

**The Ministry of Education and Research
The Institute for Educational Sciences
The Institute for Research on the Quality of Life
UNICEF**

**THE PARTICIPATION TO EDUCATION
OF
ROMA CHILDREN
PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, ACTORS**

BUCHAREST

2002

THE PARTICIPATION TO EDUCATION OF ROMA CHILDREN PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, ACTORS

Authors:

Mihaela Jigau – coordinator

Mihai Surdu – coordinator

Magda Balica

Ciprian Fartusnic

Irina Horga

Laura Surdu

Consultants:

Cezar Birzea – The Institute for Educational Sciences

Maria Ionescu – The National Office for the Roma

Ioan Marginean – The Institute for Research on the Quality of Life

Filip Stanciu – The Ministry of Education and Research

The study was conducted and published with the financial support of the UNICEF Representative Office for Romania.

Contributions of the authors:

Mihaela Jigau	(ch. 1, 2, 4.1.1., 4.1.2.1., 4.2.1.2., 4.2.3.2., 5)
Mihai Surdu	(ch. 1, 4.1.1., 4.1.2.2., 4.2.1.1., 4.2.3.1., 6)
Magda Balica	(ch. 3.2., 3.3., 3.4., 4.2.1.4., 4.2.2., 5, 6, Case studies – educational projects)
Ciprian Fartusnic	(ch. 3.1., 4.3., 5, Case studies – educational projects)
Irina Horga	(ch. 3.2., 3.3., 3.4., 4.2.1.3., 4.2.2., 5, 6, Case studies – educational projects)
Laura Surdu	(ch. 4.2.1.1., 6, Case studies – Family surveys)

Other collaborators: Daniel Arpinte, Valentina Marinescu, Monica Militaru.

The authors would like to thank the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research – the Office for Minority Language Education, for the support provided in achieving this study.

Also, thanks go to all those who took part in the surveys:

- School inspectors, school principals, teachers, students, parents, local authority representatives in the counties of Arges, Constanta, Covasna, Gorj, Vaslui and the Bucharest authority representatives;
- Representatives of the institutions which provided information on the educational projects for the Roma population, which were conducted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 1. THE OBJECTIVES AND THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	8
CHAPTER 2. CONCEPTUAL LANDMARKS AND PERSPECTIVES ON DROP OUT AND ITS GENERATING CAUSES	18
CHAPTER 3. EDUCATION POLICIES FOR THE STIMULATION OF THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION OF ROMA CHILDREN	28
3.1. EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS FOR MINORITIES, RATIFIED BY ROMANIA	28
3.2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN ROMANIA	30
3.3. NATIONAL POLICIES TO STIMULATE THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.....	33
3.4. EDUCATION POLICIES TO STIMULATE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION, SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE ROMA POPULATION	40
CHAPTER 4. SURVEY RESULTS	44
4.1. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION, DROP OUT, NON-SCHOOLING	44
4.1.1. <i>Enrolling children in obligatory education</i>	44
4.1.2. <i>Drop out and non-schooling</i>	50
4.1.2.1. General tendencies of drop out.....	50
4.1.2.2. Drop out and non-schooling in rural environment education institutions with Roma population	63
4.2. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION DETERMINANTS	66
4.2.1. <i>School determinants</i>	66
4.2.1.1. Financial resources.....	67
4.2.1.2. Human resources	76
4.2.1.3. Educational offer	93
4.2.1.4. School ethos	105
4.2.2. <i>Individual characteristics</i>	125
4.2.3. <i>Cultural, social and family determinants</i>	134
4.2.3.1. Cultural determinants	134
4.2.3.2. Social and family determinants	136
4.3. SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY TEACHERS TO STIMULATE THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION OF ROMA CHILDREN	157
CAPITOL 5. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION STIMULATION STRATEGY FOR THE ROMA CHILDREN AND YOUTH	168
5.1. OBJECTIVES REGARDING THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION STIMULATION OF ROMA CHILDREN AND YOUTH ..	168
5.2. THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION STIMULATION STRATEGY FOR ROMA CHILDREN AND YOUTH	177
5.3. THE EPA SYSTEM BASED INTERVENTION PROGRAM	205
CAPITOL 6. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMS DESIGNED FOR THE ROMA POPULATION	217
BIBLIOGRAPHY	248
APPENDICES	250
APPENDIX 1. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY COUNTIES, ACCORDING TO THE PERCENTAGE OF ROMA CHILDREN	251
APPENDIX 2. THE STRUCTURE AND TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE GROUPS PARTICIPATING IN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP INTERVIEWS.....	252
APPENDIX 3. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, BY TEACHING LANGUAGE AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION, IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2000-2001.....	254
APPENDIX 4. DROP OUT AND NON-SCHOOLING	256
APPENDIX 5. FINANCIAL RESOURCES	260
APPENDIX 6. HUMAN RESOURCES	263
APPENDIX 7. CASE STUDIES	268
APPENDIX 8. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROJECT MODELS DESIGNED FOR THE ROMA POPULATION	281

INTRODUCTION

In Romania, the lack of a real tradition to protect cultural diversity, has left traces much deeper than we would currently agree to admit. To support this, both the difficulties in the past years to promote a model through which cultural and ethnic diversity would be protected and encouraged, as well as failure to identify and solve the problems of each ethnic group, can be invoked. The Roma ethnic minority is one of the examples which could justify, at least partly, this characterization.

With an emerging political and intellectual elite, the Roma minority still has a weak representation in political institutions and a low power to introduce on the public agenda specific problems, even though it is the most numerous ethnic minority in Romania, after the Hungarian one. Most representatives of this ethnic group are still facing important difficulties, and formulae such as exclusion, social and cultural marginalization, discrimination, are a common trait in describing the Roma minority situation. The policies promoted, both at central level, as well as at local level, did not manage to change this condition, as long as initiatives were punctual and isolated. Thus, problems such as the low education level, illiteracy, lack of qualification, unemployment, the precariousness of the health condition, and poverty continued to affect most of this population.

The need for a government strategy to improve the situation of the Roma, which should formulate guiding principles and should have joint action directions (administration, social services, community development, communication and civic participation, etc.) is an undeniable fact. Since 2001, this document exists¹ and numerous intervention options have been explained. This must also be achieved in the field of education, which is a possible starting point in breaking the vicious circle *poverty-exclusion-loss of identity*. It represents one of the important long-term trump cards for the management of multi-ethnic communities and for the eradication of both cultural, as well as social and economic marginalization.

¹ *The Romanian Government Strategy to improve the situation of the Roma*, Bucharest, 2001.

The project which the present study is based on, was born out of the wish to empirically verify the direct observations which the authors had the opportunity to make, in time, on certain schools in the Romanian education system. Basically, during previous researches, we managed to observe that there are a number of schools in the rural or urban environment, in which the percentage of Roma students is very high. In these schools, later defined as *Roma schools* based on the need to identify them, we were surprised to see, first of all, the condition of the buildings in terms of age, aspect, and inappropriate spaces, the precariousness or the quasi-inexistence of the material resources.

This aspect of inappropriate material conditions for an adequate educational process is the more shocking since in the relative proximity of some of the Roma schools there are schools with a different ethnic composition, where the conditions are sensibly different, in a positive sense. Such a situation made us ask ourselves the following questions: are there differences between the Roma schools and the other schools in the system? Can it be said that Roma schools are "second hand schools"? What would be the criteria according to which Roma schools are inferior to other schools in the system? Initially, we wanted to check if Roma schools are relatively isolated cases, or if they are a common presence in the Romanian education system. Then, starting from the observation that certain Roma schools are less equipped from a material point of view, we wanted to see if this is to be found at the level of the entire system, or whether it is just isolated cases we're dealing with. In addition, we wanted to check if Roma schools are different from the point of view of the quality of education, which has been operationalized through the training of the teachers, through the absence / presence of the fluctuation and commuting phenomena, a.s.o. Another point of interest was the participation to education. In this regard, we were interested in the answer to the following question: are Roma schools different from the whole system in terms of student school participation, drop out and non-schooling?

Our intention throughout the entire study was to underline the differences, where they exist, between Roma schools and the whole education system. We proceeded thus with the belief that, apart from social and economic factors (poverty, marginalization, type of occupation), cultural factors (the Roma population's different cultural characteristics) family factors a.s.o., there are causes intrinsic to the education system, which lead to a

weak school participation of the Roma children and to substantially lower school results. In terms of value, the belief of the authors is that the existence of Roma schools is something with negative consequences on social harmony and solidarity, which has negative effects both on the Roma population and the society as a whole. This separation – most of the times based on the residential, rather than the intentional criterion – has more serious consequences, in case the quality of education is lower in Roma schools, as compared to the whole system. The data provided allowed us to make comparisons only between Roma schools in the rural environment and the whole rural education system. Anyhow, in terms of size, we believe that the currently existing differences offer a guiding image for the entire education system.

The conclusions of the investigation, the analysis of the possible solutions in the opinion of the teachers, and the analysis of education policies on the stimulation of the school participation of Roma children promoted until present, helped in drafting certain objectives and an implementation plan for an improvement strategy. Action directions, responsible institutions, and time horizons are presented. At the same time, an education priority area intervention program (EPA) is presented in detail; this is an integrated solution to problems specific to the education of children coming from socially or culturally disadvantaged environments. The authors are hoping that this study would be a useful tool for future policies on the stimulation of school participation and on ensuring true equal opportunities for Roma children, as compared to other children, as well as opportunities regarding cross-cultural education, in general.

This study was conducted by using the databases created by the Institute for Educational Sciences and the Institute for Research on the Quality of Life (IRQL), during studies funded by the Soros Open Network Romania. Through the generous contribution of UNCEF Romania, an organization that we would like to thank once again, we conducted secondary analyses and quality research, which allowed us to follow the perspective we had in mind.

The authors

Chapter 1. THE OBJECTIVES AND THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

1.1. The motivation of the study

The right to education of all children and youth, regardless of social and ethnic origin, sex or religious beliefs, guaranteed by the Romanian Constitution, is far from being a reality in the case of the Roma population. Thus, several studies (*Gypsies, between ignorance and concern*, IRQL, 1992, 1998, *Roma children in Romania*, Save the Children – UNICEF, 1999) reveal the fact that one of the categories deeply affected by a low participation to the education process is this very ethnic group. In the case of pre-school education, for instance, the participation of Roma children is almost four times lower than the participation of the entire population, at this level of education; the differences continue during primary education– lower by approximately 25% than the other children – and the low secondary education, where school participation is lower by 30%. One must also remember that illiteracy is a problem faced by almost 40% of the adult population. An even more serious problem is that this percentage of illiteracy has increased during the transition period, as compared to the previous period, thus affecting the young population between 10 and 16 years old.

Another difference with regard to the participation to education, especially at the level of the low secondary education and of the post-obligatory education, which affects the entire young population, can be noticed between the urban and the rural environments. This difference is also fueled by the so-called "general conditions," which place the rural environment in a disadvantaged position, as compared to the urban environment ("low degree of technical equipment, the inappropriate quantity and quality of social infrastructure and services, the weak development of the communication systems, the inappropriate condition of the transportation network, especially the road transportation network, the increasing poverty of certain population groups"), as well as certain problems specific to the rural education system: "the inadequate condition of the buildings and of the logistics, following the decrease of the resources available to

rehabilitate them, the insufficient number of qualified teachers"² and so on, just to name a few of the most significant ones.

The discrepancies which mark the whole school age population in the rural environment, also hypothetically affect the Roma population in these areas, and the present study intends to verify this hypothesis, and to identify the causes and the general and specific conditions which generate the low participation to education of the Roma children in rural areas.

From an explanatory point of view, there are a few general perspectives to which the education of Roma children can be related. The first one, which could be called the socio-economic perspective, is trying to explain the low school participation of Roma children as a direct consequence of the poverty faced by most of this population. The second type of approach, the "culturalist" perspective, explains the low school participation of the Roma through cultural differences, through the different life style they have. In this sense, the low school participation would represent a form of resistance of the Roma, to cultural assimilation. Finally, the third type of approach envisages institutional failure, and tries to establish the causes of the low participation among the characteristics of the education system organization and the deficiencies of the education policies promoted. A pragmatic approach must integrate all three perspectives and answer the question: "what can be done to change this situation?"

This is because the low participation to education, the low training level and illiteracy have a negative presence at the level of the personal development of the Roma, "life opportunities," social mobility opportunities, and, last but not least, the possibility to fully exercise one's citizen rights.

In this context, we consider that stimulating the participation to education of Roma children is a priority, in order to solve the social problems faced by this ethnic minority. Therefore, the present study aims to contribute to the identification and analysis of the causes which generate a low participation to education, to find solutions in order to

² *Rural Education In Romania: conditions, problems and development strategies*, MEN-ISE, 2000.

improve the problems that would lead to an increased number of government or civil society initiatives, and to draft education policy recommendations for the Roma.

1.2. The objectives of the project

- ✓ To offer a comprehensive image of the causes which generate the low participation to education of the Roma children:
 - To evaluate the situation regarding the participation to basic education of Roma children, focusing on those located in rural areas;
 - To identify the causes which lead to a low level of school participation and drop out.
- ✓ To elaborate a typology of the educational programs for the Roma, which were carried out during 1990-2000:
 - To identify the NGOs which carry out educational projects for the Roma, the objectives of those programs, the activities conducted and the results obtained;
 - To make presentations of positive educational practices for Roma children (successful projects).
 - To analyze the education policies on the stimulation of school participation, and to elaborate education policy recommendations for the Roma:
- ✓ The analysis of the legal framework which forms the basis of education policies for the Roma;
- ✓ The analysis of the education participation stimulation policies;
- ✓ The elaboration of a strategy to increase the degree of participation to education of Roma children.

1.3. Methods and techniques of investigation:

The study used a complex methodology, which allowed for the comprehensive approach of this issue, including:

- Documentary analysis;

- Secondary analysis of quantitative data;
- Questionnaire survey;
- Focus group interviews;
- Individual interviews;
- Social survey.

✓ **Documentary analysis**

The main laws and regulations which form the legal framework of the Romanian education policies on the stimulation of the school participation of Roma children, as well as the national and international documents in this field, were researched through a documentary analysis.

✓ **The secondary analysis of the data**

This method consisted of analyzing the data originating from previous research studies, which targeted different objectives, and which was not sufficiently exploited. We are referring here, first of all, to the database of the "*Rural education in Romania: conditions, problems and development strategies*" research study. The data was collected between 1999-2000, which practically means that a census of the education institutions in the rural areas was carried out during the research. The secondary analysis of this data emphasized aspects referring to:

- The material resources of the schools which include Roma children;
- The quality of the human resources of those schools;
- The percentage of schools with Roma students, where there are cases of drop out or uneducated children in their area;
- The causes of drop out and non-schooling;
- The solutions adopted at school level, in order to prevent these phenomena, etc.

In order to conduct the secondary analysis, the schools which included Roma students were selected from the initial database, and a new database was built, which allowed for detailed analyses of those respective schools.

Another secondary analysis was conducted on the Institute for Research on the Quality of Life databases, which were constructed during the 1992³ and the 1998⁴ research studies, that were conducted on national samples, representative for the Roma population.

Finally, a third secondary analysis was conducted on the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES) database, which includes information acquired during the research study carried out in 2001, on drop out and non-schooling, as well as their generating causes. This study was carried out on a representative sample of schools which face such problems. These schools were requested to provide, through an "Individual file of the student who dropped out," information regarding:

- The individual characteristics of the students (health condition, age and the grade in which the drop out occurred, school results prior to dropping out, ethnic affiliation, a.s.o.);
- The characteristics of the family environment (the family type and form, the level of education and the employment situation, the health condition of the parents, the living and food conditions, etc);
- The causes of drop out and the prevention solutions adopted in each case.

✓ **Focus groups and individual interviews**

During **group interviews with Roma parents and children** the issues discussed referred to the following aspects:

- School perception;
- The connection between the confidence in school and school participation;
- The factors which contribute to the increase of the confidence in school;
- The family-school relationship;
- Causes and solutions for drop out and non-schooling;
- Multicultural education and the introduction of the Romani language and culture in the school curricula;
- Desirable school models, life strategies to follow.

³ *Gypsies, between ignorance and concern*, coordinator C. Zamfir, Alternative Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993

⁴ *Indicators on the Roma communities in Romania*, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002

The individual interviews with teachers and principals from schools which include Roma students, focused on certain aspects regarding:

- The teacher - parent relationship;
- The involvement of the parents in school problems, in establishing the curriculum decided at school level (SDC) and their effects on school participation;
- The perception of the causes for drop out and non-schooling;
- Multicultural education and the introduction of the Romani language and culture in the school curricula;
- Solutions to increase access to education.

✓ **Social surveys**

The purpose of the **social survey**, a method that was used in the case of the families of Roma children who dropped out of school, was to emphasize the causes and the context in which the temporary school withdrawal occurred. "The history" of the temporary school withdrawal represents a case study that allows for the launch of hypotheses on drop out causes and methods to prevent it.

✓ **Questionnaire survey**

The **questionnaire survey** method – a questionnaire launched by various NGOs – was used in order to identify the objectives of the different educational programs designed for the Roma population that have already been conducted, the program activities carried out, their results and funding sources. The information collected through the questionnaires was completed by interviews with representatives of NGOs and project managers, and by accessing the web sites of non-governmental organizations which promote educational programs.

1.4. Institutions involved; population investigated - general characteristics

The reference population is that of the rural environment education institutions, and the population investigated through secondary analysis of the data is represented by the

education institutions which include Roma students. Thus, out of the 12,287 education institutions included in the database that was constructed during the *Rural education in Romania* study, a number of 3,162 institutions were investigated. If we take into account the fact that, within the same institution there are, in some cases, kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, vocational schools and apprenticeship schools or just some of them, then we may consider that out of the real number of education institutions investigated during 1999 - 2000 (19,427) the present research included 5,560 cases. The distribution of the investigated institutions, according to the type of school, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Education institutions investigated

Total	Kindergartens	schools with grades 1-4	schools with grades 1-8	High school	Vocational and apprenticeship schools
5,560	2,335	974	1,867	165	219

According to the percentage of the Roma, education institutions are distributed on a scale which goes from one Roma student in the school, to exclusively Roma schools, where the percentage of the Roma students is of 100%. In order to have a better image of the distribution of education institutions, according to the number of Roma students, we used the following labels, which also have an empirical relevance:

- **Mixed schools** - a category which includes schools where the percentage of Roma students is between 0.5 and 50%.
- **Majority Roma schools** - schools where the percentage of Roma students is between 50.1% and 70%.
- **Predominantly Roma schools** - institutions where the percentage of Roma students oscillates between 70.1 and 100%.

According to the percentage of Roma students, the schools - of all levels - where there are students affiliated to such an ethnic group, are distributed as following:

- 87.9% - mixed schools;
- 6.4% - majority Roma schools;
- 5.8% - predominantly Roma schools.

The distribution of the institutions, according to the percentage of Roma students, by counties (Appendix 1) shows notable differences from one county to another, with regard to the tendency to group a large percentage of Roma in the same school. Thus, in the county of Brasov, out of the total number of schools where Roma students are studying, 35.9% are schools where the percentage of the Roma is of more than 50% (19.7% majority Roma schools and 16.2% predominantly Roma schools). Similar values are also recorded in the county of Sibiu, where the schools with more than 50% Roma students represent 28.7% (11.8% majority Roma schools and 16.9% predominantly Roma schools). Other counties where the percentage of predominantly Roma schools is over twice as big as the average number of rural schools with Roma students, are Bacau, Vaslui, Covasna, Arges and Neamt.

The IES database, which contains information resulted from the research of drop out causes was also used, as we mentioned before, when investigating the drop out determinants. In this case, the reference population is made up of children who dropped out of school, from a representative sample of 135 obligatory education institutions, with Roma students. The school sample is representative according to a number of criteria (variables which characterize education institutions), namely: the quality of the human resources available (qualified / unqualified teachers), the residence of the teachers (in the locality where the school is located / outside it) and the stability of the teachers (stable / fluctuant teachers), the degree of isolation of the localities where the schools are located (distance to the nearest town / city) and so on. These institutions are located in the counties of Arges, Arad, Constanta, Ilfov and Vaslui. According to the information included in the *Rural education in Romania* study, at the level of these counties, in general, there is a high percentage of education institutions where such phenomena occurred. At the same time, these are representative for the large geographical areas of the country (with the exception of Moldova), according to the percentage of education institutions with, respectively, without drop out and non-schooling situations.

At the level of these schools, 516 dropouts were identified, out of which 200 were Roma. They represent the reference target group in the analysis of drop out and low participation to education determinants - especially the individual and the social and family determinants. Individual and group interviews, as well as social surveys took place in the

counties of Arges, Constanta, Covasna, Gorj and Vaslui, in schools from localities whose ethnical structure also includes Roma - Tigveni - Momaia (Arges), Mihail Kogalniceanu (Constanta), Polovragi - Rudarie (Gorj), Slobozia - Girceni (Vaslui), as well as in a school located in the Ferentari district, Bucharest (Appendix 2). 20 individual interviews with teachers and school principals were conducted; 12 focus groups interviews - six with parents and six with students - each with a number of 8 - 10 subjects (a total number of more than 100 parents and students) and 10 social surveys of the families of drop out students. The individual and group interviews took place at school, and the social surveys, at the residence of the parents.

1.5. Limits and difficulties of the investigation

One of the limits of the secondary analysis comes from the fact that the data refers exclusively to the rural environment. As a result, the analyses which follow are conducted exclusively on rural environment education institutions, and do not offer a broad image of the situation of schools with Roma students, from the whole education system. During the analysis, all the comparisons made between schools with Roma students and "the system," "the total number of schools" or "the system average " are implicit comparisons between rural schools which also include Roma students (in various percentages, ranging from 0.1% up to 100%) and the total number of rural environment education institutions which also include schools with Roma students. What we intended to do is a comparative analysis between the rural schools with Roma students, and the entire rural environment education system.

The second limit of the secondary analysis comes from the way in which the data is recorded. Thus, the schools with Roma students which were analyzed, were selected according to the *percentage of Roma students in the school* variable criterion. The estimate of this percentage belongs exclusively to the principal of the school and we believe that, in this case, ethnic affiliation was determined via hetero-identification, rather than self-identification. In addition, it is possible that in the case of some schools, the percentage of Roma students may have been distorted (increased or decreased) according to local or contextual interests / expectations.

Regardless of these limits, we consider that the study reflects a relatively correct image of the schools with Roma students in the rural environment, and especially the differences between these schools and the entire rural education system. In addition, as a suggestion, the study calls for the need of an analysis of the whole education system (from the rural, but also the urban environment), through a comparison with the schools in the system which also include Roma students.

Chapter 2. CONCEPTUAL LANDMARKS AND PERSPECTIVES ON DROP OUT AND ITS GENERATING CAUSES

Drop out represents one of the multiple forms of **school failure**. The notion of school failure has different contents from one education system to another, and some of the most often encountered meanings, apart from the premature abandonment of school, are: a gap between personal potential and results, leaving the school without having any qualification, individual learning difficulties, grade repetition and illiteracy, the incapacity to reach school objectives, failure to pass the final exams, etc. There are even differences between a **cognitive type of failure**, which refers to not fulfilling the established objectives, and a **non-cognitive type**, which implies the child's failure to adapt to the demands of the school environment.

Drop out also has different meanings and significations: leaving the education system before completing compulsory education, leaving the system before graduating one of its levels, leaving the system, regardless of the level, without obtaining the diploma which proves the completion of that respective education level, leaving the education system without obtaining a certificate which could offer opportunities to integrate in the labor market, prematurely leaving the secondary education level without being integrated in "second chance"⁵ type of programs, a.s.o.

The non-schooling phenomenon also represents a failure, both of the respective individual, as well as of the education policies to promote access to education.

In the present study, the notion of drop out is used in the sense of **leaving the education system prior to completing obligatory education** – a level which represents the study's interest center – without taking into account the students who graduated the 8th grade without passing the elementary school graduation exam ("capacitate" exam); the non-schooling notion is used with reference to **school-age children (7-14 years old) who never attended school**.

⁵ *Education at a glance. OECD Indicators*, 2000.

School failure (including the above-mentioned phenomena), which appears during a certain moment in modern society, is analyzed by some education specialists⁶ from several perspectives, during its evolution: as a **pedagogical fact**, as a **social injustice**, and as an **economic waste**.⁷

As a **pedagogical fact**, school failure represents the learning difficulties some children encounter during the teaching process. The notion became legitimate once education was generalized, and the interest for the decrease of school failure peaked in the 60s. At the beginning, the phenomenon appears as a normal fact, without obvious social consequences, and the causes are attributed exclusively to the student (a "weak" student or with low intellectual capacities).

In the years '70s – '80s, school failure starts being perceived from the perspective of a **social injustice**, being a subject present in all debates on equal education opportunities. The generalization of education and prolonged school expectancy create the theoretical premises of access to education for all social categories. At the same time, the school is diversifying its function: it no longer offers only a basic cultural formation, instead, through its networks and levels, it becomes a determinant for the professional and social insertion of the youth. As a result, "failure no longer is a pedagogical problem, it becomes a social problem" (quote from the author). If, in the beginning, the selection was made on financial, and therefore, social criteria, later it was operated on academic criteria, and this offers the possibility of an education-based social mobility. However, specialists are underlining a certain "social reproduction through school (although this was conceived as a means of social democratization), and this situation contradicts the equal opportunities concept." School failure thus appears as a failure of democratization, and the school institution takes part in "generating" social inequality; "failure no longer belongs to the child, it belongs to the school itself" (quote from the author).

⁶ Charlot, B., *Penser l'echec comme evenement, penser l'immigration comme histoire*. In: *Migrants – Formation* no. 81, 1990

⁷ Also see Jigau, Mihaela, *School success factors*, Grafoart Printing House, Bucharest, 1998.

The relative economic and social crisis period determined a new perspective on school failure as an "**economic waste.**" If, initially, "the priority objective of the governments in the field of education was to reduce social inequality and to fight against school failure," later, the student at risk is no longer considered "the victim of social injustice, instead it is a young man, expensive for society, about to be offered a second chance and inserted, and a future less productive citizen" (quote from the author). In this perspective, "economists raised a series of questions: taking into account the political and economic priorities and the resources available, how much can a country extend its efforts for the social and professional insertion of disadvantaged young people? Starting at what point must a social treatment of the problem begin, or, in other words, what rate of marginalized and non-adapted people can society tolerate?"⁸

This perspective points out a switch of interest from failure to success, from personal achievement to competence, from school effectiveness to economic efficiency.

A new vision on education is shaping up after adopting the *Memorandum on lifelong learning*, an EU document launched during the Lisbon European Council (October 2000). This vision is reflected by the messages contained in the document, especially by key messages no. 1 – "new basic competencies **for everyone**" (which refers to guaranteeing universal and continuous access to learning, in order to acquire and refresh the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge-based society) and no. 2 – "achieving an **increased level of investments in human resources.**" The new perspective can also be perceived through the four converging objectives which the Memorandum supports – employment opportunity, active citizenship, social cohesion, and personal achievement, which can be attained through education.

Although the document focuses on the integration of education throughout **adult lifetime**, as a consequence of the demographic tendencies, among others, which increase the strategic importance of the work force that includes elderly people, lifelong learning is considered an "apparent continuum, which starts from the cradle until the end of life." The starting point is **to provide basic education and initial professional training for all young people**, "to endow them with new basic competencies demanded by a

⁸ Also see Jigau, Mihaela, *School success factors*, Grafoart Printing House, Bucharest, 1998.

knowledge-based economy." At the same time, young people must "be taught how to learn," and the development of a positive attitude toward learning is also targeted. In the same sense, another EU document – The Employment Guide (the 2001 edition) requires all EU member states "to make sure that all young people complete obligatory education."

With regard to the Memorandum, the issue at stake is therefore no longer that of resource waste, instead it is the exploration of new ways, the identification of new solutions which would allow for **an increased investment in human resources**, in education, starting with the initial training of young people, and continuing throughout adult lifetime.

The issues of failure or school success must be approached in the context of equal education opportunities, a concept on which there are several perspectives,⁹ which we will systematically present below. A first perspective refers to **equal access opportunities**: at the beginning of the school period, all children must be provided with equal opportunities, taking into account the fact that "they have a different genetic dowry," they come from heterogeneous environments and have suffered different influences. A second perspective refers to equal **opportunities**: "the contents of the curricula and the pedagogical approach" must be non-discriminatory; schools should also be "equally effective" (Coleman, 1966.) The perspective on **the results of the educational process** presumes at least a relative equality of school performances, upon the completion of the same schooling levels. This implies, though, an individual approach of the children (therefore, unequal), investing more time and more resources in those with "a slower learning rhythm" or with "low school capabilities." That is why, when referring to this perspective on equal opportunities, on equal results (supported especially by totalitarian regimes which intended to homogenize society, the individuals, and the groups), Coleman (1973) concludes: "the ideal of equal opportunities is a fake ideal."

⁹ Husen, T., *Influence du milieu social sur la réussite scolaire*, Paris, Publications de l'OCDE, 1975

We must also place the "series of value dichotomies attached to the concept of equality," presented by Neacsu¹⁰ (2000) in the same context of the analysis of equal opportunities and access to education:

- formal equality (in terms of vested rights) – real equality;
- opportunity equality – equality of final results;
- group equality - individual excellence;
- inter-individual equality – inter-individual diversity;
- chance / access equality – competition (in order to have chances and access);
- inter-individual equality – freedom of option (to change and innovate).

The equal opportunities must signify, in fact, offering **multiple options** for **different capacities and capabilities**, "an education for everyone and for each person" (Reuchlin, 1991), an open education for all people, regardless of age and social economic conditions, but also an education for each person, according to his / her specific needs – avoiding homogenization and encouraging diversity – which would create the premises of **equal access opportunities to social life** (Husen, 1975). This option was supported by the **equal opportunity policies**, which focused on eradicating exclusion and exaggerated selection, forming basic competencies for all individuals, offering a "second chance" type of education to those who have left the education system, integrating formal education with non-formal education and informal education, so that the learning situation could be expanded. This perspective on education is brought once again into the limelight through *The memorandum on lifelong learning*, through its objectives and key messages sent to all EU member states and to those that are currently applying for membership. The document no longer only refers to the initial education and training process, it now grants education new values and dimensions, being considered as a continuum throughout the entire life.

Apart from the promoted education policies, there are a number of risk factors with regard to "exercising" the right to education (the formal dimension of the equal opportunities principle), factors which are induced by the individual characteristics of the

¹⁰ Neacsu, I., *The access to education of children from rural areas*. In: *A decade of transition; the situation of the child and family in Romania*, UNICEF, Bucharest, 2000.

children, of the social, family and school environment, of the social groups the children belong to, etc.

With regard to school success risk factors and the causes of school failure with its multiple display forms, including drop out and non-schooling, there are different explanatory models that focus on the individual (the child), the school or the family, considered either individually or as interacting. We shall succinctly present below, as an example, some of the theoretical positions developed with regard to the school failure determining factors, according to the focus they have on one or another of the generating cause structures¹¹.

✓ **The student's individuality**

The child's individual characteristics, more specifically the low level of intelligence (determined by the genetic inheritance), intellectual or psycho-sensorial deficiencies and disorders, are considered by the **genetic approaches** as being the main causes for school failure. This "classical" position, which had and still has supporters (Jensen, 1969; Jaquard, 1983; Plomin, 1989), has negative implications and effects both at a social and moral level, as well as in pedagogical practice.

The psycho-affective approach also places the child in the center of the explanatory model, but this time in connection with the family and school environment, with the influences these environments have in the child's personality formation process (De Ajuariaguerra, 1977, Mannoni, 1979).

Equally important for the student's school performances, in explaining failure situations, is the child's **attitude toward knowledge**, the sense given by the child to knowledge and school success or failure. However, this attitude is built depending on the "social and family environment, his / her personal history, the reaction when meeting the school and the specific goal-oriented work" (Charlot, 1990, Charlot, Bautier, Rochese, 1993).

¹¹ Also see Jigau, Mihaela, *School success factors*, Grafoart Printing House, Bucharest, 1998

✓ **The social and family environment**

Most studies and researches that approach the issue of school failure refer to the influences developed by the defining characteristics of the originating family environment of the child in difficulty, which are social, cultural and economic characteristics. A disadvantaged and "disadvantaging" family environment throughout the child's schooling cannot provide either the cultural references needed to efficiently use the school offer, or the material conditions to support the education of the children. Moreover, the cultural level of the family of origin and its attitude toward school can cause a delay in the general intellectual development, especially at a cognitive level, which is the harder to recover, the more profoundly disadvantaged the environment is. In this sense, references are being made to the differences that exist between the culture in which children are educated in disadvantaged families and the dominant culture offered by the school, the types of values that are being used, the language differences, etc.

All of the above synthesize the representations of the **social cultural handicap** theory supporters, a theory considered by Charlot (1990) as being "deficitary" (it focuses on the deficit) and "defectological" (it points out the student's knowledge gaps), and which, the same author claims it is founded on a double unrealistic hypothesis:

- The characteristics of the children are determined by those of the families and the communities they belong to, and their school evolution can be anticipated by analyzing these collective characteristics;
- The social relations between groups are considered as relations between spaces, therefore the family and social environment of the children coming from disadvantaged families could be distinct from the family and social environment of those coming from advantaged families.

The social cultural handicap notion thus reduces "the individual to a group" and "social relations to space relations." From this perspective, the social group is seen as being homogenous, ignoring contradictions in favor of defining "social professional categories" or "social classes" starting from statistical criteria, without taking into consideration the social dynamics which is reduced to a "social cultural topography."

The viewpoints of the author quoted above are real to the extent that, a disadvantaged family environment, with all the attributes it infers, cannot be considered the only element "responsible" for the school failure of children coming from such environments or a determinant which condemns everyone to failure, to the impossibility of attaining social mobility through education, just as an origin based in a socially, culturally and economically advantaged environment cannot necessarily ensure the school, professional and social success of the children.

✓ **The school institution**

Some theorists have developed a concept according to which the school is a "social reproduction" institution, since it ignores the values of the students coming from disadvantaged groups and it promotes instead those of the children coming from "the advantaged classes." The school thus reproduces the class relation structure, and it makes the existing social hierarchy (which is seen as a result of the competencies of individuals belonging to a class) perpetual and legitimate. The child coming from a disadvantaged environment will come into conflict with the "cognitive style" and the norms promoted by the school, which are different from those he and his family have adopted and respect, and this situation will lead to lack of adaptation and school failure¹².

The school as the main factor that may cause school failure is also invoked by the **interactionist trend**, which claims that school failure "is built" inside the school (Chaveau, Rogovas, 1984) as a result of the specific way of interaction between students and teachers. According to this thesis, teachers have certain higher or lower expectations from students, and "the answer" of the students satisfies the demand. Also, school results are profoundly influenced by the conditions in which the learning process takes place and by the concrete methods to evaluate the activity (Grisay, 1984; De Landsheere, 1980; Perrenoud, 1989; Bloom, Hastings, Madaus, 1973).

¹² Bourdieu, Passeron, 1970; Althusser, 1970. In: *La lutte contre l'echec scolaire: un defi pour la construction europeenne*. Brussels, EURYDICE, 1994.

Reconsidering the school failure cause perspectives, Riviere (1991) proposes two types of generating factors: **institutional** and **individual**. The category of **institutional factors** includes:

- The nature and level of the cognitive demands of education, expressed during different types of evaluations (current evaluation, final exams, etc.);
- The rigidity of the learning rhythm and the normative character of the education system, which does not allow for sufficient adaptations to the particularities of the students and to the local characteristics;
- The "ruptures" occurred during the schooling period (transfer from another school or class, from another teacher);
- Other institutional determinants: the size of the class (the number of the students in that class), the homogeneity / heterogeneity of the class in terms of performance, the organization of the schooling time (the length and structure of the school year, of the semesters, of the holidays, of the student "work" week and "work" day).

Factors referring to the financial resources of the school, the management and quality of the human resources, the quantity and quality of the material resources, the logistics, etc., can also be included in the category of institutional factors.

The most important **individual factors** are considered:

- The constitutional factors, hereditary factors (psycho-physical characteristics);
- The psycho-affective factors – affective and aptitude-related characteristics, which facilitate or prevent school adaptation;
- The social – economic factors and social – cultural factors, as determinants of the family environment;
- The general educational environment factors – the social context in which the education is conducted, the value and importance granted to this institution by society, with implications on the individual's (student's) attitude toward school.

The presentation of different school failure and generating cause perspectives reveals that they take into account both educational aspects, as well as individual, social, economic,

cultural and political dimensions, but most of them focus, though, on only one or another of these characteristics. The studies conducted in the last decades question single-dimensional interpretations, considering that school failure is in fact influenced by a configuration of school development inhibitory factors, among which one should remember both the contextual and institutional variables, as well as the individual and interpersonal ones, which differ, though, from one situation to another, in terms of the intensity of their action, as it will be revealed throughout this study.

Chapter 3. EDUCATION POLICIES FOR THE STIMULATION OF THE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION OF ROMA CHILDREN

3.1. European and international documents for minorities, ratified by Romania

Romania signed several international documents which promote the ethnical or racial non-discrimination principles. The most important of them are:

- The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) – ratified in 1970;
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCER) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – ratified in 1974;
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – ratified in 1990;
- The UNESCO Convention on Education Discrimination – ratified in 1964.

There are also a series of documents at European level, which forbid racial or ethnic discrimination, and are relevant for Roma minority policies in Romania. In the field of rights and liberties, the Council of Europe elaborated in 1950, *the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, which Romania ratified in 1994, shortly after becoming a member of the Council. However, Protocol 12 approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has not yet been ratified by Romania, even though it brings a clarification and an extension of the protection which the Convention offers to its citizens against discrimination.

The Council of Europe also promoted *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* which establishes anti-discriminatory measures for national minorities. Romania signed this document in 1995, three years before it came into force (February 1, 1998). Romania thus has the obligation to implement the policies and observe the principles of the Convention, as well as to present the Council of Europe with regular reports on the progress made. In order to promote the values of inter-culturality

and pluri-lingvism and to protect regional or minority languages in Europe, the Council of Europe adopted *The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*. Romania signed this document in 1995, and the Charter came into force in March 1998. Another document that is important for the education of the minorities is the *European Charter on Local Autonomy*, adopted in Strasbourg in 1985, which Romania ratified in 1994.

If, until 1990, the problems of the Roma minority were relatively ignored at European level, once the Central and Eastern European states integrated in the European structures, this state of fact began to change. The first formal elaboration appears in the Council of Europe Resolution no. 1203 / 1993, where the Roma population is referred to as "a true European minority." Thus, the Council of Europe founded a *Specialist Group on Roma*, with direct tasks to council the member states on all aspects referring to this minority and to support the activity of the General Secretary Coordinator of Actions regarding the Roma Population.

Other documents which are important for the promotion of the Roma minority rights were elaborated by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Both the *Charter for European Security*, as well as the *OSCE Reports on the Situation of Roma* highlighted the difficulties currently faced by this minority. During the summits in Copenhagen (1990), Helsinki (1992) or Istanbul (1999), the member states declared their concern for solving these difficulties, which equals a moral commitment to eliminate any form of discrimination against the Roma. Romania has political obligations by accepting the conclusions of these summits.

However, the most important decisions that currently influence Romania's policies on the Roma minority are those of the European Union. The EU developed measures regarding the Roma population, focusing especially on two coordinates: local sensitivity and resource allocation. *The Guiding Principles for Improving the Situation of the Roma in Candidate Countries* represents one of the most important documents adopted by the EU in this sense, which was drafted in 1999 by the Roma Issues Expert Group and the OSCE's High Commission for National Minorities.

Another important document is the *Directive no. 2000 / 43 / EC of June 29, 2000* against racial and ethnic discrimination, landmark and fundament to all minority policies of the member states. Romania issued an anti-discriminatory ordinance only one month later (August 2000), a measure of legal balancing which brings it closer to the European standards on minority protection.

The adhesion negotiations are, in the case of the candidate countries, the main framework in which the problems of the Roma population are analyzed. These are considered an important political criterion in the human rights and minority protection chapter. Thus, since 1997, the Roma population draws special attention in the *Annual Reports* which monitor the progress made by the candidate countries in the integration process. In Romania's case, *The Council's Decision* of January 28, 2002 on the principles, priorities, intermediary objectives and conditions included in the Partnership for Integration with Romania (2002/02/EC) contains several recommendations regarding the Roma minority.¹³

3.2. The legal framework on the right to education of ethnic minorities in Romania

The Romanian legal framework stipulates the right to education of the national minorities through a number of general regulations, included both in the Constitution and the Education Law, as well as in other regulations especially designed to prevent and eradicate discrimination.

The Romanian Constitution establishes the general principles referring to the rights, liberties and fundamental duties of all citizens, as well as regulations referring to the access to education of people belonging to ethnic minorities, as follows:

¹³ "Granting adequate financial support and administrative capacity for the implementation of the Government's strategy on improving the situation of the Roma population at national, regional and local level, paying special attention to the eradication of discrimination (including in public administration) and providing equal access to education, dwellings and social services." "Establishing an efficient system to examine the complaints against police abuse and providing access for the Roma population to it."

- The unity of the people and the equality among citizens: "Art. 4. (2) Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion..."
- The right to identity: "Art. 6 (1) The State recognizes and guarantees the right of persons belonging to national minorities, to the preservation, development, and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity. (2) The protection measures taken by the Romanian State for the preservation, development, and expression of the identity of the persons belonging to national minorities shall conform to the principles of equality and non-discrimination, in connection with the other Romanian citizens."
- Equality of rights: "Art. 16 (1) Citizens are equal before the law and public authorities, without any privilege or discrimination."
- Freedom of conscience: "Art. 29. Freedom of thought, opinion, and religious beliefs may not be restricted in any form whatsoever..."
- Freedom of expression: "Art. 30. The instigation to national, racial, class or religious hatred, the incitement to discrimination... are prohibited by law."
- The right to education: "Art. 32. (3) The right of persons belonging to national minorities to learn their native language, and their right to be educated in this language are guaranteed... (4) Public education shall be free, according to the law."
- The right to association: "Art. 37. Citizens may freely associate into political parties, trade unions, and other forms of association..."

In concurrence with the Constitution, the **Education Law** states that education is a national priority and stipulates the right to education of all citizens, the right to be educated in their native language, as well as the obligation to observe the right to a cultural and linguistic heritage of the minorities. All these rights are expressed through the following **provisions**:

- organizing school institutions, groups / classes for all types, levels and forms of education, where they teach in the language of the minorities;
- including in the school curricula, in the case of Romanian teaching language education institutions, a number of native language courses similar to Romanian courses, as well as history and national minority tradition courses, in that respective language;

- reflecting the history and traditions of each minority in the school curriculum;
- providing schoolbooks and appropriate pedagogical supports in the native language;
- teaching religion in the native language;
- training the school staff in the language of the respective ethnic minorities;
- taking a native language exam., during the final exams (elementary school graduation exam - "capacitate" exam, high secondary education graduation exam - "baccalaureate" exam)

The access to education of all children and young people is simultaneously facilitated by a **social protection system**, which has different forms:

- free education, assistance and logistics, and, respectively, free schoolbooks, free medical and psychological assistance of the students and children from the pre-school education system;
- funding / co-funding from the State budget: overall funding for the expenses of the school readiness preparatory group schooling; co-funding the expenses for pre-school children and students in boarding schools, student dormitories and canteens; co-funding extra-curricular activities for high performance students;
- providing institutional services and facilities: granting scholarships to students with outstanding results, and social scholarships to those coming from economically disadvantaged families, decreasing the public transportation expenses;
- social protection for children and students with special educational needs by organizing adequate institutions, classes / groups for pre-school children and students with special needs.

In order to observe the rights of national minorities, the Government of Romania adopted in 2002, *Law no. 48 for the approval of the Government Ordinance no. 137 on the prevention and punishment of all forms of discrimination*. According to this regulation, denial of access to education of a person or a group of persons, at any level and form of education, due to race, nationality, ethnic group, religion, social category or affiliation to a disadvantaged category, represents a crime and is punished according to the law. This law is in accordance with the provisions of the international agreements on the eradication of intolerance and racism.

3.3. National policies to stimulate the school participation of children and young people

Although they did not explicitly approach the issue of school participation, the education reform measures after 1990 promoted a series of changes in the system, with a potential impact on the decrease of drop out and non-schooling, two phenomena which have grown significantly in the first part of the '90s. The first legal regulations which were designed to prevent and improve these phenomena were adopted, though, in 1998.

Thus, an inventory of the education policy documents drafted by the Ministry of Education and Research, emphasized several categories of **measures which result in an improvement of school participation**:

- a) direct intervention measures and programs on the causes and effects of the non-schooling phenomenon;
- b) rural environment education improvement regulations, with effects on the stimulation of school participation;
- c) human resource quality increase measures for the education system in disadvantaged areas;
- d) school year structure flexibility regulations and alternative organization forms for the learning process (low frequency education forms, second chance education classes, summer schools, etc.);
- e) social protection measures for disadvantaged categories of population.

Below we will analyze the main **provisions** of these types of regulations which influence the participation to education.

a) Direct intervention measures and programs on the causes and effects of the non-schooling phenomenon

The official acknowledgement of certain phenomena, such as illiteracy, drop out, marginalization and social professional exclusion of young people, who prematurely left the obligatory education system, represented the premise for the reconsideration of education policies on school participation. As a result, a number of programs were

drafted and implemented in order to improve these phenomena, as well as their effects. In this sense, the following regulations can be mentioned:

- *The Order of the Minister of National Education (O.MNE) no. 4231 / 1999 regarding the experimental application of the Eradication Program of marginalization and social and professional exclusion of young people who dropped out of the obligatory education system and did not get the minimal necessary competencies to find a job*

This program is designed for young people, between 14 and 25 years old, and aims at:

- drafting curricula for the completion and conclusion of basic education, and for professional training which corresponds to an apprenticeship school;
- organizing evening school training course modules during a period of three and a half years;
- offering the participants to the program an obligatory education graduation certificate, which gives them the opportunity to take the elementary school graduation exam ("capacitate").

- *O.MNE. no. 3062 / 2000 regarding the Adult Education Program in school and high schools*

The order stipulates the introduction in the activity plans of the schools, high schools and county teacher houses, of some concrete adults education programs, based on the specific needs of the respective community and in cooperation with the local authorities and the representatives of civil society. The lifelong education programs are focused on completing the basic education (including alphabetization) of adults who did not conclude their obligatory education due to different reasons.

The program is especially designed for populations which are at risk of marginalization and exclusion: illiterates, unemployed, economically, socially and culturally disadvantaged persons, persons with special needs.

- *O.MNE. 3510 / 2000 regarding new illiteracy eradication actions*

The order re-iterates certain previous measures and stipulates a number of duties which are given to the county school inspectorates, in order to eradicate illiteracy:

- developing a illiteracy monitoring system, at local level;
- conducting investigations on the causes which generated illiteracy;
- drafting adequate measures in this regard: organizing second chance education classes, providing home schooling for people who cannot move around, organizing

intensive courses, encouraging the participation to the pre-school education system, etc.

These regulations promote the partnership between the school inspectorates and the local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the representatives of the community, with regard to monitoring illiteracy cases and organizing drop out prevention activities.

- *O.MNE. no. 3097 / 2000 regarding drop out prevention and ensuring the continuation of schooling for school-age children and young people in pre-university education*

The order stipulates inclusion measures for all school-age young people in a form of compulsory education; these measures are needed so that the graduates of compulsory education could continue their studies within different branches of the secondary education cycle (focusing on orientation and professional counseling) and special regulations for rural environment schools, in order to increase the quality of the teaching process.

- *O.MNE no. 5080 / 1999 and O.MNE. no. 4780 / 1999 on the National program "A second chance through education"*

The program is designed for people who have interrupted their studies due to social reasons, and offers opportunities to continue one's education and to obtain a minimal professional training.

The regulations mentioned above establish the framework needed to develop the partnership school – community during interventions on non-schooling causes and effects. The proposed measures are especially designed for people who dropped out of school or who have never been enrolled in the formal education system, by providing access to basic education and a minimal professional training.

b) Rural environment education improvement regulations, with effects on the stimulation of school participation

From the perspective of equal education opportunities, numerous legal regulations in the past years refer to situations which are specific to rural environment schools, by promoting measures to improve school participation in those areas.

According to *O.MNE. no. 3179 / 2000*, **The rural education re-launch program**, initiated as early as 1998 by the Ministry of National Education, in conformity with the Government medium term rural strategic development program, is aimed at providing "equal education opportunities for students in the rural environment, by providing quality education, in an environment favorable to the learning process." In this sense, the main objectives of the programs focused on:

- Re-dimensioning the rural environment school network;
- Modernizing the rural school infrastructure;
- Supplying rural schools with modern material and equipment, which would ensure that the changes implemented through the reform are applied;
- Training teachers and school managers, in accordance with the rural environment school characteristics.
- Establishing rural centers for documentation, information and teacher training;
- Developing the institutional capacity at local level, by providing community school support and by increasing the role of the school in the community;
- Developing a school transportation network.

In order to improve the access to post-obligatory education levels for students in the rural environment, *O.MNE. no. 4318 / 1999* stipulates the possibility to establish apprenticeship schools, not only within vocational schools and school groups (a school group is an education institution which provides at least two different forms of schooling), but also within the schools with grades 1-8 or in theoretical high schools in the rural area, according to the local training priorities.

These measures have an impact on the increase of the rural environment education quality, which is a condition to stimulate school participation, both in the obligatory education, as well as in higher education levels.

c) Human resource quality increase measures for the education system in disadvantaged areas

The legislation on teachers stipulates specific measures for disadvantaged areas, in order to increase the quality of the human resources in the education system:

- Granting certain facilities: wage increases for teachers in isolated areas, reimbursement of commuting costs, the possibility to use a piece of land, loans to buy houses;
- Establishing specific conditions to fill in the positions and to complete teaching assignments in rural areas;
- Diversification of the lifelong training courses;
- Attracting qualified teachers in disadvantaged areas by granting study scholarships, on a contract basis, to students who live in the rural environment; the contract clause is that, at the end of their studies, the graduates would teach in the rural environment the subjects they specialized in, for a period of time at least equal to the duration of their studies.

Such regulations create a favorable framework for ensuring the quality of the educational activity and for improving school results and the level of school participation.

d) School year structure flexibility regulations and alternative organization forms for the learning process

In order to ensure the access to education of certain groups in special situations, a number of school year structure flexibility measures and alternative organization forms for the learning process were established.

O.MNE. no. 3705 / 1999 on the school year structure, stipulates the possibility to adapt the school year structure to conditions related to the weather, scenery, and the trade specific of that area. The possibility to organize the school year structure according to local conditions is extremely important for rural environment education institutions and represents a measure designed to stimulate school participation and to decrease absenteeism, drop out and non-schooling.

In the same sense, regulations on the diversification of the education process organization methods – low frequency education, second chance education classes, summer schools, etc. – are intended to enlarge the access to education of certain groups, such as: students

from isolated areas, children coming from families with itinerant professions, people who have abandoned their studies before completing obligatory education and are returning to the system, etc. Thus, O.MNE. no. 4370 / 2000 on the organization and operation methodology of low frequency classes in secondary education institutions, stipulates the organization of these alternative forms of education for people who have gone beyond the maximum age for daytime education enrollment, or for those who, due to social or medical reasons, cannot attend daytime education.

e) **Social protection measures for disadvantaged categories of population**

Apart from educational regulations and changes, school policies also promoted social protection measures for disadvantaged categories of population:

- Granting social scholarships and other forms of support to students in the pre-university state education system, who come from families with a difficult social and economic situation, from disadvantaged areas or from areas affected by unemployment;
- Providing school stationery for students who come from low income families;
- Providing social assistance for the transportation of students who commute from one locality to another, and are coming from families with a precarious material situation;
- Granting a free meal to students in the primary and secondary education cycle (applying this measure is still under debate.)

These measures are designed to improve the social and economic causes of absenteeism, drop out or non-schooling, which, according to the studies conducted, lead to the most frequent non-schooling situations.

Lately, it was noticed that the interest of the decision factors for improving non-schooling has increased. Thus, **The pre-university education development strategy for 2001 – 2004**, drafted by the Ministry of Education and Research proposes a number of **strategic priorities** with an impact on school participation:

- providing education equity, in order to achieve equal access opportunities;

- providing the quality of learning and educational services, in order to avoid school lack of success and school losses;
- consolidating and developing the education system social facilities for students, especially in disadvantaged environments.

In order to achieve these strategic priorities, the Ministry of Education and Research initiated, in partnership with other institutions – the Romanian Government, school inspectorates, universities and colleges, local authorities, NGOs, etc. – a series of **programs**, and supported the continuation of those which started in the previous years.

The most significant, in this regard, are the following:

- The NETA-Program on the education of young adults, with an interrupted schooling track – promotes improvement measures for the effects of the drop out phenomenon.
- *A second chance* – develops measures of integration for young people who dropped out of obligatory education, in order to complete their basic education and ensure a minimal professional training.
- *Drop out prevention and eradication* – stimulates community initiatives to support basic education for disadvantaged categories.
- *Improving the education activity by creating transportation facilities for rural environment students* - designed to provide transportation conditions which should lead to the decrease of absenteeism, drop out and non-schooling, in the case of students from disadvantaged areas.
- *Supporting students who come from low-income families, by offering free school stationery* – designed to increase school participation by providing facilities for poor students.
- *The national program Food in Schools* (which has not yet begun) – designed to provide one meal for all students in obligatory education .
- *Providing equal opportunities for children / young people belonging to national minorities* – promotes measures to provide the conditions needed to conduct teaching activities in the native language and for the study of native history, culture and language.

The programs initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research correlate with the objectives and measures to improve access to education stipulated in **The national Strategy on anti-poverty and promotion of social inclusion**.

3.4. Education policies to stimulate school participation, especially designed for the Roma population

Policies to improve school participation in general were accompanied by a number of specific regulations, designed for the Roma population. In order to stimulate the school participation of Roma children and youth, the Ministry of Education and Research developed, since 1998, a coherent strategy. This strategy includes a number of regulations and measures developed, in certain cases, in cooperation with different NGOs, which are focused on:

- **Promoting young Roma in faculties and university colleges, in order to form a young Roma intellectuality:**
 - granting an increased number of higher education government funded slots for Roma candidates (the measure was initiated since the 1992 – 1993 university year and was extended afterwards, through *O.MNE. no. 3577 / 1998, no. 5083 / 1999, no. 3294 / 2000 and no. 4542 / 2000.*)

- **Stimulating the training of Romani speaking teachers:**
 - establishing classes / groups within elementary schools and pedagogical colleges to train the future Roma or non-Roma teachers, who will be working with Roma students (the system began since the 1990 – 1991 school year and it still continues, based on *O.MNE. no. 3577 / 1998 and no. 5083 / 1998*);
 - conducting Romani language initiation/ improvement courses for Roma and / or non-Roma ethnic teachers, qualified and unqualified.
 - founding a Romani language department within the Foreign Languages Faculty of the Bucharest University, since the 1998 – 1999 university year.

- **Stimulating the study of Romani language through special measures:**

- the possibility to begin the study of Romani as a native language, at any moment during the school year and in any study year;
 - encouraging the school to employ teachers qualified to teach Romani or, in their absence, high school graduates, or at least graduates who completed 10 grades, and who are ethnic Roma.
- **Drafting programs, manuals and auxiliary materials** for the Romani language and for the history and traditions of the Roma.
 - Establishing territorial structures which should monitor the school participation of Roma children and youth (in conformity with O.MNE. no. 3363 / 1999 on the appointment of Roma / for the Roma inspectors in each county school inspectorate.)

In **The pre-university education development strategy for 2001 – 2004**, the Ministry of Education and Research proposed the initiation and continuation of several **programs**, especially designed to stimulate the school participation of Roma children and youth:

- *A good start for school* – proposes the piloting of an educational model for the decrease of drop out at young ages, of the Roma population.
- *Developing the capacity of Roma communities to withdraw children from dangerous forms of labor, and to integrate them in the national education system* – is designed to develop efficient methods to eliminate labor in the case of Roma children and to include them in the education system.
- *The school participation of Roma children. Problems, actors, solutions* – focuses on drafting solutions to improve the phenomenon.
- *The access to education of the disadvantaged groups, especially the Roma* – proposes measures to stimulate children coming from disadvantaged groups, especially Roma children, in view of completing obligatory education.
- *Equal opportunities for Roma children through school development programs and the involvement of parents* – is designed to provide equal education opportunities for Roma children, by adapting the educational offer to their specific needs and by promoting the cross-cultural dialogue.

- *The national plan to stimulate the Roma population's school participation and to decrease drop out* – proposes integrated measures to stimulate the participation to education of the Roma school-age population.

*

* *

The analysis of the education policy documents focusing on the school participation of the Roma population, leads to the following conclusions:

- Romania signed the main agreements and European and international documents on human rights, on the rights of the minorities and on the prevention and punishment of all forms of discrimination. These documents represented an important landmark for drafting policies on the education of national minorities.
- The Romanian legal framework stipulates the right to education as a fundamental right and guarantees the access of all citizens to education and training, regardless of their ethnic affiliation.
- At the level of education policies, it has been noticed lately that there is an increase of the interest to prevent and improve absenteeism, drop out and non-schooling, in general, and of the Roma population, in particular. The regulations and programs initiated are designed both to provide intervention measures for non-schooling causes, as well as for its effects, in terms of social and professional integration.
- The education policy documents stipulate a number of positive discrimination regulations, in order to facilitate the Roma population's access to education and to cultural identity preservation.
- Most of the regulations promoted propose education quality improvement measures for the Roma population (qualifying ethnic Roma teachers, drafting the curriculum, etc.), as well as social protection measures for students and their families.
- A tendency to join the efforts of different organizations has been noticed, both at central level (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research), as well as at community level (representatives of local authorities, NGOs), in developing certain joint cooperation programs, designed to improve the participation to

education of the Roma population. Thus, **The Romanian Government Strategy on the Improvement of the Roma Situation** grants a special role to education, in all the measures intended to significantly improve the situation of the Roma.

Chapter 4. THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

4.1. School participation, drop out, non-schooling

4.1.1. Enrolling children in obligatory education

In Romania, education represents a right guaranteed by the Constitution for all children and young people, regardless of social or ethnic origins, sex or religious beliefs. This represents the formal dimension of the equal opportunities education access, a premise from which we start in the analysis of the participation to education, without taking into consideration, at first, the risk factors on "exercising" this right, which are induced by individual characteristics of the social, family, etc. environment.

The access to education infers, in the first place, apart from its formal dimension, **ensuring the school institution network** needed in order to enroll children in the education system. From this perspective, a few statistical data is illustrative, in order to highlight the access to education of the children, especially of those from the rural environment (Table 1).

Table 1. Students, education institutions and teachers in obligatory education, according to residence environments, in the school year 2000 – 2001.

	Education institutions		Students		Teachers			
					Total		Out of which qualified	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	12549	100.0	2376700	100.0	154889	100.0	124270	80.2
Urban	1957	15.6	1291391	54.3	74528	48.1	64630	86.7
Rural	10592	84.4	1085309	45.7	80361	51.9	59640	74.2

Source: *Primary and secondary education at the beginning of the school year 2000 – 2001*, NIS

The statistical data presented reflects the fact that the number of rural environment secondary education institutions, to which we add the departments operating within certain high schools and school groups, is far bigger as compared to the urban level, although the number of students is lower. This situation, which is justified, if we take into account the low population density in rural areas, encourages the access to education of the children. In the past years, due to the demographic tendencies recorded, which meant a decrease of the population and birth rate even in the rural environment, many of the school institutions are under-used (some of them were even been closed down or merged with other institutions). Currently almost a quarter of them are operating with up to 20% of their students; in these institutions less than 2% of the total number of students are enrolled. Maintaining schools with a low number of students represents, though, a measure to stimulate the school participation of children from rural localities with a small number of inhabitants, a measure for providing their access to education. However, there are still situations when children have to travel 4-5 kilometers (sometimes distances even bigger than that) to school, especially to schools which include the low secondary education level; in certain cases – localities located on hills or in the mountains, which lack automobile access – not even school transportation can be a solution, and identifying other means which would facilitate the participation of those children to education, is needed.

If, in the case of the institutional networks, the data reflects a satisfactory situation, there is, though, a number of **problems regarding the school infrastructure**: many of the buildings are in an advanced degraded condition, some of them are over one hundred years old, made from improper materials, lack basic utilities (water, sewerage, modern heating sources, etc.), and are thus operating without a health permit.

In addition to all of the above, there are severe deficiencies regarding the **teaching materials supplies** and the modern teaching devices, the low number of books, which are also old, in school libraries, the improper equipment of the school laboratories (where it exists), old, non-ergonomic school furniture, a.s.o. In the case of certain rural environment schools, a part of these deficiencies have been improved though the contribution of several programs carried out in those respective areas, but without completely solving most of the problems which the schools are facing.

With regard to **human resources**, from the point of view of the number, and implicitly the students / teacher ratio – which, in 2000 – 2001 was of 13.5 in the rural environment as compared to 17.3 in the urban environment – one may say that students in the rural environment are in a privileged situation. The problems are related to the quality of human resources, with consequences on the quality of the educational act, if we take into account the high proportion of unqualified teachers. In the above mentioned school year, this percentage was almost twice as big as in the urban environment: 25.8% as compared to 13.3%; otherwise said, out of the total number of unqualified teachers, 67.7% are working in the rural environment. The discrepancy between rural environment schools and urban environment ones from in terms of the quality of human resources represents a problem which has been present for several years now, while tendencies for improvement are less visible.

The current education opportunities, considered from the perspective of the appropriate network of education institutions and teachers, also provides education access in the native language for children who belong to different ethnic minorities in Romania. In this regard, the situation of the enrollment of children and students belonging to different minorities, in all education levels is relevant, and so is the number of distinct institutions and departments and teachers who provide the schooling process. Thus, according to the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), at the level of the school year 2000 – 2001, out of the total number of 4,032,127 students enrolled in pre-university education, 208,013 (5.1%) attended native language education, in 2,714 (11.1%) institutions or departments, out of the total number of 24,355 education institutions, and they were taught by 12,698 teachers (4.8%), out of the total number of 266,979 (the number of students and teachers, according to teaching language and levels of education, is presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in Appendix 3). The percentage of children and students belonging to ethnic minorities who are being taught in their native language, and of the respective institutions and departments, according to pre-university education levels, is as follows:

- Pre-school education: 13.8% institutions and departments and 7.6% children;
- Primary education: 8.5% institutions and departments and 5.6% students;
- Low secondary education: 10.5% institutions and departments and 4.9% students;

- High secondary education: 12.3% institutions and departments and 4.3% students;
- Vocational and apprenticeship education: 10.7% institutions and departments and 2.5% students;
- Post-secondary education: 13.2% institutions and departments and 2.6% students.

Children belonging to the Roma ethnic minority do not benefit from the type of opportunities mentioned above – education institutions where the schooling process is conducted exclusively in the native language, and the appropriate human resources. In fact, there are differences of opinion both among the parents, as well as at the level of the Roma non-governmental organizations and their representatives, regarding education in the native language. The academic subject Roma minority history and traditions was, nevertheless, included in the national curriculum (for grades 6 and 7), as was the study of the native language. In the school year 2000 – 2001, 5,960 students enrolled in primary education and 6,597 in the low secondary education cycle were studying the Romani language (3 – 4 hours a week), and the teaching process was conducted by 260 Roma teachers (according to the Ministry of Education and Research).

The way in which school-age population benefits, in fact, from the education access, in terms of its formal dimension (the right to education guaranteed by the legal framework), and of the opportunities which exist for this purpose (ensuring the material and human resources), is reflected by the indicator on the degree of enrollment in the education system (the gross rate of school enrollment). Taking into account the interest point of the present study – basic education – following, we will present several tendencies regarding the enrollment of children in this level of education (Table 2, Figure 1).

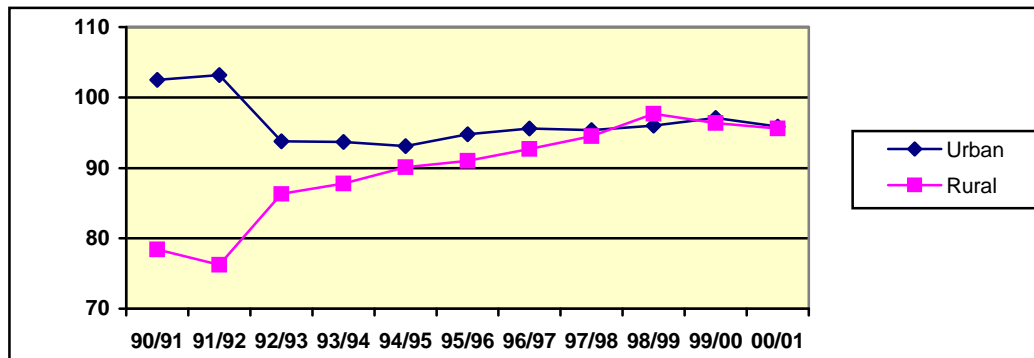
Table 2. The gross rate of enrollment in obligatory education, according to the environment of residence, between 1990 – 2000

School year	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01
Total	91.2	90.5	90.7	91.4	91.9	93.3	94.4	95.0	97.0	96.8	95.8
- Urban	102.5	103.2	93.8	93.7	93.1	94.8	95.6	95.4	96.0	97.1	95.9
- Rural	78.4	76.2	86.3	87.8	90.1	91.0	92.7	94.5	97.7	96.4	95.6
Primary	90.8	92.4	93.8	96.9	99.7	99.5	99.1	97.5	99.8	99.9	98.3
- Urban	98.6	98.9	95.6	96.6	98.1	97.6	96.6	95.1	97.2

- Rural	78.8	80.0	91.0	97.4	102.1	102.1	102.6	100.7	103.0
Low secondary	91.4	88.9	86.1	86.5	84.3	86.7	86.4	92.3	94.3	93.9	93.3
- Urban	103.7	102.9	90.1	90.4	87.4	90.7	89.8	95.7	97.5
- Rural	78.4	73.9	80.6	80.9	79.8	80.8	81.5	87.4	89.8

Source: *The National Human Development Report, Romania 2000, UNDP, 2001* and *The primary and low secondary education at the beginning of school year 2000 – 2001, NIS, 2001*

Figure 1. The gross rate of enrollment in obligatory education, according to the environment of residence, between 1990 – 2000



As it can be seen in the above Figure, the general tendency, with some oscillations, is an increase of the school participation degree, both at the level of the entire obligatory education, as well as of the two cycles it includes. The tendency begins to become visible since 1995 (after the decline recorded in the previous period), and for the primary education cycle, it begins as early as 1993 – 1994. An important role in this sense, was played by the regulations meant to stimulate the participation to education, respectively the child allowance granted based on school attendance.

With regard to the degree of enrollment in obligatory education, some differences are recorded between girls and boys. These differences are in favor of boys, and are displayed in the rural environment and at the level of primary education; the respective differences were in the school year 2000 – 2001 less than two percents apart (next table).

Table 3. The gross rate of enrollment in obligatory education, according to environment and sex, in the school year 2000 – 2001

	Population counted at 07/01/2000			Students enrolled			Degree of enrollment		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	female	Total	Male	female
Total (7-14 years)	2481248	1265802	1215446	2376700	1216498	1160202	95.8	96.1	95.5
Primary (7-10)	1086527	555483	531044	1077251	555325	521926	99.1	100.0	98.3
Low secondary (11-14)	1394721	710319	684402	1299449	661173	638276	93.2	93.1	93.3
Out of total:									
Urban	1346292	686571	659721	1291391	658311	633080	95.9	95.9	96.0
Rural	1134956	579231	555725	1085309	558187	527122	95.6	96.4	94.9

Source: *The primary and low secondary education at the beginning of the school year 2000 – 2001, NIS, 2001*

Although the general tendency is positive, the enrollment degree of the children in the low secondary education cycle is still low – approximately 93% in the past years; at this level of education there are the biggest discrepancies between the urban and the rural environment, and the difference is maintained at approximately 8 – 10 percents throughout the entire reference period (even more in the first part of that interval) – Table 2.

If the degree of enrollment in obligatory education of the population with an appropriate school age, as a whole, is satisfactory (with the exception of the low secondary level, in the case of children from the rural environment), and reaches, in general, the European standards, the situation of the participation to basic education of the Roma children is completely different, and the information we have is disturbing. Thus, if we take into consideration the age group 7 – 16 years, we notice that, in 1998, only 61.4% of the Roma children and youth were enrolled in the education system, and a similar percentage were functionally literate ("read well").¹⁴

Certain differences on school participation, not very big though, are noticed between girls and boys. Thus, out of the total number of children and young people enrolled in the education system, from the same age group mentioned above, 52.0% are boys and 46.9%

¹⁴ The social and economic situation of the Roma, the Institute for Research on the Quality of Life, 1998.

are girls¹⁵. The differences are also minor when the analysis takes into account the environment of residence.

The evaluation of school participation to basic education underlined, apart from the generally positive tendencies, a series of negative aspects, represented by a lower degree of enrollment in the low secondary education of children from the rural environment, but especially of Roma children, regardless of the level of education and their environment of residence. The fact that such a high percentage of children do not complete their basic education affects not only their subsequent development, but also questions the equal education access opportunities, either from the perspective of the quality of the resources offered (material and human), or from that of individual social and family characteristics, from a broader social and economic context, which we will try to analyze during the research study.

4.1.2. Drop out and non-schooling

4.1.2.1. Drop out general tendencies

In order to offer a complete image of drop out, a phenomenon with serious implications on the personal development of the children and of their opportunities for professional and social integration, we are presenting at the beginning of this chapter the general tendencies recorded by this phenomenon during 1990 – 2000. The analysis is based on the information provided by the National Institute for Statistics (NIS), and the reference point used is "the drop out rate." This reference point represents **drop out during one**

¹⁵ The information provided was obtained based on a survey conducted on a representative sample. In the case of the Roma school population, it was not possible to calculate the degree of enrollment in the education system, due to the lack of real information on the Roma ethnic population, according to their total number, age, sex, and environment of residence. In fact, it is considered that the 1992 Population Census didn't manage to establish the exact number of ethnic Roma, since some of them did not state their ethnic affiliation. As a result, the information presented above does not reflect the real difference between boys and girls, in terms of the degree of school participation, calculated with reference to the total population in the same age group, instead it refers only to the percentage, according to sex, of the children enrolled in the education system.

school year, and the method used is to report the number of students enrolled at the end of the school year, to the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the same year.

The first data we are presenting below (Tables 4 and 5, Figures 2 and 3) underlines the evolution of the phenomenon both according to the residence environments, as well as to the levels of education (primary and low secondary).

Table 4. The evolution of drop out during a school year in the obligatory education system, according to the residence environments, from 1990 to 2000

Students (thousands)		89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00
T	Enrolled beginning of year	2892	2701	2609	2541	2501	2497	2506	2509	2523	2519	2461
	Enrolled end of year	2824	2653	2575	2503	2485	2472	2486	2490	2504	2496	2440
	Drop out	2.4	1.8	1.3	1.5	0.6	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
U	Enrolled beginning of year	1668	1594	1564	1539	1515	1493	1501	1483	1469	1439	1373
	Enrolled end of year	1630	1567	1539	1506	1503	1490	1488	1470	1454	1420	1355
	Drop out	2.3	1.7	1.6	2.1	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.3
R	Enrolled beginning of year	1224	1107	1045	1002	985	1003	1004	1027	1054	1080	1089
	Enrolled end of year	1194	1085	1036	997	982	982	999	1020	1050	1076	1085
	Drop out	2.5	2.0	0.9	0.5	0.3	2.1	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.4

Source: The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies; The Institute for Educational Sciences, 2002

Figure 2. The evolution of the drop out rate during the school year, in obligatory education, according to the environment of residence, from 1990 to 2000

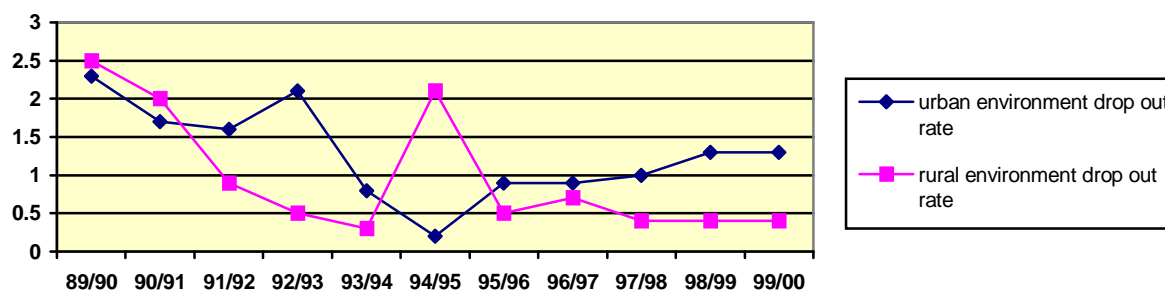
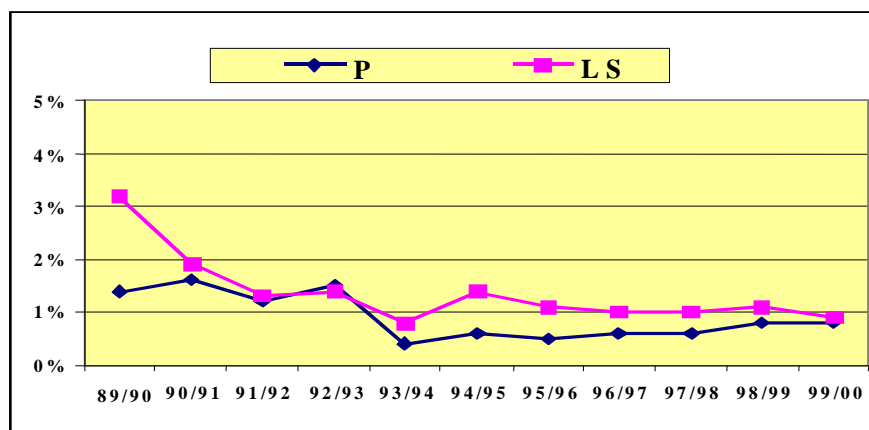


Table 5. The evolution of drop out during the school year, according to the level of education, from 1990 to 2000

Students (thousands)		89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00
T	Enrolled beginning of year	2892	2701	2609	2541	2501	2497	2506	2509	2523	2519	2461
	Enrolled end of year	2824	2653	2575	2503	2485	2472	2486	2490	2504	2496	2440
	Drop out	2.4	1.8	1.3	1.5	0.6	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
P	Enrolled beginning of year	1379	1254	1211	1201	1238	1336	1376	1388	1356	1268	1174
	Enrolled end of year	1359	1233	1196	1183	1233	1328	1368	1379	1348	1258	1164
	Drop out	1.4	1.6	1.2	1.5	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.8
L S	Enrolled beginning of year	1513	1447	1398	1340	1263	1161	1130	1121	1167	1251	1287
	Enrolled end of year	1464	1420	1379	1320	1252	1144	1118	1110	1155	1237	1276
	Drop out	3.2	1.9	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.5	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.9

Source: The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies; The Institute for Educational Sciences, 2002

Figure 3. The evolution of drop out during a school year, according to levels of education, between 1990 - 2000



The analysis of the above data allows several tendencies to be noticed, among which:

- The significant decrease of the drop out rate, both in terms of total numbers, as well as of the environment of residence (especially in the rural environment), starting with the school year 1995 – 1996, as a result of the regulations on child allowance granted based on school attendance; the measure reached its goal, thus proving efficient.

- Changes of the drop out rate value, according to the environment of residence: after a period in which the drop out rate was, in general, higher in the rural environment as compared to the urban one, starting with the school year 1991 – 1992 the tendency reverses itself, and the rural drop out rate becomes lower than the urban one. This change may be generated by the unemployment phenomenon which recorded a great increase at the beginning of the 90s and which affects mainly the urban population, since it assumes the possible consequences on the school participation of the city resident children. Maintaining the tendency recorded throughout the entire reference period may also be determined by the precariousness of the material conditions of the urban area inhabitants, the financial difficulties, the limited possibilities to carry out certain paid activities and / or to sell their products, and in this conditions, the child allowance quantum receives a relatively higher value, becoming a method to stimulate the participation to education. On the other hand, it is possible that the rural environment drop out rate be only apparently lower, and be influenced, as a result of the calculation method used, by the population migration phenomenon, including school migration, from the urban to the rural environment. As a matter of fact, in 1996, the direction of the migratory floods, which traditionally was from the rural to the urban, reverses, and the number of urban environment inhabitants who get settled in villages becomes higher than that of the rural residents who move into town.
- The constant difference between the primary and the low secondary education, the value of the drop out rate being higher in the low secondary education than in the primary cycle, while toward the end of that time interval they become closer; the difference is shown both in the total numbers, as well as according to the environment of residence, but visibly diminishes in the last years (Table 6, Figures 4 and 5). It is surprising that, beginning with the school year 1997 – 1998 drop out decreases in the rural environment, even at the level of the low secondary education, recording lower rates than in the urban area. But, as we mentioned before, it is possible that this rate, as it was calculated, may be distorted by the influence of other phenomena, which have been taking place in Romania in the past years, namely the migration of the population from cities to rural areas.

- The lack of differences between boys and girls during the entire reference period, their behavior from the perspective of the analyzed phenomenon being practically identical, without any differences at the level of the same education cycle or the environment of residence (Table 6).

Table 6. The evolution of drop out during the school year, according to education levels, environment of residence and sex, from 1995 to 2000

	1995-1996			1996-1997			1997-1998			1998-1999			1999-2000		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Total	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Urban	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Rural	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4
Primary	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9
Urban	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	0.8	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.4
Rural	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
Low secondary	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.9
Urban	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.2
Rural	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4

Source: data calculated based on the information included in: *The primary and low secondary education at the beginning of the school year 1996 – 1997, 1997 – 1998, 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000, NCS; The primary and low secondary education at the beginning of the school year 1996 – 1997, 1997 – 1998, 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000, NCS / NIS.*

Figure 4. Drop out evolution in the the primary education, according to environment

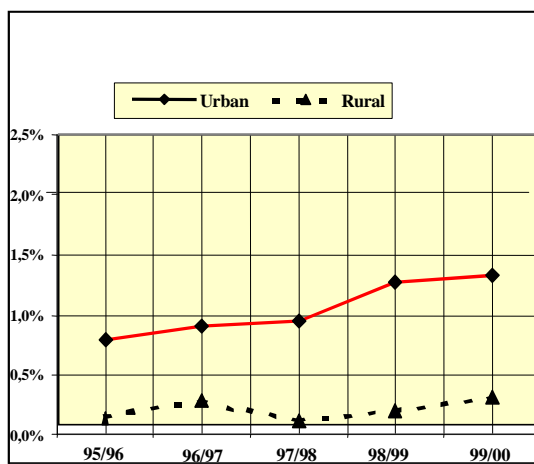
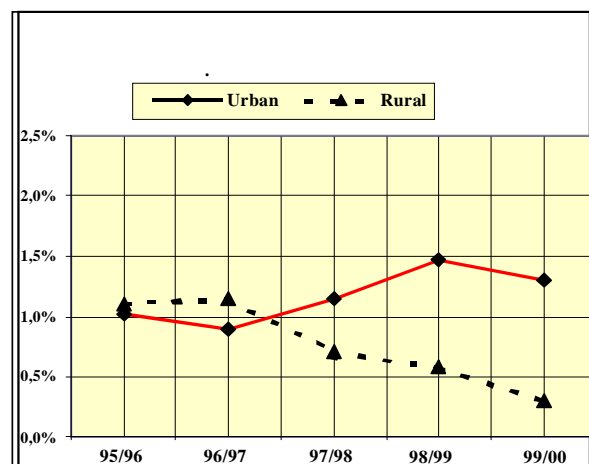


Figure 5. Drop out evolution in low secondary education, according to environment



Certain notes which accompanied the present study already suggest the imperfections of the method (used frequently, though) through which the drop out phenomenon was analyzed. Such a method does not take into account the situation in which drop out occurs, while advancing from one grade to another, as a result of multiple causes, among which: the child's and / or the family's refusal to continue school, the failure to show up for second examinations, or the non-acceptance of the grade repeating situation and subsequently, of drop out, etc.

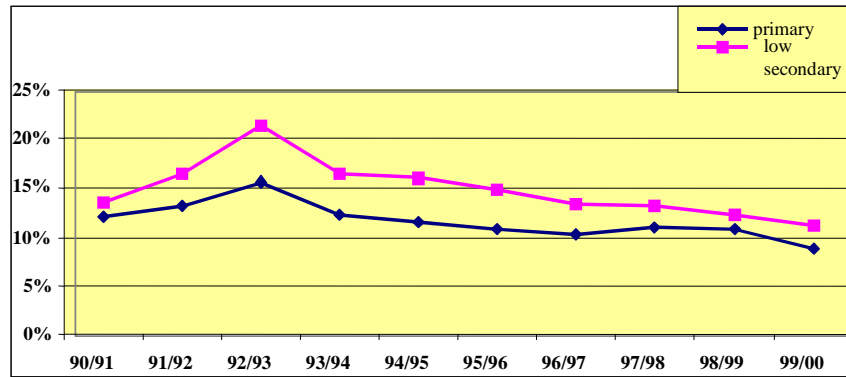
On method which allows for a more correct evaluation of the phenomenon is based on the analysis of the student cohorts during one education cycle. The use of this method emphasized the disturbing dimensions of the investigated phenomenon (Table 7, Figure 6). Thus, during a ten-year period (1990 – 2000), each cohort lost, during one education cycle, more than 10% of the entry number in the education system, which represents approximately 20 – 25% during obligatory education. The loss is even bigger in the low secondary education system, but there is a continuous tendency of improvement at both education levels.

Table 7. The primary / low secondary education graduates percentage between 1991 – 2000, from the corresponding student cohorts

Debut year in grades 1 - 5		87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
Graduation year grades 4 - 8		90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00
enrolled	gr. 1	374.3	350.4	324.2	279.1	334.1	339.8	362.2	376.3	370.4	356.2
	gr. 5	383.6	378.5	370.9	372.9	357.1	333.4	302.7	262.7	309.0	313.9
graduates	gr. 4	328.8	304.1	273.3	244.5	295.1	303.1	324.6	335.0	330.3	324.6
	gr. 8	331.6	316.9	291.5	311.9	300.0	283.7	261.9	227.9	271.1	278.9
percentage %	gr. 4	87.9	86.8	84.3	87.6	88.3	89.2	89.6	89.0	89.2	91.1
	gr. 8	86.4	83.7	78.6	83.6	84.0	85.1	86.5	86.8	87.7	88.8

Source: The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies; The Institute for Educational Sciences, 2002

Figure. 6. Drop out evolution during one education cycle, according to student cohorts (after graduation year), from 1991 – 2000



The analysis of the drop out phenomenon according to student cohorts reveals differences not only according to the education level, but also to the environment of residence (Figures 7 and 8). Thus, there are significant differences between the urban and the rural environment on the student loses, both at the primary level, but especially at the low secondary level, in the case of students who graduated the primary or low secondary education cycle in the school years 1998 – 1999, respectively 1999 – 2000. In the last case, the difference is of approximately 5 percents, which confirms the results of other studies that refer to a higher drop out rate in the rural environment, where it mostly occurs at the primary education level.

Figure. 5. Losses according to cohorts (primary level)

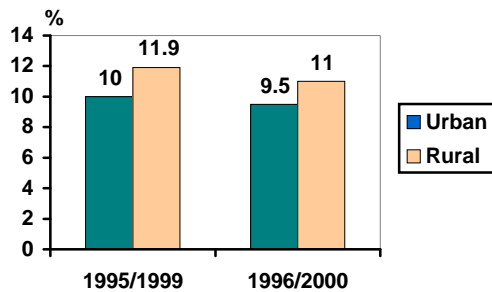
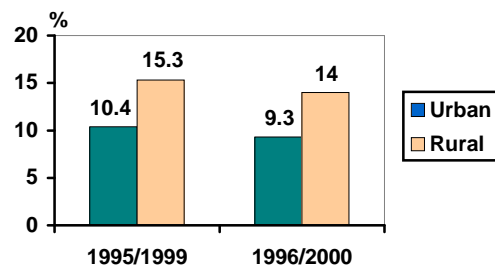


Figure. 6. Losses according to cohorts (low secondary level)



Significant differences on school participation are also noticed between girls and boys (Table 8, which contains data on the percentage of graduates of a student cohort, at the end of an education cycle, and Figures 9 and 10, on losses according to cohort, environment of residence and sex). They emphasize the lower frequency of drop out cases among girls, both at the level of the two education cycles – in the primary cycle, with 3 percents, and in the low secondary one, with more than 5 percents – as well as at the level of each environment of residence. The differences which exist at the level of low secondary education are just as broad in the urban as they are in the rural environment, reaching values of almost 6 percents.

One of the explanations for this situation is that parents seek more often the help of the boys to conduct different household activities, or, in extreme cases, even to support the family by occasionally practicing activities which allow them to earn income sources.

Table 8. The primary / low secondary education graduates percentage in the school years 1998 – 1999 and 1999 – 2000, from the corresponding student cohorts, according to environment and sex

	Students enrolled in the system in grades 1-5, in the school year 95/96 (thousands)	Graduates of grades 4-8, in the school year 98/99		Students enrolled in the system in grades 1-5, in the school year 96/97 (thousands)	Graduates of grades 4 – 8, in the school year 99/00	
	Number (thousands)	No. (thousands)	%	Number (thousands)	No. (thousands)	%
PRIMARY						
Boys – Total	190.7	167.5	87.8	183.5	162.3	88.4
Urban	105.7	94.0	88.9	99.9	89.3	89.4
Rural	85.0	73.5	86.5	83.6	72.9	87.2
Girls – Total	179.7	162.8	90.6	172.6	157.6	91.3
Urban	100.8	91.8	91.1	95.0	87.0	91.6
Rural	78.9	71.0	90.0	77.6	70.6	91.0

LOW							
SECONDARY	158.9	134.9	84.9	161.6	139.2	86.1	
Boys – Total	97.5	84.6	86.8	98.1	86.3	88.0	
Urban	61.4	50.3	81.9	63.5	52.9	83.3	
Rural	150.1	136.2	90.7	152.3	139.7	91.7	
Girls – Total	93.0	86.2	92.7	93.9	87.7	93.4	
Urban	57.0	50.0	87.7	58.4	52.0	89.0	
Rural							

Source: data calculated based on the information included in: *The primary and low secondary education at the beginning of the school year 1995 – 1996, 1996 – 1997, NCS; The primary and low secondary education at the beginning of the school year 1998 – 1999, 1999 – 2000, NCS / NIS.*

Figure 9. Losses at the level of the cohort which completed primary education in 2000, according to environment and sex

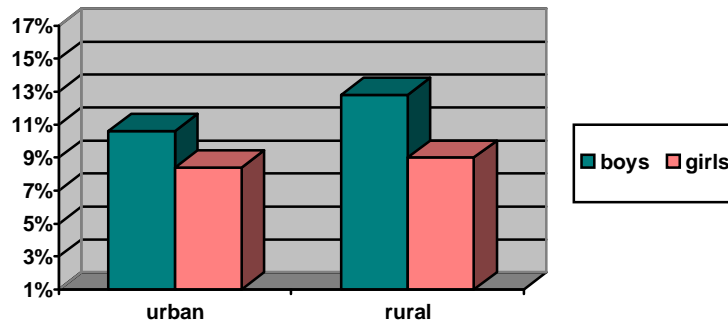
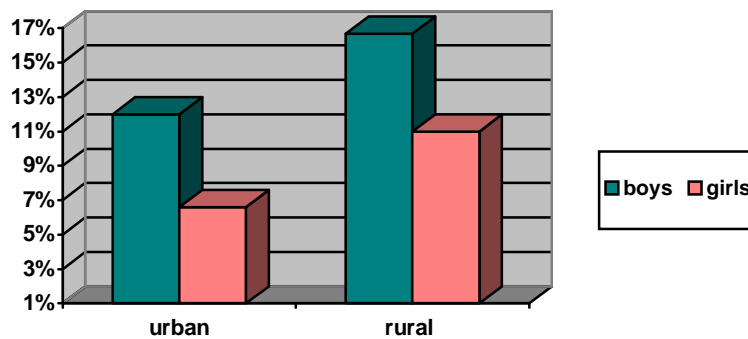


Figure 10. Losses at the level of the cohort which completed low secondary education in 2000, according to environment and sex



The method of evaluating drop out based on the analysis of the "apparent"¹⁶ student cohorts has certain inconveniences, and the decrease of the student population throughout the school years is not only a consequence of drop out, but of other phenomena as well, which belong to the school loss categories: migration, death, repetition, a.s.o. In the case of grade repetition, the method itself brings the necessary corrections, though, each cohort taking over every year the retained students from the same study level (grade) from the previous school year, thus eliminating the influences of losses through grade repetition. Although the grade repetition rate at the level of a cycle is maintained relatively constant during certain periods of time, due to the differences between cohorts with regard to the number of children which they include, thus eliminating the influence of losses by grade repetition. However, there is the possibility of inducing certain rate value distortions of drop out evaluated through the cohort analysis. This method analyses, though, with more accuracy the phenomenon, and gets even closer to estimating its real dimension. The possible corrections which may be brought by excluding death cases (for years 1999 and 2000, the death rate for age groups 5 – 9 and 10 – 14 was of 0.6 – 0.5%¹⁷), external migration (for which we do not have any information, but which can not significantly affect the data), grade repetition (in the above mentioned limits) do not significantly reduce the values presented in the above tables, around which we may say that drop out per cohort is situated.

An additional argument in supporting this data would be, to some extent, that although in recent years the transition rate from the low secondary education to the high secondary one is maintained at approximately 95%¹⁸ (approximately two thirds in high school and one third in vocational education), the gross low secondary enrollment rate is at about 70%¹⁹.

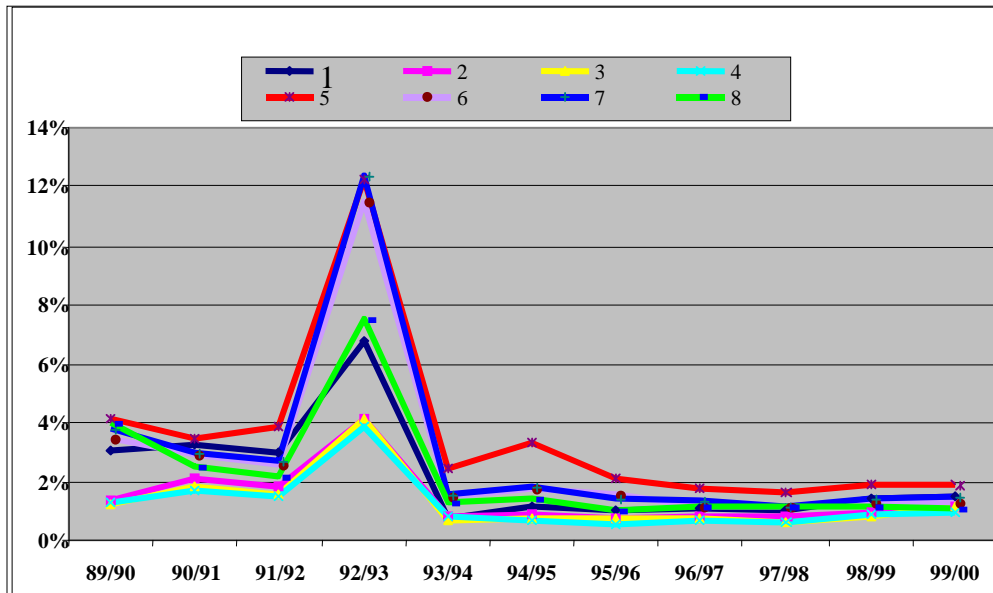
During the analysis of drop out, we must also add that drop out has a number of variations from one grade to another, being more frequent at the level of the first grade of the primary, respectively the low secondary education. (Figure 11).

¹⁶ The apparent cohort, unlike the "pure" cohort, includes retained students, who were expelled with the right to re-enroll in the following years.

¹⁷ *Demographic analyses; Romania's demographic situation in 2000*, NIS, 2001

¹⁸ *The National Human Development Report, Romania 2000*, UNDP.

Figure 11. Drop out (school losses), according to grades, during 1990 – 2000



In the case of the first grade, the higher drop out rate can be explained through the school adaptation difficulties faced by some children, especially those who did not attend the preparatory class, due to psycho – intellectual deficiencies diagnosed only at the beginning of school, etc.; some of the children in these situations return to school the following year or, in some exceptional cases, they are sent to special schools. The higher frequency of drop out during the first grade of low secondary education can also be caused by the low ability to adapt to a new education cycle, which has other demands, more difficult tasks, by the family's decision to keep the child home in order to help with household chores, since, as they grow, children can carry out certain activities, can be of help to their parents, or by the influence of some mentalities according to which, it is enough to acquire minimal writing, reading, and calculus skills at the level of the primary cycle. Maintaining a high unemployment rate among young people, who not only completed basic education, but also high school or vocational school, contributes to the appearance of such attitudes toward school. Apart from some reserves of the parents regarding education, there are also situations when certain families cannot financially support the education of their own children, the more since the new education cycle infers increased collateral education costs.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

Drop out and non-schooling have an even bigger magnitude among Roma ethnic students. Thus, almost 12% of the children aged 7 – 16 years dropped out of school before completing obligatory education, and 18% are non-educated (have never been enrolled in the education system) – Table 9. Their percentage can be even higher, if we are to include in the same category the cases of non-answer. We must add to all of the above the fact that over 80% of the non-educated children are Roma.

Table 9. The school situation of Roma children in 1998

School-age children (7-16 years old)	Enrolled	Dropped out of school	Have never been enrolled	Don't know / don't answer
	61.4%	11.6%	18.3%	8.7%

Source: Data from the Institute for Research on the Quality of Life (IRQL), 1998

With regard to the analyzed phenomenon, although there are some differences according to sex, they are not very high – approximately 6% in the case of non-educated children (Table 10), just as irrelevant as those according to the environment of residence.

Table 10. The school situation of Roma children, according to sex, in 1998

No. children	Male	Female	Don't know / Don't answer
Enrolled	52.0%	46.9%	1.0%
Non-educated	46.3%	52.2%	1.4%

Source: Data from the Institute for Research on the Quality of Life (IRQL), 1998.²⁰

According to the studies conducted by the Institute for Research on the Quality of Life, the level of education of the previous generations can also be found at the level of education of the current generations. Thus, with regard to the percentage of non-schooling ("have never been enrolled in school") we notice it has an increased tendency to be preserved throughout the generations.²¹

²⁰ *Indicators on Roma communities in Romania*, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002.

²¹ For a comprehensive analysis of the level of education according to generations, see M. Surdu, *The school education of the Roma population* in the study entitled *Indicators on Roma communities in Romania*, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002.

Table 11. The percentage of non-schooling of the Roma population, according to generations

School-age generation (7-16 years)	The adult generation (17-45 years)	The older generation (over 46 years)
18.3	16.1	26.7

Although in the case of the adult generation we notice a substantially higher participation to education, as compared to the older generation, the current school-age generation does not show an improvement of the school participation, and the degree of enrollment in the education system diminishes. As a result of the economic recession in the transition period, while, although free, education needs the material support of the family (collateral costs), the decrease of the school participation is obvious.

In the case of the school-age generation, the percentage of illiteracy is also very high, close to the one recorded at the level of the adult generation. If the latter manages to reduce almost half the percentage of the illiterates, as compared to the older generation, the tendency is not maintained in the case of the current school-age population.

Table 12. The percentage of illiteracy of the Roma population, by generations

	Read well	Read with difficulty or not at all	Don't know/ Don't answer	Total
The transition generation (10-16 years)	57,9	37,5	4,6	100
The adult generation (17-45 years)	64,5	31,8	3,6	100
The older generation (over 46 de years)	38,4	45,3	16,3	100
Total population over 10 years old	57,6	35,8	6,6	100

Although it has recorded positive tendencies, the current level of drop out – a phenomenon analyzed during this presentation –, must still represent a disturbing problem for the education decision makers, and should require coherent policies, strategies, plans and converging and efficient action directions. On the agenda of the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) there is, as a matter of fact, the issue of drop out, in general, and the problem of the school participation of Roma children, in general.

At the same time, the analysis also reflects the difficulty of describing and evaluating the phenomenon, a difficulty generated by the deficiencies which persist at the level of the information system, at least with regard to monitoring drop out and non-schooling cases, both of the population which has the appropriate age for participation in obligatory education, but especially of the Roma children.

4.1.2.2. Drop out and non-schooling at the level of rural environment education institutions, with Roma population

The evaluation of drop out and non-schooling, conducted through the secondary analysis of the database during the research study on rural education in Romania, took into consideration the following indicators:

- The percentage of education institutions where there are ethnic Roma children enrolled, which have recorded drop out and non-schooling phenomena in their area of interest;
- The percentage of non-educated students, of those who dropped out of school before completing their obligatory education, respectively; in the case of non-schooling, the variable goes from *not at all*, *under 5%* and *over 5%*, and in the case of drop out, the corresponding values are *not at all*, *under 2%*, *between 2 – 5%*, *over 5%*.

The first aspect emphasized by the analysis of the data, refers to the increased percentage of education institutions with Roma children that have recorded, within the area they recruit their students, cases of **non-educated** children. Thus, half of the schools where the number of Roma ethnic students is below 50%, recorded cases of non-educated children and almost 60% of the schools where Roma ethnic students represent the majority, face with the same problem. We also noticed that, while the entire rural environment obligatory education institutions system recorded non-schooling phenomena in almost one third of its institutions, in the case of schools with Roma students, this phenomenon appears in half of them (Table 1). The difference is even higher, reaching almost 25% in case the comparison is made only between school institutions where Roma students represent the majority.

Table 1. The percentage of rural environment obligatory education institutions, according to the frequency of non-schooling and the ethnic structure of the student population

- in % -

	Without non-educated students	Under 5% non-educated students	Over 5% non-educated students
Schools with less than 50% Roma	51.1	43.2	5.7
Schools with over 50% Roma	41.7	44.2	14.1
Total rural schools with Roma	49.8	43.2	7.0
Total rural schools	66.6	29.8	3.6

From the data presented above, we can observe that the percentage of education institutions which record a non-schooling rate of over 5% is almost double in the case of schools with Roma students, as compared to the whole system. If we take into account the schools with over 50% Roma students, the percentage of schools which record a non-schooling rate of over 5% is almost 4 times bigger than for the entire rural education system.

The percentage of non-schooling is different from one county to another (Table 1, Appendix 4). The counties with an increased percentage of school institutions with a non-schooling rate above 5% are the following: Constanta (23.1%), Ialomita (20%), Vrancea (17.6%), Iasi (14.5%), Brasov (14.3%), Covasna (14.1%), Sibiu (12.9%), Bacau (12.3%), Calarasi (12.2%), and Mehedinti (12%).

As in the case of non-schooling, the percentage of school institutions which record drop out situations is higher in the case of schools with Roma students, as compared to the whole system. The biggest difference is at the level of primary education: almost twice as big, if we compare the total number of schools with Roma students, and almost three times as big, in the case of schools with more than 50% Roma students (Table 2).

Table 2. The percentage of obligatory education institutions which recorded at least one case of drop out between 1997 – 1999, according to the ethnic structure of their student population

- in % -

	Drop out in primary cycle	Drop out in low secondary cycle
Schools with less than 50% Roma	30.3	41.7
Schools with over 50% Roma	46.1	69.1
Total rural schools with Roma	32.4	44.2
Total rural schools	17.2	40.0

For the distribution by counties, see Tables 2 and 3, Appendix 4.

The drop out situation in the obligatory education system for the school year 1998 – 1999 also shows differences between schools with Roma students and the whole system, according to the **intensity** of the phenomenon. Thus, in the case of schools with grade levels 1 – 4, the percentage of schools with Roma students, where drop out is over 5% per institution is twice as big as compared to the whole system (Table 3). The difference is also present at the level of schools with grades 1 – 8, but it is a little lower.

Table 3. Drop out rate for the total number of rural schools and schools with Roma students, according to the type of school, in the school year 1998 – 1999

- in % -

	Not at all	Under 2%	Between 2-5%	Over 5%
Total schools 1 – 4	90.8	4.0	3.3	1.9
Schools 1 – 4 with Roma	90.6	1.6	3.2	4.6
Total schools 1 – 8	55.2	30.7	11.4	2.7
Schools 1 – 8 with Roma	63.2	21.0	11.7	4.1

The general indicators selected by hypothesis in order to partially explain non-schooling and drop out (the population of the locality, the occupational structure of the population of that locality) do not contribute to a significant extent (Table 4, Appendix 4) to revealing the causes of these phenomena. The only observation we can make following the analysis of associating these indicators with the evaluated phenomena is that in larger localities, the percentage of non-schooling tends to increase, and the probability to find drop out cases in the education institutions from these localities is higher. In other words,

the smaller the community, the less probable to find non-schooling and drop out cases. The explanation may be given by the fact that in some of these localities with a low number of children, the interest of the teachers for the school participation of the children, but also for preserving their own jobs, is higher, and in this sense, their action is more efficient.

4.2. School participation determinants

Through the study's hypothesis it was considered – according to a multi-dimensional interpretation model – that the results of the students, school success or failure, have a series of determinants, and are influenced by multiple independent variables, among which:

- General socio-economic determinants, context variables, among which the development level of the localities; the locality size (in terms of number of inhabitants); the occupational structure of the population; the degree of isolation (distance to the nearest town), a.s.o.;
- School determinants;
- Individual characteristics of the students;
- Social and family determinants.

The action of the socio-economic context variables on school participation was already presented during this study, and below we intend to evaluate the influence of the last three variable categories mentioned above.

4.2.1. School determinants

Specialized literature includes a number of **indicators** and **school characteristics**, as well as **teacher efficiency criteria** in the category of school factors with implications on school success or failure.

The first category focuses on the financial resources and investments of the school, on the quality of the supplies and programs (the presence / absence of science laboratories, the number of books per student in the school library, the number of students who are going through a second chance education program, a.s.o.), and the second one, on a number of characteristics of the teachers: studies, job experience, age, mobility, socio- economic status, etc.

Apart from the characteristics mentioned above, certain authors (Coleman, 1966) also include among school variables "the social composition of the school environment" – which, although it contains the characteristics of the students and their family environment, determine variations at the level of performances, from one school to another – or school ethos characteristics. To these school variables, including those referring to the teachers, analyzed by the specialized literature, others are added – the qualified / unqualified teacher ratio, the stability or fluctuation of the teachers, their training courses, etc.

The present study took into consideration the following potential determinants of school participation, out of the school factors category:

- The material resources of the school (schooling spaces and supplies);
- The quality of the teachers (qualified / unqualified teachers), the stability of the teachers in the school, whether the teachers live in the proximity of the school or at a bigger distance (residence in the locality or in other localities);
- The educational offer;
- The school ethos.

4.2.1.1. Material resources

The material resources, the infrastructure and the school supplies directly influence school results and less directly, school participation. However, since, on the one hand, in many situations, school failure in the form of grade repetition (sometimes "repeated grade repetition") leads to drop out, and on the other hand, the inappropriate quality of the material resources affects the very quality of the educational process, below we will

present some of the aspects regarding the situation of the material resources, and evaluate the possible differences between rural environment schools, according to the ethnic structure of their student population. Certain explanations must, though, be given, with respect to material resources. Thus, as it was mentioned before, the analysis is based on information gathered during the *Rural Education in Romania* study, which was conducted in 1999 – 2000. With regard to material resources, during the period of time which passed until now, apart from possible renovations, small repairs or (re)decorations, an important number of rural schools benefited from the *School buildings rehabilitation program*, co-funded by the World Bank and the Social Development Fund. Also, last year, the *Rural education re-launch program* was conducted, and this allowed for a significant number of schools in 8 counties to be supplied with various tools, school material and school furniture; other programs concentrated on supplying school libraries. In these conditions, although the analysis will focus on certain indicators as having a bigger stability, we recommend certain precautions in interpreting some of data presented, due to the changes which occurred in this field, in the past two years.

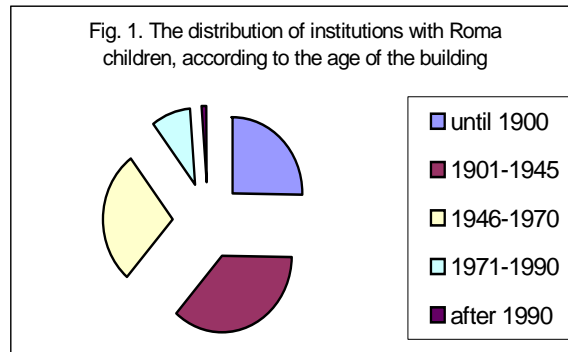
✓ **The school infrastructure**

One of the indicators used in the research on rural education in Romania to describe the education institutions was **the school construction year**. Using the same indicator to describe rural environment schools with Roma students, we notice that the percentage of buildings erected before 1900 is double in the case of schools with Roma students, as compared to the average number throughout the whole rural education system (25.4% as compared to 12.7%).

There are also, in this case, counties which are far from this situation. Thus, in the counties of Galati (100%) and Timis (97.5%) all or almost all school buildings with Roma students are over 100 years old.

Table 1. School construction year for the total number of rural schools and for rural schools with Roma students

Construction year	Until 1900	1900-1945	1945-1970	1970-1990	After 1990
Total number rural schools	12.7	35.7	37.1	12.9	1.6
Rural schools with Roma	25.4	36.0	28.3	9.1	1.2



Other counties where the percentage of schools with Roma Students, which were built before 1900, is high, are: Harghita (46%), Covasna 45.3%), Sibiu (44.1%), Caras-Severin (37.5%) and Arad (33%).

Another indicator used to evaluate the school infrastructure is **the most recent capital repairs year** (or, the construction year, in case the building did not undergo any capital repairs). The school buildings evaluation from the perspective of this indicator is shown in Table 2 (see Table 2, Appendix 5 for distribution by counties).

Table 2. The capital repairs year for the total number of rural schools and schools with Roma students

Capital repairs year (or construction year, if no capital repairs were made)	Until 1900	1900-1945	1945-1970	1970-1990	After 1990
Total number rural schools	4.4	15.1	24.3	27.3	28.9
Rural schools with Roma	3.7	8.6	23.6	33.1	30.9

We can notice that there are no notable differences with the exception of the fact that a large number of schools with Roma students underwent capital repairs between 1970 – 1990, which can be explained if we take into account the age of those schools.

In order to evaluate the school infrastructure, we used the 1999 survey and the **building status** indicator, which was measured, based on the estimates made by the respective institution's principals. In order to make a comparison, we are presenting below this indicator, in the case of schools with Roma students.

Table 3. The building status for the total number of rural schools and school with Roma students

Building status	Good	Needs small repairs	Needs major interventions
Total rural schools	15.0	49.7	35.2
Rural schools with Roma	13.4	47.7	39.

The data presented does not reflect a significant difference between the total number of schools in the rural education system and the schools with Roma students, according to this indicator, but it does emphasize the inappropriate status of a high percentage of school buildings in rural areas, even though some of them benefited from the *School buildings rehabilitation program*.

The school infrastructure precariousness is also discussed by the subjects interviewed:

Text box 1. Group interview Roma parents, Roma students – Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent: You saw the situation, ... the teacher himself added some planks ... there was dirt falling onto the heads of the children... The school is turning into a complete ruin.

Parent: You can see for yourself the status of the school. The school is demolished, it no longer exists, sir. It is very difficult during the winter, when the children go to school, we don't have shoes for them, to send them to school very day. It is difficult, and the school is up that hill... it is very difficult ... If there is any possibility to have a new school, a better building, we will agree, otherwise not... It's OK here, we studied here, too, and we spent our childhood here, but you can see what the situation is now...

Interview Operator: What do you think about this school?

Student: I think it is too old as compared to the one in Racova, where we are studying now; the classrooms are bigger. Here, the school benches are broken...

Providing schools with utilities represents another variable according to which we intended to compare the rural school infrastructure, as a whole, with the one of schools with Roma students. We included in the utility category the connection to the power

network, the water supply and the toilet. Table 4 presents the situation of utilities (for distribution by counties see Table 3, Appendix 5).

Table 4. Utilities for the total number of rural schools and school with Roma students

<i>Utilities</i>	Power	Own water supplies	Toilet in the school
Total rural schools	97.9	76.5	97.9
Rural schools with Roma	99.2	71.7	91.5

With the exception of power, in terms of utilities, the situation of schools with Roma students is poorer than the rural education system average. Thus,

- More than 5% of schools with Roma students above the system average do not have water supplies of their own;
- More than 6% of the schools with Roma students above the system average do not have a toilet inside the school;

The utility problems were also signaled during group interviews: "The material resources are rather precarious, everything is old, wrecked, we don't have any water supply here" (interview teacher – Rudarie, Gorj county)

✓ **School space per student**

An important indicator in assessing the infrastructure is **the school space provided to one student** or, in other words, **the classroom congestion degree**. In order to characterize schools with Roma students according to this indicator, we defined its values according to the current school building norms²²: normal limits between 1.8 – 2.1 square meters per student in the classroom and 2.7 – 3 square meters for each child in kindergarten. In Table 5 we are presenting the values of this indicator:

²² See *Rural education in Romania, MER – IES, Bucharest, 2000, pg. 71*

Table 5. The distribution of types of institutions, according to school space per student, for the total number of rural schools and schools with Roma students

	Under the minimum space (overload)	Within normal limits	Over maximum space (underload)
Kindergartens			
Total rural institutions	71.9	15.6	12.5
Rural institutions with Roma children	56.8	7.5	35.7
Schools 1-4			
Total rural schools	12.0	9.0	79.0
Rural schools with Roma students	23.0	9.6	67.5
Schools 1-8			
Total rural schools	6.3	9.9	83.8
Rural schools with Roma students	27.6	9.1	63.3
High schools and school groups			
Total rural schools	12.2	14.6	73.2
Rural schools with Roma students	27.9	14.2	58.0

With the exception of kindergartens, where the percentage of overloaded institutions with Roma children is lower than the system average, we can notice that, for the rest of the education levels, the percentage of overloaded institutions is higher in the case of those with Roma students, in comparison with the system average. In the case of pre-primary education, though, the participation of Roma children is also lower (almost 4 times lower).

Overload in the case of schools with Roma students, as compared to the system average is:

- Almost twice as big in schools with grades 1 – 4;
- Almost four times as big in schools with grades 1 – 8;
- Almost twice as big in the case of high schools, vocational schools and school groups.

The inappropriate conditions in schools, evaluated from the perspective of the analyzed indicator, are also part of the complaints of the interviewed subjects, both teachers and parents:

Text box 2. Interview parents, primary school teacher - Tigveni, Arges county

Parent: We are not content with the school, because it is very small. It is in a poor condition, it is not maintained. There are 3-4 children crowded in the same school bench.

Primary school teacher: We don't have enough classrooms. We have three classrooms, but mine is very small, you cannot walk through the bench rows..

Text box 3. Interview teacher - Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: The school space is extremely limited, the furniture is minimal – eight school benches and one table.

Text box 4. Interview teacher - M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Teacher: We don't have enough classrooms, we want to arrange some additional classrooms, the computer science laboratory, because this is one of our achievements, we switched the class profile from mathematics and physics, which no longer exists, to mathematics – computer science. The parents helped us buy 7 computers, therefore there was some money, the City Hall promised, paid, and we will receive additional computers, but I was told, I don't know, now your salaries are our responsibility, your buildings are our responsibility as well, but the gentleman is very decided and says it is an ordinance, not a law, and if I send money and make investments worth several million lei, the Court of Accounts will come and will charge everything to me. And I am thinking, where can I arrange the second computer science lab? Where can I move the classrooms, because the Church is also requesting the whole building?

✓ School spaces with special destination

Another aspect which differentiates the schools with Roma students from the whole rural education system and which we considered appropriate to mention, refers to the absence of the library in the case of 50.7% of the schools with Roma students, as compared to 34.3%, the corresponding percentage throughout the whole rural environment education system, regardless of the level of education it represents.

Text box 5. Group interview Roma students - Girceni, Vaslui county

Student: (we would like to) have our own library...the librarian from Girceni used to bring us (books), she promised we will have one, she came every Thursday, but she hasn't come in a long time.

Operator: So, she brings you books and you take them home?

Student: Yes, we read them, and then return them.

Operator: Are there enough books for all children?

Student: Yes.

Operator: Are there many students who want to read?

Student: Yes.

Operator: And then you exchange them among yourselves?

Student: No, she does not allow us to do that.

Operator: You must return them?

Student: Yes, and if we want, we can take home the book we like, but if we tear them apart, we must pay for them.

Operator: And since when she no longer came to bring you books?

Student: Since long ago.

Operator: And you didn't ask anyone why this happened?

Student: We asked our classroom master and he said that they needed (the books) there, in Girceni, they had a competition, and she didn't have time to come here.

Operator: But is she coming again?

Student: Yes, the classroom master said she would come next week.

Operator: Apart from storybooks, what other books do you chose?

Student: Ion Creangă.

Operator: You choose books related to what you learn in school? Do you choose the books yourselves?

Student: Yes.

Operator: Or does the Romanian language teacher tell you what to read?

Student: We chose them, we write little notes, we give them to the librarian, and she mixes them up, throws them onto the teacher's table, she writes down the number of the note and our name, and whoever is first chooses the book and who is last, and there are no more books...
She doesn't mind. It was her idea.

Operator: So, you want a library very much...

Student: Yes, very much.

✓ Furniture and teaching material supplies

Beyond items which are comparable from a quantitative point of view, there are several deficiencies with regard to the material supplies of the visited schools with Roma students (furniture, equipment, teaching materials) which are characteristic to a large number of rural environment schools (the schools which benefited from the *Rural education re-launch program* or other locally developed programs, such as CEDU 2000+, have a better situation, and received furniture, computers, copying machines, teaching materials a.s.o.).

All the categories of subjects investigated during individual and group interviews complain about these deficiencies, which are reflected in the quality of education:

Text box 6. Group interview Roma students - Rudarie, Gorj county

Student: We need more school benches, because, see, some of these are broken..

Text box 7. Group interview parents –Tigveni, Arges county

Parent: They should be provided with (the necessary) conditions, they should be given some rights in this school ... curtains, new paint, tables.

Text box 8. Interview school principal –Valcele, Covasna county

School principal: Supplies in the rural environment are the same as in the 70s...we barely managed...to get a computer, just one for all the school centers, and even that computer is used for financial issues.

Text box 9. Group interview Roma parents, Roma students - M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Teacher: We don't have any computers. And then, we talk about them, like we talk about Napoleon's physics, or about a space ship, it is very hard to talk about something you don't have... we don't have materials, we don't have a workshop, we don't have tools to process the wood, and then, we only do theoretical things, but what about practice?

Teacher: Minimal furniture – eight school benches and one table, teaching material created exclusively by us, and based solely on images...

Parent: The teacher says they don't have pens, notebooks, but what can we do if we don't have the money to buy these? All the children don't have books, the school didn't provide them.

Student: No compasses, no test tubes, no substances... We didn't conduct any experiments either..

The qualitative research emphasized the precariousness of the supplies, in terms of the following components:

- Old and deteriorated school furniture, in some cases, a second generation furniture, in the sense that the parents of the students also studied in the same school environment;
- The quasi-inexistence of teaching materials, except for those created by the teachers from their own resources; the little materials that do exist are old and almost unusable;
- The lack of laboratories, in most schools visited or, in the schools that have a space for this purpose, the lack of specific teaching material;
- The lack of school workshops (even in the case of new school buildings, constructed through the *School buildings rehabilitation program*) and / or of the appropriate supplies;

- The absence of sports halls in most schools visited;
- The small number of books in the school libraries and their considerable old age, in cases when schools do have a library;
- No computers, copying machines, fax machines in most schools visited, and in some cases, even no telephone;
- The insufficient number of schoolbooks, which causes 2 up to 6 children to study on the same textbook.

The investigations on the material resources of the rural environment education institutions, considered as a whole (including those with Roma students), emphasized a series of **school infrastructure problems**: many of the buildings are seriously degraded, some of them are over 100 years old, built out of improper construction materials, they don't have the necessary utilities (water, sewerage, modern heating sources, etc.), and as a result, some schools are operating without having a health permit.

Serious deficiencies regarding the **teaching materials**, the lack of modern teaching methods, very few and old books in the libraries of the schools, the inappropriate supplies of the school labs (where they do exist), the old, non-ergonomic school furniture a.s.o. add to the above problems. Although through the national programs developed, a part of these problems were improved, there are still many difficulties which the rural schools are facing, and, from certain points of view, especially those schools with Roma children.

4.2.1.2. Human resources

The quality of the human resources involved in education – which represent the main component of the education system – and the degree of involvement in the teaching activity of the staff, represent some of the factors which influence the school results of the students and their participation to the education process, which was also confirmed by a number of studies and researches.

The teacher variables analyzed in the present study refer to:

- The teacher deficit at the level of schools and according to school disciplines;

- The intensity of the fluctuation and commuting phenomena among teachers.

One hypothesis alleged that the qualified teacher deficit is higher, and fluctuation and commuting are more intense at the level of schools where most students are Roma, and this hypothesis was verified via the secondary analysis of the information contained in the database constructed during the rural education research.

The teacher categories the analysis operated on are the following²³:

- **Qualified teachers:** kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers, and professors whose qualification is certified by a specialized diploma, according to the job they hold;
- **Unqualified teachers:** teachers who do not have the necessary qualification for the job, which should be certified by a diploma;
- **Commuting teachers:** teachers who live in another locality than the one where the school where they teach is located;
- **Fluctuating teachers:** teachers who carry out their activity in the same educational institution for a period of time shorter than a complete education cycle.

✓ **The qualified teacher deficit**

The qualified teacher deficit was evaluated based on several indicators, namely:

- The percentage of rural environment education institutions, with student populations whose ethnic structure also includes Roma students, and which have at least one unqualified teacher;
- The percentage of unqualified teachers at the level of institutions which have the above mentioned characteristics;
- The percentage of unqualified teachers out of the total number of teachers in the rural environment, where there are schools with Roma children;
- The qualified teacher deficit, according to school disciplines.

²³ The teacher categories are those defined in the *Rural education in Romania; problems, conditions and development strategies* study, MER – IES, 2000

The first conclusion which emerges from the analysis of the data we have at our disposal – data which corresponds to the school year 1999 – 2000 – refers to the very high percentage of rural environment institutions that reported a qualified teacher deficit. This percentage is significantly higher in the case of institutions with a school population whose ethnic structure includes Roma children (Table 1). If we compare the total number of schools in the rural system, according to the type of institution, to those with Roma ethnic students, regardless of their percentage, the most significant difference is noticed at the level of schools with grades 1 – 4 – 67.1% as compared to 43.5%. The difference is even more obvious, and it exists in all types of schools, regardless of the education level they represent (but especially in schools with grades 1 – 4 and in kindergartens), if we use as terms of comparison the total number of institutions in the system and those which include more than 50% Roma children (majority or predominantly Roma schools). In this case, the respective difference is of approximately 30%: 70 – 75% as compared to 43 – 47%. The higher percentage of institutions with a qualified teacher deficit is noticed, though, at the level of schools with grades 1 – 8, regardless of the ethnic structure of the student population – over 96%; in this case, all institutions with a majority or predominantly Roma school population have at least one unqualified teacher.

Table 1. Institutions with a qualified teacher deficit*, by school types, according to the ethnic structure of the student population

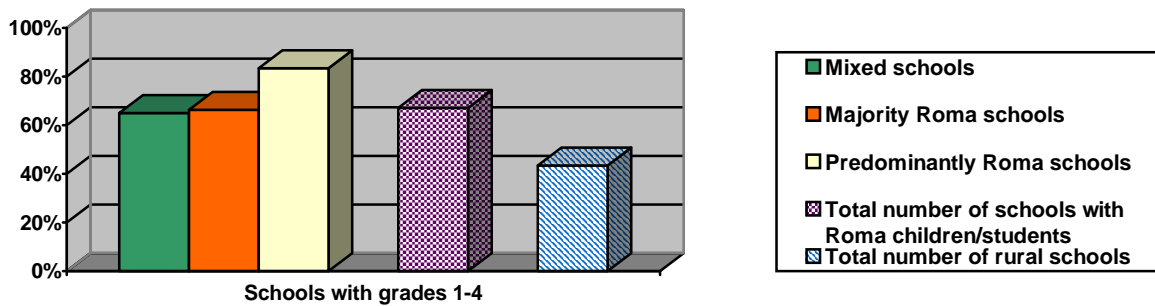
- in % -

Education institutions	Kindergartens	Schools with grades 1-4	Schools with grades 1-8
Mixed schools	40.5	65.0	98.0
Majority Roma schools	57.1	66.3	100
Predominantly Roma schools	83.3	83.5	100
Total schools with Roma children / students	42.0	67.1	98.1
Total rural schools	47.6	43.5	96.7

*In order to establish the respective percentages, we included in the unqualified teacher category those teachers who are qualified in other fields than the school discipline they teach, according to the regulations corresponding to the school year 1999 – 2000. It is estimated that, by not taking them into account, the percentage of institutions with a qualified teacher deficit is reduced by approximately 10%, in the case of obligatory education institutions and by 2% in the case of pre-school education. The difference between the

total number of rural environment institutions and those with Roma children is, nevertheless, also maintained in this case.

Figure 1. The percentage of education institutions with grades 1 – 4 with a qualified teacher deficit, according to the ethnic structure of the student population



Another relevant indicator for the qualified teacher deficit analysis is **the percentage of unqualified teachers per institution**. The values of this indicator, presented below (Table 2), reflect the same disadvantaged situation of the schools with Roma students, almost a quarter of their total number (31.4% for schools with majority Roma population and 58.3% for schools where ethnic Roma are predominant) having over 50% unqualified teachers; the corresponding percentage at the level of all rural environment obligatory education institutions is of approximately 9%. The disadvantage of the Roma students is even bigger, if we take into account the fact that some of them have school adaptation difficulties, special educational needs, lower interest for studying, which was induced by families that have reservations regarding the role of the school in the personal development of the children, a.s.o., and these difficulties are harder to recover by unqualified teachers, which do not possess the necessary competencies to a sufficient extent.

Table 2. The percentage of unqualified teachers at the level of obligatory education institutions, according to the ethnic structure of the student population²⁴

²⁴ The percentage of unqualified teachers per education institution was calculated according to the methodology used in *The Rural Education in Romania; Problems, Conditions and Development Strategies* study, after excluding schools with less than four teachers, a situation in which over 95% of the schools

	Not at all	Under 25%	25-50%	50-75%	Over 75%
Mixed schools	2.1	30.8	46.7	16.8	3.6
Majority Roma schools	0.0	16.4	52.2	22.4	9.0
Predominantly Roma schools	0.0	5.0	36.7	36.7	21.6
Total schools with Roma students	1.9	29.3	46.6	17.7	4.5
Total rural schools	14.5	48.8	27.9	6.8	2.0

Most obligatory education institutions with Roma children, which reported a qualified teacher deficit, are located in isolated localities, at longer distances from the city (over 25 km), where the population carries out exclusively agricultural activities, in localities which are not commune capitals and which, in general, have a lower development level (Table 2, appendix 6).

The same association pattern is noticed in the case of the analysis of all rural environment education institutions with a qualified teacher deficit. The explanation for this type of association is offered by the characteristics of the respective localities, which are less attractive for qualified teachers. The lower development level of these rural areas – which, most of the times, affects the infrastructure and school supply status – big distances to the city, transportation difficulties, etc. discourage qualified teachers in closer urban areas or in more developed rural localities from commuting and, even less, from settling in such localities, as the interviewed actors also noticed:

Text box 1. Interview school principal - Girceni, Vaslui

School principal: Our locality is isolated, the big distance to the first city, the lack of transportation... it is hard to bring qualified teachers here.

In order to complete the general image on the qualified teacher deficit, we also evaluated the **percentage of unqualified teachers** out of the total number of teachers in rural environment education institutions with ethnic Roma children (Table 1 and Table 3, Appendix 6, which presents the percentage of unqualified teachers, by counties). Once again, we notice that there is a big difference between the above-mentioned institutions

with grades 1 – 4 are currently in. As a consequence, the values of this indicator are estimated only for the obligatory education institutions with more than four teachers.

(less in the case of pre-school education) and the total number of rural environment schools, and this difference is of approximately 10% for primary school teachers and 20% for professors. The differences are even bigger if we use as a term of comparison the teachers (primary school teachers and professors) who work in the majority or predominantly Roma schools.

Table 3. The percentage of unqualified teachers at the level of education institutions, by staff categories, according to the ethnic structure of the student population

	Kindergarten teachers	Primary school teachers	Professors
Mixed schools	33.5	27.2	40.7
Majority Roma schools	45.2	39.2	48.3
Predominantly Roma schools	57.8	49.7	58.8
Total schools with Roma children / students	35.7	29.5	41.7
Total rural schools	33.5	20.3	21.9

The human resource quality evaluation of the institutions with Roma children also took into consideration the "**duration**" of the **qualified teacher deficit for certain school disciplines** ("disciplines not covered by qualified teachers") recorded at the level of education institutions (Table 4). Based on the information provided by the school managers, we notice that over 60% of them have had a "teacher deficit for a certain discipline, for over 2 years," which means twice as big as the one recorded for the whole number of low secondary and high secondary rural education institutions.

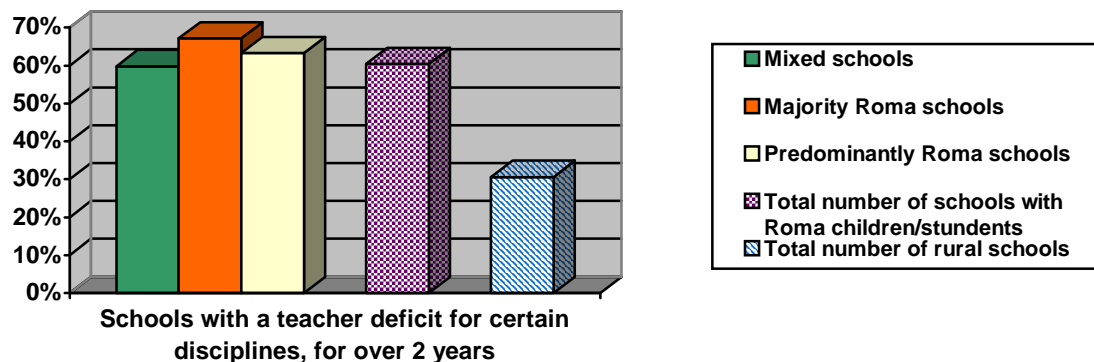
Table 4. The distribution of the (low and high) secondary education institutions, according to the duration of the qualified teacher deficit for various school disciplines and to the ethnic structure of the student population

- in % -

	There is no deficit	Deficit for certain disciplines in the last 2 years	Deficit for certain disciplines for more than 2 years	Deficit for most disciplines in the last 2 years	Deficit for most disciplines for more than 2 years
Mixed schools	12.7	21.0	59.8	0.6	5.9
Majority Roma schools	5.1	15.2	67.1	1.3	11.4
Predominantly Roma	2.8	4.2	63.3	0.0	28.2

schools					
Total schools with Roma students	11.9	20.0	60.4	0.7	7.1
Total rural schools	43.5	14.0	30.6	1.7	10.2

Figure 2. Education institutions with a qualified teacher deficit for certain disciplines for over 2 years, according to the ethnic structure of the student population



The qualified teacher deficit – which, in some schools occurs for more than three disciplines – is also found, especially in the case of modern languages, Romanian language, history, music, geography, drawing, physical education, biology, and others. These disciplines are reported to be between 30% and 10% of the total number of institutions with unqualified teachers, except for modern languages, which is reported to be of over 70% in the respective schools. Deficiencies of the human resource training quality in rural environment education are even more serious, since they appear in the case of teachers who teach disciplines for the low secondary education graduation ("capacitate") exam.

Text box 2. Interview school principal - Girceni, Vaslui county

School principal: We have qualified teachers. More than half of them are qualified and three are unqualified. My biggest concern is for primary education ...the Romanian language teacher is unqualified, and when the time for the capacitate exam comes...

This situation affects the quality of education, the school results of the students, which were obtained both during the schooling period, as well as at the elementary school

graduation exam, and it places rural environment students, especially ethnic Roma students, in a disadvantaged position as compared to urban environment students, and the children are aware of this disadvantage:

Text box 3. Group interview Roma parents - Girceni, Vaslui

Parent: Our teachers are good teachers...but some Romanians, who can afford it, send their children to town ... maybe the teachers there are better... Mine is in the seventh grade... I would send him to town as well if I could afford it...

Text box 4. Group interview Roma students - Girceni, Vaslui

Student: We would like a music teacher to teach us the musical notes... and to play instruments and to sing...The one we have does not teach us the musical notes.... I heard that they do so in town ...

In some cases, apart from the lack of qualification in a certain domain, parents or children complain about either the inappropriate training of the teachers ("*I was not a retained student... my mother pulled me out of school and said that she would re-enroll me together with my other sister, this primary school teacher is not good enough... and she re-enrolled me later...*" – group interview with Roma children, Bucharest), or about the implication and low interest (even in the case of qualified teachers) for their own activity and for the education of the children:

Text box 5. Group interview Roma parents - Bucharest

Parents: There are teachers who don't care at all. My daughter is in the second grade, and I am not satisfied with her teacher. My child comes from school, I start doing homework with her, and she says she didn't understand anything... I went to the school the other day... the children were in recess and were locked in the classroom... they were kicking the door trying to get out of there. The teacher was in the teachers' room. I told her Miss, the children are going to break the door... She said, ten more minutes, and I waited for her for 20 minutes at the door and I was screaming at the children locked in the classroom. So, there are teachers who do not care...

Realizing that they cannot provide help for the school activity of their children ("*this lady or that one, who don't have any education, they cannot help the children*" – group interview Roma parent, Bucharest), Roma parents think that the teachers are the determining factors for the school success (or failure) of their children: "*my little girl is the best in her class since she started school... she had a very good primary school teacher... so, **the teachers are the key***" – group interview Roma parent, Bucharest).

Although primary school teachers and professors think that the transfer of the entire responsibility of the education of children onto the school represents a counter-productive attitude and is less beneficent to the children, most of them are aware that such attitudes are justified by the limits and difficulties of the parents in offering minimal help for conducting school tasks, in supporting the education of the children, taking into account the low education level of most of the parents.

In agreement with the parents, the interviewed teachers and managers of schools with a qualified teacher deficit accuse just as much this situation and propose that the main solutions be "to grant facilities to attract qualified teachers" and "to improve access to continuous training programs".

✓ **Teacher fluctuation**

Teacher fluctuation was also considered a possible factor which may influence the results of the students and even their school participation, an influence which is due to:

- the insufficient knowledge of their students, in the case of teachers with low stability in a certain education institution, which would allow them to adapt their teaching methods to the characteristics of the children;
- the additional efforts of the students to adapt and re-adapt to the teaching style and the personality of the teachers, with possible repercussions on their school results;
- the poor cooperation with the family, as a consequence of the instability of the teachers in the school, and others.

The data based on which the dimensions of this phenomenon were evaluated, which is presented below, (Table 5), allows for the following conclusions:

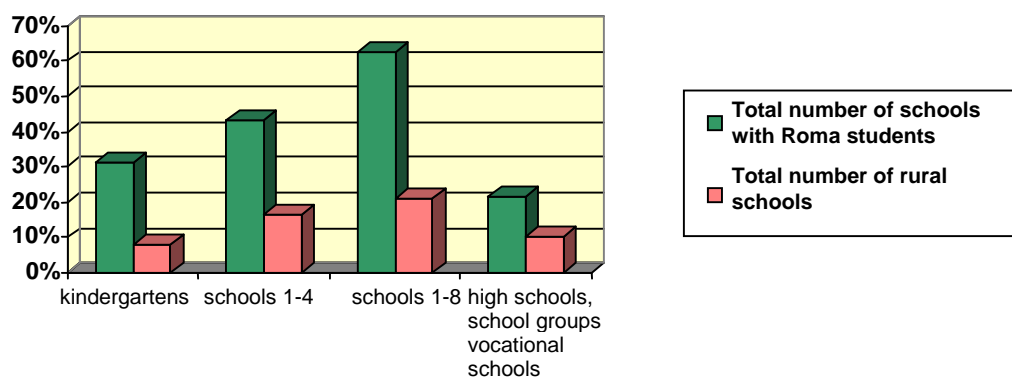
- teacher fluctuation is present in all rural environment education institutions, but especially in the schools with grades 1 – 8, which also have a more numerous staff;
- the frequency of the phenomenon – assessed according to the percentage of institutions where it is recorded – is much higher in the case of institutions with Roma children, and this percentage is more than three times bigger for pre-primary and obligatory education institutions and more than twice as big for secondary education institutions.

Table 5. The distribution of the institutions with fluctuating teachers, by types of institutions, according to the ethnic structure of the student population

- in % -

	Kindergartens	School with grades 1-4	Schools with grades 1-8	High schools, school groups, vocational schools
Mixed schools	29.8	41.3	61.9	21.6
Majority Roma schools	39.6	50.6	66.7	25.0
Predominantly Roma schools	45.9	59.7	76.0	18.2
Total schools with Roma students	31.3	43.1	62.7	21.7
Total rural schools	7.9	16.7	21.0	10.1

Figure 3. The distribution of institutions with fluctuating teachers, by types of institutions, according to the ethnic structure of the student population



Teacher fluctuation is associated, just like in the case of the qualified teacher deficit, with certain characteristics of the localities. Thus, fluctuation is bigger in institutions located in isolated, poor localities, with a lower development level (Quartile 1) and in those which are not commune capitals (Table 3, Appendix 6). Such localities do not "retain" qualified teachers, and are of no interest to the teachers, to get settled in the respective areas.

The negative effects of teacher fluctuation are revealed both by the interviewed teachers and school principals, from the perspective of the difficulties to create a stable staff and an ethos which encourages the school success of the students (*"we have a small staff, which changes from one year to another and it is difficult to really have a team to work with for the good of the children"* – interview school principal, Girceni, Vaslui county), as well as by the parents, who focus on the difficulties created by this phenomenon for their children (*"if this year he has one teacher, the next year, another one, it is very difficult for the children... each teacher has his own demands, each has his own teaching method.... And the children adapt with difficulty... what can they learn anymore?"* – group interview Roma parents, Girceni, Vaslui county).

The same actors consider that teacher fluctuation is more frequent in the rural environment, and creates an additional disadvantage to children who reside in those areas – especially in the case of institutions located in isolated localities, with transportation difficulties, with a poor population, a low economic development – where qualified teachers, who do not reside in the respective localities, use any opportunity to leave. The phenomenon reaches an even higher level – as the interviewed subjects think, and whose assertions are also confirmed by the above-mentioned data – in institutions with majority Roma students. To the above mentioned causes, we may also add, in such cases – as even certain teachers state – the difficulties they face when working with students who have special educational needs, school adaptation problems, a low interest in school, as well as the difficulties referring to the cooperation with the parents of these children, since some of them have reservations toward the school.

Some of the solutions indicated by the school managers to reduce the dimensions of the fluctuation phenomenon are similar to those referring to the qualified teacher deficit: granting facilities to encourage stability and attracting qualified teachers, improving access to training and increased focus, during these programs, on developing the remedial competencies of children with special needs, of those with minor psycho-intellectual development delays, which are mainly the result of an insufficient stimulation, etc. Other solutions refer to offering job tenure to qualified substitute teachers, a measure which

could encourage stability, and "investing the school principal with the power to select and employ his own staff."

✓ **Teacher commuting**

The commuting phenomenon has negative effects primarily on the teachers, especially in rural localities where there are transportation difficulties due to the precarious infrastructure, the inadequate timetable, or the absence of transportation means, which generates fatigue, low availability to get involved in school problems, and in certain cases, it even affects the teaching activity. All of these have consequences on the school results of the students and even on the school participation of the children, due to the low availability of the teachers and their lack of time to develop relationships with the parents, the community, and other institutions, in order to prevent non-schooling and drop out.

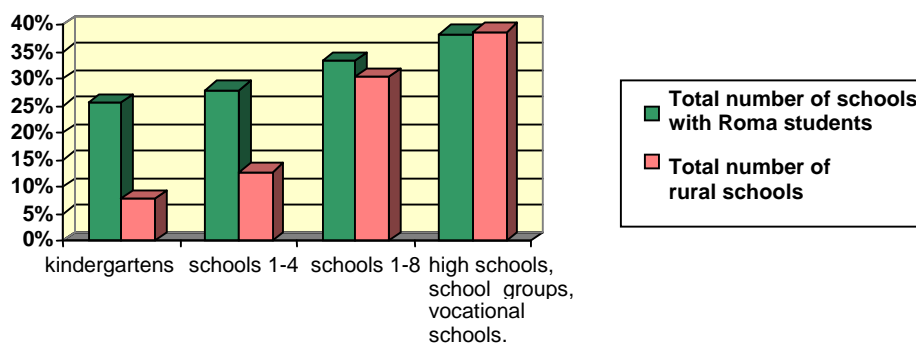
By analyzing the statements of the school managers, we noticed that the phenomenon occurs more frequently in the case of school with grades 1 – 8 or in the high secondary education (Table 6). Unlike these, commuting is less present in kindergartens and in primary schools, probably also due to the fact that the percentage of unqualified teachers who work at those respective levels is higher, and most of them are locals. In connection to this phenomenon, the difference between the total number of rural environment institutions and those with Roma children, by school types, is more increased, though, in the case of pre-primary and primary education institutions.

Table 6. The distribution of institutions according to the presence of commuting teachers and the ethnic structure of the student population, by types of institutions

- in % -

	Kindergartens	School with grades 1-4	Schools with grades 1-8	High schools, school groups, vocational schools
Mixed schools	25.7	28.4	33.0	40.6
Majority Roma schools	21.4	21.8	31.7	17.6
Predominantly Roma schools	26.6	29.5	42.3	30.8
Total schools with Roma students	25.5	28.0	33.3	38.4
Total rural schools	7.8	12.7	30.5	38.8

Figure 4. The distribution of institutions according to the presence of commuting teachers and the ethnic structure of the student population, by types of institutions



Unlike fluctuation and qualified teacher deficit, commuting has an opposite tendency, and it is usually encountered in the case of institutions located in big localities (with a large number of inhabitants), closer to urban areas and in commune capital localities (Table 4, Appendix 6). These localities attract not only teachers (most of the time qualified) from other rural environments, but also from towns located in the neighborhood, due to the easier commuting conditions provided: infrastructure, transportation, possibly an adequate timetable for transportation, a.s.o.

The issues discussed during group interviews, both by professors and by parents, regarding teacher commuting, focused less on the repercussions of the phenomenon on the students, and more on the difficulties faced due to the costs involved, or the difficult conditions in which commuting takes place, as well as the effects it causes on teachers: fatigue, possibly a lower implication in school activities, a.s.o.

Text box 6. Interview teacher –Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: We also had a commuter in our school. He didn't last long. Here, transportation conditions are very rough, especially during winter... Sometimes the bus gets stuck in the snow and it doesn't work again for days... And, on top of it all, the City Hall didn't have money to reimburse him.

Text box 7. Group interview Roma parents –Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent: Yes, I remember... We had here a teacher coming from another village, closer to the city... He was freezing, the poor man, in the bus... I saw him once....

To the problems analyzed above, regarding the qualified teacher deficit, fluctuation and commuting, a number of difficulties referring to **teacher lifelong training** can be added, some of which were mentioned by the interviewed school managers, as follows:

- The rather more difficult access of rural environment teachers to different professional training programs, especially those teachers located in more isolated rural localities;
- The difficulties to attend training courses, due to the collateral costs involved;
- The inadequate content of the training courses for issues specific to the rural environment;
- The low training programs offer on developing competencies which allow teachers to adapt their teaching methods to the characteristics of certain school population categories at risk, among which are some of the Roma children;
- The absence of centers / training courses at local level, etc.

*

* *

As it can be seen from the data presented, the qualified teacher deficit represents a problem faced by many rural environment education institutions with ethnic Roma children, and the inappropriate quality of the training of an important percentage of the teachers could have important consequences throughout the education of the children. Thus, a high percentage of children in pre-school education face the risk that the qualified teacher deficit may decrease the role and functions of this education segment: school readiness preparation, decrease of adaptation difficulties, remedial function, in the case of children with special educational needs, etc. The consequences of a low training of the human resources is also seen in the obligatory education, especially in the school results and even in the participation to basic education. In this sense, it is significant that the magnitude of drop out and non-schooling is much lower in institutions which have over 90% qualified teachers, as compared to schools where the corresponding percentage is of only 50% or less (Table 5, Appendix 6).

The conclusion is pertinent, if we take into account the fact that unqualified staff has less competencies to conduct quality teaching activities, which are, at the same time,

attractive for the students, competencies which would allow the prevention of school inadaptability and facilitate the gradual introduction of the students to school tasks, and competencies on adapting the teaching process to the student's characteristics, thus allowing, in certain cases, the reduction of the cultural disadvantage which the child brings from his family, etc.

Drop out and non-schooling associate with other teacher variables, namely the degree of stability of the teachers in the school, and the distance between the teacher's residence and the place where the school is located (residence within the same locality as the school, or in another locality) – (Table 5, Appendix 6). In this case, the explanation is that, often, parents show more confidence, respect and openness to teachers who live in the same locality as the parents, or who have a bigger degree of stability in the school. The cases in which parents prevent their children from going to school, are, possibly, less frequent, and the close relationships they have with the teacher diminish their reserved attitudes toward the education process. Moreover, parents encourage the school participation of the children and check on their school attendance frequency, and this was confirmed during group discussion with the parents:

Text box 8. Group interview Roma parents –Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent: ... I send my child to school ...the teacher is from our village, he is one of us. I would feel ashamed not to send my child to school... we know the teacher, he knows us... I couldn't face the teacher if I did that... I even ask the child if he went to school, I ask the teacher as well when I see him or when I stop by the school... but this happens seldom. I don't check the child's homework, I'm not good at that...

Teachers residing in the same locality with their own students show openness and are closer to their students, due to their better understanding of Roma children, of their capacities, their problems and their families for several years.

Text box 9. Interview teachers –Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: ... I've known him since he was little... I've known him and his family... they have many problems... they don't have clothes, or food for him. Occasionally, we bring them food and school stationery... The parents are sending him to school... they are ashamed not to do it, we have been knowing them fore a long time... I really wish he could go to a high school or a vocational school. I told the parents that this would be the only way for him to have a better life. They listen to me, but they don't have the money to send him to the city...

The information we have, although it does not allow for generalizations, seems to emphasize the existence of a much closer relationship in the rural localities, especially in isolated ones, between teachers, on the one hand, and Roma children and their parents, on the other, as compared to urban localities or localities situated in the proximity of towns. It is possible that rural environment teachers, from smaller communities, are aware and show more understanding to the problems faced by Roma families and children, which results in adopting non-discriminatory attitudes: "no, the teacher does not make any difference if you are a Gypsy or a Romanian... he treats everyone well..." – group interview Roma students, Girceni, Vaslui county.

In the city, though, at least according to the statements of some Roma parents, teachers (but also Romanian children, as well) tend to have a reserved attitude toward Roma children: "occasionally they beat us, they call us Gypsy..." – group interview Roma children, Bucharest; "they moved my daughter into another class, a Gypsy class... I went to the class master and told her to move my daughter back... I don't care that they give her a free meal in that class..." group interview Roma parents, Bucharest. In this case, though, the increased sensitivity of the interviewed person makes it difficult to distinguish between a discriminatory attitude of the teachers and the interpretation given by the person to the situation described. However, the same example draws attention to the precautions we must take in developing different programs for the Roma: even if these program have generous objectives (as in the above-mentioned case, when the target was the stimulation of school participation by granting a free meal at school), the program implementation method (distributing Roma children in separate classes) can hurt their sensitivity, can raise the suspicions of the ethnic Roma, and this may compromise the program results.

The difference reported between the two residence environments is determined both by the distinct characteristics of the rural, respectively, urban communities, as well as by the relatively different status of the teachers in the two types of communities: in the rural environment, the teacher still seems to maintain a higher status, which is appreciated and respected by the other community members, and this situation, at least within certain limits, encourages the school participation of the children.

From the presentation of the human and material resources situation in education institutions, we can see their possible influence on school participation, although, as it will be seen later during the analysis, there are multiple factors, variables, and individual, social, family, and community characteristics which the school and the teachers either cannot control, or cannot influence to a sufficient extent as to determine the participation to education of all children. On the other hand, the training level, the competencies of a certain number of teachers, and even the degree of availability and implication reduce the school's capacity to take action in this direction.

4.2.1.3. The educational offer

In order to provide equal opportunities, adapting the educational offer to the specific needs of the school population which belongs to national minorities, represented an important objective during the reform of the education system. One of the problems targeted by the present study was the extent to which different characteristics and opportunities of the educational offer – forms of organizing the education process, the school's curricular offer, providing teachers who belong to the Roma ethnic group / speakers of Romani language etc. – influence the participation to education and the school success of Roma children.

✓ Organizing separate classes / schools for Roma children

In conformity with the legal framework, at the level of the Romanian education system, there are classes taught in the languages of the national minorities. For the ethnic Roma, there is no education with full teaching in their native language, and education policies promote the principle of integrating Roma ethnic children in education institutions designed for the majority population. The present investigation showed, in fact, that most Roma parents and teachers reject the idea of **organizing a Romani language education system** or even the idea of **organizing separate schools or classes for the Roma**.

On the one hand, implementing such measures is perceived as a segregation method, based on ethnic criteria, which may have negative results on the school evolution of the

children and on their social integration. Parents think that an education system designed especially for Roma children does not have the same quality as the one designed for the majority population, because most of the qualified teachers refuse to teach in schools with Roma population. Also, they claim that the socializing model of children in school must correspond to the social context in which they live; thus, the cohabitation of several ethnic groups in the same community presumes the inclusion of children from different ethnic groups in the same school. The cases in which special classes for Roma students were organized are criticized, although teachers motivate that "it was just an accident," and the criterion was not ethnic affiliation, instead it was the school results.

Text box 1. Group interview Roma parents – Bucharest and Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Mediator: What is your opinion, would it be good for Roma students to study separately, in classes or schools especially designed for them?

Parent 1: No, in any case, no, that would be discrimination... it would even be ... there was such a school or class here in the neighborhood, and the children were very marginalized. I do not agree with that. I don't conceal the fact that I am a Gypsy, but I want the children to live as they did until now, like in the neighborhood, not separately.

.....

Parent 2: No, not that! If we give them an education, it has to be a good one! If they live in the same place, children have to be the same!

Parent 3: They are all children. If it were a Gypsy school, then the education would have been different, and we wouldn't like that!

On the other hand, the integration of Roma children in mass education schools is considered to be an efficient method to recover the possible social and cultural disadvantages of the children, in comparison with the culture promoted by the school (among which, those generated by not knowing the Romanian language at the time of enrollment in school), a way to stimulate the learning motivation, a cross-cultural education method needed in a community where there are several ethnic groups and also, a method to become aware of the fact that everyone is "the same".

Text box 2. Group interview Roma parents - Rudarie, Gorj county

Mediator: What do you think it's best for your children: to study in separate classes, or together with Romanian children?

Parent 1: Together. If they see that the Romanian children are studying, they will study too, they will become civilized by imitating the Romanian children.

Parent 2: At the school down the valley there are two or three Gypsy girls and the rest are Romanian girls.

And the Romanian girls help the Gypsy girls. We are very happy.

Parent 3: He sees that this one is learning, that one is learning too, and he says "I am going to learn, too."

Text box 3. Group interview Roma students - Bucharest

Mediator: Would you like to study in a school with only Roma students, or in a regular one?

Student 1: No, not only with Roma students. I would prefer to be in a school where there are also Romanian children. Maybe I can learn something from them... or they can learn something from us. I would become friends with them.

Student 2: We thought that Romanians were more educated. But, even though I made a mistake once in a while, they also did. And we found out that they make mistakes as well...

If most Roma parents choose the integration of their children in the regular system, in some cases Roma students express their wish to study separately from the Romanian students: "*Let us all be united, only us, because we know our way*". (group interview Roma students, Rudarie, Gorj county). They accuse the fact that, in mixed ethnic communities, Roma students are sometimes marginalized – "*They are seated in the last row and are left alone, provided that they are being nice*" (interview teacher, Rudarie, Gorj county) – and criticized for the way they dress, for their behavior or for their weak school results. Even some of the teachers think that Roma students should study in separate classes; they think that, since the education system evaluation is still conducted according to the group norm, and less according to performance standards, and Roma children come to the school with certain social and cultural disadvantages, which do not allow them to have the same learning rhythm as the other children, they "*can become retained students, all of them*" or drop out of school (interview teacher, Polovragi, Gorj county), if they are integrated in regular classes.

The differences of opinion expressed by the people investigated lead to the conclusion that both options – the integration of Roma children in schools designed for the majority population or in separate classes – may result in low school participation, if the specific of each and every situation is not being taken into account (the type of Roma community, the school characteristics etc.).

- ✓ **Developing alternative education methods, adapted to the educational needs of Roma children** (second chance education classes, low-frequency education, summer schools etc.)

Teachers who work in schools with an ethnic Roma population think that organizing second chance education methods is absolutely necessary, at the beginning of the school period. This measure is needed because a large number of Roma children do not attend kindergarten, which causes adaptation difficulties: difficulties to understand the learning tasks, because they do not know the Romanian language, problems to adapt to school discipline, difficulties to relate with other children. In this sense, certain schools have already organized intensive tutorial programs and free consultations for children with weak school results. The teachers also support the idea of organizing alternative education methods (summer schools, compacted education, low frequency education) for at-risk Roma children, because of their limited number of days in attendance or the learning difficulties, or for those who are beyond the legal school age and cannot complete their obligatory education.

Unlike these teachers, many parents reject the idea of introducing such alternative methods of organization. They think that *"this is no longer a school, they will not learn anything there"*, *"as it is, they go to school very seldom because we don't have the necessary means to send them to school"* (group interview Roma parents, Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county) and that the results of the students will be very weak, taking into account that the time allotted for homework, at home, is often very limited, and the study conditions provided by the family are inappropriate. Therefore, parents would rather have the school organized in as semi-boarding school fashion, including a free meal offered at lunch time, and homework preparation programs at school, after hours, under the supervision of specialized staff, who could provide the pedagogical support needed by Roma children.

✓ **Projecting the curricular offer in order to capitalizing on the Roma ethnic cultural characteristics**

The curricular offer of the school may represent another determinant factor for school participation. Through the curricular reform, school disciplines especially designed children who belong to national minorities were introduced in the **framework education plan**: the Native Language and Literature and the History and Traditions of the National

Minorities. In institutions / departments where classes are taught in a minority language, the study of the native language is included in the core school curriculum, 7 – 8 hours per week in the first and second grades, and 3 – 4 hours per week in the other grades; in institutions / departments where classes are taught in Romanian, the Native Language is considered a discipline included in the school curriculum, taught 3 – 4 hours per week. The History and Traditions of the Minorities is included in the curriculum, based on the decision of the school, at the level of the sixth and seventh grade, and it is taught in the native language. Also, regulations stipulate the opportunity that Religion be studied in the languages of the national minorities. Apart from the number of hours included in the core school curriculum, schools with a national minority population may allocate from **the curriculum decided at school level**, additional number of hours for study of the Minority Native Language and History.

The teaching of the Romani language, as a native language, has several characteristics, determined by certain factors (the migration of Roma families from one locality to another, during a school year, the qualified Romani teacher deficit, etc.). As a result, regulations include specific provisions: the study of the Romani language may begin in any study year, or in any moment of the school year, without being conditioned by having a stable residence in the respective locality; the teaching of Romani language classes may be conducted, in the absence of qualified teachers, by Roma high school graduates; conducting mid-term exams and the elementary school graduation exam for the Romani language is not compulsory, etc.

The curriculum proposed by the Romani language school programs focuses on: developing progressively the oral and written communication competencies, becoming familiar with the spiritual values of the Roma ethnic group, and approaching contents from the perspective of cross-culturality. Unlike other native languages, the teaching of Romani in the first year of study includes only objectives which are intended to form and develop oral communication abilities, while writing starts in the second year of study.

In the past years, the number of schools which have included Romani language classes in their educational offer has increased significantly. Group discussions with Roma students and parents, as well as interviews with teachers who teach in schools with an ethnic

Roma population, showed that there are different opinions regarding the teaching of Romani in school.

Some of the persons included in the surveys showed a powerful motivation for the study of the Romani language, caused both by intrinsic reasons, as well as by exterior causes. On the one hand, the native language is considered a defining element for ethnic identity. On the other, knowing the language is considered a necessity, because it ensures good communication within the community to which the speaker belongs, or with other communities which belong to the same ethnic group. The option to study Romani was expressed both by people who come from compact ethnic communities, who use the native language at home, as well as by those who mainly use Romanian in day-to-day life.

Text box 4. Group interview Roma students - Bucharest and Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Mediator: Would you like to be taught Romani in school?
Students (all of them): Yes.
Mediator: Have you had such classes in school, until now?
Student 1: There was a teacher, but she only taught her own class. Now, there is another lady in her place, and we want to enroll there.
Student 2: Yes, it was nice. But the lady is gone now. I would like to study Romani some more, it is our language. There are differences between us, there are several kinds of Roma, there are bear-tamers, and tinsmiths, and spoon-makers... We can't even communicate among ourselves... My family is a family of Romanianized Gypsies; and we don't speak Romani too much, although we are Gypsy; my mother knows the Romani language, my father does not speak it very well, therefore we don't have any reasons to speak this language at home. But I would like to learn it.
.....
Mediator: What language do you use at home?
Student 3: More Romani, than Romanian. But Romani words are most of them like Romanian words...
Student 4: I am both Romanian, and Gypsy and Turkish. In my home they use Romani also, but it is different than what my colleagues speak.
Mediator: Would it be useful if you had Romani language classes ?
Student 5: Yes, because even at home we speak more our language, and it would be beneficent. It would be easier. And we would understand each other better.

Text box 5. Group interview Roma parents – Bucharest and Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Mediator: What would be your opinion if Romani were taught in school?
Parent 1: I wouldn't be against it, because we are Gypsies, and as long as the language exists, it must be

known, I would like that... even though I don't speak Romani well, despite the fact that I am a Gypsy... In my house they used to speak Romani, and I understand more than I can speak; I can't have an entire dialogue in Romani, I speak more Romanian. And I would like that my children learn the Romani language.

Parent 2: I know the language, but my children don't. Some of them do, and children must know the language.

.....

Mediator: What is your opinion?

Parent 3: I am both Romanian and Gypsy... This is who we are, I am proud of being a Gypsy.

Parent 4: I would like that, and together with the child, I would also study from the schoolbook, to enrich my Romani vocabulary. Yes, I would like that, and it would help both me and the child.

From a different perspective, parents from other communities think that the study of the Romani language in school does not represent a necessity. Some of the parents who know Romani and speak this language, think that the knowledge acquired by the child in the family is enough, and that it isn't necessary for the Romani language to become a academic subject in the school curriculum; they believe that only the study of the Romanian language can provide a good social integration for Roma children. Just like them, a number of parents from the communities where Romani is not spoken, do not perceive it as an ethnic identity element.

Text box 6. Group interview Roma parents – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county; Tigveni, Arges county; Rudarie, Gorj county

Mediator: You said that the children don't study your language at school, but would you like them to?

Parent 1: They know the language, we are an ethnic group who knows its language, but the most appropriate way would be to study in Romanian. Among Roma children there are children who didn't know Romanian when they were enrolled in school, they didn't know how to speak Romanian correctly, because they have been living in this neighborhood. And it was really difficult for them...

.....

Parent 2: Romanian, too, because we don't know another language... We don't know Romani.

Parent 3: We can barely manage to translate into this Romanian language, let alone they would learn another language... Romani.

.....

Parent 4: Why should they learn Romani? Romanian, madam! We won't understand what they say! We use a dialect, but we don't speak Romani.

Even some of the teachers think that the study of Romani is not a necessity in communities where this language is not used in the family, and they believe that introducing Romani language classes would do nothing but make the curriculum of Roma students too difficult.

Apart from Romani language classes, the schools with an ethnic Roma population included in their curriculum, starting with the school year 1999 – 2000, **Roma minority History and Traditions** classes. The objectives of the disciplines included in the school curriculum are: knowing the historical truth about the ethnic Roma group and the characteristics of the relationships between the Roma, on Romanian territory with a majority Roma population, promoting confidence and respect at a cross-ethnic level, capitalizing on the documentary and ethnographic sources which refer to the history of the Roma minority.

The interest for this discipline is fairly high, both at the level of Roma students, as well as at their parents: *"let us know how we were born as a nation, how it used to be before, where we are coming from..."*, *"mother and father occasionally tell us about this, but it's no good, it's not like at school, where you learn more"* (group interview Roma students, Valcele, Covasna county). Also, teachers who teach in schools with Roma students think that the Roma minority history and traditions classes are necessary because they provide "the legitimacy" of ethnic identity and help the children build more confidence in their abilities.

Another important aspect from the perspective of the curricular offer of schools with Roma population, which is considered to be a powerful motivational factor for the school participation of the children, is **to provide a minimal professional training**. Group discussions identified several possibilities of achieving a minimal professional training for this school population:

- establishing vocational schools or apprenticeship schools, apart from elementary schools with an ethnic Roma population;
- acquiring a pre-professional training by adding optional packages in the curriculum decided at school level, at the level of grades seventh to ninth (the observation and orientation cycle), while generalizing the obligatory education to nine years.

Parents and teachers are proposing that, in places where the Roma communities are still practicing their traditional professions, these should be adapted to the current labor market context and included in the school curriculum; this option provides the possibility

to capitalize on the competencies which the Roma children have already acquired in the family environment. Another proposal refers to developing optional packages focused on training for professions which are requested on the local labor market.

We consider that providing a minimal professional training for Roma students during obligatory education or outside elementary schools, is very necessary, since most of their families live in precarious socio-economic conditions and cannot financially support them to continue their studies. Apart from capitalizing on the Roma ethnic cultural characteristics, this offer increases the opportunities of socio-professional integration of Roma children, and thus becomes a motivation for their participation to education.

✓ **Organizing extra-curricular activities**

Extra-curricular activities are often given strong educational values; they represent alternative forms of organization to a classical lesson, where new subjects can be discussed and new types of activities can be organized with the students. Organizing extra-curricular activities designed for Roma students or activities which would involve them, together with children who belong to other ethnic groups, represents an efficient method of cross-cultural education, a method to attract them to school and to involve them, as well as their parents.

National programs for extra-curricular activities for the Roma were developed at the level of the Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with different NGOs: Romani language student camps, cross-cultural education student camps, national Romani language competitions.

The group discussions conducted during the present study emphasized that, at the level of many school investigated, extra-curricular activities for the Roma had been organized – field trips, visits, student camps, Roma habits and traditions competitions, festivities, experience exchanges with other schools with Roma students, other extra-curricular activities – with the financial support of the local authorities or of various NGOs. These activities often involved the families of the children.

Many times, though, extra-curricular activities are limited only to the festivities organized at the end of the school year, or to those for various celebrations. Organizing visits and field trips is more difficult, since the budget resources of the schools are low, and the material situation of the Roma families does not allow them to provide financial support to their children to participate in these activities. Also, some of the teachers are commuters, they don't stay in school after classes, and they don't have the necessary time to organize other types of activities with the children.

Both the children and the parents appreciated positively the extra-curricular activities. Even though, at the beginning, some of the parents expressed some reserves toward certain activities (for instance, sending the children to student camps, unaccompanied by someone from the family), they became aware of the importance of these activities for the integration of the children in the school community. Many of them stated that these events are the only opportunities for their children to get out of the community, to see other places, and to have other educational experiences than those they have in school.

Teachers think that extra-curricular activities are opportunities to achieve cross-cultural education and to capitalize on competencies other than those required during classes (for instance, the artistic talent of Roma children). Also, they stated that the participation of Roma children to these activities results in improved relationships with the other children, better adaptation to the school ethos, as well as an increase of the motivation of children to study. Therefore, the importance of organizing such activities and the need to involve Roma children in them is highly supported.

Text box 7. Interview teachers - Girceni, Vaslui county

Mediator: Apart from acquiring knowledge, do you think other competencies and abilities of the children should be capitalized on?

Teacher: I told you about the little actor... there are Roma children who show a lot of talent. I think there should be more extra-curricular activities for them. We, as teachers, we discover their talent, but we must also develop it, and even channel it, in the future. They [Roma children] sing beautifully, they dance... they are thus trying to express their personality. And we must take this into account...

✓ **Developing an educational offer for Roma parents**

Apart from the educational offer aimed at the school-age population, developing programs for Roma parents represents an efficient way of increasing their interest in education, and, implicitly, of increasing the school participation of the children.

Group discussions with Roma parents emphasized that most of them are aware of the importance of education and would like to participate in adult education programs: *"I don't know how to read, I didn't get the chance to learn while I was a child... I feel very sorry about it... I wish I could come to school and learn, too, I would like that and it would help me a lot in life. I must know (how to read) and so do my children."* (group interview Roma parents, Bucharest).

The schools which organized adult education programs (literacy programs, health education programs, civic education programs, etc.) benefited in most cases of extra-budgetary financing sources: NGOs, international programs, etc. The cases in which it as the initiative of the schools to organize such programs were less numerous, although teachers admit that the low education level of the parents and their reserved attitude toward the formal education system are some of the main causes of school failure for Roma children.

✓ **Providing Roma ethnic teachers or teachers who speak Romani, in schools with Roma students**

Another aspect of the educational offer, which influences the school participation of Roma children, is the employment of ethnic Roma teachers, or teachers who speak Romani, in schools with Roma children. Education policy measures in this field encourage the training of qualified teachers from among the ethnic Roma, and employing them in schools with a high percentage of Roma students.

Many of the school managers and teachers from the schools included in the present study underlined the importance of employing ethnic Roma qualified teachers, or teachers who know Romani. This measure is needed especially in pre-school education and in the

primary cycle, in order to help the children get over the learning difficulties generated by not knowing Romanian. Also, we estimate that teachers who are coming from the same ethnic group as the children are closer to them, they manage to understand better the problems generated by the fact that the children are coming from cultures which are different from the culture of the majority population, and Roma children can find in them row models to succeed in life.

Text box 8. Interview teachers - Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher 1: The children would definitely consider him one of them, and their coldness, their distance toward school would decrease. In addition, he would be an excellent row model for the Roma community, in terms of the success of investing in education.

Teacher 2: I have a colleague, who is Roma, and the students have great respect for him. They are trying to imitate him, to find a model to follow, because they are at an age when they need models.

However, some Roma parents question the authority Roma teachers would have in front of children who belong to the same ethnic group: *"I think our boys would be naughtier, if the teacher were Roma. They would say <he's a Gypsy, one of us> and they would cross the lines... I don't know if there would be any student – teacher respect, which should exist. It would be more difficult, because he would be one of us"* (group interview Roma parents, Girceni, Vaslui county).

*

* *

The data presented above leads to the conclusion that the school's educational offer, in all of its aspects – forms of organization of the education process, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, teachers, programs for parents, etc. – represents one of the main determinants of the participation to education of Roma children, since it develops their motivation to study, it capitalizes on the ethnic Roma cultural characteristics, and it provides the premises for their socio-professional integration.

4.2.1.4. School ethos

The research studies conducted in the past decades in the field of education sociology, questioned one-dimensional and mechanistic approaches regarding the influence of the family or school environment factors on the school success of the students. Thus, as early as the 80s, a number of comparative analyses on education systems brought into discussion certain paradoxes regarding the connection between the students' social origins and the influences of the school environment on the one hand, and their school success, on the other (Cherqaoui, M.). It was noticed, for instance, that additional pedagogical support provided to students coming from disadvantaged social environments, by simply increasing the number of classes, does not automatically lead to the improvement of their school performances. Also, contrary to the common opinions at the level of the scientific community, according to which powerfully selective education systems would bring an advantage to students coming from advantaged social classes, the data gathered through comparative analyses showed that, in fact, the more a system is more selective, the more the students coming from disadvantaged social environments had more success opportunities.

Such paradoxes stimulated the interest for researches which studied more deeply the analyses regarding the school influence factors on the results of the students, expanding the area of investigation from objective, easily to observe and measure factors (the level of academic and pedagogical competencies of the teachers, the school's material resources, the curricular offer, etc.) to implicit and subjective elements, related to the culture and climate of the school organization. Researches showed that, although they are harder to observe and more difficult to investigate, these subjective factors, which relate to the values, beliefs and behavioral models promoted by the school organization, have an equally important influence as any other category of factors.

More recent studies on the school as a social organization, which "teaches and causes learning," as well as the sociological analyses that interpret the school environment, demonstrated that the relationships established between the members of the school organization (students, teachers, principals, parents, etc.), through each person's nature and personal way of relating himself to the shared values, norms, and beliefs, create a

subjective universe, a special affective and inter-relational atmosphere, that gives an identity to each school organization, thus contributing to the development of **school ethos**. By school ethos we, thus, understand the degree to which the members of the organization "adhere to the school's culture, share its beliefs, norms, behavioral models and values." The ethos of the school organization is evidenced through the "subjective senses and meanings which the members of the organization confer to certain aspects and situations which they face in the daily life of the organization" (Paun, E.).

Although the present study did not explicitly intend to perform a systematic analysis of the connection between school ethos and drop out and non-participation, the qualitative instruments (individual and group interviews) used in this investigation allowed us to emphasize certain aspects related to the perceptions and representations of Roma students, parents, teachers, principals, on the atmosphere, the experiences and norms, the culture and the characteristics of the school organization they belong to. Starting from the hypothesis that school ethos, through its nature, represents one of the factors which encourages school success or, in association with negative action factors, generates student failure, we will try to identify below some of the aspects which define the culture and climate of the schools included in our investigation, and the way in which they influence the participation to education of the Roma students.

✓ **The school culture**

When interpreting the school culture aspects which may influence the participation of the Roma children to education, we chose a multi-level analysis model, that attempted to identify the following components:

- the basic assumptions of the school culture;
- the values of the school culture;
- the norms of the school culture.

• **The basic assumptions of the school culture**

The assumptions of the school culture are built based on the representation of the members of the organization (teachers, students, parents, etc.) on the role of the school

and of education, in overcoming social and cultural barriers, and in encouraging social mobility, and beliefs on the ethnic origin influence on the school evolution of the students, etc. A number of perceptions and representations regarding the fundamental assumptions on which the school culture is based were identified by analyzing the interviews conducted with the main actors of the investigated school institutions, both from the perspective of the teachers, as well as from that of the Roma parents and students.

In most cases, **the teachers** had an optimistic vision on the positive action of education and of the school in developing the personality of the students. They believe in the child's "good nature" and the individual capacities of the students, regardless of their ethnic origin. A certain fatality and a feeling of frustration were noticed, though, with regard to the school's impossibility to compensate the economically and socially disadvantaged situation of children coming from poor families, by education. Teachers think that the school success of the students depends, to a large extent, on the support of the family, on the quality of individual study time at home, on the interest of the parents for the education of their children. Often, teachers think that their pedagogical effort is ruined by the lack of a more active family support in the child's education.

Text box 1. Interview teachers –Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: Roma children have surprising abilities. They play instruments, they have a great practical intelligence...

Text box 2. Interview primary school teacher –Tigveni, Arges county

Teacher 1: They (Roma children) cannot learn good manners and the society behavioral norms as long as their family environment is corrupted. It is not corrupted due to lack of love, they love their children, instead it is corrupted due to the lack of material resources, food, clothes, and living conditions.

Teacher 2: I do believe that, in fact, all the time they come to school hungry. How is a child supposed to learn when he is hungry?!!

Usually, the parents of Roma students appreciate education mostly from the perspective of its instrumental value: through school you can acquire certain knowledge and abilities to get around, to find a job, to earn a sufficient income. In very few cases did the parents perceive education as a chance for success and social mobility. However, most of the Roma parents who did not have access to education in their childhood, expressed regret

for "not going through school" and are even open for proposals regarding adult literacy and education programs, thus proving a high level of confidence in the role of education.

Text box 3. Group interview Roma parents – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Mediator: What do you think, is school useful in life?
Parent: Yes, mainly for reading. There are films (on TV) and they must understand. You have an education, you get a good life, we don't want our children to be as poor as we are.
Mediator: And is the school a chance for them?
Parent: Yes, if they have an education.
Mediator: But what if the school would organize some courses for you, to learn how to read, would you come?
Several parents (together, approvingly): Yes, certainly! We'd like that!

Roma students included in this investigation shared, to a great extent, the ideas of their parents and teachers on the role of education. Thus, not even one of the interviewed Roma students questioned the importance of school, but their arguments oscillate from instrumental type of arguments (to know how to shop, to read on TV, to write a letter from the army, to be able to get a driver's license, etc.) to arguments with a high learning motivation value: education will help them "become men," "it will help them know the world and the people," "it will help them change their life."

Text box 4. Group interview Roma students – Tigveni, Arges county

Student 1: I like to come to school to learn and to become someone important... a tractor worker or a policeman...
Student 2: It's a good thing to go to school, you can earn money later.
Mediator: Is it useful what they teach you in school?
Student 3: When you grow up, you can go to work, if you went to school. You know how to read and write. If you don't know, and someone asks you... you make a fool of yourself.

Text box 5. Group interview Roma students – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county; Valcele, Covasna county

Mediator: Why is it useful for you to go to school?
Student 1: The school prepares us to be men... to become a teacher, something, to know how to sign your name, to write, to read...
Student 2: To be able to go to work...
.....
Student: The school helps in many things, whenever you need. You have an education, you get a good life.

It may be stated, without any intention and possibility to generalize, that the presumptions which form the cultural basis of the investigated school organizations create the premises for a positive ethos, which is motivating for participation and study. The main limitations of the confidence of the investigated actors in the power of education are to be found at the level of the economic circumstances of school success, not at the level of circumstances regarding the ethnic origin of the students. Thus, the presumption that education becomes inoperative when confronted with these types of circumstances may represent a de-motivating and frustrating factor, both for the parents and for the students, as well as for the activity of the teachers, having negative effects on the school success of the students.

- **The values of the school culture**

Taking into account the fact that the present investigation did not intentionally and explicitly aim to identify the types of values promoted by the school organizations included in the research and did not use a specific methodology in this sense, we will limit ourselves to analyzing how the interviewed actors relate to the following types of values: **equal education opportunities** and **respect for the Roma culture**. The arguments of these options are: the relevance for the subject of this study and the relatively high frequency of the discussions referring to these values, during the interviews we conducted.

In most cases, both for the investigated teachers, as well as for the parents, equal education opportunities suppose: a common curricular offer for all students, schools and mixed classes, non-differentiated pedagogical methodologies, objectivity in evaluating competencies. Out of an ardent desire to avoid discrimination and segregation (two phenomena which are more or less present at social level), the interviewed actors put an equal sign between non-differentiated treatment and non-discriminatory one. Thus, for many Roma parents, a school especially designed for Roma children, with teachers coming from their ethnic group, with a differentiated offer, obviously represents a source of discrimination and a violation of equal education opportunities: *"If we give them an education, we must give them a good one! If they all live in the same place, the children must be treated in the same way! Where do Romanian children live? Only among*

Gypsies!... No! They are all children! If there was a Gypsy school and education would be different, then we wouldn't like it... Education is better in this situation!" (group interview Roma parents – M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county).

The respect for Roma culture and traditions represents, in the opinion of those interviewed an intrinsic value, which must be given attention to, just like any other value regarding individual or collective identity. Although they think it is interesting that Roma students should study at school the Roma language, history and traditions, both parents and students, as well as teachers, don't look upon this option in term of respecting a right which lies at the foundation of equal education opportunities. Teachers think that the study of the native language and culture would be useful, but they opine that such a measure would not influence decisively the school participation and the results of Roma children. Some of the parents express their interest for the study of the Romani language and history, as a chance to revive the traditions they themselves have estranged from in time; it is mostly the case of Roma families who live in the urban environment and who no longer know the Romani language: *"I would like that, and together with the child I would also study from the schoolbook, to enrich my Romani vocabulary"* (group interview Roma parents – Bucharest).

It may be noticed that, at least at a declarative level, there is a high level of school ethos in the investigated institutions, in terms of equal education opportunities and respect for the Roma minority culture values. Thus, both the parents and the students, as well as the teachers, understand equal education opportunities as a form of non-differentiated treatment for students, starting from the premise that there are no differences between students, in terms of their ethnic origin. The diversification of the educational offer through the introduction of the Romani language and history is positively perceived, in general, without deeming such a measure as a fundamental right to provide equal education opportunities. As a consequence, neither the efforts of the schools, nor the requests of the parents are persistent enough as to lead to the generalization of the study of Romani language and history in all schools with ethnic Roma students.

- **The norms of the school culture**

Perceived as a combination of rules and expectations, based on which the behavior of the members of an organization is displayed, norms represent the most observable and concrete expressions of school culture. The school universe is regulated, in essence, based on two types of norms (Paun, E.):

- **Institutional norms** (formal or explicit) – incorporated in laws, official documents and regulations on the organization and operation of the education system and of the school institutions;
- **Consensual norms** (predominantly informal or implicit) – a result of the negotiation between teachers – students – parents on the internal organization of the school and the desirable behavior of the members in this organization.

For the present study, we considered relevant the connection between the types of norms mentioned above and their impact on the school ethos of the investigated institutions, starting from the analysis of the following examples of institutional regulations:

Example no. 1

Granting the child allowance through the education institution is conditioned by the school attendance frequency of the students. Teachers have the right to suspend the allowance when the number of skipped classes is higher than the one provided by law. Also, teachers have the right to justify the absences of the students, provided that the students bring a medical excuse note or are retained by the parents for special family events.

Initiated at system level as a stimulation measure for school participation, granting the child allowance through school generated, when enforced, a series of effects, both at social level, as well as the school normativeness level. For many poor families, including Roma ones, the allowance represents the only source of income. Being in the end a powerful enough extrinsic motivation for some families which are in difficulty to send their children to school, the allowance represented nevertheless an important subject for disagreement among teachers, students, and parents. On the one hand, the parents of the

children who exceeded the maximum number of unjustified absences were frustrated by the suspension of the allowance, and tried to find solutions to convince the teachers to sign the necessary documents to regain it. On the other, the teachers were aware of the importance of this income for the families of children with low attendance frequency, which made the decision to suspend the allowance very difficult.

The solution to these conflict situations was sometimes found through the negotiation of some consensual norms between the members of the school organization. Thus, it was noticed that "calculating" absenteeism in terms of the maximum number of absences accepted, has become a practice in the case of some students. Often, this situation represents in fact a hidden form of drop out. Another frequently encountered practice for the justification of absences is that of presenting medical excuse notes, whose authenticity is "ignored" by the teachers.

Text box 6. Interview teacher - Bucharest

Operator: Do Roma children skip classes more, as compared to Romanian children?

Teacher: Yes, but it's somehow the same, yet they are more numerous.

Operator: Do they usually justify their absences? What are the reasons they invoke?

Teacher: Not really. The reasons exist anyhow. They have the right to 5 days per year for special family events. The parent writes a note to the class master, signed by the parent. But then, there are medical excuse notes...

Operator: Do they use them frequently?

Teacher: I can't check! As class master, I see the doctor's stamp, and if it isn't retroactive, it's ok. I can't conduct investigations. We have a very tough school. We must teach and play babysitter, and priest at the same time. They come here many times to get their family problems off their shoulders. Medical excuse notes cannot be checked...

Text box 7. Interview teacher – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Teacher: Being young, we, the teachers, listen to them. Especially since they have problems... And even with the allowance checks... I am in the situation of telling them to go to the doctor to get a medical excuse note, so that they won't lose that money... We are not distant with them.

Taking into account the social effects of suspending the allowance, the teachers thus feel compelled to establish implicit norms when they have to make such a decision. Unfortunately, establishing such unwritten norms does not result in a positive ethos, which would stimulate the real participation of children to education, instead these are

just temporary compromise solutions between the need to socially protect the family and the enforcement of punishing measures, which are made legal at system level.

Example no. 2

Grouping students into classes is a decision which belongs to the school and which can be achieved based on criteria established by the managerial team of the school.

Based on a flexible curriculum, which would facilitate the development of the child's personality in accordance with his individual particularities, the study of optional disciplines represents, per se, a measure designed to contribute to the observance of the equal education opportunities principle. The present investigation identified, though, certain situations in which organizing certain classes designed for the study of optional disciplines led indirectly to the segregation of Roma students in separate classes. Respecting certain criteria to divide students into classes (usually, the grade point average or the average mark for the curricular area connected to the optional discipline), led to communities exclusively made up of Roma ethnic students. At other times, by invoking the reason of studying Romani language, history and traditions as disciplines designed exclusively for Roma ethnic children, certain schools organized separate classes made up exclusively of Roma students. Such situations generated vigorous protests from the parents.

Text box 8. Group interview Roma parents – Bucharest

Parent: ... I want to say that here, at school, they are treating children in different ways. For instance, I am Roma, but I don't want to be an ethnic Roma, I don't want to be part of this ethnic group, and he placed 30 Gypsies into one class. *Wait a minute, Principal, why did you place this child here, if he doesn't want to? Place only those who want so. Those who don't ...* For instance, how many classes are completing second grade now? I think there are five of them. They made differences between these five classes. They placed ten bright children in one of them and only two or three in the others.

Adapting institutional norms to the level of the school by promoting managerial strategies, which implicitly and informally lead to segregation phenomena based on ethnic criteria, represents, in fact, a strong conflict situation. Such implicit norms, which are diffuse and are not declaratively assumed by those responsible, may generate a school ethos with negative effects on the participation and school results of Roma children.

Example no. 3

Another interesting example on the norms of the school culture emphasizes the tendency of certain organization members to turn informal and consensual norms into formal norms, at school level, for the stated purpose of improving the school activity quality. The proposal to institutionalize behavior regulations in school intends, though, to increase the formal level of student behavior control and promotes an authoritarian climate, which is not always productive and beneficial for the school participation of the students.

Text box 9. Interview teacher – Bucharest

Operator: ... How do you think the relationships between Roma children and teachers could be improved?

Teacher: I don't know... Probably, at the beginning of the school year, a regulation should be read out in front of the parents and students, a student behavior regulation, so that the teachers and the parents could know about it. Some norms should be established: you are not allowed to swear, you are not allowed to do this... you are not allowed to do that... if you do this you are punished in this way... Their behavior grade should be lower, or other things that would hurt them, but not beatings. But something that would wake them up. I think these regulations would bring good results. I said earlier that the parents should be very well informed about high school options. You can only go to high school if you have a good behavior grade, so the parent... the high school is very good because it provides that, but in order to get there, the students must do that, must learn that, and must not have a low behavior grade. In order for the child not to have such a grade, he must not break windows or do God knows what else.

Operator: But are there such discussions being conducted between teachers and parents?

Teacher: I don't know... you only asked me what would be... But so far... Certainly there are class masters who, the moment they get in contact with the child's parents, they tell them about the child's good sides and the bad sides and the parents should do something for the bad sides not to occur again... There are certainly no teachers here, in this school, who would want to hurt a child.

Operator: Could a tighter cooperation with the parents contribute to the improvement of the school results and behavior of the students?

Teacher: Yes, maybe the rules could be posted somewhere... when the parent walks into the school he should see the rules there. They don't come to the school often, but when they do, they should at least see the rules then... It should be a colorful poster, to get people's attention...

✓ Is there a school culture characteristic of Roma students?

Sociological studies on education and ethno-methodology on school ethos underlined the display of several types of cultures, at school level: the culture of the managers, the culture of the teachers, and the culture of the students. The interaction of these cultures,

as well as the degree of convergence and homogenization between the different types of cultures at school level confer dynamism and uniqueness to the school ethos, either in the sense of emerging values, which lead to the development and positive evolution of the organization, or by creating tense or even conflict situations between the organization members, with negative effects on school activity, in general.

From the perspective of the present study, we consider interesting a succinct analysis of **the school culture of the Roma students**, which would offer the possibility of identifying several characteristics which represent the possible, less observable causes of non-schooling or of the school failure of the students. In this sense, the investigation conducted on Roma students allowed the following observations to be made:

- Usually, the type of behavior and the relationships with the adults promoted in the families of origin are more permissive and more open in the case of Roma students. As a result, Roma students have the tendency of being more independent and more direct in their relationship with the teachers. Such attitudes are sometimes interpreted as lack of discipline and are punished accordingly, bringing prejudice to the self-image of the students, but also to their relationship with the teachers or their colleagues.
- Unlike the school culture, which encourages the students to have a docile and conformist behavior, Roma children want to be noticed, to have their point of view respected, and to be appreciated. If the teachers ignore these aspects, Roma students build resistance strategies against the school culture, either by developing apparent obedience behaviors, or by displaying explicit negative attitudes.
- When they face adaptation difficulties to the academic demands of the school, certain Roma students use affective strategies, which offer them an advantage in their performance evaluation. Others, though, perceive the teachers as a real affective support in solving the problems they face at home or at school.
- In certain cases, Roma students have the tendency to interpret as discriminatory the attitudes of some teachers, even when the behavior and assessments of the teachers

regarding one given situation seem to be objective. In fact, this tendency is a consequence of the labeling phenomenon, which is more or less present in certain schools investigated. Some Roma students are thus confused, and cannot manage to distinguish the true cause of the teacher's negative assessment: their own weak school results or the mere fact that the student is an ethnic Roma?

- Even within the group of Roma students there are two subspecies of cultures identified: a) the culture of those who have interiorized the values promoted by the school and who show a high degree of conformity to school norms, in the declared hope that education represents the chance to overcome their socio-economic condition and to be successful; b) the culture of students who are more attached to values and behavior norms which are exterior to the school (the family of origin, the group of friends, the group of elderly Roma students, etc.) and which often turns into an anti-school culture, associated with non-schooling or deviant behavior phenomena.

Apart from these observations, we are presenting below an interesting description regarding the school culture characteristic of Roma students, from the perspective of the teachers.

Text box 10. Interview teacher –Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Operator: Do you think there are teachers in school who treat Roma students differently, just because these children belong to that particular ethnic group?

Teacher: I don't think so, but they (the children) do and I don't know exactly: *miss, we think you treat other children differently" ... my dear, your level is lower than that of the other eighth grade classes, and you know it" ... "there are other eighth grade classes which are very good, the children in those classes study additional hours, they come to classes, they behave differently".* And from here, this repulsion, because the teacher is asking you to come to classes, and if you don't... There is probably a barrier between them, and this is very difficult. I think that the teachers would give them their hand. They don't know how to reach a consensus, in my opinion. And they are impulsive, they have the tendency to shout, to behave strangely. When you point something out to the other children, they apologize. The Roma don't! *"But why, miss?"* Well, there are teachers who do not tolerate yet such a behavior. I am trying to explain to them: "try to be different, change your attitude and the teachers will change theirs as well." Many understood that, many didn't. They feel they are not treated right.

Operator: Do you think that this is only their impression?

Teacher: I think so, yes. I don't think we have reasons (to treat them differently). We all live in the same locality. I don't see any reasons. I have never heard in the teachers' room: *"apart from everything, he is an ethnic Roma", "I am not going to that class because they are Roma students."* I don't know exactly what they do in class, but I feel them like this... and I don't understand them. I talked to them. There are teachers who

really care about them, because these are sensitive children, underneath that mask they're wearing. They want to look tough and more interesting, they probably want to be placed in the limelight in a different way, if they are not treated right.

Text box 11. Interview teacher – Bucharest

Operator: Do you know of any cases in which teachers treat students differently because they belong to the Roma ethnic group?

Teacher: No, I don't think so. Something else is interesting. We had two cases of Roma children who did not study and had a bad behavior. And they accused me: "*Teacher, you are giving me a lower grade because I am an ethnic Roma!*" Of course I was angry inside, but I explained them that they are equal in front of me, and I gave them an example: "*Look, your cousin is the best student of her class, she studies English well, while you don't study, you are not disciplined, and it hurts me to hear you say that, when you know very well that you are the only one guilty for the situation you're in. It is not honest to tell me that, when you know how I treat all of you!*" There are children who want to hide their lack of discipline like this, and to me, this is... But these are very isolated cases. Usually, they are fair judges.

Although the data and purpose of the present investigation did not allow us to conduct a more profound analysis of the aspects related to the types of school sub-cultures, which exist at the level of the institutions investigated, we can state that Roma students display a specific set of attitudes and behaviors toward the school, which can result in a special type of school culture. Surely this type of culture can also be reported in the case of students who do not belong to the Roma ethnic group, but certain behaviors which result from the interiorization of ethnic "labels" put by "the others" onto Roma students seem to get a certain specificity. Whether it is a culture of resistance and rejection, or of school affiliation, it can, implicitly and subjectively, facilitate or block the school success of the students, and sometimes, it can have more important effects than other categories of easily identifiable factors.

✓ **The school climate**

The climate represents the essentially subjective dimension of the school, and is a qualitative expression of the psychosocial relationship characteristics between its members. Being one of the results of the interaction between several structural, instrumental or socio-affective factors, the climate influences the quality of the pedagogical activity conducted in school, and, implicitly, the performances of the students. The degree of motivation and mobilization of the human resources involved,

and the cohesion of their actions within the school community thus represent conditions for a positive climate, with a stimulating and facilitating role for the school success of the students.

In the present study, the analysis of the climate was mainly designed to investigate the way in which the relationships between school actors are established and developed, and their effects on the school participation of Roma students. We considered significant in this sense, the analysis of four types of interactions, at school level: the teacher – student relationship; the relationships between students; the teacher – parent relationship; the school – community relationship.

- **The teacher – student relationship**

The information gathered following the survey emphasized the fact that, in general, there is a significant connection between the behavior of the teachers toward students, on the one hand, and the student degree of attachment to the school, on the other. The interviewed teachers stated that they were aware of the fact that teaching activities in schools with majority Roma students are more difficult and demand both professional competencies, as well as special human qualities. Often, the teachers find themselves in a situation when they go beyond their strictly professional responsibilities, and conduct counseling activities, additional pedagogical support or even material support for the children. A high level of attachment to the school and its problems is noticed especially in the case of smaller rural environment schools, where the socio-economic disadvantage situation of the families of the children does not differ significantly in terms of their ethnic origin. In the opinion of the teachers, the high level of poverty melts away the ethnic barriers between children, and teachers perceive the problems of the children as being collective, regardless of whether they are Roma or Romanian.

Text box 12. Interview teachers - Tigveni, Arges county

Teacher 1: In our school, the teacher must first be a parent, and then a pedagogue. Many children come to school angry in the morning, and I ask them what is wrong. Some of them say that they didn't do their homework because their father turned off the light or because his brother took his pen away. Or, there are children who are hungry and we collect money and buy them bread...

Teacher 2: Our support for the children goes as far as donating our share of clothes, shoes, school materials

for the skills development class, etc.

Text box 13. Interview teachers –Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: ... my colleagues are striving to provide them with row models, to counsel them and sometimes to soothe them. It matters a lot, because thus their spirit becomes better, so, as much as we can, we are trying.
Operator: Do you know of any cases in which teachers treat students differently because they belong to the Roma ethnic group?
Teacher: No, I don't think so, reality makes you become more tolerant, or you move to another school, or you give up or you stay here and accept a few things.

However, both the interviewed Roma students as well as the parents reported cases in which the attitude of some teachers is explicitly or implicitly discriminatory: using insulting names with an ethnic connotation, placing Roma students in the back rows of the class, organizing classes exclusively with Roma students, etc. Such behaviors can create conflict situations with negative effects on the Roma students' school participation and results. Nevertheless, the reported cases are isolated and are not the expression of a teacher ethos, which would promote generalized discriminatory attitudes toward Roma students.

Text box 14. Group interview Roma parents – Valcele, Covasna county and Tigveni, Arges county; Interview teacher – Rudarie, Gorj county

Parent 1: There were some teachers who behaved badly: "open the window, it smells like Gypsy in here, damn you Gypsies". But he doesn't think about the fact that we only live on the child's money, for instance 260,000 lei for two children. Clothes, shoes, notebooks, food, detergent, what can you buy?
.....
Parent 2: Our children feel very frustrated. At school, they are seated in the last row, and the Romanians are seated in the first row.
Parent 3: There is no studying of any kind. They only care for the Romanians, for the Roma they don't. They seat them in the last row, and the Romanians sit in the front row. They seated him in the last row.
.....
Teacher 1: I believe that it would be better for them to study in separate classes because their level is lower than that of other children. If they were enrolled in the downtown school, they would all become retained students.
Teacher 2: There are differences being made between Romanian children and Roma children. They [the Roma] are seated in the last rows and are left alone, provided that they are being nice.

- **The relationships between students**

Interviews with Roma students underlined that these children have some negative affective experiences when relating to other children. Some of the interviewed students evoked situations in which their Romanian colleagues addressed them insulting words with an ethnic connotation or displayed aggressive behaviors toward them. The effects of these attitudes are isolation and refusal of communication with colleagues, associated with lack of interest for school and learning. These psycho-affective states of mind are reported especially in the case of Roma children with weak school results, with school environment adaptation difficulties, which they perceive, as a whole, as a hostile environment. The same category of students states that they would prefer to study in schools especially designed for the Roma, in order to avoid these discomforts.

However, most of the interviewed Roma students think that their relationships with their Romanian colleagues are satisfying and even represent an opportunity to share common experiences and interests. The positive perception of their relationships with the others originates in the aspiration of Roma students to succeed by acquiring desirable behavior models. These reference models are to be found, in the end, in the image of the Romanian colleague, who "is hard-working and learns well" and whom the teachers appreciate.

Text box 15. Group interview Roma students – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Mediator: What do you like at school, do you like your colleagues?

Student 1: No, because they call me a stinking Gypsy!

Mediator: But whom do you get along well with?

Student 1: We get along with the Roma... but not very well with the Romanians.

Student 2: I like it too, but the Romanians shout: "Gypsy!" And I get into fights with them. There are some Romanians who also fight, and there are others who don't.

Mediator: You?

Student 3: I like Romanian language very much, the teacher is very good, I get along well with a girl who is the best in our class, she is Romanian, but the children leave me alone. They are all good, the building is nice.

Mediator: What do you think?

Student 4: I like to read, and I get along well with my colleagues.

Mediator: Is there something you don't like at school?

Student 3: I like everything.

Mediator: What do you say, Elvis?

Student 1: I like math and I get along well with everybody.

Student 5: I like it, I am nice and I get along well with the Romanians as well.

Although, at a formal level, there were no records of conflict or aggressiveness cases between students who belong to different ethnic groups, it was noticed that, in terms of the perceptions and subjectivity of each child, certain socio-cultural differences related to the school and the culture promoted inside it are perceived either as rejection and isolation, or as powerful motivations to succeed. That is maybe why the school results of Roma students are often associated with the type of perception of their relationships with the others, inside the school.

- **The teacher – parent relationship**

Both the parents and the teachers believe that achieving a communication between the family and the school is important, and they think that this connection can have multiple effects with regard to the school participation and results of the students. Most of the times, the encounters with the parents are conducted exclusively inside the school, in a formal environment: the parent meetings. In some cases, parents are required to come to school for individualized meetings with the teachers, especially when the school results or behavior of the students "cause problems." House calls to the homes of the students are not something usual, they is instead just a way of communication, which the teachers use in special cases, although Roma parents are open and feel honored when someone is interested in their situation.

Usually, teachers think that it is the duty of the parents to show interest in the school situation of their children, while the teacher is the one entitled and capable of finding pedagogical solutions to the problems of the students; only in rare cases do teachers perceive the cooperation with the parents from the perspective of a real partnership in identifying common solutions. In order to justify the lack of strategies to co-interests the parents in school problems, the teachers invoke the family's lack of interest for the education of the children: "...*Finally, the third category is represented by parents who have a very simplistic image about education and who cannot look beyond their narrow interest. These are the ones who cause us the biggest problems, and we ended up wanting them to be indifferent and to leave us do our job the way we know better.*" (interview teacher – Girceni, Vaslui county).

Roma parents talk with a certain amount of pride about the moments when they spoke to the teachers. They think they have something to say and they want their opinion to be taken into consideration. Roma parents acknowledge the scientific authority of the teachers and appreciate their human quality, but they think it is their right to take attitude when there are situations in which the school is being unfair.

Text box 16. Group interview Roma parents – M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Operator: Did you have any problems with the teachers here?

Parent 1 (and other parents): No! We have excellent teachers! In other schools they are not as understanding, but these ones take us to the teachers' room: "tell us, what problem do you have?" But they don't have the means to help us. They know our situation fairly well, they didn't make any differences (between the children).

Operator: How often do they summon you to school?

Parent 2: They summon us for the parent meetings. When they need something, they send us a note through the children. We come to these meetings, because that is when we discuss what is going on... And we say... Or they ask us for some things. We would like to have the means to... but if our husbands had jobs...

Group interviews emphasized certain perception and expectation differences regarding the relationship between the family and the school, according to the environment of origin. Thus, it was noticed that in the rural environment, the parents of Roma students have a higher level of attachment to the school and show respect for the competencies of the teachers. Usually, in the investigated rural communities, where the poverty phenomenon is high, the parent – teacher relationship seems to be rather a subordinating one, and the participation of the parents to school decisions and their critical attitude are very low; parents often have a feeling of guilt, because they cannot provide better material conditions for the development of the child or because their education level does not allow them to support their children more in completing school tasks.

Roma parents in the urban environment show, in general, a critical attitude toward the school, and the work of the teachers, and they view education rather like a social service which must respond to the concrete needs of the beneficiaries and which can be amended with regard to its quality. A broader access to information and a more active social implication of the Roma parents from the urban environment allowed them to have more coherent opinions regarding the rights of the minorities, non-discriminatory treatment, the partnership with the school, etc. The representatives of Roma parents think they are not

being treated right when they are not consulted with regard to certain decisions at school level, and demand more transparency from the teachers and the principal.

Text box 17. Group interview Roma parents – Bucharest

Parent: I don't know what they do with the school fund.

Parent 2: There is a committee... All the classes are dirty... if a teacher lives like this, at home...

Mediator: But is there a parent committee in the school?

Parent 3: There is one, he selected them. Mrs. Maricica is part of this committee.

Parent 1: (*talking to Mrs. Maricica*) And does the principal have a clear situation of how much money was collected from the students and how it was spent?

Parent 2: I didn't receive anything, he comes with invoices every time, with files, but I didn't check personally, another parent did.

Parent 1: It should be done like this... when there is a parent meeting... Mr. X, the situation is like this, this amount of money was spent for the school... class 8 C was cleaned up ... if we collect some more money, we can also clean up 7 C, but he never gave us an explanation.

Parent 3: They don't redecorate the classes with the money coming for the school fund, they redecorate the hallways, the school benches. If the school fund is not enough, and there are only 200,000 lei collected, and 200,000 more are needed, they take it from the school fund, and they add the rest of the money; when I wanted to be part of this committee, they told me, relax, it has already been selected years ago. How come you have the same people in the committee for several years? There haven't been any elections in a long time, since five years ago.

.....

Parent 4: I want to say that here, at school, they are making differences (between children). For instance, I am an ethnic Roma, but I don't want to be an ethnic Roma, I don't want to be part of that ethnic group, and he placed 30 Gypsies in one class. Wait a minute, principal, why did you place this child here, if he doesn't want to? Place only those who want so. Those who don't ...

Mediator: Is that a problem where neither the children, nor the parents were consulted?

Parent 1: I should have been consulted, not the child, because, maybe the child would have said yes. This can't be! I went to the principal: "Sir, you should have asked me whether I agree or not!"

Both non-commitment relationships between parents and teachers, based on the delimitation of each actor's tasks, as well as critical and conflict relationships create the premises of a closed climate, where each of the parties involved has expectations without having constructive cooperation initiatives.

- **The school – community relationships**

The data gathered via group interviews showed that the relationships between the school and the community are still at the level of good intentions and less at the level of concrete

initiatives, and the constraints result, on the one hand, from the lack of resources, at local level, and on the other hand, from the lack of institutional development strategies, at school level.

Text box 18. Interview teacher - Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher 1: ... Still, we haven't managed to persuade the local authorities to support us. Maybe we didn't know what doors to knock on or we weren't persistent enough: everywhere they told us that, true, our problems are real, and we need help, but so far, there are no resources to do that.

Mediator: How do you think you could overcome these problems?

Teacher 1: With the new responsibilities, everyone is throwing the dead cat in their neighbor's yard...

.....
Teacher 2: I struggled a lot, but unfortunately I was rather alone in this. We have all the disadvantages of a small school... In my heart, I wanted something very beautiful, but you can't do much when you are alone.

Generally, it was noticed that rural environment education institutions had a more open climate, beneficial for the communication between the school and the community representatives. The community actors are well-known people, close to the school and the family, they know the problems which the families have, and are trying to develop a supportive attitude in their relationship with the teachers, to the extent of the possibilities, which are sometimes limited. Sometimes, the local authority representatives or other important community members have more influence on the parents with regard to the stimulation of school participation. It is the case of a mayor from a rural locality, who offered Roma families a piece of land to work on, and required them, in exchange, to send their children to school.

Text box 19. Interview teacher - M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Operator: Did anything take place in this sense, to be able to help them somehow? Is the City Hall doing anything?

Teacher: Yes, we had a meeting with the City Hall, the Roma parents, and the teachers. It helped us a lot in bringing them to school. The mayor has a lot of influence on them. He has always supported them. He was telling the Roma representatives who were there: *"Please, you know I helped you as much as I could, please help me too! Let's bring them to school!"* And because the Roma intervened, their representatives talked to them and this mattered a lot. The children came to school. I noticed that they have respect for the City Hall.

Operator: But do you know what the City Hall did for that?

Teacher: It helped them, always. They found an opening, they said, yes, Mr. Mayor, we will help you, the way you helped us. I don't exactly know what the City Hall did.

Mediator: But was the mayor pleading in favor of bringing the children to school?

Teacher: Yes, and because their representatives understood that, there were children who haven't been to

school in years, and thus, we managed to get them back in school...

At other times, the village priest is the one who conducts activities designed to stimulate interest for education: "*There was this priest, very close to the people... he taught religion classes, the children were really close to him, they went to church, they came to school...*" (interview teacher – Girceeni, Vaslui county).

Although urban environment education institutions benefit from a more active support from the community and are involved in different non-governmental organization projects, "the community partner" is perceived as being an outside one. Such a climate, based on formal and indirect relationships ("*the people from the ... organization came, and they offered us assistance*" – parent, Bucharest) create suspicions from parents and students: "*... they come at Christmas and they give ethnic Roma members packages with food and clothes! This doesn't make them fatter, it's better to leave the child live as he did until then!*" (group interview Roma parents, Bucharest).

*

* *

School ethos is an essentially subjective dimension, which is permanently built within the interaction between organization members. Elements which relate to the perceptions, attitudes and behavior toward school may influence the implementation of systematic and institutionalized measures. School managerial policies should take into account these specific dimensions and should promote an open climate, a climate of real communication between teachers, students, parents and the community.

4.2.2. Individual characteristics

Individual characteristics represent a special category of factors which influence the school success of the children. Unlike social, family, and educational environment factors, whose action on the school success of the child is external, individual characteristics represent a result of the interaction between internal (hereditary) types of

determinants and the other categories of external factors. Research studies in this field show that the individual particularities of the students represent the main category of determinants for school success or failure. We cannot speak, though, about their action outside the influences of the social, family and educational environment, which set their print on the psycho-intellectual evolution of the children.

Specialized literature includes in the category of individual characteristics which determine the child's school success:

- The physical health condition;
- The psycho-intellectual development characteristics;
- The child's self image;
- The attitude toward knowledge, in general, and toward school, respectively (the degree of confidence in education and in school);
- The level of learning motivation, etc.

As we said in the chapter on the methodology of the study, the evaluation of the influence of individual characteristics on the school participation of the children (as well as, in fact, the influence of the social and family environment characteristics) was achieved through the secondary analysis of the IES database on drop out non-schooling, built during the 2001 research study. This database contains information on 561 children who dropped out of school or have never been enrolled in school, out of which 200 of Roma ethnic origin, and upon which the following analysis is concentrated. To this data, we also add the information gathered from individual and group interviews conducted with teachers, parents and Roma students, as well as from the social surveys carried out in Roma families with children who dropped out of school.

Due to some logistical considerations, the investigation was not designed for an exhaustive approach of the individual factors which may determine school failure, and took into account only the information provided by the above-mentioned categories of subjects. A part of this information (for instance, the one referring to the attitudes and motivations of the children) must be interpreted with the reserve that these are perceptions of the teachers or parents on the individual characteristics of children who dropped out of school or who have never been enrolled in school.

The questionnaire survey requested opinions on the following characteristics of the students:

- Their health condition;
- Their level of psycho-intellectual development;
- Their attitude toward school;
- The types of behaviors displayed.

Other aspects, such as the learning motivation, the level of aspirations, the self-image of the children, etc. were followed during individual interviews and group discussions.

The data collected through the research emphasized that **the precarious health condition** represents an important cause of drop out and non-schooling. Thus, out of the Roma children in one of these situations, almost 10% have serious physical or mental health problems, and approximately 20% have minor health problems which, however, make their school attendance frequency difficult. Family surveys revealed that some of the health problems could be improved or solved, thus avoiding non-schooling or drop out. In many situations, this is not possible, either due to the socio-economic conditions of the family, or due to the lack of identity documents, which prevent access to health assistance services. For the same reasons, it is difficult for some families to enroll children with severe deficiencies in the special education system.

Text box 1. Family survey – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta

Operator: You were saying one of your children has health problems...

Mother: He cannot walk, if he walks from here to the other street, that's all. It's really difficult, there are days when he cannot even get out of bed. That is why we didn't enroll him in school.

Operator: What kind of problems does he have?

Mother: He has these problems since birth, but where am I supposed to go? When you go to a doctor, you have to give him money. Who is going to see me, without any money? And he also needs identity documents. He needed at least a second-degree handicap certificate, but he doesn't have one.

Operator: Do you give him any medication?

Mother: Where from? Nothing, since he has no handicap certificate, he cannot even get a pension.

Text box 2. Group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent 1: He studied for three years and the teacher taught him well. But it was useless. He is mentally delayed. It was tormenting. Yes, I took him to Vaslui, to the policlinic... he also has problems with his

eyesight...

Mediator: And how old is he now?

Parent 1: He's thirteen years old, but he's a bit crazy...

Mediator: And is he still going to school?

Parent 1: No, he is no longer going to this school, since he is...

Mediator: You didn't take him to the special school in Vaslui?

Parent 1: I even borrowed some money and I took him there...

Parent 2: I also have a daughter and I would like to take her to the special school. She doesn't speak well and I would like to take her to Vaslui, but I don't have the money to do that.

A special situation is that of AIDS infected children. In cases when they are not enrolled in special education institutions, parents prefer not to send them to school, although, from the interviews we conducted we noticed, at least at a declarative level, that the teachers show an attitude of acceptance of AIDS infected children in mass education.

Text box 3. Interview teachers - Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Teacher 1: One of these children who dropped out, was a retained student, he had a sister infected with AIDS. It is possible that this girl is also a suspect of AIDS and the parents didn't send her to school anymore. Another child who no longer comes to school was involved in stealing things, with other children, he fell, broke a bone, and he is in the hospital since last summer. His sister is an epileptic, and her mother doesn't let her come to school anymore.

Teacher 2: We have AIDS infected children in school, and they are well integrated. We have several homes especially designed for AIDS infected children, and in one home there are, for instance, 7 children; a foundation pays the administrator and the woman who cares for them is paid by the inspectorate. From there, the children who re healthier come to us. In the beginning some teachers showed some reserves, but later...We have AIDS infected children in the village, some we know, some we don't. We had a conversation with the doctor and she said: "you don't know many of them, and we are not going to tell them to you, it's better to keep away from all children if you have an open wound..." I gave them an example, a child brought me some flowers and I kissed him and I showed the others that nothing happens.

Apart from physical health problems, teachers are reporting another cause for drop out and non-schooling: **delays in the psycho-intellectual development of the children.** Besides the more serious cases, which require the enrollment of children in special schools, these delays may be recovered successfully through a systematic educational activity. There are, however, situations in which **the learning difficulties determined by not knowing the Romanian language** are labeled as delays in the psycho-intellectual development of Roma children. The fact that these problems are not evaluated correctly by the parents and teachers and that no concrete and measures are taken to improve them

and to provide adequate pedagogical support, often leads to weak school results and even drop out situations.

Another individual variable which may influence school success is **brotherhood rank**. Certain studies support the hypothesis according to which there is a risk factor for the physical and psycho-intellectual development of the last-born child in a large family, and growth and development deficiencies can affect the evolution and school results of the children. The brotherhood rank is related to the age of the parents: the older they are, the higher the risk for the physical and mental health of the children. With regard to the same aspect, some studies talk about an increased psycho-intellectual potential of the first-born children (Terassier, 1981).

The opportunity to evaluate the effects of this variable through a simple statistical analysis is difficult, though. The possible influence of this variable is associated with that displayed by other variables, especially social and family variables. On several occasions, in large Roma families, which have many children, the income, the living quarters, the food, etc. are distributed to a large number of members, thus becoming insufficient, especially in the case of socially and economically disadvantaged families. The school evolution of the children is thus affected by the impact caused by the joint influence of all these factors. The information of the present investigation does not confirm the hypothesis regarding the connection between brotherhood rank and school participation, mainly because of the joint influences of the social and family factors, faced by the children in the target group.

Apart from the information referring to physical and intellectual development particularities, the opinions of those interviewed on **motivational and attitude characteristics** offer important data in the analysis of individual factors. According to the statements of the teachers on **the attitude of Roma children toward school**, almost two thirds of those in a drop out situation show lack of interest toward school, and over 20% have attitudes of rejection or even repugnance. Only in 10% of the cases, the teachers think that these children have a positive attitude toward school, and the causes which generated the drop out were of a different nature

The data presented must be taken into consideration with certain reserves, since, quite a few times, the teachers do not perceive the real adaptation problems to the school environment of Roma children (caused by not knowing the Romanian language, by the fact that they originate from different social and cultural environments, they didn't attend kindergarten and are not used to rules of discipline specific to the school system, etc.) and interpret certain reserves and refusals toward learning tasks as being negative attitudes toward school.

The negative attitude of children toward school, in those cases where it is real, represents the result of several factors. The representations of the children regarding the importance of education for the individual path in life are built both in the family and socio-cultural environments (the attitude of the parents toward the formal education system, the confidence of the parents in the role of the school as a social success factor, the level of aspirations with regard to the future of their children, etc.), as well as the school environment (experiences regarding the relationships with teachers and colleagues, attending kindergarten, etc). Thus, the negative attitude of the children toward school translates the causes of drop out from the perspective of individual factors, to social, family and educational ones.

The same types of arguments are also valid in the case of **the learning motivation of the children**. It was noticed during the interviews conducted with Roma children, that some of those in a drop out or non-schooling situation, coming from economically, socially and culturally disadvantaged environments, have a low learning motivation, caused by the fatalist representations regarding their chance to rise above their social condition via education. In certain situations, even when children show interest for learning, the reasons for attending school are extrinsic (for instance, getting the allowance or the social scholarship) or are focused on immediate and punctual expectations (for example, acquiring basic skills, not as premises of a good socio-professional integration, but for the purpose of being able to watch soaps on TV).

There are cases of Roma children who show an increased interest in education, in the continuation of their studies, and have a high level of aspirations. The determining learning motivation is to acquire the knowledge and competencies needed in life –

"school is helping us learn about nature, about people, about how other people live in other countries," "to learn new things," "to know how to count money, to do my shopping, to sign my name, to read, to write," "to know how to behave in life" (group interview Roma children – Mihail Kogalniceanu, Constanta county) – as well as an opportunity for social mobility. They hope, they are even convinced that education is the only thing which will give them access to different conditions, to another lifestyle than the one of their own family. It is the case of a Roma girl in the eighth grade, who states: *"I want to study... to go to a high school, a vocational school... I must go to the city... I want to have a different life..."* (group interview Roma students – Girceni, Vaslui county).

A number of **gender-based differences regarding the attitude toward school and the learning motivation** can be observed during the interviews with Roma students and their parents. These differences are determined especially by the Roma traditional cultural models, according to which, girls get married at early ages, and their social role is to raise children, to take care of the family, and not to exercise a profession based on a specific school education. Thus, in many cases, girls are discouraged to attend school, and their lack of education is tolerated at the level of the Roma community.

Text box 4. Group interview Roma parents –Girceni, Vaslui county

Mediator: How many grades did your son complete?

Parent: Four grades. He wanted to study some more, but it was impossible... I was telling him: "Florin, you should study, you're a boy! A girl without an education is acceptable, but you are a boy, you'll join the army, you'll have to write letters home!"

Text box 5. Group interview Roma students - Tigveni, Arges county

Student: It is my father's ambition that I go to school, because this is good, a boy should study... He said that a grown up boy like me... it is bad if you don't know how to read and write, when you are in the army. To ask others to do that for you...

Despite the perpetuation of traditional mentalities, certain Roma families are aware of the role of education and they wish to support the school participation of children, regardless of their gender.

Text box 6. Group interview Roma students –Valcele, Covasna county

Mediator: What do your parents say?

Student 1: My father wants me to go to school, but when I play in the street and I forget to do my English homework, he calls me in the kitchen and my mother says: "let her be, she's a girl, she'll end up cooking

anyhow..." but he says: "let her come here and do her homework. And he helps me. When I don't know something, I call him: "come one, dad, help me!" He really wants me to go to school.

The attitude toward school and the learning motivation may also be interpreted as displays of the child's **self image**. Representations about one's person are formed in time, as a result of a number of factors and experiences lived both in the social and family environment, as well as in the school environment: successes or failures, encouragement or labeling, the relationship between the group of origin and the reference groups, etc. Group discussions emphasized that, often, Roma students in a drop out situation or at risk of dropping out have a gap between their real potential and the representations of their own capacities, which is proof of a distorted self image. An example, in this sense, is represented by the case of some interviewed children, who, although they had good school results during their schooling track, think that Romanian children are much better prepared and that they could never challenge them.

Text box 7. Interview teachers - Tigveni, Arges county

Mediator: Do Roma students show up for the elementary school graduation exam?

Teacher: Yes, but their chances are fairly slim, and this is because of their lack of interest. During the holiday, the Romanian teacher asked them to come to school for additional training, they didn't show up. She asked them: "Why didn't you come?" "We won't pass the exam anyway." "Who told you that?" "The other children know more than we do, anyhow." And the teacher was disappointed, she was hoping that at least 5 children would show up, at least those better prepared. I don't know why they didn't come.

Although the **school results** of the students represent the expression of the impact of various categories of factors (individual characteristics, family environment characteristics, school environment characteristics), some teachers associate the weak school results of the students with a low level of their psycho-intellectual development and these are invoked as being the main causes of drop out.

The distribution of the investigated cases, according to **the school results obtained prior to dropping out** show that 19% of the Roma children included in the investigation had grade point averages below 5, and almost half of them were within graduation limits, their grade point averages being between 5 and 6. This data emphasizes the fact that the weak school results of the students are frequently associated with drop out. On the one hand, weak school performances result in a grade repetition situation, which, in most

cases, leads to drop out. On the other, repeated weak school results have negative effects with regard to the learning motivation of the children, and this may cause rejection toward school. However, a significant number of Roma students (20%) had satisfactory school results or even good results prior to dropping out, and the causes of their school failure were of a different nature.

More than half of the Roma dropouts included in this research were in a **grade repetition** situation, once or even twice. The results of the investigation pointed out, though, that grade repetition does not always go together with drop out, and therefore almost 40% of the dropouts were never retained students.

Another aspect followed during this investigation was the connection between drop out or non-schooling and deviant behavior. **The display of behavioral deviance** in Roma children who dropped out or have never attended school, has an increased percentage – approximately 20% of the cases. The present study showed that there are no significant differences in displaying deviant behaviors according to ethnic affiliation. The forms of behavioral deviance are diverse, ranging from attitudes of group lack of discipline to serious delinquency behaviors (theft, vagrancy, prostitution, etc.).

Text box 8. Family survey – Bucharest

Operator: I understood that only she (*a little girl*) is going to school. Normally, the 11 years old boy and the 14 years old girl should also go to school. Have they even been to school?

Mother: Yes, certainly.

Operator: How many years did they go to school?

Mother: They went to school this year, but they're not going anymore.

Operator: What happened?

Mother: The girl, she decided not to go, it's not that I don't let her go...

Operator: Why did she decide that? What was the reason?

Mother: Until the sixth grade she was twice a retained student. Now she is more developed from a physical point of view, more... she was really ashamed to go.

A neighbor (who witnessed the discussion): She ran away from home, madam, why isn't she telling you the truth? Her daughter became a prostitute!

Operator: Let her tell us what she knows.

A neighbor: I have to tell you, we're neighbors. The children are poor, that child steals... only the elder boy works! Only him! The rest are a bunch of rascals, why lie about it? Why not tell the truth?

Mother: If you're interested why she dropped out of school, practically, according to the papers, she completed 5 grades. But she wants to be re-integrated next year. They could re-integrate her, if that was her wish. She got involved with the wrong people and that's where she ended up. The child has left home 2

Deviant behavior may represent, in some situations, the cause of drop out. Most of the times, though, it is rather the consequence of the lack of integration in school and has multiple causes: influences of the family environment, socio-economic factors, school determinants, etc.

*

* *

The data referring to the individual characteristics of the Roma students included in this investigation emphasized the fact that some individual particularities of the children may be the determining causes of drop out or non-schooling. Their influence on the school participation of the children must, nevertheless, be interpreted in connection to other categories of factors, which relate to the family, social and cultural environment or to the school environment.

4.2.3. Cultural, social and family determinants

We made a distinction between cultural factors and social and family factors, within the category of family environment determinants. We considered this separation necessary, since it is more an operational one, taking into account the characteristics of the study target group.

4.2.3.1. Cultural determinants

The studies conducted in this field²⁵ emphasized that we can talk about a number of school participation cultural determinants. From these, we consider that the stated

²⁵ *Indicators on the Roma Communities in Romania*, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002.

nationality and the language spoken in the family are two "strong" variables of the ethnic identity and, as a consequence, "indicate" the cultural characteristic of a population. This goes especially for the Roma population whose cultural tradition is preponderantly oral. Thus, we consider that the persons / families who state they belong to the Roma ethnic group and especially those who speak Romani reflect, to a great extent, Roma traditions and culture. That was the reason for introducing the variables *language spoken in the family* and *stated nationality* in the cultural determinants category. The two above-mentioned variables reflect a different image of school participation. Thus, the analyses of school participation based on these two variables emphasize the following:

- Pre-school participation to education is twice as low, in the case of families where Romani is spoken, as compared to Roma families (hetero or self-identified) who do not know this language. There is also a low participation tendency at this education level, in the case of Roma who are living in compact communities, as compared to the situation when they live in mixed communities or among Romanians. Thus, in 1998, the pre-school participation to education in the case of compact Roma communities was of 12.1%, while in mixed communities it was of 19.1%, and in the case of ethnic Roma living among Romanians, it was of 29.3%.
- In the case of school age children (7 – 16 years), non-schooling is 2.5 times higher in the case of families where Romani is spoken, as compared to families where this language is not spoken. Non-schooling in the case of school-age children is almost three times higher in the case of families who self-identify them as ethnic Roma.
- In the case of the Roma population over 16 years old, the two variables (the spoken language and the stated nationality) also operate differences with regard to the acquired school level. First of all, as in the case of children, non-schooling is much higher in the case of Romani speakers and of those who state they are ethnic Roma. Also, the acquired school level is lower (fewer graduates of eight grades, vocational school, high school) in the case of adults who speak Romani and / or identify themselves as ethnic Roma, as compared to those who do not speak Romani and those who do not identify themselves as ethnic Roma.

The different school participation, according to the language spoken and the stated nationality, which are considered variables that characterize the cultural characteristic,

may be the result of different lifestyles, due to integration / non-integration in the dominant culture and assimilation / non-assimilation of the majority population values, including the value of school and the perception of this institution. As a consequence of the different lifestyles, confidence in school may be a variable which structures the degree of school participation.

Lack of confidence in school and the lack of value for the school institution are encountered more often in families who speak Romani and state that they belong to the Roma ethnic group. The lower participation to education of the children from these families not only reflects the differences of cultural characteristics and lifestyle, but possibly a resistance, of which they are aware or not, to the cultural assimilation which may possibly be exercised by the school. In this sense, without a cross-cultural school offer, we may assume that the school participation gap structured around the *spoken language* and *stated nationality* variables will be maintained. Not knowing or poorly knowing the Romanian language when enrolling in school determines not only weaker school results, but, in certain cases, even drop out or the refusal to attend school. Cross-culturality presumes not only re-encountering the native language in school, but also cultural elements specific to the Roma population.

4.2.3.2. Social and family determinants

Among the variables identified as being the main determinants of school participation, of school results, of school success or failure, by the theories developed and the studies conducted on the issue, are those which define the family environment, and which represent the subject of this chapter.

The present study focused on the following characteristics of the social and family environment:

- a) The education level of the parents;
- b) The occupation of the parents;
- c) The wealth of the family:
 - The family income (general assessment);

- d) The family size:
 - The type of family (nuclear, large);
 - The number of children in the family;
- e) The living conditions of the child and the family:
 - The living conditions;
 - The status of personal assets and the nutrition conditions of the child;
- f) The health condition of the parents and their special situations;
- g) The form of the family ("normal", disorganized, re-organized);
- h) The affective climate in the family:
 - The relationships between parents;
 - The attitude of the parents toward the child;
- i) The attitude of the parents toward school and the education of their children.

One of the family variables which seems to influence school participation to a great extent is **the education level of the parents**; most dropouts (more than 50%) come from families with no studies, or who have completed primary school at most (following table).

Table 1. The distribution of dropouts, according to the education level of their parents (total batch)

Education level	No studies		Primary school		Low secondary school		Vocational school		Non-answer/not applicable ¹	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Father	79	14.1	201	35.8	172	30.7	54	9.6	55	9.8
Mother	115	20.5	187	33.3	190	33.9	31	5.5	38	6.8

¹Also includes death cases: 53 of the children, 32 Romanian and 21 Roma have a deceased mother or father.

Although, in general, the human capital in the rural environment (from the perspective of the education level), which is the environment where the investigations were carried out, is less developed than in the urban environment (the 1992 population census emphasized that 38.9% of the rural environment inhabitants did not have elementary and high

secondary education, as compared to 12.5%²⁶, in the urban environment), the extremely high percentage of parents from the study batch, who have a very low education level is surprising, though. This comes in addition to the fact that a part of the population, who has no education or just primary education – identified during the census – was fairly old (some of them underwent a natural disappearance process), and expectations target a positive evolution after 1992, with regards to this indicator.

Regarding the education level of the parents, we must mention the fact that most of parents without education belong to the Roma ethnic group: over 30% in the case of the father, and 40% in the case of the mother (following table), which represents eight, respectively four times more than in the case of parents from the majority population²⁷. In fact, the percentage of children who dropped out of school and who belong to this ethnic group is bigger, not per se (35.7% as compared to 61.1% Romanian and 3.2% other nationalities), but in comparison to the total Roma population, which, according to the highest estimated values, is of approximately 7% of the total country demographic.

In this context, we must mention the fact that the ethnic Roma represent a category which faces multiple problems: economic, social, cultural, and educational problems. It is thus estimated that a very high percentage of them have a low education level, and at the same time, they are below poverty limit. The connection between poverty and education is displayed in both senses: poverty reduces the access to education and the length of schooling; this is, though, proportional with the education level reached, and the lack of education leads to poverty. In essence, the current poverty leads to increased poverty, and the generating factor is the lack of education, and implicitly, the lack of opportunities to capitalize on individual values and to integrate on the labor market, with consequences on the living conditions. The situation is also aggravated by certain representations regarding the role and functions of the school. A part of the ethnic Roma is not aware of the connection between the education level and the social and economic situation. The

²⁶ *The National Human Development Report, Romania 2000*, UNDP.

²⁷ The social and family determinants were studied through the secondary analysis of the IES database, constructed during some research studies on the causes of drop out in the obligatory education. See the chapter referring to the methodology of the research.

participation to education does not represent, in their view, a guarantee for social success, and, therefore, they display reserved attitudes toward school²⁸.

Table 2. The distribution of dropouts, according to the education level of the parents, by ethnic origin

Education level		No studies		Primary education		Low secondary education		Voc. school		Non-answer / Not applicable ¹	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Father	Romanian	13	3.8	118	34.4	134	39.1	45	13.1	33	9.6
	Roma	63	31.5	74	37.0	34	17.0	7	3.5	22	11.0
Mother	Romanian	33	9.6	99	28.9	163	47.5	27	7.9	21	6.1
	Roma	81	40.5	79	39.5	24	12.0	2	1.0	14	7.0

¹ Also includes death cases.

Figure 1. The father's education level, according to ethnic origin

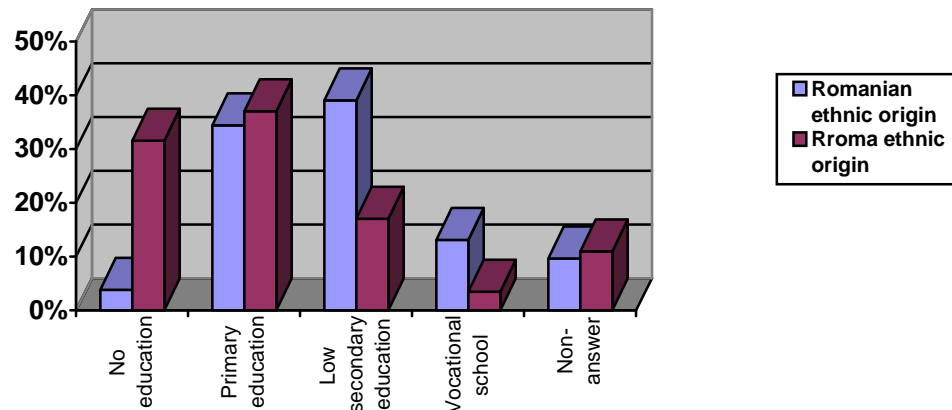
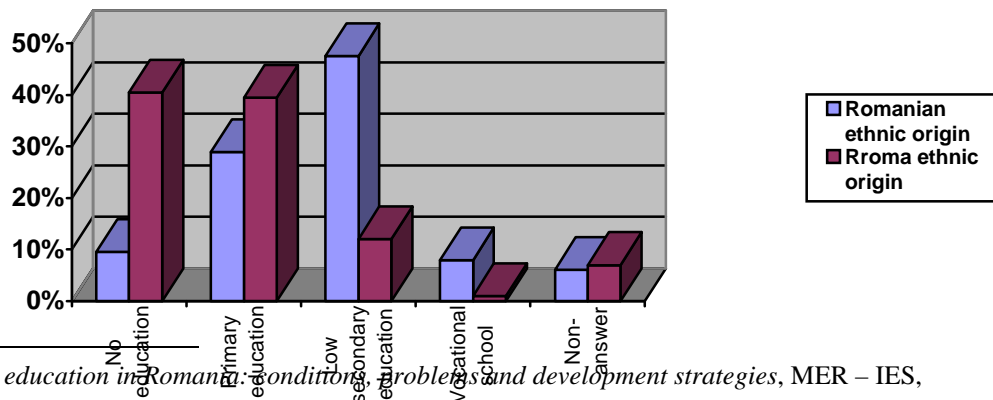


Figure 2. The mother's education level, according to ethnic origin



²⁸ Also see *Rural education in Romania: conditions, problems and development strategies*, MER – IES, 2000

The educational status of the parents acts as a handicap with regard to the school participation of the children. As a matter of fact, some studies²⁹ emphasized the fact that the most powerful influence of the parents' education level is shown in the case of students from the first education cycles – a level on which the present research has also focused – and later, the intensity of the family environment impact is diminished, namely, the intensity of the parents' education level. In other words, the positive or negative influence of the family on the child reaches an optimum level in the first years, and failure or success differences due to this influence are strongly emphasized at the beginning of schooling; these influences also continue afterwards, but they are slightly diminished.

The determinant value of failure or success which the education level of the parents has, must be taken into consideration not only per se, but especially through the factors it triggers: the differences regarding the language used and the values promoted in the family (in some cases), as compared to those used in school; this fact leads to school adaptation difficulties, school failure, to the incapacity of the parents to grant a minimal support, to "supervise" the homework of the children, etc.

Some of the parents are aware of their educational disadvantage, of the fact that they cannot serve as row models for their children, and cannot grant them support in their school activity, although they would like their children to enhance their social condition:

Text box 1. Group interview Roma parents –Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent: ... well... we would like to. We would like to help him, but we don't know, we didn't go to school; he said that we were also living, although we don't have an education... he didn't quite know, he couldn't have been sure ... We wanted him to learn, to be different from us...

Others, as we mentioned before, are questioning the importance of education for becoming successful, for gaining social mobility:

Text box 2. Group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county; Valcele, Covasna county; Rudarie, Gorj county

Parent 1: ...even if they went to school, it would have been the same thing... there are some people here who

²⁹ Mihaela Jigau, *School success factors*, Grafoart Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998.

did go to school... to no avail, they couldn't find any job. One of them returned from the city... the company where he used to work no longer exists...

.....
Parent 2: He graduates from school, he goes into unemployment...

.....
Parent 3: After they graduate they'll go dig the land, like we did...

Parent 4: They will live in poverty, that's what they'll do; they cannot become engineers or doctors or leaders of the country.

Parent 5: What can you do if you don't have the money to send them to high school? He studies until he completes the eighth grade, but to take him to Baia, you don't have the money... We would like to do that, but there's no money...

Some of the parents who completed vocational education (father / mother or both parents) and whose children dropped out of school, belong to the category of people who returned to the rural environment after going into unemployment, as a result of the economic restructuring process and the liquidation of some companies. In the case of some of these families, the important changes in their social status, in the lifestyle and living conditions, led to real confusions which also set their print on the education of the children, leading even to extreme situations – such as drop out.

One aspect identified during the investigation refers to the fact that a part of the teachers does not have sufficient information on the family environment of the dropouts, which is relevant to the relatively large number of non-answers to most items included in the individual file of children in this situation, a file which should have been filled in by the teachers from the classes where the children used to be integrated before leaving the school. This finding may reflect the weak relationship, at least in some cases, between the teachers and the parents of children who are in a crisis situation, in a major school failure situation, although the intervention methods designed to prevent this phenomenon presume a relationship and a close cooperation with these families, knowledge of the environment, the influences, and possibly the pressures and shortages of any kind children have to put up with.

According to the characteristics of the area where the investigation was conducted (the rural environment) and the education level, most parents (almost two thirds) have agricultural related **occupations**. One thing to be noticed is that only approximately 30 – 35% of the families are working their own piece of land, and other 33 – 35% are in the

situation of "working on a daily basis" (in the agricultural sector), in the residence locality (most of them) or outside it, in order to earn a living, since they do not possess a piece of land, which they could exploit to their own benefit. The Roma population is disadvantaged from this perspective as well, and a much higher percentage, especially in the case of women, being in this situation (Table 3). Even a high percentage of the children who dropped out of school, after the event took place, conduct income generating activities – season activities ("work on a daily basis"), agricultural or non-agricultural activities in their native locality or in other localities – although their age is below the legal limits for labor integration. At other times, the fact that their parents are sending them out to work, even outside their residence locality, is the cause of drop out:

Text box 3. Interview teachers – Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher 1: In the end, he did drop out of school... Now he is somewhere in Bacau, and we cannot contact him... they are afraid we may convince him to go back to school, and the parents don't even want to hear about that. They are saying that they have nothing to eat and that they have to send him there to bring them what they need. But they are not working, well, maybe the father does... they are alcoholics...

Teacher 2: These children were determined to drop out of school... it was not their fault, it was the shortages, some of the children, from what I'm seeing, are even used by their parents and sent to work in their place, in order to earn the daily bread...

The children themselves are telling, during the interviews, that sometimes, they are forced to skip school in order to conduct certain activities in the locality ("*the girls go hoeing, or help their younger brothers with the cleaning, the cooking... the boys turn out the cattle, they go plowing... she skips school to go to work... her parents are a couple of drunkards, they work, but then they spend all the money on alcohol... or season activities outside the locality, together with the parents – "he went together with his father to take care of the sheep, and he had to repeat through that grade, and he didn't graduate because he went away with his father again... they are away from spring until November"* (group interview Roma students – Girceni, Vaslui county).

Table 3. The distribution of dropouts, according to the occupations of their parents, by ethnic origin

Occupation	Agric. Activities on own land	Work on a daily basis	Agric activities outside the locality	Non-agric. activities in the locality	Non-agric. activities outside the locality	Other situations ¹	Non-answer/Not applicable ²
------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------	--

		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Father	Romanian	102	29.7	99	28.9	13	3.8	24	7.0	35	10.2	11	3.2	59	17.2
	Roma	4	2.0	71	35.5	9	4.5	24	12.0	26	13.0	19	9.5	47	23.5
Mother	Romanian	149	43.4	88	25.7	6	1.7	18	5.2	20	5.8	30	8.8	32	9.3
	Roma	11	5.5	85	42.5	4	2.0	24	12.0	15	7.5	31	15.5	30	15.0

¹ In this category we included unemployed people, people who left to work abroad, who practice fortune telling, begging, etc.

² Also includes death cases.

Apart from agricultural activities, some of the parents of children included in the study batch, also conduct non-agricultural activities, but which do not require a certain qualification, they are temporarily working abroad or practice – as the investigated teachers stated – "activities" such as begging (especially those belonging to the Roma ethnic group).

Being in the impossibility of obtaining concrete information on **the family income**, in order to have a complete overview of their material situation, we requested the teachers to make a general assessment of the material resources of the parents, in the individual file they filled in for each student who dropped out of school, as compared to the incomes of the other families. As it can be noticed from the characteristics of the activities they conduct, incomes are often occasional, uncertain, and in 80% of the cases they are assessed - by the teachers – as being totally insufficient, within survival limit; the percentage is maintained both in the case of Roma, as well as Romanian families.

Text box 4. Interview teachers –Tigveni, Arges; Valcele, Covasna

<p>Teacher 1: Most families live on what they make from begging, or they conduct different activities for the population: digging, hoeing, collecting hay, occasionally they make brooms, baskets. Their living standards are very low, many live below normal standards.</p> <p>Teacher 2: I think that they always come to school hungry. What can a child do if he is hungry?... The mother of one child was telling me why her son is not coming to school: "Miss, they leave in the morning, hungry, they go home at lunch, they don't find any food there, and their father beats them to stop crying because of hunger. When they come home from begging in the streets, they are fatter than when they stay home.</p> <p>Teacher 3: The children are usually hungry. They cannot stay in class until noon, because they are hungry. They either leave, or they stop listening. Many complain about stomachaches, or headaches. Last winter they were absolutely hungry, they had nothing, and they were begging in the village. That was their only source of food.</p>
--

The parents themselves talk during the interviews about the shortages they have to put up with: "*there are days in which, both we and the children eat corn porridge with ashes...*" (group interview Roma parents, Girceni, Vaslui county), and the teachers confirm this situation: "*they are very poor... they beg for an hour of work or for a plate of food; poverty is the main issue... the family would not keep the children at home, they would not send them to work, if they were not so poor...*" (interview teachers – Girceni, Vaslui county).

The poverty of the rural environment population, the disparities between the urban and the rural, in general, which existed since before 1989, continued to grow deeper especially due to the low investments in those areas, and in the agricultural sector, and also due to an "autarchic" agriculture at the level of individual households. Transition years, with the changes they brought along, especially those generated by the Agricultural Reform in 1991, "turned the Socialist state farm peasant – who lacked both the salary and the property – into the small land owner, specific to the beginning of the century in Romania and to all pre-industrialist capitalist societies in Europe during the 18th and the 19th century.³⁰" The reform also determined "the separation of the land from technology and expertise," "the destruction of the old state-owned farms patrimony – from irrigation systems to livestock farms" and the return to the traditional type of household and the traditional village model, a model which led to "the increase of poverty" and to a "subsistence economy."

The situation of the Roma in the rural environment is even more dramatic, since many of them do not own individual pieces of land, and are thus forced, as we mentioned above, to work "on a daily basis" on the lands of landlords for money or products which, however, do not cover their "daily needs": "*where can we go? We have no farm, we have nothing, where can we go? Even these days, when it rained, we had to go through a hunger strike, since Saturday night, because we had nothing to eat. But yesterday, despite the hunger strike, I went to the Romanians, to search for work.*" (group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county).

³⁰ Pasti, Vl. *A decade of social transformations*. In: *A decade of transition; the situation of the child and of the family in Romania*, UNICEF, Bucharest, 2000

The impact of poverty on the participation to pre-school and obligatory education of Roma children is also emphasized by the data of a research conducted on a national Roma population³¹ sample. Thus, with regard to enrollment in pre-school education, it is 4 times lower in very poor households³², as compared to rich households (Table 4). In other words, the poorer a household, the less probable it is to encounter a non-schooling situation.

Table 4. The participation to education according to the material situation of the household

Very poor households	Poor households	Average situation households	Rich households
10.9%	18.7%	29.5%	42.5%

In the case of obligatory education the tendency is maintained, and non-schooling is three times bigger in the case of children coming from poor to very poor households, as compared to those who belong to rich families, or with an average economic situation.

Another consequence of poverty may be, in certain families, **alcoholism**. Sometimes, in such cases, without being aware of the consequences which the temporary withdrawal from school has on their own children, regardless of when it occurs, parents send them to work in order to obtain the necessary money to buy alcohol.

Text box 5. Interview teachers –Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: ... that family has 10 children, the 11th is on his way, and one died... You can find the father every day at the village bar, and he sends his children to turn out the cattle... we managed to give one of the girls two grades, but when she was in the eighth grade, he found her a job, in another locality, we don't exactly know where. We cannot get in touch with her to get the schoolbooks back, we must contact the family. But her father is a notorious drunk, and I don't know what we are going to do...

In the absence of other incomes, these parents even use the allowance of their children. And yet, even in such families there are children who want to study. One example, in this sense, is the case of a Roma child from a family in which both parents display acute alcoholism characteristics, reported to us by a teacher:

³¹ Indicators regarding the Roma communities in Romania, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002.

³² The household characterization was made by the interview operators who filled in the questionnaire.

Text box 6. Interview teachers –Girceni, Vaslui county

He was telling me, teacher, I have to come to school to collect my check and to go buy what I need for school in advance, by credit... because if my mother gets the check, she would spend it all on alcohol... And he was really going to the store and was buying pens, pencils, stationery, by credit... the shop assistant knew him; then, later, when he collected his allowance, he would go and pay off his debt. The parents couldn't spend the money. And the child was studying hard, even though sometimes after two or three hours he, and other children, would almost faint because of hunger... However, the family sent him off to work, and he dropped out of school...

The degree of poverty is the more obvious, if we take into account **the size of the family (the type of family and the number of children)**. Thus, in over 40% of the cases (more than 50% of the ethnic Roma) the children who dropped out of school come from families made up of parents, children and grandparents, sometimes other relatives, as well, and 60% of the families (70% of the Roma cases) have 4 or more than 4 children: *"We are over 20 Roma families, and each family has at least 5 – 6 children and they couldn't enroll them in school because of the conditions"* (group interview Roma parents – M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county). The minimal incomes obtained by the parents who work are thus necessary for supporting a large number of persons, but they are completely insufficient. Sometimes, by working "on a daily basis" in summer, they pay off debts from the previous winter, as Roma parents claim during group discussions: *"during winter, we borrow grinded corn, beans, potatoes, and others... and during summer we have to work for them... we never have enough food... we must work more so that we also have something to eat during summer as well... sometimes we take the children along, but we must never forget about the school attendance frequency... otherwise we lose the allowance..."* (group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county).

The interviewed person is referring to the limit of school absences, which the children must not go beyond, monthly, in order to receive their allowance. This is a practice fairly known and accepted by teachers, since they are aware of the shortages which the children and their parents are facing. And the examples offered represent "happy" cases in which poverty, shortages, and the impossibility to satisfy basic needs did not lead to drop out (at least until the moment the interview took place). Some children think that education is a method to rise above this situation. Such an attitude and such an image of the education

system, has a Roma student who states: *"I want to study... I want to become someone... I want to leave this place..."* (group interview Roma students – Girceni, Vaslui county).

The minimal family incomes are also reflected by **the living conditions**; in almost 40% of the cases, these conditions are assessed by the teachers as being "completely inappropriate": 30% for majority population families and almost 50% for Roma families. During family visits conducted for social surveys and from the statements of the interviewed parents, teachers and children, we learned about cases in which 5 – 6 persons, sometimes even more than that, live and sleep in one room, in promiscuity and complete lack of hygiene. And this situation is not specific only to the rural environment, it is also encountered in the big cities: *"There are families who live 10 people within 10 square meters. I asked them, how do you live, how do you sleep? In shifts, they said"* (interview teacher – Bucharest). A similar situation is noticed in the case of **the condition of the personal assets of the children** and **their nutrition conditions**: both aspects are assessed as "completely inappropriate" in the case of a percentage higher than one third of the total number of students, while the differences between Romanians and Roma are maintained – less than a third, as compared to 43, 46%, respectively.

We would like to bring back into the limelight the sequences from the interviews conducted with Roma parents and teachers, on the improper nourishment of children, on the absence of the stationery (which are sometimes bought by the teachers, according to the statements of some of them) which were mentioned above, bringing other examples referring to the shortages faced by the children: *"they are also going to school in the winter... we send them, not always, but we do...we put plastic bags over their torn shoes and they go to school... they arrive there completely frozen..."* (group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county). The same fact is confirmed by the teachers, also with reference to Roma children: *"with the thin clothes and torn shoes they have, they arrive at school so frozen, that we have to let them warm up next to the stove for an hour... their hands and feet are blue and swollen, and they can't even speak well... their teeth are clenched... and sometimes they are hungry..."*; *"that child, in the middle of winter, was wearing no socks and he had sports shoes on... he didn't even had a jacket on... he was only wearing a sweater... and no hat either..."*; *"during the last classes they tell us: we can't hold on any longer, we haven't eaten since last night"*; *"we're in the 21st century, but*

many times they have to wait for one hour for their feet to defrost and to be washed" (interview teachers – Girceni, Vaslui county). Even the children talk about such issues, regardless of their origin environment: *"Others have no shoes to wear... and at that school down the valley... it was cold, we didn't like to go to school very much, when we bought new windows, others were breaking them..."* (group interview Roma children – Girceni, Vaslui county). *"I skip school every day... I get hungry and I leave the school..."* (group interview Roma children – M. Kogalniceanu – Constanta county).

As we can see, the children are also referring to the precarious condition of the school infrastructure, a situation which still occurs in certain rural areas, even though others benefited from the programs mentioned earlier in the study.

Apart from the problems regarding the nutrition and clothing conditions, from the statements of the parents and teachers we also learned about the drop out risk or, in any case, about the increased school absenteeism, a phenomenon which sets its print onto the quality of the student training. The information presented draws attention to the possible consequences of the family living conditions, and mainly of the insufficient food, which are inappropriate from the point of view of diversity and quality, to the health condition and to the psycho-intellectual development of the children. Although the implications of the living conditions on the health condition of the children represent the most important element, we would like to point out the connection between the performance level and that of the nutrition conditions, confirmed by studies in this field.

Other problems regarding the **form of the family** appeared in the families of the target group dropouts; these problems affected, at least potentially, their school evolution: the death of one of the family couple partners (almost 10% of the cases), the disorganization of the family through divorce / separation (15%) the re-organization of the family (mother or father – remarried or living with a concubine) which is not always favorable to the child (10%). The disorganization of the families and their consequences on children are also emphasized by the teachers during interviews: *"the families of the children are often disorganized; approximately one third of the children were abandoned; when asked to write a composition entitled 'My mother', for instance, they describe their grandmother"* (interview teachers – Girceni, Vaslui county).

As a matter of fact, sociological literature mentions the negative effects of certain disorganized, re-organized or deficient family environments – which, in our case, are to be found in over one third of the children who dropped out of school – not only on school performances and school evolution, which the present study has also underlined, but on the evolution of the child, in general.

Other aspects highlighted by the survey refer to the precarious **health condition** of some of the parents of children who left the education system prematurely, which affects 10% of the families (5% in the case of the father, and 5% in the case of the mother – Table 5). If we also add the number of children who have major health problems (9%), the percentage of families in which at least one member has major health problems reaches a worrying level, both from the perspective of the study focus subject, as well as with regard to the general health condition of the population. In some cases, the severe diseases of the parents required admission into hospital for a longer period of time (in over 6% of the families) and this had repercussions on the care and supervision of the children. Without recording significant differences, the cases presented are more frequently found among ethnic Roma families.

Table 5. The distribution of dropouts, according to the health condition of their parents

Health condition	Good		Minor health problems		Serious health problems		Non-answer/Not applicable ¹	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Father	344	61.3	126	22.5	28	5.0	63	11.2
Mother	350	62.4	143	25.5	30	5.3	38	6.8

¹ Also includes death cases.

Several factors concur to such a situation: the low education level, the unsatisfactory hygiene conditions, and the lack of sanitary education, the poverty level (in some cases, extreme poverty), with implications on the nutrition conditions, the deficiencies of the medical assistance network in rural areas, in general, and in those isolated, in particular, a situation which sometimes is an obstacle against providing emergency medical assistance, practicing preventive medical assistance, a.s.o.

A dramatic example, which was offered during group discussions with Roma parents (an interview conducted in an isolated locality, situated at approximately 40 kilometers from the city, where the distance to the nearest transportation means is of 10 kms), about the case of a baby less than 1 year old, is representative for the last aspect mentioned above:

Text box 7. Group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent: the poor thing... he caught a cold... his mother gave him quack remedies for a couple of days... he was getting worse. Where could you go? Wintertime, lots of snow... the medical unit is far away... about 10 kms. away. The doctor doesn't come here even during summer. No bus... She left on foot, taking the child with her ... he died in her arms...

As we mentioned before, alcoholism tendencies appear in some families, most of the times in the case of the father, but sometimes in the case of both parents. These are associated – in fewer cases – with serious behavioral deviance phenomena, which result in the imprisonment of those people (over 6% in the case of the father and 1% in the case of the mother), and such situations are more frequent in the case of ethnic Roma families (approximately 60% of the cases). These phenomena have serious consequences not only on the education of the children – from this perspective, the consequences are already displayed – but also on the behavioral model passed on to the children, who are thus exposed to a major marginalization and social exclusion risk.

Finally, one phenomenon which seems to have acquired more importance in the 90s, refers to **temporary departure from the locality or, in some cases, the country**, sometimes with a solid justification – in order to find a job and earn one's living – and other times due to a certain, euphemistically speaking, spirit of adventure. Such situations – especially departures abroad – can be found in the case of Roma families (almost a quarter of the parents of the target Roma children group). The effect of this internal or external "temporary migration" on the school participation of the children, regardless of whether they accompany their parents or remain in the care of their grandparents or other relatives, is most of the times similar: first of all, leaving the locality, and therefore the school, is not followed by enrollment and continuation of education in another institution, and secondly, the lack of authority or a weaker authority on children, the less responsible attitude of the relatives etc. (not significantly different, as a matter of fact, from that of the parents) brings them once again in a drop out situation.

Poverty, health condition deficiencies, problems within the family (the death of one of the partners, the disorganization of the family) alcoholism, the deviant behavior of the parents, etc., also affects the **affective family climate** – a dimension with implications on school performances, success or failure – both from the perspective of the **relationships between parents**, as well as of the **behavior and attitude of the parents toward the children**. Taking into account the assessments of the teachers, we notice that in almost 30% of the families of the target group children – children who dropped out of school – there are "permanent misunderstandings" and "serious and repeated conflicts," while other 20% are families affected by death or divorce / separation. According to the same assessments, in almost 40% of the cases the father, mother or both parents display an indifferent attitude toward the children, who are not offered any family care, supervision, affection, and warmth: *"The environment is disastrous, and the parents don't respect their children – vocabulary, abuses, beatings..."* (interview teacher – Girceni, Vaslui county). *"There are children who dropped out of school because of their parents, I know of such situations, in my building there are parents who drink, leave their homes, don't care what the children are doing, mothers who are around 40 years old... and have children... and nobody knows anything about that child... whether he did his homework or not..."* (group interview Roma parents – Bucharest). From this perspective, investigations did not highlight significant differences according to the ethnic criterion.

The same indifferent **attitude** is also displayed by many families (more than two thirds) **toward school and the education of the children**, and, sometimes, this indifference turns into a reserved attitude toward education (in almost 15% of the cases). The perspective of the teachers on the attitude of the family toward school may be, to some extent, distorted, due to certain tendencies of the teachers to transfer a great amount of the responsibilities pertaining to the education of the children onto the family.

In some cases, the indifferent attitude of the parents toward the education of their children is induced by certain "traditions", according to the statements of one teacher – *"some parents, especially Turkish Gypsies, I think, are saying... well, we didn't study too much, either... why should our children study? Therefore this is a tradition"* (interview teacher – M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county); at other times, this is the result of

resignation, of becoming aware of the fact that the precarious living conditions would not allow them to financially support the education of their children, after completing obligatory education:

Text box 8. Interview teachers –Girceni, Vaslui county

Teacher: The parents are living in precarious conditions, they are overworked, they don't even manage to have dreams about their children, and the last thing on their mind is the education of their children. Even though some of them know that the future of their children is buried forever if they don't continue to send them to school, they are doing nothing to create such a future for their children, or they can't do anything in that direction.

The low secondary education is considered almost useless, since it does not provide the chance for professional training, a job and mobility toward the city (which is the ideal of some of the children, and their professional and social success model). Such an attitude, even though it may not be explicitly expressed, can still be seen from some of the interventions of Roma parents during group interviews, parents whose children however, did not drop out of school:

Text box 9. Group interview Roma parents –Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent: I am sending him to school... let him go to school... and after he completes eight grades, what is he going to do? He's going to end up with me, digging the earth, to earn a living... because I don't have the money to send him to other schools, in the city... Where could I get it? Boarding school, canteen... It was good when there was a apprenticeship school in the locality... the children could learn a job... But now it no longer exists... it only has eight grades...

Parent: They should go on with their education, but with what money can we do that? At present... only here, if they build a school...

Apart from the pessimistic attitude regarding the evolution and development of the child via education, which is generated by material and financial constraints, the interventions of the parents also underline certain obstacles of a different kind; in the case to which we are now referring, these obstacles focus on the deficiencies of the school network which block the access to secondary education of the rural environment population, especially of the population from isolated areas. In such a situation, the parents demand training for their children to acquire minimal skills during low secondary education, possibly in traditional professions:

Text box 10. Group interview Roma parents –Girceni, Vaslui county

Parent 1: They should provide the children with a lathe... and some tools for the wood, so that the child can learn how to process the wood... when they graduate, they should know how to make a bench...

Parent 2: If only they brought some equipments to school for the children... the child would say: I am going to school to learn something... they should keep the children in the workshop for a couple of hours, to work some more...

Parent 1: If only they had a workshop here... the child would say: I am going to school to learn a profession ... if the children are going to school, they are learning... the child comes by himself... he likes to go to school... how do I manufacture this component, how to I finish it, I am going to learn a profession...

Parent 3: I would be nice to have a music teacher, so that the child can learn something... mine plays both the trumpet and the saxophone, and anything else... they should bring musical instruments, which should belong to the school, and children could learn how to play them during the music classes... here, this was the tradition, we had a band...

The aspirations of the parents regarding the professional future of their children – in case they have a positive attitude toward school and education – are different, varying according to the environment of residence. Thus, unlike parents from the rural environment, for which the ideal is that their children acquire minimal professional skills, which would allow them to rise above their own social condition (the example above), the people in the urban environment, or in areas close to the city, have a much higher level of aspirations, although their hopes for these aspirations to come true are low. In other words, the difference resides, in fact, in the ideal model of accomplishment via education: *"I want... let him go on, to a high school"* (group interview Roma parents – Bucharest). *"I want her to have a lot of education... to become a doctor, something... I want all of them to reach the twelfth grade and I want them to become important people, to help me in their turn... but with what money?"* (group interview Roma parents – M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county).

The ideal regarding the personal success of their children, and implicitly the attitude toward education, is different also according to the gender of the children: *"well, the girl can go to the kitchen, but a boy must have a job when he gets married, to support his family"* (group interview Roma parents – M. Kogalniceanu – Constanta county).

Some of the parents, even if they are convinced that the education of their children will be finalized once they complete their obligatory education, still think that it also has an important role in preparing the children for what lies ahead, in developing certain positive attitudes and behaviors: *"School helps, even the one we have here helps, how could it not*

help? If there was no school... then they would all become a bunch of losers... if they don't have an education, they don't know anything... they become thieves, they steal, they grow up without getting an education, we get in big trouble, they start stealing..." (group interview Roma parents – Girceni, Vaslui county).

*

* *

The above analysis underlines that the target group children originated from deeply disadvantaged family environments, with multiple disadvantaging characteristics, which are generated one by the other, and whose joint action, together with that of individual and educational factors (a part of them are also induced by the social and family determinants) results in school failure.

Many of the problems faced by Roma families and which lead, in some cases, to a low participation to education, drop out or non-schooling, shown during the present investigation, were also highlighted by the teachers, during the *Rural education in Romania* study. The managers of rural environment institutions with Roma students (over 500 subjects) think that the main causes of drop out are social and family related, including among them, in the order they were indicated:

- The origin of children from very poor families;
- Keeping the children home for different agricultural activities and help with household chores;
- Affiliation to groups with season / nomadic professions (a situation which leads to the temporary withdrawal or definitive exit from the education system);
- The low education level of the parents;

Causes of different types are less frequent and mainly refer to: psycho-intellectual development deficiencies of the children and health problems (as individual factors) and school attendance difficulties, due to the big distance between the education institution and the home of the students (school network deficiencies). The latter represents, though, an important problem, especially when school transportation is not provided.

A similar perspective on the determinants of school participation can be found in the opinions on the causes of drop out expressed by the teachers investigated during the 2001 research. They were selected from 135 rural environment institutions that are facing increased drop out situations (see the chapter on the methodology of the research) and were required to give their opinions on the causes of this phenomenon, with direct reference to concrete cases recorded in the classes where they teach.

The main category of determinants highlighted through this method, is represented by social and family factors, namely: **the negative attitude of the parents toward school** (58%), especially of ethnic Roma parents; **the impossibility of the family to provide the child with the necessary resources to attend school (clothes, shoes, stationery, etc.)** – (55%) and **keeping the child home to conduct different household activities** (54%). Other causes with a lower school attendance frequency were **the season migration of the family, the child's affiliation to nomad families** and **the deviant behaviors of the family members** (delinquency, alcoholism), as well as certain **specific traditions** (for instance "the Gypsy Law" – *the woman must not be too educated*). A special situation encountered only in the case of Roma children, which the teachers identify as a non-schooling reason, is **the lack of identity documents** of the children, which the teachers claim again to be the responsibility of the family.

Individual causes hold the second place: **the child's negative attitude toward school** (34%), more frequent in the case of Roma children, **psycho-intellectual development deficiencies** (27%) or **the precarious health condition** (12%). Another cause, important in terms of frequency, especially in the case of Roma minority students, is represented by **changes in the marital status of the students (marriage)** - (7%).

"The repeated grade repetition" of one or several grades was indicated as a drop out cause by almost half of the respondents (44%). We must, however, underline that the school performances of the students are the result of a number of influence factors both related to the family, like the ones enumerated above, as well as to the school, like, for instance: the teaching methodologies employed, the methods to approach children with school adaptation difficulties and / or a socio-cultural disadvantage, the quality and diversity of the teaching methods, the school ethos, conducting stimulating extra-

curricular activities. However, the teachers referred less to the school related category of factors which may generate drop out.

Based on the present analysis, we may say that as long as school performances, school success or failure are essentially determined by social and family factors (the material situation of the family, the education level of the parents and their attitude toward school, etc.) and individual factors (many of them induced by the first category), in connection with a number of other variables – more or less numerous, with a higher or a lower degree of influence – which are, in general, dependent on the above factors, **equal opportunities for success** are still far from being confirmed by reality, particularly in the case of Roma children. That does not mean that all children coming from economically, socially, culturally and educationally disadvantaged families are "condemned" to failure from the beginning, to a less successful school evolution, to professional and social lack of success. However, failure, especially that which takes the form of drop out, is more frequent, occurring almost exclusively in the case of children coming from disadvantaged environments and areas, or children who represent disadvantaged groups, and a great part of the Roma population is in this situation.

We may conclude that **the school fails to decrease the individual and social differences between children**, to diminish the social and cultural disadvantage of some of the students, regardless of their ethnic origin (and even less, the economic disadvantage). To some extent, the conclusions of certain studies which tried to answer the question on how much performance variations³³ are influenced by variations at the level of individual, social, family and school conditions and factors, and which

³³ The impact of different categories of determinants analyzed during the study is also displayed in the school results of the students. Thus, the **grade repetition rate** at the level of obligatory education, in the case of institutions with Roma students, between 1997 – 1999, was 5.2%, as compared to 3.9%, which is the corresponding value at the level of the whole number of rural environment schools. This gap is even more obvious in the case of predominantly Roma schools (with over 70% Roma ethnic students). Thus, in the 175 predominantly Roma schools which provided information on this indicator, the grade repetition rate is of 11.3%, that is almost three times bigger as compared to the whole system. At the same time, and with regard to the **presence of the students at the elementary school graduation exam** (the 1999 session), Roma schools record sensibly lower values: if, for all the rural environment education institutions, the elementary school graduation exam presence was of 88%, in the case of Roma schools it decreases to 82.4%, and in predominantly Roma schools – to 69.6% (the indicator was calculated for 132 schools who provided appropriate information). Finally, beyond the recorded presence, the graduation rate of this exam reflects the same gap. Thus, if, for the whole number of rural environment schools, the graduation rate was of 68%, in the case of Roma schools the value of this indicator decreases to 63.1%. The most critical

underlined the role of the first two categories, may be interpreted in the same sense. In other words, the school, and everything else it represents (organization, conditions, factors and resources, as a whole) seems to objectively fail sometimes to eliminate the influences exercised by the family, the community, the individual characteristics of those educated, and therefore, to achieve complete equal opportunities for education, the more since at the level of the schools there are a number of problems and deficiencies which decrease this role, as it could be seen during our presentation.

In the case of children in the most severe form of school failure - drop out during obligatory education - a category which also includes the Roma children in the target group of the present study - who are coming from seriously disadvantaged, marginalized, and socially excluded environments, the risk of perpetuating the situation of their own families is extremely high; this requires the adoption of second chance measures for the children who already dropped out of school, as well as measures to prevent this phenomenon. These solutions refer both to the school environment, to the school institution with its financial, material and human resources, but they also go beyond that, focusing on the a social protection system for disadvantaged children and families, special programs for different populations at-risk, such as the ethnic Roma population, and so on; we will refer to these solutions in the last chapter of the study.

4.3. Solutions proposed by the teachers to stimulate the school participation of Roma children

In this chapter we will present **the opinions of the teachers** on the possible solutions regarding the stimulation of the school participation of Roma children. Completing the investigation with the perspective of these actors on the analyzed phenomena is important, both in order to know *the solutions which have already been tried* at school / community level, as well as in order to understand *the feasibility* of the proposed solutions. Our analysis is based, first of all, on the information gathered from the secondary analysis of the data obtained through the IES study on *Drop out in the rural*

situation is recorded in predominantly Roma schools, where more than half of the students who take this exam do not pass it (the graduation rate is of only 44.6%).

environment and on the individual and group interviews conducted during the present research. The conclusions are completed with information from the *Rural education in Romania: conditions, problems and development strategies* study.

By questioning the school managers and the teachers on the measures taken by the school to prevent drop out / non-schooling, the investigations managed to bring a number of clarifications with regard to this issue. Most drop out prevention measures taken by the schools are designed for the family. The interventions presume initiating a dialogue with the Roma parents and providing support through the cooperation between the school and the community, and its major institutions (local authorities, church) or with local business agents. One of the mentioned solutions is to impose sanctions on the family, according to the current legislation. The only solution related exclusively to the school aimed to modify of the school year structure. A synthesis of the results is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Drop out / non-schooling prevention measures

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 = inviting the parents to school2 = visits to the student's house3 = material support provided to the family with the help of the community4 = material support provided to the family with the help of the local authorities5 = church support6 = impose sanctions on the family7 = adapting the school year structure to local conditions (weather, landscape, occupations, etc.) |
|---|

The method which the investigated schools used the most was represented by discussions with the parents (in over 90% of the cases), either by inviting them to school, or by visits to the homes of the students. The dialogue with the family is the solution used by most teachers when they face situations in which students don't show up or don't show up anymore at school. However, we must notice that this action is only a preliminary solution: the school gets in touch with the family in order to *inform* it on the situation of the child, in order to motivate the parents to get informed or to identify the causes which led to this situation and to stimulate their interest in the education of the children. There are, however, various factors which may prevent the family from supporting the school's demarche, which means that the dialogue is not enough most of the times, and cannot, in

itself, solve the school participation problem. Most of the investigated school managers and teachers mentioned the dialogue with the family, while information on other measures was scarce. The ideas expressed during the social surveys support this observation (Text box 1). Thus, in most drop out cases investigated, regardless of the factors which trigger it, there are no examples of school initiative (Text box 2). This thing happens both before, as well as after the students stop attending school, in other words, both in the case of measures which should be taken to prevent the phenomenon, as well as in the case of drop out eradication measures.

Text box 1. Interview teachers - M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Mediator: Did you try to do something to bring her back to school?

Teacher: Certainly, I went to her house, and I saw the conditions she was living in, she was indeed staying with her grandmother, after that she repeated fourth grade, the grandmother died... the parents felt sorry about it, they were parents you could talk to, there were no problems, just like in the case of the parents I have now; they are concerned, they are at least telling the children to write, good or bad, even though they don't know how to help the children... at least they tried, and this is something for them.

Principal: [...] We did make some efforts, you know...

Mediator: Specifically, what did you do?

Principal: Well, we tightened our relationships with them... We go to the community, they are also invited to the City Hall. It's about providing services, it's not about imposing conditions on them, you simply talk to them, you tell them, look, they are going to need this, they need to get a job, they need to go to school, although the City Hall does offer them jobs and then, they send their children to school. So, first of all, these discussions... and we also have an example: years ago, we had students who graduated from high school, and one of them is now married to an ethnic Roma, who is a Law student.

Text box 2. Family survey - Polovragi, Gorj county

Student: I went to school for 7 years, but I stopped because my parents were going to work and someone had to stay home. I couldn't go any longer, because I had to stay home while my parents were at work. When I went back to school in the autumn, the principal told me to stop coming, and I did. I was a retained student for one year. On the other hand, they were not taking very good care of us. They dictated, and if you managed to write it was ok, if not...

The same idea is reflected from the group interviews with the parents. They appreciate the openness of the teachers and their wide knowledge of the problems faced by the students, but they criticize the weak capacity of the teachers to identify concrete solutions to the different school problems.

Text box 3. Group interviews Roma parents - Bucharest

Mediator: Mr. Ilie, how do you get along with the teachers?

Parent: Fine so far, but the results are different, we are talking about children, it went well until the fourth

grade, in the fifth grade he encountered children who are 14-15 years old, and he lost touch with reality... in the second semester I managed to.... Then, a feeling of disgust appeared.

Mediator: Was it due to the older children?

Parent: This school is more specific, anything can be done, the big ones are stronger... the young ones rely on their parents... therefore they feel humiliated, enslaved, its' like they no longer have... like before, yet they managed to recover... what I noticed in my child, is a feeling of disgust for going to this school: father, I am not going there anymore, they spit on me, they take my notebook, they take money from my pockets; he who is weak does not have the right to live.

Mediator: And how do you get along with the class master?

Parent: We get along well, be he's on the side of the strong ones.

Mediator: But did you tell him?

Parent: Yes, certainly. There was a problem, I came to school, I didn't stay home and wait for my child to come... But he did nothing. Now, during this vacation, I made the decision to forbid him to go to this school, I'd rather he goes by bus, by tram (to another school), than let him go to this school.

Mediator: On what occasions do you come to school?

Parent: If the teacher summons me, I go. Or for the parent meetings.

Mediator: But on what other occasions do the teachers summon you to school?

Parent: When there are problems related to one of the school subjects, or health problems.

Mediator: Do you feel the need to come to the school more often?

Parent: Absolutely, if parents came to school more often, their children would study better... because the teachers alone are not enough.

Parent: When I follow him around, I slap him now and then, and it works...

The measures mentioned by the teachers show that the concern of the schools to prevent drop out / non-schooling did not manage, in general, to be turned into innovative strategies or activities. Simple solutions which imply minimal (human and material) resources were used in most cases, without conducting, with some exceptions, programs which should be designed for or have an impact on the school participation. Due to the numerous difficulties (analyzed at large in the chapters on drop out and non-schooling determining factors) most initiatives, where they exist, are not put into practice.

A second category of measures, in order of frequency, is **providing material support to the families, with the help of the local authorities**. These measures were mentioned by approximately one third of the total number of 135 investigated schools, where there are Roma students who dropped out at obligatory education level. Since the minimal enforcement conditions are fulfilled (the good cooperation between the school and the City Hall, and the existence of available financial resources in the local budget), this measure can prove efficient in certain cases where school participation is negatively influenced by the precarious economic conditions of the family. The information

provided by the teachers during individual interviews hints, though, to the fact that it is quite hard, nowadays, to use such a solution, although the results which can be obtained are exceptional.

Text box 4. Interview teacher, M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Teacher: There are also Romanians who skip classes, but not too many in my class, or they are so and so, one Roma parent and one Romanian parent, and another problem in my class is the material aspect, the parents are separated...

Mediator: Did anything happen in this sense, can either you or the City Hall help them somehow?

Teacher: Yes, we had a meeting with the City Hall, the Roma parents, and the teachers. It helped us a lot in order to bring them to school. The mayor has a lot of influence on them. He always supported them. He was telling the Roma representatives who were there: *"Please, you know I helped you as much as I could, please help me too! Let's bring them to school!"* And because the Roma intervened, their representative also talked to them, and this mattered a lot. The children came to school. However, they still skip classes, because they are doing what they please. But a bridge was built: Ramona, whom I was telling you about, the teacher said that she couldn't bring her to school, she doesn't want to, I said, please send her just for one week to talk to me, to stay here in the class, bring her, and she will complete eight grades. So no one treated her differently, but I understood there is a strong tie between the City Hall and them. I noticed that they have great respect for the City Hall.

Mediator: But do you have any idea what the City Hall did for them?

Teacher: It helped them, always. They found an opening, they said, yes, Mr. Mayor, we will help you the way you would help us. I don't know exactly what the City Hall did.

Mediator: Was the mayor pleading in favor of summoning the children to school?

Teacher: Yes, and because their representative understood that, there were children who haven't been to school in years, and thus we managed to get them back in school... The message to the community was: *If you cannot become teachers...support your people if you think you cannot find any understanding in other ethnic groups, stand up and support your cause.*

Approximately one fifth of the answers mentioned **financial assistance measures for the family, provided with the support of the local community**. As in the previous case, these solutions are conditioned by the locality economic development level (the presence of business agents, the resources of the parents of other students, etc.), by the openness of the church toward community problems and the capacity of the school to raise extra-budgetary financial resources. Several examples that illustrate this type of intervention were offered during the interviews with the teachers.

Text box 5. Interview teachers - M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta

Principal: Honestly, I even go beg for sponsorships, we have a school activity on Saturdays, to attract the fathers of the children, because some of them don't know exactly where the school is, and we started with the parents of the students in grades 1-4, we initiated all sorts of contests, soccer games, chess games, and if we at least had one notebook, one pencil for each participant, it would justify my efforts.

Mediator: And where do you get these?

Principal: The main source is a petrol station.

Mediator: Are the children of the station manager enrolled here?

Principal: No, and this is the nice part of it, he is not from Kogalniceanu, his wife was a student of this school, but these people help both the school, and the kindergartens, and if others go to them before us, they help them too. There are other kiosks at the entrance, since there are so many children, so, obviously they go to the one in the schoolyard, and the waiting line is long, so then, they go to the other kiosk. Well, the owner of that other kiosk helps us, an artificial tree for Christmas, and other things. When I went to the owner of the first kiosk he said: *you know, we have children... I can't give you anything!*

Mediator: Do you have any business agents in the area?

Principal: There are no such agents... we tried to ask a company which deals with air traffic control. The manager was very pleased, especially since the parents of some children were working there. We asked for some furniture, which they were going to throw away, some computers, and they said they needed approval from Bucharest! For things which they were going to throw away!

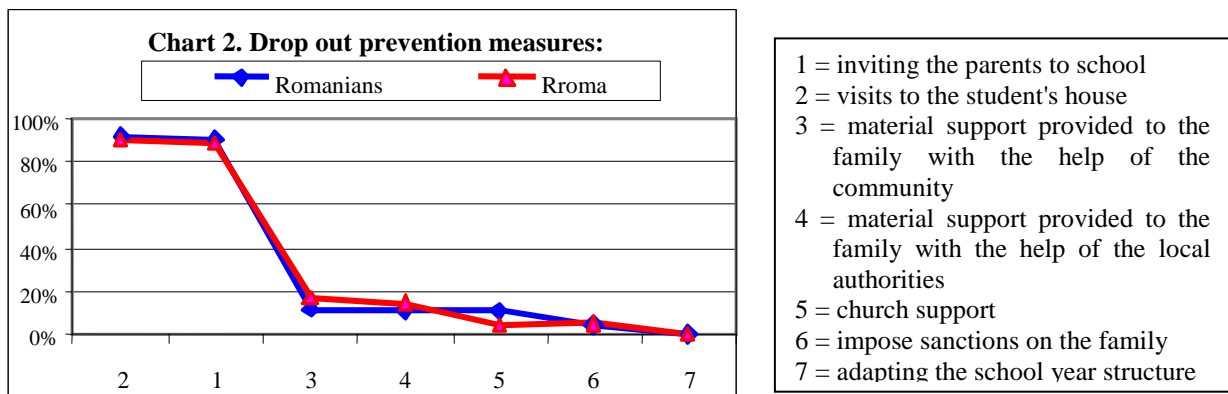
Although there are situations in which the family has a reserved attitude toward education and does not perceive that withdrawing the child from school is a profoundly negative thing, only 2.2% of the answers mention **imposing sanctions on the family** as being one of the solutions applied. We can also notice that the cooperation measures and assistance measures for families with uneducated children and children who dropped out are preferred, to the detriment of those based on coercion, especially after more and more parents are accusing the legitimacy of conditioning the allowance by school attendance. However, financial assistance for ethnic Roma families, as a drop out or non-schooling prevention measure, can also lead to *perverse effects*. One example can be the creation of a dependency culture: certain families will be tempted to keep their children at home, only to benefit from possible material advantages. Another example is to be found in one of the interviews conducted with the teachers:

Text box 6. Interview teacher - M. Kogalniceanu, Constanta county

Teacher: We also tried, we conducted two clothing collection activities, and in addition we received some from the economic high school. We did this in the previous years, but this year we forgot, because we had so many things on our minds, and the people from the economic high school had the initiative to do it. Then, our people said why shouldn't we do it, too... and we did, one during Easter time, and one during the New Year. These humanitarian aids, they were not only for the Roma, they were also for Romanians who are poor, but there were cases when some of the Roma sold the notebooks, or... Maybe the amount should be lower than what they gave in the past, less than one million. You initially give a smaller amount for schoolbooks, notebooks, shoes, and then you give another amount of money during the following year.

As a consequence, the unwanted secondary effects, which could appear by providing vulnerable families financial assistance, must be corrected through different school actions, by adapting improvement strategies to the individual particularities of children who are at risk of dropping out or being uneducated; the social and cultural model of the different ethnic minorities is one of the factors which may directly influence the efficiency of some of these measures.

The analysis of the school participation improvement measures according to ethnic affiliation, conducted during the IES study on school participation, shows that, in general, there are no significant differences with regard to the solutions applied, instead the differences are in terms of the frequency of cases which benefited from a particular solution.



In the case of ethnic Roma students, church support solutions are approximately twice as few, as compared to Romanian students, while the financial assistance solutions are more frequent in the case of Roma students.

Text box 7. Interview teachers –Tigveni, Arges county

Mediator: In your opinion, what would be the solutions for decreasing drop out and non-schooling?

Teacher: We need a complex approach for that. We have the determining role, but one must not forget that the parents must also be educated. And here, not only the school, but the local authorities and the other institutions as well must get more involved. The Gypsies go to church, but they have a mercantile purpose for that, they go there to beg, to receive. Religion classes in school were conducted superficially, they were not conducted on a constant basis, the teacher simply didn't show up. The village priest is a person with authority, but we would only show up for one class, instead of three. The City Hall did not know how to involve the Gypsies in cultural events. That would have been a socializing opportunity, both parents and children need it. They could meet with other parents and they would realize that there are no big differences between them and

the other children. They are obsessed with the fact that they belong to a Gypsy community... that they are marginalized.

Starting from the hypothesis that a school which knows how to involve the parents in solving problems and in its activities, has more chances to succeed in its drop out and non-schooling prevention measures, we tried to illustrate, during our investigation, the relationship between the school and the family, and the domains in which Roma parents became involved. Thus, only 3% of the schools state that they do not involve parents in any of their activities, while over 90% state that they involved the parents in at least one aspect related to their school activity. The most frequently mentioned are the administrative activities (78%). The involvement of parents in choosing the curriculum decided at school level or in organizing extra-curricular activities also recorded significant percentages (67% and 35%), which is encouraging if we take into account the positive impact of these activities on school participation. Although the teachers did not mention them as a solution, these activities may turn the school into an environment which is closer to the specific of the local community and motivating for the family. The fact that parents respond to such requests shows that there is an important potential which must be capitalized on. Since many studies demonstrate the importance of the attitude of the parents to the school success of their children, the programs which will also manage to include in their extra-curricular activities specific drop out and non-schooling prevention objectives (such as making the parents and children familiar with the rigors of a formal education system, stimulating the socialization of children, assisting the parents in identifying the specific needs of the children, orientation and counseling, etc.) can prove to be efficient. Thus, the school participation stimulation measures included in the institutional development plans of the schools which face such phenomena must not be limited just to economic assistance solutions for families.

Even though more than half of the investigated schools state that parents are financially supporting the school (54%), these contributions have, in general, a low value, and are designed especially to solve different administrative problems, which makes the support of other institutions vital for the material assistance for families with uneducated children or dropouts. Since only 1% of the schools state that parents got involved in obtaining donations / sponsorships for the school, or in initiating program whose beneficiary is the school, we can say that, until now, schools didn't manage to attract parents into achieving

real local partnerships and did not exploit all available opportunities in implementing this type of solutions.

It is relatively encouraging the fact that almost 20% of the school institutions stated that they initiated or benefited from local, regional or national programs. In the absence of such programs, it is extremely difficult to develop managerial capacities, so that the management of a school institution could become a real agent of change. Non-participation is one of the most difficult problems which a school principal must solve. In this sense, the experience of some programs, especially if other partners are involved in them, may represent an important support.

The schools that state that they conducted various projects appreciate the positive impact on their current activities, which confirms the above conclusion. However, only one fifth of the schools underline, among the positive results, the decrease of drop out cases. No program especially designed to eradicate this phenomenon was mentioned, as the projects which led to this effects had very diverse subjects. The most often mentioned are: the facility to integrate future Roma students or first grade students (additional student training programs, teacher training programs, supplying teaching materials); school development (training the principals, counseling and orientation, setting up laboratories, supplying furniture, etc.); education for the minorities (cross-cultural education, oral history, cultural activities organized with the support of the community); attracting the parents to school (lectures with parents, involving the parents in establishing the disciplines in the curriculum decided at school level or the extra-curricular activities, including the parents in the school decision making structures).

Other programs mentioned were *The school buildings rehabilitation program*, *The rural education re-launch program*, and the *School transportation program*. Unfortunately, several success projects did not manage to be sustainable, due to the difficulties to raise funding sources after completion. The analysis of the main funding sources of such programs indicate the fact that less than 80% of the investigated schools managed to conduct certain programs designed exclusively through their own efforts or with the support of non-governmental organizations or sponsors. The rest of the schools managed to conduct certain projects only with the help of programs initiated at national level.

As we have shown so far, the solutions which refer directly to children who drop out or are uneducated, are not very diversified. The analysis of the programs initiated and conducted by the schools supports the idea that there is still a low program experience with regard to developing strategies for at-risk students. Although most of the investigated schools state that they are conducting additional student training programs, the problems of a child who is about to drop out are not limited to cognitive problems. A more careful analysis of the individual needs of the children (training needs, as well as psycho-affective needs) may detect in time those students who are at risk of dropping out of school, and may supply important information for drop out prevention programs.

Also, organizing regularly extra-curricular activities, to whose educational valences we referred earlier, would represent one of the solutions to the school participation problem. A high number of the investigated schools (80%) mention organizing such activities, but without explicitly considering them solutions to stimulate school participation and to prevent drop out. Extra-curricular activities, with a positive impact on the motivation and attitude of the students toward school, as well as the curriculum decided at school level, represent one of the most efficient instruments of the school to adapt to the local community characteristics, to develop a new identity for the students (developing the feeling of belonging to a certain group - class, school) and to stimulate informal education initiatives. This will also indirectly contribute to the decrease of the number of students who drop out of school.

The solutions indicated by the managers of the schools with Roma students, which are illustrated through the secondary analysis of the database build during the study regarding the rural education in Romania, are also focusing especially on improving the social and family conditions and factors. The following were mentioned with an increased frequency:

- material and financial support for Roma children and their families;
- cooperating with the family in order to stimulate its interest and the interest of children for school;
- cooperating with the local authorities and institutions;
- imposing sanctions on the families.

The solutions which focus on school determinants, indicated in fewer cases, refer to: improving the teacher training quality and improving their access to lifelong training programs; developing alternative education forms; imposing sanctions on the teachers who are not interested in the school participation of the students; providing school transportation when needed, etc.

The proposals of the school managers and teachers regarding the school participation stimulation of Roma children were included in the strategy drafted for this very purpose, which is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. SCHOOL PARTICIPATION STIMULATION STRATEGY FOR ROMA CHILDREN AND YOUTH

5.1. Objectives regarding the school participation stimulation for Roma children and youth

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- O1. Increasing the degree of enrollment of Roma children and youth at all education levels**
- O2. Improving the quality of the human resources involved in education, in order to create a stimulating educational environment for Roma children**
- O3. Projecting the educational offer in order to promote cross-culturality**
- O4. Providing access to education and training for adult Roma**
- O5. Opening up the school to the community and diversifying the partnership projects involving community actors**
- O6. Establishing a national monitoring system for the school participation of Roma children and youth, in order to develop improvement measures**
- O7. Capitalizing on the success stories of the national and European education programs and projects designed for the Roma population**

O1. Increasing the degree of enrollment of Roma children and youth at all education levels

Critical points

- The low enrollment degree in pre-school education of ethnic Roma children
- The low participation of Roma children and youth to basic education and to post-obligatory education levels, especially children coming from economically, socially and culturally disadvantaged family environments, who are at risk of being socially excluded
- Deficiencies of the pre-school education institution network, with implications on the school participation of children at this education level
- The weak development of the post-obligatory education network in the rural environment
- School attendance difficulties for daytime education in the case of Roma children residing in isolated rural areas with home - school transportation difficulties, who come from migratory families
- The limited access to alternative forms of education (low frequency education, long distance education, etc.) of Roma children and youth who dropped out or were never enrolled in school

Specific objectives

1.1. Stimulating the participation of Roma children to pre-school education, especially to the school readiness preparatory group, in view of preventing school adaptation difficulties, including those generated by not knowing the Romanian language

1.2. Re-sizing the pre-school education network, so that it can provide access to this level of education to each child in the Roma communities

1.3. Stimulating the participation to basic education of Roma children, especially of those coming from the most disadvantaged social and family environments, with the help of specially designed programs

1.4. Developing alternative basic education organization forms for Roma children in special situations (children residing in isolated areas, dropouts or uneducated children, children coming from migratory families, at-risk children)

1.5. Stimulating the participation of young Roma to higher levels of education

1.6. Diversifying the post-obligatory education network in order to expand the young Roma's access opportunities to these education levels.

O2. Improving the quality of the human resources involved in education, in order to create a stimulating educational environment for Roma children

Critical points

- The very low proportion of qualified teachers and school managers who belong to the Roma ethnic group
- The small number of qualified ethnic Roma teachers, as related to the personnel need which should provide, based on community demand, the teaching of the Romani language
- The high percentage of unqualified teachers (ethnic Roma or of another nationality) in the rural environment and the magnitude of the fluctuation and commuting phenomena
- The limited access of rural environment teachers, including those of Roma origin, to lifelong training programs, due to the high costs involved and the training offer inadequate to the rural environment characteristics and to the problems of special education needs students
- The absence or the insufficient development, during initial and continuous training teacher programs, of a number of modules which would promote cross-cultural education and develop the competencies needed to prevent, monitor, and improve school failure and lack of adaptation situations
- The lack of teacher competencies to work with adults and the insufficient development of their abilities to communicate and relate to the main community institutions and actors
- The lack of measures - or the low efficiency of those which exist - to stimulate young Roma to become teachers

Specific objectives

- 2.1. Increasing the number of qualified Roma teachers
- 2.2. Providing the needed number of qualified teachers to teach Romani in pre-university education institutions
- 2.3. Providing the needed number of qualified Roma teachers to conduct the teaching process (grades 1 - 4/ 1 - 8) in Romani, in institutions from communities that request teaching in maternal language
- 2.4. Stimulating the promotion of qualified Roma teachers on school administration positions (school inspectors and principals of institutions with a high percentage of Roma ethnic school population)
- 2.5. Attracting qualified teachers to the rural environment, either of Roma origin, or from the majority population, and reducing the fluctuation and commuting phenomena
- 2.6. Increasing the access of rural environment teachers, in general, and of teachers from communities with Roma population, in particular, to lifelong training programs
- 2.7. Adapting the training offer to the training needs of the teachers and school managers from institutions that have Roma ethnic population
- 2.8. Training the teachers for the purpose of promoting cross-cultural education
- 2.9. Increasing the teacher degree of awareness regarding problems focusing on school participation and the magnitude of non-schooling and drop out, as well as the involvement of the teachers in concrete activities to improve these phenomena
- 2.10. Stimulating the teachers from schools located in Roma communities to get involved in adult education and community education activities
- 2.11. Developing a network of ethnic Roma school mediators

O3. Projecting the educational offer in order to promote cross-culturality

Critical points

- The poor diversification of the schoolbooks and auxiliary materials offer, which are needed to teach the Romani Language and the History and Culture of Roma Minority school subjects

- The insufficient development of cross-cultural approaches within the core school curriculum disciplines (i.e. disciplines belonging to the Language and Communication, Man and Society, and Arts curricular domains)
- The lack of teaching materials, cross-cultural information and documentation materials in kindergartens and schools, for the students and the teachers
- The sporadic character of cross-cultural extra-curricular activities or activities especially designed for the ethnic Roma students
- The poor capitalization on the Roma characteristic crafts within the initial and lifelong professional training offer

Specific Objectives

- 3.1. Diversifying the curricular offer needed to teach disciplines designed for Roma children (The Romani Language, The History and Culture of the Roma Minority)
- 3.2. Developing cross-cultural approaches in teaching core school curriculum disciplines (i.e. disciplines belonging to the Language and Communication, Man and Society, and Arts curricular domains)
- 3.3. Capitalizing on the Roma culture, history and traditions in the curriculum decided at school level of the education institutions with ethnic Roma population
- 3.4. Developing the extra-curricular activity offer (student camps, festivities, contests, celebrations of events, etc.) with cross-cultural characteristics or which are especially designed for ethnic Roma students
- 3.5. Capitalizing on the characteristic Roma crafts within the initial and lifelong professional training offer

O4. Providing access to education and training for adult Roma

Critical points

- The low education level of Roma adults
- The high rate of illiteracy among Roma adults
- The reserved attitude of the Roma parents toward the school and the participation to education of their children

- The limited access to training programs
- The low level of employment

Specific objectives

- 4.1. Increasing the education level of the adult ethnic Roma population
- 4.2. Stimulating the development of the positive attitudes of the Roma adults toward school and increasing their awareness on the role and importance of education
- 4.3. Stimulating the interest of the adult ethnic Roma for the increase of the professional training level
- 4.4. Increasing employment opportunities

O5. Opening up the school to the community and diversifying the partnership projects involving community actors

Critical points

- The low degree of involvement of the Roma parents in making school decisions
- The lack of confidence of the Roma parents, especially of those with a low education level, in the role of the school as a determinant of the social and professional success of the students and transferring the responsibilities regarding the school results of the students exclusively onto the school
- Communication difficulties and the lack of cooperation projects with the local community, to promote education projects, especially programs which focus on multicultural education
- The insufficient development of managerial strategies to co-interest business agents in programs that would bring benefits to the school
- The lack of projects focused on the insertion of the young ethnic Roma graduates and the low number of school - community partnerships needed in order to facilitate professional integration

Specific objectives

- 5.1. Stimulating the participation of Roma parents to school activities and using them as a resource in educational activities
- 5.2. Improving the communication and cooperation between the school and the local authorities in order to promote programs designed for Roma children and youth
- 5.3. Developing managerial strategies to co-interest business agents in cooperation programs with education institutions
- 5.4. Involving school institutions in the establishment and operation of *Community resource centers for the Roma population* and increasing the role of education in community development
- 5.5. Involving post-obligatory education institutions in the development of employment projects for young Roma graduates

O6. Establishing a national monitoring system for the school participation of Roma children and youth, in order to develop improvement measures

Critical points

- Deficiencies in the data collecting system regarding cases of drop out and non-schooling
- The lack of a database at county and national level regarding the cases of drop out and non-schooling

Specific objectives

- 6.1. Implementing a monitoring system for cases of drop out and non-schooling of Roma children
- 6.2. Optimizing the data collection system on drop out and non-schooling
- 6.3. Initiating a national information system on the evolution of drop out and non-schooling of Roma children

O7. Capitalizing on the success stories of the national and European education programs and projects designed for the Roma population

Critical points

- The low dissemination and exposure level of the results of programs designed to educate the Roma population
- The lack of periodical evaluations regarding the impact of programs designed for the Roma ethnic population
- The low coherence and continuity level of the interventions achieved via programs which particularly focused on punctual problems of the Roma population
- The non-homogenous distribution of the programs with an impact on education, in the geographical areas where there are Roma communities

Specific objectives

7.1. Increasing the visibility of the Roma population education programs, in order to capitalize on their results

5.2. The implementation plan of the school participation stimulation strategy for Roma children and youth

O1. Increasing the degree of enrollment of Roma children and youth at all education levels

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
1.1 Stimulating the participation of Roma children to pre-school education, especially to the school readiness preparatory group, in view of preventing school adaptation difficulties, including those generated by not knowing the Romanian language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditioning the school allowance by attendance of the school readiness preparatory group, since this will become compulsory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration 	2005	Increasing the enrollment degree of pre-school age Roma children in the school readiness preparatory group, up to 90%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting a yearly census of all pre-school age Roma children, by the teachers and the school mediators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The kindergarten County school inspectorates 	Annually	Building a database that would include all pre-school age children in the community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing an ethnic Roma kindergarten teacher or a teacher who speaks Romani in kindergartens from majority Roma communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research The county school inspectorates 	2007	Diminishing the difficulties to adapt to the pre-school environment, especially difficulties of communicating in Romanian
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving the kindergarten teachers in identifying cases of children without identity documents, and in reporting these cases to the qualified authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The kindergarten The local administration 	Permanently	Decreasing the number of Roma children without identity documents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting information activities for the Roma parents, on the importance of kindergarten and early education for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The kindergarten - The local community - Roma organizations - Roma communities leaders - The mass-media 	Permanently	Positive changes in the attitude of the Roma parents toward the participation to pre-school education of their children
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating Roma children in all day long program kindergartens, as a premise for multiplying the educational influences and their effects on the development of the personality of the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School inspectorate - Kindergarten 	Permanently	Positive changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the children, school adaptation difficulties prevention
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a free meal / snack for all children in pre-school education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research); - The community (parents, business agents, NGOs etc.) 	Permanently	Increasing the enrollment degree of Roma pre-school age children in kindergartens
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing material support to the children and to the poorest Roma families, by involving the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research); - The community (parents, the church, business agents, NGOs) - Roma organizations 		
1.2. Re-sizing the pre-school education network, so that it can provide access to this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the current pre-school education network in order to identify communities which have no kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - The local administration 	2003	Establishing at least one kindergarten in each community / providing the transportation of children to pre-school education

level of education to each child in the Roma communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the pre-school education network, according to the local demographic evolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research County school inspectorates The local administration 	2007	institutions in neighboring localities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the quality of the infrastructure and equipment in pre-school education institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research The local administration The community 	2006	Equipping pre-school education institutions according to MER standards
1.3. Stimulation of the participation to basic education of Roma children, especially of those coming from the most disadvantaged social and family environments, with the help of specially designed programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing ethnic Roma teachers or teachers who speak Romani in schools with a high percentage of Roma students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research County school inspectorates 	2007	Diminishing school adaptation difficulties, especially difficulties of communicating in Romanian
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing the program which focuses on providing material support (free stationery) to children coming from poor families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) 	Permanently	Increasing the enrollment degree of Roma school age children in obligatory education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a free meal / snack: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: to all children, regardless of their ethnic origin, enrolled in the obligatory education system Option 2: to all children, regardless of their ethnic origin, enrolled in the primary education system Option 2: to all children from school with grades 1 - 4 / 1 - 8, where the percentage of Roma students is higher than 30 - 50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research); The community (parents, business agents, NGOs etc.) 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing material support to the children and to the poorest Roma families, by involving the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research); - The community (parents, the church, business agents, NGOs) - Roma organizations 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing measures to facilitate the school access of Roma children: - Enrolling Roma children who have no identity documents and providing them support to obtain these documents - Initiating legal measures to facilitate the transfer of Roma children who come from migratory families, which often change their residence, from one school to another - Improving the effectiveness of the psychological examination of children at the beginning of school (providing specialists, appropriate examination tools, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - County psycho-pedagogical assistance centers - The school - The local administration 	Permanently 2003 2004	Reducing the cases of drop out and non-schooling, as well as the cases of unjustified orientation, toward special education / mass education
1.4. Developing alternative basic education organization forms for Roma children in special situations (children residing in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the quality of the infrastructure and equipment in the education institutions included in the current network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - The local administration - The community 	2004	Equipping the obligatory education institutions in conformity with MER standards

isolated areas, dropouts or uneducated children, children coming from migratory families, at-risk children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing school access conditions by developing the school transportation network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - The local administration - The community 	2003	<p>Reducing the number of children who drop out or are not enrolled</p> <p>Decreasing school absenteeism</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the infrastructure, the human and material resources, drafting the curriculum in order to develop alternative forms of education: - The "itinerant teacher" model for the schooling of children who reside in isolated areas or who come from nomad families; - low frequency or intensive obligatory forms of education, for Roma children who, due to different reasons, cannot attend daytime education; - second chance education forms for uneducated children or for children who dropped out and want to integrate / re-integrate in the formal education system; - The open and long-distance post-obligatory education system designed for Roma children residing in isolated areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - The National Center for Curriculum - The National Evaluation and Examination Service - The school - The local administration 	2010	<p>Reducing the number of children who drop out or are not enrolled</p> <p>Decreasing school absenteeism</p>
1.5. Stimulating the participation of young Roma to higher levels of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granting scholarships to young Roma students with excellent results, who want to continue their studies in vocational schools, high schools, colleges and universities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) - The local administration - Business agents - Roma organizations 	Annually	Increasing the number of ethnic Roma specialists in the above mentioned fields

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing government funded slots for Roma students in the higher education system, especially in the following fields: health, social assistance, public administration, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) 		
1.6. Diversifying the post-obligatory education network in order to expand the young Roma's access opportunities to these education levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the rural environment post-obligatory education institutions network and its equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - The local administration 	2007	Increasing the degree of participation to post-obligatory education of the young Roma from the rural environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing specializations for apprenticeship and vocational education, especially designed to capitalize on Roma traditional crafts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - Roma organizations 	2007	Increasing the number of young Roma specialized in the above mentioned fields
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing vocational education forms (departments within music and choreography high schools, art schools, etc) which should capitalize on Roma culture and traditions elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - Roma organizations 	2007	

O2. Improving the quality of the human resources involved in education, in order to create a stimulating educational environment for Roma children

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
2.1. Increasing the number of qualified Roma teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiating a special financial support program designed for the ethnic Roma who attend pedagogical education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) Roma organizations 	Permanently	Improving the qualified Roma teacher deficit
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to provide government funded slots for the ethnic Roma within pedagogical education institutions, on condition that after graduation, they should work in schools with Roma population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research Pedagogical colleges Universities 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing special training programs for unqualified Roma teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County school inspectorates County teacher houses Pedagogical colleges Universities The Institute for Educational Sciences NGOs 		
2.2. Providing the needed number of qualified teachers to teach Romani in pre-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying education institutions where the teaching of the Romani language is required and establishing the needed number of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County school inspectorates 	2003	Improving the qualified teacher deficit for the teaching of the Romani language

university education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing special training programs for unqualified Roma teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County school inspectorates County teacher houses Pedagogical colleges Universities Teacher training centers Roma organizations 	Permanently	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiating a special financial support program designed for the ethnic Roma who are studying in faculties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) Roma organizations 	Annually	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the number of slots within the faculties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research Universities 	Annually	
2.3. Providing the needed number of qualified Roma teachers to conduct the teaching process (grades 1 - 4/ 1 - 8) in Romani, in institutions from communities that request teaching in maternal language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiating a special financial support program designed for the ethnic Roma who are attending the appropriate education institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) Roma organizations 	2010	Providing the necessary conditions for the study of the maternal language, in communities where this is required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing government funded slots for the ethnic Roma, in the appropriate education institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research Pedagogical colleges Universities 		
2.4. Stimulating the promotion of qualified Roma teachers on school administration positions (school inspectors and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting and adopting suitable legal measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government, Parliament County school inspectorates Roma organizations 	2003	Increasing the percentage of Roma school managers

principals of institutions with a high percentage of Roma ethnic school population)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access for the qualified Roma teachers to lifelong training programs, especially organized for acquiring the needed managerial competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County school inspectorates - Universities - County teacher houses - Training centers for school managers - The Institute for Educational Sciences - NGOs 	Permanently	
2.5. Attracting qualified teachers to the rural environment, either of Roma origin, or from the majority population, and reducing the fluctuation and commuting phenomena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing facilities to the qualified teachers who settle in the rural environment and especially in the most disadvantaged and isolated areas and / or observing the facilities already provided for by the legal regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) - Local administration - County school inspectorates 	Permanently	Decreasing the qualified teacher deficit in the rural environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the facility granting program (scholarships, financial education support etc.) for the students included in the pedagogical education system, who will work in rural environment institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central administration (Government, the Ministry of Education and Research) - Local administration 	Permanently	
2.6. Increasing the access of rural environment teachers, in general, and of teachers from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-centralizing the lifelong teacher training system in the rural environment, by developing regional training centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - County teacher houses 	2007	Increasing the number of teachers who participate in lifelong training programs

communities with Roma population, in particular, to lifelong training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making professional training more flexible, by developing the open and long distance education systems, correspondence courses, tutorials, intensive training programs, summer schools, study visits, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - County teacher houses - Colleges, universities - Teacher training centers - The Institute for Educational Sciences - NGOs - Roma organizations 	2004	
2.7. Adapting the training offer to the training needs of the teachers and school managers from institutions that have Roma ethnic population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing initial and lifelong training modules for teachers and school managers, focused on compensatory education methods and on prevention, counseling, monitoring and intervention strategies for school adaptation deficiencies, drop out and non-schooling situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County school inspectorates - Universities - Pedagogical colleges - County teacher houses - Teacher training centers - The Institute for Educational Sciences 	2004	Providing the teachers with the necessary competencies to prevent and improve school failure situations
2.8. Training the teachers for the purpose of promoting cross-cultural education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including several cross-cultural education modules in the initial and lifelong teacher training program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County school inspectorates - Colleges, universities - County teacher houses - Teacher training centers - The Institute for Educational Sciences - NGOs - Roma organizations 	2004	Changes in the attitudes of the teachers and in the educational practices used, according to the principle of cross-culturality

2.9. Increasing the teacher degree of awareness regarding problems focusing on school participation and the magnitude of non-schooling and drop out, as well as the involvement of the teachers in concrete activities to improve these phenomena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing school counselors or training one teacher in each school to solve the counseling problems of the students who are at risk of school failure, and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County school inspectorates Universities Pedagogical colleges County teacher houses Teacher training centers The Institute for Educational Sciences 	2004	Providing every school with one teacher who has competencies to counsel the students and their families
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including a special chapter on prevention and improvement activities for the school participation of the students in the school institutional development project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school 	Permanently	Developing concrete strategies to improve school participation at the level of each education institution
2.10. Stimulating the teachers from schools located in Roma communities to get involved in adult education and community education activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting teacher awareness activities on the importance of the adult education and of community education, from the perspective of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County school inspectorates County teacher houses The Institute for Educational Sciences NGOs Roma organizations 	Permanently	Increasing the motivation of the teachers for participation in adult education programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including adult and community education competencies development modules, as well as communication and cooperation abilities with actors and institutions with an educational role within the community (family, the church, local authorities, associations and organizations), in the initial and lifelong education programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County school inspectorates County teacher houses Colleges, universities Teacher training centers The Institute for Educational Sciences NGOs Roma organizations 	2005	Providing the teachers with the needed competencies to conduct adult and community education programs

2.11. Developing a network of ethnic Roma school mediators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing (initial and lifelong) training programs for Roma ethnic school mediators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges Universities Teacher training centers 	2004	Providing every school with a school mediator, in order to improve the school - community relationship
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employing school mediators in schools with Roma students, who will facilitate the relationship between the school and the community with regard to drop out, non-schooling and school failure risk problems, in cooperation with social and sanitary mediators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research County school inspectorates The school 	2007	

O3. Projecting the educational offer in order to promote cross-culturality

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
3.1. Diversifying the curricular offer needed to teach disciplines designed for Roma children (the Romani Language, the History and Culture of the Roma Minority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing the process of drafting Romani language curricula for all levels of pre-university education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research The National Council for Curriculum 	2005	Romani language curricula for all levels of pre-university education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting the schoolbooks which are needed to teach the Romani language and the Roma History and Culture 		2007	A diverse offer of schoolbooks, teaching materials and auxiliary materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the necessary auxiliary materials needed to teach the Romani language and the Roma History and Culture: teacher guides and methodologies, information and documentation materials, text books, special notebooks for the students, etc. 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting bilingual teaching materials (Romanian - Romani) designed to help learn Romanian and, respectively, Romani, in kindergartens and in the first grade 			

3.2. Developing cross-cultural approaches in teaching core school curriculum disciplines (i.e. disciplines belonging to the Language and Communication, Man and Society, and Arts curricular domains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing cross-cultural education subjects in the curricula and school materials used for disciplines belonging to the Language and Communication, Man and Society, and Arts curricular areas (the Romanian language, history, geography, civic education, religion, arts, music, etc.) which should also include elements from the Roma culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Council for Curriculum 	2005	Subjects, modules and educational supports for cross-cultural education
3.3. Capitalizing on the Roma culture, history and traditions in the curriculum decided at school level of the education institutions with ethnic Roma population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing optional disciplines focused on social and cultural elements, which are specific to the Roma culture (history, art, traditions and habits, etc.) in the curriculum decided at school level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school The National Council for Curriculum Roma organizations 	2005	The modules of the curriculum decided at school level, focused on Roma culture and Roma traditional crafts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing optional pre-professional training packages in the observation and orientation cycle, in obligatory education (grades 7 through 9), focused on traditional Roma crafts or on other locally specific crafts, by consulting with the parents and the community 		2005	Stimulating the participation to obligatory education

3.4. Developing the extra-curricular activity offer (student camps, festivities, contests, celebrations of events, etc.) with a cross-cultural character or which are especially designed for ethnic Roma students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing programs (festivities, field trips, student camps, celebrations of important events in the Roma history and culture, reciprocal support activities in the community, etc.) together with students belonging to other ethnic groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school The community (parents, local authority representatives, etc.) Roma organizations 	Permanently	Diversifying the methods of expressing ethnic identity and the cross-ethnic communication methods Increasing interest for education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing extra-curricular activities, especially designed for Roma children (national student camps, field trips, etc.), which should promote the cultural character of the Roma ethnic group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school The community (parents, local authority representatives, etc.) The Ministry of Education and Research 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing extra-curricular activities which should promote the right to education and its importance, both for girls, as well as boys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school 	Permanently	Stimulating the participation to education of the girls
3.5. Capitalizing on the characteristic Roma crafts within the initial and lifelong professional training offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing certain specializations and lifelong training modules, which should update and adapt traditional Roma crafts to the demands of the labor market, in the professional education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research The National Center for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education 	2005	Increasing the employment opportunities of the Roma population Capitalizing on the experienced acquired in the family, regarding the traditional crafts

O4: Providing access for the adult Roma to education and training

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
<p>4.1. Increasing the education level of the adult ethnic Roma population</p> <p>4.2. Stimulating the development of the Roma adults' positive attitudes toward school and increasing their awareness on the role and importance of education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying adult education needs, within the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school The local administration NGOs Roma organizations 	Permanently	Decreasing the illiteracy rate and increasing the education level of Roma adults
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizing information and awareness activities for the Roma adults, regarding the importance of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school NGOs Roma organizations The mass-media, especially TV and radio stations 	Permanently	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiating adult education programs (intensive courses, low-frequency education, summer schools, etc.) conducted by the school, using its own infrastructure, material and human resources, as well as by other representatives of the community, NGOs, a.s.o. (from this perspective the school becomes a multi-functional cultural complex) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school The local administration County school inspectorates NGOs Roma organizations 	Permanently	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing training modules for trainers, in order to use the adult education methodologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County teacher houses Teacher training centers The Institute for Educational Sciences 	2003	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting an alphabetization curriculum and modules on sanitary education, civic education, parent education, family planning, a.s.o. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County school inspectorates - Universities - Pedagogical colleges 	2003	Adult education modules
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing joint meetings between parents and teachers or specialists in various fields, regarding subjects such as the child's psycho-individual development, orientation and school counseling, opportunities to continue school, the right to education and the importance of education for the personal development, both of the girls, as well as the boys, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - County school inspectorates - The local administration 	Permanently	Improving the educational climate of the family and developing positive attitudes of the parents toward the education of their children
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community education programs at school level, in order to revitalize the cultural traditions specific to the Roma ethnic group and the community spirit, to promote acceptance and mutual respect attitudes and cross-culturality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - NGOs - Roma organizations 	Permanently	Increasing social cohesion
4.3. Stimulating the interest of the adult ethnic Roma for the increase of the professional training level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the needs of the Roma adults for professional training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - NGOs - Roma organizations 	Permanently	Increasing the employment opportunities of the Roma population and improving their living conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting awareness activities regarding the impact of professional training on employment opportunities, and implicitly on the living conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - NGOs - Roma organizations 	Permanently	

4.4. Increasing employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the access opportunities of the Roma adults to professional training programs, by developing special programs at the level of the school, school groups, and training centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (The Ministry of Education and Research, The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection) County school inspectorates Job placement agencies School institutions Public training centers Private training offers 	2004	Increasing the employment opportunities of the Roma population and improving their living conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledging the qualifications / experience / crafts of the Roma adults, acquired in informal and non-formal education contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The central administration (The Ministry of Education and Research, The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection) 	2004	

05. Opening up the school to the community and diversifying the partnership projects involving community actors

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
5.1. Stimulating the participation of Roma parents to school activities and using them as a resource in educational activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating a group of "contact parents" and disseminating the school institutional development project with its help 	- The school	Permanently	Increasing the degree of awareness of the parents regarding the importance of education for their children
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regular and active involvement of Roma parents in the decision-making structures of schools with students belonging to this ethnic group (administration boards, parent committees, etc.) 	- The school	Permanently	Developing the school-family relationship and improving the school status in the community

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing activities which would provide school visibility within the community and awareness on the importance of school: - celebrating certain events significant to the school and the community - polling the parents regarding their opinion on the activity of the school - involving the parents, voluntarily, in educational activities: participation in teaching activities, tutorial programs for children, teaching writing and reading courses for adults - involving the parents in activities which promote elements specific to the Roma culture and in cross-cultural activities (festivities, music/theater/dance shows, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - Parent committees - The local administration - Roma organizations 	<p>Permanently</p>	<p>Improving the participation to education of Roma children and decreasing drop out risk</p> <p>Diversifying the role of the school within the community</p>
--	---	---	--------------------	---

5.2. Improving the communication and cooperation between the school and the local authorities in order to promote programs designed for Roma children and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community education programs conducted by the school, in partnership with the local authorities: - Organizing regular meetings between the school and the local authority representatives - Identifying institutional partners and their responsibilities - Involving Roma organizations (parents associations, non-governmental organizations, etc.) in the programs conducted by the school and in drafting improvement strategies at local level - Evaluating the costs and identifying alternative sources to support the programs - Jointly evaluating the results of the programs and generalizing success stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school - The local administration 	Permanently	Increasing the degree of school support from the local authorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing intensive training programs for local authority representatives, on specific minority education issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County school inspectorates - County teacher houses - Teacher training centers - The Institute for Educational Sciences - The local administration 	2003	Raising the awareness of the local authority representatives and increasing their degree of involvement in improving ethnic Roma specific issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cooperation between the school and the local authorities in identifying and solving problems regarding the lack of identity documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School institutions - The local administration 	Permanently	Decreasing the number of Roma children without identity documents

5.3. Developing managerial strategies to co-interest business agents in cooperation programs with education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the managerial capacities of the managers of schools with Roma population (raising funds, drafting and managing projects, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research County teacher houses The Institute for Educational Sciences 	Permanently	Increasing the degree of school support from the business agents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attracting business agents into conducting extra-curricular activities, social activities and school community services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school Business agents Roma organizations 	Permanently	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the communication infrastructure of the school (telephone, fax, Internet) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Education and Research The local administration 	2004	Making the managerial activity more efficient

<p>5.4. Involving school institutions in the establishment and operation of <i>Community resource centers for the Roma population</i> and increasing the role of education in community development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing <i>Community resource centers for the Roma population</i> (at school level or separate centers) and using the existing ones, thus creating an active local network focused on identifying the local education needs and on involvement in school development projects by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improving the cooperation between local development institutions and the implementation of minority education projects - organizing educational activities for Roma parents (civic education, sanitary education, counseling and professional orientation, mentorship, etc) - attracting community mediators (school, social and medical mediators), with responsibilities in improving the relationship of the school with the community - facilitating the access of schools to education funding programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - The school - Roma organizations - The local administration - Parents - Business agents 	<p>2004</p>	<p>Increasing the degree of community school support</p> <p>Increasing the education level of the parents of ethnic Roma students and their awareness degree on the importance of education for their children</p>
<p>5.5. Involving post-obligatory education institutions in the development of employment projects for young Roma graduates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the partnership between the school and the business agents, in order to identify the potential employers for the young ethnic Roma graduates (contracts, job fairs, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - County job placement agencies - The school - Business agents - Roma organizations 	<p>Permanently</p>	<p>Increasing the employment opportunities of the young ethnic Roma graduates</p>

O6. Establishing a national monitoring system for the participation to education of Roma children and youth, in order to develop improvement measures

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
<p>6.1. Implementing a monitoring system for cases of drop out and non-schooling of Roma children</p> <p>6.2. Optimizing the data collection system on drop out and non-schooling</p> <p>6.3. Initiating a national information system on the evolution of drop out and non-schooling of Roma children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting a system of indicators, in order to monitor these phenomena • Building a database at county and national level, which includes drop out and non-schooling cases, which should be completed and updated yearly • Establishing specific responsibilities at the level of the County school inspectorates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coordinating the data collecting activities on drop out and non-schooling situations at county level - checking up the monitoring methods of drop out and non-schooling cases at local level - drafting a report at the end of each school year, which should give details on the magnitude of these phenomena, their evolution and on the programs initiated by the inspectorates and the schools, in order to improve school participation • Giving the school managers responsibilities regarding the coordination of the identification and monitoring activity of drop out and non-schooling cases, at local level • Developing an information network between the school and other institutions at community level, in order to corroborate the information on non- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - The school - The local administration and other community institutions - Roma organizations 	<p>2004</p>	<p>Offering a real image on drop out and non-schooling</p> <p>Raising awareness on problems regarding the school participation of the ethnic Roma population</p> <p>Substantiating drop out and non-schooling prevention and eradication policies</p>

	schooling cases and to identify their causes			
--	--	--	--	--

O7. Capitalizing on the success stories of the national and European education programs and projects designed for the Roma population

Specific objectives	Action directions	Intervention levels	Time horizon	Expected results
7.1. Increasing the visibility of the Roma population education programs, in order to capitalize on their results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a national database which includes the education programs and projects designed for the Roma population (subjects, objectives, target population, activities) available on the Internet • Initiating studies on the impact of the programs which have already been carried out • Using the positive experiences obtained during programs designed for the Roma population in designing new interventions • Conducting local and regional information campaigns on funding opportunities for Roma education projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ministry of Education and Research - County school inspectorates - The school - Roma organizations - NGOs which conduct programs designed for the Roma population - The mass-media, especially radio and TV stations 		Increasing the impact of the educational programs designed for the ethnic Roma population

5.3. The EPA system based intervention program

5.3.1. General presentation of the "priority education zone" system

The "**education priority areas**" system, which involves the principle of positive discrimination (allocating additional school resources to children with learning difficulties and weak school results, caused by their socio-economic disadvantage situation), was initiated in England (**EPA – Education Priority Areas**) in 1967. Later it was also implemented in France (1981), in order to support education activities in areas where the geo-economic and social conditions represent an obstacle against school success, and it was then developed in most European Union member states.

The EPA programs developed in these countries are designed for **target groups**, which include, in general, children up to the age of 14, who have never attended school, or who dropped out prematurely from the education system, school population coming from the peripheries of immigrant inhabited cities, rural population recently settled in the city, Roma children who do not attend school regularly, children belonging to families with itinerant occupations, other categories of socio-economically disadvantaged population, at risk or in a social exclusion situation, both in the urban environment, as well as the rural one. According to the characteristics of the group which it addresses (with differences from one country to another), the EPA programs unite in "single" classes children of various ages, or they organize classes according to levels appropriate to the age of the children.

Generally, priority area education programs have the following **objectives**:

- the eradication (decrease) of illiteracy;
- providing basic education to young people coming from socio-economically disadvantaged environments;
- facilitating their professional insertion.

The development of the EPA system presumes certain **conditions** and **preparatory stages**:

- the pedagogical substantiation of the project, including its psychological, social, economic, etc. "justification;"
- opening the education system to the outside world, and creating conditions for a differentiated education;
- coherence with the general education policy;
- the de-centralization and autonomy of the schools, as well as their increased degree of responsibility;
- drafting and applying an alternative curriculum, which focuses on acquiring basic and / or professional competencies;
- the initial and lifelong training of the teachers - actors who have the main part in applying the principles of compensatory pedagogy - in order to provide them with competencies on locating the problem, establishing objectives, drafting a concrete activity program, evaluating the results, etc.;
- multi-institutional education involvement;
- reuniting the children, parents and the other members of the community in a joint educational activity;
- making the children and parents accept the positive discrimination principle.

Taking into account the target groups to which they are addressed, as well as their objectives, EPA programs have several general characteristics:

- the long term educational effects are more obvious than short term ones, and more profitable than in the case of programs which are focused solely on knowledge acquisition;
- they focus on school performances improvement, as well as on the relationship between the child and the school (as an education resource);
- they represent a complex framework and methodology for the educational approach of the child in a school failure situation (the failure is considered in terms of a global perspective, it is not restricted only to certain disciplines), not a teaching technique;

- they presume the essential change of the traditional role of the school, focusing on social aspects, adaptation aspects, professional integration aspects, as well as others.

5.3.2. The description of the program

The study regarding the school participation of Roma children and youth resulted in the identification of the multiple causes which generate non-schooling and drop out. Taking into account the complexity of these causes, we propose a global approach of the improvement interventions, in the form of the "education priority area" system (EPA).

For this purpose, we are presenting below several elements and characteristics of an education priority area:

- the characteristics of the target population
- a hypothetical example of a medium size school, included in such a program and the resources it has;
- the necessary interventions;
- an estimate of the costs involved.

➤ **The description of the area and of the target population**

- **The geographical area of inclusion:**

- a peripheral city district.

- **The general characteristics of the population:**

- socio-economic disadvantage (low education and employment level, precarious living conditions, increased poverty);
- large concentration of Roma ethnic population.

- **The school population included in the program:**

The population will be made up both of Roma ethnic students, whom the program is mainly aimed at, as well as students who belong to other ethnic groups, or to the majority population group, coming from socio-economically disadvantaged families. The student groups will be structured into two categories, according to the focus of the program subject:

- The first target group: children aged 11 - 16 years old, uneducated or who dropped out of school more than 2 years ago;

- The second target group: students with learning difficulties and major school failure risk, uneducated children aged up to 10 years old, and students who dropped out of school less than 2 years ago.

➤ **The description of the school**

- **The size of the school:**

The school has 525 students:

- 75 students with characteristics which define the first target group mentioned above: 3 classes * 25 students;
- 450 students with the characteristics of the second target group: 18 classes (2 classes / level) * 25 students.

- **Types of programs provided by the school:**

- For the first target group the program will take three years and will intend to provide minimal basic knowledge (writing, reading, history, geography, civic education knowledge) - 2 years - and professional training - 1 year. The integration of children in this program will be made based on an initial competency evaluation, according to which they will be distributed by study years.
- For the second target group the program will be carried out based on the national curriculum, choosing the minimal number of hours / week. The curriculum decided at school level will target the achievement of minimal professional skills.

- **The organization of the school program:**

The school will operate in one shift, in a semi-boarding school system, which presumes:

- providing lunch at school (with the financial support of the government, NGOs, and others);
- providing conditions for the individual student training in school, after hours, with the assistance of a specialized staff.

- **The management of the institution:**

The institution will have an increased degree of autonomy, but also responsibility to make decisions on:

- the management of the human resources;
- the management of the material resources;
- establishing the educational offer;
- the organization of the school year structure and of the daily school program.

- **The infrastructure and the furniture:**

The school must have:

- 21 classrooms;
- 3 laboratories (physics, chemistry, biology);
- 1 computer science lab;
- 2 workshops (specialized in the trades in which the school is training the students);
- 1 counseling office;
- 1 library or reading room;
- 1 sports hall;
- 1 school canteen;

The space of an already existing school may be used, by making certain renovations and redecorations, according to the needs.

The school must have multi-functional furniture, which will allow teachers to conduct both the classes, as well as the individual training.

- **The teaching materials:**

- The school will be supplied with at least the materials provided for by *The Regulations for Minimal Supply of the Ministry of Education and Research*;
- Per the request of the school, additional teaching materials will be provided, according to the specific training needs of the students and the methodologies applied by the teachers.

- **Human resources:**
 - **Supplying the necessary staff:**
 - qualified teachers for the following categories: primary school teachers, professors, foremen teachers, school pedagogues, school counselor, community school mediator;
 - non-academic and auxiliary staff.

Supplying teachers needed to teach the Romani language, according to the needs of the students and their families, must also be taken into account.
 - **Selecting the teachers** according to certain criteria: high level of professional and pedagogical competencies, availability to participate in the program, flexibility, creativity. It is recommended that a part of the teachers belong to the Roma ethnic group.
 - **Stimulating the teachers** to participate in the program, by offering them salary bonuses.
 - **Training the teachers** via initial and lifelong training modules, focused on the development of competencies regarding:
 - the autonomy and responsibility in making decisions;
 - the approach of students with special education needs;
 - the prevention and improvement of school adaptation difficulties;
 - the alphabetization and teaching of basic knowledge (alternative curriculum for the students included in the program - the first target group);
 - adult education.
- **The educational offer:**
 - **The Curriculum** (education plans, schools programs, schoolbooks and auxiliary materials) adapted to the characteristics of the students included in the first target group will contain basic knowledge (writing, reading, calculus, history, geography, civic education knowledge, etc.) and professional training elements;
 - **The Curriculum** (school programs, schoolbooks and auxiliary materials) designed for the students included in the second target group will contain optional professional training packages. The professional training will be achieved via the curriculum decided at school level, at the level of the seventh through the ninth grades (in view

of extending obligatory education to nine years), and during the last year of study the percentage of these disciplines will reach 30%.

- For ethnic Roma students in both targets groups, **the curriculum** will include:
 - o the Romani language;
 - o elements of Roma history and culture.
- **Active and participative methodologies** will be used in the teaching process. These methodologies are designed to improve adaptation difficulties, prevent and eradicate school failure, capitalize on the progress of the children both at cognitive level, as well as at the level of their attitude and behavior, in order to stimulate their learning motivation and to improve their self image.
- **Extra-curricular activity** programs will be diverse and will focus on certain aspects, such as: developing a civic attitude, respecting the cultural identity, capitalizing on the Roma cultural heritage, cross-cultural communication. These activities will have a high percentage within the program, and will be conducted with the participation of the parents, and of other community members.
- The school will organize **parent education programs** (sanitary education, family planning, etc.) and adult alphabetization programs.
- The school will provide **counseling services** both for the students, as well as their families.

➤ **The EPA resource center**

Education priority areas should also include an *EPA resource center* which will conduct the following **tasks**:

- establishing an active local network, which is designed to identify the educational needs of the children, of their parents and of other community members;
- developing educational activities for Roma parents and for other community members, by involving the teachers and other actors with responsibilities at community level;
- attracting community mediators (school, social and medical mediators), who have responsibilities in improving the relationship between the school and the community;
- organizing activities for the benefit of the community.

The human resources involved in the activity of the EPA resource center:

- teachers;
- community mediators (school, social and medical mediators);
- local authority representatives.

The EPA resource center may operate either as a distinct institution, or within the school, using its resources.

➤ **Estimated costs**

An education institution which operates in an education priority area involves additional expenses for:

- specific supplies (furniture, teaching material, equipments);
- providing a free meal for the children;
- developing special training programs for the teachers and school managers;
- an additional number of teachers and salary bonuses;
- developing specific curricula;
- the operation of the resource center.

Following, we will present an estimate of the costs, for certain expense categories, which are involved by the development of the EPA system at the level of an education institution, whose characteristics were described above.

- **The training of the teachers**

Methodological premises: 10-day teacher training courses.

Training costs / day: USD 2 (course support and other auxiliary materials) + USD 1 (the trainer's fee) = USD 3 / person

Total teacher training costs:

38 (teachers) * USD 3 * 10 (days) = **USD 1,140**

- **Furniture supplies**

Methodological premises: supplying all 21 classrooms with modular furniture (25 desks + 25 chairs, 1 teacher's desk + 1 chair, 1 blackboard, 1 library shelf)

Classrooms costs:

25 (desk + chair) * USD 60 = USD 1,500

1 (teacher's desk = chair) * USD 80 = USD 80

1 (blackboard) * USD 150 = USD 150

1 (library shelf) * USD 100 = USD 100

Classroom costs: USD 1,500 + USD 80 + USD 150 + USD 100 = USD 1,830

Total classrooms costs:

21 (classrooms) * USD 1830 = **USD 38,430**

Laboratory costs:

13 (laboratory table - 1 for 2 students) * USD 120 = USD 1,560

25 (chair) * USD 20 = USD 500

1 (teacher's desk = chair) * USD 120 = USD 120

1 (blackboard) * USD 150 = USD 150

1 (laboratory closet) * USD 300 = USD 300

Laboratory costs: USD 1,560 + USD 500 + USD 120 + USD 150 + USD 300 =
USD 2,630

Total laboratory costs:

3 (laboratories) * USD 2,630 = **USD 7,890**

Computer science lab:

25 (computer desk + chair) * USD 50 = USD 1,250

1 (teacher's desk + chair) * USD 80 = USD 80

1 (blackboard) * USD 150 = USD 150

1 (library shelf) * USD 100 = USD 100

Total costs computer science lab:

USD 1,250 + USD 80 + USD 150 + USD 100 = **USD 1,580**

School furniture supplies costs: USD 38,430 + USD 7,890 + USD 1,580 = **USD 47,900**

- **Teaching materials supplies**

Methodological premises: The estimate refers to supplying the school with the following categories of teaching materials³⁴:

- maps and drawings;
- auxiliaries and educational games;
- arts and sports materials;
- lab and workshop supplies.

The average number of students / classroom was considered to be 25.

Total teaching materials supplies costs: USD 13,400

- **Equipment supplies (copying machines, computers)**

Methodological premises: supplying the school with a copying machine, computers, fax machine.

Estimated costs:

- copying machine: 1 (copying machine) * USD 10,000 = USD 10,000
- computers: 10 (computers = printer) * USD 1,000 = USD 10,000
- fax machine: 1 (fax machine) * USD 120 = USD 120

Total equipment supplies costs:

USD 10,000 + USD 10,000 + USD 120 = **USD 20,120**

- **Renewing the library book fund**

Methodological premises: renewing the existing library book fund (1,000 volumes) with an additional 500 volumes.

Estimated costs: USD 2.5 / volume

Total books costs: 500 (volumes) * USD 2.5 = **USD 1,250**

- **Food costs**

Estimated cost per day: USD 1 / student

Total food costs: 525 (students) * USD 0.5 * 173 (study days / school year) = **USD 45,412**

³⁴ The teaching materials took into consideration were the ones presented in *The Regulation for Minimal Supply for grades 1 - 4, and 5 - 8 respectively*, in O.MNE 5169/12.30.1999, and the costs were estimated based on the information included in presentation catalogues.

Synthetic table on estimated costs

Teacher training courses	USD 1,140
Furniture supplies	USD 47,900
Teaching materials supplies	USD 13,400
Equipment supplies	USD 20,120
Supplying the school library	USD 1,250
Food	USD 45,412
Total costs	USD 129,222

Chapter 6. EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMS DESIGNED FOR THE ETHNIC ROMA POPULATION

In order to identify positive practices in the field of education programs for the ethnic Roma, an inventory of the projects which targeted the stimulation of the school participation of Roma children and youth, conducted in Romania between 1998 - 2002 was made during this research study.

The methodology used for collecting the data was represented by filling in a self-evaluation questionnaire, as well as conducting interviews with the program promoters.

The self-evaluation questionnaire was addressed to a number of 200 organizations, which conduct activities or have responsibilities in the field of education. The investigation tools were distributed via mail or e-mail. The information requested in the questionnaire focused on the following aspects: the role of the organization involved in conducting the program (promoter, partner), funding sources, activities conducted, results and impact. The questionnaire was filled in by 68 organizations, which offered information pertaining to 110 projects. The Internet also represented one of the information sources on organizations which conducted Roma education projects and their activities.

Based on the information collected, 10 program promoting organizations were selected, and **interviews** were conducted with their representatives. Four of the projects regarding the school participation of Roma children are presented in Appendix 8, as good practice models.

Although the inventory is not exhaustive, the data collected resulted in **identifying a program typology**.

The main **promoting institution categories** were:

- public institutions (central and local): ministries, prefectures, city halls, county inspectorates, education institutions, training centers, research and development institutions;
- non-governmental organizations:
 - Roma foundations and associations;
 - other foundations, associations, civic organizations - with charity purposes, involved in the protection of the child in difficulty, involved in youth issues, etc. - which conducted education programs designed for the Roma minority;
 - international organizations which have offices in Romania, embassies, etc.;
 - business agents;
 - political parties.

Out of this inventory, most projects were conducted by Roma non-governmental organizations (23%), and by organizations involved in the protection of the child in difficulty (18%), as well as by international organizations (19%). One thing that must be noticed is that most of the projects involved an active partnership at local level, between the promoting institution and other education organizations.

The projects addressed various **target groups**:

- Roma children enrolled in the formal education system, or children in a situation of drop out and non-schooling;
- young and adult Roma;
- Roma parents;
- teachers who conduct their activity in institutions with ethnic Roma population (ethnic Roma teachers, unqualified teachers, school managers);
- trainers;
- school mediators;
- representatives of the Roma community;
- local authority representatives.

The programs benefited from various **funding sources**. Most of them received funds from foreign sources: Phare, the World bank, the European Union, The Open Society Foundation, UNICEF, etc. Other funding resources were provided via government programs, local authority programs, business agents, donations. A part of the projects benefited from co-funding from the own sources of the promoters.

According to the **specific objectives** of the projects, the following typology may be observed:

- infrastructure and equipment supply improvement projects for schools with Roma students (building kindergartens and schools, day centers; libraries, school furniture, teaching material, etc.);
- material (stationery, food, clothes) and financial support projects (scholarships, school grants) for Roma students and their families;
- projects which focus on the editing of schoolbooks and other Romani language publications;
- projects which focus on the introduction in the school curriculum (core school curriculum or curriculum decided at school level) of certain elements related to the Roma minority language, history and culture;
- projects for the development of extra-curricular activities designed for Roma children (student camps, visits, contests, scientific groups, tutorials, etc.);
- teacher training programs for teachers who work in schools from Roma communities (training teachers to teach the Romani language, training unqualified teachers, training teachers and school managers on issues related to cross-cultural education, etc.);
- second chance education projects (alphabetization, preparation for school, learning of the Romanian language, assistance and counseling, etc.) designed for the at-risk students, who dropped out of the formal education system, or for uneducated children;
- qualification projects for young and adult Roma, to train them in traditional Roma trades or other types of trades demanded on the labor market;

- projects which focus on the stimulation of a knowledge climate and of a cross-ethnic communication climate in schools and in Roma communities, by developing a school - parents - local authorities partnership.

The categories of identified objectives cover a large range of education needs of Roma children and youth, deeply analyzed in the present study. Many of the solutions developed through projects have great potential to be generalized at the level of other Roma communities and were capitalized on during the action directions within the school participation stimulation strategy for Roma children and youth, drafted in the present study.

No.	Organization name	Project title	Financiers	Period in which it was conducted	Target group	Project description
1	"Together" Community Development Agency	ARTRom	The Matra program, the Foreign Affairs Ministry-Holland, through the partnership between the "Together" Agency and Spolu International Foundation-Holland		25 children and young people, between 10 and 16 years old	Expressing the creativity of Roma children; Attracting Roma children who have gone beyond schooling age, to school; At the end of the 3 months of training, a painting exhibition, entitled ART Rom, was organized.
2	"Together" Community Development Agency	ARTRom	The Matra program, the Foreign Affairs Ministry-Holland, through the partnership between the "Together" Agency and Spolu International Foundation-Holland	1999-2000	The children in the Pata Rat community	Building a day center for the children in Pata Rat.
3	"Together" Community Development Agency	Kindergarten for pre-school children	The Matra program, the Foreign Affairs Ministry-Holland, through the partnership between the "Together"	2000-2001	15 Roma children	Preparing 15 Roma children for school; The local non-Roma community was initially suspicious of this kindergarten, but, in time, after the advantages of the projects were explained to them, and after seeing the progress made by the children,

			Agency and Spolu International Foundation-Holland			the majority ethnic group and the minority one were brought closer together. In fact, at the opening of the kindergarten, both local authority representatives, as well as those of the County School Inspectorate and of the Ministry of Culture were present, and they advised the inhabitants to live in harmony. The kindergarten's schedule follows the national curriculum, adapted to the needs of Roma children, including education in Romani. Frequent meetings with the parents of the children take place, and they participate in the festivities organized by the kindergarten.
4	"Together" Community Development Agency	Roma education Vrancea	-	1999-2000	-	
5	"Together" Community Development Agency	Romanian language tutorials	The Matra program, the Foreign Affairs Ministry-Holland, through the partnership between the "Together" Agency and Spolu International Foundation-Holland	2000-2001	21 children aged between 8 and 11 years old, students of the elementary school no. 17, Romanesti	Increasing the school results of Roma children - Romanian language tutorials. The children made progress in learning Romanian, which was reflected by a better understanding of the school subjects taught during the education process, by getting better ratings, and by a decrease of the number of absences. In their turn, the families of the children are also satisfied because the children receive a snack during the tutorials. With the

						<p>support of local sponsors, the Craiova branch of Save the Children offered children Easter gifts (tennis shoes, candy) and a one-day trip was organized during the spring vacation.</p> <p>The project continued until the summer vacation; in September 2000, another group of children was trained, until 2001, by involving other local supporters of the project</p>
6	The Alliance for Roma Unity	Help us learn a trade	-	1999-2000	Young Roma from Caransebes	Increasing the degree of professional training and integration of young Roma from Caransebes, by training them in various trades demanded on the labor market.
7	The Alliance for Roma Unity	Stimulating the employment of Roma clerks by local administrations and public services	-	1999-2000	Young Roma high school graduates and Roma university students in their final years, from Bucharest and the counties of Dolj, Timis and Iasi	<p>Organizing an information and training network for the Roma, which would include 7 counties;</p> <p>Increasing competencies to work in the local administration and the public institutions through public clerk training courses.</p>
8	Amare Phrala "Our brothers" Cluj	Qualification courses for young Roma	-	1999-2000	Young Roma	Organizing qualification courses for young Roma.
9	Amare Phrala "Our brothers" Cluj	Becoming more efficient	-	1999-2000	Roma students	English language courses for Roma students.

10	The "Cordial" Association Vrancea	Alphabetization program for the Roma	-	1999-2000	Roma adults	Alphabetization project, conducted in cooperation with the teachers of the "Emil Botta" High School in Adjud, for the Roma.
11	The "Social Alternatives" Association Iasi	From the Roma community to the Roma community	Phare	2000	Roma students	A complex community development project, designed for young Roma: enrollment in school, integration, vocational training, documentaries.
12	"The Community supporting the child" Association, Arges	Community action project	-	1999-2000	-	The project was conducted in cooperation with the University of Bucharest and UNICEF Romania and the Manchester University.
13	The "Hilfe Fur Rumanien" Association, Timis	Material support	-	1999-2000	Roma children enrolled in second chance education classes	Material support from the "Hilfe Fur Rumanien" Association.
14	The "Vasile Voiculescu" Association, Sibiu	Training programs for the Roma children, using the Waldorf method	Phare	2001	Roma children	Building a school for Roma children in Rosia, Sibiu county Preventing drop out and granting assistance to children with special needs.
15	The "Tata Oancea" cultural	Opportunities for young Roma	Phare	2000	Young Roma	Communication, organization and management ability improvement training program for young Roma.

	association, Caras Severin					
16	The Democratic Association of the Free Roma (DAFR)	Support for Roma children	The Romanian Government The Phare Program	2000	Roma children in the Iscroni elementary school	Providing stationery for 50 Roma children with social difficulties; Supplying the school with a computer and a printer.
17	The Gypsy Women's Association "For our children", Timis	Expertise center for the education of Roma children	-	2001-2002	Young Roma (especially girls) from the Timis county Local authorities	Establishing an expertise center as the result of a partnership between the local and central authorities and Roma NGOs. Activities: alphabetization courses; counseling; professional training; setting up a library; editing a Romani language magazine.
18	The Gypsy Women's Association "For our children", Timis	Through art and culture toward identity and self-confidence	-	1999-2001	Roma children and youth	The project included 3 sections: the Romanian language, music and dance, Romani language theater; summer camps. A festival was organized, where the creations of the children involved in the project were presented.
19	The "O del Amenza" Roma	Qualification and re-qualification	-	1999-2000	Young Roma	Organizing qualification and re-qualification programs for young Roma.

	Association	courses for young Roma				
20	Caritas, Alba	Distribution of school stationery	CARITAS	1999-2000	Roma children from the elementary school no. 2 with grade levels 1-8 in Blaj, and the elementary school with grade levels 1-4 in Gura Rosie	Providing school stationery for Roma children with social difficulties.
21	Caritas, Covasna	Teaching camp for the study of the Romani language and the traditional Roma crafts	-	1999-2000	Roma students	Organizing a teaching camp for the study of the Romani language and the traditional Roma crafts.
22	Caritas, Satu Mare	Improving the access to education of Roma children	-	1999-2000	Roma students in the Livada and Turulung communes, Satu Mare	Organizing semi-boarding schools, which offer psycho-pedagogical assistance and free meals.
23	Caritas, Satu Mare	Providing access to education	-	1999-2000	Pre-school children and Roma students	Providing food for the kindergarten and the school in Petea village, Dorolt commune
24	Neamt County Teachers House	Get involved, you too!	Neamt City Hall	2002	15 managers from schools with Roma students 6 primary school teachers and professors who teach classes with Roma	Identifying the educational needs of Roma children; Drafting a curriculum decided at school level module, which should respond to the identified needs; Developing the partnership between the

					students Roma issues counselors	school and the Roma representatives; Organizing teacher training sessions.
25	Casrom, Mures	Improving the social and educational situation of Roma children	-	1999-2000	Roma communities	Distributing humanitarian aids, ranging from clothes, shoes, to school stationery, in the following localities: Ludus, Tg- Mures, Sanpaul, Ogra, Vanatori.
26	The Christian Roma Center, Sibiu	Long distance learning	-	1999-2000	Young Roma graduates of 8 grades, who have gone beyond schooling age	Setting up a long distance learning high school class, in order to form ethnic Roma intellectuals
27	The Ethnic Roma Federation "Save the Children", Constanta	School project Mangalia	-	1999-2000	Young Roma who have gone beyond schooling age	School counseling provided to Roma teenagers; The alphabetization of teenagers who have gone beyond schooling age.
28	The Open Society Foundation, Cluj Wassdas Foundation	The second chance	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Young people, aged between 14 and 25 years old, who dropped out of school during low secondary education	The program was conducted at the Energy school group in Cluj-Napoca. Currently, 32 students continue their studies as apprentices of this group.
29	The Open Society Foundation, Cluj	Funds for the Somesel school, Cluj county	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Students from the Somesel school, Cluj county	The reconstruction and redesign of the day center for Roma students located within the school.

	Spolu Holland					
30	The Open Society Foundation, Constanta	A closer cooperation between Roma parents and the school	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000		
31	The Open Society Foundation, Constanta	Understanding the role of education in the family	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000		
32	The Open Society Foundation, Constanta	The positive attitude change of the Roma toward school	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000		
33	The Open Society Foundation, Covasna	The qualification of Roma teachers	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Unqualified ethnic Roma teachers	Ethnic Roma teacher training program.
34	The Open Society Foundation, Hunedoara	The second chance	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	25 young people aged between 14 and 25 years old, from the Criscior commune, Hunedoara	Training Roma students to become auto tinkers - the boys, and tailors - the girls
35	The Open Society Foundation, Ialomita	Multicultural education and identity	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Roma students from Strachina	The project was designed to improve education policies and capitalize on the cultural specific by stimulating a dialogue between Roma students and Romanian

						students.
36	The Open Society Foundation, Iasi	Commercial and Managerial Counseling and Assistance Center for the Roma community in Tg. Frumos	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Students from the Tg. Frumos elementary school	The project is conducted in partnership between the Tg. Frumos Vocational School, the Iasi County School Inspectorate, the Roma Party and the National Center for Development. The project is conducted at the Tg. Frumos Vocational School and aims to create a Commercial and Managerial Counseling and Assistance Center for the Roma community.
37	The Open Society Foundation, Iasi	The second chance	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	33 students, mostly Roma	The project is conducted at the "Ion Creanga" elementary school and the "Tg. Frumos" Vocational School, in Iasi
38	The Open Society Foundation, Neamt	Roma social mediators - confidence and communication elements	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	School mediators	Training programs for school mediators
39	The Open Society Foundation, Olt	Initiation and training course for teachers and potential teachers and school mediators,	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Female students from the regular school Roma primary school teachers and professors who work with Roma students Roma and non-Roma	Programs: Beginning and improving the study of Romani Computer operation beginner courses; Project management; Cooperation learning in a multicultural

		during vacation time			high school graduates, who speak Romani Roma graduates of 10 grades, who speak Romani Foreign languages teachers or other teachers who want to teach Romani	context.
40	The Open Society Foundation, Olt	Equal opportunities for all	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000		
41	The Open Society Foundation, Olt	Hope for everyone	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000		
42	The Open Society Foundation, Prahova	School development in communities with ethnic Roma inhabitants - equal opportunities	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000		3 institutions were included in this project. They benefited from funds, for teaching materials, school stationery and teacher lifelong training programs.
43	The Open Society Foundation,	School development in communities with ethnic	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	The elementary school no. 3 Copsa-Mica, the Industrial School Group	Monitoring resource and pilot schools, as well as forming a work team

	Sibiu	Roma inhabitants			"Independenta", Sibiu	
44	The Open Society Foundation, Suceava	Equal opportunities	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Students from 6 institutions located in communities with ethnic Roma inhabitants	Capitalizing on the local specific by establishing a cross-cultural office, a Sunday school for parents, and by mentoring children. The school was evaluated during the program, it was equipped with modern technique (computer). Teacher training programs and seminars organized by the FOS were also conducted in other 5 schools, selected from 10 schools which conducted projects. Another objective was to supply the schools with teaching materials and school stationery.
45	The Open Society Foundation, Timis	Building and funding the Varias Timis kindergarten	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	The Varias Timis community	Building a kindergarten for Roma children in Varias, Timis county
46	The Open Society Foundation, Timis	Training courses for teachers who work with Roma children, in Timis county	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Teachers	Organizing training programs for teachers who work with Roma children
47	The Open Society Foundation, Timis	Training ethnic Roma teachers at the Bucharest University	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	7 teachers enrolled	Organizing training programs for ethnic Roma teachers

		College				
48	The Open Society Foundation, Timis	The first steps in reading and writing	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	Roma children	Recovering reading - writing deficiencies
49	The Open Society Foundation, Timis	School development in communities with ethnic Roma inhabitants	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	700 students and 150 teachers	
50	The Open Society Foundation, Timis	The second chance	The Open Society Foundation	1999-2000	32 young people aged between 14 and 25 years old	The auto transportation industrial school group The light industry school group
51	The "Civic Action" Foundation, Bucharest	Training center for Roma parents	Phare	2000	Roma ethnic parents	Organizing a training center for ethnic Roma parents in the Rasvani community, in order to increase their degree of involvement in the education of the children.
52	The "Alliance for the Roma" Foundation, Ialomita	Kindergarten for Roma children	-	1999-2000	Pre-school Roma children	The project is designed to form a kindergarten class made up of pre-school Roma children, in a Roma community. The program provides for a free meal for the children and appropriate supplies for the class.

53	The "Casrom Romania" Foundation, Mures	The social recovery of Roma children through education	-	1999-2000	Roma communities in Tg. Mures	Radio shows designed for the ethnic Roma living in Tg-Mures. These shows include information from all Roma related fields, and articles from the local press. Enforcing the Order of the Education Minister on the learning of Romani; thus, one objective was to establish groups, special classes for the learning of this language, second chance education and alphabetization for Roma children, tutorials and special Romani learning courses.
54	The "Connections" Foundation	Preventing child maltreatment – human resources training	The Leonardo da Vinci Program	1999-2002	Teachers involved in child issues	Lifelong training of the human resources in country, and in France; Assistance for 7 children, victims of maltreatment.
55	The "Children and the family" Foundation, Bistrita	Discrimination versus ignorance	Phare	2000	The local community	A project designed for facilitating the access of the Roma to education and health services, by using school and social mediators in the Roma communities.
56	The "Oasis" Foundation, Mures	Facilitating the academic and social integration of Roma children	-	1999-2000	Roma children enrolled in the education system or who dropped out of school	Main objectives: Integrating children age between 3 and 7 years old in the public school system; Alphabetizing children aged between 7 and 15 years old, who dropped out;

						Additional educational activities for children enrolled in the public education system; Sanitary education; Distributing humanitarian aids.
57	The "Oasis" Foundation, Mures	The kindergarten for Roma children in Valea Rece, Mures county	-	1999-2000	Pre-school Roma children from Valea Rece, Mures county	Setting up a kindergarten class for Roma children.
58	The "Oasis" Foundation, Mures	Stimulating the learning and social integration of Roma children	-	1999-2000	20 students from public schools in Tg. Mures	Providing support allowances in order to stimulate learning and social integration.
59	The "Phoenix" Foundation, Bucharest	Counseling and schooling for the Roma	-	1999-2000	Roma children and youth	Counseling and school orientation activities for Roma children and youth.
60	The "Phoenix" Foundation, Bucharest	Roma A, B, C - Arithmetic - Primer	-	1999-2000	Ethnic Romanian, Roma and Hungarian students	Editing two schoolbooks: trilingual arithmetic (Romanian, Romani and Hungarian) and the trilingual primer; Providing 1,000 schoolbooks for the Roma.
61	The "Roma Humanity" Foundation,	The alphabetization school	-	1999-2000		Alphabetization programs

	Cluj					
62	The "Connections" Foundation	Drop out prevention - intervention and assistance	Donations	1998-2002	Families which face drop out risks	Direct material support; Social and psychological counseling. Annually, 10-12 children who are at risk of dropping out were maintained in their families.
63	The Local Development "Hope" Foundation	Integration via education	Phare	2000	Roma children	An educational program designed to prevent the drop out of Roma children
64	The International Foundation for the Child and the Family, Bucharest	Study on the evaluation of family barriers - the school in the Ferentari district - Bucharest	UNICEF	1995	1,272 families, out of which 152 Roma families	Conducting a modular type of intervention, in order to initiate and support the social integration of the ethnic Roma; Increasing school participation by involving the parents and the community members in the education of the children; Identifying the particularities of the social and economic factors in Roma families, which may contribute to the creation of barriers between the family and the school; Identifying the children who attend / do not attend school; Emphasizing the perception of families of an ethnic disadvantaging attitude in school, which encourages the lack of

						school attendance and drop out.
65	The Foundation for the Children and the Family, Cluj Napoca	An information center network for the poor community in the rural environment	EU	2002	The local community	Improving the school results of the children; Beginner computer science courses; Alphabetization courses; Training community mediators.
66	The Foundation for the Children and the Family, Cluj Napoca	The education of the Roma in Crasna commune (Huseni and Ratin localities)	EU	2002	The Roma community	The rehabilitation of schools; Providing school transportation for students; Providing material support to poor Roma families; Setting up a kindergarten class for Roma children; Setting up a "second chance" education class.
67	The Foundation for the Youth, Olt	Training program for trainers	-	1999-2000	Trainers	
68	The RUTH Foundation, Bucharest	Supporting Roma students	RUTH Foundation	1999-2000	40 very poor Roma students from a school in Arad	A social support project for Roma students, who receive school stationery and a free meal daily, at school.
69	The Humanitarian Foundation "The Philip Shelter,"	The academic and social integration of disadvantaged children	-	2000-2001	Schools with Roma students	Purchasing schoolbooks for the study of Romani, in schools with an ethnic Roma population.

	Bucharest					
70	The Crasna school group	Education for Roma children in the Crasna commune	Phare	2000	Roma students	Renovating several schools in the region. Providing transportation to school for Roma children living in isolated areas.
71	The Mures County School Inspectorate The Casrom Foundation	Educational resources for Roma children and their teachers, in order to provide an elementary education	Phare	2000	Roma students Teachers who work in schools with Roma students	Drafting a Romani language course; Interactive computer programs in Romani.
72	The Timisoara Inter-cultural Institute (T.I.I.)	Cross-cultural educational activities in schools with Roma students, from the Timis county	The Open Society Foundation, Romania	1997-1998	Roma and non-Roma students Teachers School mediators Parents of students from 6 schools in the Timis county	Improving the school attendance frequency of and providing equal opportunities for Roma students; Results: cross-cultural clubs in 6 schools from the county; Training 6 school mediators..
73	The Timisoara Inter-cultural Institute (T.I.I.)	The education of children from Roma communities: the training of teachers who work with Roma children	The Confidence-building measures program of the Council of Europe	1996-1998	Teachers who work with Roma students Roma community representatives, who play a school mediator role	Improving the school attendance frequency of and providing equal opportunities for Roma students; Results: Financial report published in Romanian and French; Initiating the <i>Educational Activities in schools with Roma students from the Timis county</i> project (The Open Society

						Foundation).
74	The Timisoara Inter-cultural Institute (T.I.I.)	Cross-cultural education in multi-ethnic communities	The Confidence-building measures program of the Council of Europe	2000-2002	Students and teachers from multi-ethnic schools The parents of the students The representatives of the national minority NGOs	Strengthening mutual cognition, communication, and confidence between various ethnic communities; Strengthening the bonds between the school, the civil society and the local authorities, in a multicultural environment, by increasing the role of the national minority NGOs. Drafting a methodological guide, in Romanian and French, starting from the experiences of the project participants.
75	The Timisoara Inter-cultural Institute (T.I.I.)	Cross-cultural education in multi-ethnic communities	The Cultural European Foundation	1999-2000	28 teachers from the schools involved in this project (7 from each school) and their students	Training teachers in cross-cultural education methods and activities; Improving the school climate, by stimulating partnerships between the teachers and the students - representatives of different cultures; Stimulating school partnerships, at local and regional level, and also at trans-border level (schools in Hungary). Results: partnerships at the level of 4 schools in the region and trans-border cooperation; most teachers continue to teach and to practice cross-cultural education in their classes.
76	The Timisoara	EUROM – The integration of	The Socrates Program	1998-2001	Roma children Roma families and	Improving the school attendance frequency of and providing equal

	Inter-cultural Institute (T.I.I.)	the Roma culture in the school and extracurricular education			communities Teachers and school mediators who work with Roma children Representatives of the associations interested in this subject	opportunities for Roma students; Creating and consolidating an international school network, which would allow the teachers to share experiences; Raising the interest of the parents with regard, on the one side, to the education of their children, and on the other, to the needed complementarity between family education and school education; Results: <i>a synthesis file</i> in Romanian, Spanish and French; <i>a methodological guide</i> for teachers who work with Roma students; on-line training course for teachers who work with Roma students; lifelong training course, available in the COMENIUS 2001-2002 Catalogue.
77	The Open Society Institute, Budapest	Roma culture camp for Roma children – Timis	-	1999-2000	Roma children	Organizing a Roma culture camp for Roma children in the Timis county
78	Save the Children	The Convention on the rights of the Child (short version) in Romani language	The Council of Europe	1999	Children who study Romani and their teachers	Familiarizing Romani speakers with the rights of the child; Drafting a useful and pleasant study material.

79	Save the Children	The right of Roma children to equal opportunities	Radda Barnen - Sweden	2002	180 Roma and Romanian children from the Timis, Caras-Severin and Hunedoara counties	Making the children of the two ethnic groups closer to each other and more understanding of each other.
80	Save the Children	Education - the guarantee of a better future for Roma children	The European Union – Access	2002	Children from 4 kindergartens and 4 schools in Pitesti, Targoviste, Craiova and Galati	Decreasing the level of absenteeism and drop out of Roma children; Attracting and maintaining an increased number of Roma children in the education system.
81	Save the Children	The pre-school education of Roma children from the Balcescu district – Tecuci, Galati county	Phare - Lien	1999-2000	20 Roma children	School readiness for Roma children; The children who attended kindergarten are the prizewinners of the first grade, and the project continues, and it has been taken over by the Galati County School Inspectorate.
82	Save the Children	The pre-school education of Roma children	The Canadian Embassy to Bucharest	2002	60 Roma children and their Romanian colleagues from the kindergartens in Romanesti, Costesti Vale-Merisu and Goleasca-Sotanga	Creating a pleasant and attractive environment for children, stimulating the interest in pre-school education, school readiness ; Increasing the number of Roma children who attend kindergartens.

83	Save the Children	The kindergarten for Roma children in Singer de Padure,. Mures county	The "Together" Development Agency	2000-2002	Groups of 16 Roma children / year	Offering a pre-school education opportunity to children with precarious financial situations; Providing equal intellectual development chances for children; Enrolling without difficulties in the school program.
84	Save the Children	Together for a world without discrimination	European Union – EIDHR	2001	Over 300 Roma and Romanian children from the counties of Arges, Prahova and Galati	Making the Romanian and Roma children closer together, understanding and mutually respectful of the differences between them; Making the children pay greater attention to inter-ethnic relations; Improving the school climate; Accepting and respecting the differences.
85	Save the Children	The <i>Romani penul-or the Roma Family Mistique</i> by Delia Grigore	The Council of Europe	1999	The students and teachers who initiate a multicultural education	Providing information on Roma family traditions; Using the <i>Romani penul - or the Roma Family Mistique</i> paper in the teaching-learning process, by interested teachers and students.
86	Save the Children	Romanian language tutorials for Roma students from the elementary	The "Together" Development Agency	2000-2002	Groups of 20 Roma children / year	The correct learning of Romanian by children whose mother tongue is Romani; Improving school results, and making the children capable of understanding and following the explanations of the

		school no. 17, in Craiova				teachers.
87	Save the Children	A new mentality: the attitude toward Roma children in schools	The Council of Europe UNICEF Radda Barnen	1999-2001	Teachers who work with Roma children	Training and informing the teachers on Roma history, culture and traditions, the rights which the Roma children should enjoy and which should lead to the elimination of discrimination in schools; Improving the school climate in certain school institutions.
88	Save the Children	Let's build a future based on mutual respect	The Council of Europe	2001	Children, parents, local authorities from the counties of Arges, Prahova, Dambovita	Knowing the internal and international regulations on the protection of the minorities and the rights of Roma children; Raising awareness for the need to find local solutions without seeking the support of the central authorities; solving certain cases.
89	Save the Children	The technical seminar "The situation of Roma children in Romania"	Save the Children, Sweden (Radda Barnen)	1999	Roma children from Romania	Solutions to improve the situation of Roma children in such fields as education, health, cultural identity; Adopting the National Action plan for Roma children, which was forwarded to the Romanian authorities in order to be used in drafting the strategy on the improvement of the situation of the Roma.
90	Save the Children	The international seminar "Roma	Save the Children Sweden (Radda	1998	Institutions and non- governmental organizations which	Finding out the causes of the situation of Roma children in European countries;

		children in Europe"	Barnen) The British Embassy to Bucharest FDSC UNICEF The Ministry of Culture		deal with Roma children in 17 European countries	Identifying solutions to improve it; Making an "Equal opportunities" documentary on Roma children from Romania, as well as a study on them; Adopting a European Action Plan in favor of Roma children.
91	Save the Children	Roma children have rights, too	The Resource Center for Ethno-cultural Diversity	2001-2002	The local authorities and the Roma communities in certain localities from the counties of Arges, Constanta, Brasov, Dambovita, Dolj, Iasi, Suceava, Neamt, Galati, Vaslui	Creating the opportunity of a dialogue between authorities and Roma parents, on finding local solutions, in order to observe the rights of the child; Solving at local level the difficult situation of certain families and children.
92	Save the Children, Mures	The kindergarten for Roma children in Sangerul de Padure	-	1999-2000	Pre-school age Roma children	Setting up a kindergarten group for Roma children.
93	The Roma Party, Bistrita Nasaud	Purchasing schoolbooks for the study of Romani	-	1999-2000	Roma students	2,000 schoolbooks were ordered for the teaching of Romani in schools.
94	The Roma Party, Vaslui	Priorities in eliminating the	-	1999-2000	Roma students	The project consisted in providing clothes, school stationery, and personal

		disease sources in Roma school communities				hygiene items for a number of 320 students from the elementary school with grades 1-8 in Pusci, in the Laza commune, Vaslui county.
95	PER Mures	Multicultural education	-	1999-2000	Teachers who work with Roma students	Training for one year.
96	The Caransebes City Hall The Alliance for the unity of the Roma	They are our future	Phare	2000	The local community	A project to build a nursery and a kindergarten for Roma children.
97	The Deva City Hall	Social protection for education	Phare	2000	Roma children	Creating a local Roma organization; Setting up a kindergarten in the Roma community; Organizing summer camps for Roma children.
98	The Jimbolia City Hall	The access of the Roma - concrete steps to improve the situation of the Roma in Jimbolia	Phare	2000	Unemployed young Roma	Training unemployed young Roma in various trades
99	Rom Star, Bacau	Connecting the school to the power network	-	1999-2000	The students of the Poiana Negustorului school, from the Blagesti commune	Connecting the school to the power network.

100	Rom Star, Bacau	Education program for Roma children	-	1999-2000	80 Roma children aged between 14 and 18 years old	The project focused on the introduction of the study of Romani, and Roma history, habits and traditions in the education of the youth. The students included in this program learned to write and read in Romani. The results of the project mobilized the leaders, the teachers and the School Inspectorate to introduce Romani in 12 other schools.
101	Rom Star, Bacau	Training program for teachers	-	1999-2000	Teachers	Conducting teacher training programs needed for the teaching of Romani in school.
102	Rom Star, Bacau	Training program for school mediators	-	1999-2000	School mediators	Selecting leaders from Roma communities and conducting training programs for them, in order to make them become school mediators.
103	Romani Criss The Association of the Roma in Coltau, Maramures	Sanitary and body hygiene The study of the Romani language and culture	-	1999-2000	Roma children in Coltau, Maramures	Education programs: sanitary education, the Romani language, the Romani culture.
104	Romani Criss, Covasna	Sanitary and body hygiene education	-	1999-2000	-	Sanitary education programs.
105	The elementary school no. 3 Tg. Jiu, Gorj	COMPAS – The education and integration of Roma	The Socrates Program	1999-2002	Roma and non-Roma students enrolled in low secondary education.	Conducting school and extracurricular activities with the participation of Roma parents;

		children				Organizing opportunities for mobility of the teachers and students, in schools from across the border.
106	The Tg. Frumos Vocational School The "Romani chance" Association	Training and socio-professional integration center for the Roma	Phare	2000	Roma children	Vocational training program for Roma children.
107	UNICEF MER Romani Criss	A good start for school	-	2001-2002	30 Roma children aged between 6 and 12 years old	The project is design to pilot an education model for the decrease of drop out of the Roma population at young ages. The activities included in the project aim to develop the school readiness of Roma children who never attended kindergarten or school, or who dropped out. This training should result in good integration and school success for them.
108	UNICEF MER ECHOSOC The International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor	Developing the capacity of the Roma communities to withdraw children from dangerous child labor situations and to integrate them in the	-	2001-2002	2,000 Roma children aged between 6 and 15 years old, from the Pata Rat - Cluj, Calvini - Buzau, and Bucharest communities	Raising the awareness and assuming the rights of children in conformity with the stipulations of internal documents and international conventions to which Romani is part; Drafting efficient means and methods to eliminate child labor and child institutionalization.

	The "Together" Community Development Agency Save the Children "Improving the situation of the Roma in Romania" program	national education system				
109	The General Union of the Roma, Hunedoara	The qualification of the Roma in the trades demanded by business agents on the labor market	-	1999-2000	Young Roma	Training courses for the Roma, followed by diplomas and employment within the limit of vacant jobs on the market.
110	Wassdas Cluj	Educational support projects in the Pata Rat and Iris Roma communities	-	1999-2000	Roma communities in Pata Rat and Iris	Educational programs

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anastasoae, V., Tarnovschi, D. (ed.) *Projects for the Roma in Romania 1999-2000*. Bucharest, The Ministry of Public Information – The National Roma Office, 2001.

Charlot, B. *Penser l'echec comme evenement, penser l'immigration comme histoire*. In: *Migrants – Formation*, no. 81, 1990.

Cherkaoui, M. *Les paradoxes de la reussite scolaire*. Paris, Press Universitaires de France, 1979.

Husen, T. *Influence du milieu social sur la reusite scolaire*. Paris, Publications de l'OCDE, 1975.

Jigau, M. *The school success factors*. Bucharest, Grafoart Publishing House, 1998.

Mannoni, P. *Troubles scolaires et vie affective chez l'adolescent*. Paris, Editions ESF, 1979.

Neacsu, I. *The access to education of children from rural environments*. In: *A decade of transition: the situation of the child and family in Romania*, Bucharest, UNICEF, 2000.

Pasti, Vl. *A decade of social transformations*. In: *A decade of transition; the situation of the child and family in Romania*, Bucharest, UNICEF, 2000.

Paun, E. *The school – a socio-pedagogical approach*. Iasi, Polirom Publishing House, 1999.

Riviere, R. *L'echec scolaire est-il une fatalite?* Paris, Editions Hatier, 1991.

Stanciulescu, E. *Sociological education theories*. Iasi, Polirom Publishing House, 1996.

Zamfir, C., Zamfir, E. (coord.) *Gypsies between ignorance and concern*, Bucharest, Alternative Publishing House, 1993.

*** *Demographic analyses; the demographic situation of Romania in 2000*, NIS, 2001.

*** *Education at a glance. OECD Indicators*, 2000.

*** *Indicators on Roma communities in Romania*, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002

*** *Education in Romania; statistical data*. NCS, 1994, 1996.

*** *Primary and low secondary education at the beginning of school years 1996/1997 1997/1998, 1998/1999, 1999/2000*. NCS/NIS.

*** *Primary and low secondary education at the end of school years 1996/1997, 1997/1998, 1998/1999, 1999/2000*. NCS/NIS

*** *Minorities and education in Romania. School year 2000-2001*. The Ministry of Public Information - The Inter-ethnic Relations Department, The Ministry of Education and Research - The General Directorate in the Languages of National Minorities

*** *The National Human Development Report, Romania 2000*. UNDP, 2000.

APPEDICES

Appendix 1. The distribution of education institutions by counties, according to the percentage of ethnic Roma students³⁵

- in % -

County	Mixed	Majority Roma	Predominantly Roma
Alba	85.1	9.5	5.4
Arad	91.4	6.7	1.9
Arges	82.7	5.5	11.8
Bacau	81.0	5.2	13.8
Bihor	89.1	6.4	4.5
Bistrita – Nasaud	90.4	4.1	5.5
Botosani	92.0	-	8.0
Brasov	64.1	19.7	16.2
Braila	98.2	1.8	-
Buzau	91.8	5.7	2.5
Caras – Severin	91.8	2.7	5.5
Calarasi	98.5	1.5	-
Cluj	91.7	6.8	1.5
Constanta	87.5	6.3	6.3
Covasna	79.2	8.3	12.5
Dambovita	88.7	5.6	5.6
Dolj	93.1	3.4	3.4
Galati	92.5	5.0	2.5
Giurgiu	95.5	3.4	1.1
Gorj	96.6	-	3.4
Harghita	87.5	8.9	3.6
Hunedoara	92.7	2.4	4.9
Ialomita	90.9	-	9.1
Iasi	89.2	1.5	9.3
Maramures	93.3	5.0	1.7
Mehedinti	63.0	33.3	3.7
Mures	84.6	9.0	6.4
Neamt	79.2	8.3	12.5
Prahova	89.9	4.5	5.6
Satu Mare	92.9	3.8	3.2
Salaj	87.6	7.0	5.4
Sibiu	71.3	11.8	16.9
Suceava	90.9	3.6	5.5
Teleorman	95.7	4.3	-
Timis	98.3	1.7	-
Tulcea	100.0	-	-
Vaslui	83.3	3.3	13.3
Valcea	90.0	7.5	2.5
Vrancea	90.0	2.5	7.5
Ilfov	87.4	5.7	6.9
Total	87.9	6.4	5.8

³⁵ Mixed = Roma percentage of up to 50%; Majority Roma = Roma percentage between 50-70%; Predominantly Roma = Roma percentage of more than 70%.

Appendix 2. The structure and territorial distribution of the groups participating in individual and group interviews

Table 1. The structure and territorial distribution of the groups participating in group interviews

County	The place where the interview was conducted	Group content	Number of participants
Arges	Tigveni-Momaia	Parents	8
Arges	Tigveni-Momaia	Students	9
Covasna	Valcele	Parents	9
Covasna	Valcele	Students	10
Constanta	M. Kogalniceanu	Parents	8
Constanta	M. Kogalniceanu	Students	10
Gorj	Polovragi	Parents	8
Gorj	Polovragi	Students	9
Vaslui	Slobozia-Girceni	Parents	11
Vaslui	Slobozia-Girceni	Students	10
Bucharest	Ferentari district (Elementary school no.136)	Parents	10
Bucharest	Ferentari district (Elementary school no.136)	Students	9
Total group interviews		Parents	6
		Students	6
Total interview subjects		Parents	54
		Students	57

Table 2. The structure and territorial distribution of the a subjects investigated in individual interviews

County	The place where the interview was conducted	Professional status	Number of persons interviewed
Arges	Tigveni-Momaia	Principal	1
Arges	Tigveni-Momaia	Teacher	1
Arges	Tigveni-Momaia	Primary school teacher	1
Covasna	Valcele	Principal	1
Covasna	Valcele	Teacher	1
Covasna	Valcele	Primary school teacher	1
Constanta	M. Kogalniceanu	Principal	1
Constanta	M. Kogalniceanu	Teacher	2
Constanta	M. Kogalniceanu	Primary school teacher	1
Gorj	Polovragi	Principal	1
Gorj	Polovragi	Teacher	2
Gorj	Polovragi	Primary school teacher	1
Vaslui	Slobozia-Girceni	Principal	1
Vaslui	Slobozia-Girceni	Teacher	1
Vaslui	Slobozia-Girceni	Primary school teacher	2
Bucharest	Elementary school no.136 - Ferentari district	Teacher	2
Total			20

Table 3. The territorial distribution of the subjects investigated in family surveys

County	The place where the interview was conducted	Number of surveys
Arges	Tigveni-Momaia	1
Covasna	Valcele	2
Constanta	M. Kogalniceanu	2
Gorj	Polovragi	2
Vaslui	Slobozia –Girceni	2
Bucharest	Ferentari district	1
Total	6	10

Appendix 3. The number of students and teachers, by teaching languages and education levels, in the school year 2000-2001

Table 1. The number of children enrolled and teachers, by teaching languages, in pre-school education

Teaching language	Children enrolled	Teachers
Total	611036	34023
Romanian	564991	31992
Hungarian	40086	1940
German	5119	60
Serbian	277	8
Ukrainian	286	8
Slovakian	237	14
Croatian	40	1

Source: The National Institute for Statistics.

Table 2. The number of students enrolled and teachers, by teaching languages, in primary and low secondary education

Teaching language	Students	Teachers
Total	2376700	154889
Romanian	2252817	147750
Hungarian	112847	6896
German	9482	155
Serbian	356	19
Ukrainian	274	3
Slovakian	803	64
Czech	91	2
Croatian	30	-

Source: The National Institute for Statistics.

Table 3. The number of students enrolled and teachers, by teaching languages, in high secondary education

Teaching language	Students	Teachers
Total	687919	64018
Romanian	657910	61164
Hungarian	26207	2599
German	3197	184
Serbian	134	20
Ukrainian	214	16
Slovakian	83	10

Bulgarian	126	6
Croatian	48	19

Source: The National Institute for Statistics.

Table 4. The number of students and teachers, by teaching languages, in vocational education

Teaching language	Students	Teachers
Total	239550	4894
Romanian	232736	4763
Hungarian	6798	131
German	16	-

Source: The National Institute for Statistics.

Table 5. The number of students and teachers, by teaching languages, in post-secondary education

Teaching language	Students	Teachers
Total	82117	1438
Romanian	79955	1348
Hungarian	2100	89
German	62	1

Source: The Ministry of Education and Research and the National Institute for Statistics.

Appendix 4. Drop out and non-schooling

Table 1. The distribution of the rural environment obligatory education institutions, with Roma students, according to the percentage of non-schooling, by counties (in %)

County	Not at all	Under 5%	Over 5%
Alba	57.4	38.3	4.3
Arad	46.3	45.3	8.4
Arges	48.5	50.5	1.0
Bacau	49.1	38.6	12.3
Bihor	52.6	36.5	10.9
Bistrita – Nasaud	65.1	30.2	4.8
Botosani	70.0	30.0	-
Brasov	28.6	57.1	14.3
Braila	26.3	68.4	5.3
Buzau	51.4	44.9	3.7
Caras – Severin	61.1	36.1	2.8
Calarasi	29.3	58.5	12.2
Cluj	58.3	39.4	2.4
Constanta	30.8	46.2	23.1
Covasna	39.4	46.5	14.1
Dambovita	57.9	36.8	5.3
Dolj	50.0	50.0	-
Galati	22.9	68.6	8.6
Giurgiu	50.6	44.3	5.1
Gorj	70.8	20.8	8.3
Harghita	48.1	48.1	3.8
Hunedoara	82.1	17.9	-
Ialomita	10.0	70.0	20.0
Iasi	47.3	38.2	14.5
Maramures	62.5	35.7	1.8
Mehedinti	40.0	48.0	12.0
Mures	56.1	39.4	4.5
Neamt	33.3	61.9	4.8
Prahova	49.2	44.4	6.3
Satu Mare	50.9	44.8	4.3
Salaj	57.5	36.7	5.8
Sibiu	40.5	46.6	12.9
Suceava	33.3	57.1	9.5
Teleorman	78.4	21.6	-
Timis	37.5	53.6	8.9
Tulcea	45.5	54.5	-
Vaslui	47.8	47.8	4.3
Valcea	54.3	42.9	2.9
Vrancea	29.4	52.9	17.6
Ilfov	31.7	60.3	7.9
Total	49.9	43.3	6.7

Table 2. The distribution of the primary education institutions³⁶ with Roma children who dropped out between 1997 - 1999, by counties

County	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
Alba	2	22.2
Arad	19	55.9
Arges	2	9.5
Bihor	23	60.5
Bistrita – Nasaud	6	35.3
Botosani	4	50.0
Brasov	23	54.8
Braila	10	58.8
Buzau	12	34.3
Caras – Severin	5	6.8
Calarasi	16	64.0
Cluj	7	22.6
Constanta	4	80.0
Covasna	17	56.7
Dambovita	11	42.3
Dolj	4	66.7
Galati	9	25.0
Giurgiu	13	59.1
Gorj	2	16.7
Harghita	5	45.5
Hunedoara	-	-
Ialomita	4	80.0
Iasi	20	35.7
Maramures	3	42.9
Mehedinti	1	3.8
Mures	18	42.9
Neamt	2	14.3
Prahova	9	30.0
Satu Mare	15	12.1
Salaj	10	34.5
Sibiu	18	34.0
Suceava	16	64.0
Teleorman	8	20.5
Timis	17	14.8
Tulcea	4	66.7
Vaslui	2	40.0
Valcea	1	25.0
Vrancea	10	35.7
Ilfov	19	63.3
Total	371	32.4

³⁶ 1,146 schools, representing 41.5% of the total number of schools with grades 1-4, with Roma students, provided information on this item.

Table 3. The distribution of the obligatory education institutions (grades 1-8) with Roma children, which reported³⁷ cases of drop out between 1997-1999, by counties

County	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
Alba	4	30.8
Arad	13	52.0
Arges	10	50.0
Bacau	9	64.3
Bihor	17	45.9
Bistrita – Nasaud	11	45.8
Botosani	3	60.0
Brasov	23	69.7
Braila	11	61.1
Buzau	17	47.2
Caras – Severin	4	8.5
Calarasi	15	68.2
Cluj	10	31.3
Constanta	4	57.1
Covasna	19	67.9
Dambovita	14	40.0
Dolj	4	80.0
Galati	15	55.6
Giurgiu	14	53.8
Gorj	4	36.4
Harghita	7	63.6
Hunedoara	1	20.0
Ialomita	4	66.7
Iasi	25	54.3
Maramures	7	77.8
Mehedinti	7	35.0
Mures	24	52.2
Neamt	6	46.2
Prahova	8	27.6
Satu Mare	17	19.5
Salaj	9	39.1
Sibiu	20	46.5
Suceava	25	78.1
Teleorman	10	25.6
Timis	20	22.0
Tulcea	5	62.5
Vaslui	7	77.8
Valcea	1	14.3
Vrancea	14	63.6
Ilfov	21	77.8
Total	459	44.2

³⁷ 1,038 schools, representing 55,9% of the total number of schools with grades 1-8, with Roma students, provided information for this item.

Table 4. The distribution of the obligatory education institutions, according to the presence of the non-schooling and drop out phenomena, and to some locality characteristics

	% schools in category	Percentage of non-schooling			Presence/absence of drop out	
		Not at all	Under 5%	Over 5%	No	Yes
THE VILLAGE POPULATION (DURING CENSUS)						
Under 250 inhabitants	5.3	73.5	22.9	3.6	84.8	15.2
250-500 inhabitants	15.7	68.4	26.9	4.7	80.1	19.9
500-800 inhabitants	17.8	56.5	37.7	5.8	70.5	29.5
800-1500 inhabitants	26.6	45.0	50.2	4.8	59.6	40.4
Over 1500 inhabitants	34.5	32.9	56.6	10.5	42.4	57.6
Distance to the nearest city						
Under 10 kms	20.6	48.5	45.1	6.4	55.4	44.6
10-25 kms	56.4	47.9	45.0	7.1	55.4	44.6
25 kms and more	23.0	50.7	43.0	6.2%	62.4	37.6
Type of locality						
Commune capital village (including subordinated villages, city)	46.0	39.7	53.1	7.2	50.4	49.6
Commune non-capital village	54.0	56.1	37.5	6.4	64.8	35.2
Development Commune Quartiles						
Q1	15.5	48.9	44.7	6.4	51.5	48.5
Q2	22.8	49.8	42.9	7.3	59.4	40.6
Q3	30.9	49.4	44.5	6.2	58.3	41.7
Q4	30.7	46.2	46.6	7.2	56.3	43.7
The occupational structure of the population						
Exclusively agricultural activities	95.3	48.9	44.5	6.6	57.3	42.7
Various activities	4.7	42.2	49.2	8.6	52.2	47.8

Appendix 5. Material resources

Table 1. The distribution of the education institutions with Roma students, by counties, according to the age of the buildings

- in % -

County	Building year				
	Until 1945	1900-1945	1945-1970	1970-1990	After 1990
Alba	21.1	42.3	23.9	8.5	4.2
Arad	33.0	39.0	20.0	8.0	-
Arges	8.2	40.8	40.8	7.1	3.1
Bacau	7.1	33.9	41.1	17.9	-
Bihor	23.8	33.5	37.3	5.4	-
Bistrita – Nasaud	25.0	29.4	38.2	5.9	1.5
Botosani	8.3	20.8	54.2	12.5	4.2
Brasov	26.7	53.3	14.3	4.8	1.0
Braila	7.8	51.0	25.5	15.7	-
Buzau	13.8	36.5	28.9	20.1	0.6
Caras – Severin	37.5	28.1	21.9	9.4	3.1
Calarasi	20.8	33.3	27.1	12.5	6.3
Cluj	26.2	31.0	37.3	4.0	1.6
Constanta	18.2	63.6	18.2	-	-
Covasna	45.3	42.2	10.9	1.6	-
Dambovita	7.4	41.3	28.9	17.4	5.0
Dolj	30.4	34.8	21.7	13.0	-
Galati	100.0	-	-	-	-
Giurgiu	17.9	47.4	26.9	6.4	1.3
Gorj	25.0	29.2	29.2	16.7	-
Harghita	46.0	42.0	8.0	4.0	-
Hunedoara	17.6	38.2	35.3	8.8	-
Ialomita	10.0	40.0	20.0	20.0	10.0
Iasi	27.0	27.0	33.3	12.7	-
Maramures	17.9	26.8	44.6	10.7	-
Mehedinti	20.0	40.0	20.0	16.0	4.0
Mures	17.0	39.4	34.9	7.5	1.2
Neamt	13.0	34.8	34.8	17.4	-
Prahova	9.4	47.1	25.9	15.3	2.4
Satu Mare	22.6	39.4	27.7	10.3	-
Salaj	11.2	31.2	45.6	12.0	-
Sibiu	44.1	43.4	10.3	2.2	-
Suceava	32.1	35.8	17.0	11.3	3.8
Teleorman	13.3	48.9	35.6	2.2	-
Timis	95.7	1.7	1.7	0.9	-
Tulcea	40.0	20.0	30.0	-	10.0
Vaslui	-	50.0	50.0	-	-
Valcea	-	36.4	54.5	9.1	-
Vrancea	16.2	18.9	45.9	18.9	-
Ilfov	22.6	38.1	29.8	9.5	-
Total	25.4	36.0	28.3	9.1	1.2

Table 2. The distribution of the education institutions with Roma students, by counties, according to the year of the last capital repair

- in % -

County	The year of the last capital repair (or the building year, in case no repairs were made)				
	Until 1945	1900-1945	1945-1970	1970-1990	After 1990
Alba	5.6	9.9	25.4	25.4	33.8
Arad	2.0	9.0	24.0	37.0	28.0
Arges	1.0	6.9	29.7	42.6	19.8
Bacau	1.8	7.1	33.9	44.6	12.5
Bihor	1.6	5.8	32.6	32.1	27.9
Bistrita – Nasaud	1.4	5.8	18.8	49.3	24.6
Botosani	-	4.0	20.0	48.0	28.0
Brasov	-	10.2	15.7	32.4	41.7
Braila	2.0	13.7	33.3	39.2	11.8
Buzau	5.0	6.9	27.7	41.5	18.9
Caras – Severin	4.6	3.1	20.0	23.1	49.2
Calarasi	2.0	8.0	26.0	20.0	44.0
Cluj	4.7	10.2	27.6	22.8	34.6
Constanta	-	18.2	27.3	36.4	18.2
Covasna	4.5	12.1	15.2	28.8	39.4
Dambovita	2.5	9.1	21.5	42.1	24.8
Dolj	4.0	-	8.0	44.0	44.0
Galati	5.0	12.5	30.0	30.0	22.5
Giurgiu	3.8	12.7	31.6	41.8	10.1
Gorj	-	4.2	20.8	37.5	37.5
Harghita	6.0	10.0	16.0	38.0	30.0
Hunedoara	-	10.8	29.7	21.6	37.8
Ialomita	-	-	20.0	30.0	50.0
Iasi	4.8	4.8	19.0	47.6	23.8
Maramures	-	1.8	29.8	38.6	29.8
Mehedinti	4.0	12.0	20.0	28.0	36.0
Mures	2.4	8.5	20.3	26.4	42.3
Neamt	4.2	4.2	29.2	33.3	29.2
Prahova	-	10.6	29.4	34.1	25.9
Satu Mare	2.6	7.7	19.9	32.1	37.8
Salaj	1.6	7.1	15.7	19.7	55.9
Sibiu	7.4	17.6	20.6	25.7	28.7
Suceava	-	7.3	14.5	54.5	23.6
Teleorman	-	4.4	26.7	55.6	13.3
Timis	14.7	14.7	22.4	18.1	30.2
Tulcea	-	-	10.0	20.0	70.0
Vaslui	-	-	-	50.0	50.0
Valcea	-	5.7	20.0	54.3	20.0
Vrancea	-	2.7	29.7	40.5	27.0
Ilfov	7.1	9.4	25.9	25.9	31.8
Total	3,3	8,6	23,7	33,3	31,1

Table 3. The distribution of the education institutions with Roma students, by counties, according to utility supplies

- in % -

County	Power	Own source of water	Toilet in the school
Alba	100.0	87.5	94.5
Arad	100.0	62.9	95.9
Arges	100.0	88.6	97.2
Bacau	100.0	97.6	96.6
Bihor	99.5	74.1	92.7
Bistrita – Nasaud	95.9	69.2	95.8
Botosani	100.0	93.8	92.0
Brasov	99.1	52.9	82.3
Braila	100.0	97.6	98.2
Buzau	99.4	71.2	95.5
Caras – Severin	100.0	85.0	93.1
Calarasi	98.5	66.0	92.3
Cluj	100.0	79.5	96.1
Constanta	91.7	66.7	58.3
Covasna	100.0	61.1	94.4
Dambovita	99.3	89.8	94.1
Dolj	96.0	87.0	88.5
Galati	100.0	66.7	97.5
Giurgiu	100.0	87.9	96.6
Gorj	100.0	82.1	100.0
Harghita	100.0	38.2	82.1
Hunedoara	99.5	80.5	85.4
Ialomita	95.9	90.0	90.9
Iasi	100.0	72.3	96.9
Maramures	99.1	42.0	93.1
Mehedinti	100.0	96.2	96.3
Mures	99.4	66.1	91.9
Neamt	100.0	79.2	95.8
Prahova	98.5	63.0	77.3
Satu Mare	100.0	56.5	90.4
Salaj	91.7	79.3	92.2
Sibiu	100.0	53.2	87.5
Suceava	99.3	71.1	88.9
Teleorman	96.0	97.7	95.7
Timis	100.0	67.5	78.6
Tulcea	100.0	50.0	83.3
Vaslui	100.0	77.8	100.0
Valcea	100.0	85.7	95.0
Vrancea	97.4	84.6	94.9
Ilfov	100.0	70.9	81.6
Total	99.2	71.7	91.5

Appendix 6. Human resources

Table 1. The percentage of unqualified teachers in the education institutions with Roma children, by education levels

County	Kindergartens	Primary education	Low secondary and post secondary education
Alba	23.1	22.4	32.3
Arad	38.2	23.4	33.8
Arges	23.2	21.0	37.3
Bacau	5.5	29.2	45.2
Bihor	27.7	16.3	34.0
Bistrita – Nasaud	23.4	20.6	44.1
Botosani	32.6	34.1	61.7
Brasov	50.4	33.5	47.6
Braila	39.6	24.9	43.7
Buzau	27.1	31.3	37.8
Caras – Severin	53.8	46.8	43.0
Calarasi	50.2	25.5	47.2
Cluj	36.1	59.2	45.4
Constanta	29.5	26.4	24.4
Covasna	49.9	33.8	45.1
Dambovita	31.8	62.6	39.0
Dolj	54.1	45.4	32.9
Galati	33.1	26.4	43.4
Giurgiu	24.8	24.7	49.5
Gorj	24.6	30.8	42.9
Harghita	56.1	17.9	54.5
Hunedoara	27.8	14.1	36.8
Ialomita	12.1	24.8	45.8
Iasi	30.8	18.8	46.6
Maramures	15.4	32.2	23.2
Mehedinti	31.9	28.2	44.0
Mures	43.7	22.4	46.3
Neamt	32.4	17.4	44.1
Prahova	14.3	35.3	40.2
Satu Mare	37.0	17.0	37.8
Salaj	19.2	53.1	43.9
Sibiu	58.7	11.8	52.8
Suceava	28.8	23.2	38.7
Teleorman	20.0	49.7	27.1
Timis	58.2	20.9	44.6
Tulcea	34.5	23.4	57.6
Vaslui	41.8	24.6	53.9
Valcea	22.7	21.6	29.3
Vrancea	26.8	47.3	41.9
Ilfov	38.9	...	47.8
Total	35.7	29.6	41.7

Table 2. The distribution of the obligatory education institutions with Roma students, according to the training degree of the teachers and to some locality characteristics

Locality characteristics	Percentage of institutions with teachers		Total
	Qualified	Unqualified	
THE VILLAGE POPULATION (DURING CENSUS)			
Under 250 inhabitants	34.2	65.8	100
250-500 inhabitants	26.3	73.7	100
500-800 inhabitants	14.8	85.2	100
800-1500 inhabitants	7.2	92.8	100
1,500 inhabitants and more	6.4	93.6	100
Distance to the nearest city			
Under 10 kms	15.7	84.3	100
10-25 kms	13.3	86.7	100
25 kms and more	11.8	88.2	100
Type of locality			
Commune capital village	17.4	82.6	100
Commune non-capital village	8.0	92.0	100
Development Commune Quartiles *			
Quartile 1	12.1	87.9	100
Quartile 2	13.1	86.9	100
Quartile 3	13.8	86.2	100
Quartile 4	13.8	86.2	100
Occupational structure			
Exclusively agricultural activities	10.9	89.1	100
Various activities	13.6	86.4	100

* DEVCOM - index proposed by Dumitru Sandu (*Rural community poverty in Romania. Targets for poverty alleviation by Romania Social development Fund*, World Bank, Bucharest, 1998.)

Table 3. The distribution of education institutions with Roma students, according to the fluctuation of the teachers and to some locality characteristics

Locality characteristics	Teacher fluctuation		Total
	Yes	No	
THE VILLAGE POPULATION (DURING CENSUS)			
Under 250 inhabitants	37.3	62.7	100
250-500 inhabitants	47.7	52.3	100
500-800 inhabitants	57.5	42.5	100
800-1500 inhabitants	60.2	39.8	100
1,500 de inhabitants and more	64.2	35.8	100
Distance to the nearest city			
Under 10 kms	57.1	42.9	100
10-25 kms	58.3	41.7	100
25 kms and more	63.0	37.0	100
Type of locality			
Commune capital village	54.6	45.4	100
Commune non-capital village	61.9	38.1	100
Development Commune Quartiles*			
Quartile 1	61.6	38.4	100
Quartile 2	62.2	37.8	100
Quartile 3	55.7	44.3	100
Quartile 4	55.0	45.0	100

* DEVCOM - index proposed by Dumitru Sandu (*Rural community poverty in Romania. Targets for poverty alleviation by Romania Social development Fund*, World Bank, Bucharest, 1998.)

Table 4. The distribution of the education institutions with Roma students, according to teacher commuting and to some locality characteristics

Locality characteristics	Teacher commuting		Total
	Yes	No	
THE VILLAGE POPULATION (DURING CENSUS)			
Under 250 inhabitants	17.4	82.6	100
250-500 inhabitants	20.8	79.2	100
500-800 inhabitants	23.6	76.4	100
800-1500 inhabitants	29.4	70.6	100
1,500 inhabitants and more	30.2	69.8	100
Distance to the nearest city			
Under 10 kms	22.1	77.9	100
10-25 kms	28.6	71.4	100
25 kms and more	26.2	73.8	100
Type of locality			
Commune capital village	29.5	70.5	100
Commune non-capital village	24.4	75.6	100
Development Commune Quartiles*			
Quartile 1	28.2	71.8	100
Quartile 2	29.3	70.7	100
Quartile 3	25.4	74.6	100
Quartile 4	25.8	74.2	100

* DEVCOM - index proposed by Dumitru Sandu (*Rural community poverty in Romania. Targets for poverty alleviation by Romania Social development Fund, World Bank, Bucharest, 1998.*)

Table 5. The distribution of the obligatory education institutions with Roma students, according to the presence of the non-schooling and drop out phenomena and to certain teacher characteristics

	Percentage of non-schooling			Presence/absence of drop out		Total
	Not at all	Under 5%	Over 5%	No	Yes	
The percentage of qualified teachers						
Under 50%	49.7	44.6	5.8	74.6	25.4	100
50-90%	39.7	50.2	10.1	65.9	34.1	100
Over 90%	61.7	29.7	8.6	90.5	9.5	100
The percentage of teachers in the locality						
Under 50%	49.5	43.6	6.9	75.3	24.7	100
50-90%	41.6	50.8	7.5	65.4	34.6	100
Over 90%	57.8	37.1	5.1	83.5	16.5	100
Teacher fluctuation						
No / isolated cases	50.8	43.1	6.0	75.0	25.0	100
Frequent cases	37.4	52.9	9.7	68.6	31.4	100
The cooperation between the school and the family						
Non-answer	59.0	36.3	4.7	87.2	12.8	100
Yes	48.2	45.4	6.4	72.6	27.4	
No	40.0	46.3	13.8	79.3	20.7	100

Appendix 7. Case studies

Case study no. 1

G.A., Polovragi village, Gorj county: 17 years old, dropped out of school in the seventh grade, married, pregnant (survey conducted with the subject's mother).

G.A dropped out of the elementary school in Tigveni commune, Arges county, before completing her obligatory education. The reason for her drop out, according to her mother, is the fact that, being the eldest child, she had to give up school in favor of raising her younger brothers. While her parents were at work, the eldest child took over the duties of the parents and had to take care of the household. Sometimes, G.A. would join her parents in conducting various agricultural works, picking up fruit (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries), trying, together with her family, to gain money or other products from any activity offered to them.

"I allowed my eldest daughter to go to school only until the seventh grade... because she had to stay with the little ones, when we were going to work, we were going to the state-owned farm. The girl liked the school, but I had no other choice. She would also come with us to weed, and to pick up berries. She started going to work when she was about 12 years old.

Neither of the parents has a job right now. The father used to work in the state-owned farm until it was closed down, but later, due to a hearing deficiency, he couldn't get another job. The only stable income of the family is a government child allowance, received by G.M., who is a student in the seventh grade at the Polovragi elementary school. Because work is occasional and season-related, the family incomes fluctuate. During agricultural seasons, the family members work on a daily basis and try to save money for the cold season, when they have nowhere and nothing to work.

"We work on a daily basis. We pick up strawberries for various employers. They offer (ROL) 70 thousand from 6 in the morning to 8 in the evening. If it is after 12, they only

offer 35 thousand. During winter we have nothing to do. During the summer we make some bank deposits, so we have something to live on during the winter."

G.A.'s brothers dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out. The main reason which explains drop out in the case of these children is the family's increased level of poverty. One of the brothers managed, however, to complete his low secondary education, but the costs involved in continuing his studies (lodging or transportation to a school outside the community) were inaccessible to the family. Due to poverty, the children are forced to work side by side with their parents, and, therefore, the main priority is earning the daily bread, not school.

"The boy is not married because he didn't complete military service. He completed eight grades, but we didn't have the possibility to let him continue his studies, and therefore he stays with me, and works... I didn't send him to school because we needed money, I need to pay for his lodging, and I can't afford that. The child studies well. He did go to school for two weeks in the ninth grade, but when he saw we had no means to support him, he stopped going... The other girl is in the seventh grade, but I think she will repeat that grade, because she has very few days in attendance. She went with us to the plantation. We had no other choice... After she completes the eighth grade, she will go to work."

Although the mother completed eight grades and comes from a family with 12 children who, each of them, completed eight grades, she does not require her children to reach the same education level. The mother values the school ("*If you have an education, you become successful*"; "*The children could find a job*"), but the difficulty of satisfying certain basic needs (food and clothes) and the small amount of material resources do not allow the children to go to school ("*I would like them to go to school, but [they can't] because we have nothing to eat, no clothes... they should go like any other child.*").

The family owns no land and can't cover a part of what it consumes with what it would have obtained from cultivating its own land. All food products must be bought ("*only water is the one thing we don't buy*").

The family has good relationships with the local authorities, especially with the village priest and the doctor and an indifferent attitude toward the City Hall, and even hostility toward the mayor of the commune, who did not keep his promises and does nothing to help the Roma community.

Case study no. 2

The L. family, from the Valcele commune, Covasna county: it has 7 children, out of which only one 13 year-old goes to school, and is enrolled in the first grade at the Valcele elementary school.

The L. family has a reserved attitude toward school. Out of its seven children, only one is currently attending school. This child is in the first grade, although he is 13 years old. The child underwent grade repetition several times, and is about to drop out of for good. The causes of the retention are the child's health condition (the father states that he has epilepsy) and lack of school attendance. According to the father, the child became a retainer because of the limited number of days in attendance. Daily, instead of going to school, the child goes to search through garbage, at the outskirts of Sfantul Gheorghe. His father claims that he did send him to school, but that the child chose / preferred "to go look through garbage" instead of attending school.

"I have seven children, out of which only one goes to school. He's 13 years old, he's in the first grade... because he was a retained student. They kicked him out, because he went to the garbage bins... It was the teacher who sent him home, because he was going to the garbage bins, I sent him to school, he, on the other hand, went to the garbage bins. Now he is gone to the garbage bin in Sfantul Gheorghe. He leaves in the morning, on foot, and comes back in the evening."

The education level of the parents is very low, the father completed four grades and the mother even less. None of the children knows how to read. The father's hope lies in this 13 year old, who is still "caught" in the education system (*"I completed four grades, I know how to write, to read. My wife doesn't know very well. The children don't know how to read either. Only this 13 year old may learn."*). Although at a declarative level, the

father is aware of the school's importance in the daily life (*"He will definitely be better off if he goes to school... without an education you can't find a job. School is very useful..."*), in fact he doesn't seem to have any expectations from the school. The education of the children is their own personal problem and less the problem of the parents. The children have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they should go to school or not. The model offered by the parents, however, is not a stimulating one. It is probable that even the model provided by the school (the relationships between students and the relationships between students and teachers) may not be encouraging.

The confidence in school of the L. family members is also quite low. One of the girls, who witnessed this discussion, and who also has school-age children, claims that the lack of interest of the teachers toward the students is the cause of their weak school results. The students complete four grades and don't know how to read or count, being practically illiterate (*"I have a daughter who is in the third grade, and she doesn't know how to read, and doesn't know the numbers. She went to school every day. I also completed eight grades but I know how to read. They are not taking care of them."*).

The L. family earns its living by practicing a trade which is traditional in the region where they live. From generation to generation, they manufactured baskets and brooms which they sell afterwards. The children are taught from very early ages to go collect twigs and to help their parents manufacture baskets and brooms. Apart from this income source, the family also leaves on the illegal sale of mushrooms, wild berries, when they are in season. The precariousness and inconsistency, as well as the instability of their income sources, are maybe the reasons which made the 13 year old become used to go search through the garbage bins of the nearest city. The immediate benefit of this practice counterbalances the remote benefit of schooling, which is hard to be acknowledged by the child in the absence of a parental model.

"I manufacture brooms, and baskets. I learned that from my parents. They also manufactured brooms and baskets. Everybody in this region makes brooms and baskets... [The child] sometimes reads, sometimes he comes to work where I go. I go sell the brooms, collect twigs, mushrooms... The children go to collect mushrooms, sell brooms, search through garbage bins..."

The family has serious survival problems, since they do not have any land or support from the community or the village.

"We have serious problems with the food. Very serious. We have no garden. Sometimes we eat, sometimes we don't. We get water from the river... They say on television they are providing us with support, here the mayor says he doesn't have anything to give away, because there are a lot of Gypsies."

Case study no. 3

V.M., 16 years old, Valcele commune, Covasna county; dropped out of school three years ago; she is currently enrolled in low frequency education.

V.M. belongs to a family of 9 children. Currently, neither of the parents has a job and benefits from social assistance (*"We don't have social assistance, or pension, we live on allowances... The mayor doesn't help us with one dime. If only they distributed social assistance, like they do in other regions..."*). Both parents used to work in the "Tractorul" plant, - in Brasov - but they were laid off in 1998. The only permanent income of the family is represented by the government allowances for the children who are currently going to school. The family thinks that the incomes are completely insufficient, as related to their needs.

The 9 children have ages ranging between 8 and 28 years.; some of them didn't complete obligatory education:

- S.A., 28 years old, female, 8 grades, married, has 4 children; lives with her parents.
- V.M., 24 years old, female, 8 grades, has 3 children, has her own house in Valcele.
- V.E., 22 years old, female, 6 grades, married, has one child.
- V.V., 20 years old, male, 4 grades, married, has 3 children.
- V.I., 18 years old, female, 7 grades, married, has 2 children.
- V.M., 16 years old, female, enrolled in low frequency education, after having dropped out of school three years ago.
- V.R., 14 years old, male, is in the fourth grade, lives with his parents.
- V.S., 10 years old, male, enrolled in the first grade.

- V.L., 8 years old, male, enrolled in the first grade.

The child who dropped out of day school was re-enrolled in low frequency education. The main motivation for the re-enrollment was to receive the government child allowance.

"One of them became a retained student, but afterwards I re-enrolled him, so they wouldn't cut off our checks. The principal knew us, Mr. Nicu knew us too, and they know we are a poor family and they helped us... the amount was 65, and then it increased to 130. It's good money for the house. He is 16 years old and he's in the sixth grade."

The main problem of the family seems to be providing food for all the 11 persons who live in the household.

"We live here with the children. We also have grand children. We are 11 people in this house. We don't even have windows. We have two rooms and a kitchen. A girl with 4 children lives here, and we live in the other room. We send the children to school hungry, they come back hungry. We work on a daily basis, the money we earn we spend in the evening on food... We eat once a day... He goes to school hungry. If we find some mushrooms, I don't have anything to cook them with."

The family earns its living by manufacturing baskets and brooms and by collecting wild berries, when they are in season. The danger, in the case of these activities, is represented by the police, since the family sells the berries and the products manufactured by its members, illegally. Because the region has mineral water natural resources, the family is also trying to sell that, facing the same problem (the lack of a selling permit). Getting land is considered to be a solution to get out of the crisis faced by the Roma families in that locality. The school administrator in Valcele thinks that the Gypsy could be supported if they are granted the trade permits they need, and if they have the appropriate conditions to sell their products.

"The police doesn't let us do it. We had enough problems with the police... We were selling mushrooms in the street, and they took them and threw them away. We lost an entire day of work. They say that this is not allowed. I do think it is not allowed, but the

mayor should help us. But is he doesn't conduct an investigation to see who has land, what am I going to live on?... I didn't go steal anything. There are some families who steal, but not all the families. The mayor should take notice of this situation. This man has nothing to live on, let's help him."

Granting special social scholarships to the children who attend school is also considered a solution for the entire family. This would probably also stimulate the school participation of Roma children. A greater understanding of the situation of the Roma students by the teachers is yet another desire of the parents ("The school is good, but there are teachers who are stubborn. I have two children in the first grade, and he sends them home, if they don't have notebooks.").

Case study no. 4

P.A., 16 years old, Polovragi commune, Gorj county, drop out in the seventh grade (survey conducted with the child and his mother).

The main reason for drop out is considered to be the need for the child's presence in the household, and respectively, his impossibility to attend the courses while his parents are at work. Although P.A. is the youngest of the children and has no siblings to take care of, he still remains at home, while his parents and older brothers go to work. Apart from the household, P.A. takes care of the grand children, too. In his case, drop out was preceded by grade repetition.

"I went to school for seven years, but I stopped going because my parents were going to work and someone had to stay home... I couldn't go any more, because I had to stay home while the parents were at work. When I went back in the autumn, the principal said that I shouldn't come any longer, and I didn't. I became a retained student for one year. But the teachers were not taking care of us either. They would dictate to us and if you managed to write it was O.K., if not..."

P.A. remembers with pleasure the times when he went to the elementary school in the locality. Although he felt marginalized by the Romanian students, P.A. assumed his

condition and was aware of the fact that the low material resources force the rudari Roma (small craftsmen, specialized in wood carving / processing) to accept the differential behavior of their colleagues and teachers. School knowledge is minimal in his case, he is almost illiterate at 16 years old (reads with great difficulty and pronounces the letters first, and then the whole word.)

"P.A.: It was good at school, we learned some things. Sometimes we would get into fights with the Romanians. Because they would also get into fights with us.

Operator: In which bench were you sitting?

P.A.: I was sitting in the second bench, but the boys in the village sometimes forced us to go sit in the last bench. They were saying that the poor ones should sit in the last bench. The rudari Roma sat all the times in the back of the classroom.

Operator: But were you, rudari Roma, sitting with the Romanians in the same bench?

P.A.: No. Roma with Roma, and Romanians with Romanians. They were saying we have lice, that we are dirty...

Operator: How did the kids call you in school?

P.A.: they would call us rudari Roma. They didn't call us Gypsy.

Operator: But would you have been upset if they called you Gypsy?

P.A.: No, we wouldn't. But we are poor, we have nothing to eat. There are [families] which have 7-8 children and they have no food for them. If they had something to work, they would go. Anyone would work. But there isn't any work. Apart from that, we have no other solution.

Operator: But if you completed 8 grades, do you think you could have found something to work?

P.A.: Well, yes, I think I would have, but I wouldn't have had where to work.

Operator: What would you like to become?

P.A.: I would like to become a tractor driver, but I don't have the necessary education..."

As most families in the rudari Roma community in Polovragi, the interviewed family does not have ownership documents for a piece of land or the house they're living in. As a result, the living conditions of the family are very bad. The condition of the houses is poor, and the living space is extremely limited (*"Here in Polovragi, we have a house with one room. That is where we all live. We have no land, because they didn't give us any."*)

All utilities and outbuildings are missing. In the house, there are only strictly necessary pieces of furniture (*"we have no TV set, the people in the village who managed to buy one during Ceausescu' time have one, the rest don't..."*).

The lack of land necessary for building new houses led to the overcrowding of the community. There are cases, such as this family, where parents offer the children who get married a place for a house in their own yard, although the space is very limited. There are situations in which 3-4 houses are found in the same yard. Local authorities explain this situation by saying that there are no pieces of land to be given to the rudari Roma.

The lack of land increases the poverty of the rudari Roma families (*"We have nothing. If we had land, we would grow corn, potatoes, tomatoes... but if we don't, where could we grow all that? We asked for some land, but they said that it belongs to the state, and the state won't give it away."*)

In Polovragi, only a small part of the rudari Roma families' houses are connected to the power network. The situation is explained by the local authorities by saying that these families have no ownership documents for their houses, therefore the power network cannot be extended. As a result, the families who are legally connected to the network, provide the other families access through improvised connections.

The main occupation of the family members is season work. The traditional occupation of the rudari Roma, which is to manufacture wooden household objects, does not meet the minimal conditions in order to become a permanent occupation. The lack of raw materials, the low sale volume, and the lack of a market are just a few factors which determined them to give up their traditional occupations. On the other hand, when the state owned farms were closed down, most rudari Roma lost their jobs.

"If we can find work, we go, if not... I haven't been to work for one week. During Ceausescu's time we used to find work. We went to pick up fruit, or to dig, around Sibiu. Now the state owned farms have been closed down and we have no place to go. Everything has been closed down. Before, we would take our children and we would bring some food home."

The permanent income of the family is represented by the government child allowances. These are completed by incomes generated by season work. The family does not receive social assistance, and the local authorities state that the insufficient budget funds forced them to stop providing social assistance to the beneficiary families. In fact, none of the rudari Roma families in Polovragi receives social assistance any longer.

Case study no. 5

The R. family, Bucharest, Iacob Andrei Street; has four children, out of which two dropped out of school. The survey is conducted with the mother and with R.A., the youngest child.

The R. family lives in a one-room apartment, 5 minutes away from school. There are only one-room apartments in the area, inhabited by Roma families. The R. family has four children. The oldest (18 years old) works in a car wash. All other children have schooling ages. The oldest girl is 14 years old and dropped out of school two months ago, when she also left home. The youngest boy, R.A., became a retained student three times. This year, he went to school for a while, after which he, too, dropped out. According to the statements of a neighbor, R.A. was involved in a series of delinquency acts (thefts, break ins) and spent some time in the "Ciresarii" juvenile facility. The youngest girl, R.P., is the only one who goes to school now, and has good school results.

There are two beds, an electric stove, a table and a TV set in the apartment. There is only one room, with no kitchen. The inappropriate living conditions did not allow the interview to be conducted inside. As a matter of fact, the mother was visibly embarrassed and agreed that the discussion take place outside the dwelling. In such conditions, the intervention of a neighbor was unavoidable. To a small extent, R.A. and the oldest son also took part in the discussion.

The oldest of the girls, who dropped out of school, although she is 14 years old, is only in the sixth grade, because she was twice a retained student. The mother thinks that drop out is caused by her repeated retention. The girl was ashamed to continue to go to school,

because she was physically more developed than her colleagues. The neighbor's opinion, who pretends that the girl ended up becoming a prostitute, and finally running away from home, is later confirmed by the mother. The girl did leave the house of her parents two months ago, and got married.

Mother: *She didn't want to go any more, it wasn't that I didn't let her go...*

Operator: *Why did she stopped going? Do you know? Did she tell you? What was the reason? But, be honest.*

Mother: *Until the sixth grade she became twice a retained student. Now, since she is [physically] more developed, more... I don't know... she was really ashamed of going to school any longer.*

One neighbor (who witnessed the discussion and intervened, in a angry voice): *She ran away from home, madam, why isn't she telling the truth? She became a prostitute, what a shame for this woman!*

Mother: *Maybe you realize what her nature is... she got involved with the wrong people, and ended up where she is now. The child left home two months ago...*

Operator: *When did you last see her?*

Mother: *One month ago. She came to visit us... <mother, I'm fine, I got married, I'm doing well.> That was all."*

The youngest child, R.A., being involved in illegal activities (theft, break-ins) ended up spending a few weeks in the "Ciresarii" juvenile facility. The return to school is not easy for R.A., who feels stigmatized, marginalized by the teachers and colleagues ("*even the teacher... when he got out of there, he went back to school, and on many occasions, the teacher was telling the children, be good, if you don't want to end up where he was. And things like that, and he was affected by that, and he said I don't want to be pointed at every time...*"). In order to get out of this situation, R.A. goes to school less and less, and last year he became a retained student. This year, he is practically in a drop out situation ("*I tell them, I explain to them what is going to happen if they drop out, where they are going to end up, that no doors will open for them, that they are limited. I always told them: <Come one, Andrei, go to school, nobody is going to tell you anything bad!> The boy: <I'm not going, and that is final!>*").

The mother thinks that the teachers bear no guilt for the lack of success of the children, because they came many times to try to convince the children not to give up school. The guilt is attributed to the children (*"the teachers were very understanding with them. I always thought they were really close to the children. So, the reason why my children don't go to school are not the teachers, it's their [the children] characters . But the school is not to be blamed..."*). The drop out leaves the mother with no hope for the children to complete their obligatory education, which she thinks it is almost an ideal for the success of her children. The mother is now more concentrated on bringing her daughter back home, although she doesn't hope that the girl would return to school. The mother's attitude toward the school evolution of two of her children is surprising, the more since she states she graduated post secondary education.

The material resources of the family are insufficient, the only incomes being the allowance of the youngest girl and the salary of the boy who works in the car wash. As a result, the food eaten by the family is of low quality and insufficient, and the clothing of the family members, inappropriate.

Operator: *What is the status of your food?*

Mother: *For instance, today I am cooking rice.*

Operator: *And this happens each day?*

Mother: *Yes.*

Operator: *What about meat?*

Mother: *In our dreams, only!*

Operator: *You don't buy much meat?*

Mother: *No.*

Operator: *What about clothes?*

Mother: *Look, these shoes, for instance, they are the best [we have]. The boy, Andrei, doesn't have any shoes.*

Operator: *And what do you do to buy shoes?*

Mother: *No, these are from charity. From someone who also has children. After the shoes became too small, or her children wore them too much, she gave them to me... that's how things are. Never new shoes.*

The marital status of the family is ambiguous: the parents separated, then re-married, but the relationship between husband and wife is tense.

Appendix 8. Educational intervention project models designed for the ethnic Roma population

Project no. 1
School development in Roma communities – Equal opportunities for Roma children through education

Initiators

The *School development in Roma communities - Equal opportunities for Roma children through education* program was conducted in Romania by SLO (The National Institute for Curriculum Development) Holland, in cooperation with the Dutch Government (through the MATRA program) and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) / The *Education 2000* Center - Romania. The funding was provided by the Dutch Government and OSF.

Period: 1998 - 2001

Objectives

The program tried to provide assistance to Roma students and to improve their social integration opportunities, by adapting the educational offer to their needs, and the needs of their parents, by implementing coherent school development strategies, by involving the parents in school activities and in the decision making process, and by promoting success stories, which may be replicated at the level of the system.

The difficulties encountered by Roma children at school were the starting point for developing the program, and the program's **key-concepts** were:

- **Awareness** of the current social position of the minorities and of the problems related to the education of the minorities.

- **Acknowledgment** of the importance and need for balance between the active participation of the minorities to society and maintaining one's own identity.
- **School success** analyzed in connection with success in social life and on the labor market.

The schools were supported in order to become responsible in solving the problems and in adapting the educational offer to the particularities of the students, and the program was designed to specialize the school's teams in:

- drafting institutional development plans;
- enriching the school curriculum with optional disciplines which are relevant to Roma students: native language, the Roma history and culture, oral history and others;
- creating a cross-cultural climate in the school and in the community;
- encouraging innovative styles, applying training strategies and learning methods focused on the individual needs of the children;
- building an active local network, made up of public institutions and community representatives; this network should solve the community educational needs;

Network

Schools with less than 10% ethnic Roma students, which showed interest in the school situation of these students, were invited to present a school development project. Based on that project, in the first stage, 12 schools were selected, and in 1999 - 2000, other 18 schools were added. The program thus involved education institutions from 9 counties, spread out in most of the country's regions.

Activities

During the three years of implementation, the program wanted to create a framework through which the schools could identify more realistically their problems, resources, opportunities, etc.; the most important dimensions of the program were:

- **building and enriching the curriculum decided at school level** (the Roma history and culture; the Romani language; Roma traditions and crafts; oral history);

- **learning support** (mentoring programs, interventions to solve learning difficulties, school readiness preparatory programs for pre-school children);
- **teacher training** (learning by cooperation, cross-cultural education, class management);
- **improving the supplies** (teaching materials and equipments for the school);
- **providing material support** to the students (school stationery);
- **organizing courses for Roma parents** (counseling, Sunday schools for parents, Roma parents - educational resources);
- **involving the community** (meetings with the local authority representatives and with other locally important institutions; building a local partnership);
- **information and experience exchanges** (information bulletins, magazines, meetings).

The training programs were conducted both for the teachers / principals from the participant schools (with experts from the Center), as well as for the teachers / principals from other schools (with trainers selected from participants to national training programs), and included the following domains: management-partnership and school development, the involvement of parents in the education process, cross-cultural education, oral history, class management - learning by cooperation, second chance education.

The program **produced**: eight booklets for second chance education , in the *ABC First Steps* collection; a Romani language primer, "*My first book*"; a resource-book, in Romanian and in English, which includes positive practices in pilot schools; an autobiographical bilingual book - Romanian / Romani. At the same time, several program activity promotion materials were drafted: 6 information bulletins in Romanian (with a summary in English and in Romani); 2 information bulletins in English (with a summary in Romanian and Romani); the program poster and the leaflet; a web site (www.impreuna.com).

Results

For the thorough analysis of the project activity impact and for the correction of the deficiencies, various evaluation tools were used: questionnaires for schools, interview guides for principals and teachers, questionnaires for training participants, etc. Monitoring activities assumed paying visits to schools, (class participation, discussions with teachers and students, meetings with parents, etc.), taking part in the training sessions, participating in activities organized by the schools included in the network, etc. Thus, we were able to follow the concrete method in which the projects of the schools were implemented.

The project managed to record progress in all of the targeted components. By eliminating discriminations, by adopting modern teaching / learning methods, by redesigning the school space, and improving the school teaching materials supplies, the changes at the level of school / class were multiple. In the selected schools, the project led to an increase of the school participation degree of Roma students. Thus, we recorded a decrease of the number of uneducated children (between 35 – 60 %), of drop out cases (between 20 – 50%), as well as of the number of school absences (15 – 30%). At the same time, the school results of the children improved. In the schools included in the network, both the number of failed exams, as well as that of retention situations decreased (10 – 25%), and the percentage of students in primary grades who did not manage to acquire basic reading / writing skills reached a minimum of 3 – 9%. Progress was also recorded in the case of Roma students. The number of those who enroll for the elementary school graduation exam (the "capacitate" exam) increased (the average is 10 – 20%), and so did the number of children who succeed in passing this exam (10 – 15%). Finally, progress was also recorded in the case of Roma students who continued their studies after completing obligatory education, even though in this case their number only increased by 5 – 10%.

One of the important results of the projects is the increase of the involvement degree of Roma families in school activities. In comparison with the situation of the schools included in the network before the beginning of the program, currently, there are contact parents in each institution (there are almost 300 people in the database), with the help of whom the school receives support both for administrative matters, as well as pedagogical

ones. Training activities proved useful through the decrease of the number of parents who do not value education, who are hostile to the school's initiatives, and through the numerous examples of community members volunteering in: teaching writing and reading for adults; mentoring programs for children; cross-cultural activities and oral history projects, etc.

By providing methodological assistance for the schools and by promoting innovative learning styles and methods, the project had visible influences on the school, where teachers communicate and get involved much easily (class management, second chance education), have more initiatives in promoting cross-cultural education and have a more profound understanding of the needs of Roma students. To various degrees, and with different focuses, the managers and the teachers involved in the program tried and managed to improve the organizational culture, the relationships with the community, the educational strategies, the learning environment, the relationships between children, etc.

Facilitating institutional exchanges also led to an increase in the capacity of the schools to attract the local authorities into funding the school projects. Thus, most of them managed to improve their infrastructure and supplies with the support of the local budget. In addition to that, the schools included in this program initiated cooperation activities with other schools and other locally important institutions (business agents, non-governmental organizations from Romania and from abroad, etc.), and approximately one fifth of the schools managed to obtain funds from other donors as well.

The continuation of the program

The experience accumulated during the project resulted in the draft of a coherent school development and community involvement model, which should promote the improvement of the school participation of Roma children, and their school results. This model became the starting point of the new *Equal opportunities* project which will also be conducted for a period of three years. The goal is that the activities of the old program be continued and developed by enlarging the network up to 50 education institutions, and by:

- introducing a school development model focused on an increased degree of awareness on the problems of Roma children, on the communication of their needs and rights, and on improving their school success opportunities;
- developing educational materials adapted to the Romani culture and history, which entails that teaching / learning Romani documents, information packages on the Romani language, culture and history, as well as examples of good practices in the education of minorities (Roma), at local and national level, should be drafted;
- enriching the educational offer of the schools and adapting it to the needs of Roma students, taking into account aspects such as the curriculum decided at school level, second chance education, etc.
- improving the communication and cooperation between the key institutions which are responsible for local development and the implementation of educational projects for minorities. Among the key institutions there are schools, County Teacher Houses and School Inspectorates;
- integrating the school development model into a network of key education institutions (schools, kindergarten, school inspectorates, training centers, universities) and creating new school success opportunities for Roma children.

In order to develop these subjects, several tools were conceived, among which: assistance offered to the managerial teams of the schools; school development (including by involving the parents) and setting up resource schools (three out of the total number of schools involved in the project). Thus, it is expected that new examples of good practices may be provided from other regions of the country, which have similar conditions, in order to promote a full acknowledgement of minority cultures in the educational process.

Project no. 2
Improving the study conditions of Roma children: Focus – Romania

Initiators

The *Improving the study conditions of Roma children: Focus - Romania* program is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Austria, DEZA - The Swiss Agency for

Cooperation and Development and by the Education 2000+ Center, within the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Period: 2001 - 2002

Objectives

This program is aimed at developing educational models for Roma children, by using the experience of non-governmental organizations which are involved in educational projects in SE Europe. Improving the educational process will be achieved through lifelong teacher training, developing and implementing certain projects of the schools involved in the program, drafting teaching materials and by disseminating the results in the Balkan region.

Network

The target group is represented by teachers from five schools in Romania, students, members of the local communities, representatives of non-governmental organizations in Romania, and in SE Europe. The project is conducted in five pilot schools: Guloia - Dolhasca (Suceava), Criscior (Hunedoara), Chiliseni (Suceava), Tecuci (Galati) and Brahasesti (Galati).

Activities

The project started with a meeting attended by the NGOs involved in Roma issues, Roma minority representatives and authorities, school principals and teachers from the pilot schools (March 2001). On this occasion, examples of successful projects which the Roma minority in SE Europe has conducted during the past years were presented, and the principals of the schools involved in the project presented to the participants the schools they were running.

30 teachers from the pilot schools and two trainers (from the U.S. and Romani) attended the first workshop of this project (Sinaia, May 7 - 11, 2001). The main training areas

covered were: human learning and thinking models and theories, learning by cooperation, questioning techniques, groups and their structures, etc. During this first meeting, contacts and partnership links with non-governmental organizations in SE Europe, which are active in the field of educational projects for ethnic minorities, were established. The participants expressed their opinions on the needs of the schools which they represent and possible improvement solutions were also discussed. Thus, the project activity program was structured in details.

The international summer camp "Together for a better school" (July 22 - 28, 2001), reunited teachers, students and the representatives of the NGOs of various minorities from all over SE Europe. The activities conducted aimed at promoting cross-cultural education, tolerance, getting acquainted and communication between children and adults of various ethnic groups in SE European countries, as well as encouraging children to actively get involved in the school's decisions.

The participants drafted school development projects (in mixed student - teacher groups), developed their communication and group work abilities and encountered new cultures and traditions. The teachers participated in training sessions on fundamental school development aspects, in debates on ethnic and cultural prejudices and stereotypes, and along with the students, were trained on how to cooperate with the community representatives. The recreational activities also included educational components, thus creating opportunities for experience exchanges with colleagues from other localities or from other countries.

Between November 28 - December 7, 2001, the Goethe Institute in Bucharest hosted an exhibition with the works of the camp participants. Representatives of Radio Romania International, Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung, daily Romania Libera, the Austrian Embassy, etc. attended the opening ceremony.

The second workshop (Sinaia, November 12 - 15, 2001) was attended by 30 teachers from the pilot schools and 3 trainers (from Austria and Romania). The main training areas were: the structure of the curricular offer and of the institutional project, the curriculum as a conceptual space, behavior indicators, interactive teaching methods, the

integration of the school in the community, efficient pedagogical communication, steps toward a free communication, etc. As in the case of the first seminar, all teachers present got actively involved in the activities of the meeting, learning new teaching procedures and practices, becoming familiar with alternative evaluation tools and developing their pedagogical communication competencies. Special attention was given to the ability of the participants in the training sessions to disseminate the information and knowledge acquired. Once returned to their schools, meetings between the participants and their colleagues were organized, so that the efficiency of the sessions could increase.

Results

Even though the project is not over yet, there are several arguments with regard to its positive impact on schools and on the target group. In evaluating the results obtained until now, we used information both from intermediary evaluation reports, conducted by the coordinating team, as well as information obtained as a result of discussions with the participants and a visit to one of the schools included in the project.

All five schools, following the investments conducted, managed to radically transform the conditions in which the educational process takes place. Investments in infrastructure included: building stoves, repairing chimneys, repairing the carpentry, repairing the electrical installation, repairing the outside façade, introducing running water in the schools, painting, toilet repairs, roof repairs, etc.

All the expenses regarding the school infrastructure were funded by the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the same source, the schools received a number of IT equipments. Thus, all schools included in the program will be connected to the Internet by the end of this school year. The Education 2000+ Center intends to organize this year training courses for teachers to learn how to use the Internet as an educational resource. Thus, the students will be able to acquire the necessary competencies for using modern communication tools (e-mail, Internet). There is already a web site available, which reunites the efforts of the NGOs involved in Roma minority education, and which provides a virtual discussion forum. The students and the schools included in the project will thus have the opportunity to present their successes, since the web page is regularly

updated. Both the DEZA Agency, as well as CEDU provide funding for the specific costs of the project (consumables, Internet connection, etc.)

Due to the training sessions, there is currently a number of 30 teachers trained in: interactive teaching methods, the integration of the school in the community, efficient pedagogical communication, human thinking and learning models and theories, learning by cooperation, questioning techniques, group theory, etc. All participants contributed to the draft of the implementation plans for the knowledge and skills acquired. Drafting a new teaching / learning strategy, which started in the spring of 2001, is still in process.

After the international camp, the schools, too, organized special activities. The impact on the participating students (most of whom originated from very poor environments) was extremely large, and the children appreciated especially the opportunity to meet colleagues from other countries, who were coming from different cultural environments. Thus, the students of Chiliseni school told their colleagues at home, their parents and other Roma community members about their experience. In school no. 7 in Tecuci a carnival was organized, and there was an exhibition of the paintings made during the camp. In fact, in all schools, small special places were built to evoke this event. As a result of the training session organized during the international camp, the students organized Student Councils in all schools, and the teachers think that their degree of involvement in class and in school issues has increased.

Changes also occurred in the management of the school institutions included in the program. Thus, the principals intend to propose in the next school year the introduction of new school disciplines in the curriculum decided at school level, and to initiate more activities together with the students and the teachers, through which the school could get more involved in improving certain community problems (ecology, supporting people with special needs, etc.) The initiatives will not be solitary, because the pilot schools currently cooperate very well, and experience exchanges are conducted regularly. With the help of the IT equipment which the schools now possess, communication was much improved.

Project no. 3
Together for a world without discrimination

Initiators: "Save the Children"

Period: 2001 - 2002

Type of funding: The European Union, within the "The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights" program

Objectives

The project aimed at developing behaviors and attitudes based on mutual respect, tolerance and avoiding discrimination of any kind of the students enrolled in obligatory education. The project started with a survey of students, ages 12 to 14, regarding their perceptions and representations on terms such as: tolerance, ethnic discrimination, the rights of the child, etc. The results of the survey emphasized that, in general, the students cannot not identify the intolerance and discrimination situations they are facing in their relationship with other children, and are not ready to avoid these situations. That is why the project focused on organizing a number of meetings, debates and informal reunions, to which both Romanian and Roma students should participate. To this purpose, 9 schools with Romanian and Roma children were selected, three schools in each of the following counties: Galati, Prahova, and Arges. The selected schools were located both in the rural, as well as the urban environment.

Activities

The debates between students took place at the level of each school selected. During these meetings, both theoretical elements regarding tolerance and mutual respect, the rights of the child, and the issue of ethnic minorities were discussed, as well as aspects regarding concrete situations, behaviors and attitudes displayed at school level, related to these problems. The debates were intended to increase the discrimination and intolerance

awareness level in daily behavior and to offer tools for the prevention and eradication of conflict situations in school.

In order to achieve communication between the working groups in each school, county level meetings were conducted with the representatives of each school involved in the project.

In order to offer an appropriate framework for displaying relationships between Romanian and Roma children, for the purpose of a better mutual acquaintance and understanding, the *Education for democracy, non-discrimination and creativity camp* was organized during the project, in Stoenesti, Arges county (August 21 - 30, 2001). The camp joined almost 90 Romanian and Roma children from the schools included in the project. The camp schedule included debates, literary creation, arts, music, dance and sports workshops.

Results

The most important impact of the project was recorded at the level of interpersonal relationships between Romanian and Roma children. According to the statements of the organizers, during the project there were no discrimination or conflict situations, and all activities were conducted in the spirit of the "All different - All equal!" motto. Also, an improvement in the school climate was noticed, as the students were much open to communication with their colleagues and displayed initiative in conducting joint activities.

The dissemination and continuation of the project

The products obtained during the summer camp were capitalized on by the students by initiating a magazine which included the creations made during the workshops. This magazine was distributed in all schools involved in the project, but also in other schools in the Prahova, Galati and Arges counties.

Project no. 4
A good start for school – a cross-cultural program for an improved adaptation of Roma children to school requirements

Initiators

The *Good start for school* project was promoted in partnership with UNICEF, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Institute for Educational Sciences, Romani CRISS and the local authorities in Panciu, Vrancea county.

The project had a target group of 23 Roma children from Panciu, aged between 5 and 12 years old, who did not attend kindergarten or school, or faced drop out situations before completing the first year of school.

Period: 2001 - 2002

Type of funding: UNICEF Office.

Objectives

The project aimed at piloting an educational model for the decrease of drop out at young ages, of the Roma population.

The activities included in the project were designed to prepare the school readiness of Roma children who never attended kindergarten or school, or who dropped out; this preparation program would have provided good integration and school success for these children.

Activities

The implementation of the *Good start for school* project started in May 2001. The main activities were focused on the following aspects:

- conducting a feasibility study in the community where the project was going to be implemented;

- conducting a training seminar for teachers who were going to work with Roma children;
- developing a school readiness preparation program for Roma children;
- organizing a seminar to evaluate the program and identify possibilities to continue it;
- organizing an Educational Support Center.

- **Conducting the feasibility study**

In the initial phase of the project, a feasibility study was conducted in the Roma community in Panciu. This study evaluated the possibilities to implement the project and established the framework for conducting the activities by:

- cooperation with the local authorities, in view of identifying the necessary space to organized pedagogical activities with the children;
- identifying the children who were going to be included in the project;
- choosing the human resources - the teachers and the school mediator - who were going to work with the children.

Also, a mutual agreement was established with the Panciu elementary school, through which the possibility to enroll Roma children older than 7 - 8 years old was provided.

- **Conducting the teacher training seminar**

The seminar was designed to train 13 teachers from the pilot school, as well as one school mediator, on specific issues:

- cross-cultural education elements;
- the role of the school mediator, as a facilitator for the cooperation between the school and the community;
- class management notions;
- the evaluation of the school results of the students;
- methods to adapt the curriculum to the needs and particularities of Roma children.

The subjects discussed were adapted to the characteristics of the project target group and focused on making the teachers who work with Roma children aware of the problems of the children to adapt to the school environment, developing attitudes and behaviors which are favorable to good school integration, as well as acquiring new competencies needed in pedagogical activities with Roma students.

- **Developing the school readiness preparation program for Roma children**

The **curriculum for school readiness preparation for Roma children** was drafted during the project; this curriculum focused on: developing the oral expression ability, developing cooperation attitudes, increasing school motivation, forming the necessary abilities needed for good integration in school type activities.

In the second phase, the **school readiness preparation program for Roma children** was conducted on the selected target group. The children were separated into two groups, according to their age (6 - 8 years and 9 - 12 years) and to their previous school / educational experience (where appropriate). Activities were carried out both by the groups, as well as joint activities: mathematic activities, language developing activities, environment activities, artistic activities, physical education, games and creative activities.

During this training program, the children received free stationery and a consistent snack every day. The parents, the local authority representatives, and other community members were also involved in the school and extra curricular activities conducted with Roma children.

Periodic monitoring activities on the implementation of the activities were organized during the program.

- **The evaluation seminar of the summer program**

At the end of the student training program, an evaluation seminar was organized in order to present the achievements of the program, to identify the problems and risks the

teachers faced, as well as to identify methods to continue the program and to enlarge it at the level of other communities.

- **The Educational Support Center**

During the *Good Start for School* program, an educational Support Center was set up in order to provide additional support to the students who benefited from this program. Thus, at the end of each course day, various educational activities are conducted in the Center: homework, reading for the next day, correcting deficiencies or compensating them, other learning activities which would represent premises for a better school adaptation of the children.

Results

The main achievement of this project was thought to be the school readiness preparation of 23 Roma children, which represents "a good start", a premise of a better school integration and success for them. Out of these children, 15 of them, between 7 and 12 years old, were enrolled in the first grade, and 7 children between 5 and 6 years old, were enrolled in kindergarten. The student school attendance frequency to classes and activities organized within the Educational Support Center is very good. The abilities acquired by the children during the summer program provided better integration in the formal education system.

The teacher interest and degree of involvement in the educational activities conducted with Roma children and their parents increased. Also, a permanent cooperation was established between the teachers and the Educational Support Center, which provides the unilateral character of educational interventions.

The interest of the parents for school increased; they come to school periodically, in order to have discussions with the teacher and cooperate efficiently with the school mediator. They became aware of the importance of education and the need for granting their children opportunities to ensure their school success and their social integration.

The dissemination and continuation of the program

The dissemination of the project results was achieved at the level of the Panciu community by organizing various activities, with the participation of both the teachers, as well as the parents, the local authorities and the Roma organizations.

During these activities, **methods to enlarge the program** at the level of other communities, as well as for other categories of children at risk, were identified, and a proposal was made to diversify the program activities: organizing various school readiness preparation programs for children, organizing teacher training programs, conducting parent education and adult education activities.