



Analysis is

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**RESULTS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE MEASUREMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES OF ROMA PUPILS IN ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS IN ROMA NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
(SELECTED FINDINGS OF A SPECIALIZED ANALYSIS OF THE
CZECH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN 2008)**

ENGLISH SUMMARY

Prague, April 2009



Roma children who live in the outcast locations have only a half the chance to complete the compulsory school attendance in a class where they started their first grade than their peers.

1. Technical Information

The analysis of disparities within the elementary school system between the Roma and non-Roma children was carried out by GAC spol. s r. o. upon public procurement contract granted in 2008 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic.

Within the period of October and December 2008, GAC obtained the data concerning the educational paths of 8,462 pupils, both males and females, selected from a representative group of 100 schools out of 396 schools established in socially excluded Roma neighborhoods. One fifth of all children were of Roma origin. With its extent and method of data collection, the research was the very first representative research focused on the education of ethnical minorities in Central and Eastern Europe.

The aim of the project was to provide an image of educational trajectories and chances of Roma pupils from socially disadvantaged environment who attend different types of elementary schools and compare it with the trajectories and chances of their non-Roma peers attending the same schools.

2. Methodology

The schools were selected through a random sampling and the sample is representative in terms of the region, share of Roma pupils, size of the city and share of common and special schools.

In the common elementary schools, GAC collected anonymous data on pupils, both males and females, who entered the school three, five or eight years ago. In the special schools we worked with the data related to the children who at that time (by the end of school year 2007/2008) completed third, fifth or eight grade, respectively. At each school we obtained the data concerning the children in one up to two classes per each monitored grade. We collected information on the grades of the total of 8,462 pupils for the entire school attendance in Czech language and mathematics, average final report grade, grade evaluating the conduct and information related to behavioral issues, total sum of absence hours and information about fails or departures to another schools.

The fundamental data were amended by the information about the school as a whole, opinions of the managers and teachers on the children and grounds of their problems. The total of 275 pupils were interviewed at 12 schools with the aim to disclose their attitude and motivation to learn, perception of leisure time, preparation for school and professional ambitions.

3. Main Findings

a. Comparison of Educational Chances

- The research proved the existence of uniform unequal educational chances of Roma and non-Roma children, both males and females, which deepen as the school years proceed.
- In majority population at the schools concerned, one girl out of twenty and one boy out of ten pupils in average who entered the first grade leaves (fails or leaves for a special elementary school) the original class. Among Roma children, however, it is nearly *a half* of the class which leaves the original class.

- ❑ The situation is worse in Roma boys than in girls. It is even less than a half of Roma boys who have a chance to complete the school attendance in the original class.
- ❑ In Roma children, 72% attend common elementary schools (it is 92% in non-Roma children), i.e. nearly one third of all Roma children attend the schools outside the main educational stream.
- ❑ Two out of ten Roman girls and 2,4 Roma boys in average leave the common school of the main educational stream (in other girls it is one girl out of a hundred and three boys out of a hundred).
- ❑ School grades and educational chances are influenced by increased non-attendance, which are in Roma children nearly three times as higher as in their non-Roma peers, and they increase further throughout the school years.
- ❑ One of the key issue points in the educational paths of Roma children is specifically the entry to the school career and a transition into the sixth grade, when the curriculum is more complicated.
- ❑ The essential problem Roma children face in the beginning of school career is the Czech language followed at the higher grades by mathematics. The average grades of Roma children are significantly worse than those of their non-Roma peers as they cannot manage the curriculum and this situation deteriorates as the school years proceed.
- ❑ According to teachers' evaluation, one fifth of Roma children earn above-average grades. Those are the pupils who enjoy support of their parents and those from families which do not use Roma language.
- ❑ Roma children at schools with a medium share of Roma pupils (21 up to 50%) have a slightly lower chance of completing the school years in the starting class.
- ❑ Given the size of the cities, the differences are not as significant; it is a uniform figure which applies to schools in big cities as well as to schools in smaller towns.

b. Efficiency of the Individual Integration Instruments

- ❑ Roma children who attended kindergartens are clearly much more successful in their educational paths. Kindergartens or preschools are attended by approximately 48% of Roma children.
- ❑ Success of children at school may be influenced by the support of an assistant. While it is only 6,5 of Roma pupils, both males and females, out of ten who survive at the original class through the third grade at schools of the main educational stream without an assistant, it is 7,5 pupils in average in classes with assistants. It could not be proved whether or not the assistant has any significant impact on reducing missed class hours.

c. Opinions of the School Managements

- ❑ It is the opinion of the majority of school management representatives that the schools are not sufficiently supported by the welfare and legislation upon which they could use sanctions in order to open space for the positive educational and school activities (school attendance, parents' motivation to send children to schools and support them).
- ❑ Most of the school managers currently see a chance of changing the situation preferentially in the exogenic aspects towards their own school, be it sanctions and pressure on to the families via the welfare or any other system, or in strengthening the educational chances through more thorough preschool preparation, higher number of

assistants, extracurricular program, etc. Thoughts of making a change within the school appear rather seldom.

- ❑ Majority of the school representatives is still not quite convinced about the significance of the instruments associated with supporting the professional motivation to learn and the anticipation of massive unsuccessfulness of Roma pupils in their pursue of higher education once they leave the elementary school.

d. Educational Needs and Attitudes of the Children

- ❑ The social and economic situation of socially outcast families is likely to tie up the most the educational and profession ambitions of Roma children and thus their prospective increasing intergenerational mobility. It is apparent from the total image of professional ambitions of Roma children that they usually do not get over the horizon of everyday life of their parents. They usually confine themselves to whatever their parents do in the household and family (cooking, repairs, etc.). Roma children do not seem to have much ambition to overcome the horizon of their parents' life careers; professionally, they end up copying very limited horizon of the outcast Roma neighborhoods. The absence of professional mobility thus weakens their motivation to learn.
- ❑ There is a potential to strengthen the role of the school in order to overcome the deficit of desirable professional and educational ambitions of Roma children. Currently, one quarter of Roma pupils receive no educational support whatsoever from their parents and, at the same time, there is no support system on the part of the school.

e. Conclusion for Further Definition of Educational Policy

- ❑ School managements have no essential problem with identification of the children as Roma and refusal of such identification occurred rather seldom. Moreover, it is likely that this barrier will be overcome if the school management will perceive that this identification is being made for the purpose of resolving the problems associated with the equalization of the educational chances of Roma children.