



Investment into Education Development

The analysis has been

CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
AND BY THE STATE BUDGET OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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The contracting authority of the research project called „*Sociological research aimed at the analysis of the image and causes of segregation of children, pupils and young people from the socially and culturally disadvantaging environment*“ is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, Karmelitská 7, Post Code 118 12 Prague 1.



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List of abbreviations

ATTS	Advanced training of the teaching staff
CE	compulsory education
EPCC	Educational and psychological counselling centre
FCSD	The Foundation of the Civil Society Development
FEPES	Framework educational program for elementary schooling
FEPSES	Framework educational program for a specialised elementary school
HS	High school
MES	Mainstream elementary school
MEYS	The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MLSA	The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-government non-profit organisation
OCH	Other children
RCH	Roma children
SES	Specialised elementary school
SFEPES	Framework educational program for elementary schooling of pupils with minor mental disorder
SPC	Special pedagogical centre
SY	School year

1.1 What is the aim of and the reason for the study

The study submitted herein represents an output of the public tender called „*Sociological research aimed at the analysis of the form and causes of the segregation of children, pupils and young people from a socially and culturally disadvantaging environment*“ commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic in 2008. The aim of the study is to present a comprehensive depiction of educational trajectories and chances of Roma pupils descending from the socially disadvantaging environment who attend various types of elementary schools by means of a comparison with the trajectories and chances of their peers who attend the same schools.

Given its focus on the educational paths and chances of Roma children (compared to their non-Roma peers), the research fills in a significant gap in understanding the course and some of the causes of the educational retardation of a considerable part of Roma population that is either socially excluded or faces a threat of social exclusion. The analysis of the data provides information on deeper and longer-term mechanisms of social exclusion of many Roma male and female pupils, including the inter-generational transfer of the cumulative load. The study thus represents another significant step in the analysis of the current situation in the area which has not yet been either mapped or statistically analyzed.

The analysis of the educational paths and chances of children enables to define the substantiated hypothesis concerning the options and methods which could help to change the current unfavourable situation by increasing the educational chances of these children and thus increasing their chances to succeed in the job market and to join the economic and social life of the Czech society.

The lack of education is one of the main factors in the background of the formation and inter-generational transfer of social exclusion of Roma people. Therefore, supporting education in the generation of their children is a prerequisite for the change of the never-ending result of which would be the improving outlook of an ever-growing group of people and growth of their upward educational mobility.

The majority of Czech population considers education the very key and long-term instrument assisting in overcoming the marginalization of socially excluded Roma males and females within the trans-generational dimension.¹ The education and the system of schooling represent the very instruments which bears the greatest expectations in the Czech society in respect of an overturn of the unfavourable development and an improvement of the position of the excluded „Roma communities“ through the integration policy of the state in the long-term horizon.²

The decision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic to analyze the educational trajectories and chances of children from the socially disadvantaging environment of Roma neighbourhoods represents another significant step to such a level of understanding, which allows to provide a competent definition of adequate policies and practical utilization of the efficient tools of change of the educational chances as well as an improvement of the educational outlook of Roma pupils. Less than three years after the completion of a map of socially excluded Roma neighbourhoods, which was initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic, both the professional and general public now receives an

¹ 65 percent of the adult Czech population sees the chance for a change and integration of Roma males and females into the Czech society in the generation of their children. Source: *Klíč k posílení integrační politiky obcí*, Otevřená společnost, GAC, Praha 2008, s. 26 [*The Key to Strengthen the Integration Policy, Open Society, page 26*].

² Ibidem pages 41, 50.

analysis of the results of which clearly support the expectations associated with the education and schooling system.

Since this extensive and representative study is the first of its kind in the Czech Republic, we consider it necessary to focus not only on the main findings but also on a detailed interpretation of the research its methodology and individual outputs while showing their strengths and weaknesses in order to provide the professional and responsible public, in particular, with an opportunity to continue working with the results and to deepen or review the results with a critical approach in methodology.

1.2 Basic resources of the study and its content-related view

The situation and work of the schools operating in the vicinity of socially excluded Roma neighbourhoods is very differentiated and variable, not just in respect of the existence of the various types of schools³ (mainstream elementary schools, other special elementary schools), composition of the pupils, methods of teachers' work and the support of the school administration surroundings. There is a lot of variance among pupils in terms of their school performance and family background.

Until recently there has been literally no information available regarding the educational paths and chances of Roma children; given their rather low level of success in entering and completing high schools, reaching higher education and succeeding in the job market, there is a prevailing perception of even a uniform failure of Roma boys and girls in schools and in their grades earned in profile subjects.

It is only the data and statistical view of the representative set of schools and rather large groups of children compared that shows an extensive variance of the school life and training practice and, last but not least, also the variance in effort of both parents and children, starting with a great effort down to ultimate passivity. There is a rather differentiated picture of the educational paths of children as well as the school activities existing on the level of elementary schools. This variety gets largely stuck in the bottleneck after the completion of or already in the course of the elementary school. Many children independently on their school performance copy the life path of their unemployed parents or siblings. And there is the main argument as to why to start with the situation in the elementary schools and describe and analyze the distinguishable inequalities occurring therein.

Compared to the understanding of educational inequalities, their main causes and essential circumstances in various social groups in the majority population, the comparative analysis of the chances and inequalities in Roma children is just at the beginning. Therefore, we consider it necessary to make sure that the research does not remain the only one of its kind. Its aim is not just a mere dissipation of the so-called „information darkness“, which has been so far surrounding the topic of educational chances and inequalities between Roma and non-Roma

³ In the first half of 2009, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (hereinafter the „MEYS“) in cooperation with the Institute for Information on Education performed a survey in order to map the numbers of pupils being educated according to various educational programmes in elementary schools. The children attending elementary schools are currently educated according to the so-called framework educational programmes. In general, the teaching follows the so-called Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Schooling and the Basic, General or National School (*hereinafter simply referred to as FEP ES*). The children with specific educational needs, which have been diagnosed with minor mental disorders, follow the curriculum under the Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Schooling of Children with Minor Mental Disorder or „Specialised School Programme“ (*hereinafter referred to as FEP SS MMD*) – this programme is applicable to pupils attending regular classes as well as to children attending specialized classes in regular elementary schools or to children in practical schools (a type of specialized school, which does not have an equivalent in the UK or the US educational system; it used to be referred to as the „special school with programmes for mentally handicapped children“).

children, but, above all, laying the minimum knowledge which could enable the Ministry of Education to define the necessary changes and compensatory instruments. It must be stressed that many of the monitored elementary schools attended by Roma children from the socially disadvantaging environment do use various tools and have already gained more or less experience with the results, positives and shortcomings. Therefore, we do not start from scratch, which is also important.

In this analysis, we focus on several topics:

1. Description and analysis of the basic features of selected schools, which serves as a fundamental instrument for the representative analysis of the set of elementary schools operating in the vicinity of the excluded neighbourhoods in terms of the type of school, composition of classes and the development of entries and departures (mobility) of pupils;
2. Basic characteristics of the educational paths of the pupils identified by their school grades earned in the junior and senior levels of the elementary school;
3. Information the teachers obtain about the pupils, their performance, background, activity and cooperation of their parents with the school;
4. Teachers' opinions on the education of Roma children;
5. Opinions of Roma boys and girls regarding the role of education, their professional and other pretensions and occupation patterns in comparison with their non-Roma peers;
6. Basic available extracurricular supporting educational programmes, mainly the activity of non-profit organizations the children have available in the school's neighbourhood.

The backbone of the study is represented by the outputs of the analysis focused on a set of schools and a set of both male and female pupils, their school performance, school attendance and mobility among various types of schools. In these particular areas, the study brings the findings and observations which may be defined as statistically representative (see the details in the chapter on methodology set forth), whereas the other areas may be considered as being rather probed.

The most important formal and methodological objective of the project was to overcome the thus-far prevailing assumption that the inequality and differences in options cannot be studied given the difficulties in differentiation and identification of pupils as being Roma and non-Roma. The study proves that this particular barrier can be overcome and resolved based on a solid methodological (standardized) basis, which is supported by definitions and is empirically verifiable. The respective information also forms an integral part of the methodological interpretation.

1.3 Information about the project, its partners and liability for the contents thereof

The research and the analysis of the outputs may represent an important instrument for the purpose of seeking integration strategies. This is also one of the reasons why the project was elaborated within the relatively short period between September 2008 and January 2009.

The research team was amended and extended by the experts who would continuously and critically monitor the course of the project to provide comments, as well as by the support and cooperation of managers of the selected schools and their colleague teachers who would process the data and information and provided qualitative assessment. Without their synergy, the analysis,

data inputs and analytical outputs could not come into existence. The entirely positive, professional and superior cooperation of the teachers and schools' management in the project in the stage of collecting the data brings one of the key observations, i.e. that the Czech elementary education system shows the qualification prerequisites for starting the integration programmes. These prerequisites and experience of course differ under the circumstances of the given school as well as by the experience, view and approach of the teachers. We believe that the study will be just a mere evidence of the fact that the selected schools and their teachers participating therein did not waste their time and work in vain. The research team thus feels the need to thank them all for their effort.

The last note addresses the contracting authority, i.e. the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, which formally monitored the course of the analysis and supported its outputs; however, in no stage whatsoever did it show any tendency to influence the research, analysis or the interpretation of the outputs. We do appreciate the confidence and feel obliged to explicitly declare that it is the research team who bears the exclusive liability for the study, its resources, analysis, structure and sorting of the outputs, their interpretation and wording including the conclusion arising there from.

Dated in Prague on 28 January 2009

2.1 Causes and symptoms of educational inequalities

The roots of the educational inequalities may be divided into two basic areas. The causes are to be found both **in the families and their climate** as well as **in the school as an institution**: the school performance of children thus reflects the environment in which they grow/are growing, what kind of standards existed/are existing (material background, position of the role of education on the value ladder, social and symbolic capital) as well as the approach of the school as an institution towards the children (or the educational system as such), the issue as to whether or not the school appropriately manages, supports and develops the heterogeneity of the pupils' attitudes and needs (the school as an institution may strengthen or weaken the handicaps the children bring along from their families). Since the educational inequalities are nowadays especially strong determinant for the social and economic inequalities in the society, there are extensive literature resources and a great number of research analyses available in order to analyze the causes of educational disparities and inequality of educational chances. Therefore, we are focusing only on a brief description of the potential determinants; we take them into account and deal with them in terms of their prospective interception in our data and analysis. For deeper theoretical insight, we refer to the respective literature.⁴

We deem the following to be the **main mechanisms of the educational disparities on the part of an individual** (or family, respectively):

- *Less developed cultural potential* where the child (compared to others) in the family less often encounters the necessary cultural competence, which is anticipated and requested from children by the school in the area of general cultural outlook, knowledge, capacity to pass a judgement and to distinguish the values and instruments: from the conceptual equipment up to the existence of home library, culture experience etc.;
- *Less stimulating environment in terms of language.* Insufficiently stimulating language environment relates to the cultural family capital. It is demonstrated by the scope of the vocabulary used, diversity of language and the use of abstract terms. The socially excluded Roma families also demonstrate the existence of Roma-Czech ethnolect (a mixture of Czech and Roma language), which obviously inhibits the language capacity of Roma children upon entry to school as well as in managing the curriculum and the very exposure at school in which the language and mastering both verbal and written form thereof represents the fundamental learning instrument;
- *Low family support.* Socially excluded families largely attach less importance to education; they do not encourage children to do homework, they do not identify critical issues in school attendance and, last but not least, they obviously do not encourage the children to aspire to achieve a higher educational and social status than the parents have themselves;

⁴ „The authors placed on the left understand school selection as the reason, something that causes that the children from lower social classes end up with the same social status as their parents. On the other hand, the authors placed on the right view the school selection as a consequence of disparities which existed before the child entered school,“ says social scientist Tomáš Katrňák. In his opinion, in the imaginary center between the two fields stands the classicus of the reproduction in education studies, French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu, who on one part describes the structural requirements of contemporary societies but on the other part also considers the dispositions of an individual. Katrňák Tomáš. 2004. *Odsouzení k manuální práci: Vzdělanostní reprodukce v dělnické rodině*. Praha: SLON, s. 36. [„Sentenced to manual work: Educational reproduction in working class family“, p. 36]

- *Non-existence of positive occupational and professional patterns.* The children living in the socially excluded environment grow up experiencing a very high unemployment rate, they have no professional or mobility patterns that would motivate them to study and to strengthen their educational aspirations or lifestyle models based on the occupation and salary adherent to professional career and qualification;
- *Lower material equipment of family and poorer household and housing conditions in the excluded neighbourhoods.* Another accessory mark of the socially excluded is poverty – in many cases the child does not even have its own desk at which he/she could do homework, the family has no money to buy educational material (or is not willing to spend money on that) or to pay for transportation to school. As shown in the Analysis of the Socially Excluded Roma Neighbourhoods and Absorption Capacity of the Entities Operating in This Area (The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2006), the neighbourhoods even struggle to maintain the very fundamental civilization standards with respect to availability of utilities, hygiene, let alone the privacy and adequate conditions for learning in the households.

Although the structure of the educational system may not influence the primary socialization of the family, it may have, however, a significant impact on the secondary socialization. A number of international surveys prove that there are great differences in Roma pupils' grades in various schools in the Czech Republic: a part of the educational disparities may be thus attributed to the **educational system and schools as institutions**.

For instance, in the PISA 2000 survey, the Czech Republic ranked with the countries in which the pupils' results in the test of reader's literacy depended also on their family background.⁵ In the latest published PISA 2006 survey, the Czech Republic stands on the same level as the countries with an above-average difference between the well and poorly performing pupils. The value of the difference between the results of 5% of the best and 5% of the most poorly performing pupils in the Czech Republic has reached 322 points. On the other hand, in Finland, which achieved the best results and where the poorly performing pupils receive more extensive individual care, the difference is considerably lower.⁶ In the Czech system, by contrast, the mechanisms that would mitigate the difference in the family background are missing.⁷

The aim of the research was not to compare the educational situations and performance of parents and children; however, it may be and should be dealt with, according to other results (MLSA 2006, FCSD 2007), upon the hypothesis that the educational system in the Czech Republic, in this case represented mainly by the elementary schools, does not only fail to mitigate the educational disparities generated by social exclusion of families but on the contrary – it transfers it from the parents' generation down on the generation of their children by preventing them to increase their educational and occupational changes. It is then very likely for the children to leave the elementary school to end up exactly where their parents ended up, i.e. outside the job market, dependant on social allowances and on the gravitation field of both socially and territorially excluded Roma neighbourhoods.

In this case, the situation of social handicap is deteriorated by the attributed ethnical origin with respect to the growing „ethnical“ homogeneity of some of the large excluded Roma neighbourhoods where the children have no stronger ties and daily experience with the majority

⁵ Matějů Petr a Straková Jana (eds.). 2006. *(Ne)rovne šance na vzdělání: Vzdělanostní nerovnosti v České republice*. Praha: Academia, s. 127 [(Un)equal chances to receive education: Educational disparities in the Czech Republic].

⁶ Palečková Jana. 2007. *Hlavní zjištění z výzkumu PISA 2006: Poradí si žáci s přírodními vědami*. Praha: Ústav pro informace ve vzdělání, s. 6 [Main findings from the research PISA 2006: Will the pupils manage science?].

⁷ Matějů Petr a Straková Jana (eds.). 2006. *(Ne)rovne šance na vzdělání: Vzdělanostní nerovnosti v České republice*. Praha: Academia, s. 141 [(Un)equal chances to receive education: Educational disparities in the Czech Republic].

of population and lifestyle based on employment, but also in terms of the growing „ethnic“ homogeneity of schools in the neighbourhood.

The synergy between the „ethnic“ contents and social handicap has indeed many other dimensions, be it language competence or the attitudes of these children and expectations of their family and social surroundings. In summary, in the case of the Roma pupils, we monitor the handicap of the socio-ethnic nature and origin, which is linked to the paths and chances of the children from the excluded Roma neighbourhoods.

2.2 Initial methodological concept

By its extent and thus statistical reliability of the findings, this sociological research is one of the first of its kind that focuses on the significant sources of educational inequalities of Roma male and female pupils in comparison with their non-Roma classmates.

The research of these educational disparities was complicated by several circumstances or barriers this project has to deal with. It concerned both the feasibility and, most of all, the sensitive issue of the identification of Roma children, i.e. the willingness and capacity to identify boys and girls as „Roma“ in schools and in classes. Unless there is an impending risk of infringement of the Personal Data Protection Act no. 101/2000 Coll., the identification of children is in compliance with the Council of Europe⁸ adopted by the Czech Republic.

For the aforesaid reasons, we paid systematic attention to the description of the research methodology so that the used process would be obvious, the options of increasing the quality could be discussed or that the research could be repeated in the future; and, last but not least, so that it would be evident what are the assumptions the research has been based on and what are the limits linked therewith.

2.3 Terminology

The analysis compares the educational trajectories and aspirations of the children from schools situated in the vicinity of socially excluded neighbourhoods. We focus mainly, but not only on, Roma children. We consider it necessary to explain the terms stated above and to point to their conversion in the research methodology. The definitions, methodological utilization and operability of the terms are based on and in compliance with the definitions and operability we used in the “Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Neighbourhoods and Absorption Capacity of Entities Operating Therein from 2006”⁹. In the pilot study from 2007, we also specifically tested the environment of the elementary schools for the purpose of analyzing the school environment.¹⁰

Socially excluded and socially disadvantaging environment

We define social exclusion as a process in which an individual, a group of individuals or a community has significant difficulty or entirely prevented access to resources, positions and opportunities which enable involvement in the social, economic and political activities of majority society. The risk of social exclusion increases in the individuals and groups in which the aforesaid (or some other) factors cumulate. Social exclusion is often linked namely to (but not only) and is demonstrated by the following:

⁸ It concerns namely the provision of Framework Convention of the European Council adopted into the Czech legislation.

⁹ *The Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma neighborhoods And Absorption Capacity of Entities Working In This Field*, MLSA, 2006, hereinafter referred to as the „Analysis“.

¹⁰ The Analysis of Attitudes and Educational Needs of Roma Children and Youth prepared by GAC for FCSD in 2007.

- ❑ territorial exclusion (the individuals and groups affected by social exclusion often live in closed and/or isolated communities with a low level of accommodation and insufficient civil amenities),
- ❑ symbolic exclusion associated with stigmatization (generalized attribution of negative features) of individuals or groups,
- ❑ low education rate and aggravated chance to overcome the handicap,
- ❑ aggravated access to legal forms of gainful occupation and salary based income, dependence of social allowances and material poverty associated therewith,
- ❑ hazardous lifestyle, poor hygienic conditions and poorer health condition associated therewith,
- ❑ life strategies oriented to the presence,
- ❑ closed economic system characterized by frequent pledging of property and borrowing money with high interest (i.e. usury and so-called fast loans),
- ❑ greater potential of occurrence of socially pathological elements (e.g. alcoholism, drug abuse or gambling) and crime (higher risk of becoming a perpetrator as well as a victim of a criminal activity),
- ❑ reduced socio-cultural competence (e.g. language barrier, inexperience or lack of knowledge of one's own rights and duties).

The symptoms of the social exclusion listed above (or other prospective ones) occur in various situations and in various scales. It is also possible to speak of the social exclusion if some of the symptoms only occur.

Roma male/female pupil

The term „Roma“ may be understood and used in various contexts and in different ways. This analysis is using the following definition: a Roma male/female pupil is a person who accounts himself/herself as being a Roma without necessarily endorsing himself/herself to this ethnic group under any circumstances whatsoever (e.g. in population census), and/or he/she is considered being a Roma by a significant part of his/her surroundings based on the factual or alleged (anthropological, cultural or social) indicators. This analysis considers namely the second part of the definition as it reflects the social fact that the attributed affiliation to a Roma ethnic group may be one of the causes of social handicap.¹¹

Mainstream elementary school and specialized elementary school

A mainstream elementary school is a facility educating pupils according to the Framework Educational Programme for Elementary Schools („FEPES“), whereas a specialised elementary school is a facility established for the purpose of educating children with specific educational needs (FEPES, attachment SFEPES or FEPSSES).

2.4 Sampling characteristics of schools

The data for the research were collected primarily at the elementary schools situated in the vicinity of socially excluded Roma localities. The aim at the elementary schools is based not only

¹¹ See also: *Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti*, MPSV, 2006 [*The Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma localities and Absorption Capacity of Entities Operating Therein, MLSA*].

on the tasks itself but also on the pilot research¹², which showed that the elementary schools do have sufficient information and data available with respect to the pupils to be able to examine and compare their school grades. Therefore, the basis for the sample selection was not the children but the elementary schools attended by the pupils from socially excluded Roma localities along with their non-Roma peers who live in the same town or municipality. Comparison of the results and study of the differences in the educational trajectories occurring in these schools provide a direct view of the differences between the children from the excluded Roma localities and other children living in the same town but outside the excluded localities.

The key methodological step is the selection of schools and its configuration, i.e. the determination of the typical features distinguishing the schools situated in the vicinity of excluded localities. Based on the findings arising from the Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities from 2006 as well as the pilot pilot research¹³, we defined the sampling criteria as follows: 1. *the size of the municipality* in which the school is located – this feature indirectly indicates the size of the excluded locality and other significant features of both the pupils and the school; 2. *the type of school*, i.e. a mainstream elementary school or a specialised elementary school (e.g. practical/vocational ES); and 3. *the percentage of Roma children* in the total number of pupils attending the school concerned.

Such parameters of the school characteristics, which are based on the findings arising from the preceding analysis (MLSA 2006, FCSD 2007), enable to include the main (distinctive) categories of schools that are relevant in terms of a prospective impact on the educational paths of children. At the same time, it may be useful in order to find out how much is the group of monitored schools representative compared to the total set of schools attended by Roma pupils living in socially excluded localities.

2.5 Sampling of schools and sample representativity

The selection was made from complete list of all elementary schools situated in the vicinity of socially excluded localities. The list was created during the work on the map of excluded localities (Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Communities in the Czech Republic and Absorption Capacity of Entities Operating Therein, MLSA 2006). Given the 2-year shift, the information concerning the schools had to be updated.¹⁴ This particular list included 396 elementary schools nationwide. All of these schools were subject to observation of three aforesaid indices (selection quota).

Since the set of the schools attended by children from the excluded localities was known, the selection was performed by means of random sampling. It was possible to assume that some of the later-addressed schools might not participate in the research for various reasons; therefore, the selection of the monitored schools was over-represented compared to the requirements of the contracting authority and a set of 150 elementary schools were randomly selected. As a condition, the structure of the schools had to be in compliance with the structure of schools as a whole in terms of the quota, i.e. so that the sampled set of schools compared with the entire set of 396 schools would be statistically representative. The chart below shows the distribution of the quota in the monitored characteristics of the randomly sampled 150 schools:

¹² Analysis of the Attitude and Educational Needs of Roma Children and Youth, 2007.

¹³ See note 12.

¹⁴ Some schools were closed, other merged or the children from socially excluded environment started to attend some other elementary schools in larger numbers.

Chart 2.1: Structure of the first selection of 150 schools

Criterion	Number of schools	Percentage	Number in the sample of 150 schools
1. Size of municipality			
up to 5000	83	21 %	31
5001-50,000	209	53 %	79
50,001-300,000	63	16 %	24
more than 300,000	41	10 %	16
2. Type of school			
Mainstream elementary school	262	66 %	99
Elementary schools with special classes	34	9 %	13
Specialized elementary school	100	25 %	38
3. Number of children from target group			
up to 20 percent	166	42 %	63
21-50 percent	74	19 %	28
more than 50 percent	65	16 %	25
unknown Percentage	91	23 %	34
Total	396	100 %	150

2.6 Data Collection

After the sampling was completed, the schools were directly asked whether they would participate in the research. The participation meant filling in two standardized electronic record sheets and providing up to five recent annual reports in an electronic version (see the details below). The schools were addressed as follows:

- via telephone, by an interview lasting 5 to 10 minutes in which the school principals were presented with the research and the explanation as to what would it mean for the school to participate, i.e. the contents and scope of the cooperation. In the event that the schools did not decide to participate immediately, they received the respective documents in order to provide them with more time to think about it.
- via e-mail along with the respective documents.

The rate of refusal was higher than assumed; therefore, other schools were selected by random sampling as to replace those that decided not to take part. The total overview of the success/failure in convincing the schools to participate in the research is shown in the chart below.

The chart clearly shows that a total of 193 elementary schools from the entire Czech Republic were addressed with the offer to participate in the research, i.e. 49 percent of the basic sample (396 schools). The total success ratio reached 55 percent, i.e. approximately every second school agreed to participate.

A total of 106 schools agreed to participate in the research and all quotas calculated for the set of a 100 schools were thus fulfilled.

The most frequent reason for refusal was a declared lack of time, which occurred in approximately 75 cases. A similar number of school principals refused to participate immediately regardless of the topic; others declared a long-term absence of the management, problems with the archives, and others refused to distinguish among the children (Roma/non-Roma) in compliance with the practice in force.

Chart 2.2: Success/Failure ratio in convincing the schools to participate

Criterion	Addressing schools			
	total	yes	no	Success ratio
1. Size of municipality				
up to 5000	42	24	18	57 %
5001-50,000	107	55	52	51 %
50,001-300,000	27	17	10	63 %
more than 300,000	17	10	7	59 %
<i>Total</i>	193	106	87	55 %
2. Type of school				
Mainstream ES	136	72	64	53 %
ES with special classes	14	9	5	64 %
specialized ES	43	25	18	58 %
<i>Total</i>	193	106	87	55 %
3. Ratio of children from target group				
up to 20 percent	87	43	44	49 %
21-50 percent	33	22	11	67 %
more than 50 percent	25	18	7	72 %
unknown ratio	48	23	25	48 %
<i>Total</i>	193	106	87	55 %

When considering whether or not to participate in the research, the principals declared the following two issues as being the most important ones aside from the scope thereof:

- ☐ Identification of children for the purpose of the research, i.e. the decision whether or not the child may be considered Roma, non-Roma or other ethnicity. Section 2 of Act no. 561/2004 Coll. providing for the pre-school, elementary, secondary and higher vocational and other education stipulates that „the education is based on the principles of equal access provided to each citizen of the Czech Republic or other EU member states to education without any discrimination due to race, colour, sex, language, belief, religion, nationality, ethnical or social origin, property, family and health condition or other citizen’s status“ and the educational practice does not distinguish between Roma and other children. According to the information provided by the schools, they are attended only by a small number of children who consider themselves Roma. Some schools thus considered the classification of children as an ethical issue¹⁵. We may also conclude that the schools’ management and the principals thereof are rather poorly informed about the regulation defined, for example by the aforesaid Framework Convention of the Council of Europe, which enables to ascertain the „ethnicity“ provided that the aim thereof is to overcome the „ethnically“ invoked inequalities or discrimination.
- ☐ Anonymity of data stated in the record sheets and anonymity of the school concerned. As far as the anonymity of data is concerned, the research is fully in compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act no. 101/2000 Coll. as the subject matter thereof did not concern any personal data. Moreover, the research team provides the participating schools with a guarantee of anonymity towards third parties: the identification data of the (selected) schools as well as the names and addresses of the participating schools remain exclusively in the work documents of the research team; the information was not and

¹⁵ This is also the reason why the questionnaires to be filled in by the schools’ principals (see the details below) contained the open question asking what the principal thinks of the ascertainment of the „ethnicity“ for the purposes of research for the aim of which is to contribute to reduce inequalities in the education system.

would not be passed on to the contracting authority or to any other party, as well as the names of the teachers who took part in the project.

2.7 Contents of the collected data

The participation of all schools in the collection of data involved filling in/provision of the following documents:

☐ Questionnaire for the schools

The questionnaire contained the basic general data about the school, i.e. the number of children who attended the school in the past years; a percentage of the Roma children in the total number of pupils, the Framework Educational Programme (hereinafter the „FEP“), which is the basis of their School Educational Programme (hereinafter the „SEP“); information on the pre-school preparation, departures of pupils, their grades, absences, integration tools used or cooperation with the respective non-government non-profit organization¹⁶.

☐ Record Sheet

This form contained the data on the educational trajectories of children from the selected classes based on the data obtained from the catalogue sheets. The data was fully anonymous in compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act no. 101/2000 Coll. In this respect, the methodology differed between the mainstream elementary schools and the specialised elementary schools. Whereas in the first case, the schools were defined by the year of commencement of education, in the second case, it was the termination of the respective year during the period of 2007/2008 (see the details in section 3.2). In the first case, the reason for the differentiation lies in the attempt to analyse what is the next point of departure for the children; in the second case, it is the different nature of this type of school in terms of the commencement of the education (children start here not only in the first grade but even later).

☐ Annual Reports

The annual reports for the past five years formed an additional part of the research and served for example for the verification of an approximate accurateness of some data.

☐ Questionnaire to be filled in by the principals

This form was offered beyond the scope of the main and „mandatory“ parts of the research: it was only up to the principal to decide whether or not he/she would fill it out. As opposed to the main elements of the quantitative part of the research, this form contained open questions. The topics concerned the following issues: what kind of problems are associated with the education of children from a socially disadvantaged environment; what proved to be the best solution thereof and what kind of new instruments or legislation would be welcome in respect thereof.

¹⁶ For the purposes of this research, we considered the relevant NGO as the organizations whose service portfolio includes the support of children and youth from a socially disadvantaging environment, e.g. in the form of tutor classes or leisure time activities. See the chapter on the absorption capacity for evaluation.

3.1 Basic description of the selected set of schools

The quantitative part of the comparative analysis of the educational trajectories and the success of Roma and other children is based on the complete and relevant data obtained from 99 elementary schools¹⁷ situated in the vicinity of socially excluded localities throughout the Czech Republic. As described above, the main selective and thus comparative features are: the size of the municipality, the type of school and the percentage of Roma pupils in the school.

Chart 3.1: Selection structure

Criterion	Number of schools
1. Size of the municipality	
up to 5000	23
5001-50,000	52
50,001-300,000	16
more than 300,000	8
<i>Total</i>	99
2. Type of school	
Mainstream elementary school	69
Special elementary school	30
<i>Total</i>	99
3. Proportion of Roma children	
up to 20 percent	61
21-50 percent	21
more than 50 percent	17
<i>Total</i>	99
4. Vicinity of a large socially excluded neighbourhood	
No	77
Yes	22
<i>Total</i>	99

All quotas were approximately fulfilled in terms of the statistical and quantitative distribution within the research; their random sampling and the method of data collection enabled to consider the results **representative towards the entire set of all elementary schools attended by the children from socially excluded Roma localities nationwide.**

The criterion „the type of school“ was re-coded for analytical purposes into two categories based on the data filled in by the participating schools in the questionnaires. The question was, which framework educational programme (FEP) serves or will serve as the basis for the school’s educational programme (SEP). Based on this, one specific category involved a mainstream elementary school which bases its SEP mainly on the framework educational programme for elementary schools (FEP ES). This ES category prevails in representation of the Czech educational system and is deemed to be the standard in terms of the elementary education sum.

¹⁷ The complete and relevant data was obtained from the total of 99 schools; however, some specific parts of the analysis may feature a lower total number as e.g. not all of the cases are relevant for a given part or not all of the schools filled in the given item correctly. As we stated above, we acquired the total of 106 schools for cooperation; 7 of them failed to supply the data within the deadline or quality required.

The second category involves a specialised elementary school¹⁸ whose SEP is based on the FEP ES, SFEPES or will be based on¹⁹ the FEP SES: this type of schools focuses on the education of children with specific educational needs.²⁰

Although the region in which the school was situated was not considered a selection criterion, this factor may be deemed to be of key importance and was thus taken into account. The set of schools included all regions, while the regions with a higher concentration of largely excluded Roma localities are represented as proportionally stronger than others. This key statistical outcome of schools sampling supports solid statistical representativeness of data sample:

Chart 3.2: Selection structure by regions

Region	Number of schools in the entire set	Proportion thereof in the set researched	Number of schools in the sampling	Proportion thereof in the set researched
South Bohemia	17	4 %	8	8 %
South Moravia	23	6 %	5	5 %
Karlovy Vary	21	5 %	7	7 %
Hradec Králové	24	6 %	11	11 %
Liberec	25	6 %	5	5 %
Moravia-Silesia	43	11 %	8	8 %
Olomouc	32	8 %	3	3 %
Pardubice	19	5 %	5	5 %
Plzeň	22	6 %	5	5 %
Prague	15	4 %	3	3 %
Central Bohemia	49	12 %	13	13 %
Ústi nad Labem	82	21 %	22	22 %
Vysočina	14	4 %	2	2 %
Zlín	10	3 %	2	2 %
Total	396	100 %	99	

The consolidated main criteria show the following structure of the elementary schools in the sampling (see chart 3.3 below).

In the school year 2007/2008, the 99 schools in the research group were attended by a total 28,723 children out of whom approximately²¹ 18 percent were Roma, i.e. 5,052. Although the selected group included approximately one fourth of schools in the vicinity of socially excluded Roma localities, the exact number of Roma children attending the school could not be estimated as the total set of schools features also the schools which are not fully organised, i.e. they are primary schools (1st up to 5th grade).

¹⁸ These schools previously used the educational programme „Special school“ or „School for socially or mentally challenged children“; currently, the schools are often referred to as practical or specialized schools.

¹⁹ The Ministry of Education released the FEP SES from the school year 2008/2009.

²⁰ Two schools stated all three FEP, their distribution into categories was based on the annual reports stating how many children come under this or that educational programme and how many children attends them in total (mainstream ES and SES differ in majority of cases in terms of the maximum permitted number of children per class and thus in the school itself).

²¹ Since the schools are not allowed to classify children by „ethnicity“, they were asked in the questionnaires to estimate a percentage of Roma children in the school in the respective school year. The estimation was then recalculated to the total number of children. Since it is just an estimate, the data as well as a number of conclusions must be taken as approximate ones running rather within an interval.

Chart 3.3: Structure of the sampling divided by main criteria

Participation of Roma children at school	municipality	Number		
		MES	SES	Σ
up to 20 percent of Roma children at school	up to 5,000	16	1	17
	up to 50,000	29	2	31
	up to 300,000	8	0	8
	more than 300,000	3	2	5
<i>Total</i>		56	5	61
21-50 percent of Roma children at school	up to 5,000	2	2	4
	up to 50,000	4	9	13
	up to 300,000	3	1	4
	more than 300,000	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>		9	12	21
More than 50 percent of Roma children at school	up to 5,000	0	2	2
	up to 50,000	1	7	8
	up to 300,000	1	3	4
	more than 300,000	2	1	3
<i>Total</i>		4	13	17
Grand total		69	30	99

When considering an estimated number of Roma children, **it is important to be aware of the fact that not all Roma children who attend the schools concerned necessarily live in the socially excluded Roma localities.**

3.2 Basic description of the set of pupils

As stated in the chapter on methodology, aside from the summary data regarding the schools, we also considered anonymous information from the schools' registries and catalogue sheets, which contain the educational trajectories of pupils, specifically the data on the grades' development, absence rate, repeated classes and transfer to another school or educational programme.

As per the mainstream elementary schools, we monitored the **anonymous data** of pupils who started to attend them three, five or eight years ago (i.e. in the school years 2000/2001, 2003/2004 and 2005/2006). As per the specialised elementary schools, we worked with the data concerning the children who, at the time of the research (at the end of school year 2007/2008), completed the third, fifth or eighth grades, respectively. We requested the schools to provide us with the statistics always for two classes in each grade.²²

The teachers filled in the following data about each pupil:

- identification data (the „ethnicity“, sex, assumed occurrence of social exclusion within the family, need for special educational instruments),
- data on grades earned (final grade in Czech language, math, conduct, an average grade and occurrence of any problematic behaviour),
- frequency of absence,

²² Some elementary schools have only one class per grade; therefore, they only supplied the data for this one grade. In three or more classes per grade, we chose two with the highest number of Roma children.

- data on the integration instruments used (an assistant to the teacher²³, preparation class or any other form of pre-school preparation).

Using this method, we obtained data for a total of **8,462 pupils**. In aggregate, the set contained **31.3 percent of children who completed the third grade of primary school; 33.3 percent completed fifth grade and 35.4 percent completed eighth grade**. The vast majority of children (86 percent) attended the schools of the mainstream educational system.²⁴ The analysis covered 48.2 percent of girls and 51.8 percent of boys.

Roma children form approximately one fifth of the set (21 percent), which means that we managed to obtain the data concerning **1,800 Roma pupils (both girls and boys)**. Once again, the „ethnicity“ was determined by the teachers, i.e. by **external identification**. We assumed that the external identification is largely sufficient in the school environment (similarly to a number of other areas). If the teacher considers the child being a Roma, he/she infers this fact from some kind of a basis and, at the same time, he/she thinks of the child as being a Roma.

It came out from the interview with the teachers and principals that one of the key factors of classification of children was the fact that at least one parent of such child would be considered Roma. Although the respondents enquired about the criterion of the „ethnic“ affiliation, in most cases, they suggested the aforesaid procedure by themselves. On the other hand, albeit very seldom, the respondents would offer the definitions of „being Roma“, which put more emphasis on cultural dimensions. „*But we don't even look at them as Roma... they don't even understand Roma language anymore*“, one female teacher said during a qualitative probe with pupils when she and the researchers discussed the topic as to whether or not the majority of pupils attending the school concerned were Roma or not.

The total of 77 percent of children (from the aforesaid set) **attended the schools in which the percentage of Roma pupils reached up to 20 percent of the total number of children attending that school**.²⁵ Therefore, the schools with a minor percentage of Roma children prevail in the set. **One tenth**²⁶ of the analyzed set then attended the schools with more than 50 percent of Roma pupils, i.e. the schools that often have the reputation of the so-called „gipsy schools“; in this case, it does not involve only the specialised elementary schools as the category also includes the highly homogenous²⁷ schools of the mainstream education system.

²³ In this particular case, we are indeed aware of the dubiousness of such definition. Roma assistants to teachers very often do not work in one class. The assistant's job description is currently not stipulated by any official document and depends on the mutual agreement between the school's principal (or any other educational institution) and the assistant. Therefore, it is not unified and may differ from school to school. Source: Jindráková Lucie: *Role asistenta pedagoga ve vzdělávání romských dětí [The Role of Teacher's Assistant in Education of Roma Children]*. Master thesis vindicated at the department of social work of the Philosophic Faculty of Charles University in Prague in 2008.

²⁴ This is due to the fact that the set contained more regular elementary schools based on the imperative of representativeness and that in a majority of cases, both types of schools differ in terms of the maximum number of children possible in classes and the number of classes in the school.

²⁵ The data obtained upon the total number of children in schools during 2007/2008 reaches a similar level: 79 percent.

²⁶ The data obtained upon the total number of children in schools reaches the 8 percent level (school year 2007/2008).

²⁷ In this respect, the schools attended by a small number of Roma pupils may also be defined as homogenous, albeit the same adjective may be used, the analysis shows that both types of these schools do differ in many aspects.

Aside from the „ethnic“ identification, we also enquired each pupil whether he/she comes from a socially excluded environment²⁸ and whether or not he/she has any specific educational needs. The schools may undervalue the perception of social exclusion and the actual scope of social exclusion of Roma children compared to the fact and reality of the excluded Roma localities. As per the perception of the existence of the specific educational needs of children, the situation is even more selective.

In other words, a number of teachers may perceive the remarkable failures, low performance and low order educational chances of Roma pupils as falling within the acceptable „standard“ of the educational system. The obvious difference between the actual state of disparity and low performance of Roma children on one hand, and the way teachers perceive them, may be just one of the discrepancies which should be addressed by a separate focus and analysis.²⁹

²⁸ We also left it up to the teachers to define this; when we interviewed them, we specified what we perceive as a socially excluded environment: a situation of a child in a family where the following elements cumulate: unemployment, socially pathological behavioral (criminality or drug abuse) or poverty.

²⁹ According to the teachers, a total of 21 percent of the pupils come from a socially excluded environment and 20 percent of them have specific educational needs. The chart below shows the classification in detail:

Children	Socially excluded environment		Specific educational needs	
	Roma males and females	YES	65.3 %	YES
NO				66 %
NO		34.7 %	YES	29 %
			NO	71 %
Other children	YES	91.0 %	YES	29 %
			NO	78 %
	NO	9.0 %	YES	15 %
			NO	85 %

During the analysis of the educational trajectories, we were mainly processing the anonymous data obtained from the pupils' catalogue sheets. The aim of the analysis was to use the data to test a hypothesis as to whether or not Roma children attending the schools in the vicinity of socially excluded localities were less successful than their peers.

As a main criterion for measuring the educational trajectories, we chose a likelihood that the child would leave his/her original class in the mainstream school, which he/she attends, after the first grade due to a negative event. **We define a negative event as a transfer to a specialised elementary school or the necessity to repeat the grade.**

Based on the comparison of the negative events in the individual categories of pupils (classified according to the „ethnic“ categorisation, sex or attended school), we compared the individual elements upon which we may describe an individual's educational trajectory:

- ☐ departures to specialised elementary schools,
- ☐ failures to complete grades,
- ☐ achievement in profile subjects,
- ☐ absence rate.

We focused specifically on the two moments framing the educational trajectory in elementary schools that deserve particular attention:

- ☐ commencement of the first grade and efficiency of the selected integration instruments,
- ☐ differences in the educational trajectories of children given any further prospective transfers to other schools.

4.1 The likelihood of survival in the original class of mainstream elementary school

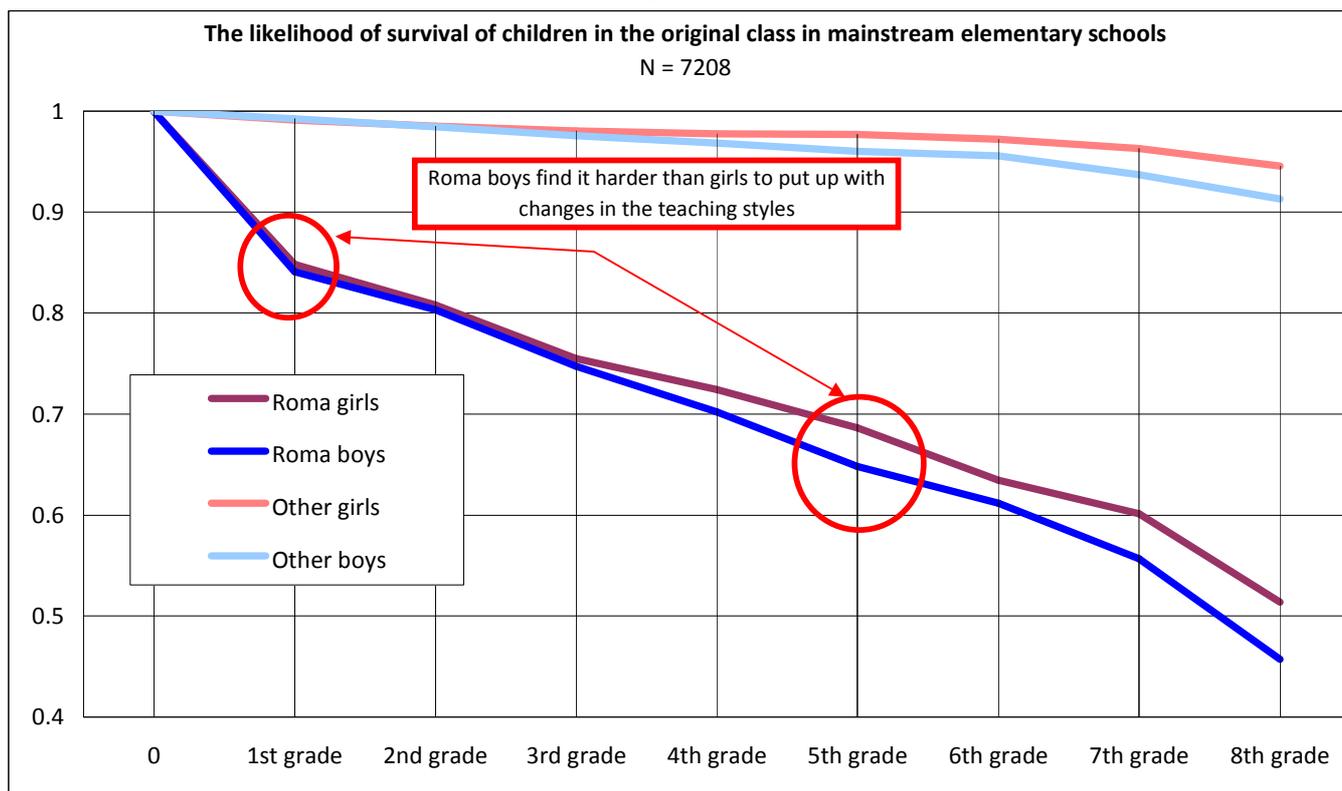
The results of the analysis of the occurrence of negative events clearly confirm the hypothesis that the children identified by teachers as Roma are academically less successful than the other children. As stated above, we chose the child's chance to survive in his/her original class in the mainstream elementary school as the determining indicator of the educational failure.³⁰

Whereas in average it could be stated that in a majority population of pupils attending the monitored schools, approximately one in twenty girls and one in ten boys who started the first grade there would leave for the aforesaid reasons (they failed to complete the grade or left to a specialized ES), whereas it is approximately *a half* of all Roma children who would leave the class. The situation is worse with boys than with girls. Therefore, there is approximately only **a half** of a chance for the Roma pupils to complete the elementary school with their peers they started the school with.

In both sexes, the most frequent departures from the original class occur specifically in the **first grade** and **throughout the sixth to eighth grade**. The failures during the first five grades may be explained mainly by a poorer preparation and by the „equipment“ of children with respect to their family background. Moreover, Roma children often do not attend any form of preschool education, have less vocabulary, etc.

³⁰ We stress again that we perceived the departure only as the events that are negative in terms of the educational trajectory, i.e. failure to complete the grade or departure from the original school to a school outside the mainstream education. Therefore, we did not count in the exits to pluriannual secondary schools, relative elementary schools or other mainstream elementary schools.

Diagram 4.1



It is thus not surprising that a failure or departure is more frequently experienced in the children defined by teachers as those from a socially excluded environment. **Whereas only four in ten Roma pupils defined by the teachers as descending from a socially excluded environment survive through the 8th grade, it is approximately seven out of ten Roma pupils in which the degree of social exclusion is not as high.** Although the educational chances of Roma children who do not live in a socially excluded environment (as defined by the teachers) are rather equal to non-Roma children who do come from a socially excluded environment, they are still much lower.

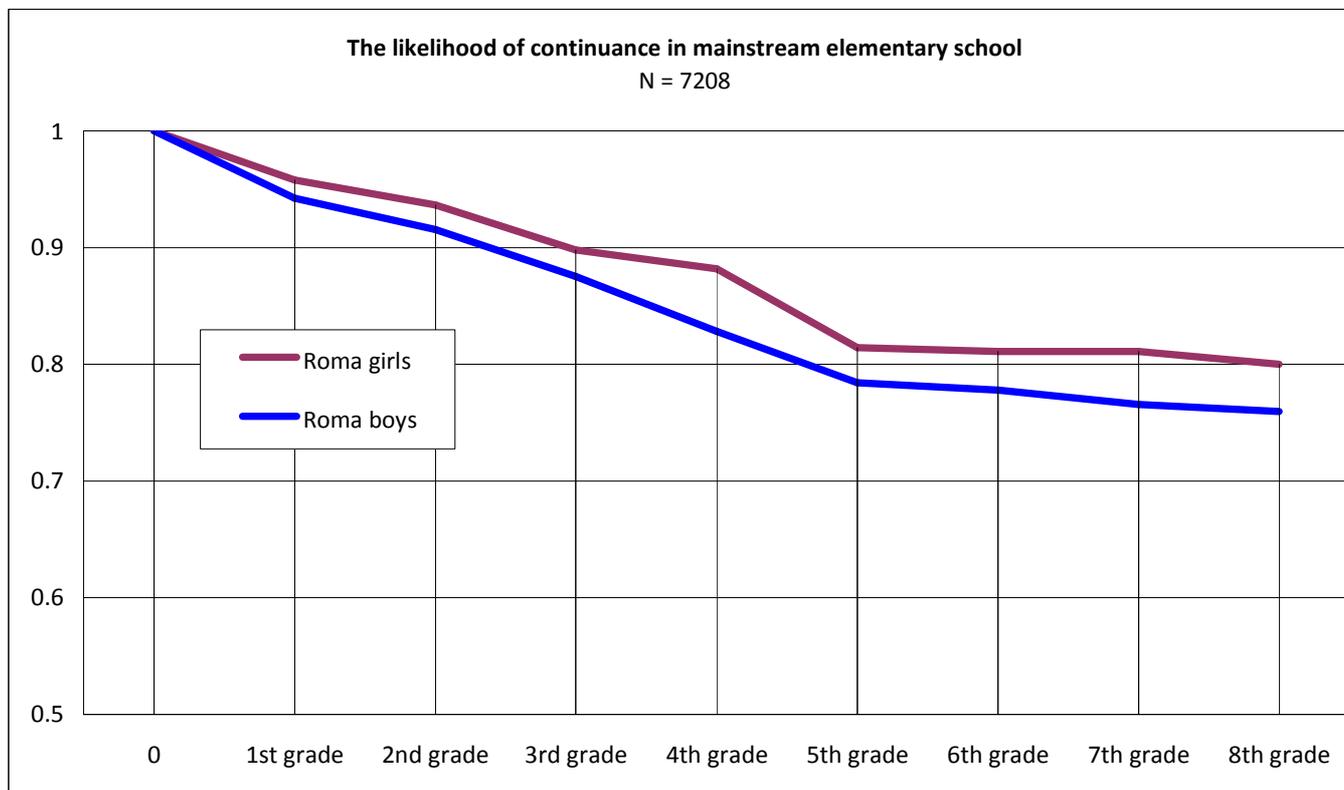
Some teachers, however, may perceive the failure in the first grade as a kind of an integration instrument. One female teacher we interviewed during the *Analysis of Attitudes and Educational Needs of Roma Children and Youth* (Nadace rozvoje občanské společnosti, 2007 [*The Foundation of the Civil Society Development - FCSO*]) stated that she would often let a Roma child repeat the first grade in order to have him/her better master the basics. According to her, this practice is better than sending the pupil to a school outside the mainstream education or let him/her pass to an upper grade where the deficit gained in the first grade increases and would be more difficult to balance it, notwithstanding the fact that the child would be forced to attend a venue where he/she experiences a failure on a daily basis.

To a certain extent, this finding confirms our hypothesis mentioned above, i.e. that the teachers slightly undervalue the degree of social exclusion in Roma pupils. We believe that the standard of judging the family background is lower in Roma pupils than in other children.

4.2 The likelihood of departure to a specialised elementary school

The likelihood of departure to a specialised school outside the mainstream education is of course lower than the likelihood of survival in the original class. The original class is left in this direction by an average of two in ten Roma girls and 2.4 in ten Roma boys (it is one girl out of a hundred pupils and three boys out of a hundred).

Diagram 4.2



The first and the fifth grade seem to be the most problematic. If a Roma pupil completes the first grade, the likelihood of his/her continuance in the class increases by one fourth. If a pupil completes the third grade still in his/her original class, the likelihood of departure reaches approximately 0.1 (one pupil out of ten leaves). If he/she completes the fifth grade, he/she is likely to stay in the same school with the likelihood approximating to 1.

Chart 4.1: Percentage of exits in a specialized school by individual classes

	1 st grade	2 nd grade	3 rd grade	4 th grade	5 th grade	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
Roma children								
<i>girls</i>	21%	11%	19%	8%	34%	2%	1%	4%
boys	24%	11%	17%	20%	18%	3%	5%	2%
Other children								
<i>girls</i>	10%	10%	19%	13%	39%	3%	1%	5%
boys	9%	15%	27%	10%	24%	4%	4%	7%

These findings are supported also by the interviews held with some teachers who claimed that in their experience, Roma children mostly leave the mainstream education at the beginning of the school attendance, whereas other children often leave during the senior years, i.e. in the sixth to ninth grade (when the departures are mostly caused by behavioural issues).

Chart 4.2: Percentage of Roma- and other children in various types of schools

Type of school	Number of children in SY ³¹ 2007-2008	N schools	Roma- and other children within types	Total percentage of RCH and OCH
Mainstream ES	25,484		100 %	89 %
Roma children	3,618	69	14 %	72 %
other children	21,866		86 %	92 %
Specialized ES	3,239		100 %	11 %
Roma children	1,434	31	44 %	28 %
other children	1,805		56 %	8 %
Total	28,723			100 %
Roma children	5,052	100	100 %	100 %
other children	23,671			100 %

Chart 4.3: Distribution of Roma- and other children in the set of 99 ES according to the percentage of Roma children

Type of school	N schools	N of Roma CH	Distribution of Roma CH	Number of other CH	Distribution of other CH
up to 20 % of Roma children	61	1,981	39 %	20,918	88 %
21-50 % of Roma children	21	1,114	22 %	2,323	10 %
over 50 % of Roma children	17	1,957	39 %	430	2 %
Total	99	5,052	100 %	23,671	100 %

The results of the analysis of pupils' educational trajectories are not only confirmed by the teachers' statements but also by the data obtained from the schools as a whole. Out of a 100 Roma children attending the elementary schools **in the vicinity of socially excluded localities**, 28 of them attend the elementary schools outside mainstream education³²; in other children, the ratio reaches 8%. In other words, **92% of non-Roma children attend regular elementary schools as opposed to 72% of Roma children** (see chart 4.1). This ratio remains on a similar level within the time horizon of the last five school years.³³ More than a quarter of Roma children who attend mainstream elementary schools receive education in the schools with the majority of Roma children (see chart 4.2a); in specialised elementary schools, it is two thirds of Roma children receive education in the ES with a high ratio of Roma peers (see chart 4.2b). One half of Roma pupils in the mainstream ES receive education in the schools within the majority of non-Roma children and must hold out in a position of minority. The chart shows, however, that one of the key, if not determining, features of the specialised schools is that 66% of the Roma pupils attend the schools in which the Roma girls and boys prevail; therefore, the children stay in their own ethnical and social environment they are familiar with from home and family. The special schools with the lowest percentage of Roma pupils (up to 20%) represent a minority in terms of the number of schools as well as in terms of the percentage of Roma pupils (10%).

³¹ SY is an abbreviation of „school year“.

³² Apart from the children who commenced attending the specialised elementary schools after gaining some experience in a regular elementary school, there are also children who started receiving education directly in the schools outside the mainstream education system.

³³ In 2003/2004, it was 30 children out of a 100.

Chart 4.4a: Distribution of Roma and other children in mainstream ES by the percentage of Roma children

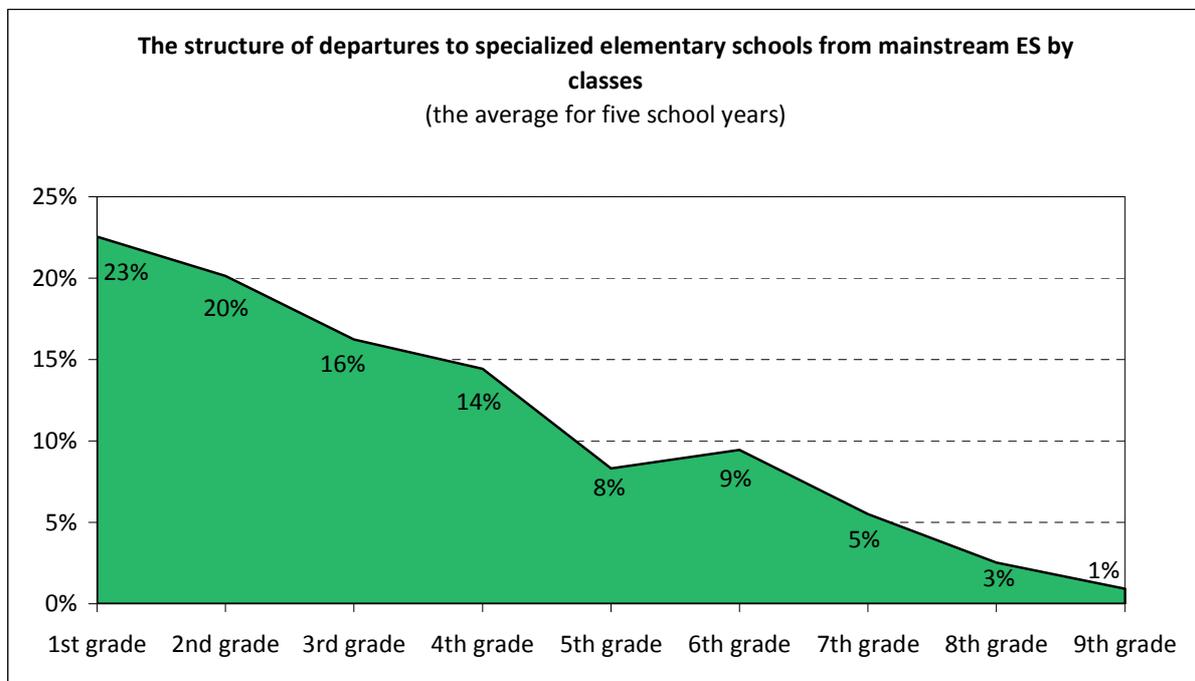
Type of schools	# of schools	# of Roma children	Distribution of Roma children	# of other children	Distribution of other children
up to 20% of Roma children	56	1,832	51 %	20,204	92.4 %
21-50% of Roma children	9	777	21 %	1,580	7.2 %
over 50% of Roma children	4	1,009	28 %	82	0,4 %
Total	69	3,618	100 %	21,866	100.0 %

Chart 4.4b: Distribution of Roma and other children in specialized ES by the percentage of Roma children

Type of school	# of schools	# of Roma children	Distribution of Roma children	# of other children	Distribution of other children
up to 20% of Roma children	5	149	10 %	714	40 %
21-50 % of Roma children	12	337	24 %	743	41 %
over 50 % of Roma children	13	948	66 %	348	19 %
Total	30	1,434	100 %	1,805	100 %

The structure of the average departures according to classes in the past 5 years is depicted in chart 4.2. Aside from the first grade from which a total of 23% of children leave for a specialised school, there is an irregularity between the fifth and the sixth grade as a slightly higher number of children leave from the sixth grade rather than from the fifth grade. The transition to the sixth grade may be considered as one of the important issues to be addressed by more support of Roma pupils in this area.³⁴

Diagram 4.3



³⁴ The diagram also shows that 81% of children leave for specialised ES from the 1st to 5th grade.

The quantity of departures is also affected by the type of school. The majority of Roma pupils leave to specialised schools from the schools with a medium percentage of Roma children (21 to 50 percent) – whereas in schools with a low percentage of Roma children, the likelihood of departure reaches 0.20; in schools with a medium percentage it is 0.29 and in schools with a high percentage (more than 50 percent) the likelihood reaches 0.15.

Diagram 4.4

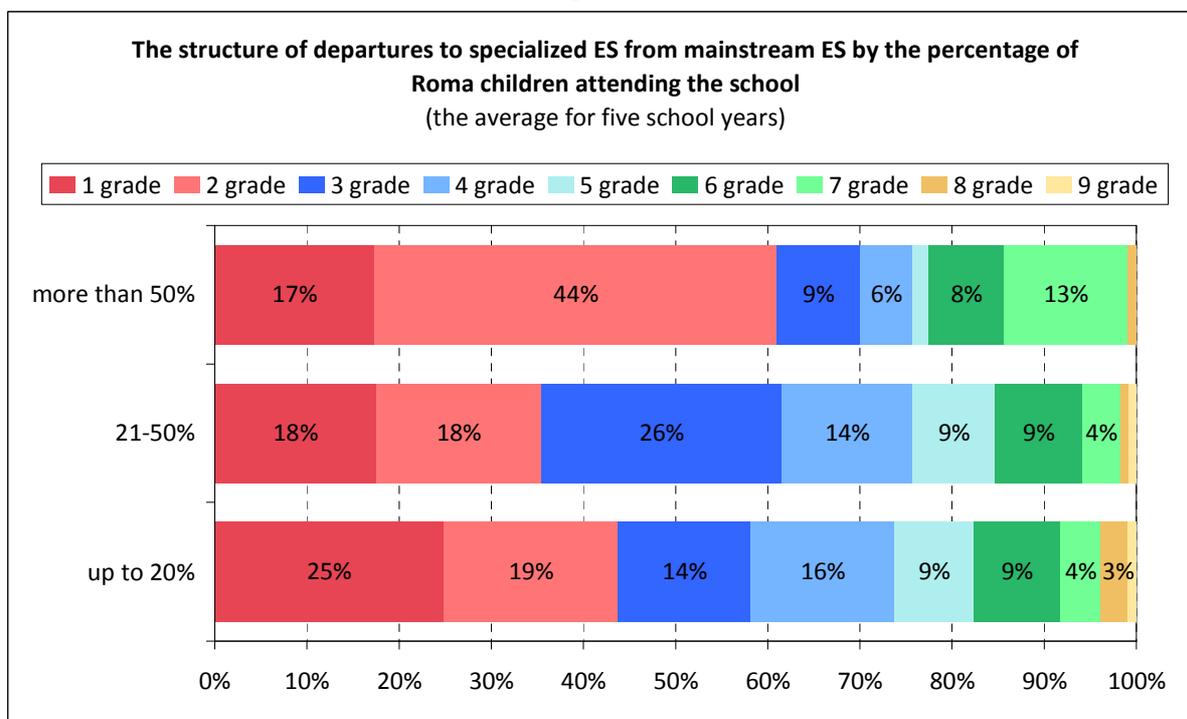


Diagram 4.3 depicts the structure of departures sorted out by the individual grades within categories of the percentage of Roma children attending the school: it is interesting to compare **the grades from which children leave the most often: whereas it is the first grade (25%) in schools with a low percentage of Roma children, the schools with a medium percentage of Roma children experienced the most frequent departures from the 3rd grade (26%) and the schools with a high percentage showed the most frequent departures from the second grade (44%).**

One possible explanation for the last type is that the schools try to work with all children in the first grade and „give them a chance“; later on, when the children do not keep up with the pace of teaching for whatever reason, the schools offer them a transition to a specialized ES. As stated above, this case involves the schools from which the children leave for SES with the lowest likelihood. This could be explained by these schools being in average the most active in utilizing integration instruments (see the details below).

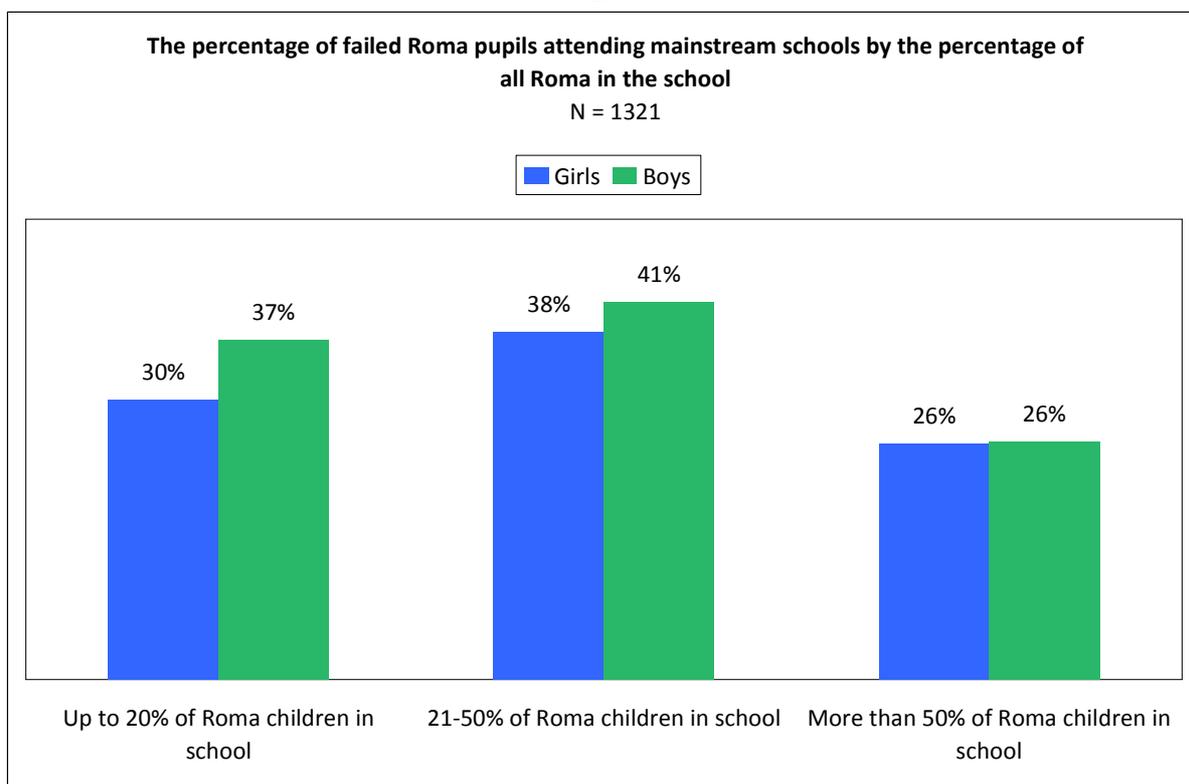
Vice versa – i.e. from specialized ES to mainstream ES³⁵ – the children leave only in exceptional cases. On average, it may be one child (or less) per school/school year. However, as the percentage of Roma children in schools increases, the likelihood of this progression decreases: therefore, while in average 14 children out of a thousand leave from a specialized ES with a low percentage of Roma children, the maximum of one child out of a thousand leaves the school with a high percentage of Roma children.

³⁵ The data was obtained from 27 specialized ES.

4.3 Failure to complete grades

To a certain extent, the school also influences the quantity of failures and departures. Diagram 4.4 shows the differences between the schools according to the percentage of Roma children to the total number of attending pupils. Whereas the percentage of failing pupils is similar in the schools with a majority of Roma children, the schools with a lower percentage of Roma children experience more failing boys than girls.

Diagram 4.5



Surprisingly, the worst educational chances of Roma pupils in terms of failures were ascertained in the schools of medium category: 38% of Roma girls and 41% of Roma boys received an “F” for their yearly school report. **These schools** (as shown by the data) **do not use the specialised integration programmes that much** compared to the schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils in which approximately one fourth of boys and girls fail. The number is a little higher in schools with a lower percentage (up to 20%) where 30% of Roma girls and 37% of Roma boys fail at least once.

Although the problems associated with teaching the children from a socially excluded environment cumulate in schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils, these schools, on the other hand, attract the teachers who wish to deal with this issue; these schools also cooperate with non-profit organizations and support the activities aiming at offsetting the learning handicaps.

4.4 Development of achievements

Another survey statistics, which is useful in understanding the factors affecting the educational inequalities, are the **grades obtained in profile subjects, i.e. Czech language and math**. This statistic also answers the question, which one of these subjects more boldly distinguishes the educational trajectories of Roma boys from those of Roma girls.

Diagram 4.6

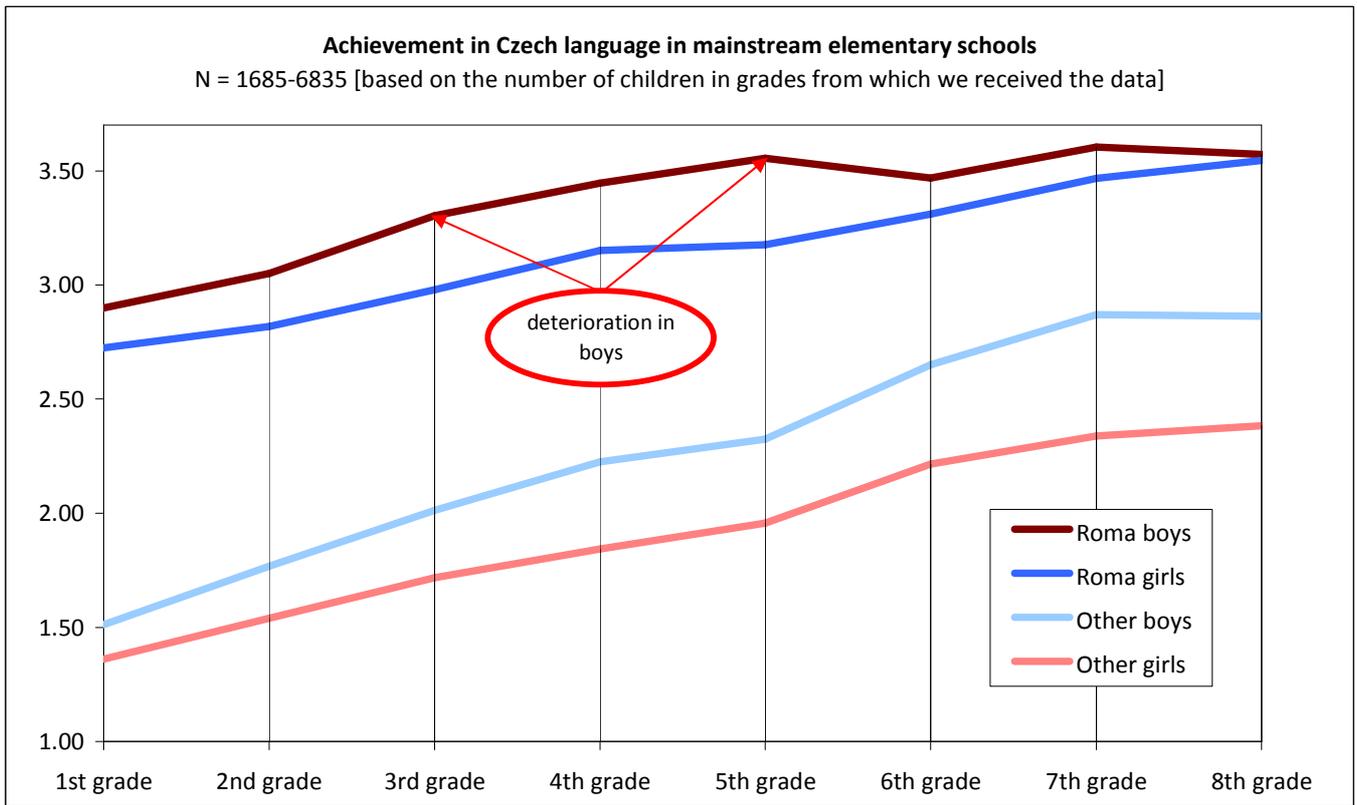
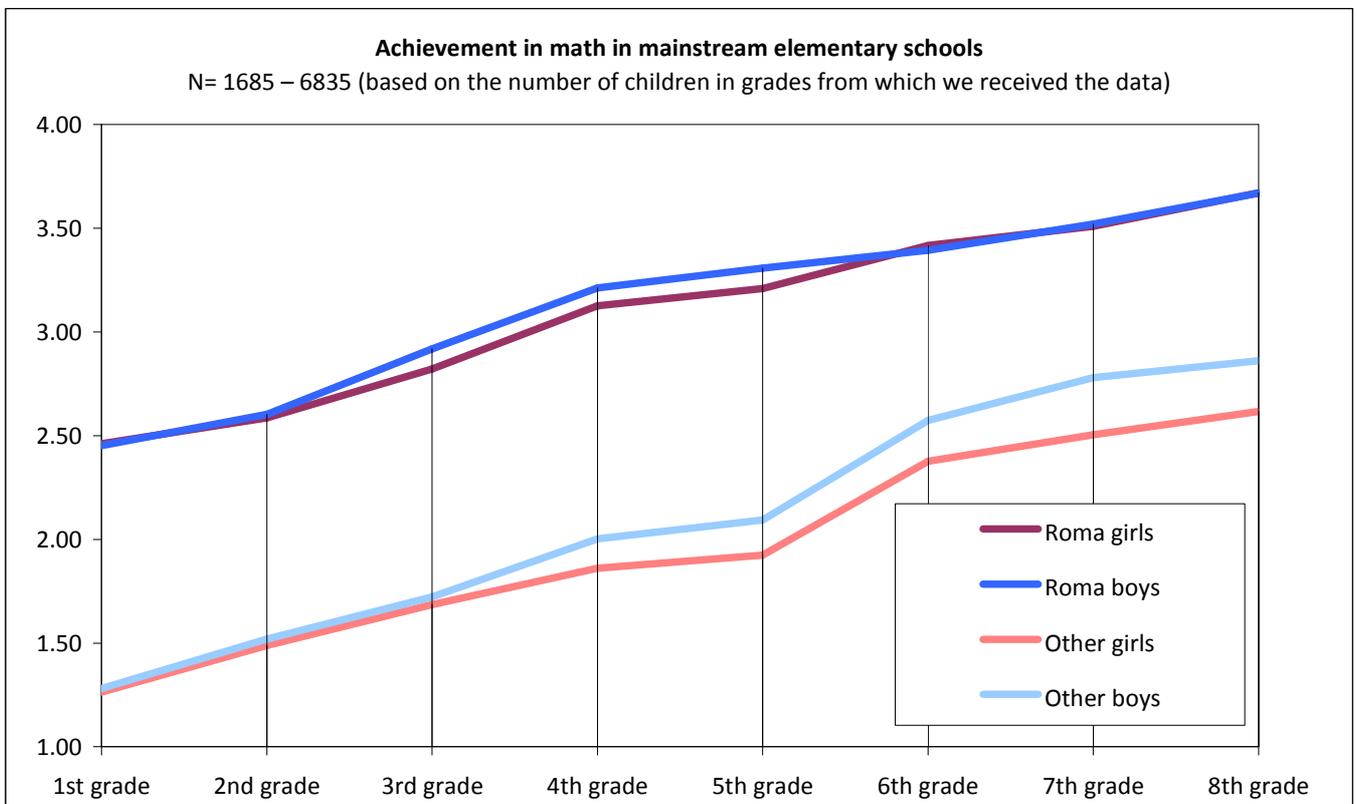


Diagram 4.7



The achievement in Czech language significantly mirrors the development of failures. In the case of boys, however, another issue adds up **in the third grade** where, according to some education experts, the achievement becomes slightly more complicated again after a relatively successful second grade.

The significantly worse grades of Roma pupils compared to their non-Roma peers are maintained throughout the entire elementary schools and, as school attendance is coming to an end, the average grades of Roma children and youth approximate to the failure zone, while the average grades of their non-Roma peers maintain a qualitatively higher standard despite the outflow of the most successful children to pluriannual secondary schools³⁶.

As opposed to Czech language, the development curves of Roma boys and girls in math are balanced and show no significant break points. With a certain interval, they mirror the curves of their peers from the majority population.

The differences between sexes mentioned above are confirmed by the chart above, which compares the average grades obtained in Czech language and math in Roma children only. The differences are obvious **specifically in the first five grades** when the **Czech language is much more difficult for Roma children to master than math**; in the 6th to 8th grade, the average grades obtained in both subjects draw nearer each other (the average achievement in math is even worse than in Czech language).³⁷

Chart 4.4: Achievement of Roma children in Czech language and math

	1 st grade	2 nd grade	3 rd grade	4 th grade	5 th grade	6 th grade	7 th grade	8 th grade
Czech language								
<i>girls</i>	2.72	2.82	2.98	3.15	3.18	3.31	3.47	3.55
boys	2.90	3.05	3.30	3.45	3.55	3.47	3.60	3.57
Math								
<i>girls</i>	2.44	2.58	2.91	3.21	3.30	3.39	3.52	3.67
boys	2.45	2.57	2.82	3.12	3.20	3.41	3.50	3.67

4.5 Absence rate

Another significant indicator reflecting the differences in the educational trajectories of Roma pupils is **the development of the aggregate absence rate**. The absence rate greatly relates to the achievement throughout school attendance. That is, the frustration from failures may have a negative impact on the absence rate³⁸. The number of missed classes, however, is not the same in the course of the elementary school. It actually increases and the performance deteriorates with the grades. This relation applies to both Roma children and the majority population. In Roma children, however, the number of missed classes is much higher.

Diagram 4.7 shows that the **absences of Roma children compared to their peers nearly triples**. Although the problems begin during the first five grades, they tend to cumulate in the following senior grades when the differences between boys and girls also deepen and the girls tend to miss more classes. Whereas in the first five grades, the quantity of missed classes could be

³⁶ The pluriannual secondary schools are mostly pursued by the young people who achieve the best average grades: therefore, it could be assumed that the average grades of the children who stay in the school are somewhat worse than if the best achieving children stayed.

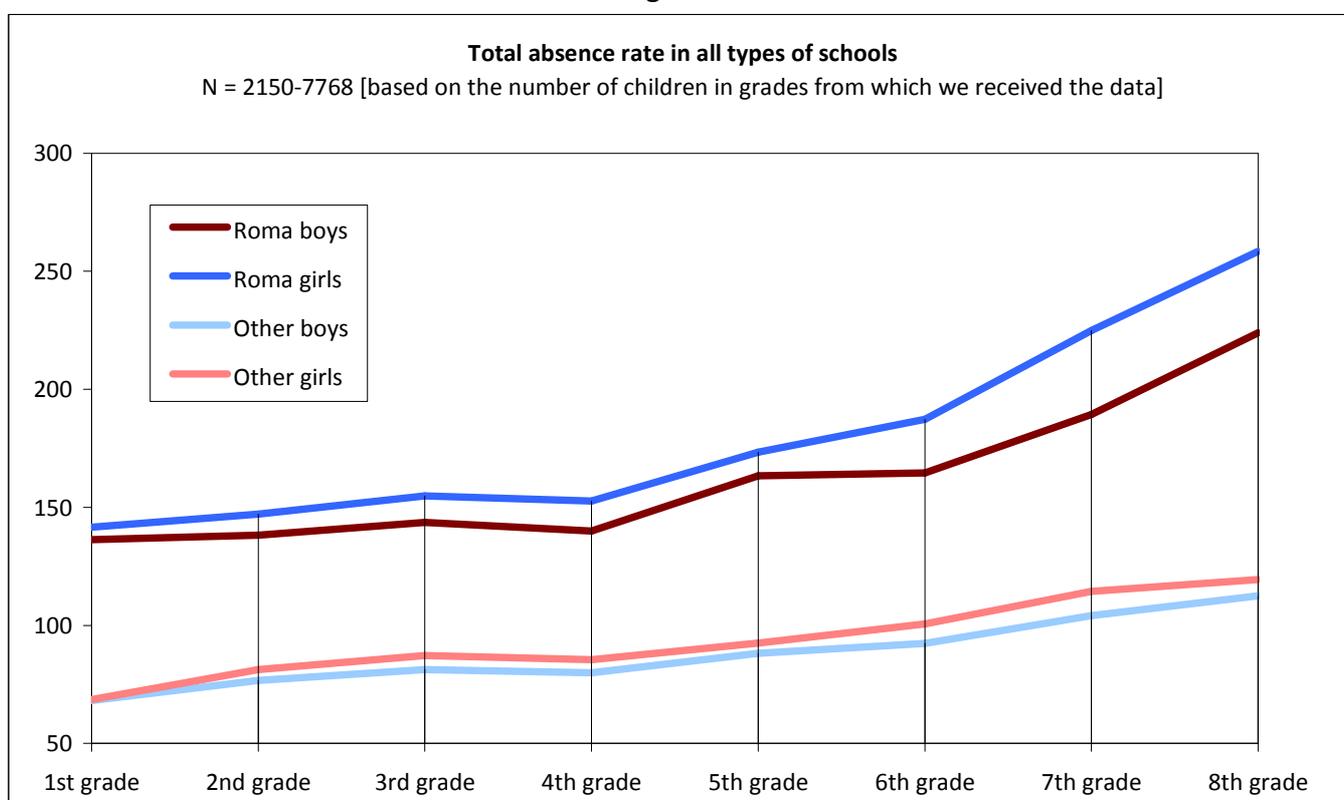
³⁷ However, the similar disproportions are present among the other children, too, albeit the differences between boys and girls and among the situation in the first five grades and the last three grades are not that great.

³⁸ The high absence rate cannot be thus perceived as a cause of the worsened school results but also as a demonstration thereof.

attributed to an increased absence rate due to illness, in the next three grades it rather reflects the children's relationship towards the school and the high absence rate may be caused by their effort to avoid school.

This statistic is confirmed by diagram 4.8, which compares the average absence rate and an average of unexcused classes within all eight grades of the mainstream ES according to the percentage of Roma pupils attending the school within the past five school years. Here again, it shows that the percentage of Roma pupils represents a significant differentiating variable quantity: as their percentage in the total number of children grows, the average absence rate and the unexcused absences increase. It is thus likely that the schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils are attended by more pupils whose chances to keep up with the curriculum are significantly lower – or, that the climate in the schools with a lower percentage of Roma pupils is more favourable as per the attendance with respect to both excused and unexcused absences.

Diagram 4.8



In specialized ES, the differences in absence rates are not as outstanding (see diagram 4.9). Both cases show an increase in the absence rate during the last three grades, which confirms the hypothesis concerning the interaction of the school attendance and the school results and their joint negative pressure on the educational chances of children.

The questionnaire for the schools' principals included a question on how the principal concerned explains the high absence rate of Roma children. Within the answers obtained, it is the low perception of importance of children's education on the part of their parents which is mentioned the most often. Parents seem to tolerate children's absences (total 41% of the respective answers). The next most frequent reason is a bad example in case that the child is the only one in the family who „has“ to go somewhere every day, i.e. a situation when the parents are unemployed and their daily routine is not associated with any duties whatsoever (13% of collected explanations). Other

significant and incidental explanations are also the lack of interest in attending the school (8% of cases), baby-sitting for younger siblings (8 % of cases), lack of money for transportation to school and buying school aids (7%) or living in an environment with a higher likelihood of sickness rate (5%).

Diagram 4.9

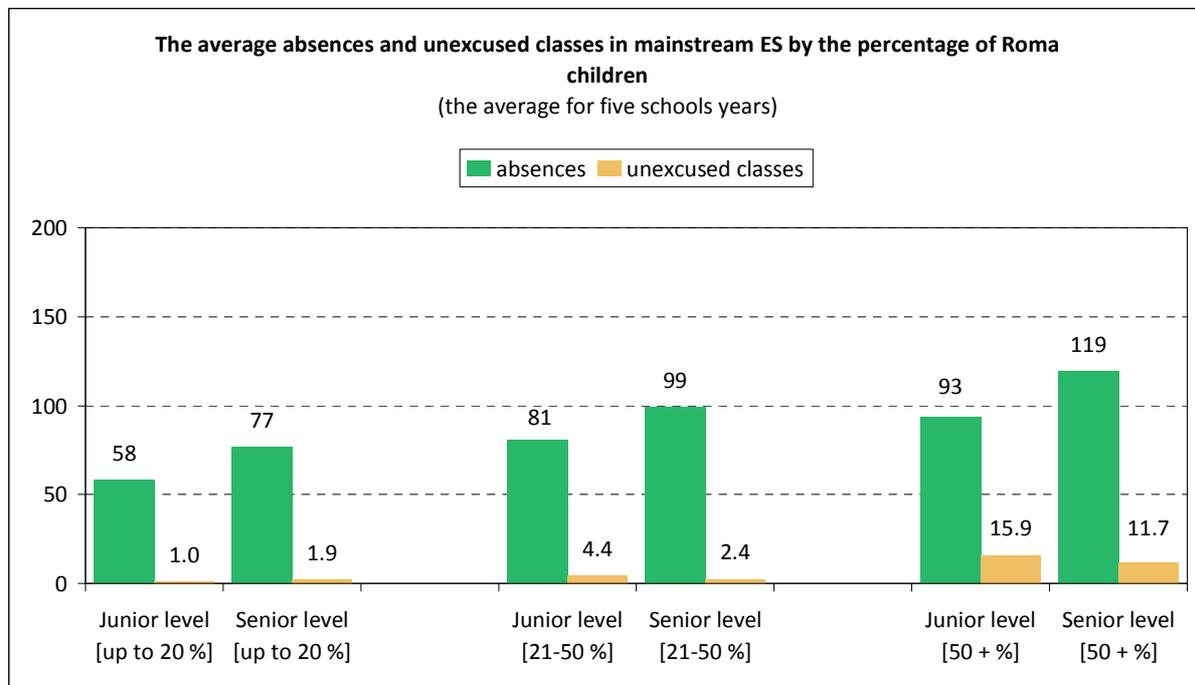
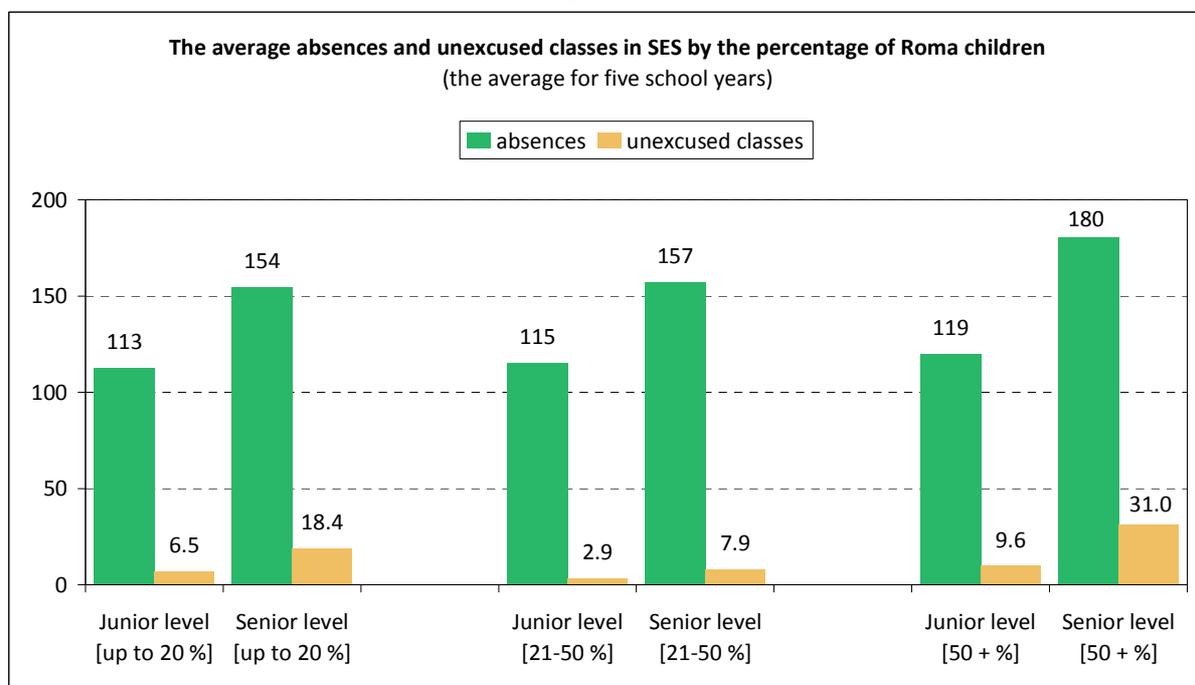


Diagram 4.10

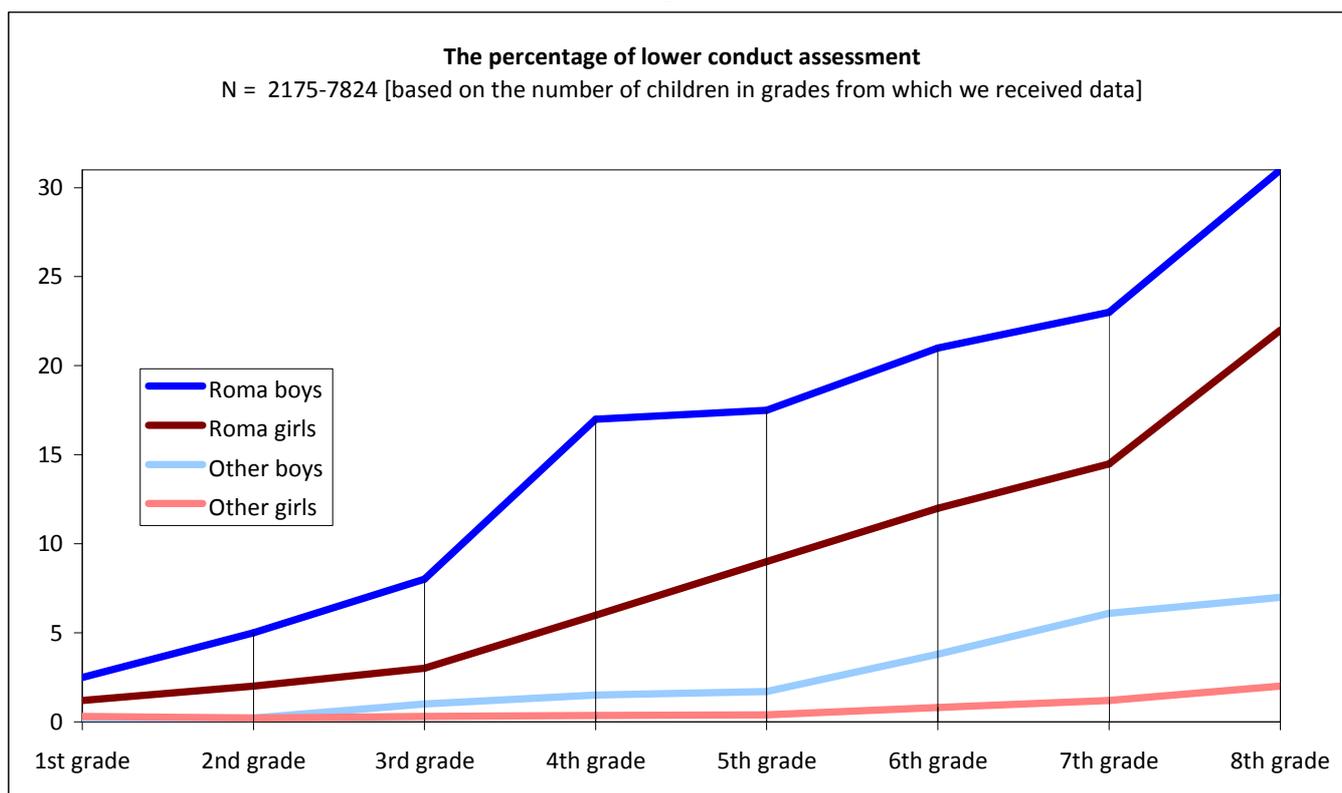


4.6 Lower conduct grades

The absence rate is closely linked with lower conduct grades. The occurrence of behavioural problems increases as the school years increase. Whereas in non-Roma children, the curve grows

more prominently in the last three grades, in Roma children the curve is growing continuously ever since the commencement of the education path. In the 8th grade, 31% of Roma boys and 22% of Roma girls receive a lower conduct grade (in other children, it was 7% in boys and 2% in girls). When calculating the percentage, we worked with both the children attending the mainstream ES and the specialised ES. The specialised schools showed a higher incidence of lower conduct grades. For example, 20% of Roma children attending the mainstream schools receive lower conduct grade in the 8th grade as opposed to 35% of Roma children attending specialised schools.

Diagram 4.11



4.7 Commencement of the first grade and the efficiency of selected integration instruments

Out of all Roma children who commenced the first grade in 2007/2008, 13% started in specialised elementary schools. In this respect, there is a substantial difference in the comparison thereof with other children as only 2% of them started the school attendance in specialised schools. This percentage did not change much in both cases for the period of the last five school years. In other words, **Roma children are 6 times more likely to start attending a specialised school without having come in touch with a regular school than their non-Roma peers.** Even in mainstream ES with a low percentage of Roma children, 31% of Roma children start in the 1st grade in the average of five school years.

Starting the first grade is one of the significant issues of the educational trajectories. **Approximately 3 Roma children out of twenty first-graders leave their class** (due to a failure or departure to a specialised ES). There are not that many differences between the boys and girls, although the girls are slightly more successful given the fact that they better handle the transition to another teaching system.

Czech language is the biggest problem for most Roma first-graders. Given their family background, they often lack a solid knowledge of the language compare to their peers; they often just stay home and have no experience whatsoever with any form of pre-school preparation.

We are currently experiencing three main instruments aiming at offsetting the deficits upon school commencement:

- ▣ kindergartens,
- ▣ prep classes, and
- ▣ Roma assistants to teachers.

4.7.1 Kindergartens

The analysis shows that the **Roma children who attended kindergartens are clearly much more successful in education.** On one hand, this could be credited to the influence of the institution; on the other hand, the children are sent to the kindergartens mainly by more motivated and less socially excluded families. This double interpretation is also supported by the fact that the differences in educational inequalities persists throughout the school attendance, which would rather support the hypothesis of the kindergarten being more of a demonstration of interest and motivation by the parents, which affects the children in further school attendance.

Diagram 4.12

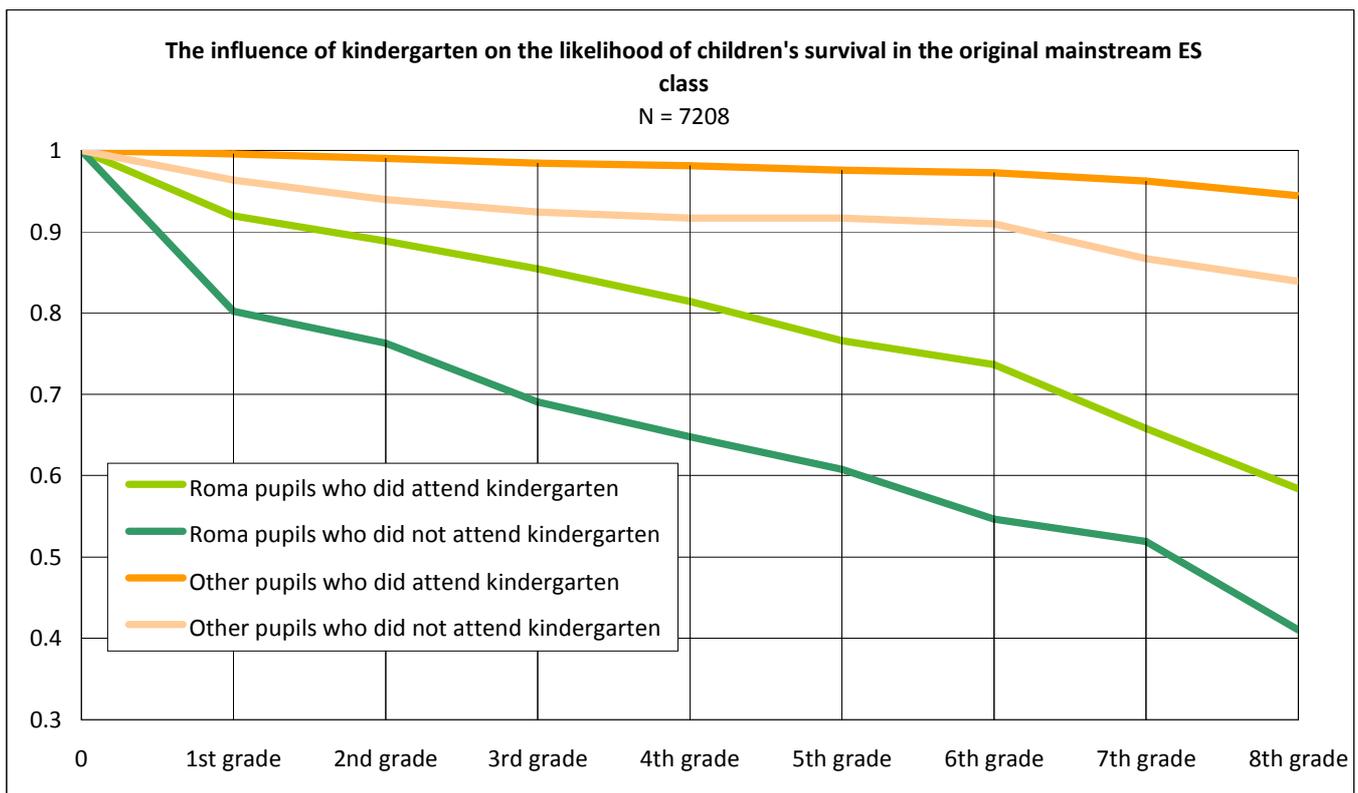


Chart 4.5: Percentage of children in kindergartens

Year of commencement	Roma children	Non-Roma children
2005/2006	37.8 %	92.3 %
2003/2004	36.8 %	91.2 %
2000/2001	34.0 %	89.9 %

The kindergartens are currently attended by a small percentage of Roma children, i.e. approximately 40%; this number does not change much over time. Just to compare, it is approximately 90% of non-Roma children who attend kindergartens.

There are several instruments on how to increase the number of Roma children in kindergartens – e.g. by appointing an assistant to a teacher in the kindergarten, by field social work, better openness of the kindergartens. These intentions, however, currently face several key barriers:

- ❑ Low rate of motivation of the kindergartens to participate in resolving the issues of education of Roma children from socially excluded localities. They also often refuse to change their practice.
- ❑ Low rate of motivation of Roma parents to enroll their children into kindergartens. One of the barriers is usually the costs of attendance or the lack of will to bring the children in.
- ❑ Selection of a suitable assistant to a teacher and funding thereof.
- ❑ The capacity of kindergartens is often on the borderline.

4.7.2 Preparation classes

Another measure to be taken as to balance the chances upon commencement of the first grade is the introduction of a preparation class. In the school year 2007/2008, they were established in a total of 26 surveyed schools, i.e. in 20% of mainstream ES and 40% of specialised ES. In the mainstream ES, it is obvious that the higher the representation of Roma children is in school, the higher the percentage of schools that use this instrument; the longer the instrument is used, the more children pass the preparation class.³⁹ The same conclusion cannot be provided on behalf of the specialised schools, although the prep-classes are the most prevalent in terms of representation here but they have been in practice only for the past five years.

However, the professional public accepts prep-classes with reservations. Compared to kindergartens, which have mostly an inclusive nature and where the Roma children share the same space with non-Roma children, the prep-classes are largely exclusive as they are attended mostly by Roma children (and they are established specifically for socially excluded children).

According to the *Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Absorption Capacity of Entities Operating Therein* (MLSA, 2006), following is the summary of pros and cons associated with the establishment of a prep-class in schools:

Pros:

- ❑ Children get used to the school environment and regime. Their preparation to school attendance improves. They receive special educational care (speech therapist, special educationist).
- ❑ Prep-classes demonstrably contribute to a reduction of the absence rate in Roma children.
- ❑ School is in closer contact with the parents of children in preschool age; the

³⁹ It is an average 13 years of age in the schools attended by more than a half of Roma children.

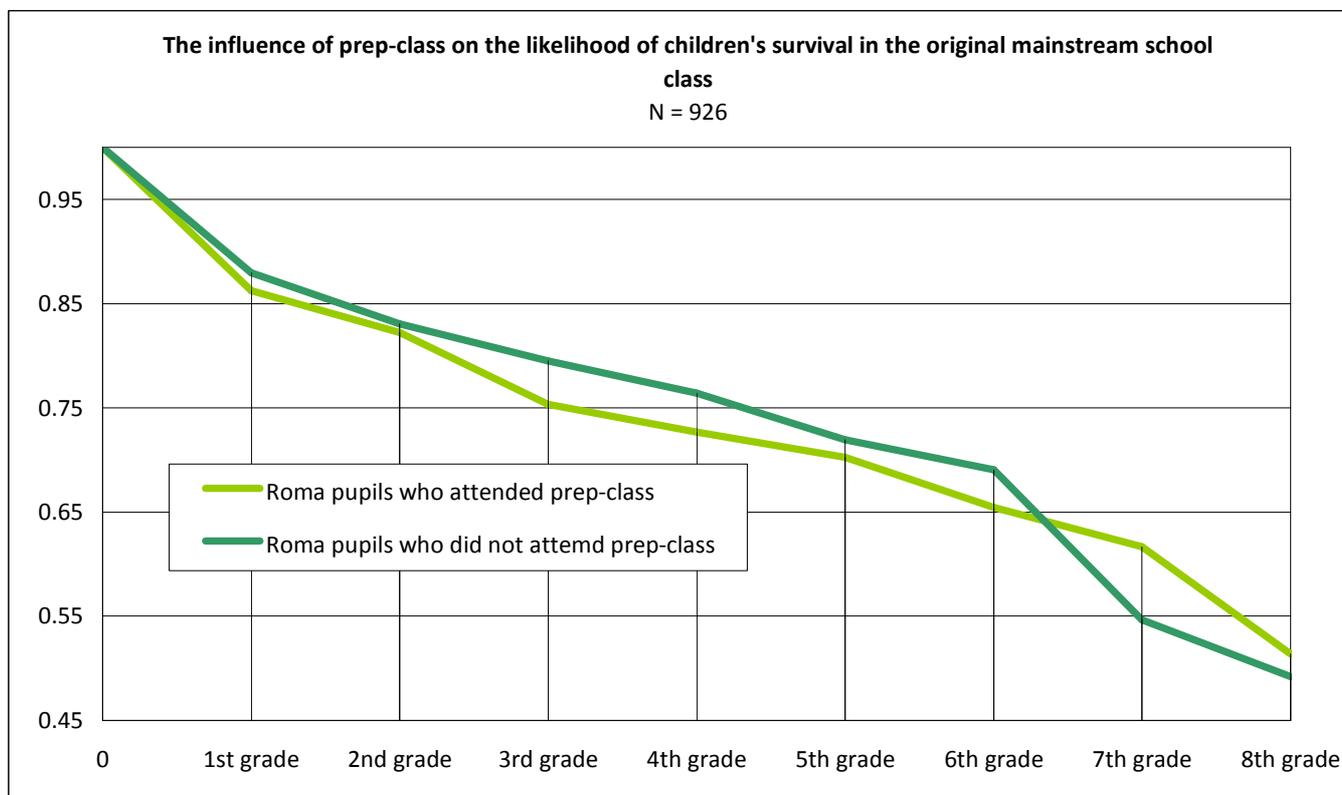
school and the parents get to know each other and are able to build a relationship based on trust.

- ☐ Parents do not need to pay any tuition and this is why they often use the prep-classes.

Cons:

- ☐ Some consider the prep-class a segregating measure (Roma children are not integrated in classes attended by non-Roma children).
- ☐ Prep-classes are often established in schools outside mainstream education. Parents thus very often decide to leave the child there and do not even try to integrate the child into the mainstream school.
- ☐ Child has only 10 months for mastering the knowledge and skills necessary (as opposed to a three-year period available at a kindergarten), which is in many cases insufficient.
- ☐ In prep-classes established in specialised ES, the likelihood of the child leaving for a regular ES reduces (see above).
- ☐ Prep-classes compete with kindergartens for potential pupils.
- ☐ In municipalities with a prep-class established, Roma parents prefer the prep-class to the kindergarten (except for the last year thereof, the kindergartens are subject to a tuition). City counsellors often criticise the tuition in both instruments due to an unnecessary waste of budget funds.

Diagram 4.13



The impact of this measure on the educational trajectories is not such as in the case of the kindergartens; moreover, it brings results only at the beginning. The children who

attended the prep-class continuously approximate to their peers by results. In this case, the instrument should be followed up by other instruments which would guarantee the continuity in balancing the educational chances.

On the other hand, the prep-class was only attended by a small number of Roma-children; non-Roma children use this form even less. Compared to the kindergartens, the percentage of prep-class attendees has been significantly increasing (see chart 4.3):

Chart 4.6: Percentage of children in prep-classes

<i>Year of commencement</i>	<i>Roma children</i>	<i>Non-Roma children</i>
2005/2006	18.3 %	2.4 %
2003/2004	14.6 %	0.7 %
2000/2001	7.7 %	0.5 %

Both integration instruments, i.e. the kindergartens and prep-classes, almost do not coincide; the parents mostly choose either one. Only nine per cent of the parents used both instruments. **In general, we estimate that either one of the instruments is being used by approximately 48% of Roma children.**

If we verify this number and take a look at the set of schools, we see that, in mainstream elementary schools, the **long-term percentage of Roma children who attended some sort of pre-school preparation** (a kindergarten or a prep-class) reaches approximately **55 percent**.⁴⁰; therefore, it does not differ much in terms of the percentage of Roma children to the total number of children in the school. This means that even the pupils attending the more or less regular mainstream elementary schools do not pass any pre-school preparation in a greater extent as it might be expected.

Compared to Roma children, the **pre-school preparation of other pupils** who attend ES with a low percentage of Roma children reaches a long-term level of 90 percent.⁴¹ Therefore, a significant discrepancy already occurs in the pre-school preparation; despite the fact that the suggested rate of pre-school preparation of Roma children may be considered a partial success.

4.7.3 Assistant to a teacher

The chances of Roma children from a socially disadvantaged environment to manage the pressure associated with the commencement of school attendance may be improved by the appointment of an **assistant to a teacher**. „Their main objective is to create such an atmosphere in the class which is comfortable and safe for the Roma children and which is also perceived as trustworthy by the Roma parents. By the presence of an assistant, the school opens more towards the local community and becomes a friendly place.”⁴² The assistant to a teacher should enjoy an equal status of the teachers’ team. His/her work involving communication with families should be irreplaceable as the assistant represents a connecting link.

The role of a teacher’s assistant is more prevalent than in the case of prep-classes: in the school year 2007/2008, the assistants were used by 68% of schools. The lowest representation of the assistants may be found in the mainstream ES and in the specialised ES with a low percentage of Roma children: it is approximately half of the schools. In other cases, the teacher’s assistant is

⁴⁰ The difference between the number calculated from the data on children and the data obtained from the schools is seven percentage points, which is not much given the different methods of calculation.

⁴¹ The same analysis is not too reliable for SES as approx. 4-5 children start attending their 1st grades. In the analysed set, 12 out of 30 of these schools currently opens a prep-class.

⁴² Jindráková Lucie: *The Role of an Assistant to a Teacher in the Education of Roma Children*. A thesis defended at the department of social work at the Philosophic Faculty Prague in 2008

represented in the interval of 89 to 100% (which is also the case of the mainstream ES with a high percentage of Roma children). Similarly, as in the case of prep-classes, the length of experience with this role depends on the representation of Roma children in the school: the average representation in the individual categories is four (low percentage of Roma children), six (medium percentage), and 12 (high percentage) years, respectively. The inclination is similar in the specialised ES, although the time intervals are shorter (5, 5 and 7 years).

In the past five years, the average number of teacher's assistants has been slowly increasing; as expected, the highest number of teacher's assistants operates in the mainstream ES with a high percentage of Roma children: 4-5. In other schools of the same type, the number oscillates between 1-2 and in specialised ES, the number may reach 2-3.

According to the *Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Absorption Capacity of Entities Operating Therein* (MLSA, 2006), the pros and cons associated with the appointment of an assistant to a teacher may be summarized as follows:

Pros:

- ❑ Assistant to a teacher is one of the very few positive role models, even for some non-Roma children. It proves that even a Roma person may get a job and that learning makes sense.
- ❑ Assistant's work has a bold effect on the improvement of school attendance and schools' achievements of the pupils.
- ❑ Assistant to a teacher strongly supports the trust of Roma children and parents towards school.
- ❑ Assistant to a teacher prevents misunderstanding between the family and school, which often lies in the cultural differences.
- ❑ Assistant to a teacher often has a good knowledge of the environment the children come from, he/she is aware of the specifics of behaviour and customs, he/she does not see them as provocation and lack of manners or negligence and is able to induce a positive change of behaviour.

Cons:

- ❑ Parents rely too much on the communication with the assistant, which supports their passivity in communicating with the schools as an institution on the parents' behalf.
- ❑ Teacher's assistant may be perceived by some as a support to one and only group of pupils. If the child comes from a Roma environment or directly from the locality inhabited by more non-relative families, a part of the inhabitants of the locality may refuse to communicate and /or cooperate with him/her given the mutual „inter-family“ grudge and mistrust.
- ❑ Uncertain source of funds necessary for the assistant's remuneration – in the current system, the school is obliged to request funds for the assistants every year, which increases their administrative load. Besides, there is no certainty that the funds will be granted at all and the contract with the assistant is thus usually concluded for a definite period. This situation is, of course, de-motivating even for the assistants themselves.

The obtained data confirm the conclusion that **the role of an assistant does have an influence on the school results of children**. Whereas in classes without an assistant, only 6.5 out of 10 Roma pupils survive in the original class in mainstream ES, it is in average 7.5 Roma pupils in classes with an assistant. On the other hand, it could not be proved whether or not the assistant would have any significant influence on the decrease of the absence rate.

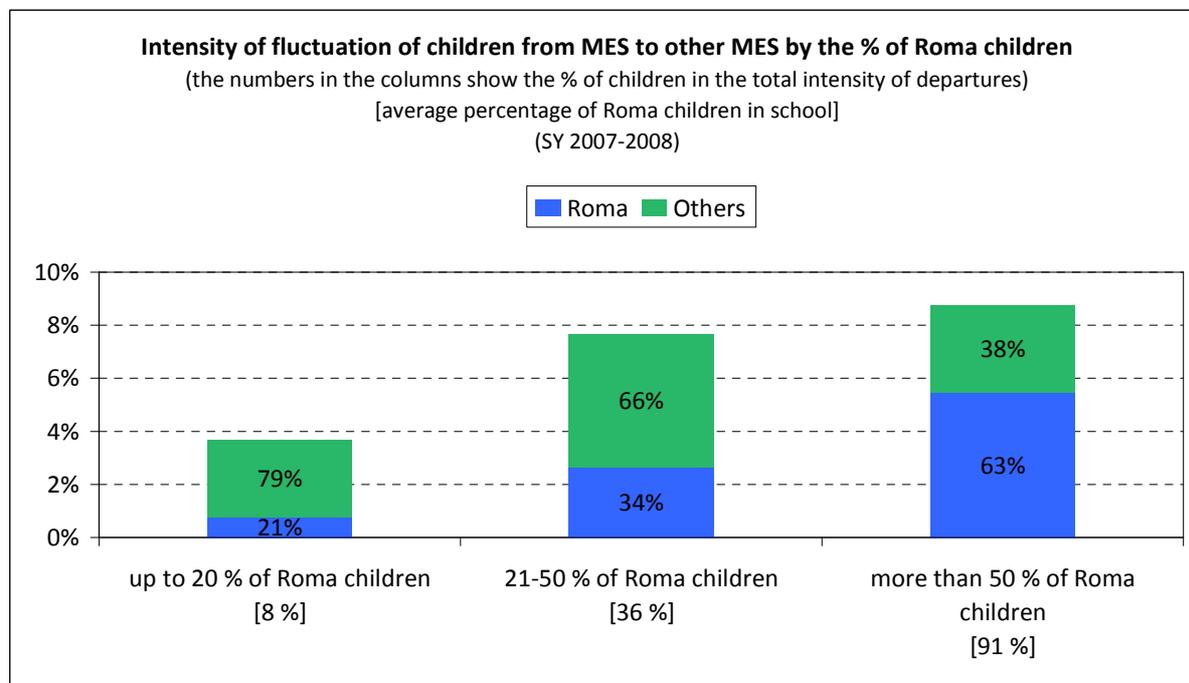
4.8 Differences in educational trajectories in other prospective transitions

The differences in educational trajectories are reflected not only in the intensity of departures to specialised ES but also in other prospective directions of departures: either in transitions from the mainstream ES to another ES of the same type (due to moving to another city or departure to elective schools) or in leaving for high schools.

4.8.1 Exits from mainstream ES to other schools of the same type

As per the departures from the mainstream ES to other schools of the same type, there are significant differences between the schools with various percentages of Roma children to the total number of pupils attending the school (see diagram 4.13): the analysis shows that **the higher the representation is of Roma children in the school, the higher the intensity is of departures to other regular elementary schools** (i.e. the intensity of pupils' fluctuation). In the ES with the highest representation of Roma children, it was 9% of pupils leaving the school in the schools year 2007/2008; in the ES with the lowest percentage of Roma children, the same indicator reached 3.7 percent of children. This fact becomes more important especially at the moment when the children have any specific educational needs and it is necessary to apply individual care: the **high intensity of fluctuation also means a lower chance to influence the children on a long-term basis and exploit the basics already built**.

Diagram 4.14

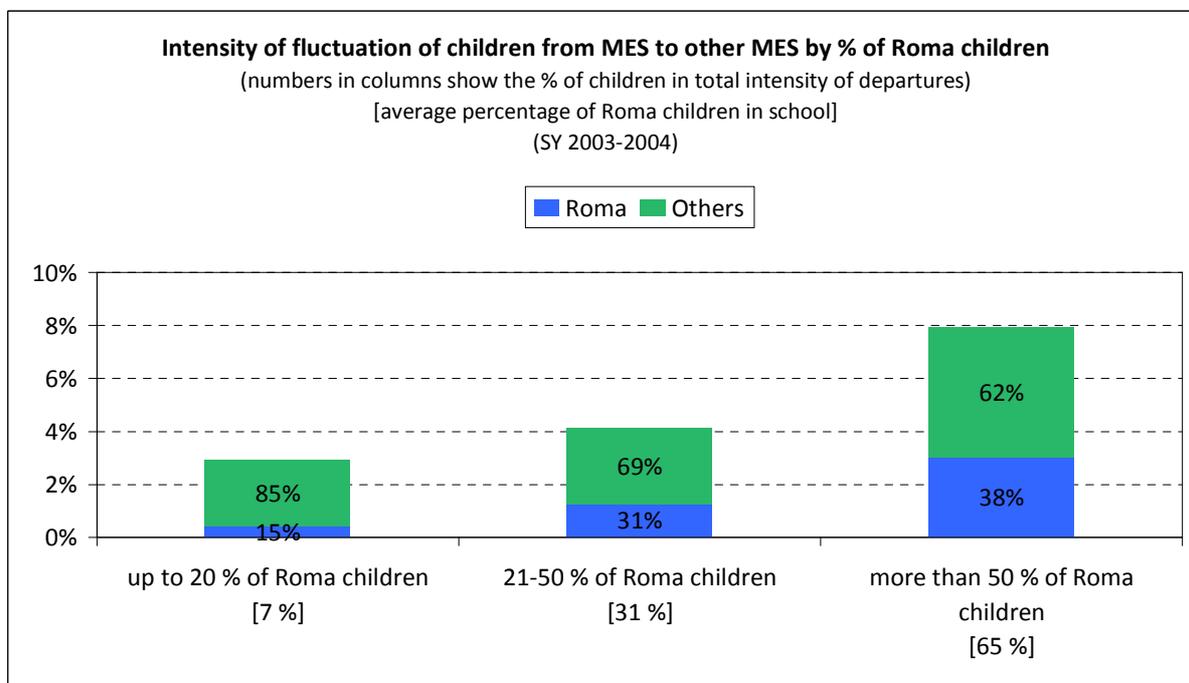


While the total intensity of fluctuation of Roma children in the two marginal categories held out on the similar level in the past five years, this was not the case in the medium category (21-50% of Roma children in school) from which 4.1% of pupils left at the beginning of the SY and 7.7% during the school year 2007/2008. **Therefore, in the past five years, the intensity of**

fluctuation in the medium category approximated to the schools with the highest representation of Roma children.⁴³

Furthermore, diagrams 4.13 and 4.14 also provide a comparison of the average percentage of Roma children in schools in each category (the data in the square parenthesis) and the inner structure of their departures (the data in the columns). Although these children represent on average 8% of pupils in the schools with a low percentage of Roma children, the departures thereof reach 21%. On the other hand, it could be assumed in the last category that the higher fluctuation of other children may be associated with the fact that the school starts being perceived as a „Roma“ school. This interpretation is supported by the development described above: on average, this category of schools is the only one which experienced a significant change in the percentage of Roma children in the schools in the past five years (see the change of heterogeneity index); the percentage of other children in the total number of departures within the monitored time period reaches 58%, which suggests an intensive outflow of non-Roma children.

Diagram 4.15



4.8.2 Departures to high schools

The transition towards high schools is the moment when the pupil leaves the elementary school. In this respect, it is necessary to separate the mainstream elementary schools from other schools⁴⁴ given the differentiating demands associated with the volume of curriculum and skills.

As per the mainstream ES, **if we compare the schools with the lowest percentage of Roma children (these are more or less the mainstream ES) with the other two categories, the path of the pupils in the other two categories towards the pluriannual secondary**

⁴³ Given the small number of the schools analysed in this category (7), it is necessary to give special consideration to the development described herein as it is likely that not all the schools in this category actually go through the development: however, the intensity of fluctuation might grow in the schools with an increasing percentage of Roma children.

⁴⁴ This analysis was carried out with 64 mainstream ES and 30 specialized ES.

schools as well as to apprenticeships completed by departing exam (ASLE) proves to be **much more difficult**. Moreover, in the schools with a high percentage of Roma children, significantly more children leave for apprenticeships (AS) or they do not even apply for a secondary school.

Diagram 4.16

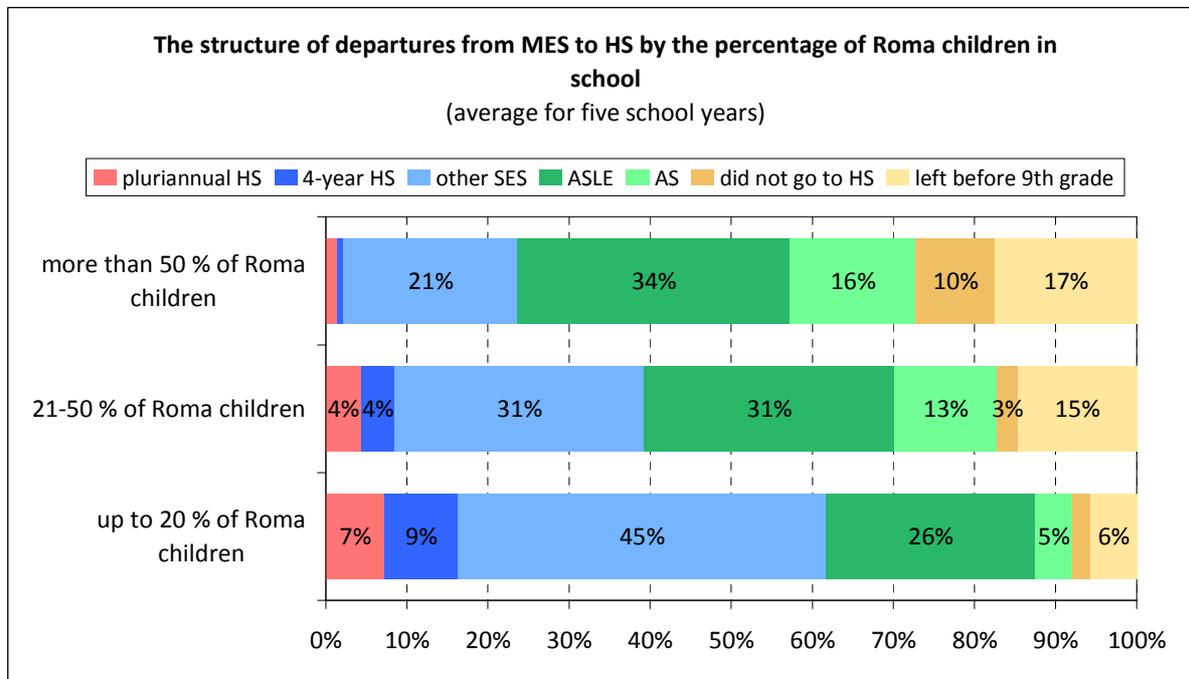
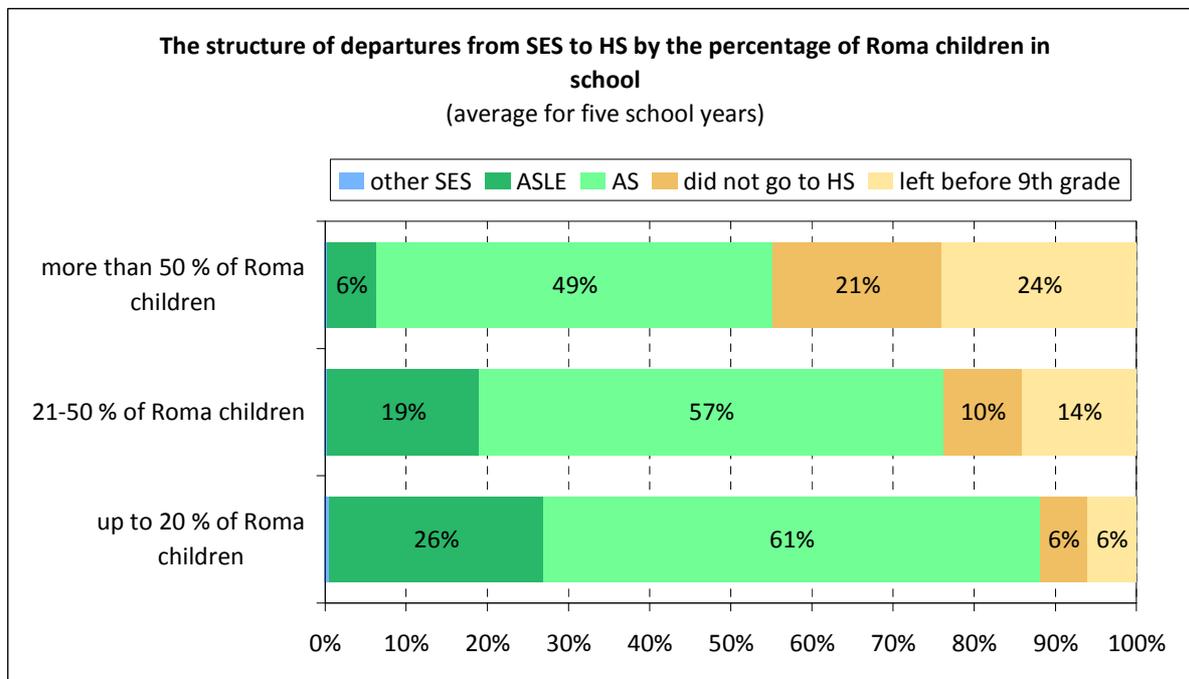


Diagram 4.17



The percentage of children who leave the school before completing ninth grade is also much higher compared to the category with the lowest representation of Roma children. The percentage of children who are likely to end their education in elementary school (they do not apply for a high school or leave before completing the ninth grade) significantly correlates with

the percentage of Roma children in the school: there is a strong relation showing that **the higher the percentage is of Roma children in the school, the higher the percentage is of children (both Roma and non-Roma) who would not continue to a high school.**⁴⁵

In this respect, it is necessary to stress that we are speaking of a transition which has a key importance for the chances of children to enter the job market with any qualification or secondary education. Moreover, the chances of keeping children in high school and having them complete it remain beyond the scope of this study. **The children from the „Roma“ schools have an approximate threefold chance to end up without any qualification whatsoever, or to fail in completing the elementary school at all.** On the other hand, the Roma children and youth attending the schools with the lowest percentage of Roma children have a double chance to do so or to encounter a peer who would leave for a secondary school.

In the specialized ES, there are also differences between the educational institutions with various percentages of Roma children (see diagram 4.16). A total of 45% of pupils attending the schools with a high percentage of Roma children do not continue in secondary schools and another 49% continue in apprenticeships. Compared to the schools with the lowest percentage of Roma children, the departures to vocational education have a minimum representation. However, it is obvious that the representation of children who lack a secondary education increases with the percentage of Roma children in the school.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ In the school year 2007/2008, this correlation reached 0.76 (albeit it does not meet the strict statistical assumptions concerning the normal distribution). For the purpose of educational policy, it is necessary to consider the actual situation of the school concerned and disregard the classification thereof in a certain category.

⁴⁶ There are some exceptions occurring in the specialized ES when a child leaves for „another high school“; however, the chances are nearly zero in the specialized ES with a high representation of Roma children.

4.9 Key findings

- Whereas on average one out of twenty girls and one out of ten boys from the majority population departs (fails or leaves for a specialized ES) from the original class in which he/she started in the first grade, in Roma population it is nearly half of the children who leave the school either due to failure or a departure to a specialized school. The situation is worse in boys than in girls. The chance of Roma pupils to complete elementary school along with their peers equals approximately half.
- Mainstream elementary schools are attended by 72% of Roma children (and 92% of other children), i.e. nearly one third of Roma children attend schools outside mainstream education.
- Two out of ten Roma girls and 2.4 of Roma boys leave mainstream elementary schools to attend specialized elementary schools.
- The key issues occurring in the educational trajectories of Roma children are mainly the commencement of the first grade and the transition to the sixth grade (in some boys it is also the third grade as they generally do not manage the changes in the curriculum).
- The school results are also affected by the increased absence rate; in Roma children, the absence rate is nearly triple compared to their peers, and it increases with grades.
- The decrease of performance of Roma pupils in the sixth to ninth grades is induced by the attendance and schools results. It has also a significant effect on their educational chances in terms of likelihood to succeed in completing elementary school as well as in terms of their chances to continue on to high school.
- If the management of elementary schools is right saying that the main cause of the decrease in pupils' attendance is family background (lack of motivation, unemployment, aversion to duties, etc.), then it is clear that the elementary schools currently have no tools to sanction or enforce the attendance of children, increase motivation of their parents and motivate children to manage and attend school.
- In the first five grades, Czech language represents a much worse nightmare for Roma children than math; in the last three grades, the average results in both subjects are similar (the average results in math become even worse than in Czech language).
- In many respects, there are significant differences between the mainstream ES as classified according to the percentage of Roma children to the total number of pupils in the school. It may be concluded that the higher the representation is of children from a socially excluded environment, the more demanding the educational work is given the individual approach and intense building of the school-child-family relationship.
- If we compare the schools with the lowest representation of Roma children (these are more or less the mainstream ES) with the other two categories, the path of the pupils from the other two types to the secondary schools or apprenticeships completed by a departure exam proves to be much more difficult.
- Surprisingly, the worst are currently the educational chances of Roma children attending the schools of medium category in terms of failures and departures to schools outside mainstream education. Roma children attending schools with a medium percentage of Roma children (21 to 50%) have relatively the lowest chance to complete the school in the class in which they started.
- The role of the teacher's assistant has an influence on the success of children in school. Whereas only 6.5 out of 10 Roma children survive the third grade in their original class in

the mainstream ES without an assistant, it is on average 7.5 Roma children in classes with an assistant. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the assistant would have any significant influence on decreasing the absence rate.

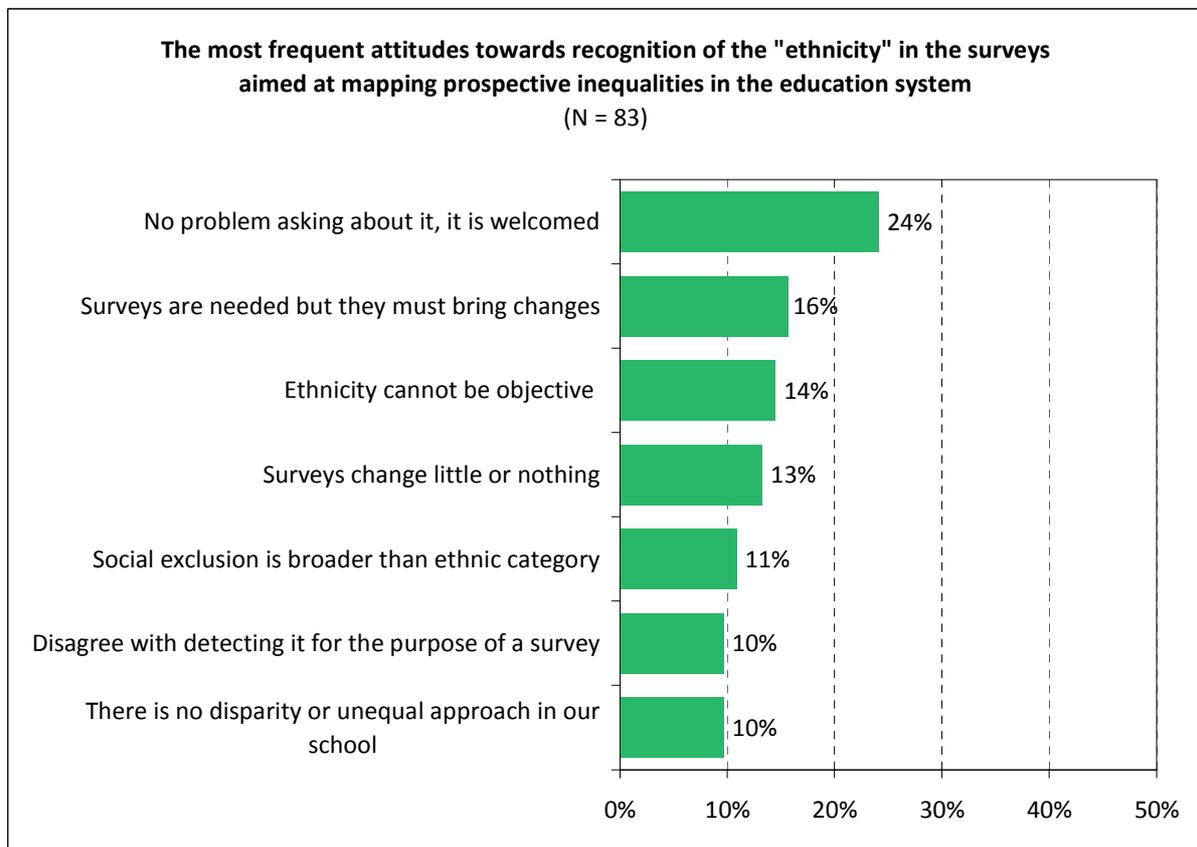
- ▣ Roma children who attended kindergartens are clearly much more successful in their educational paths. The problem is, however, that only a minority of Roma children (approx. two fifths) attend the kindergartens.
- ▣ The influence of the preparation classes on the improvement of educational chances is not as strong as the kindergartens'; it is effective only at the beginning of the educational path; then, the children who attended the preparation class tend to be similar to their peers.
- ▣ Kindergartens or preparation classes are attended by approximately 48% of Roma children.

5.1 Analysis

As mentioned above, the questionnaire submitted to school principals represented a voluntary component of the survey, an option to express their opinion on the education of children from a socially disadvantaging environment and, specifically, on the education of Roma children, using open questions. Despite the questionnaire being voluntary, the response was very high; we analyzed 90 filled-in questionnaires.⁴⁷ Open questions were sorted out by individual categories in order to analyze them and present them in a comparable form.⁴⁸

The addressed school principals work in schools for 18 years on average out of which 9 years are spent in school management positions. Their most frequent major is in special pedagogy (which somewhat reflects the selected set of schools), math, geography and physical training. The most frequent age groups are between 41-50 years and 51-60 years (in total 84%).

Diagram 5.1



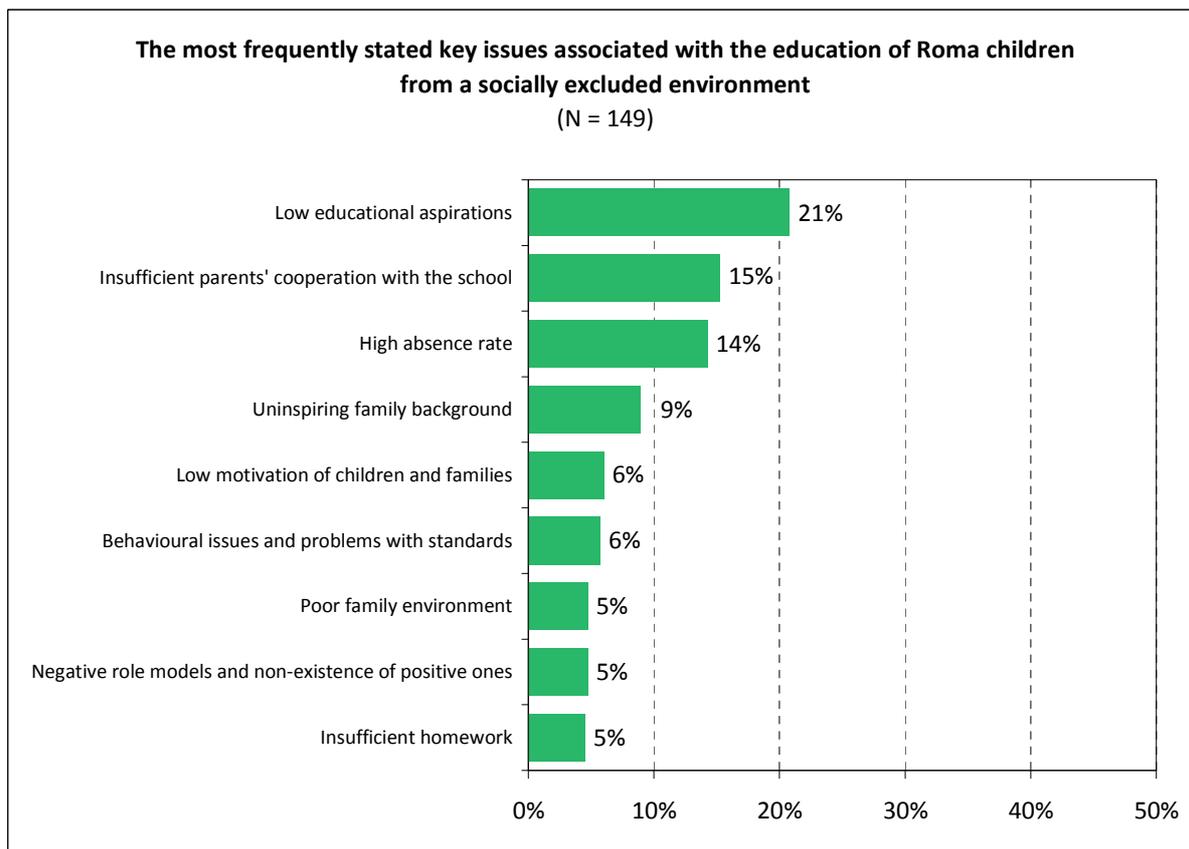
Although the school principals did not always fill in the submitted documents personally, they had been informed about the survey and thus were aware of its specifics. In the questionnaire, they could express their opinions on the surveys which work with the „ethnicity“ issue in order

⁴⁷ The high return is not easy to explain; the likely reasons may be: the interest in the topic, an opportunity to express their opinion on a specific issue that the school deals with, or the fact that it does not take much time to fill in the questionnaire and thus does not represent much extra work load.

⁴⁸ This is why the total number of responses exceeds the number of collected questionnaires: some responses have to be allocated under several categories as they present several options. The irrelevant answers or „do not know“ answers were left out.

to ascertain any prospective inequalities in the education system; some of the schools refused to participate referring to the illegitimacy of such act. The structure of answers is depicted in diagram 5.1.⁴⁹ It shows that the majority of answers points to the supporting dimensions of the survey: i.e. that the surveys should be reflected in practice, which does not occur too often; that the „ethnicity“ cannot be defined objectively; or that the social exclusion is not just an „ethnic“ category, which form a total 54 percent of answers).

Diagram 5.2



The first one of the topics to address represented the most serious problems associated with the education of Roma children from a socially disadvantaging environment compared to other children.⁵⁰ The distribution of the most frequent answers is depicted in diagram 5.2: it shows that the school principals consider low educational aspirations as the most important issue, i.e. that the education does not have such value for Roma children from a socially disadvantaging environment as for other children⁵¹: The most frequently mentioned issue is closely linked to others and forms a joint package characterizing the social handicap.⁵²

Among the well-proven and frequent tools for educating children from socially disadvantaging children („good practice“) are:

⁴⁹ Other options not included in the diagram include: „it is possible only anonymously“ and „the surveys are usually purpose-driven“; both options are represented by one percent.

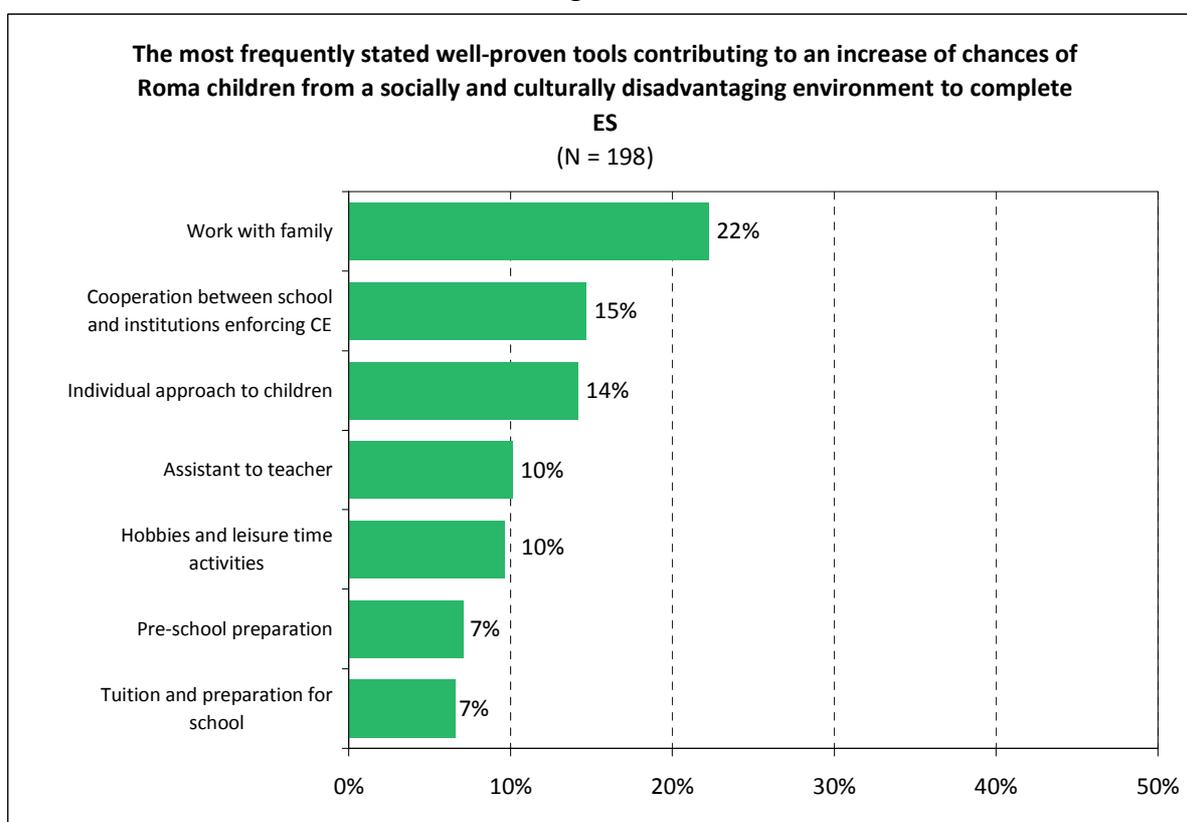
⁵⁰ This involved specifically three most serious issues sorted out according to their gravity.

⁵¹ This opinion proves to be relevant in the chapter on the qualitative part of the analysis (see the chapter for details).

⁵² The answers not included in the diagram: low learning dispositions of children, low education of parents, high migration (each represented by 3%), missing endurance, errors on the part of the education system, configuration of social system (each represented by 2%).

- ☐ working with the family,
- ☐ cooperation with the institutions enforcing compulsory education (see the diagram of the CE),
- ☐ individual approach to children,
- ☐ employing an assistant to teachers,
- ☐ selection of hobbies and leisure time activities,
- ☐ pre-school preparation and selection of tuitions (employed on 63% of schools, one third of them cooperates with some non-profit organization).
- ☐ Only one percent of answers includes further training of teachers aimed specifically at the education of these children.⁵³

Diagram 5.3

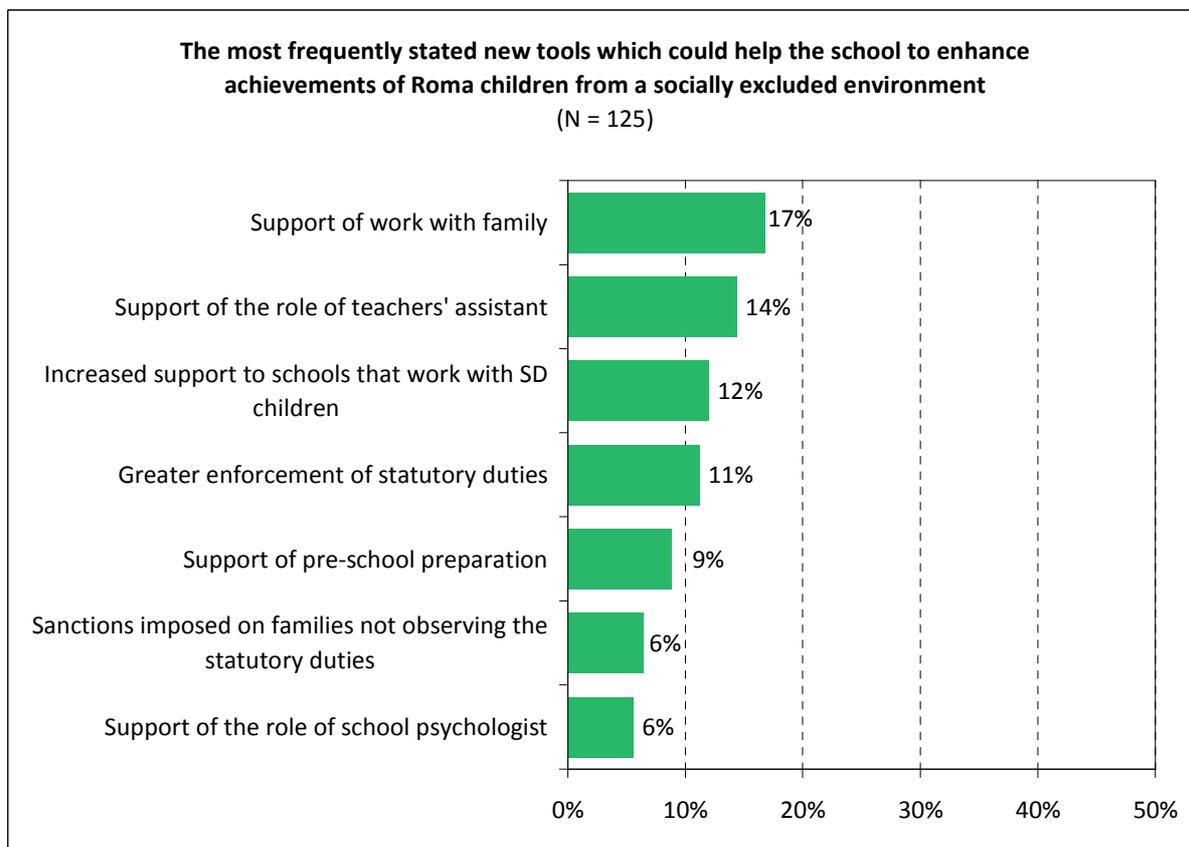


This structure also reflects the new services and tools for the education of Roma children from a socially disadvantaging environment which are needed the most: the top one is again the support of instruments employed in working with the family (field work and pedagogy) followed by the role of an assistant to a teacher (who often visits the families and mediates communication between the school and the family), acknowledgment of the specific needs of the schools attended by a high percentage of children from a socially disadvantaging environment (budget increase). The support of further training of teachers aimed at the education of children from a

⁵³ Other items include: „support of the assistance of specialists“ (PPP, SPC, school psychologist - 6%), „low number of socially disadvantaged children in class“ (4%), „role model represented by an assistant or an excelling peer“ and „after-school club“ (2%), „multicultural education“ and „avoiding financial sanctions imposed on families“ (1% each).

socially disadvantaging environment is represented by one percent, similarly as in the preceding case.⁵⁴

Diagram 5.4



As per the prospective new legislation (see diagram 5.5), aside from the general support of the enforcement of the current legislation and introduction of a stricter configuration of the social policy, the options of schools include a mandatory pre-school preparation (8%) or a change of the existing funding system in the form of an increase in the normative for socially disadvantaged children, i.e. greater flexibility of the system in relation to the composition of children in school (7%). This also concerns a more detailed specification of the concept of social handicap⁵⁵ (4%).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Other proposals include: „improve school budgets to allow the purchase of school aids for needy children“ (4%), „reduced number of pupils in class“ and „support special pedagogy“ (3% each), „existing situation is adequate, the errors lie in the use thereof“, „use a part of the financial support to families for schools“, „conceptual support and more active policies on the part of the state and the Ministry of Education“, „involve child’s role models in school life“, „change or abolition of normative funding“, „strengthen programmes for high school preparation“ (2% each), „boarding ES“, „avoiding the establishment of „ethnically“ homogenous schools“ (1% each).

⁵⁵ Some schools declare that the socially disadvantaged children form more than half of their pupils.

⁵⁶ Other options include: „participation of special educationalists and assistants in all relevant schools“ and „an increase in the school’s authority in dealing with absences and closer options of cooperation with other institutions“ (3% each); „providing support to families which observe their duties imposed by the legislation in force on the education system“, „statutory duty of further education on high school“, „reduced number of pupils in class“, „financial support for school aids“, „greater support by NGNPO“, „greater authority of school in transferring children to specialized ES“ (2% each); „determination of the maximum possible percentage of socially disadvantaged children in school“, „early transfer of children to specialized ES based on a thorough examination“, „mandatory afternoon preparation for classes“,

Diagram 5.5

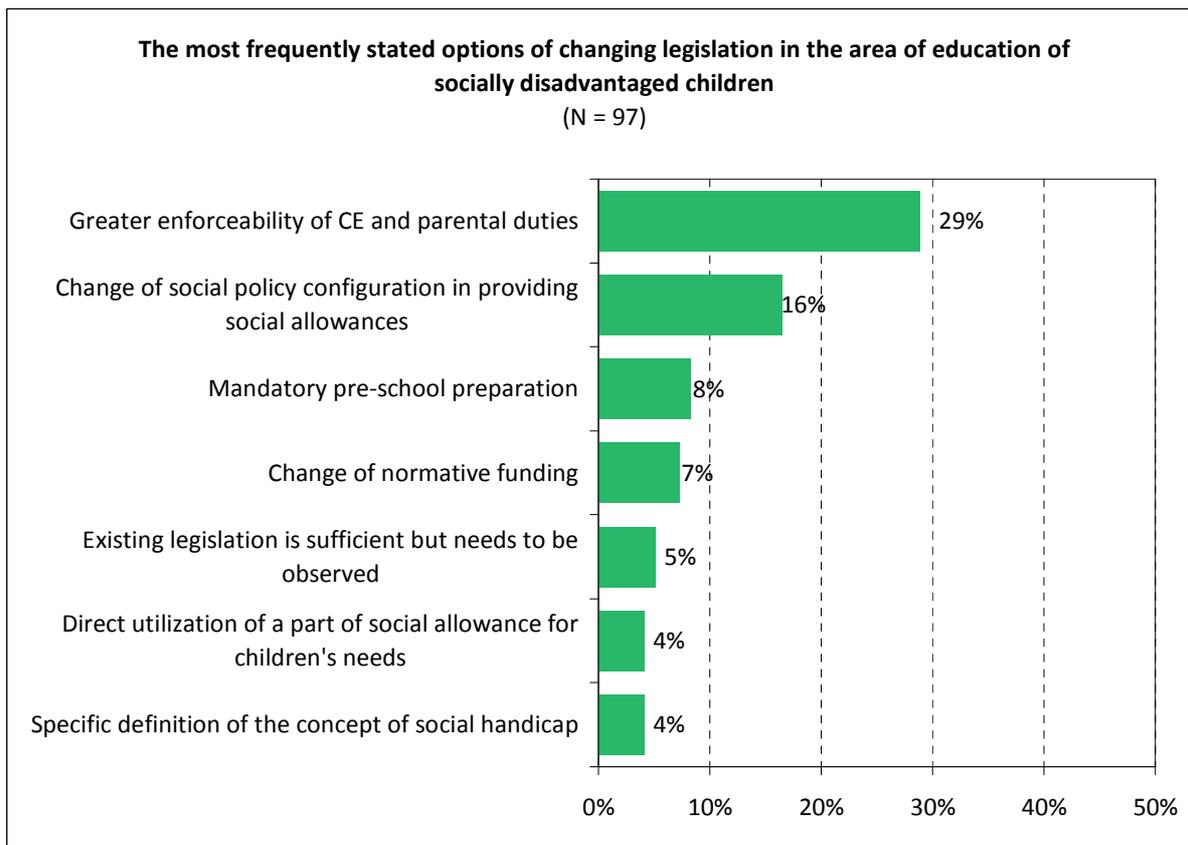
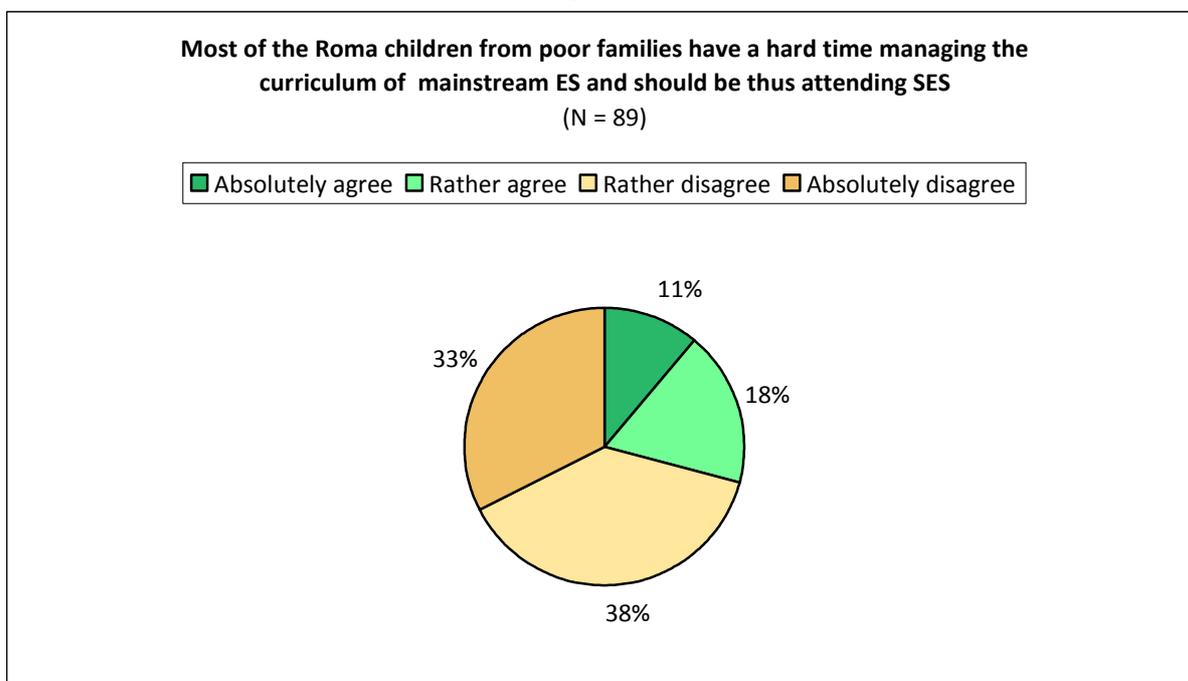


Diagram 5.6



„scholarships for socially disadvantaged children“, „establishment of school centers aimed at dealing with this issue“, „option of multiple repetition of the grade applicable to first up to fifth grade“ and „change of the provision on allocating children to preparation classes“ (1% each).

Given the fact that the principals identified the family as one of the key determinants of the education of Roma children from a socially disadvantaged environment, it is not surprising that 90% (of all 89 responses) of them agree with the statement that a vast majority of Roma parents have very little interest in the school achievements of their children. The responsibility for the education of children is mostly sought by the families and nearly 80% of principals agree that most of the teachers know how to work with these children – therefore, they do not see the failure on the part of the school but delegate the responsibility to the family. The other issue which needs to change is the existing configuration of the elementary school system because the way it functions now, it does not allow paying specific attention to the pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment (73% rather agree or absolutely agree).

The last statement concerned the opinion as to whether or not the majority of Roma children from poor families have so many problems with managing the curriculum in mainstream ES to the point that they should be eligible to attend specialized ESs. As depicted in the diagram above, one third of all answers absolutely agree with the statement.

5.2 Key findings

- ❑ A positive approach prevails among the teachers towards the specific activities aimed at Roma pupils (e.g. this project). The question remains, however, what kind of attitude they will assume once it will not only concern the research activities and the reformative measures will have to be applied in every-day practice.
- ❑ School management does not have a fundamental problem with identifying the children as Roma, although refusals to do so would be rather minor. Moreover, it is likely that this barrier will be overcome provided that the school management will get to understand that the identification is made for the purpose of resolving the issues associated with equalizing the educational chances of Roma children.
- ❑ The responsibility for education of these children is largely sought in the family; nearly 80% of school principals agree that the majority of teachers know how to work with these children – they do not seek failure in the school itself but delegate the responsibility and solution solely to the family.
- ❑ School management considers efficient mainly a combination of negative (sanction) pressures onto parents with the positive instruments aimed at motivation and skills of the pupils themselves. In other words, the schools are convinced that they do not have sufficient support for their task in the social and legislative system, which would use the sanctions to open some space for positive educational and school-related activities.
- ❑ At this moment, most of the principals seek a path to change primarily in the exogenous factors towards their own school, either via pressure onto families by the social and other system, or by strengthening the educational chances using more extensive pre-school preparation, employing assistants, providing after-schools activities, etc. Proposals for changes inside the school occur only scarcely and focus on a more individual approach to pupils.
- ❑ School principals do not mention any tools associated with enhancing their professional motivation as to receive more training and the anticipation of massive failures of Roma pupils on the way to qualification once they leave elementary school.

6.1 Methodology

The attitude of Roma girls and boys towards the school, classes and education represents a separate topic and belongs to the most frequently quoted barriers of their better educational chances. However the issue of motivation and attitudes of Roma children did not represent the main subject matter of the analysis but involved mainly the factual characteristics and results of their educational trajectory in elementary school, this topic could not be left out, so much more that even here some more integral findings and data is still missing.

The solution involved a qualitative search among the selected pupils of eleven elementary schools focused on a comparison of educational and professional aspirations of Roma and non-Roma children. This step is based on the hypothesis that the aspirations may have a significant effect on a later professional assertion.

Eleven schools in which we carried out the search had been selected upon standard selection criteria for the entire group of schools, i.e. the size of the municipality, the type of educational programme of the school and the percentage of Roma children attending the school concerned. The selected schools were situated in six regions within the Czech Republic. Seven of them based their educational programme on the framework educational programme for elementary schooling, three on the framework educational programme for elementary schooling of pupils with minor mental disorder and one ES used the combined programme.

Given this rather small group, we cannot consider it a representative picture of aspirations of Roma pupils in all schools. Nevertheless, the qualitative search brings the results on behalf of 2.8 % of schools from the entire sample of schools operating in the vicinity of excluded localities. Therefore, it is a picture which should be deemed to be relevant at least for the purpose of the definition of a working hypothesis. It would be useful to verify the hypothesis on a larger and more representative sample of children.

The teachers from these eleven schools selected 26 children⁵⁷: first of all, they chose 13 Roma children mostly from the 5th and 8th grades, or from the 6th, 7th or 9th grades, respectively, and added 13 non-Roma children attending the same classes as their Roma peers and with the same composition in terms of girls and boys, with a comparable conduct and school results. This configuration, which featured the only distinctive element, i.e. the identification of a child as Roma and non-Roma, attempts to test whether or not there are any differences in aspirations of the children which share some other elements. Two types of information were obtained from each selected child:

- the information obtained directly from the children: the research team led semi-standardized qualitative interviews focused on their professional and educational aspirations,
- the information obtained directly from their class teachers: the teachers filled in a brief standardized questionnaire requesting mainly the information about the families, school results, conduct and issues of the children – learning, behavioural and family-related issues.

⁵⁷ Some schools offered less children in case that there were not enough children in the school that would meet the selection criteria.

All data was made anonymous from the very beginning in order to avoid a chance of identification of the interviewed children in the processed data and questionnaires.⁵⁸

A total of 275 children (145 boys and 130 girls) were interviewed. Roma children had a slight prevalence in the sample – 146 children versus 128 non-Roma children, including one Vietnamese boy. More than half of the children came from the 4th⁵⁹, 5th and 6th grades (52 %): these will be further referred to as the younger pupils. The second half of the children attended 7th to 9th grades (48 %); they will be referred to as the older pupils. An overview of the composition of the interviewed children according to grades is depicted in the chart below:

Chart 6.1: Structure of interviewed children

Grade	N of children	Percentage
4.	2	0.7 %
5.	96	34.9 %
6.	43	15.6 %
7.	20	7.3 %
8.	86	31.3 %
9.	22	8.0 %
N/A	6	2.2 %
Total	275	100.0 %

The central topics of this part of the analysis are the educational and professional aspirations of the children, educational level they wish to achieve and the profession or job they wish to obtain. What is the idea the Roma children have of their dream profession, path and required education in comparison to other children? These children often come from the families whose members experience long-term unemployment and live in a socially excluded environment.

6.2 The structure of interviewed children and their families

According to the information provided by the teachers, the **children who participated in the research** are **usually considered average** in terms of both results and absence rate. The teachers do not perceive them as rather problematic and more serious learning problems were concluded only in approx. one fifth of the children (22 %), while more serious behavioural problems were concluded in one seventh of the children (14 %) and family issues occurred in one child out of nine (12 %)⁶⁰.

In all these aspects, **Roma children received a worse average evaluation**⁶¹. The teachers evaluate their school results as worse and their absence rate as higher than that of their peers. Roma children also show more frequent learning and behavioural problems (out of the pupils with more serious problems, two thirds are Roma) as well as the problems in the family (nearly three quarters of Roma children).

Greater educational problems occurred in pupils from the mainstream elementary schools: the problems classified according to their gravity as medium up to very serious were ascertained

⁵⁸ The names or any other personal data were not recorded anywhere.

⁵⁹ The children who repeat the grade actually belong to the 5th grade by age.

⁶⁰ It is necessary to point out that the data for evaluation of the family background might be slightly distorted towards a better result given the fact that the family background was not evaluated in children living in a foster home where they actually ended up in a majority of cases because of the unsuitable family environment.

⁶¹ It should be considered to what extent this evaluation was affected by the stereotypes towards Roma children and their background.

in 55 % of the interviewed children as opposed to only 30% of pupils from the specialised schools we monitored. Therefore, it confirms the fact that compared to the specialised schools, the standard elementary schools obviously apply more demanding criteria on the evaluation of children.

Diagram 6.1

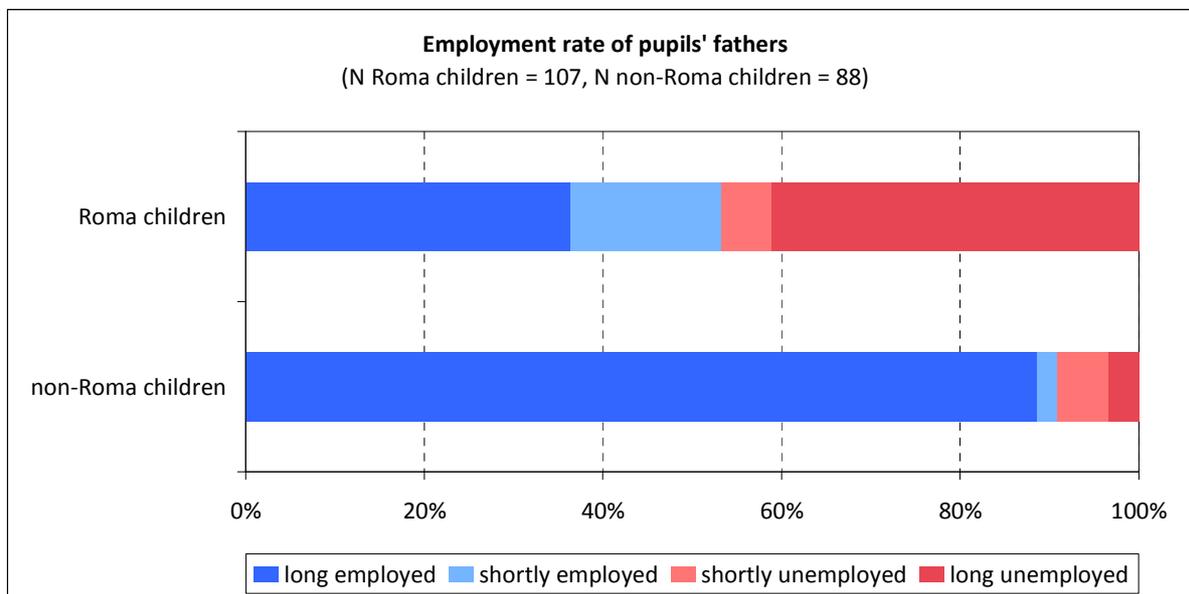
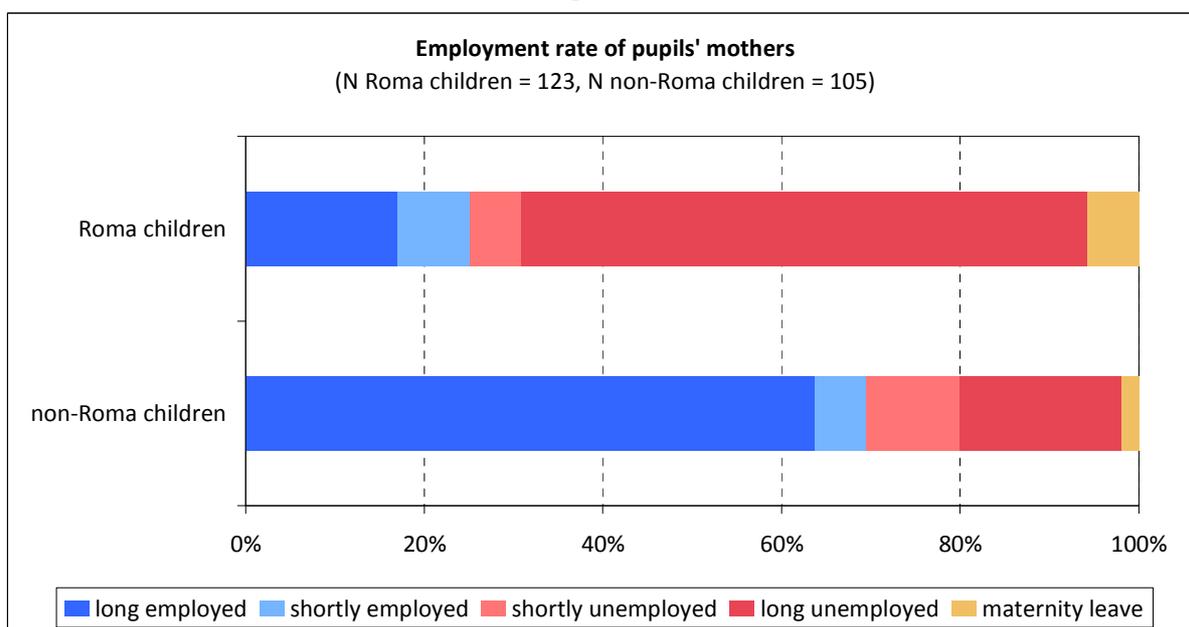


Diagram 6.2



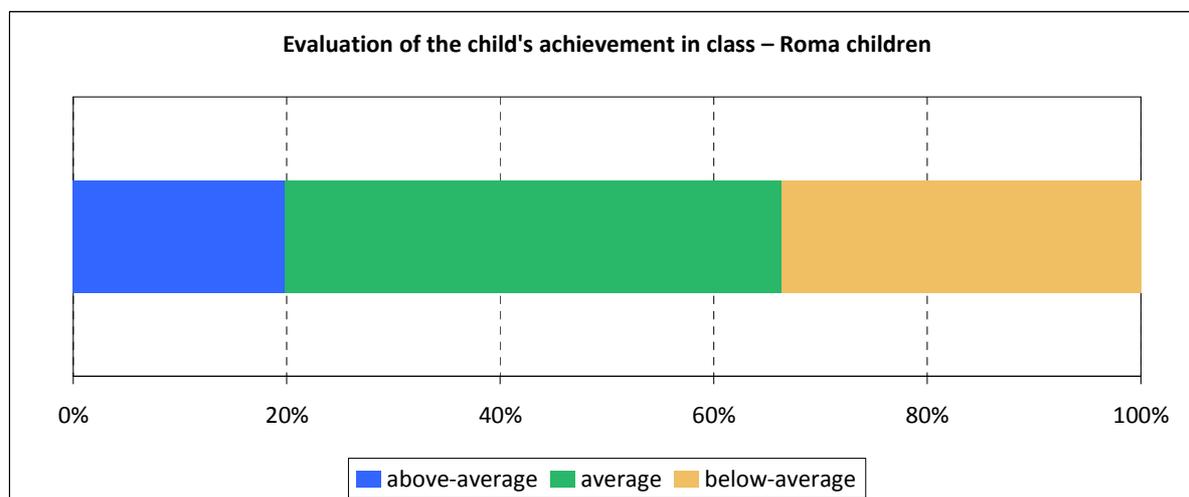
The school results and further professional aspiration of children are demonstrably affected by the interest of their parents in their education; therefore, we also addressed the question as to whether or not the parents are indeed interested in the school results of their child. According to the teachers, most of the parents (three fifths) show an average interest in the school results usually during the class information meetings between parents and teachers, and one fifth shows an extraordinary interest even outside the class meetings; on the other hand, one fifth of the parents shows no interest at all and do not even cooperate if some problems occur.

The teachers also confirm a low interest in the school results of children on the part of Roma parents. 41 out of 54 children whose parents do not show any interest were Roma children (76 %). It must not be forgotten, however, that the lower interest in school results becomes more prominent especially if the children's achievement is worse or bad. It may be inferred from the facts above that in Roma children, the effects of poor performance and low interest of parents do cumulate. It shows that not every Roma child experiences poor performance and that all parents are not interested in their children's school career. Therefore, both the school and the teachers should apply an individual approach towards each child.

Aside from the parents' interest in their children's performance, we also monitored the (un)employment of parents. According to the information provided by the teachers, approximately two thirds of fathers and one third of mothers of all monitored children are employed (including the step fathers/mothers or foster parents). As we expected, there are strong differences between Roma and non-Roma children: in Roma children, only half of fathers are employed as opposed to nearly 90% in non-Roma children; mothers of Roma children are employed in more than 20% as opposed to more than 60% of employed mothers of non-Roma children.

In the group of the Roma pupils, 47% achieved an average performance assessment; one third was assessed as below-average and one fifth as above-average.⁶² Therefore, there are performance differences existing within Roma pupils, too. Given the variability of school results of Roma children, it is necessary to approach them differently. Individual care represents the key prerequisite for the approximation of thus far low educational chances of Roma children to the chances of their peers. Diagram 6.3 below depicts the basic distribution of Roma pupils from the monitored 11 schools according to their teachers' classification.

Diagram 6.3



It follows from the factors (impacts ascertained herein) associated with the evaluation of the performance of a Roma child that **the family environment and interest in the child's performance shown by the parents, absence rate and assisting the child with homework is of great importance**. The excelling Roma children often come from the families where the parents speak **only Czech**.

⁶² In schools outside the mainstream education, 29% of pupils are classified as above-average compared to 17% of pupils attending regular schools – therefore, it is clear that the mainstream ES use more strict performance criteria even upon Roma pupils.

Once the child receives strong support of his/her parents, the school performance becomes excellent, and vice versa. The children whose parents do not consider school important usually have a greater number of missed classes. Excelling Roma pupils also have higher professional aspirations (e.g. interior architect or veterinary surgeon).

6.3 Pupils and their aspirations

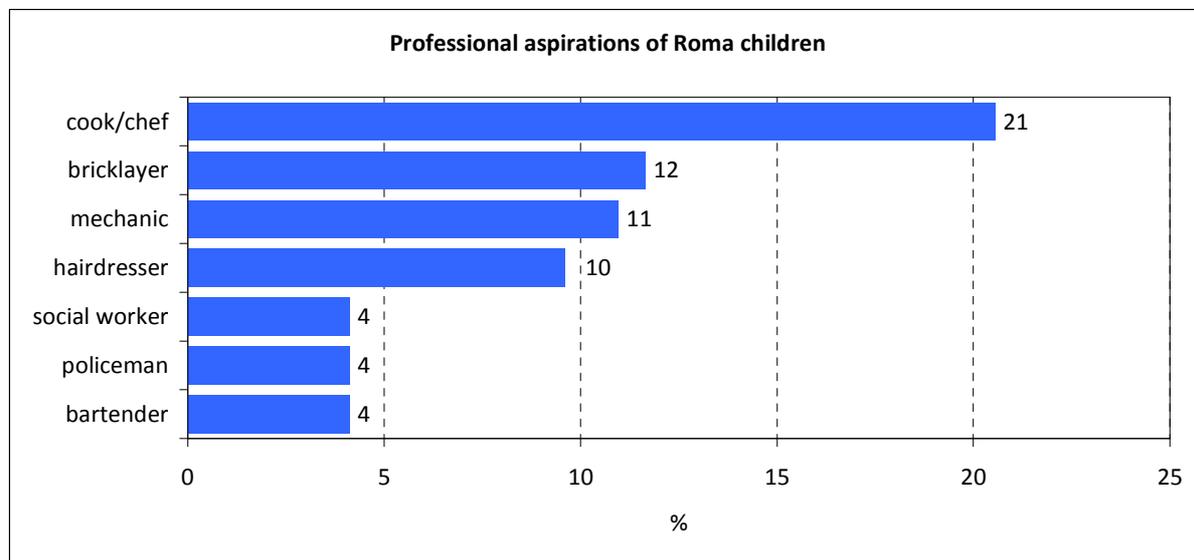
Only 21 out of 274 children, i.e. less than 10 %, have no idea of his/her future profession. Most of them belong to the younger children's group, which is understandable; obviously, only the minimum of the older pupils does not know what they want to do as a job.

In general, the professional aspirations of the interviewed children are not very high. They mostly wish to work in jobs which require vocational certificate (72 %); one fifth wishes to have a job requiring high school education (20 %) and only seldom they wish to achieve a profession which requires higher education (8 %).

The most frequently mentioned profession to achieve is a cook/chef: nearly 18% of the interviewed pupils, both girls and boys, wish to make a future living by cooking. As the second most attractive professions were a mechanic, bricklayer and policeman in boys. The girls mentioned a hairdresser as the second most popular profession followed by a veterinary doctor, shop assistant and singer or dancer.

There are **certain differences in the aspirations of Roma and non-Roma pupils: Roma pupils rather more often named the professions with lower qualification criteria.** Compared to other children, the aspirations of Roma children are more affected by the interest of their parents in their school performance: therefore, in order to obtain higher aspirations, these children need to receive stronger support and motivation from their family members.⁶³

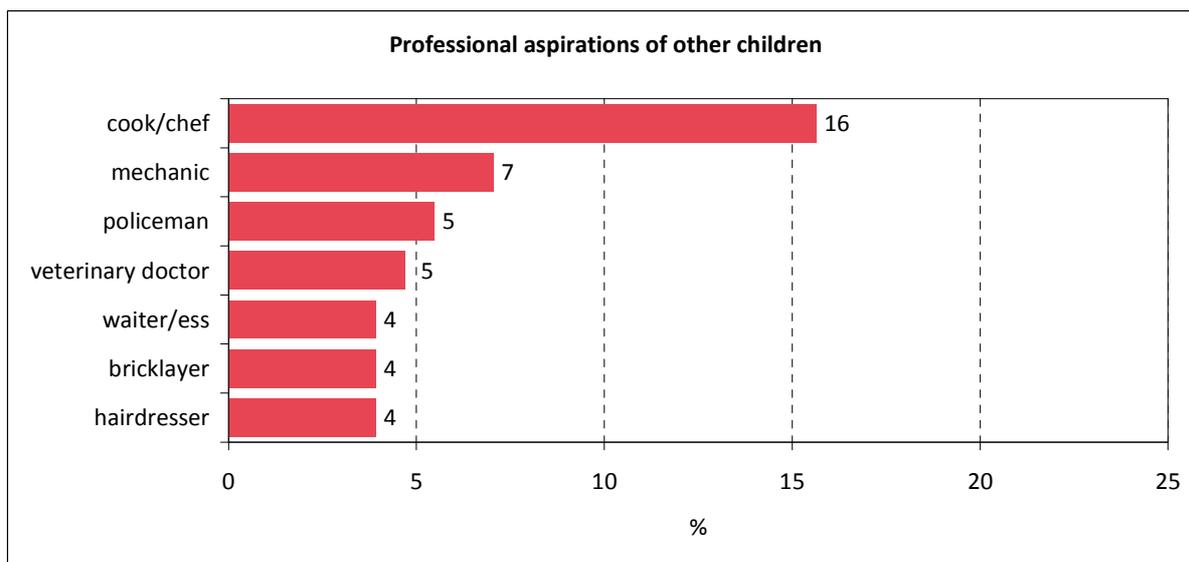
Diagram 6.4



The difference also lies in the variety of the mentioned professions as Roma pupils mention rather monotonous professional aspirations. More than half of them chose one out of four most frequently mentioned professions (cook, mechanic, bricklayer, hairdresser); **the variety was much wider in non-Roma children** (half of the children chose one out of nine professions).

⁶³ The answers provided by the school principals in the questionnaires clearly show that the involvement of the family is of extraordinary importance.

Diagram 6.5



Roma children as well as non-Roma most frequently wish to become a cook/chef; however, bricklayer scored as the second most wanted profession, which actually requires little or no qualification at all (12 %); non-Roma children chose it as the 6th most wanted job (less than 4 %). On the other hand, non-Roma children often mentioned the highly-qualified profession of veterinary doctor, which Roma children mentioned only a few times. The most qualified professions mentioned by Roma children most often were a policeman and social worker.

When asked for **the reasons that led them to choosing a specific profession**, the children most often provided rather vague reasons, such as „*I would like doing that*“, „*I would enjoy it*“, or said that they liked the contents of the given profession („*I enjoy cooking*“, „*I enjoy dismantling and repairing things*“, „*I like experimenting with hair*“, etc.). It may be generally concluded that the most frequently mentioned reason is the **attractive contents of the given profession (40 %)** followed by one's own positive **experience with the given work (31 %)**. Children mentioned one's own experience mainly in cooking; they said that they cooked with their parents at home and they enjoyed it. In some cases, the boys mentioned that they helped their father repair the car or took a part in building a house.

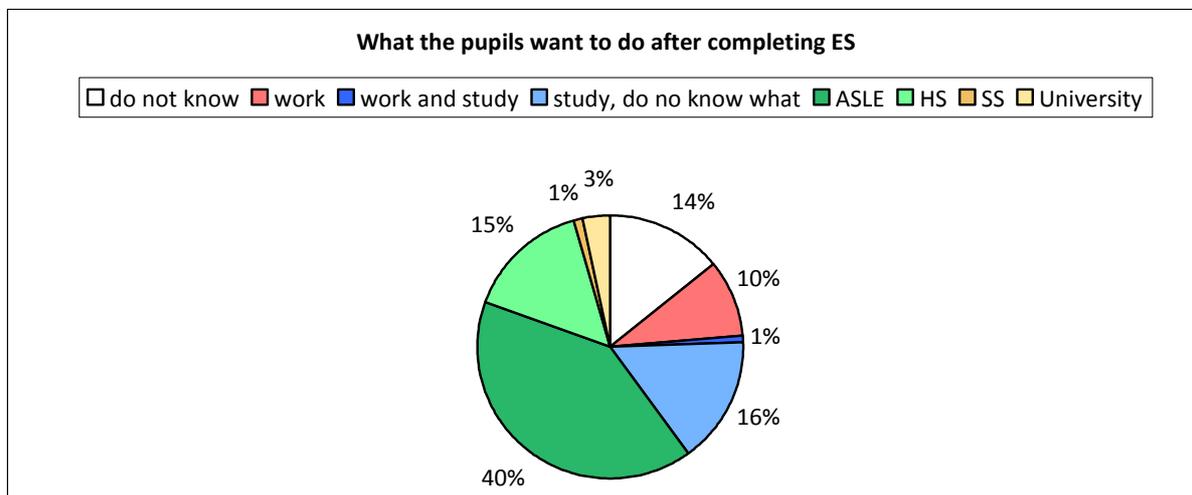
The impact of the social environment and the prospective mobility models on the selection of a preferred profession is also interesting. Approximately only one third of children do not know anybody in their surroundings who would perform the profession they chose compared to the remaining two thirds of children who do know somebody.⁶⁴ Most often, it involves their family members. A father's role apparently has the great importance: 11% of children stated that their father performed the job they chose. The children often mentioned uncles and aunts (10 %), friends (9 %) and siblings (8 %).

The professional models of Roma children do not reach beyond their immediate surroundings and are directed into the family rather than to school or to a broader daily experience. The containment of the children in terms of their professional ambitions and plans within their own social environment and their daily experience proves to be rather strong. The absence of professional ascending ambitions also corresponds with the ideas of an educational path.

⁶⁴ This data, however, needs to be linked with the structure of professional aspirations.

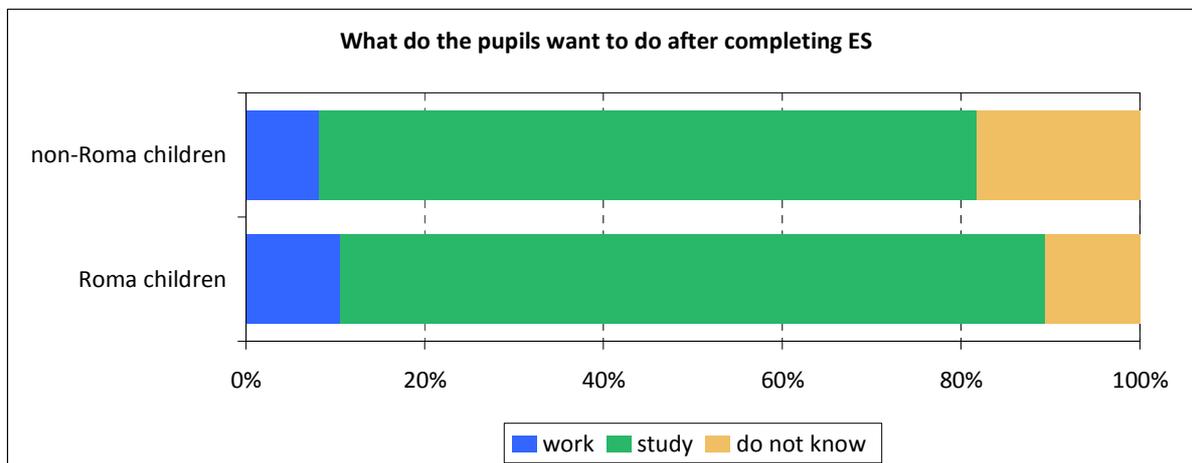
What would the children want to do once they completed mandatory school attendance? **Most of them plan to continue in an upper educational level (75 %), usually an apprentice training centre. A smaller, but not negligible group, plans to start working, i.e. leave elementary school without any qualification (10 %), and a rather large group has not made a decision yet (14 %).**

Diagram 6.6



Roma and non-Roma children do not differ much in this particular aspect – be it in the number of those who want to study and work or in what kind of school they want to study. **The only exception is the secondary school not mentioned by any of Roma pupils;** on the other hand, the number of those who consider filing an application for admittance to a university does not differ.

Diagram 6.7

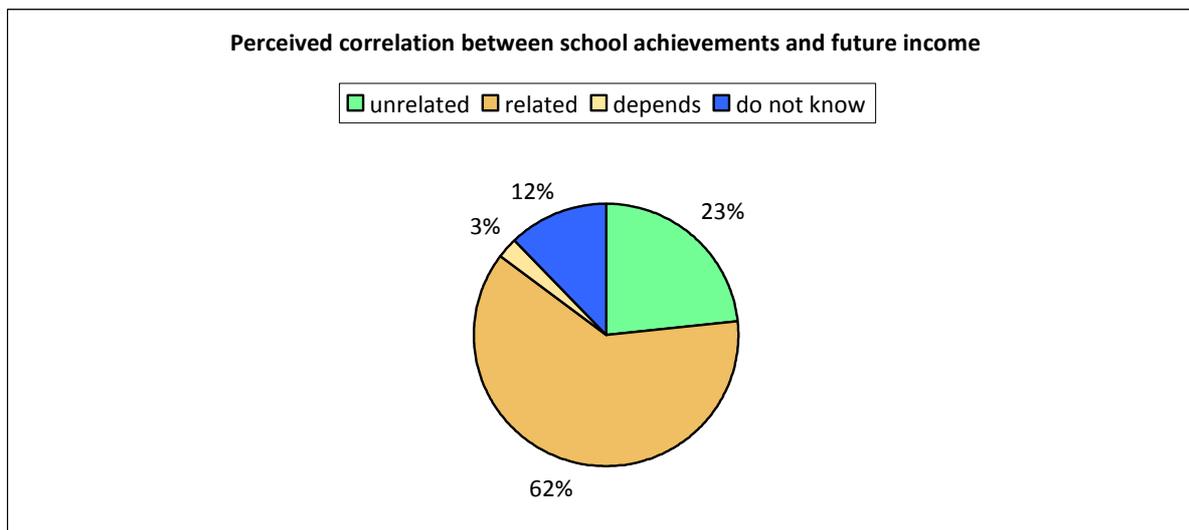


It is clear that the mobile aspirations in terms of the education are lower in the interviewed schools and pupils, both Roma and non-Roma peers. This is likely to be one of the important factors that strengthen the disparity of educational chances. The fact that none of the Roma children even mentioned any ambition to study at a secondary school is also important along with the fact that **they do not even consider trying it.**

6.4 Importance of education

How do children perceive the role of education and how do they associate it with prospective financial success? We asked the children **if they thought that those who excelled in school would make more money in the future. Most of the children do understand the correlation (62 %)** and only approximately one third thinks that these two things are not related. Roma and non-Roma children did not differ much in this opinion.

Diagram 6.8



6.5 Consulting educational plans with teachers and parents

Family and schools and the support thereof play an important role in selecting the school and making decisions on the further career of the children. How often do the children consult their future plans with their parents and teachers? Do they feel support from their side?

At least one half of all interviewed pupils have previously consulted their plans with teachers or tutors (approximately one third of the children said that the teacher had discussed it with them repeatedly). Other children (i.e. the second half) said that they had never discussed this topic with their teachers. If we focus only on the older children who should definitely discuss their future with their parents and/or teachers, the percentage of those who never consulted their plans in schools is slightly lower but still quite high (41%).

Diagram 6.9

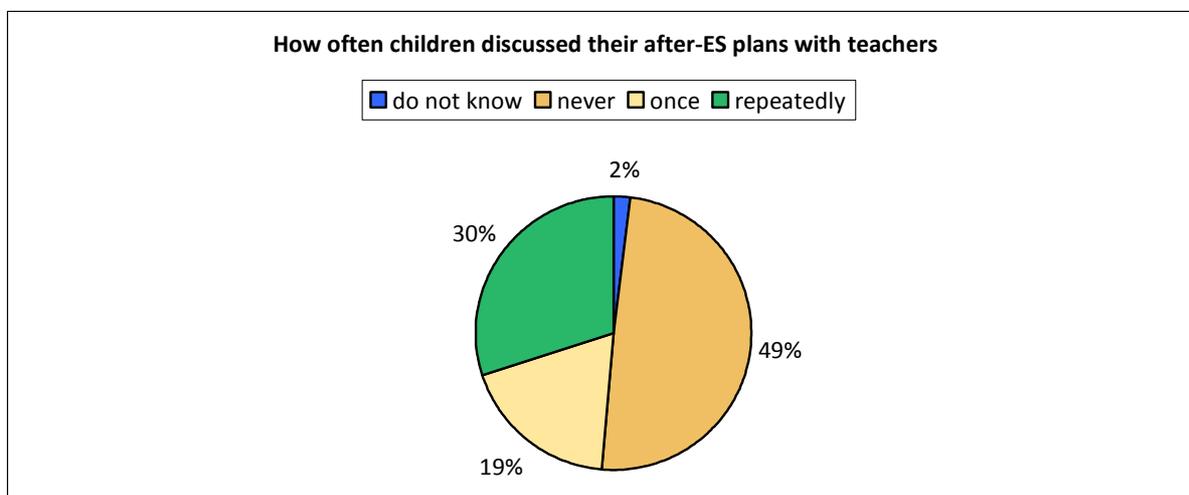
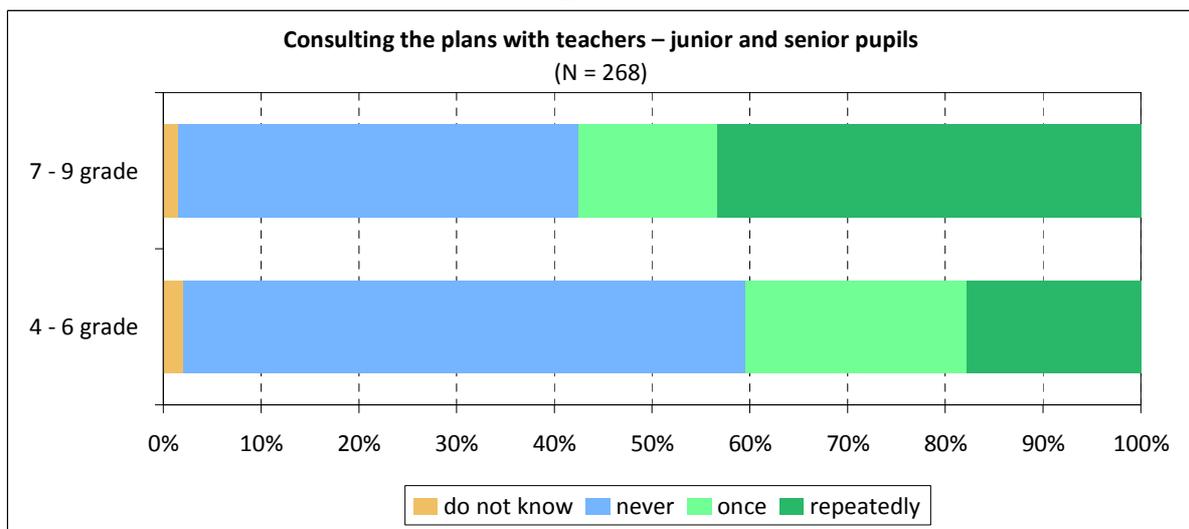
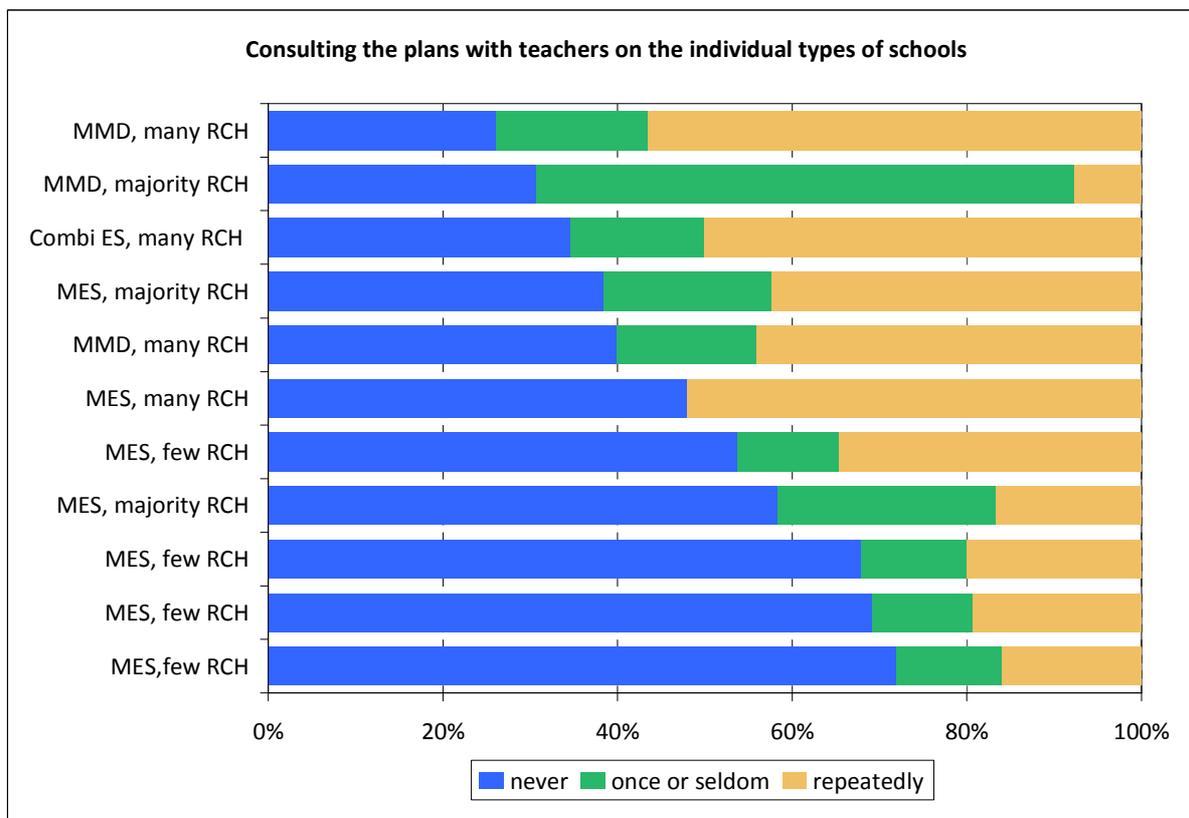


Diagram 6.10



There are also quite prominent differences in this issue between the individual schools. The children’s answers suggest that **the children’s future plans are the least discussed by the teachers in mainstream elementary schools with a low percentage of Roma children** followed by the mainstream ES with a higher participation of Roma children and even more often in schools of other types but mainstream ES.

Diagram 6.11



Teachers in the mainstream ES with a low participation of Roma children probably assume that in majority of the children, it is the family that plays the key role and they perhaps do not feel the need to contribute to or compensate for the family in case of an absence thereof.

Therefore, mainstream elementary school does consider the family a basis and anticipates its key motivational role for the children’s aspirations. Those children who lack the family background are left out without any system support.

Diagram 6.12

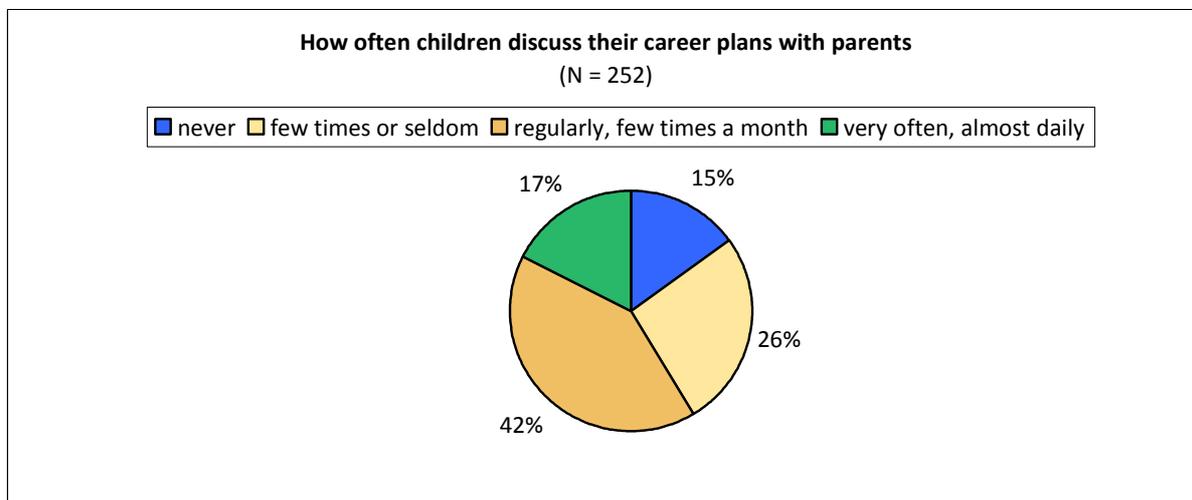
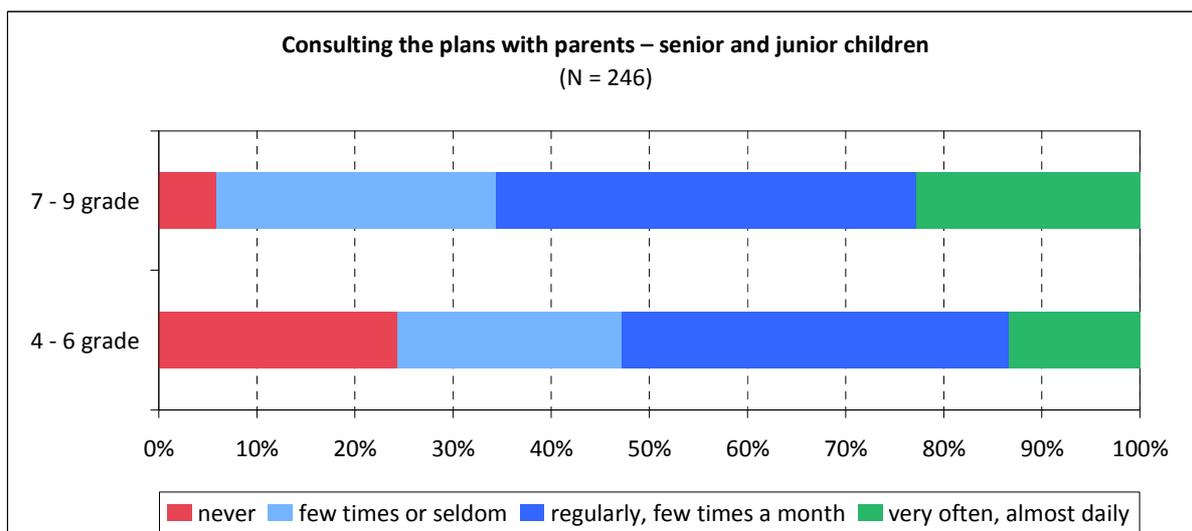


Diagram 6.13



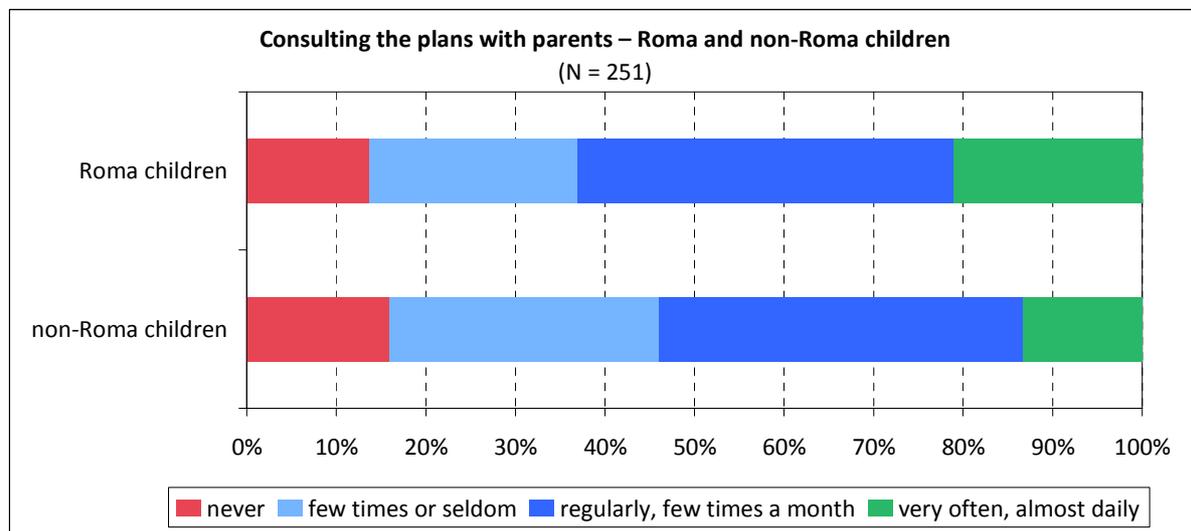
On the other hand, the selection of a future profession is even more complicated in specialised schools. In many cases, teachers anticipate that the family does not fulfil its function, assume its role and actively build their own competence and impact on the children.

The pupils also assessed whether or not the school helps them to achieve their aspirations. Most of them (60%) answered yes and 26 % answered no. Aside from teaching itself, the children most often mentioned that the teacher would help them to choose a school, that they would have the opportunity to attend tuition classes, the school offered them tuition for the admission tests and they practice activities, such as cooking and manual skills.

In addition to the consultation with the teachers, the children were also asked whether and **how often they discussed their future plans with their parents at home**. About 15% of them never discussed it and the remaining children did. **Most of the children (59 %) discuss this topic with their parents often**, at least several times a month. Surprisingly, there were no significant differences in this respect between Roma and non-Roma pupils. The differences were

found mainly between the age groups as the parents usually **discuss the career plans with older children**. Only 7 out of 127 older pupils said that they had so far not discussed their future plans with their parents; as depicted in the diagram, the number of those who discuss the future with their parents grows with age.

Diagram 6.14



6.6 Preparation for classes

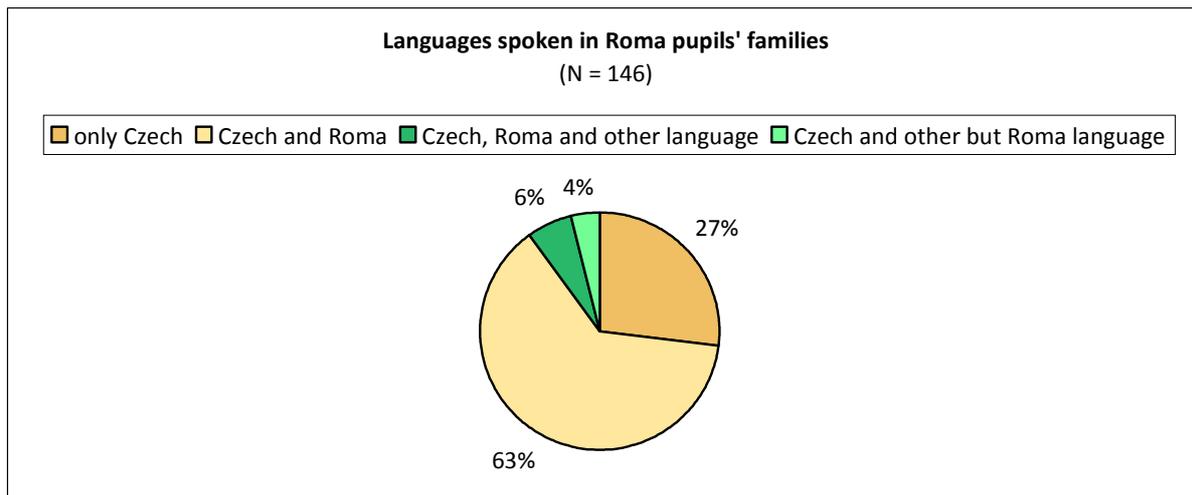
What kind of ideas do parents have about their children's future? What kind of profession would they want for their children? Most of the children said that their parents agreed with their choice or that they granted them the right to choose on their own and all they wanted was for the children to enjoy the profession. The children often mentioned that their parents wished that their children continued to study, without any preferred subject matter. If the children ever mentioned any particular profession their parents would want for them, they would state the same professions as the children mentioned, i.e. cook, mechanic and bricklayer.

The relationship of the family with the child's education was ascertained through the question as to who helps the pupils with their homework. **Approximately one quarter of children (23 %) do it by themselves** without any help. **Other children receive help mostly from their mother (38 % of cases)** or from both parents (15 %), and often also from a sibling or even the father. In some families, it may be other relatives. In Roma children, the percentage of children who receive no help is slightly higher. It is 25% of Roma and 20% of non-Roma children who receive no help in doing homework. It is questionable, though, whether or not the percentage of children who gave their parents credit in helping them with homework is real; even though, one quarter of Roma children has to deal with homework all by themselves.

6.7 Languages used in Roma families

For a Roma child, the successful completion of a school year and a curriculum very much depends on mastering the Czech language. **According to Roma pupils, most of them live in families whose members speak several languages**. Only 27% of Roma families speak just Czech; **more than two thirds of Roma pupils say that their families use also the Roma language along with Czech**. There are great differences, however, as to what the role is of Roma language in the family, which was not the subject matter of the survey.

Diagram 6.15



In some Roma families, the Roma language is apparently the primary language; the children from these families stated that they spoke **mostly Roma and only some Czech**, or, that they do not speak Czech at all and Czech is only used for communication in school – „*romanes, Czech in school only*“. The sample included only a few of these children – just 5 out of 146 Roma children; therefore, it seems that **this model is just marginal**.

On the other hand, there are **two other models that seem to be the most frequent**: one in which **the family actively uses both languages**, i.e. the family members speak both Roma and Czech and Roma is mastered by children as well (this is the case of 39 out of 146 Roma children).⁶⁵

The second model involves the families in which **Roma language is still present but is seldom used**: it is usually spoken by some family members only (mostly by the parents with one another, or the parents and the grandparents), or it is used on special occasion, etc. The children then speak only or mostly Czech and use Roma only seldom, or they can understand some of it and, at times, not even that (this model was described by 48 out of 146 interviewed Roma children)⁶⁶.

It seems that in some Roma families, the children learn Roma later on as a second language (besides Czech).⁶⁷ Three Roma children also said that their parents do not want them to learn Roma.⁶⁸

Some of the other young Roma pupils did not say that so explicitly but the fact that they very much stressed that their family members „*never spoke gipsy*“ suggested that they value that and speaking Roma is perceived as something wrong, something they should be ashamed of.

⁶⁵ „Roma, Czech, it is the same.“ „Both Czech and gipsy.“

⁶⁶ „We speak mostly Czech, Roma only when we visit somebody, I don't really speak it.“ „Czech; my parents speak Roma only with each other, I can understand a bit.“ „Sometimes Roma (my Dad and I understand Roma but Mom speaks it), otherwise we speak Czech.“ „Mom sometimes speaks Roma with some people, I understand a little.“

⁶⁷ „Czech and Roma – I learnt it when I was older.“ „Czech; my parents speak Roma, I don't as yet but I will learn it...“ „Czech; I understand Roma but I do not speak it, I am still too young...“

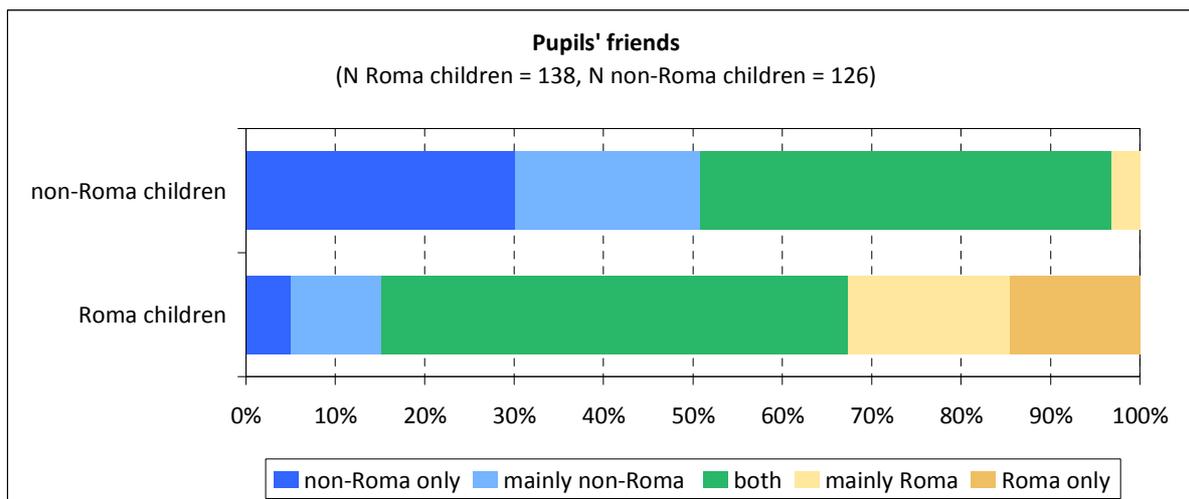
⁶⁸ „Czech. My Mom speaks Roma but does not want us to learn it, she thinks that it would retard us...“ „My Dad does not even understand Roma, my Mom does but does not speak, they don't want us to speak Roma; I do both ways, speak and understand.“

6.8 Relationships between Roma and non-Roma children

The relationship to schools also very much depends on the relationship to peers, especially in mixed classes. We tried to find out **how much Roma and non-Roma children befriend each other.**

Most of the children (75 %) maintain that they are friends with both Roma and non-Roma peers. Only a part of them say that they are friends with either group only (with 16 % of non-Roma, 7 % Roma). Even in those who say that they are friends with both groups, a major part says that one of the groups prevails.

Diagram 6.16



When **non-Roma children explained why they would not befriend Roma children**, they mostly said: „I don't like them“, „they are strange“, „we have nothing in common“ or „I don't understand them“. When asked for details, the children mentioned particularly that **they did not like Roma children being rude, speaking nasty, having no manners, making mess, smoking and fighting all the time.**

Some children also said that they had a **personally bad experience** with Roma children: they were either attacked verbally or physically by them, and some children also said that they had been either mugged or battered by the Roma in the past. The children often expressed the opinions and **prejudices of their parents.**

6.9 Role models

At the end of the survey, we also enquired **whether or not the children had any role models** and why would it be just that particular person, and what they admired the most in him/her. **The majority of pupils (41 %) stated that they had no role model.** Some added that they wanted to be „themselves“ and original.

The role models the children admire the most include their **friends and acquaintances** in the first place (16 %) followed by their **parents or one parent** (13 %) and uncles and aunts (8 %) and celebrities (7 %); the most frequently mentioned role models were singers or athletes.

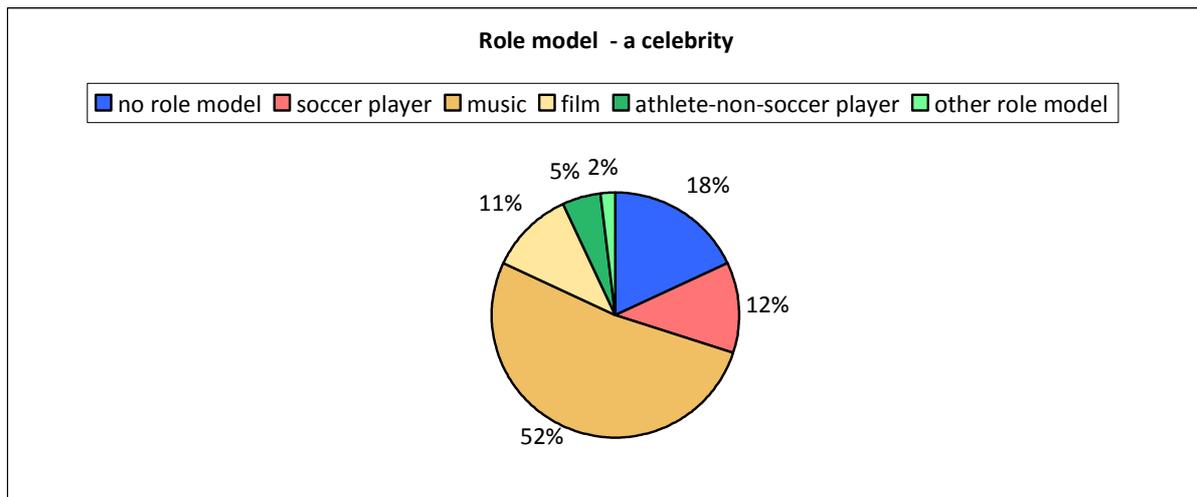
There were various reasons for that: starting with the fact that a given person treats the respondent nicely, the person features admired physical or intellectual qualities or he/she excels in school, work or finance.

When asked about a **celebrity they admired**, more than a **half of children (52 %) offered a male or female singer**, or a band, a soccer player (12 %) and actors (11 %). The most frequently

mentioned musician was the rapper called 50cent. As per the differences between Roma and non-Roma children, **Roma children featured a much higher percentage of those whose role models would be rappers or hip-hoppers**: these were named by 36 out of 146 Roma children. The aforesaid 50cent scored the most in votes and was followed by Akon, Eminem or Tupac Shakur. All 128 interviewed non-Roma children named a rapper or a hip-hopper only eleven times.

As per the celebrities, Roma children mentioned **a higher number of coloured idols**, mostly musicians or athletes (50cent, Rihanna, Ronaldinho) but they also named some domestic Roma musicians (mostly Gipsy.cz and others): 44 out of 146 Roma children named someone like that. Only 13 out of 128 non-Roma children mentioned similar artists.

Diagram 6.17



6.10 Key findings

- ❑ There is an obvious key difference in the teachers' evaluation of the curricular demand in mainstream and specialised schools. Whereas the performance assessment seems to be more forbearing, it is much stricter in regular schools and is more induced from the general standards. This fact must not be forgotten when considering the outputs hereof.
- ❑ The mainstream ES with a low percentage of Roma children (i.e. more or less the regular elementary schools) more often expect that the pupils receive support from their families and do not seem to attempt to compensate for family care in cases where the pupils do not have family support available.
- ❑ Although the lack of interest in children's school performance is one of the constitutive elements of life in social exclusion, it cannot be applied as a common feature to all socially excluded Roma families. The survey proved variability in attitudes. The individual and differentiate approach to pupils should reflect the complexity of interaction among the family-school-pupil. If a functioning family background is missing, the effort to strengthen the school's impact on the areas normally tackled by the family is currently present mainly in specialised schools and is rather an exception in mainstream.
- ❑ Roma pupils experience a higher unemployment of both parents, being the most distinctive element between Roma and non-Roma peers. The disadvantaging factors cumulate the highest in this area.
- ❑ The social and economic situation of socially disadvantaged Roma families is likely to have the greatest influence on the educational and professional aspirations of their children and thus on a prospective ascending inter-generational mobility. The total image of professional ambitions of Roma children shows that they usually do not cross (which does not mean that they could not do so under certain circumstances) the horizon of daily life in excluded localities. Containment in life conditions and limits of excluded enclaves seems to limit the social and professional aspirations of children and their mobility chances to enter the socio-professional structure of the Czech society. Today, many Roma children no longer have any ambitions to step out from the life conditions of their parents and break through from social exclusion via professional mobility.
- ❑ Although it may seem that low educational ambition in schools with a medium percentage of Roma children is typical also for their non-Roma peers, the results of the qualitative search signalise that Roma pupils from these schools are missing the ambitions and courage to achieve secondary education, leaving exams and higher. The mobility ambitions of these children are deep below the level where they should be, both in terms of job market demands in the Czech Republic and far from the hopes Czech society lays in an inter-generational exchange and support of educational chances of Roma pupils on their path to overcome social exclusion.
- ❑ There is a great potential to enhance the role of school in overcoming the deficit of desirable professional and educational mobility aspirations of Roma children. The analysis suggests that one quarter of Roma pupils current receive no learning support from their parents. Although the children might discuss their professional future with the parents, the role of school in this process remains below the level it should assume.
- ❑ The analysis of language background of Roma children will require separate attention. The results suggest a significant occurrence of Roma as a secondary family language, which of course does not facilitate the status of Roma girl and boys in schools where the classes are taught in Czech.

The study summarizes the outputs of the research „*Sociological research of the analysis of the form and causes of the segregation of children, pupils and young children from a socially and culturally disadvantaging environment*“ commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 2008 in a public tender. The aim of the research was to present a comprehensive picture of the educational trajectories and chances of Roma pupils from a socially disadvantaging environment who attend various types of elementary schools by means of a comparison with the trajectories and chances of their peers attending the same schools.

The roots of the educational disparities may be divided into two main areas. The causes thereof need to be sought in families and the family atmosphere as well as in the school as an institution. The schools performance of children thus reflects the family background in which they grow, and the kind of standards they experience there (material background, position of the role of education on the value scale, social and symbolic capital), and also the way schools as an institution treat them, whether or not it is able to adequately manage, support and develop the heterogeneity of their attitudes and needs (the school as an institution may accentuate or weaken the handicaps the children bring from their families). The Czech system, however, has been long missing the mechanisms that would mitigate the differences in family backgrounds.

We focused on the schools attended by the children from 310 excluded localities identified by the *Map of Socially Excluded Roma Localities and Absorption Capacity of the Entities Operating Therein* (MLSA, 2006). We identified 396 schools from these localities and comprehensive data was obtained from 99 schools.

This sample of 99 schools, which forms the selected group described herein, was attended by 28,723 children in school year 2007/2008, out of which approximately 18 percent were Roma children, i.e. 5,052 pupils. As per mainstream elementary schools, we monitored the anonymous data obtained from the pupils who had entered the schools three, five or eight years ago (i.e. in school years 2000/2001, 2003/2004 and 2005/2006). As per specialised schools, we processed the data concerning the children who at that time (i.e. at the end of school year 2007/2008) completed the third, fifth or eighth grade, respectively. We requested each school to provide us with the statistics for one or two classes in each grade.

During the research, we analyzed the data on a total of 8,462 pupils concerning their performance in Czech language and math as well as in the profile subjects throughout their school attendance, their average final report grades, grades evaluating the conduct or information related to their behavioural issues, total sum of missed classes and their departures to other schools.

The research confirmed the hypothesis on the existence of educational disparities between Roma and other children who attend the schools in the vicinity of socially excluded localities. Whereas in a majority of the population attending the monitored schools, approximately one girl out of twenty and one boy out of ten departs (fails or leaves for a specialised ES) from the original class which he/she entered in the first grade; in Roma children, nearly half of them abandon the original class. The situation is worse in boys than in girls. The chances of Roma pupils to complete elementary school with their first-grade peers equals nearly a half.

All schools in the sample showed a deterioration of school performance of Roma pupils on the senior level of elementary school, regardless of the percentage thereof. At this stage, the performance of Roma pupils is also affected by the fact that they often miss the classes. The absence rate of Roma children is nearly three times higher than in their non-Roma peers. Whereas on the junior level, the increasing absence rate may be affiliated to the living conditions

in the socially excluded environment and thus also to a higher sickness rate related therewith, the absence rate on a senior level indicates the relationship the children have towards the school and learning as such.

The decline in performance of Roma children at the senior level of the ES, which is reflected by an increased absence and worse grades, also contributes to the decrease of their chances to proceed to the secondary education. It is obvious that the pupils' performance is deteriorating just in the period when, on the contrary, they should improve it given the upcoming demands and chances to achieve a higher education. Albeit the majority of Roma pupils do have remarkably bigger problems with absence and learning compared to their peers; however, there is a minority of those who have a good chance to proceed to a high school or even a secondary school. The chances of these children need to be supported. At present, however, these children lack even any aspirations to make such a move.

If the ES management is correct in stating that the main cause of the decrease of pupils' attendance lies in the family background (motivation, unemployment, duties, etc.), then it is obvious that the elementary schools currently lack sufficient means to sanction and enforce the children's attendance, increase motivation of their parents and attract the children by more interesting classes or by applying individual care as to support the interest of children to learn and attend the school. In other words, the schools feel as if they do not receive enough support from the social and legislation system, which could open the space to the positive school and educational activities through sanction pressure. On the other hand, they do not see much of a necessity to change their own educational and internal practice.

On the junior level of the ES, Roma pupils perceive Czech language as a much worse of a nightmare than math; on the senior level, the average grades in both subjects become equal (the average grades in math are even worse than those achieved in the Czech language). There are significant differences between the mainstream ES classified according to the percentage of Roma children to the total number of pupils attending the school. In general, the higher the representation is of children from a socially excluded environment attending the school, the more demanding the teachers' work is in terms of the individual approach and intense building of school-child-family relationship.

We managed to document the effect the main integration instruments have on the school performance of children. Roma children who attended kindergartens are clearly more successful in their educational trajectories. The problem, however, is the fact that only a minority of Roma children are sent to kindergartens (approx. two thirds of them). The effect of preparation classes on an improvement of the educational chances is not as strong as in the case of the kindergartens and has a positive effect only at the beginning of the educational path. The Roma children who attended the preparation class become gradually equal to their Roma peers who did not attend it. Kindergartens or preparation classes (parents usually choose either one) are attended by approximately 48% of Roma children. Therefore, approximately 52% of Roma children are left without any pre-school preparation.

It is important for a child at an early school age, whether or not the school he/she attends employs an assistant to teachers. Whereas in the mainstream schools without an assistant, 6.5 out of 10 Roma children survive in the original class up to the 3rd grade, it is 7.5 pupils in the classes with an assistant. On the other hand, it could not be proved that the assistant would have any influence on reducing the absence rate.

If we compare the schools with the lowest percentage of Roma children (these are more or less the regular mainstream ES with the percentage of Roma children not exceeding 20 percent) with the other two categories of a medium (21 up to 50 percent of Roma children) and majority of Roma pupils (more than 50 percent), the chances of pupils from the latter two categories to

proceed to secondary schools and to apprenticeship centres completed by leaving exam seem to be much lower. Surprisingly, the worst educational chances were ascertained in Roma children attending the schools of medium category in terms of fails and exits to schools outside the mainstream education system.

In schools with a low percentage of Roma children, the Roma children meet with other children from various social levels and professional groups and thus obtain a better view of the social and professional structure of the Czech society. On the other hand, the schools with a higher percentage of Roma pupils accepted the status of the so-called Roma school. They create integration programmes and attract the professionals who want to deal with the issue.

The schools with a medium percentage of Roma pupils thus take over the handicaps of both poles. Here, Roma children do not study in a fully opened environment; on the other hand, these schools do not have such a scope of integration instruments available (perhaps due to a fear that they would attract more Roma pupils or receive the reputation of Roma school).

However, there is a great potential for strengthening the role of the school in overcoming the deficit in the desirable professional and educational mobility aspirations of Roma children. One full quarter of Roma pupils currently receive no learning support from their parents.

The role of the school in motivating children to continue studying and increasing their professional aspirations remains deep below the necessary level upon which they should be. Low attention given to the professional motivation and encouraging children seems to be one of the causes of containment of Roma children within the social exclusion of their highly unemployed parents.

The school currently does not help much to break through any social or professional horizon of life in the social exclusion, however good prerequisites it may undoubtedly have, although at least one fifth of Roma pupils show the performance capacity to manage this difficult transition.

The submitted project is the first representative study of the issues of the educational chances and trajectories of Roma pupils. The outputs may be used either as a proposal for the optimization policies and measures contributing to a decrease of the educational disparities described herein, or for the purpose of strengthening the knowledge base of the definition of integrating educational policy which brings along the greatest expectations on the part of both the professional and general public.

8.1 Comparison of educational chances

- ❑ The research proved the existence of unequal educational chances between Roma and non-Roma children attending the schools in the vicinity of socially excluded localities.
- ❑ In the monitored schools, an average of one girl out of twenty from the majority society departs (fails or leaves for a specialised ES) from the original class in which she started the first grade; in boys, it is one out of ten. The chances of Roma pupils to complete the ES with their peers equals approximately a half.
- ❑ The situation is worse in Roma boys than in Roma girls. The boys have even less than half the chance to complete the school attendance in their original class.
- ❑ Mainstream ES are attended by 72% of Roma children (it is 92% of other children), i.e. nearly a third of Roma children attend the schools outside the mainstream system.
- ❑ An average two out of ten Roma girls and 2.4 Roma boys leave the mainstream ES for non-mainstream schools.
- ❑ The schools performance is also affected by an increased absence rate, which is nearly triple in Roma children compared to their peers.
- ❑ The biggest issues in the educational paths of Roma children are specifically the commencement of the first grade and transition to the sixth grade (and even the third grade in some boys who do not manage the changes in curriculum too well).
- ❑ During the first five grades, the Czech language represents much worse a nightmare for Roma children than math, whereas the average performance in both subjects is equivalent during the last three grades (an average performance in math becomes even worse than in Czech).
- ❑ Roma children attending the schools with a medium percentage of Roma pupils (21 up to 50 percent) have a slightly lower chance to complete the school in the same class.
- ❑ If we compare the schools with the lowest percentage of Roma children (i.e. mostly the regular ES – up to 20% of Roma children) with the other two categories (the schools with 21 to 50% of Roma children and the schools with more than 50%), the transition of pupils from the latter two types of schools to secondary schools or apprenticeship centres completed by a departure exam seems to be much more difficult.
- ❑ The differences in terms of the size of the municipalities are insignificant; it is a uniform template applicable to both metropolitan schools and schools in smaller cities.

8.2 Efficiency of the individual integration instruments

- ❑ The role of an assistant has an influence on the school performance of children. Whereas in the mainstream schools without an assistant, 6.5 out of 10 Roma children survive in the original class up to the 3rd grade, it is 7.5 pupils in the classes with an assistant. On the other hand, it could not be proved that the assistant would have any influence on reducing the absence rate.
- ❑ Roma children who attended kindergartens are clearly more successful in their educational paths. However, only two fifths of Roma children are being sent there.

- ❑ The influence of prep-classes on the improvement of educational chances is not as strong as in the case of kindergartens and only at the beginning of the school; then, the children who passed the prep-class gradually perform to the level of their peers.
- ❑ Kindergartens or prep-classes are attended approx. by 48% of Roma children.

8.3 Opinions of school management

- ❑ The managers of the majority of schools argue that the schools do not receive sufficient support from the social and legislation system, which could use sanctions to open space for the positive educational and school activities.
- ❑ Most of the managers currently see a way to change the situation primarily in the exogenous factors applicable to their own facility, be it the sanctions and pressure on to the families by the social and other system, or strengthening the educational chances by more extensive pre-school preparation, allocation of more assistants, after-school activities, etc. The ideas involving some changes in the schools occur in a minority of cases.
- ❑ Most of the managers are not yet convinced of the importance of the instruments associated with supporting the professional motivation to learn, and anticipate a massive failure of Roma pupils in their path to qualification once they leave elementary school.

8.4 Educational needs and attitudes of children

- ❑ The social and economic situation of socially excluded families is likely to have the strongest impact on the educational and professional aspirations of their children and thus on a prospective ascending inter-generational mobility.
- ❑ The total image of the professional ambitions of Roma children shows that they usually do not cross (which does not mean that they could not do so under certain circumstances) the horizon of daily life experience of their parents. They usually resort to what their parents do in the household (cooking, repairs, etc.). Roma children do not show stronger ambitions to step out beyond the horizon of the life path of their parents; on the other hand, by profession, they strictly copy the very limited horizon of the excluded Roma localities.
- ❑ The analysis of the language background of Roma children requires special attention. The results suggest a significant occurrence of Roma as a secondary family language, which certainly does not facilitate the status of Roma girls and boys in schools where the classes are taught in Czech.
- ❑ There is a potential to enhance the role of school in overcoming the deficit of the desirable professional and educational mobility aspirations of Roma children. One quarter of Roma pupils currently receive no learning support from their parents and, at the same time, there is no system of support provided by schools.

8.5 Conclusions for further definition of the educational policy

- ❑ School management has no principal problem with identifying the children as Roma and refusal to do so is rather minor. It is also likely that this barrier will be overcome if the managers will see that identification is made in order to resolve the problems associated with equalising the educational chances of Roma children.
- ❑ If the educational policy should be configured so that it could help as much as possible to those who need it the most, it requires a specific approach to various types of schools.

This means, above all, an adequate financial support provided to the schools with a high percentage of socially disadvantaged children.