Attending the educational needs of Roma children

(Comparative analysis)

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1. INTRODUCTION

For a number of reasons Roma children constitute an especially vulnerable group among migrant and minority students in Europe. In accounting for their educational difficulties, it is important to consider the complexity of their problems, including the various components of low socio-economic status and cultural marginalization, constantly reinforced by ethnic prejudices and discrimination. Ideally, education could serve as a means to break out of this cycle and promote the social inclusion and upward mobility of Roma people. However, as evidence shows, schools notoriously fail to accomplish this mission. Such state of affairs points to the need of reforming methods and practices used in education. Pedagogic innovations, first of all, should aim at making Roma pupils feel comfortable at school and in the classroom, which is essential for their enhanced participation and performance.

The TERNO project seeks to address the educational needs of Roma children by providing pedagogical tools to teachers working with them. Ideas and methods considered useful in dealing with this target group are transferred in the form of a short 2-days training course to be tested by TERNO country teams (from Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain) and delegated professionals in June 2013. The material of the course is compiled with attention to the particular situations found in the countries and educational institutions participating in the TERNO project, and it also draws on existing teaching aid expertise concerning diversity management and ways of attending educational vulnerability.

1.1 Research objectives

The overall objective of the research was to provide useful information for the development of training methodology to be used in supplementary education of teachers dealing with Roma pupils. In addition, in doing research, participants had a chance to establish or reinforce contacts with the schools, school personnel, students, parents and possibly educational experts they intend to work with in later phases of the project.

The main idea was to map out shared problems and expectations regarding the education of Roma children, while also acknowledging differences in contexts, situations and exigencies. It was assumed that, notwithstanding distinct features of schools and school systems, the diversity of Roma communities living in Europe and the variety of problems Roma children and youth face in educational institutions, there are a number of commonly shared concerns to focus upon, which need to be addressed in all places and circumstances. Such problems range from the lack of material means and capacity of families to provide for the conditions of schooling of their children, to harmful or just ineffective educational policies and practices, negative attitude of peers, teachers and the broader social environment, and Roma children’s experiences of discrimination in school and everyday life. Alongside these factors, it was presumed that (disrespect for) cultural and linguistic differences may also play a role in hindering the educational career of Roma pupils.

Research conducted in the framework of the TERNO project aimed to identify and account for the problems these pupils cope with at school as well as the difficulties faced by their teachers and parents in trying to help them. Our intention was to uncover the main problems, obstacles and gaps concerning the education of Roma children in the selected schools, shedding light on the factors behind the comparatively low educational attainment of Roma students and their vulnerability to dropout. The issues tackled here partly concern the general policy frameworks and institutional settings, or the precarious situation of Roma minorities in general, that a project of the given dimensions cannot
possibly alter. Nevertheless, we deemed important to collect a wide range of information so as to contextualize the key issue, which is methodologies and attitudes adopted by teachers in our sample.

Research in each country took place on the site where participants intended to test the teachers’ training. This choice was based on the consideration that research experience could be directly utilized in developing the training methodology, as well as in organizing the pilot training courses, recruiting interested professionals, and setting up ‘reference points’ or specialized learning centers for disadvantaged Roma students, as envisioned in the project framework.

1.2  Rationale

It has been widely acknowledged that ethnicity – in interplay with social, economic, cultural, gender and other factors – shapes distinctions in the everyday working of schools. The underlying dynamic leading to such effects partly originates in the false impression that certain social groups have very different schooling demands, abilities and ambitions than others; the fact that we all seek happiness and fulfillment and strive to get along in the same world is easily rendered to oblivion by the overstressing of differences. As a matter of fact, the presumption of differences easily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, as differential treatment tends to produce actual differences in educational performance just like in any other areas of life. Yet, in confounding causes with effects, differential treatment normally gains justification in the different educational performance of children, conducting to departing advancements. At an institutional level, the imposition of distinction, coupled with other structural and social factors – contra-selection of the educational personnel, infrastructural deterioration of schools where a high rate of students come from underprivileged social groups, attempts of middle-class parents to enroll their children in better schools (the so-called ‘white flight’) – becomes the basis of educational segregation, which is the most fundamental ill determining the future of vulnerable groups marginalized in the school system, like Roma children.

The main starting point of the TERNO Project was that intercultural education is not as widespread as it should be in schools with a significant Roma presence. The research confirmed this presumption: the wish to learn more about this kind of methodology was expressed by several teachers in the sample. Given that, on demand, the intercultural approach – i.e. a kind of diversity management sensitive to cultural issues – constitutes the core of teachers’ training, in an attempt to get to the core of teachers’ feelings of helplessness or discomfort, the present study focuses on culturally influenced understandings regarding the educational ambitions, performance and school behavior of Roma students.

1.3  Research design and applied methods

The different aspects of the education of Roma children were investigated by means of field research conducted from February to May 2013. Additional information regarding national educational systems and policies and the situation of Roma minorities in the participating countries was collected in the course of a preliminary desk research so as to enable the interpretation of findings.

The research was organized into several stages and steps. Lists of questions, questionnaires, templates and codebooks aided participants in obtaining and processing data (see in appendix). The final output of country teams consisted of national reports structured into short sections responding to particular queries. It was the task of the Hungarian team to synthesize national reports and provide a comparative analysis of country experiences in the form of needs assessment presented in a
conceptual framework upholding the values of anti-discrimination and equal opportunities. This comparative analysis served as the basis for the development of the teachers’ training methodology.

The first phase consisting of desk research was instrumental in mapping the social and policy background in each country, with particular attention to local features considering the schools involved in the research. Data was collected on the living conditions of the Roma minority and other factors influencing their educational opportunities. Thus the main characteristics of inter-ethnic relations, shaped by historical and ideological factors, the social status of Roma people and their typical ways of living and working were overviewed, alongside with the general traits of the educational system and the place and treatment of Roma pupils within it. Information gathered during this phase was supposed to contextualize later findings and support the interpretation of the specific issues encountered during field research.

During the second phase, participants conducted field research. Methodological tools to accomplish this task included a list of questions on the research site, a teachers’ questionnaire, and templates for interviews and focus group discussions. Data collected by these methods represent the main source of analyzing basic needs and local features/priorities concerning the education of Roma children. In particular, teachers’ questionnaires serve the understanding of teaching methods used in the schools as well as reveal (the teachers’ perceptions regarding) interactions between teachers and pupils and among peers, relationship with the parents, etc. Interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with the main actors directly determining the educational experiences of Roma pupils, i.e. school principals and representatives of school authorities, teachers, parents, educational experts, representatives of organizations providing educational services to Roma pupils and Roma pupils themselves. These individual and collective interviews, consisting of reflections on local educational practices from different perspectives, proved highly valuable in identifying incidental gaps and ideas of how to improve teaching methodologies.

As for the selection of research sites and samples, a number of issues had to be considered concerning later phases of the TERNO project. Such questions included the following: Is the learning center planned to function as part of a particular school, or operate as a totally independent institution? How many schools and teachers are to be involved in it? If just one school and (part of) its staff, will there be a sufficient number of children to ensure adequate functioning? If many schools, what would be the ideal limitation of research scope to suit the interests and capacities of the participant? What determines the choice of partners by the participants: do they prefer to involve problematic schools, schools open to innovation, schools they have already worked with, etc.? While these dilemmas led to slightly diverging solutions in the participating countries, one decision was commonly shared: research was everywhere conducted in the school or schools to be involved in later phases of the project.

The purpose of the background research was to provide a general idea regarding the situation of Roma in respective countries and the localities of research/project implementation. (Appendix 1)

Field research constituting the crucial part of our investigation started with collection of information on the selected research site, i.e. the locality of the school(s) where actual research would take place. Data collection will follow the same design as in desk research. (Appendix 2)

The most essential information for our project, revealing how professionals approach Roma students and problems encountered in teaching them – i.e. the use of educational methods and practices,
personal experiences, opinions and attitudes – was collected orally. The methods used for this purpose were interviews and focus group discussions (group interviews) conducted with the key actors involved in the education of Roma children, and the subjects of education, i.e. Roma children themselves. Categories of interviewees included:

A) School principals/representatives of local school authority (1-2 individual interviews per country)
B) Teachers of Roma students (1 focus group with 6-8 participants or 3 individual interviews per country)
C) Parents of Roma students (1 focus group with 6-8 participants per country)
D) optional: Roma pupils (and their peers) (1 focus group with 6-8 participants per country)
E) optional: Educational experts/representatives of organizations providing educational services to Roma children (1-2 individual interviews per country)

Individual interviews were conducted with school principals or representatives of school authorities and experts or representatives of organizations providing educational services to Roma children. Teachers of Roma students either participated in focus group conversations, or were interviewed individually. Parents, just like Roma students, were also interviewed in group. Whether to interview Roma students was up to country teams to decide.

Interviews and focus group discussions were semi-structured: instead of a limited set of questions, only a framework of themes was provided. The common thread of interviews, i.e. the key questions asked from each category of respondents, was uniform across all country samples, with some similarities among different categories of respondents as well to ease comparison. At the same time, there was room left to inquiries about specific issues characterizing national research contexts.

The common thread of interviews and focus group discussions related to the obstacles of school attendance and the reasons of low school achievement and dropout among Roma students. Respondents were presented with a list of factors that may affect the school career of Roma students, from which they had to choose the 3 items considered the most/least important in this respect (Appendix 3).

3 main aspects of the key issue – i.e. low educational outcome of Roma students – were discussed in every interview and focus group discussion, although in somewhat different form, depending on the position and perspective of respondents:

- The treatment Roma children receive in the school
- Expectations and visions of an ideal school
- Ideas about the necessary steps to be made to approach this ideal

In addition, interview drafts were provided including particular issues addressed depending on the category of respondents (Appendices 6/A-E). School principals were also asked to fill 'school datasheets’, and teacher interviews included a ‘teachers’ questionnaire’ (Appendices 4 and 5).

The processing of recorded data and its presentation in a condensed and uniform manner was aided by common templates in the form of ’info-sheets’. (Appendices 7/A-E)
2. SYNTHESIS OF COUNTRY EXPERIENCES (DESK RESEARCH)

The aim of this comparative study is to present a critical and problem-centered account of issues related to the education of Roma children, as uncovered by country researchers of the Terno project. Since the analysis is supposed to serve a common methodology in providing assistance to teachers, the accent lies on shared experiences and common aspects of the school environment and the teaching process, to be addressed in the course material, while also indicating the peculiarities of individual cases that might encourage the inclusion of alternative exercises.

The circumstances in and around schools greatly determine the resources and opportunities available to school management and staff, influencing the capacities, attitude and scope of action of teachers and students alike. The personal observations and subjective views of responsible actors become comprehensible when viewed against the backdrop of the 'objective' situation in the participating countries and selected localities, uncovered in the course of desk research. A summary of the background situations is provided in the first part of this chapter dealing with ethnic relations and the characteristics of the Roma populations, education policies targeting the Roma, and the schools and localities selected for research.

Besides variation across countries, comparisons involve other dimensions as well, instrumental in revealing significant differences in perspective among the various groups of actors. This will be ventured in the second part of the chapter discussing the needs of students and the tasks and challenges faced by their teachers, also accounting for the kind of help they are missing. Thus the position of school establishments (articulated in interviews with teachers and school principals) is contrasted with the point of view of the target group of educational policies and measures specifically concerned in our project (i.e. the opinions expressed by Roma students and parents). The involvement of a third group of interviewees representing “informed outsiders” (experts and representatives of organizations engaged in educational matters) is helpful in clarifying important aspects of the particular educational contexts, contributing to the interpretation of findings.

In approaching the central problem – barriers to the education of Roma children – from different angles, our purpose is more than revealing conflicting viewpoints; we also want to highlight the importance of the position of the speaker and all that involves in terms of perceptions, responsibilities and agency. The hypothesis of the present study is that disaccordances between interpretations arise from differences that are both social and cultural, and always related to power. However, culture as an explanatory framework tends to take precedence over the other two types of factors, because it is in the realm of culture that values referring to social conditions and power relations become crystallized and articulated. Thus opinions regarding the schooling and education of Roma children are underpinned by certain cultural understandings on both sides, i.e. on the part of schools and education systems as well as on the part of Roma families and communities. In the analysis of field research findings we focus on tendencies and biases characterizing such approaches in order to delineate an interpretative field within which meanings can be negotiated. Opening up a ground of mutual
exchange may be of great help in dissolving stereotypes, creating a better school environment, facilitating the communication between schools and Roma families, and improving the learning motivation and abilities of Roma children – all of which objectives are essential components of our envisaged teachers’ training course.

2.1 Ethnic relations and the characteristics of Roma populations

Roma represents the largest and also the most disadvantaged ethnic minority in Europe, totaling a population of about 10 million. The vast majority of Roma live in deep poverty, and they are the most discriminated against group among European ethnic minorities.\(^1\) Despite concentrated efforts, such as the Decade of Roma Integration (2005-2015)\(^2\), their situation has not improved much, and under the present crisis the social exclusion of Roma may even intensify. Roma people face severe unemployment basically everywhere, which is partly due to their deficient education. The waste of human potential is especially painful considering that Roma are the youngest and most dynamically developing European population.

Although declared a “a true European minority” by a Council of Europe Resolution in 1993 and despite the Racial Equality Directive that was enacted in 2000 by the European Community mainly as a response to the human rights violations and deteriorating socio-economic conditions of Roma, the legal and social protection of this diasporic minority has not been achieved in any European states. The grievances suffered by Roma can be best conceptualized in terms of misrecognition, entailing unequal treatment and discrimination, disrespect of their rights and interests and misrepresentation of Roma culture and identity.

The size of Roma populations varies in the countries involved in the TERNO research (the estimated number of Roma is 265,000 in Greece, 140,000 in Italy, 800,000–1,000,000 in Spain and 2,000,000 in Romania) and shows significant diversity in terms of immigration history and level of accommodation. In Greece, Italy and Spain, long established and economically more or less integrated Roma communities coexist with recent immigrants (mostly coming from Romania, Bulgaria and ex-Yugoslavia) many of whom live under substandard circumstances and are considered pariahs even by more successful members of their own ethnic group. As for Romania, apart from a few legendary rich and powerful Roma families, the situation of the vast majority of Roma is extremely bad, which is why many of them try their luck by emigrating to the West.

2.1.1 Legal status

Roma minorities have been present in European countries for several centuries. Yet, whatever the established frames of recognition, they tend to remain excluded, deprived of individual as well as collective minority rights. While equality before the law and anti-discrimination are essential constitutional provisions everywhere, reinforced by specific legislations, they are not successfully enforced in the case of Roma.

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2. The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 is an international program for the social integration of Roma in Europe, initiated by the Open Society Institute and the World Bank, and supported by the European Commission.
Many Roma are not protected by citizenship rights. This can be because citizenship has not been granted to them, as is the case with new immigrants in general, and specifically where a 'ius sanguinis' logic determines citizenship, like in Italy. However, in Greece even long established Roma could not obtain citizenship at all before the 1970. Another reason of being unprotected is the lack of essential personal documents, like in Romania, completely excluding Roma from society and making them virtually invisible. Illegal immigrants and Roma without residence permit utterly fall out of the system – which is why they are called 'hidden persons' and 'irregular Roma' in Italy.

In addition, as against the norms of minority rights protection in international law, Roma culture, identity and language are not protected basically anywhere, contributing to the vulnerability and lack of social respect of this ethnic group. Thus Roma are not officially recognized as a minority in Spain (where they represent the largest minority group), Italy and Greece, while their formal recognition in Romania has not contributed much to the promotion of their conditions as it was modeled according to the demands of the much more powerful Hungarian minority, the situation and ambitions of which are very different. Patterns of residency, namely that Roma are usually spread all across the country, not confined to specific regions, disfavors their recognition, often tied to the principle of territoriality, like in Italy. In Greece, where ethnic difference is interpreted in terms of religious distinction, with the exception to the 'Muslims' in western Thrace, including some Roma, most Roma (adopting Greek Orthodoxy) are not recognized.

Thus Roma are the subject of unequal treatment in many ways, keeping most of them in a socially deprived condition. Their lack of access to quality education and labor market opportunities – resulting from discrimination – should be seen not only as social problems but as the infringement of their basic rights.

2.1.2 Social conditions

Roma populations are spread all over the territory of these countries, with concentrations in and around big cities and in certain regions. Urbanization and sedentarization represent two important tendencies of the past decades, provoked by the modernization of societies that ultimately reach the outcaste groups, too. Hence, these processes should be accounted for as strategies of accommodation and as such welcomed by host societies. Still, Roma are not effectively supported or even frustrated in their attempts of social integration and upward mobility.

The most deprived Roma groups inhabit segregated, areas, sometimes mingled with other ethnic groups. Thus there are urban ghettos and isolated Roma colonies in remote parts of the countryside in Romania, and huge, so-called temporary – but effectively permanent – camps from Athens to Turin, many of them unauthorized, keeping Roma in a transient and insecure state. These are extremely deprived localities, lacking in basic infrastructure, where people live overcrowded, exposed to infections and the harassment by authorities that, instead of assuming their legal duties in providing appropriate accommodation, threaten camp dwellers of unlawful eviction. Life in these devastated neighborhoods, isolated from society and neglected by the state, is harsh (life expectancy is 10-30 years less compared with the rest of society) and conflict-laden, consisting mainly in a struggle for survival.

The seclusion of Roma is occasionally seen as a means of self-protection. To be sure, abandonment by the larger society may favor the development of informal networks of mutual help. At the same time,
one should not forget that deprivation and self-enclosure in ghettos tend to corrupt human relationships and community feelings, provoking frequent conflicts and even violence. The idea that Roma prefer being among themselves and do not wish to participate in social life is a dangerous half-truth justifying the exclusion of these people from education, the labor market and public life including culture and politics.

Even among Roma who have achieved middle class status relatively few live integrated into the majority population, and those who do tend to disappear: the price of integration is usually assimilation, whereby Roma identity gets lost. When, in turn, the Roma community persists even in such circumstances – like in Agia Varvara, a district of Athens – economic stability, decent jobs and housing, or the assumption of majority values, do not warrant social respect or provide protection against unequal treatment.

Unemployment is conspicuously high among Roma everywhere. As opposed to the traditional notion that Roma refuse working, they actually have to invest extra energies into maintaining an existence from illegal or semi-legal jobs, and apply for welfare if available. The traditional Roma professions are mostly outdated and rarely practiced today. The typical Roma occupations of our days – including occasional jobs, seasonal agricultural work, street selling, trade, collection and resale of metals and scrap materials, begging – are neither dependent on education, nor represent stable jobs providing social security. Instead, this selection reflects a state of social exclusion and a drive to occupy economic niches that are available in such a situation. However, even these work opportunities are dwindling as small Roma entrepreneurs are driven out from the market by competition as well as authorities demanding their license that is often missing.

Adaptability can certainly be appreciated as an outstanding trait of Roma way of life or 'culture'. Nevertheless, it is important to see that this quality, again, breeds on confined circumstances, determined by the works of discrimination. It should also be acknowledged that the activities undertaken by Roma can produce one third or one fourth of the average income, and so are enough only for maintaining a very low subsistence level. With the change of opportunity structures, mainly by ensuring access to quality education, Roma would certainly move on choosing other professions ensuring more stability and prestige. However, as long as discrimination and social exclusion prevails, illiteracy is high and Roma often do not have a good command of the language of the host society, their life strategies will be determined by severely restricted opportunities.

In sum, whether members of long-established communities or new immigrants, Roma remain at the periphery of societies, which is the aggregate result of intertwining factors: the combination of disadvantages in employment, education, and housing. The lack of resources (material means as well as social capital), in turn, inhibits Roma from improving their situation, and makes them excessively dependent on policy interventions.

2.1.3 Policies

Roma are present in the political and public agenda with different intensity, having the highest profile in Italy and the lowest in Spain and Greece from among the countries discussed here. Devoid of ethnocultural recognition, Roma at best are seen as a 'vulnerable group' to be addressed by social policies, and at worst as anti-social people, inclined to deviance and criminality, that should be strictly policed. Despite the notoriety of problems faced by Roma, measures conceived and implemented to improve their situation are mostly ad hoc in character, responding to emergency issues. Strategic thinking
appeared on the scene late, and not always out of genuine considerations: in Romania the adoption of a Roma program was a precondition of EU accession, and the availability of EU funds represent a determining factor everywhere. What is worse, even when implemented, medium and long-term programs have often proved to be ineffective and short-lived. Among the reasons weak coordination and bureaucratic sluggishness, the absence of legal guarantees, non-involvement of Roma, and lack of information, transparency and accountability are prominent.

As for their content, policies traditionally aimed at eliminating extreme poverty through improvements in housing and living conditions, healthcare and social services. Lately, social inclusion is sought to be enhanced by programs in education and employment and complex regional developments as well, reflecting the principles of anti-discrimination. The conditions of practicing citizenship rights has become a focal issue in Spain and in Romania, where a program started to issue ID documents to Roma. Questions of culture and identity are, however, rarely discussed. One exception is Italy where a debate has started regarding the specific criteria for the effective protection of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities as a national minority. It is also in Italy where human rights education was undertaken dissolve prejudices and aversion against Roma.

2.1 4 Attitudes

Negative feelings against Roma are widespread all over Europe. Curiously, Roma are the most refused and despised ethnic minority. However, anti-Roma hostility is not of the same intensity and taking distinct forms in the studied countries. What is commonly shared by Roma populations is being targeted by negative stereotypes and prejudice, which are more or less the same everywhere: they are regarded as idle people who do not want to work, who make a living as welfare-parasites, thieves and criminals, are dirty and sloppy spreading infections. In assuming that they cannot/do not want to improve their conditions, Roma are held responsible for their own plight. As a result, Roma seldom have any relations with the majority society beyond certain economic transactions and formal contacts in institutions, like offices and schools.

Differences among countries with respect to the levels and manifestations of anti-Roma aversion can be explained by the immigration history and relative proportion of the Roma minority, on the one hand, and the ideological outlook characterizing the host society, on the other. Thus in Greece, having lived in the country for many centuries, Roma in general are not viewed as a distinct ethnic group (with the exception of the ‘Muslims’ in Western Thrace) but as part of the Greek Orthodox nation. As a consequence, they are not exposed to violence even in times of crisis. However, especially those living in deprived conditions, are nevertheless harassed by authorities and stigmatized by the population, leading to their marginalization from local communities. Though proving highly tolerant with respect to differences in nationality, religion or race, Spaniards nevertheless widely share negative perceptions about Roma, constituting a practical barrier to their entry to the labor market. The adoption of generalizing stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes by the population and the authorities is notorious in Italy, too, showing the clear purpose to forbid access of Roma to goods and services. In Romania ethnic hatred also takes explicit forms, like mob violence, besides the regular manifestations of hostility.

Stereotypes are instrumental in maintaining a social distance from Roma, showing in widespread discrimination, atrocities and practices of residential and educational segregation. In a functionalist perspective, blaming the victim type of notions and scapegoating mechanisms justify the exclusion of
Roma from basic services and employment, and reinforce community ties of the in-group (i.e. the majority society).

Stuck in ghettos or camps, often devoid of ID documents, work and residence permit, these people actually have no alternatives. They do not live the way they do out of their own choice but because there appears to be no way out of their confined circumstances. Still, Roma are often blamed for their situation by reference to their cultural backwardness. Specifically, the lack of permanent residence contributes to maintaining the generalizing image of Roma as a pre-modern nomadic people. Hence, a fate determined by social conditions becomes interpreted as a chosen lifestyle, a manifestation of cultural traits that are found incompatible with majority social norms – while it is actually the responsibility of majority societies that the situation of Roma is so ‘backward’.

Discrimination and prejudices go hand in hand. Discriminatory practices mirror and, so to speak, implement negative stereotypes, whereby these stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies. Roma are seen as lazy, and so they are barred from work and education opportunities. As a result, they stay without employment and educational qualifications. But is this enough to make them give up on trying to obtain decent employment or study further?

### 2.2 Education policies targeting the Roma

The main role of education is generally conceived of as a means of upward mobility and social inclusion. Yet, the reality is different for the vast majority of Roma, in whose life the school represents the first site where they face discrimination and prejudice, so that their disadvantages and marginalization only get reinforced as they struggle themselves through the education system.

Notwithstanding differences in the structure of the education system in the countries participating in the present study, compulsory education lasts for 10 years everywhere, from the age of 5 or 6 to 15 or 16. Since ethnic data is usually not collected in these countries at a national level, there are no precise statistics on the school attendance and educational attainment of Roma pupils; only sporadic data collected by local agencies or estimated by researchers are available. On such basis, it can nevertheless be taken for granted that Roma are overrepresented in public institutions, attending facilities located near their place of residence (typically in poor neighborhoods), as their families cannot afford private schools. (Apparently, churches are not very keen on providing for the education of Roma children). Given selectivity produced by social status, residential patterns, ethnic prejudices and the intrinsic mechanisms of education systems, Roma children more often than not study in a segregated environment, though policies have been launched to stop this phenomenon in the interest of all.

#### 2.2.1 Problems

The fundamental educational problems of Roma are poor participation (caused by language difficulties and the inability of educational institutions to accommodate needs arising from lifestyle characteristics, and manifested in late or no enrolment, absenteeism and dropout) and low educational attainment (involving illiteracy, bad grades and insufficient skills). These problems are all intertwined, blocking the perspectives of Roma concerning further studying and hindering their opportunities to profit from the educational system. Language incompatibility and distinct cultural habits exacerbate the difficulties of Roma children, also by exposing them to prejudices on account of such distinctive
features. An important negative outcome of this situation is educational segregation that is perversely seen sometimes as a useful tool of solving problems.

To illustrate general concerns and country distinctions with some data:

In **Greece**, less than 40% of Roma children participate in primary education, and more than 80% of adult Roma are illiterate. These problems are seen to come from non-attendance, connected with the ignorance of the Greek language, delayed enrolments, and high rates of absenteeism and dropping out due to the frequent movement of families in search for work. Roma parents are said to discourage their children from going to school so that they can help them with work and home duties. Very high dropout rate is explained partly by early marriage: 58% of the Greek Roma gets married before the age of 19. Ethnic prejudice also has an alienating effect: racism on the part of classmates and their parents is a widespread experience and, even though they attend the same school, Roma and non-Roma children seldom mix. Lack of official documentation like proof of vaccination constitutes a further obstacle. All these problems add up to result in poor educational outcome: only 17.7% of the Roma population has finished primary school, while secondary and tertiary education has practically no role in the life of Roma.

Unattendance is widespread in **Italy**, too, where 80% of Roma children and young adults attend school irregularly, and more than 10% of those aged 7-15 are not enrolled in any institutions. Schools in neighborhoods with many immigrants are unprepared to receive a large share of foreign pupils, and the teachers are left without suitable interpretation tools for some situations, while their heavy workload prevents them from carefully exploring each "micro-world” that pupils bear along as their own cultural store. Schools complain about Roma parents’ seemingly unconcerned attitude, their neglect to follow their children’s school path, which they justify as a cultural feature (with reference to nomadism). At the same time, the fact that Roma parents shy away from school can be explained by their feelings of discomfort, caused by the experience of ethnic prejudice, which is manifested also in their concern with their children’s safety at school. Based on negative experiences, many Roma parents do not see school as an educational environment and thus hardly participate in their children’s daily school life. Thus it appears that there is failed acknowledgment on both sides, which determines the evaluation of the performance of Roma children, too: the skills required and appreciated by their parents do not match with the skills expected from them in the school. As a result, the educational advancement of Roma is seriously frustrated: secondary education or a professional course have been completed only by 15% of them, while hardly any Roma students make it to higher level education.

By contrast, school attendance among the Roma population has significantly improved in **Romania**, though only at the level of primary education. Such positive tendencies were encouraged by the imminent EU accession, and have somewhat faltered since, so poor participation in education and early abandonment of school still constitute severe problems. The main problem in Romania is segregation with and its far-reaching consequences. Thus infrastructural conditions at facilities attended by Roma are fast deteriorating, especially in rural areas, and the professional standard of the staff is usually very low at these schools, employing out-dated teaching materials and methods of instruction. Roma families, many of which are disorganized, with parents lacking education, often unemployed and struggling with daily survival problems, are unable to make up for these deficiencies. On the contrary, they cannot even provide their children with proper clothes and school supplies, or pay them for the transport to school, while requiring their support at home, which takes time away from studying. An additional problem is seen to rely in the use of Romani language that fails to provide access to universal culture and therefore does not support school advancement.
Like in Romania, school attendance has greatly improved in **Spain** as well, where during the past two decades there has been an almost total enrolment of Roma children in compulsory education, 90% beginning school at the same age as their non-Roma fellows. As a result, illiteracy is almost non-existent among Roma under 25 or 30 years of age. However, by the end of primary school differences in age and grade tend to increase. Transition to the cycle of compulsory secondary education remains an insurmountable barrier, and when it comes to higher education, the presence of Roma dwindles to 1%. High school dropout in the compulsory period of education appears as one of the most important challenges. Dropout is seen as to be caused mainly by a high level of absenteeism: irregular school attendance among Roma reaches 45%, as compared with 3.8% in case of non-Roma, and 80% of those commencing school leave it before finishing the last course. As in other participating countries, child labor, difficulties caused by the parents’ work and a general disinterest of both children and parents in school are underlined as the immediate reasons of the problem. Other reasons mentioned in connection with dropout are also comparable to what is reported from the other countries discussed here. Thus dropout is attributed to a lack of motivation, absence of habits to work and study and relationship difficulties between the family and the school. As a result, Roma students struggle with curricular gaps and they are increasingly unable to catch up with the others. The ”culture shock” is also mentioned as a factor hindering the educational integration of Roma, which may refer to problems similar in nature than in other participating countries, namely the development of mutual distrust and aversion between the school and the Roma population. This kind of distrust arises from (and feeds into) experiences of clashes and conflicts, which – putting cultural differences aside – make unequal power relations and hierarchies manifest. As opposed to simplifying problems by references to differences in linguistic and cultural codes, or to parents’ inclination to send or not to send their children to school, the Spanish research team emphasizes the specific context of education. According to this approach, children are offered ”mixed messages”: they are supposed to be granted ”equal opportunities” in a very hierarchical and monocultural context represented by the mainstream educational approach that generates exclusion and marginalization. On the one hand, they are encouraged to integrate into the education system, while on the other hand they experience the devaluation of their contributions, marginalization of their assets and exclusion of their right to quality education

Roma culture, based on orality rather than literacy and involving changes of place of residence, and the attitudes of Roma families, questioning the value of education and imploring early marriage and contribution to family duties and income by teenage children are notoriously blamed for underperformance and early school leaving. However, it should be seen that what is apparently ”cultural” (and, hence, eternal or at least not tied to the here and now) may, to a great extent, be shaped by actual circumstances determined by outward conditions. Thus frequent movements entailing the change of schools, often in the midst of the school year, which inhibits the educational career of many children, are often necessitated by the search for work by the parents, or compelled by authorities evacuating camps. The early passing into adulthood is not so much a reason but an effect of poor education. If girls and boys are concerned differently and show dissimilar patterns of education career (some data, for instance those from Spain, indicate that Roma girls are less likely to enroll but also have lower rates of early exit), this certainly has to do with cultural norms regarding gender roles, which, however, are likely to be transformed when new opportunities arise in education. Also, there is vast evidence regarding the correlation between the availability of quality education and delay in childbirth, involving the drop of the number of children – irrespective of the ethno-cultural background.
The interrelationship between economic and social conditions, cultural characteristics and choices in everyday life is evidenced by some positive developments, too. Thus a change in parents’ attitudes is reported from Spain and Greece. Parents are seen to increasingly value education, participate in school-related activities and monitor their children’s advancement, which is attributed to the decline of traditional Roma occupations, or the growing autonomy and activism of Roma communities and organizations promoting the concept of education. Apparently, sooner or later, against all odds and despite social pressures responsible for their disadvantages, social exclusion and marginalization, modernization reaches the Roma, too.

The accessibility and value of education for Roma is determined by a complex set of factors. Yet, when it comes to actual educational opportunities and assets, the heart of the matter is the failure of the education system in two ways. First, educational services fail to respond to different needs. These needs arise from social status (poverty), family history (like immigration and its consequences), the cultural background (concerning existing resources or the dominant interpretations of social values) and the personal characteristics of children, while the discriminating attitude of society and school may represent further factors in determining basic needs. Second, the education system fails to ensure equal treatment to Roma students (as well as others belonging to disadvantaged memories), which is manifested in the use of alternative (sometimes reduced) curricula, distinct means of disciplining, explicitly segregating practices or the distancing attitude adopted towards Roma children and parents. As a result, Roma children are not provided with viable opportunities in terms of social advancement through education. On the contrary, the unpreparedness of teachers, racist behavior on the part of the school staff as well as classmates and their parents are reported from all participating countries, leading to the separation of Roma students, low pedagogic expectations regarding their performance, and factually poor educational outcomes.

2.2.2 Interventions

Goals and norms set by the European Union play a central role in the development of education policies targeting the Roma. The early programs aimed at increased enrolment and attendance, which was followed by efforts towards integration. Most lately, early education and adult learning have been given more emphasis in the spirit of life-long learning. Attention to differences in students’ background have been crosscutting educational initiatives, either leading to the separation of Roma students in poor quality facilities and classes, or to their inclusion based on a multiculturalist or interculturalist agenda.

The need to increase the enrolment rate of all Roma pupils, especially at secondary level and with respect to girls, was recognized in all the countries. Measures improving the access of Roma to school were implemented in Romania during the pre-accession period. Reflecting the dual logic of the Romanian system, these measures emphasized socio-economic needs as well as cultural characteristics. Though acknowledging their educational problems, Italy has never introduced any specific policies facilitating the education of Roma and Sinti children. Such policies were implemented, however, in Greece in the late 1990s, but with little avail: due to bureaucratic impediments and the mismanagement of funds, as well as conceptual mistakes, the program basically failed. At the same time, the relaxation of the formal criteria for the registration of Roma children in Greek schools is noteworthy for reflecting some flexibility on the part of authorities. The ”moving school” program, in turn, where volunteer teachers visit camps is a good example of flexibility in service provision.
In all the studied countries the idea that Roma have special needs and therefore require a different kind of education was raised and experimented with at some point. This specific ethnocentric interpretation of cultural characteristics and educational contents was conducive to the special treatment of Roma, and thus to the consolidation of segregated forms of education. Thus in Italy special classes called 'Lacio Drom' operated from the mid-sixties to the eighties, having their own organization and didactic program, based on the assumption that Roma children had cognitive deficits due to their culture. In 1986, the right of Roma and Sinti children to education, regardless of their legal status, was restated on new grounds, emphasizing integration, equal opportunities and mutual responsibility: children have a duty to attend school and schools are responsible to provide education that respects cultural differences. In Spain special schools designed for children with disabilities became catch-all institutions receiving all students rejected by the education system, including Roma children. These schools integrated problematic students, while segregating them from all the others, diluted the regular curriculum, adopted a learning program that was inattentive to individual differences, and thus were incapable of improving students’ functional skills. The recognition of the ills of segregation and marginalization triggered a movement for standardization in the 1980s. In Greece it was not until the new millennium that it was acknowledged that Roma needed the same kind of education as anyone else: enrolment in Greek schools, learning the Greek language and obtaining professional skills. After trying special education first, it was only in 2002 when a program aiming at the integration of Roma children at school by securing them equal opportunities and enhancing social cohesion was launched.

Romania is a special case, since it combines two general frames in addressing the educational problems of Roma, both resulting in segregation. One of these prescribes the introduction of policies regarding 'the access to education of disadvantaged groups'. Devoid of a strong predicament of integration, this approach separates Roma students for practical reasons, i.e. to attend their special needs. The other tendency advocates 'policies for minorities' following a classical language and culture oriented model of minority politics that justifies special treatment by reference to the need to protect unique cultural characteristics. The problem with this perspective is that, based on the needs and demands of the Hungarian minority, it has little to do with the specific educational problems and challenges faced by Roma children. In addition, as Roma had no opportunity to speak for themselves, there was nothing to prevent educational guidelines from reflecting the soft racist attitudes held by the majority population, articulated in the form of a 'well intentioned proposal' to 'save' the Roma. Thus while appearing as positive and minority-friendly, both paradigms are based on paternalistic and even xenophobic notions regarding the emancipation of Roma, pushing for their separation from the majority. As a result, Roma children have been forced into ghetto-like schools or classes, with poor facilities and unqualified teachers.

The integrationist multicultural or intercultural strand in education policies has an uneven presence in the countries under investigation and, quite importantly, does not seem to have a strong impact on the education of Roma minorities even where it has been introduced. Receptivity, in the first place, depends on the countries’ general attitude towards minorities. Thus in Greece, where a distinguished role of the educational system consists in the formation of a strong national and religious identity, cultural and religious differences have never been given importance. Although inter- and multicultural educational programs have been introduced in Romania during the past decade, these were rather marginal and had little effect on the Roma. Counties leaving larger terrain to minority politics, like Spain or Italy, acknowledge more readily the significance of interculturalist education. Thus efforts are being made in Spain to develop intercultural contents in educational programs and improve the knowledge of different cultures in general and specifically with respect to Roma. Interculturalism seems to have the greatest sway in Italy, where the term first appeared in official programs already in
1979. Applied at first to lower secondary education, the approach was then extended to primary schools, progressively involving kindergartens and upper secondary schools as well. However, guidelines dedicated to the inclusion of foreign students by means of creating interculture are not followed systematically and seem to be ineffective with regard of Roma and Sinti.

Insufficient implementation of programs has been reported from all participating countries. Problems include bureaucratic hindrances, the lack of continuity and the misuse of funds (Greece), structural and methodological deficiencies (Italy), or misdirection of programs due to the failure of consulting Roma representatives or existing research data (Romania). An important aspect of educational policies targeting Roma is that they are elaborated without the involvement of the concerned minority group. In Romania the Roma population was not even consulted when working out the guidelines of education on the grounds minority politics, a paradigm that in theory supports the pursuit of autonomy. Although some level of collaboration with NGOs exist in Spain and Italy, this occurs mostly on a project basis, while Roma remain excluded from permanent consultative and decision making bodies. Cooperation appears to be more viable at local level. For instance, the cooperation of Roma associations and local governments in Spain provide a fundamental framework in implementing education policies. In particular, they had a successful program involving mediators acting as a communication link between student centers and Roma families to combat dropout.

In sum, the needs of Roma students are not addressed properly by the school systems in the countries concerned in this project. Education policies targeting Roma either do not exist at all or are not systematically implemented. Innovations, to a large extent, depend on the availability of EU funds in the form of currently open tenders, on the one hand, and the personal commitment of the teacher or school master, on the other. In consequence, Roma receive unequal treatment even in case of formal equality and integrative education. Part of the problem is the lack of a positive acknowledgement of cultural identity, while, paradoxically, cultural differences are, at the same time, overemphasized as a source of problems. In this respect, it is highly important that Roma are not invested with minority rights. This means they do not receive due respect as a group, nor have opportunities to protect themselves and promote their interests. This is why Roma are more exposed to xenophobia and racism than other marginalized ethnic groups, surrounding them with a wall – sometimes visible, sometimes invisible – in educational institutions.

### 2.2.3 Discourses

Public opinion about the education of Roma as reflected by, principally, the media is full of denunciations and misapprehensions. In the general perception, Roma do not like to go to school and do not want to work, so their education is pointless, and all investments into it are good for nothing. (It is quite possible that where the media ignores this issue, like in Greece or Spain, Roma are still better off – even though stereotypes and prejudices can spread from mouth-to-mouth, too.) Roma are essentially seen as inappropriate for school. Their educational disadvantages do not provoke solidarity and supportive attitudes in society, or even a desire for understanding the background reasons. Instead, Roma are blamed for their own problems and condemned for causing problems to others.

Majority parents refrain from enrolling their children into institutions attended by many Roma children, which, in itself, is a major source of educational segregation. It remains hidden that part of what they are afraid of – i.e. that the educational standard at such schools deteriorates – is precisely a consequence of segregation, as opposed to the presence of Roma students. Instead of such relatively complicated reasoning, assuming the hard work of abstraction and a deeper understanding of the
workings of society – and, within it, the educational system – most people favor simplistic explanations. Thus Roma come to be seen as incompatible with school, as it were: they do not study, disturb other kids, cause conflicts, spread illnesses, etc. This is a way of distancing the problem, together with the people the problem is associated with. Hence, as if everything was alright on one side of the divide, the "others", that is to say, the "Roma way of life" is blamed for any problems and conflicts. In other words, the educational exclusion of Roma children is reflected upon in a way that justifies such treatment and expands it to become social exclusion.

School establishments tend to perceive Roma students in negative terms: who lack important skills and capacities, are unable to adopt mainstream norms, and cannot progress together or catch up with the majority. Teachers often see Roma as problematic pupils who are hard to handle and "would not make it" anyway. The image of Roma as drifters and deviants is looming around, especially in Italy and Spain: poor school performance and irregular attendance is attributed to assumed nomadism that is supposed to survive in the "instincts", even when the people in question have actually settled down long ago. Personally, the parents of Roma children are put in the wrong for pushing their children go begging or work at home, and not paying any interest to their education. However, teachers rarely visit camps or talk to parents to learn about their preferences. The lack of communication results in ignorance, a sense of impotence and sometimes even in hostile feelings. The assumed hopelessness of the case of Roma reflects the frustration of teachers: it is easier to give up on a group of students than face their own limitations. To be sure, teachers in schools and classes with a significant number of Roma (and other minority) students face the extra challenge of managing diversity and ensure appropriate development opportunities to everyone. As it is usually the case, they do not receive sufficient help to fulfill this very demanding task. In a way, the refusal of the problem of Roma by society affects schools and teachers as well: they, too, do not receive social support, and might even become stigmatized for dealing with Roma children.

From time to time, certain specific problems regarding the education of Roma children emerge in the agenda of public discourse. One such issue provoking some level of debate in all countries was the approach based on special educational needs based on which Roma were put together with physically and mentally challenged children in specialized schools. The issue of segregation as such has been especially prominent in Romania, where its changing representations and meanings in public discourse reflect the duality of the entire minority politics concerning Roma. Thus while educational segregation on the basis of ethnicity was acknowledged as a form of discrimination and social exclusion, separation was also seen by some Roma intellectuals as activists, deceived by the low positive impact of integrationist strategies, as a key factor in preserving and developing Roma identity. This dilemma – discriminatory segregation vs. the maintenance of ethnic boundaries – is underlying basically all educational policies targeting the Roma, representing a leitmotif of accompanying professional and public discourse. The latest strategies to find a solution to the problem, i.e. secure equal educational opportunities to Roma while respecting their cultural and social differences, are framed by the concept of intercultural education.

3. FIELD RESEARCH

The arguments below are based on the interpretation of interview research conducted by TERNO partners. Interviews were made with school principals, teachers of Roma students,
Roma students themselves and their parents, as well as with some outside experts (see the chapter on methodology).

### 3.1 Schools selected for research and intervention (Description of the research sites)

TERNO partners have chosen to work with 2-6 schools per country (2 in Greece and Romania, 3 in Italy and 6 Spain), specifically focussing on 5-8 graders for whom further studying is a hot issue. With the exception of a special school in the Romanian, and a Catholic school in the Spanish sample, all schools are mainstream public institutions, in which Roma children study together with their majority peers. These schools are said to be integrative institutions in the sense that they employ no specific methods to select children on an ethnic basis. However, considering that, in some of them, the proportion of Roma among the student population reaches 45%-50% (in the Spanish and the Romanian samples), the integrative nature or function of education should be questioned. (In schools where this rate is below 20-30%, like in the Greek and Italian samples, integrative education has more feasibility.)

The standard and prestige of schools is varied. The ones in the Greek and Italian samples, as well as the mainstream school involved in research in Romania, are said to be typical schools with no special reputation. The public recognition of Spanish schools under investigation, in turn, is good or high, and the special school in the Romanian sample is also renowned for its innovative character. In many schools there are specialized personnel to deal with Roma children. However, with one or two exceptions, none of the teachers are from Roma origins.

#### 3.1.1 Sites

The investigated schools are in urban neighborhoods with a high presence of Roma and other ethnic groups. With two exceptions (a school in the middle of a district of Athens and another one in the center of a town in the metropolitan area of Valencia, Spain) they are located in the outskirts of cities or towns. Life standard and the level of accommodation of the selected Roma populations are very different, but it is in general far worse (in terms of housing, employment, health) in comparison with the conditions of the surrounding majority society. The Greek site concerns a well-established Roma community that has adopted Greek Orthodoxy, the members of which live in proper houses and are engaged mostly in merchandise. The Italian sample is varied: it contains Roma living in social housing, some in private apartments, but also dwellers of legal and illegal camps in the northern outskirts of Turin. These people live off odd jobs, the resale of metals and begging. The Roma in the Spanish sample live in a town near Valencia. They are small-scale traders and collectors of agricultural products. The selected Roma community in Romania lives in an ethnically diverse part of the capital, and its members make a living from selling flowers, recycling materials and playing music. Participation of children in education is also varied among country samples: it is the highest in the case of the middle-class Roma community in Athens, while absenteeism and dropout are extraordinarily high among the Roma of Turin and Valencia, and also significant in the case of Roma in Bucharest, who have been subject of
several attempts to reduce these problems (i.e. participated in projects linked with school
dropout and inclusive education).

All sites are characterized by peaceful interethnic relations, the exception being maybe the
’squatters’ or ’nomads’, i.e. inhabitants of illegal camps in Turin, who are strongly rejected by
Italians and frequently harassed by the police. However, even good relations do not entail
actual contacts between the minority and the majority populations, or the participation of
Roma in mainstream institutions (like youth clubs). Here the exception is represented by the
selected Roma community in Spain, where the children mingle with their majority peers,
attend the same sport clubs, etc.

Organizations present in these areas exercise different activities in support of Roma, some of them
being involved in education matters (Greek and Romanian samples), others engaged in economic
revitalization of the area, the increase of employability of its inhabitants, the promotion of human
rights and various cultural and social activities. The contribution of these NGOs to promoting the
situation of Roma is more or less valuable, however, it may also cause harms when defined by
paternalistic attitudes and stereotypical views about Roma (like an organization dealing with Roma in
Italy that, trying to replace parents and teachers, organize alternative activities for children in the
Gypsy camp during school hours.

3.1.2 Problems

Dropout rates are greatly divergent in participating countries, but in general are considered high. Year
repeating generally concerns around 30% of pupils, though the rate is lower in schools adopting a
policy to reduce the application or outlaw this measure (in a Spanish Catholic school and the special
school in the Romanian sample, respectively). As for dropout, the extent of this problem seems to
depend especially on age/grade, while school quality as a factor remains ambiguous. Thus while
absenteeism is a widespread and permanent concern, truancy becomes an issue only in higher grades
(at secondary level education). It is certainly noteworthy how the incidence of these problem correlate
with the degree of presence of Roma/foreign students. At the same time, it is hard to evaluate the
impact of school policies, and general country distinctions do not seem to matter much in this regard,
either. For instance, the schools in the Spanish sample have participated in various programs, their
staff has undergone several training courses, and there have been lots of specialized services
introduced in most institutions. At the same time, the dropout rate of Roma students varies from 1% to
95%, seemingly irrespective of the volume of investments – although, obviously, we are not in the
position to judge the quality of services at the particular schools.

3.1.3 Responses

In any case, the task at hand – i.e. responding to the educational needs of Roma children – is not a
novelty for the institutions involved in the TERNO project. In most cases, the staff has familiarized
itself with diversity issues and learned about some methods to deal with them. Teachers have
participated in various programs and initiatives, like diversity trainings, trainings in new pedagogical
perspectives and methods, including intercultural themes, and are declared to be open to learn more
about these topics.

As far as diversity management in general and attention to Roma pupils in particular is concerned, the
direction and level of local policy responses is varied, reflecting general country characteristics. Thus
in the Greek and Italian schools discussed here general welcoming policies were introduced in order to combat initial difficulties by making Roma (and other foreign) students feel more comfortable at school and improving their knowledge of the national language. At the same time, save a few limited initiatives (like project-based psychological and learning support provided in the Greek school in the research, or general reinforcement of Roma students in an Italian school), pupils seem to be pretty much left without any extra help during the following years, as comprehensive integration programs are unknown.

Likewise, no specific approach related to cultural diversity has been adopted by the schools selected for research in Romania. At the same time, social deprivation and educational disadvantages of Roma children are sought to be compensated by, for instance, boarding service for poor children and for those whose parents work until late, mentoring of Roma students, or assistance in doing their homework, as far as one of the schools in the Romanian sample is concerned. However, no project or training course in multicultural education has been implemented. At best, as it relates to the other school investigated in Romania, special classes were organized for Roma, where they could learn about their own history. However, the initiative was abandoned, as there were less and less interested students each year. What is even more curious about the case is that it occurred in a school for children with special needs, where an estimated 30% of pupils are Roma – which rate can by no means be explained with reference to physiological defects. Hence, this institution, while having participated in a great many programs aiming at the inclusion of students with disabilities, is actually segregating on an ethnic basis (that is to say, it operates in segregated circumstances). This contradiction illustrates the ambivalence implied in the hybrid Romanian approach to the education of Roma children, wavering between a minority rights paradigm and the model of remedial education provided to disadvantaged children.

In the Italian schools under investigation, students are provided with assistance by volunteers in the classroom, there are study groups, language courses, after school activities, and reinforcement of Roma students. One of the schools used to have mediators, however, this program has finished. Gradual acceptance, involving contact with families and facilitation of meetings and group activities with the other students, also serviceable in language learning, as well as a reinforcement teacher helping Roma students, appears to be a fairly progressive approach adopted by another Italian school.

Yet it is undoubtedly the schools in the Spanish sample that have been the most active in participating in diversity management programs, and where teachers are the most extensively trained in such issues. Services like personalized mentoring, special individualized help to develop basic competences, motivation enhancement, school psychologist, counseling, support groups, adapted work, specific materials and reinforcement sessions are offered to students. There is a school carrying out a progressive integration program, involving individualized tutoring, psychological help and a classroom of therapeutic pedagogy. The staff at another Spanish school is in constant contact with the social services department of the town for advice, and teachers receive training on attention to ethnic minorities. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that a program of multicultural education focusing on Roma culture that was introduced in yet another school finished due to its rejection by the students, suggesting that the limitation of the concept to Roma culture alone is useless. The same school has given up on programs providing motivation to Roma children through different activities in which they are successful and accompanying teachers’ training courses. The reason was that the host of the programs arrived at the understanding that the 80% dropout rate experienced among Roma students has nothing to do with teachers or teaching methodologies but is owing to Roma families that do not value education and support the system – a conclusion that is quite questionable, especially since the
programs at first seemed to work for Roma students, so, rather, it appears to be an excuse for the school’s failure.

### 3.2 The educational needs of Roma children – from different perspectives (Results of the field research)

In the remaining part of this study the outcomes of interview research conducted in the participating countries are elaborated. Results are presented in a problem-centric manner, showing commonalities among particular educational situations related to the hindrances/opportunities in the school advancement of Roma children. In the meantime, manifestations of and reasons for the educational difficulties of Roma children (absenteeism, low performance, high dropout, parental attitudes and family background, social conditions, language barriers, cultural habits, lack of educational opportunities, discrimination and marginalization in society and in the school) are also discussed, showing their relative significance as well as correlations between the problems.

In order to make results comparable with respect to groups of interviewees, data are grouped into three clusters, representing the viewpoints of the main actors involved: teachers and school principals, Roma children and their parents, outside experts and representatives of local organizations dealing with the education of Roma. For the sake of transparency, a table format is used, followed by narrative explanation and concluding remarks. In each column, the most dominant opinions are represented, while also providing verbatim citations underlying the main points. Given the common methodology of teachers’ training envisioned in the TERNO project, cross-country comparison, at this point, is secondary, however, marked differences in the weight and incidence of problems as well as in the types of responses are indicated.

The objective of the comparative tables and discussions is to have participants of the TERNO project, with special regard of trainers/pedagogues who will convey the methodology, as well as future instructors and users of our teachers’ training course, ponder about a few crucial issues.

#### 3.2.1 Interpretations of the problem

To begin with, ideas concerning the origins of problems and related needs should be clarified.

The issue raised in the first table concerns the background reasons of the difficulties of/with Roma at the school. The following questions are worth contemplating here:

- What are the main factors hindering the educational advancement of Roma pupils, and what can the school/teachers do about them?
- What accounts for differences in the evaluation of problems between educational professionals and Roma children and parents?
How could these standpoints be brought closer to each other so as to create a shared platform for solving problems?

Beyond facilitating the comparison of background causes, the table layout is also suitable for generating ideas as to why the judgments made by distinct groups differ in some respects while coincide in others. In acknowledging contrasting views from different perspectives and juxtaposing divergent observations, one is tempted to question his/her earlier assumptions. Also, the reader may try to distinguish factors that (from the school’s perspective) are as pre-given, from other issues where intervention is possible and required. In this way, empathy as well as a sense of agency may be increased, and new ideas can be developed as to what to do and how to go about it.

## Problems and challenges concerning the education of Roma children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The school’s point of view (teachers, principals)</th>
<th>The point of view of Roma (children and parents)</th>
<th>Outsider opinions (experts, representatives of organizations dealing with education)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greek sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Causes:</td>
<td>Causes:</td>
<td>Causes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Poverty/begging</td>
<td>■ racist incidents</td>
<td>■ problems with social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ poor hygiene of Roma</td>
<td>■ institutional discrimination</td>
<td>■ Roma parents’ attitude towards school and hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ lack of communication between school and Roma parents/lack of parents’ involvement in school life</td>
<td>■ poverty, parents inability to provide everything due to unemployment</td>
<td>Manifestations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ lack of teachers’ preparedness</td>
<td>■ language difficulties</td>
<td>■ learning difficulties due to language difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ bad organization of school services (welcome class)</td>
<td>■ lack of communication with teachers</td>
<td>■ absenteeism related to conflicts at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ fights, racism</td>
<td></td>
<td>“It is funny, from trying to help our children in their homework, we have also improved!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifestations:</td>
<td>Manifestations:</td>
<td>‘Girls tend to get married very young, however, many continue school with their husbands’ approval.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ absenteeism and dropout related to lack of motivation, low interest of parents and frequent moving</td>
<td>■ learning difficulties due to language difference</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>■ learning difficulties of Roma children</td>
<td>■ absenteeism related to conflicts at school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“When there are some urgent problems, as hungry children facing in classes, unfortunately, it is difficult to focus on problems of methodology.”</td>
<td>“It is funny, from trying to help our children in their homework, we have also improved!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Nearly everything depends on the parents.”</td>
<td>“Girls tend to get married very young, however, many continue school with their husbands’ approval.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Some parents don’t seem to understand the importance of the</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
"As for the Roma girl, I feel that nobody cares for her educational future."

**Italian sample**

**Causes:**

- Socio-economic background/poverty, shaky living conditions
- Linguistic difference
- Little communication with parents/Parents’ attitude towards education (due to mutual mistrust and lack of perspective)
- Disorganized life in camp, illiteracy, no respect for time rule, etc.
- Lack of material means and on-purpose services/facilities in the school, inadequate teaching methods enacted by teachers
- Lack of educational services and little attention paid by teachers in secondary education
- Generational tensions (in secondary school), schools’ unresponsiveness to the needs of (problematic) adolescents
- Biases of peers and their parents against Roma
- Learning mode (textuality is unfamiliar because of orality-based culture)

**Manifestations:**

- Discontinuity: unsteady attendance and lengthy absences hindering skills development and integration into the class
- Erratic attendance, dropping out
- “Wild inclusion” in mid-term, destabilizing class-group balance and raising difficulties in difference-management
- Lack of basic skills connected with language and learning differences

**Causes:**

- Prejudice and racism of peers
- Material difficulties of families
- Shaky conditions and lack of space in the camps

**Manifestations:**

- Families’ inability to cover children’s basic needs and pay for outings
- Integration difficulties and feelings of discomfort, discouraging school attendance

"I asked them: why do you keep away from me? They answered: you are a Gypsy."

"Sometimes I woke up and felt I didn’t want to go to school because it occurred to me that the children there talked roughly with me."

"It’s the parents’ who decide when they take their children to school."

"Gypsies are not all good. There are also those who don’t send their children to school, but rather to go pinching."

"My daughter wants to have school but all she can pack into her rucksack is a pet mouse, for there’s nothing else I’ve got to give her."
Few direct contacts with Roma parents, mutual mistrust (due to disorganized camp life)

Reduced educational opportunities for which Roma families do not prioritize education

“After a major strain, doing one’s utmost to create the conditions... they are gone for a month and when they’re back, we’re back to square one, for they are no longer acknowledged by the class.”

“We’re in big trouble when grown, maybe unschooled children join in while the term is on: you can’t afford to be that tactful to them.”

“...much attention is paid to the lexicon meaning, the meaning of words. Once they understand the single words, they understand the text too.”

“There is no 'Roma problem'. Poor attendance often depends on the families’ socio-economic conditions.”

“Roma pupils hardly pose any challenge from a discipline standpoint.”

“For a culture that has been for a long time with little or no writing, a school totally about writing causes problems.”

“At the camp, all reference points get lost, sort of running out of lawfulness... the situation becomes ghetto-like in that there is no control nor goad to send children to school.”

“Living under such conditions as in the Gypsy camp does not favor either their leaning toward school, or the blooming of expectations ahead.”

“Then I think anyway that sometimes it’s us who drive them away. Because we get them to face situations with too many different things, too many things to learn.”

Spanish sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes:</th>
<th>Causes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Frequent moving</td>
<td>- Parental attitudes towards education/schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Absenteeism</td>
<td>- Socio-economic background/poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of studying habits</td>
<td>- Inappropriate teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of discipline and control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parents not monitoring their child’s school advancement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I do not think the problem is the methodology, it’s cultural."

Romanian sample

Causes:

- Precarious socio-economic status (lack of employment, insecure legal status, problematic family situations)
- Lack of family support (illiterate, traditionalist)
- Parental attitudes towards education and schooling
- Early marriage
- Lack of specialized services (mentoring)
- Inappropriate teaching methods

Manifestations:

- Learning difficulties
- Low performance
- Low attendance
- Year repeating, dropout

"I believe that the main problem is the use of children by parents to obtain additional income."

"The child has no home. He misses a lot and all the letters sent to his parents are coming back. We have no solutions for this case."

"Parents believe they have only rights, obligations never."

"Roma parents send their children to school only for social help and not for education."

There is conspicuous agreement regarding the educational problems of Roma children as seen by educational professionals and Roma parents. Thus the primacy of living conditions, involving poor material conditions as well as disorganized community and family life, is
accepted by basically everyone. Poor relationship between the school and students’ families is also attached great importance, implying that there is a distance between the two parties that may cause further problems. In addition, the responsibility of educational methods and the lack of specialized services are pointed out not just by Roma, but are also referred to by school staff as a way of self-criticism.

Agreement regarding the major problems to deal with could imply that there is a shared understanding between the parties that could serve as a basis of future cooperation. However, strange coincidences in the interpretation of problems may also indicate a yielding attitude among Roma, so that they are ready to suppress negative feelings towards the school or condemn members of their own community for the problems. As reported from Greece, racism proves to be an especially delicate topic: it was hard to elicit responses from Roma parents and children with respect to racist injuries, however, when they opened up, there appeared to be quite a lot of negative experiences to share. Results from Romania indicate an even stronger suppression of racist incidences, which can nevertheless be brought to the surface. Yet the fact that Roma in Romania are especially prone to criticize other Roma for school failures is an even better indicator of racial discrimination and marginalization: this kind of attitude suggests the assimilation of majority perspectives by the Roma and a desire to excel as ’good exceptions’ and gain acceptance by the majority population as such. Still, it looks even harder for professionals to admit racist tensions and conflicts at school, though the prejudices held by non-Roma classmates and their parents are sometimes mentioned – prejudices and discrimination by teachers never.

Besides shared problems, there are additional factors, too, depending on the particular context. Thus language difficulties represent a further barrier to education of Roma children in Greece, Italy and Spain, where Roma speak their own language or (in case of recent immigrants) the language of their country of origin. Also, there are slight differences in terms of emphasis. Irregular attendance and ”wild inclusions”, as forms of absenteeism caused by the frequent moving of families, is a major concern in Italy and Spain, where many Roma people, enclosed in camps, are basically not allowed to settle down and stabilize their conditions. Discontinuity provokes tremendous frustration in teachers who feel their investments into the education of children are often good for nothing, and that they are unable to ensure class cohesion in these circumstances.

Teachers in Italy and Spain usually refrain from blaming parents or Roma as such for the ills, though this type of causal attribution appears, too. In this context, Roma culture appears in essentialist terms as a ’culture of deficiency’, lacking in literacy and textuality, which is held responsible for a distinct ’learning mode’ and the underdevelopment of basic competences. In Italy, in particular, there is a disagreement among professionals as to the significance of culture and cultural difference: some of them emphasize the primacy of socio-economic conditions as well as the need to interpret actions and attitudes on an individual basis; others explain families’ attitude towards school with cultural reasons. Likewise, Spanish teachers mention the lack of studying habits, discipline and control as Roma characteristics. Charges against parents are quite explicit in Romania, reflecting widely held stereotypes about Roma, who are supposed not only to neglect schooling of their children but misuse the education system in order to attain social support. Such charges, so to
speak, are partly rejected by the parents (when talking about their own expectations), and partly confirmed by them (when it comes to the attitude of Roma in general). The strange ordering of factors influencing the education of Roma children reveals this kind of biased judgment, as pervasive as to affecting the views of both school establishments and Roma parents. Thus the infrastructural conditions of the school, segregation and discrimination in education, the lack of opportunities of Roma children, and even bad communication between the school and the parents are considered completely insignificant in Romania. Finally, in connection with anti-Roma stereotypes referring to violent behavior, it is worth underlining that no particular disciplinary problems have been reported by any of the participating schools.

3.2.2 The educational needs of Roma children

The educational needs of Roma students are conceptualized by school establishments according to assumptions about the attitudes of Roma towards school. At the same time, knowledge regarding the objective conditions of Roma and the limited possibilities of children and parents in terms of investing into education infiltrates into such theories. The contrast between the school’s and Roma points of view is, again, instructive in showing the gap between ideologies and realities and indicating misconceptions regarding the Roma as an effect of deficient communication between the school and Roma families.

This round of issues allows for contemplating on the following questions:

- Do Roma children’s and parents’ widely supposed disinterest in education appear as confirmed?
- Under what conditions is it imaginable that the attitudes of Roma towards the school and education are _not_ determined by prevailing conditions and perspectives/future opportunities?
- Do Roma have specific needs in education? Or do they have a specific position in the education system that involves particular problems/deficiencies?
- What conditions make Roma feel uncomfortable at school? What kinds of events/actions constitute disturbance of peace in the school environment?

### Needs of Roma students and parents / attitudes towards education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The school’s point of view (teachers, principals)</th>
<th>The point of view of Roma (children and parents)</th>
<th>Outsider opinions (experts, representatives of organizations dealing with education)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food, motivation through entertainment, less homework, language tutoring, communication with/involvement of parents, welcome policy, use of technology, understanding diversity of Roma</td>
<td>Learning support (parents do not have the means to help children or pay for private lessons)</td>
<td>Social support, change in attitudes towards education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The important thing is to activate the children and teach them things, without seeming like teaching.”</td>
<td>More heating at school, more cleanliness</td>
<td>“Roma do not consider education as something useful in their life. This mentality should be changed, by demonstrating the importance of education to parents.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The peace in the class depends on the</td>
<td>More peaceful school environment with less fights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial help in buying school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"The parents should help their children in their educational efforts."

"It is important for parents, teachers and peers to understand and accept that the Roma have a different cultural background. If we cultivate this understanding, then the Roma students should be more encouraged to learn without having to face the social stereotypes against them."

"I want to finish high school and become a lawyer."

"I expect from the school to give my child the best."

"We have understood the importance of education, and we do not bereave the school from our children."

"The school principal is always gritting on me, and when there is a conflict, he punishes only me."

"We feel that sometimes they accuse us without reason."

"Some teachers do not intervene when other children are making fun of us."

"We want more peaceful teachers and students. We cannot concentrate if there are constant conflicts."

"Our school is not clean: I have seen mice in my school."

---

### Italian sample

| Welcoming and integration, spur interaction and participation of pupils, seating arrangement (swapping, U-shape) to stimulate openness and dialogue | Teacher’s attitude as behavioral example |
| --- |
| Need for shelter (sitting together) and protection (teacher’s intervention in case of conflict caused by anti-Roma prejudices) |
| Desire for social success (making some students “work-happy” in hope of social redemption) |
| “Children are as friendly as their teacher proves to be.” |
| “Their class is where they feel cozy, all of them. Everybody has to feel well.” |
| “The reasons for such a failure are about the school’s difficulty in managing to be influential, stimulating, material |
| Schooling of children (depending on circumstances and the family), information about child’s schooling path (through brief encounters with teachers) |
and purposeful in what it’s doing.”

“One’s got to be patient, one needs overcoming a double mistrust: the one they have toward school, and the one the school has toward some people.”

Spanish sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactfulness (e.g. avoid certain topics)</th>
<th>Parental support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balanced classroom (not too many Roma)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“With these programs has been detected, that 80% dropout of Roma children is not a question of the teacher or teaching methodologies, is about families.”

„Overall Gypsy students work well, if parents are interested and if there are not many Gypsy students in the same class.”

Romanian sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and material needs</th>
<th>Great importance of education as a means to overcome existing conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater involvement of parents</td>
<td>Teachers be more receptive to children’s needs: esp. tailored curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular adjustments</td>
<td>Educational support services, supplementary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education as such</td>
<td>Direction in future plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid labeling</td>
<td>Security, good environment, avoidance of conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation, building trust</td>
<td>Own study room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding, good intentions</td>
<td>Help in finding solutions for material and financial problems, e.g. border to be available not only when the parents are employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide models of life</td>
<td>“Our children are serious. They are good learners. They always go to school”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Very important for the future is education as a specific need of Roma children.”</td>
<td>“They are good kids. They are not”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If the child feels your good intentions for his development, he will finally cooperate”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Very important for the future is education as a specific need of Roma children.”

“If the child feels your good intentions for his development, he will finally cooperate”

“They are good kids. They are not”
There is a striking difference in ideas regarding the attitudes of Roma towards education: while educational personnel, in general, is on the opinion that Roma do not value education and do not care about the school, Roma themselves – children and parents alike – tend to insist on the importance of education and seem to appreciate the school. This contrast is certainly at the heart of misunderstandings caused by insufficient communication between the school and Roma families, which is a crucial problem everywhere. It is the assumption regarding the disinterest of Roma in education that makes teachers so critical about Roma ”culture” as such, which attitude, in turn, preempts any efforts to improve the relation of Roma children to education. And it is because of the lack of such efforts that most Roma keep feeling uncomfortable in the school.

In other words, the needs of Roma concerning education are largely misinterpreted and, hence, remain unaddressed. As a result, children feel insecure in the school, which nurtures the habit of self-enclosure, trying to find shelter among other Roma children sharing in their situation. Roma parents may become even more alienated from the school. While teachers resents their non-involvement – attributed to some essentialist traits of Roma culture and lifestyle – Roma parents, in the focus of criticism, feel unwelcome in the school, so they rather try to avoid any contacts with teachers. Part of the problem is that Roma families feel incompetent and impotent in school matters for not having the material and intellectual means to support their children’s education.

Notwithstanding these problems, parents generally say they are satisfied with school and the teachers. Likewise, children affirm that they like going to school, have many friends there and feel to be treated by teachers in the same way as others. It has been also reported (from Greece and Italy) that parents have difficulties in articulating their problems, which may be due to their subdued and inferior position in society. In Italian schools they are said to be unable to offer a general view of the teaching quality or Roma pupil’s welcoming at school, rather, they judge school based on their own – scarce – experiences. They do not complain about integration problems or the teachers’ work, are content with their relationship with the school, and nobody has reported discrimination cases. In Romania it was observed that parents are, so to speak, fatalistic, in that they have a tendency to accept anything that comes as their destiny.
So there are Roma families that believe in education and encourage children to make the best use of it, while others are more skeptical about it. Yet this dilemma is often expressed in terms of a contradiction between two value systems. "Pupils feel sometimes straddling two school interpretations: on the one hand, there are teachers trying to value attendance, on the other hand, there are families misbelieving in school and in schooling as a possible way up to a different future.” (Italian study) By the same token, the Spanish study refers to ‘mixed messages’ to account for the lack of children’s motivation. Be as it may, disillusionment is quite understandable, especially in times of crisis, and is thus not a Roma specificity. Even an Italian teacher admits that "school is no longer a social elevator”.

Misunderstandings breed mutual mistrust, which is expressed in ethnic terms. The school staff tends to overemphasize ethnic difference, while Roma develop a heightened sensitivity towards prejudice and racism, precisely because they cannot be sure that teachers acknowledge the problem and would protect the children when necessary. In fact, many Roma parents and children claim that more attention should be paid to these problems, and teachers should be keener on intervening in related conflicts. An interesting aspect of a sense of discomfort generated by mutual aversion is related to the topic of hygiene. The attitude of Roma towards hygiene is often criticized by members of the majority society, including school staff. For obvious reasons, this is insulting to Roma people, whose conditions often do not permit the meeting of higher hygienic standards, but when they do, they may develop a heightened demand for cleanliness. At the same time, the deteriorated conditions of schools attended by many Roma students have nothing to do with the needs of Roma with regard to cleanliness; instead, they reflect the negligence of society, which, in itself, is injurious to Roma people.

The precondition of solving many of these problems lies in the development of mutual understanding between the school and Roma families. Such an understanding should be based on the acknowledgement of the equal rights and interests of Roma concerning quality education, including further education. The personality of the teacher – as a role model for students, initiator of dialogue and potential mediator between the parties – certainly has immense importance. In between two worlds, he or she is in a position to reconcile views, eliminate misunderstandings and act as a protector of Roma children – without trying to replace the parents or acting as if conveying some superior norms. The hiring of Roma educators and teaching assistants would also be helpful in stabilizing the relationship of Roma and the school.

3.2.3 What can the school/teachers do about the educational difficulties of Roma children?

Below is a collection of already implemented and desired measures that may support the education of Roma children, complemented with a list of teachers’ demands in selected schools. Although some interventions appear truly positive, they are not termed 'good practices’ here. First, because for them to be called as such further analysis and double-checking with TERNO partners would be required. Second, because the table contains bad or ambiguous practices as well.

The following questions may be raised in connection with the contents of the table:

- How may negative experiences of teachers concerning Roma families be connected with frustration and disappointment caused by a lack of support from the education system?
- Which ones of the measures/approaches below support integration and the school performance / educational opportunities of Roma? And which are the ones that may alleviate the burdens of
both teacher and pupil, however, end up in reinforcing Roma students’ educational disadvantage?

- What kinds of understanding of multicultural education are reflected by some of the actions included in the table? Which are the ones that support integration?
- How can the immediate environment/local community (authorities, institutions, organizations, inhabitants including Roma) contribute to the success of education? What can school principals and teachers do to gain these actors’ support?

**Interventions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful tools</th>
<th>Greek sample</th>
<th>Italian sample</th>
<th>Spanish sample</th>
<th>Romanian sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing measures, activities, services introduced to create a favorable school atmosphere and combat dropout (supportive actions, diversity management, multicultural environment)</strong></td>
<td>welcome class, language classes, integration class, preparatory class, mediators, integration teacher, special education teacher</td>
<td>School’s Educational Offer Plan covering language, peace, welfare and citizenship education (including policies aiming at mutual respect and social inclusion offered to ‘weak users’ group)</td>
<td>Anti-discrimination stance</td>
<td>Positive approach towards the learning difficulties and social integration of Roma children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>intercultural education</td>
<td>Inter-institutional Social Table coordinating actions affecting enrolment, school-family relationship and attendance monitoring</td>
<td>Education in languages, peace, welfare and citizenship</td>
<td>Innovative methods but not specifically about inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>all-day school where children do their homework</td>
<td>Welcoming policies, second language workshops and language study groups, social projects to foster inclusion, activities and workshops for ‘weak users’ (cooking, theater, music)</td>
<td>Tutorial action plan based on individual and personalized mentoring</td>
<td>Recuperation, remedial education, support teacher for children with special needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-teachers allowing for arranging work-groups (mixed, task-specific, diversified)</td>
<td>Projects to improve school performance and reduce absenteeism</td>
<td>Educational support services, supportive program in collaboration with NGOs, volunteers to help children with homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies to help children with</td>
<td>Collective and individual tutoring, reinforcement sessions, individualized attention to students and their families, mentoring, counseling</td>
<td>Semi-boarder school (after-school), free meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Task assignment according to individual needs and interests</td>
<td>Individualized/differentiated approach, cooperative learning, team work only in few classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible seating, mixed working groups</td>
<td>Reduced requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups contracted to motivate children through activities</td>
<td>(One) teacher mentoring for Roma children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strategies for diversity (support groups, therapeutic pedagogy, adapted work, specific materials)</td>
<td>Motivation of children, involvement of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiatives promoting access to education of disadvantaged groups and preventing dropout, promotion of integration and inclusion, support for children with special needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learning difficulties to follow the same program: same activities but reshaped goals. Teacher’s trainings on conflict and affectivity management, active listening, disabilities, alphabetization of foreigners, cooperative learning, attention disorders, and occasionally on interculturalism and the Roma ‘Relief groups’ providing for school-family contacts and information of teachers Actions taken by teacher to dissolve prejudices and promote integration (by talking to biased majority parents and provoking discussions and interactions in the classroom) “Interaction, and even collaboration between Roma and non-Roma is there, but it always has to be backed up and recreated both during lessons and in the leisure time.”

Trainings in teaching methodologies, compensatory teaching, diversity and interculturality, attitudes/emotional intelligence and specific training for the integration of minorities Conflict resolution Sporadic relations with, and support to, camp-dwellers by individual teachers “This year we tried to multicultural education and outreach to Roma culture and students have rejected.”

Wanted measures, activities, services, pedagogic tools and methods

Support for students at the beginning of school, development of basic competences, more supporting classes, extra tutoring, school to prepare

More resources to overcome “emergency mode”, i.e. reduction of school functions to sheer survival school to offer

More resources (material and human) to cover regular functions and extra services

More hours for tutoring and working

Social worker (cooperation with social services), speech therapist, mediator, counselor

Learn about multicultural and intercultural approaches
| **Teachers’ need for support** | More specialized support, practice-oriented training, support in handling integration, time for self-development and do individualized teaching | Revitalization, psychological support, alleviating burdens, weariness and feeling of discomfort and do away with helplessness, caused by cut down of staff, fewer materials and performances due to | New teaching methodologies, tools of conflict resolution  
“I know of no method able to change the main reasons of school failure; if there exists any, I want to know it.” | Training on Roma students  
Training on Roma culture and history  
Mentoring by Roma teacher  
Extra help by professionals (social worker, mediator, counselor)  
Extra remuneration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | children for further education individualized approach, differentiated education, learning while playing, cooperative learning, peer learning, more creative activities mediator, school counselor, teacher to help with learning difficulties, assistant teacher to help in some subjects and with homework, psychologist and social worker to deal with racism modern teaching materials, more technology, better organized classes intercultural policy integrated in school program, better programming, communication with parents, collaboration with social workers and social services to teach parents about vaccination and hygiene, activation of society to help with hunger problems | back-up services and trained staff local embedding of the school, partnerships with organizations Elimination of camps and social deprivation | in small groups Mediation to solve conflicts | Curricular adaptations  
Intercultural approaches, education in Romani language  
“We tried to provide support for Roma children by studying their native language...Romani language interest decreased year by year...But we are open to learn and apply intercultural approaches.” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The schools participating in the TERNO project are very unequally equipped with professional knowledge and pedagogic methodologies to handle diversity. Italy is outstanding in this respect, and there have been quite a few initiatives taken in the Spanish and Greek schools as well, while those in Romania have less experience in this field and employ no specific methods to promote educational inclusion. The overall impression regarding the approach of the selected schools towards diversity management is that they are inclined to deal with the issue, however, have insufficient means (material and human resources) to do so. Teachers complain about the shortage of funds to manage schools as well as their own low remuneration, excessive workload and scarce opportunities for self development. While</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>organization of the education system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more interest and support from Roma parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better remuneration, moral support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better understanding of the mentality and culture of Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We ask these teachers to do so many things, and we reward them with so little.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shortage of funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More training in intercultural education, on-purpose training courses (e.g. on alphabetization of adults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular opportunities to take further training courses as a way of personal and professional reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadier relationship with Roma families, training on mutual acquaintance between Roma families and the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The 'Roma problem' just becomes one problem among a number of problems, not even the tickliest one.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;This is a job requiring enthusiasm, and at times that’s hard because we have such a swarm of problems within the classes...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
recent cuts in the budget have put an end to many valuable programs and hinder further innovation and service-providing, teachers are too overwhelmed to make extra efforts to act on their own. Schools are struggling to meet basic educational requirements and/or trying to overcome the "emergency mode" in school operations.

As far as the content of measures and services is concerned, more or less the same categories can be found everywhere. There is common sense regarding the need of Roma (and other foreign) students for intensive help at the very beginning of the education cycle. Therefore, welcoming policies constitute a priority in most places: programs introduced in Greece, Italy and Spain help the better adaptation of students to the school environment and try to make them capable of following the learning program (welcoming class, preparatory class, integration class, language education, general citizenship education). Special initiatives are taken, at school or inter-institutional level, to promote enrolment and school performance and reduce absenteeism and dropout. Efforts are made to increase the motivation of students establish school-family contacts, and resolve conflicts in the classroom. Support services, extra tutoring and reinforcement sessions are provided for students with learning difficulties. In some places, measures have been adopted to compensate for economic deprivation and the inability of families to provide for the basic educational needs of children (all-day school in Greece, where children can do their homework, semi-boarder afternoon school and free meals in Romania). There are ambivalent initiatives as well, which, though good intentioned, are misconceived. Typical ills include the separate treatment of Roma students (like applying reduced curriculum in Romania) or the reinforcement of a paterernalist relationship with the Roma community (like, for instance, the 'relief groups' in Italy that, instead of promoting communication between them, tend to replace both the family and the teachers).

When affordable, specialized staff (mentor, integration teacher, special education teacher, teaching assistant, counselor, school psychologist) is hired to aid teachers’ educational work, and special projects are implemented by the school, occasionally contracting outside organizations, to provide supplementary services (like organizing extra-curricular activities to promote motivation and integration in Spain and Italy). Yet teachers are pretty much left alone when it comes to cope with the challenge of diversity. The size of staff and especially the number of trained personnel is just too small to meet demands. Thus service quality is really up to teachers: their openness towards the principles of modern pedagogy and ability to introduce innovative methods in support of diversity management and educational integration. Their scope of action extends to applying seating arrangement to promote interaction, working in small groups, assigning tasks according to individual skills, etc. Also, in the absence of school policies in this regard, the teacher seems to play the main role in managing family-school contacts and involving parents in school life. (See, for instance, the case of the teacher in a Spanish school who developed good relations with camp dwellers simply by visiting them and showing good intentions.) In case of conflicts among peers, occasionally involving racist attitudes, the teacher seems to have sole responsibility in resolving the situation, since specialized personnel (school psychologist, mediator) is generally lacking.

Teachers seem to be quite aware of the deficiencies of educational services, and yearn for opportunities of professional development, especially so as to become able to develop the basic competences of students and manage the integration process better. Many teachers expressed a desire to learn more about interculturality. This strand in teachers’ education is unknown in most schools, save the ones in the Italian sample, where teachers have been extensively trained in such issues, too. At the same time, it is useful to check out the long list of teachers’ needs, which is indicative of the fact that they are admittedly lacking in essential methodologies of modern pedagogy in general.

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Hence, it looks like what teachers actually want is professional reinforcement as such, rather than general ideas about multiculturalism or in-depth study of the Roma culture. Additionally, they definitely need help in the form of co-teachers, specialized personnel and outside help (social workers), as well as psychological assistance to be able to revitalize their energies.

3.2.4 Integration vs. segregation

It is important to call attention to a dilemma inherent in the teaching of students with educational disadvantages. For very practical reasons, it is tempting to group such students together so that they do not disturb other students and do not get frustrated by them. The separation of Roma children is often justified by such considerations. Evidence shows, however, that in a segregated learning environment educational performance is much lower, while integrating education is beneficial for both minority and majority students. Hence, it is worth taking the extra effort. Moreover, when Roma students as such are labeled as children with special educational needs (just like mentally disabled children), which was a widespread practice in all countries participating in the TERNO project, the implication is that their "culture" makes Roma handicap. This notion is completely irreconcilable with multicultural and intercultural standards.

Nonetheless, the moment of separation is necessarily part of the educational process. It is there not only in the reduced requirements of remedial education and special support programs (Romania), but also in very up-to-date methods of differentiated education (Italy). Individualized attention and the assignment of tasks according to individual skills supports integration, however, the very means conducive to this end is the unequal treatment of students. This paradox is neatly expressed by a Greek teacher: "If this child was given help in a segregated welcome class, she would have more chances to succeed in the normal class". The teachers' task is to strike a balance to make this contradiction manageable and justified (for instance, by working in mixed and flexible small groups). This situation, however, poses extra challenges for institutions where criteria of attendance are based on ethnicity – like centers for supplementary education proposed in the TERNO project.

The issue of integration, explicitly or implicitly, involves these questions:

- What is the point in integrating/inclusive education? To what extent is it a viable goal in target institutions, with respect to the composition of the student body or the general attitude of society?
- What are the limitations of existing integration policies? What is their scope, and who are the main agents?
- Which ones of the policies/measures/actions implemented in schools support integration the most directly?
- How can alternative learning centers, working with Roma children, promote educational integration in public schools?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes towards integration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greek sample</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the teacher’s motivation and competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School is totally in favor of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Italian sample</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the teacher’s ability and attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief groups and municipal agencies (such as the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish sample</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers seem to understand the importance of integration and employ integrating techniques in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romanian sample</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive approach towards the social integration of Roma children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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integration

“The educational system, as it is now, does not permit integration.”

“Segregation is not a solution. The children are stigmatized by distinction. You should follow a personalized procedure for children with different abilities.”

“What if the state is sabotaging a system that promotes freedom...because it does not want free people?”

“Nomads Office”) direct families to the schools nearest the camp for the children’s enrolment

Role of broader society: economic decline leads to the impoverishment of Roma and the intensification of prejudices against them.

“I sort of got on by instinct, and my instinct suggested to treat them the same way as the others, for them to understand that to me they were just like any other, and also for the other kids to understand that.”

“To me the most important item is the teacher’s attitude. If the teacher has an even disguised rejecting attitude towards these children, the children will respond in the same way.”

“There is a problem with the school doing or trying to do things for the integration, whereas the rest of the world is seemingly not trying that hard on the same track. It is like trying to explain the Resistance in a fascist environment.”

Our research data suggest that, whether or not specific measures to promote integration have been adopted by the schools under investigation, integration is a matter that really depends on the teacher’s attitude and competence. This is partly because of the distinguished position and role of the teacher in attending students’ needs and laying the foundations of the class community. At the same time, teachers’ responsibility with respect to integration becomes so acute because of the lack of related educational policies and institutional guarantees.

To be sure, one cannot expect the success of integration from the teacher only, as there are circumstances in which integration is simply unfeasible. Thus when the proportion of minority students to be integrated is too large (over, like, 30%), which is the case in most of the concerned schools, even the best pedagogic methods are doomed to failure: it may be possible to enhance learning skills but not social integration. Integration does not only depend on the software (inclusive teaching methods) but also on the hardware (rules determining the structural conditions of institutions). In the researched schools, pedagogic tools to promote integration are more or less available, however, institutional conditions are definitely unfavorable. Likewise, integration remains a Sisyphean task in a society that is hostile towards minorities. Unfortunately, xenophobia is
4. CONCLUSION: A note on cultural difference

Considering the persisting problems faced by Roma students in education systems, the issue of responsibility should be clarified. Namely: who is to be blamed for difficulties at school? Who is in a position to overcome such difficulties? Roma seem to be singled out, considered more problematic than children coming from other minority groups, which is more often than not attributed to their peculiar cultural characteristics. The belief that Roma (or any other ethnic group) has to be approached differently than others on account of cultural difference when it comes to education is quite risky, even a dead end, as demonstrated by country experiences discussed in the chapter on the background context. In turn, a critical understanding of culture, involving self-awareness on the part of teachers regarding the hidden practices of cultural marginalization (ethno-centric tendency in educational contents/curricula, failure in creating a multicultural school environment where all children feel at home) seems to be opportune.

The reason why the cultural aspect is usually overstressed in the perceptions and reasoning’s of the school when explaining the attitudes of Roma students and parents with their ethno-cultural belonging is social distance. There appears to be a tendency to transform the social into cultural, by investing social conditions with cultural meanings, associated with status and community values. Thus when it comes to excluded minorities, their actions and attitudes are often interpreted in terms of their lifestyle and assumed worldview, when in fact they are greatly determined by existing material conditions, family background and future perspectives. What appears to be "cultural" is often a matter of power: unequal power relations get easily 'naturalized' by reference to distinct cultural characteristics. The special regard of Roma has probably to do with their outcast situation in society, which breeds aversion in the majority and provokes reactions of self-defense in the minority.

Another reason why it is not some (perceived) specificity of Roma culture that should held accountable for problems is that the school is there to serve children’s needs, and not the other way round. To the extent that the skills and attitudes of Roma children look incompatible with norms and requirements at the school, it is important to see the background reasons: analyze the impacts of social deprivation, discrimination and marginalization. This exercise does not only nurture understanding but also helps deciding what can be done about the problem. What possibilities are there for an institution – in this case, the school – to compensate for these ills in a way that is emancipating, rather than debilitating? How can it involve members of the outcast minority – here, the Roma – in plans and actions, so that they are not so much the subjects but the agents of the change? In short, it is useful to turn the telescope around and see that the reason why education systems are so often inhospitable to Roma children concerns the limitations of the school’s own culture, conveying culture-chauvinistic, xenophobic or even racist notions and attitudes that restrict its perspectives and bound its actions.
It is probably the scarcity of contacts between the mainstream population/institutions and the Roma people which makes many teachers and educational professionals assume that the key to handle Roma pupils lies in a better understanding of Roma culture. It may well be that certain habits and cultural codes are worth knowing about in order to avoid misunderstandings and develop mutual respect; however, studies in Roma culture will not solve the educational problem and will not even undermine stereotypes. 'Knowing about' is not as valuable as 'knowing'. It would therefore be certainly very helpful to reinforce actual acquaintances with Roma people – the parents and families of students. In the spirit of mutual respect and curiosity, without which multiculturalism means nothing, such meetings should take place in or near the homes of Roma, not only in the school. The teacher – as a representative of the majority society – is in a position to act as the initiator of dialogue and relationship. After all, Roma parents have already made the first step when trespassing the threshold of the school in order to enroll their children.

In sum, far from suppressing this aspect, it is important to concentrate on culture for at least two reasons. First, because due to misapprehensions and value attributions, there is a kind of cultural conflict evolving in many places, deteriorating school life and spoiling the advancement of minority students. The school functions as a micro-world, a terrain where condensed meanings clash. Second, because the interface of culture provides a suitable field of intervention. In reforming pedagogical attitudes and methods, it is quite important to scrutinize widely held cultural notions of majority societies, as mediated by school practices and the actions and ideas of teachers.

Hence, the main goals of our course are, first, to help teachers identifying certain biased notions that prevent the acknowledgment of the multiple factors determining the educational performance of Roma pupils and, second, to support them with ideas as to what pedagogic methods to apply and how to create an educational environment and that respects diversity and makes everybody feel at home in the school. The specific immediate objective, in turn, is to help in the establishment of alternative learning centers for Roma children. While this initiative is supposed to promote the educational inclusion of Roma children, the centers will receive only (or mostly) Roma students. In order to resolve the contradiction between the modus operandi and the long-term goals of these institutions, it seems advisable to connect the educational objective with cultural activities. Thus such centers may become a place where children are provided with different kinds of support and reinforcement. First of all, they receive after-class tutoring to develop their basic competences. At the same time, they may have the opportunity to express and enjoy their collective identity. Being among themselves yet in semi-formal circumstances can have a liberating effect on sharing family and community problems, articulating injuries related to discrimination and racism, or playing music and act like Roma. Such occasions could give a meaning to separation from fellow students, while investing Roma children with positive experiences about themselves. Self-respect being a precondition of respect by others, Roma club-like activities can promote integration as well as contribute to the self-confidence, motivation, learning skills and school performance of individual students.
5. APPENDICES: Research questionnaires and templates

5.1 Appendix 1: Collection of background information

Please limit your answers to each question to about 1,500 – 2,000 characters. You are asked to provide the sources of data and other references where applicable.

Overview of ethnic relations

1. What is the rate of different ethnic minorities in your country, including Roma people? (Please provide statistical data if available. If unavailable – e.g. because there is no ethnic registration in your country – try to rely on studies that contain representative surveys and experts’ estimations of the size of the Roma and other population.)

2. What are the general characteristics of the Roma population in your country? Are there significant differences within the Roma population, regarding history of immigration, social status, level of integration, culture, family type, language use, subjection to ethnic stereotyping, etc? Do Roma people live dispersed in the country, or concentrated in certain areas? Is residential segregation significant? Is (a significant group or part of) the Roma population settled, or itinerant to some extent (moving in caravans, doing seasonal work, etc.)? Do Roma people usually have permanent/legal employment? Is illiteracy significant among them? (Your description should include data (or estimations) regarding the level of education, employment, income, housing conditions, number of children in a family, life expectancy, etc. In case there are no national surveys on Roma, you should try to collect data only on the selected locality, from the municipality or organizations dealing with the Roma. It is important to compare data regarding the Roma minority with national/local data characterizing the rest of the population.)

3. What is the legal status of Roma in your country? Is the Roma population or any group of Roma (e.g. travelers, new immigrants) subject to any specific legislation –
with particular regard to the selected group of Roma you intend to work with? Are Roma treated differently than other minorities? (Here you should consider any rules concerning rights to settle down, language use, cultivate cultural or religious practices, maintain their own institutions including schools, have political representation, become involved in decision making regarding matters concerning the Roma minority or any subgroup of Roma, etc.)

4. **What is your country’s general attitude towards Roma?** Are anti-Roma prejudices and stereotyping significant? Do multiculturalist trends influence the perception of Roma people? How are attitudes manifested in political ideology, public policies, social attitudes and public discourse (with special regard to education)? (You don’t need to present a comprehensive analysis, just give a general outline. Please support your statements with references to surveys and studies, if available; you can rely on newspaper articles and other media sources, too.)

**Overview of the national education system**

5. **Please outline a general picture of the education system in your country, involving the following aspects:**
   - What is the age limit for compulsory education?
   - What are the types of schools on the primary and secondary levels?
   - What is the typical age for entering and leaving the various types of schools?
   - What is the composition of the school system by ownership/authority like (public/private; if public: national/regional/local; if private: nonprofit/for-profit, church, etc.)?
   - To what extent is education subsidized? (E.g. is there normative financing by the state of private and religious schools as well?)
   - Who appoints teaching personnel and ensures quality control?
   - Are parents’ choices among schools limited by school districts, and how are those districts drawn?
   - When and how does tracking occur? (I.e. at what age or grade are students selected according to different criteria that determine their future educational career?) At
what age is it decided whether students continue their studies on paths potentially leading to higher education (i.e. choice between academic and vocational schools)?
- Are there specialized schools and classes for disabled children, students coping with educational difficulties, or having different learning needs (e.g. due to language difficulties)?
- Are there any factors related to ethnicity, social status, gender, religion, region, etc. determining the future educational career of children (i.e. educational selectivity)?

Description of education policies targeting Roma

6. Please provide some national data on the schooling and educational performance of Roma children/youth (Alternatively, please provide local data concerning the municipality):
   - their attendance in primary, secondary and higher education,
   - rates/number of segregated schools and classes for Roma children,
   - comparative drop-out rates and ratios of Roma pupils continuing education as opposed to average rates.

(Please indicate your sources. Here, obviously, you don’t have to write 1,500-2,000 words. However, you may want to refer to improvements and local successes, owing to successful programs and projects, or to negative tendencies caused by bad policies and practices.)

7. What is the dominant policy in your country regarding educational inclusion/segregation? (Here, too, you may also refer to policies and programs introduced locally, affecting the research site.)
   - Do policies on public education take into account the multi-ethnic character of society? Do they prioritize national or European values? Is interculturalism promoted?
   - Do educational policies address the problem of direct/intentional or indirect/spontaneous segregation?
By what measures is ethnicity respected in public education (multicultural curriculum, special classes for minority ethnic children, specialized teaching methodology, administrative rules, language teaching, employment of teachers with special training in minority ethnic education, etc.)?

Are there any special services provided to Roma students in teaching or as extracurricular activities (mentoring, mediators, teaching assistants, afternoon schools, etc.)? How widespread and accessible are these? Do they operate on a project-basis or are built into the regular curriculum?

(Please explain what you think are the main strengths and weaknesses of your national education system in providing good quality education to Roma. Be critical in your discussion regarding relevant policy provisions and also on how they have been implemented in practice, and what their implications are on the schooling of Roma. Alternatively, describe how the lack of such provisions influences the educational career of Roma youth.)

8. **How is the education of Roma framed in public discourse?**
   - What are the ‘hot topics’ in the media?
   - How are the prevailing claims and conflicts presented?
   - What are the responses and suggested solutions brought up by the involved parties?
   - Are there any important issues that are disregarded?

(You should answer this question by providing a critical reading of related programs and articles in the popular media assessing such programs.)

9. **What do you think are the main problems involved in the education of Roma children?**
   - What do you consider to be the main reasons behind their poor educational outcome?
   - What do you consider to be the main pre-conditions for good quality education of Roma children, in particular so that it contributes to social equality and inclusion?

(You are invited to express your own opinion on these issues; no need for references here. For ideas, you may want to use the ‘list of factors’ contained in Appendix 3.)
10. **List of references used** (including 3 English language publications)
5.2 Appendix 2: Collection of information on the research site

You can answer all or most of these questions based on what you already know about the place where you intend to conduct the research. The overall length of the description should be about one or two pages (3-6000 characters).

Description of your choice of school(s)

By the time you fill this form, you have certainly made a final decision regarding the school or schools you want to involve in the research and cooperate with to accomplish later tasks in the framework of the Terno Project. In addition, you should also know which age-group or grades of students you are going to work with.

1. How many schools do you want to involve in the research/teachers’ training? Is the school (are the schools) involved in the research identical with the one(s) you want to involve in the teachers’ training?

2. How many grades are there in the school(s)? Which grades of students do you want to involve in the research? How many classes and students (i.e. their parents, teachers, etc.) altogether?

Description of the locality

Complementing the desk research, this section will help in providing the narrower context of research data.

3. What type of locality (city, city district, village, independent locality) is it where you want to conduct research? What is its size (number of population)?
4. What is the composition of the inhabitants in terms of religion, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, mother tongue, etc.? *(You don’t need to give provide accurate data, just describe the character of the neighborhood.)* What are the main characteristics of inter-ethnic relations?

5. What are some of the typical workplaces and work forms characterizing the local people, and especially the Roma population? Are there any important gender differences in the distribution of professions? Is unemployment in general, and with respect to Roma, significant? *(You can provide data if available.)*

6. Do Roma children mingle with their fellows belonging to the social majority or other ethnic groups outside of schools? Are there any youth organizations/clubs/places to go that play an important role in the lives of Roma youth? Are they expressly intended for a Roma audience or for youth in general?

7. How many primary schools are there in the settlement/neighborhood? What types of school are they (run by the state, church, a foundation)? What is the ethnic composition in these schools? *(Provide data if available.)* What is the comparative assessment regarding the quality of these local schools like?

8. Are there any local organizations (other than yours) that deal with the education of Roma children/youth? What is their profile and general approach of this issue? What type of services do they provide?
5.3 Appendix 3: Ordering of factors (exercise)

**List of factors potentially affecting the school career of Roma students:**

This exercise will be part of all interviews and focus group discussions. You should have respondents do this exercise towards the end of interviews/focus group discussions. The way to manage this task is this: you should prepare small cards in advance, each containing one item (factor), and lay them randomly on the table. Then you ask the interviewer/participants of the focus group discussion to pick cards according to their relative importance in influencing the educational achievement and school career of Roma students. The cards with the 3 most important and 3 least important factors should be set aside by the respondents. Be sure you ask them to explain their choices and – in the case of focus group discussions – to try and come to an agreement regarding the choices by means of argumentation, i.e. trying to convince the other members of the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-economic background, poverty</th>
<th>Parental attitudes towards education and schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad communication between the school and the Roma</td>
<td>Institutional discrimination (indirect or direct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational integration/inclusion</td>
<td>Segregation in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methods practiced in the school</td>
<td>Infrastructural conditions of the school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of specialized services (mentorship, etc.)

Attitudes of majority peers and parents

Realistic perspectives of Roma children with respect to further education and employment

Interests and attitudes of Roma pupils

Cultural differences

Linguistic differences

Social prejudices and stereotyping

Disrespect of ethno-cultural identity
5.4 Appendix 4: School datasheet

Description of the school(s) involved in the research

This datasheet must be filled with regard to every school involved in the research. Part of these questions can be answered from what you already know. The remaining questions should be answered with the help of school principals or representatives of the local school authority. You can ask these questions as part of the interview you are to conduct with this/these person(s). The overall length of the answers should be about one page (3-4000 characters).

1. How is the school located in the settlement? (central location, outskirts, etc.)? What is its status, role, reputation or prestige as compared with other schools in the neighborhood?

2. Is it a public, religious, or privately owned institution?

3. How many classes/students/teachers are there in the school? How many students are in a class?

4. Are students distinguished or selected by any means to attend different classes or study groups within the same class? What criteria of selection apply in directing students to different classes or forming study groups (educational performance, ethnicity, mother tongue, specialization on certain subjects, etc.)?
5. What is the ethnic composition of the students in the school / in classes? Are there special classes for Roma? Are Roma represented in larger number in some classes than in others?

6. What are the dropout rate and the rate of students repeating classes in the school(s) in general and for Roma students (if known)?

7. What is the composition of the teachers in terms of majority vs. minority belonging?

8. What is the general approach of the school with respect to diversity? Is it keen on innovative pedagogical methods, with special regard to inclusive education? What kinds of measures or rules has it implemented in this regard?

9. Are special services available at the school? What are these (after-school programs, individual mentoring and counseling, etc.)? Who (which groups of students) tend to make use of such services?
10. Has the school ever been involved in educational initiatives targeting specifically Roma or minority students? Have teachers/school principals participated in any specialized training concerning the education of children with different educational requirements (on multicultural education, interculturalism, etc.)?
5.5 Appendix 5: Teachers’ questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to collect some factual information from teachers on teaching and learning methods and their impressions on school life. You may have respondents fill it themselves before the interview, or record answers and transcribe them later.

**Description of teaching methods and classroom interactions**

1. When did you start teaching in general/at this school? What subjects do you teach? Have you received further education/training, and what did you study there?

2. Do you manage a class of your own (i.e. are you a form master)? Please describe your class: the students, their ethnic/cultural/social background, etc.? Is it a mixed class, or more or less homogeneous in terms of ethnicity? What are the typical patterns of inter-ethnic relations among pupils? Is there interaction or cooperation during classes or in free time between Roma and non-Roma students?

3. Is it a generally peaceful class, or conflicts are rather frequent? What kinds of tensions exist in the class? Who are typically the contesting parties? Are Roma students often involved in fights? What does usually trigger these fights? What do you think is in the background of conflicts? How do you try to manage them?

4. What is your policy with respect to seating students? Do they sit in rows facing the desk and the board, or in a half circle, or in groups, etc.? Do you let students sit wherever they want to? What kinds of considerations do you have when assigning each student their seat or making them change seats (educational performance, behavior, friendships, etc.)? Do children belonging to different ethnic groups prefer to sit together, or it does not matter to them? Where do Roma children usually sit (in the front or in the rare, separately or mingled with non-Roma)? What do you do with that?
5. How do you deal with uneven learning abilities within the class? Do you assign different tasks to students according to their performance/interests? If you have students work in groups, do you have students with similar abilities seated together, or you prefer to mix students with different learning abilities?

6. How do you try to involve students to participate actively in learning activities? What kind of students do you find the easiest to teach? (Please characterize them briefly.) And which categories of students are difficult to motivate/not responsive to your endeavors? Is there any distinction among students according to ethnicity? Do Roma students, in general, show good or bad educational performance, or any differences at all in terms of ambitions and abilities?

7. What do you do when a student performs very badly? Do you talk to them/their parents? What do you advise them to do? Do they or their parents listen to you? Do you seek for external help (mentoring, teaching assistants, etc.)? Is it available at all?

8. About how many students a year fail in your class so that they have to repeat the same year? Are there many dropouts? (About how many during the entire school cycle?) What are the typical reasons for the failure of such students in your experience?
9. What kind of professional support do you think you could make use of? What do you feel to be your own weak points? Are there any kind of methodologies (in education, conflict management, etc.) you would want to learn more about?

10. Do you think teaching Roma children is especially challenging? Have you chosen to deal with Roma children at your own will? Are you satisfied with your working conditions and with the recognition of your work by society? Do you receive sufficient professional and moral support as well as satisfactory financial remuneration?
5.6 Appendix 6: Interview drafts

Interviews and focus group discussions should be audio recorded and transcribed afterwards. You may also decide to take notes, which will be helpful when you want to remember the main points as well as your own reflections. Taking notes is especially useful during focus group discussions, where it is advisable to have 2 interviewers to manage the process (one asking questions, the other making observations and taking notes).

6/A Interviews with school principals or representatives of local school authorities

Information collected from these people in decision making position is important in providing an overview of issues determining selectivity effects in education.

- First, the interviewee will be asked to fill a **school datasheet** (or more, in case the person is responsible for more than one school in the sample) to collect some factual information regarding the characteristics of the school(s) involved in the research (Appendix 4).

- Upon completion of the school datasheet(s), interviews will explore the attitude of the selected school(s) towards Roma/minority students through the views expressed by the interviewee, i.e. a person in responsible position who significantly influences educational policies and rules of their implementation. Questions will be asked regarding the school’s actual treatment of Roma students and then the interviewee will be asked to describe the ideal scenario (cf. ‘3 main aspects’ above), involving the following topics:
  - typical needs and complaints articulated by school personnel and parents (of Roma and non-Roma students),
  - positive and negative measures and local initiatives with regard to the education of Roma children,
  - difficulties of implementation of these measures,
  - ideas about multicultural education, interculturalism and, most importantly,
  - the benefits/shortcomings of segregated/integrated education in general.

- Finally (with the aid of the 'list of factors’ – see above and Appendix 3), opinions regarding the reasons for low school performance and dropout (with special regard to Roma students) should be elicited.
6/B Focus group discussion or interviews with teachers

Interviews address the perception of respondents regarding 1. Roma students and their families and 2. teaching methods designed to solve problems concerning the education of Roma students.

- Interviews/focus group discussions with teachers should start by asking each respondent to fill a 'Teachers’ questionnaire' (Appendix 5), introducing the main topics of discussion: the questionnaire asks them to describe the class(es) they teach, their teaching methods, interactions between teacher and students and among students, etc. (Alternatively, the answers to the questions in the questionnaire can be recorded and transcribed later.)

1. Roma students and their families:

- Upon completion of the questionnaire, respondents should be inquired about personal experiences referring to problems and challenges they encounter in their daily work with Roma students, like:
  - behavioral problems,
  - educational obstacles and learning difficulties,
  - interests, ways to motivate them,
  - attitude of parents, etc.

- Again – like in the case of school principals and representatives of school authorities – typical complaints of Roma and non-Roma children, parents of Roma children and parents of their non-Roma peers that concern Roma children should be discussed, along with the ways teachers respond to such claims.

- In summarizing their opinions formed about Roma students, interviewees can be asked:
  - What is their overall impression about these students?
  - How do they compare to other students?

Respondents may be asked to do the exercise involving the 'list of factors' (Appendix 3) at this point of the discussion.

2. Teaching methods:

- Teaching approaches and methods (multiculturalism, interculturalism, differential education, cooperative learning), already mentioned in the questionnaire, should be discussed in some detail. (This part of the interview reiterates the ’3 main aspects’ of the key research question, regarding actual and ideal approaches to the education of Roma children, and the necessary conditions of improvement.)

- It should be asked whether teachers have acquired special education/training in innovative teaching methods, or if they feel the need of participating in such courses and programs – and, if yes, what is that they would want to know more about.
  - Do they have any experience regarding these education tools?
  - What is their opinion about them?
- Have they ever employed any of these methods? Why did they decide so (out of their own initiation or because they were told to do so)? How did it work? Have there been any problems with implementation? Did it bring the expected results?

- If they haven’t experimented with these tools yet, why is this so (lack of training/expertise; lack of belief/confidence in the tools; institutional rules directing them otherwise, etc.)?

- What do they think is/would be the best approach or strategy to solve the problems concerning the education of Roma students?
  
  o Special attention has to be given to the advantages/disadvantages of integrated/segregated education and the use of different teaching methods in dealing with diversity. Be sure to ask respondents to illustrate their claims with examples.
Focus groups discussions with parents of Roma students

Parents should be asked about their own impressions regarding the school and the educational system in general. The focus of these group interviews certainly lies with the ‘3 main aspects’ of our query, and regards especially attitudes, rather than teaching methods:

- To begin the conversation, parents should briefly describe their family (size of the household, housing and living conditions, education, employment, etc.)
- Then it should be asked how they and their children feel about the school they attend:
  - Do they like the school? Do their children go there every day, or with what frequency?
  - Do they and their children like the peers and teachers?
  - Have their children made friends there? With Roma children or other fellow students?
  - Are they successful at school? Especially in which subjects?
  - In what subjects do they have difficulties? How are these handled by the teacher?
  - Are their special services, like afternoon study groups, mentoring, teaching assistance, etc. available at school? Do they make use of them?
- It should be asked, too, whether they can equip their children with the necessary materials (books, paper ware, etc.) and provide an appropriate learning atmosphere at home for them:
  - Do they have difficulties in paying expenses demanded for the education of their children (books, meals, school excursions, etc.)? How do they manage this task? (material assistance/benefits, loaning, etc.)?
  - Do the children do their homework at school, or at home? Do they have a place/room/desk of their own at home where to study?
  - Do they (or the grandparents, or other relatives) study at home with their children?
- The way the school staff – principals and teachers – communicate with parents and children should also be discussed:
  - By what means do they communicate with the school? (scheduled meetings with teachers, home visits by teachers, random meetings, telephone, e-mail, school festivities, etc.)
  - Are relations with the school staff generally acceptable? How could they be improved (openness of the school, attitude of teachers, time issues, etc.)?
  - Have they ever experienced bad tone used with them or their children on the part of the school staff? What did they do in response?
  - Have they ever been very disappointed with the school or its staff? What did they do then? What happened?
Parents should be made to talk about their vision of the ideal school for their children (c.f. the '3 main aspects' of the educational difficulties of Roma children):

- Would it be integrated (i.e. ethnically mixed), or maintained exclusively for Roma students?
- What are their basic needs and expectations from the school?
- Do they think their vision of the ideal school will ever come true? (Under what circumstances? If not, why not?)
  (At this point, respondents should be instigated to reflect on tendencies in society at large (discrimination, prejudices, stereotyping, etc.)
- Parents can also be asked about what they like/dislike in the educational methods used by the teacher in class and the education policies implemented locally in general.
  (To ask specific questions in this regard, please consult relevant 'teacher’s questionnaires’ that, at this point, should already be completed, and/or the relevant parts of interviews made with other categories of respondents.)

Finally, parents, too, should be asked to do the exercise with the ‘list of factors’ (Appendix 3).
6/D Focus group discussion with Roma pupils and their peers (optional)

This conversation can take place in the classroom with the participation of Roma and non-Roma students, or, if this is impracticable, be limited to a group of Roma students gathered outside of the school. Solutions may depend on the composition of the class, availability of students and authorization. Conversations should be free though channeled by the interviewer to address more or less the same issues as discussed with the parents:

- At start, orienting questions regarding the background of students, their circumstances regarding school attendance, likes and dislikes can be asked.
- Then it should be asked more specifically how they feel about the school, and what the relations are like in the class:
  - Do they enjoy attending school, or not? Do they go every day?
  - Do they like their peers and their teacher?
  - Have they made friends there? With Roma children or other fellow students?
  - Do they meet their friends only at school, or also after school hours? Roma and non-Roma alike? (What other ethnicities?)
  - What has been so far their best/worst experience at school?
- As for teaching methods, these can be circumscribed by asking questions like these:
  - Are they successful at school? Especially in which subjects? What is their average grade?
  - What are their favorite/least liked subjects?
  - Do they have difficulties in any subjects? How are these handled by the teacher?
  - Do they do their homework at school, or at home? Do they get assistance with their study work from their teachers/other staff (like teaching assistants)?
  - Do they attend organized activities at school after the classes?
- Then it should be asked whether their parents can equip them with necessary tools (books, paper ware, etc.) and provide an appropriate learning atmosphere at home:
  - Do their families have difficulties in paying expenses of education (books, meals, school excursions, etc.)?
  - Do they have a place/room/desk of their own at home to study?
  - Do their parents (grandparents, siblings or other relatives) study at home with them?
- The way the school staff – principals and teachers – communicate with them and their parents should also be discussed:
  - Do they like the way their teachers talk to them?
  - What do their teachers do in case of a conflict in the classroom? Do they take sides? With whom (Roma – non-Roma)?
- Have they ever experienced bad tone used with them or their parents on the part of the school staff? How did they feel about it?
- Have they ever been very disappointed with the school or the teachers? What did they do then? What happened?
  - Lastly, it can be asked: what is their vision of an ideal school? (Descriptions should be aided by asking additional questions regarding the ethnic composition of students, school staff, means of teaching and disciplining, etc.)
  - Do they think their vision will ever come true? If yes, when (under what circumstances)? If not, why not? (Here students should be instigated to refer to relations and attitudes experienced in the broader society, like ethnic hostility, stereotyping, prejudices, discrimination, etc.)
6/E Interviews with educational experts / representatives of organizations providing educational services to Roma children (optional)

In case of need for further information on education policies and their implementation locally – or when seen appropriate from the point of view of accomplishing later tasks during the TERNO project (i.e. organization of reference points and recruitment of personnel and students) – educational experts and/or representatives of organizations providing educational services active in the neighborhood also may be interviewed. Discussions should revolve around the same issues as above, accompanied with information on the actual contributions of professionals.

- Professional experience:
  - What is their job/position?
  - What kind of educational programs have they been involved in so far?

- Teaching methodologies:
  - Which schools do they know well in the area? What do they think about them in terms of education policies and teaching methods?
  - What is their position regarding the integrated/segregated education of Roma children? Why?
  - What do they think about (the viability) of multicultural educational methods, interculturalism, etc.?

- These interviewees can also be presented with the 'list of factors' and asked to formulate their opinion regarding the reasons of the educational difficulties of Roma children.
## 5.7 Appendix 7: Info-sheets

### 7/A Info-sheet for summarizing interviews with school principals / representatives of school authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country:</th>
<th>School represented:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category of respondent(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview or focus group? (please underline)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if focus group) number of respondents:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID-number(s) of respondent(s) (on the list of respondents):</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Aspect</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Verbatim citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Professional affiliation:</td>
<td>name or kind of organization, position and title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reasons for the educational problems of Roma students:</td>
<td>low performance, absenteeism, dropout, etc. – cf. also list of factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Specific needs of Roma students:</td>
<td>material, social, cultural, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Solutions to these problems:</td>
<td>local measures and initiatives concerning the education of Roma students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Diversity management:</td>
<td>promotion of innovative tools, special teaching services (afternoon study groups, teaching assistants, mentoring, etc.) and current trends in pedagogy (multicultural and intercultural education, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Opinions about educational integration/segregation:</td>
<td>arguments for and against integrated education of Roma and non-Roma students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Providing for needs and demands of teachers dealing with Roma children:</td>
<td>professional aid, moral support, remuneration, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Other remarks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7/B Info-sheet for summarizing interviews/focus group discussions with teachers

See also responses in corresponding ‘Teachers’ questionnaires’!

Country:
School represented:
Category of respondent(s):
Interview or focus group? (please underline)
(if focus group) number of respondents:
ID-number(s) of respondent(s) (on the list of respondents):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Aspect</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Professional experience: profile of the group regarding the level and specificities of teaching, education and training – see also Question 1. of ‘Teachers’ questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (Experiences of and reasons for) the educational problems of Roma students: behavioral disorders, learning difficulties, low performance, absenteeism, dropout, etc. – see responses to ‘list of factors’ as well as ‘teachers’ questionnaires’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Specific needs of Roma students: material, social, cultural, complaints of parents, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Solutions to these problems: use of pedagogical approaches and methods in motivating children, involving parents, conflict management, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Diversity management: experiences with innovative tools, special teaching services (afternoon study groups, teaching assistants, mentoring, etc.) and current trends in pedagogy (multicultural and intercultural education, differential education, cooperative learning)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Opinions about educational integration/segregation: arguments for and against integrated education of Roma and non-Roma students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Their own needs and demands as teachers dealing with Roma children: professional aid, moral support, remuneration, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Other remarks</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
7/C Info-sheet for summarizing interviews/focus group discussion with parents of Roma students

**Country:**
**School represented:**
**Category of respondent(s):**
**Interview or focus group?** (please underline)
(if focus group) **number of respondents:**
ID-number(s) of respondent(s) (on the list of respondents):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Aspect</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Family background:</strong> profile of respondent(s): age of their children, whether they attend school, typical family form, housing and living conditions, education, employment, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>(Causes of) successes and failures of their child at school:</strong> circumstances and frequency of attendance, performance, social life, conflicts, learning difficulties, etc. – cf. also responses to 'list of factors'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Needs and expectations:</strong> their child’s and their own demands regarding school, teachers, education</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Opinions about the school:</strong> good and bad experiences, likes and dislikes, atmosphere, teachers’ attitudes, pedagogical approaches and methods, relationship/communication with parents, attitudes of peers’ and their parents, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Diversity management:</strong> existence of tolerance, individualized attention and help, availability of special services within and outside the school (afternoon study groups, teaching assistants, mentoring) and ways of handling diverse abilities and interests of students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Visions of the ideal school:</strong> ideas and realities, with reference to relations and experiences in the broader society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Needs and demands:</strong> their own capacities, actual solutions and need of assistance in terms of providing for the educational needs of their child (paying expenses, sparing the child from work and domestic duties, ensuring them time and space to study, helping them in doing homework, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Other remarks</strong></td>
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</table>
7/D Info-sheet for summarizing interviews/focus group discussion with Roma students and their peers

Country:  
School represented:  
Category of respondent(s):  
Interview or focus group? (please underline)  
(if focus group) number of respondents:  
ID-number(s) of respondent(s) (on the list of respondents):  

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Family background</td>
<td>profile of respondent(s): average age, typical family form, housing and living conditions, parents’ education and employment, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student issues</td>
<td>their circumstances and frequency of school attendance, successes and failures, conflicts and discomforts, learning difficulties, and the reasons behind all of this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Needs and expectations</td>
<td>their own desires and their parents’ demands regarding school, teachers, education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opinions about the school</td>
<td>good and bad experiences, likes and dislikes, atmosphere, social life and friendships, teachers’ attitudes, teaching methods and conflict resolution practices, teachers’ relationship/communication with parents, attitudes of peers’ and their parents, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Diversity management</td>
<td>existence of tolerance, individualized attention and help, availability of special services within and outside the school (afternoon study groups, teaching assistants, mentoring)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Visions of the ideal school</td>
<td>ideas and realities, with reference to relations and experiences in the broader society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Needs and demands</td>
<td>their own and their parents’ expectations regarding their educational career, their family’s capacities in covering their educational needs (paying expenses, exempting them from work and domestic duties, ensuring them time and space to study, helping them in doing their homework, etc.)</td>
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<td>8. Other remarks</td>
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7/E Info-sheet for organizations providing educational services to Roma children (optional)

Country:
School represented:
Category of respondent(s):
Interview or focus group? (please underline)
   (if focus group) number of respondents:
ID-number(s) of respondent(s) (on the list of respondents):

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<tr>
<td>4. Solutions to these problems: initiatives concerning the education of Roma students, educational programs they have been involved in</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Diversity management: opinions about educational policies and teaching methods practiced in the area / at schools in this study and about current trends in pedagogy (multicultural and intercultural education, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Opinions about educational integration/segregation: arguments for and against integrated education of Roma and non-Roma students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Providing for needs and demands of schools and teachers dealing with Roma children: viability of progressive educational policies, problems with implementation, kinds of support that is needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other remarks</td>
<td></td>
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