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## QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS WITH A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF ROMA PUPILS<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

In an empirical research from 1998<sup>2</sup> I have made the observation that some schools tend to separate Roma in different classes, apart from majority pupils. Later on I realized with surprise that, behind from the usual practice of grouping Roma pupils in separate classes, in Romanian school system there are some schools in which you can find exclusively Roma pupils. My feeling of surprise was due not by that empirical reality but rather by the fact that this reality is in most of the cases a <taken for granted> reality, an unproblematic matter. Being more specific, on the field, in Coltau, Baia Mare County, I asked where I could find the local school. I was guided to school from the center of the village, a school grade I-VIII, in which learn, in different classes, Magyar pupils to the Magyar section and Roma pupils to the Romanian section. Later I found that in Coltau it is also another school grade I-IV but in which learn exclusively Roma pupils. The fact that the village inhabitants did not spontaneously mentioned this latest school proves the marginal position attributed to this school. Visiting this school I could see that inhabitants were right not to qualify this institution as a school. The school building was rent from a private person and was composed by only two small rooms (4/5 m) in which simultaneously functioned kindergarten and grade I-IV. In these two rooms learned 104 Roma children. When school attendance was 100%, children were obliged to stay 3 or 4 in the same desk. The school building had no inscription or any official symbol to certify that the building is a public institution, a public school. Inside the building the only facilities were desks, chairs and blackboards. Other educational facilities were definitely missing.

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<sup>1</sup> Supported by the Open Society Institute - with the contribution of the International Policy Fellowship of OSI Budapest

<sup>2</sup>The research "Situatia sociala a romilor din judetul Buzau", financed by Consiliul Judetean Buzau

That research proved that the schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils are not an exception. I found that from 10 visited schools in different counties, 3 of them were exclusively schools with Roma pupils. The local authorities, whom I discussed with, consider that segregated Roma schools are justified by the following arguments:

- Schools with a majority of Roma pupils are placed very closely by Roma communities;
- Children from poor families, including here the majority of Roma children, have difficulties when integrate within normal schools;
- A majority of Roma families do not have financial resources needed in order to sustain their children in schools with another ethnic majority. In these latest schools financial requirements are higher (books, money for the school found, trips or other extracurricular activities);
- Schools with another ethnic majority do not have enough space in order to enroll Roma children. In the same time there are not enough teachers for allowing an inclusion of Roma pupils in schools with another ethnic majority.

At that time I pointed out<sup>3</sup> by case studies the phenomena of segregated schools and also Roma parents and pupils dissatisfaction regarding the quality of education received in those schools. The research paper "*School participation of Roma children*" (2002, under print) gives us the possibility to obtain quantitative data regarding schools with high percentage of Roma pupils from the rural area. This research paper was realized by Ministry of Education and Research (hereinafter MER), The Institute of Educational Sciences (hereinafter IES) and The Research Institute for Quality of Life (hereinafter RIQL). The study pointed out the dimension of the segregated schools phenomena, although at official level it is a reticence to recognize that schools with a high percentage of Roma are in fact segregated schools. In other words, although it is recognized the existence of schools with a high percentage of Roma and also differences on the quality of education in these schools, no one mentions desegregation as a potential remedy. It was considered that it is necessary to take action in order to reduce the discrepancies, but

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<sup>3</sup> Papers "Roma Children in Romania", Save the Children, Unicef, 1999 and "Educational Policy for Gypsy (Roma) in Romania", Research Support Scheme, final report, 2000

it is not necessary to change the actual institutional arrangement. We believe that educational segregation of Roma pupils is unacceptable although it is based on residential segregation and although it is not a result of a governmental policy. Even if segregated Roma schools will become equal in quality with other schools from the educational system, segregation it is an inappropriate situation both for Roma minority and for Romanian society. Beyond of transmitting knowledge and developing abilities, school is also a mean for disseminating values. Tolerance, ethnic dialogue, democratic exercise can not be applied if a minority is isolated, marginalised. The American experience of desegregating school system demonstrated that segregation is a problem in itself and not only by its consequences. The doctrine “separate cannot be equal”, as a result of a long desegregation process, state in fact that two schools different in terms of racial composition (one white and another black) can not be equal even if those schools have equal resources. Isolating minority means to make the assumption that minority culture is of lower rank than majority culture.

Our main hypothesis is the following: **in schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils (over 50%), the human resources, financial resources and school’s facilities are lower compared with the average recorded within the entire educational system.**

This situation has negative consequences on school achievement and reduces “life chances” (in R. Dahrendorf terms) of Roma children. The economic and social costs of maintaining a dual educational system are very high and are reflected in the following:

- Lower quality of education received by Roma pupils in segregated schools is an obstacle in schooling on secondary education (a lower participation on vocational schools and colleges);
- Low level of schooling makes unemployment to be much higher in the case of Roma compared with total population;
- Low level of schooling induces that large part of Roma are in situation of extreme poverty producing marginalisation and social exclusion;
- A high incidence of illiteracy and especially of functional illiteracy compared with ensemble of population;

- As a consequence of high incidence of illiteracy on adult population (almost 50%) a large part of Roma are excluded from democratic process because they cannot fully exercise their right to vote. Illiteracy is an obstacle towards information on political matters (some Roma people cannot read electoral lists);
- Roma social exclusion, due in part of segregation in education, reduces Romania's chances to integrate in UE. One of specific request of UE in the case of Romania is to integrate Roma in Romanian society.

Another hypothesis of our study is that **economic and social costs of maintaining segregated schools greatly exceed costs of desegregating schools**. Desegregating measures address not only equity issue but also the efficiency of Romanian educational system.

## **2. Objectives and methodology**

### ***2.1. Study objectives***

Our study has the following objectives:

1. To assess the number of segregated Roma schools at national level and number of Roma pupils that learn in these schools on primary and secondary education. To evaluate segregated schools in terms of human and financial resources and scholar achievement.
2. To identify and evaluate economic and social costs of maintaining segregated schools in terms of unemployment, illiteracy, civic participation, social exclusion and related costs caused by poor education achieved in segregated schools.
3. To elaborate a strategy for desegregating Roma schools in general terms for Central and Eastern Europe and in specific terms for Romania. To estimate costs, to evaluate benefits and potential perverse effects (in R. Boudon terms).

We hope that our report will contribute to bringing in the public debate the issue of segregation in education of Roma children and in this way to find equitable modalities of problem solving.

## 2.2. Methodological guidelines

Quantitative data used in this report are data from previous published reports and under print studies or, in most of the cases, data obtained by secondary analysis of data from primary databases. When our tables will use data from previous published or under print researches we will indicate as source the names of the reports and of the authors. In the case of secondary analysis of data we will cite the primary databases and institutions contributing to build databases. Qualitative data are from previous interviews<sup>4</sup> taken by author in previous researches.

The main source of quantitative data is the database used previously for the report “*School participation of Roma children*”, paper under print, realized by MER, IES, RIQL. Data were gathered in 1998. The database contains 3,162 cases, representing school units from rural area with Roma pupils in different percentages (between 1 and 100%). This database was obtained selecting cases from a large database (19,427 cases), representing a census of school units from rural area (95% of total). We selected cases in our database using as variable *percentage of Roma pupils in school*. The School Principal was required to estimate the percentage of Roma pupils in school.

Researches realized by RIQL on situation of Roma from Romania in 1992 and 1998 are other two sources of quantitative data that were used in this report. We also made secondary analysis of 1998 database. If in study “*School participation of Roma children*” the units of investigation were consisted by schools, in RIQL research and database the units of investigation were individuals / Roma households from the whole country. It is considered that samples from this two research are representative for Roma population from Romania (1,804 households in 1992 and 1,765 households in 1998). Subjects included<sup>5</sup> in samples were identified as Roma by the interviewer and not necessary by themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Interviews realized during 1998 - 2002

<sup>5</sup> For methodological clarifications see “*Tiganiii intre ignorare si ingrijorare*”, C. Zamfir, E. Zamfir coordinators, Alternative Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993 and “*Romii din Romania*”, C. Zamfir coordinator, under printing.

### ***Research's limits***

The main limit of this paper is that database MER, IES, RIQL (1998) contain data on schools from rural area exclusively. So, when we are referring to schools with Roma pupils we are talking, consequently, only about schools from rural area. When we use the statement <entire system> or, simply, <system>, we refer at rural school system. Due to this limit we cannot evaluate the extension of segregation for entire system, including urban area. We can only estimate them. Most of the school units for kindergarten, primary and secondary level are placed in rural area<sup>6</sup>, but in terms of number of pupils the situation is different. If in kindergarten the children have an equal distribution between rural and urban, in primary and secondary schools learn 60% from total number of children<sup>7</sup>.

A second limit of our study comes from the fact that the variable *percentage of Roma pupils in school* is based on subjective appreciation of the School Principal. It is possible that in some cases this variable to be distorted in order to meet local or contextual interest.

Another data distortion may come from the way in which data about percentage of Roma pupils in schools are reported. For example, Coltau school (kindergarten and grade I-IV) known by us as an exclusively Roma school does not appear in database. Instead, in this village, it was reported only a kindergarten with 50% Roma children. It is probably that Roma pupils who learn in Romanian section are recorded as Romanian. We can assume that errors in reporting data in the sense of diminishing percentage of Roma, or not reporting at all, can occur. Another error in reporting percentage of Roma may come from the fact that although exclusively Roma schools are in separate building, these are considered administratively the same unit with the school with other ethnic majority. In this case the percentage of Roma pupils is calculated taking into account all pupils from all school buildings of the same scholar unit. Obviously, the data will contain less school

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<sup>6</sup> In 1997, in the rural area there used to be 9,033 kindergartens, while in urban area only 3,335 were recorded; when considering the primary and gymnasium school units the ratio is 11,201 in rural area to 2,481 in urban area (*Tendinte sociale*, Unicef, National Statistics Institute, Bucharest, 2001: 64-74).

<sup>7</sup> During 1997-1998 scholar year, pre-school populations in rural and urban areas were the same, while 60% of the primary and gymnasium pupils were in urban area (Ibid.)

with 100% Roma pupils than really exist. In other words, in a village can be a school building in which learn exclusively Roma pupils although in official reporting the school does not appear as such, but subsumed to the main school. This procedure of an unknown extent hides in fact exclusively Roma schools.

Beyond already mentioned limits, controversies around defining Roma identity (hetero-identification or self-identification) create difficulties to any public policy oriented towards Roma. Any estimation of policy costs, including educational policy too, needs an appropriate estimation of beneficiaries' number. From this reason estimation of financial costs for Roma educational policies is more or less valid.

To some extent, these limits can distort the research results regarding number of segregated school. Despite these limits, we believe that our study is important because highlight discrepancies between segregated schools and educational system. In the same time, our study is looking for legitimate solutions. At least in terms of discrepancies we believe that our study is very close to reality.

### 3. Refining Concepts

The term <segregation> must be carefully used in the case of Romania, especially if we extend analysis to other East and Central European countries. In Czech Republic for example, it is estimated that almost 80% of Roma pupils learn in special schools<sup>8</sup>, using different curricula than the mainstream schools. Also in Bulgaria<sup>9</sup> segregation in the case of Roma was based until 1992 on curricula differences between Roma schools (named in the communist period schools for children with “lower level of life style and culture”) and mainstream schools. Although since 1992 Roma schools followed national curricula, the Roma schools remained segregated *de facto* in Bulgaria. In Romania, although the schools in which learn only Roma pupils or a high percent of Roma do exist (justifying use of segregation term), **curricula in Roma schools is the same as for entire educational system** (also in the communist regime). For this reason, segregation has not

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<sup>8</sup> *Denied a future?*, Save the Children, vol. 2, 2001:37

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* vol. 1, pg. 96

a similar meaning with segregation in other countries from region. **In Romania, in this study, the term of segregation does not refer to special schools or curricula differences.**

*De facto*, segregation has a main attribute: it is not a result of a governmental policy. In American literature *de facto* segregation is described<sup>10</sup> as follows: „Racial segregation resulting from the actions of private individuals or unknown forces, not from governmental action or law. *De facto* segregation is to be distinguished from *de jure* segregation, segregation resulting from governmental action or law. *De facto* segregation is generally the result of housing patterns, population movements, and economic conditions often reinforced by governmental policies not aimed at segregation but having that effect.”

In our view ***de facto* segregation, an empirical fact, it is rather an expression of traditions, prejudice and inertia than a policy intended to segregate.** *De facto* segregation is a physical separation of minority from the majority without legal constraints in overcoming this situation. On the contrary, Romanian Constitution and Education Law specify equal access to education for any person whatever race, ethnic origin, social status, gender, etc. a person may have. In addition to that, recent regulations of MER allow to a pupil to enroll and transfer to any school from the system if he/she obtains an agreement from two schools, no matter the residence.

Schools with a high percentage of Roma are an undeniable reality although these schools are not a result of a local or central policy. These schools are usually situated near to Roma communities. Most of these communities have a high level of poverty. Roma schools are not only segregated schools but also poor schools. Although formally there are no barriers in enrolling or transferring pupils to other schools, practically Roma parents can encounter a series of economic, bureaucratic or mental barriers. In some cases Roma parents themselves are reluctant in enrolling their children to schools with a majority of pupils from other ethnic origin. If segregation is not a result of a governmental policy to

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<sup>10</sup> *Historical dictionary of school segregation and desegregation*, Raffel J., 1998, pag. 232



maintain *status quo* can be considered a policy option. Our main hypothesis, which will guide the rest of the paper, is that **in segregated schools, with a high percentage of Roma pupils, the quality of education is lower compared with the entire educational system.** In other words, considering the point of view of educational quality, schools with a majority of Roma pupils are “second hand” schools.

#### **4. Segregation level**

Naturally, we can say that *de facto* segregated schools are those schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils. But over what percentage of Roma pupils in a school can we speak about segregation? Theoretically, when the percentage of Roma pupils in a school overtakes the percentage of Roma school age children within an identified region, we can speak about a segregation tendency in that school. If we consider that in the official census from 1992<sup>11</sup> the percentage of Roma school age children was 3%, then segregation level will be 3%. But taking into account that number of Roma is considered seriously underestimated on official census, we can assume that the value of segregation level will be higher. According to RIQL estimation<sup>12</sup> Roma from Romania are 4,6% from total population (therefore 2,5 times higher than the official census value). According to some Roma non-governmental organizations Roma population are 10% from the total population (Gheorghe and Liegiois, 1995). Therefore the dimension of Roma population is 5,5 times higher than the value registered by the official census. Consequently an estimation of Roma school age population is somewhere between 7,5% and 16,5%. Due to differences in ethnic structure of population on various regions of country we can consider that a 20% Roma pupils in a school could be the theoretical level of segregation. Therefore, schools with more than 20% Roma pupils can be regarded as segregated school. Certainly, among segregated schools there are differences in terms of intensity of segregation. We cannot compare in the same terms a school with 20% Roma pupils with a school with 90% or 100% Roma pupils. Anyway, considering only percentage of Roma in a school we cannot have an adequate picture of segregation tendencies without having

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<sup>11</sup> According to National Statistics Institute, Census of Population and Houses, in *Tendinte sociale*, Extreme Group Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001

<sup>12</sup> According to *Tiganiu intre ignorare si ingrijorare*, C. Zamfir and E. Zamfir coordinators, Alternative Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993

an image about distribution of Roma pupils inside that school. We can have the situation of a school in which percentage of Roma pupils is “normal” (close to ratio of school age Roma children on the total of school age children), but Roma pupils are placed in separate classes. Anyway, the percentage of Roma pupils is important because over a certain value of Roma pupils (for example over 50%) the probability to have separate classes increase. The percentage of Roma pupils in a school is an important indicator because depending on values of this variable, policy can be oriented toward desegregation inside the school or school desegregation in itself. It is difficult to appreciate the critical value of percentage of Roma pupils from which school desegregation is needed without previous information regarding the arrangement of pupils in the classroom and ratio of school age Roma children in a specific area.

### 5. Dimensions of educational segregation

The number of educational units from rural in which learn Roma pupils (from 1 to 100%) is 3,162 cases. In the same educational units can function different grades (kindergarten, primary and secondary school). Therefore the number of analyzed schools by our database taking into account all grades is 5,560 cases. Schools distribution on grades is showed in the following table:

**Table 1. Investigated school units**

<b>Total</b>	<b>Kindergartens</b>	<b>Schools grade I-IV</b>	<b>Schools grade I-VIII</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>Vocational schools</b>
5,560	2,335	974	1,867	165	219

*Source: Roma children school participation, M. Jigau. and M. Surdu, coordinators 2002*

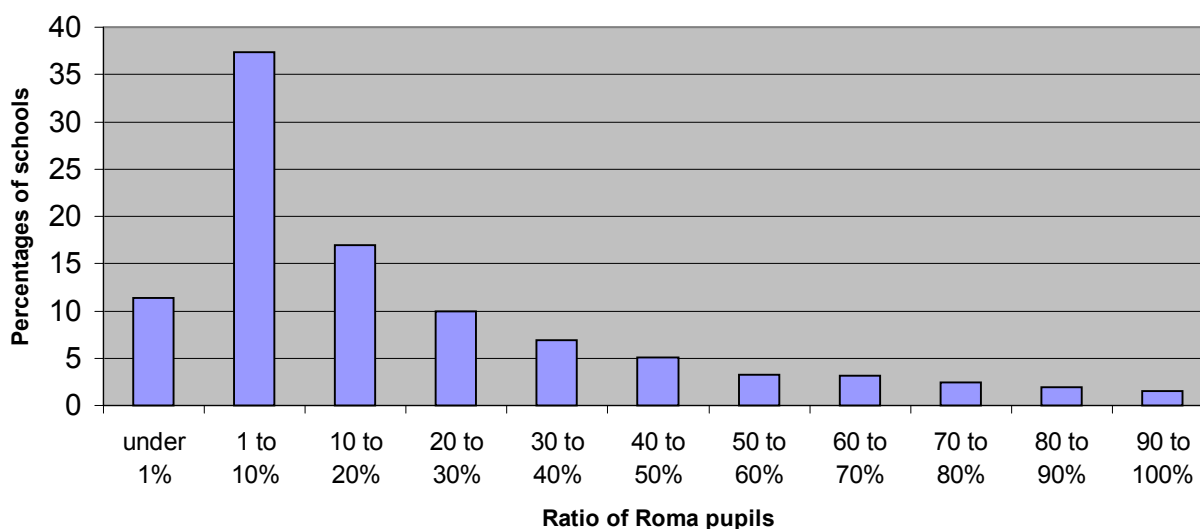
These schools teach Roma pupils in different percentage from 1 to 100%. Distribution of the schools in which learn Roma pupils, using intervals, is displayed bellow:

**Table 2. Ratio of Roma pupils by intervals:**

Roma pupils ratio	Number of schools	Percentages of schools(%)
under 1%	362	11.4
1 to 10%	1,182	37.4
10 to 20%	539	17.0
20 to 30%	314	9.9
30 to 40%	219	6.9
40 to 50%	162	5.1
50 to 60%	102	3.2
60 to 70%	99	3.1
70 to 80%	76	2.4
80 to 90%	59	1.9
90 to 100%	48	1.5
Total	3,162	100.0

Source: MER, IES, RIQL, database, 1998

**Roma pupils ratio by intervals**



The data show that almost 2 thirds from rural schools in which learn also Roma pupils have a percentage under 20% Roma pupils. In these cases, pupils distribution is a “normal” one but in over one third from rural school in which learn also Roma pupils number of Roma is over-represented. We must note that the percentage of Roma pupils in a school does not offer a picture of segregation, except cases in which the value of this indicator is very high. Let’s take for example a school in which learns 20% Roma pupils. If in a school with 20% Roma pupils are distributed in mixed classes, we can say that school does not have segregationist tendencies. Inversely, if in a school with a percentage of Roma pupils under 20% these pupils learn in separated classes, the school can be considered a segregated one, although percentage of Roma pupils is less than in population. However we believe that in schools with over 50% Roma pupils is most likely, even unavoidable, to have segregated arrangements in classes.

In order to simplify the picture of Roma pupils distribution in schools depending on percentage of Roma pupils, we will use hereinafter the following labels / categories:

- **Mixed schools** - we include here schools with a percentage of Roma pupils from 0,1 to 50%
- **Schools with a Roma majority** - the percentage of Roma pupils in these schools is from 50,1% to 70%
- **Schools in which Roma pupils prevail** - are those schools with a percentage of Roma pupils from 70,1 % to 100%.

Depending on the percentage of Roma pupils in a school, there can be taken different policy measures. In mixed schools may be useful inside school desegregation measures, focused on building a real multicultural environment and also anti-bias training. In schools with a majority of Roma pupils, policy measures can be mixed: inside school desegregation but also school desegregation in itself when necessary. Schools in which Roma pupils prevail need rather school desegregation. However our recommendations from the last section of the paper are rather general and in specific cases policy measures need to take in account the local contexts.

According to previous mentioned categories, rural schools in which learn also Roma pupils are distributed as following:

- 87,9% - mixed schools;
- 6,4% - schools with a Roma majority;
- 5,8% - schools in which Roma pupils prevail.

Number of Roma pupils who learn in schools with over 50% Roma is the following:

- In primary education (classes I-IV) learn 21,014 pupils;
- In secondary schools (gymnasium, classes V-VIII) – 10,640 pupils;
- In kindergartens are 6,680 Roma children.

In kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, in rural area, learn 38,472 Roma children in units with a majority of Roma or in which Roma prevail. If segregation patterns in urban and rural would be the same, taking into account urban-rural ratio (50% rural, 50% urban for kindergarten and 40% rural, 60% urban for primary and secondary school) result an estimation of 54,161 Roma pupils learning in urban area in segregated schools (over 50% Roma pupils). Adding Roma pupils from rural and urban, result an estimation of about 92,000 Roma pupils learning in schools over 50% Roma for the entire educational system.

Segregation tendencies are more salient for compulsory education (classes I-VIII) and especially primary education. More than half of schools with over 50% Roma are schools with grades I-IV. Almost one third are schools grades I-VIII.

**Table 3. Schools over 50% Roma by types**

	<b>Kindergartens</b>	<b>Schools grades I-IV</b>	<b>Schools grades I-VIII</b>
Schools with a Roma majority	7.0%	50.2%	33.3%
Schools in which Roma pupils prevail	3.3%	56.6%	33.0%

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

Segregating Roma children in primary and secondary schools has a strong negative impact on scholar and professional future of children, because of lower quality of

education. A Roma pupil graduating VIII classes in a segregated school has a lower chance to pass the exam for college or vocational school. Probability to follow higher education is extremely low.

#### **6. “Roma schools” – physical or social distance?**

In our opinion using *Roma* or *Gypsy school* to give a name to schools in which Roma pupils prevail is a mistake generating confusion. However the label Roma/Gypsy school is frequently used in common language. It is a mistake because in so-called Roma schools the teaching language is not Romani but the majority language (Romanian or Magyar). Romani language was only recently introduced in curricula but as an optional object of study not as a teaching language. Moreover, the content of curricula has Romani culture as object of study only in few cases of schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils.

**Schools with a majority of Roma children are in most of the cases a consequence of social history of Roma.** In Romania, Roma were slaves since their arrival on this territory. Abolition was a process during almost 25 years, slavery being abolished only in the second half of the XIX century. Fixing Roma population on the land was a permanently concern of authorities in the slavery period and after, during also in the communist period (Achim V., 1998). The process of fixing Roma on the land had as result isolated and homogenous Roma communities. These communities are usually situated on the margins of villages or outlying districts of cities. The communist regime tried by its town-planning policy to demolish Roma districts and to spread Roma population among majority population by moving Roma from houses to block of flats. This town-planning policy was largely unsuccessful, many Roma living today in Roma districts or ghettos. Almost every city has a Roma district (for example Ferentari district in Bucharest, Sineasca and Fata Luncii districts in Craiova, Catanga district in Slobozia, and so on) or a suburb inhabited by Roma (Maguri-Lugoj - Timis county, Pata Rat - Cluj county, Glina – Ilfov county, last two communities being placed near to garbage area of the cities). In rural area we can find entire Roma villages (for example Momaia, Arges county; Rudarie, Gorj county; Balta Arsa, Vaslui county), or Roma communities situated

near to villages borders (Coltau, Baia Mare county; Ticvani, Caras-Severin county). There are also cases when Roma settlements are not administratively registered because Roma people do not have property documents, although they can live there from many generations. In conclusion, **schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils are in most of the cases a result of residential segregation.** Analyzing RIQL database (1998) we can find that more than one quarter of Roma are living in isolated, homogenous communities. These communities are in fact cases of residential segregation.

**Table 4. Patterns of residential segregation (in %)**

Homogenous Roma communities	Mixed communities	Preponderantly non-Roma zone	Exclusively non-Roma zone	Cannot appreciate	NA
28.9	26.8	29.6	10.9	0.7	3.2

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

However, to explain educational segregation only by residential segregation is not enough. Let's think for example at Tigveni (Arges) school (classes I-IV). In this school learn exclusively Roma pupils, although this school is situated at 2 km from the main school (classes I-VIII) with a majority of Romanian pupils. In this case educational segregation cannot be justified only by residential segregation. With a commitment from the part of both communities (Roma and Romanian) pupils can be mixed in the same school. Some of the Roma pupils follow primary school in the main school, with a Romanian majority. These pupils come from wealthy Roma families who choose to send their children to school with a Romanian majority. The reason of this choice is the higher quality of education in mixed school compared with exclusively Roma school. We met this situation also in other Roma communities. This situation put in the light existing discrepancies in terms of educational quality between schools with a high percentage of Roma and mainstream schools. We can also draw another conclusion: including Roma pupils in mainstream school is possible where economic and mentality barriers are removed.

Analysing our data about schools with a high percent of Roma pupils we can conclude that a majority of these schools are situated to a relatively small distance from the neighbour schools of the same level. We can assume that neighbour schools are schools with a majority of non-Roma pupils because from our field observations in a village there are not two schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils. So, **more than half from schools with over 50% Roma pupils are situated less than 3 km from the neighbour schools of the same level.** The rest of the schools with a high percent of Roma are relatively equally distributed to the category 3-5 km and over 5 km.

**Table 5. Distance of a high percentage of Roma pupils schools by the neighbour schools of the same level (in %)**

	Up to 3 km	3-5 km	Over 5 km
Schools with 50-70% Roma pupils	56.2	23.4	20.4
Schools over 70% Roma pupils	52.8	22.0	25.2

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

Analyzing the same data from another approach we can conclude that average distance between schools with a majority of Roma pupils (50-70%) and neighbor units is 3,79 km. The average distance between schools in which Roma pupils prevail (over 70%) and neighbour schools is 4,3 km. Almost three quarters from schools with over 50% Roma pupils are situated from less than 5 km by the schools with another ethnic majority.

Because the physical distance between Roma and non-Roma communities is relatively small (and implicitly distance between majority Roma schools and majority non-Roma schools) the explanation of educational segregation can be found in **social distance** between Roma minority and majority of population. Although segregation is not a direct result of local communities will but rather a legacy of social history of Romania (and implicitly of social history of Roma population), researches indicate a considerable social distance between majority and Roma population. Therefore, separate arrangement of schools may be in some cases a result of a **negative image of majority population**



**against Roma minority.** Raised social distance between Roma and majority population can be an explanation for schools with high percentage of Roma pupils acceptance. Although social distance between Roma and majority population decreased seriously in latest years, it remains considerably higher. Roma population is further the most repudiated minority in Romania.

**Table 6. Changes on prejudices against Roma minority (1993-1999)**

%	1993	1997	1999
Do not want to have Roma neighbours	71.8	59.7	48.5

Source: Indicators concerning the Roma Communities in Romania, IRQL, Bucharest, 2002

Considerable social distance which separate Romanian society from Roma minority is enhanced by **socio-economic discrepancies**, but also by a lot of **prejudices and stereotypes** which remained stable over time. Regarding social economic discrepancies statistics show that prevalence of poverty is higher in the case of Roma compared with Romanian society. Under the minimum level of subsistence<sup>13</sup> (C. Zamfir, E. Zamfir, 1995:128) there are 62.9% of Roma people against the 16% of whole population. However, poverty is usually associated with a lower social status, therefore a negative public perception against the poor. Different ways of gaining incomes in rural area by the Roma strength also in public view the lower status of Roma. Most of rural Roma people do not have land in property being forced, in order to survive, to work as daily workers on their neighbours land or to seasonal migrate for work. + quoted from interviews

Regarding prejudices and stereotypes recent data reveal that majority population has a strongly negative image against Roma. + quoted from interviews

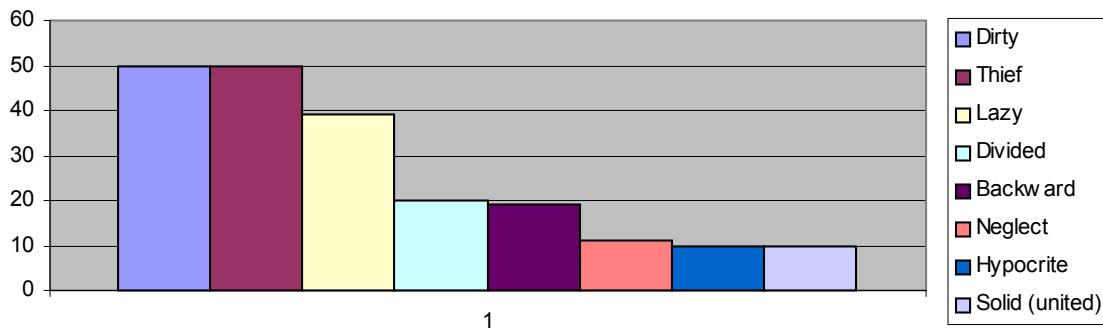
**Table 7. Main Roma characteristics most frequently mentioned by the majority**

<sup>13</sup> The minimum level of subsistence is defined as following: „...expenses on basic goods and services; clothes and shoes expenses for adults were not included, considering that these goods already exist in the household. The level of subsistence ensures the living expenses during relatively short term life sequence. To continue the living under this level it will has as consequences malnutrition and health depreciation” (Dimensiuni ale saraciei, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest, 1995)

The list in front of you enumerates some characteristics. Please, choose three of them which best describe Roma from Romania	%
Dirty	50
Thief	50
Lazy	39
Divided	20
Backward	19
Neglect	11
Hypocrite	10
Solid (united)	10

Source: *Interethnic Relations Barometer, made by Metro Media Transilvania for Resources Center for Ethno-cultural Diversity, November 2001:11, apud Indicators concerning the Roma Communities in Romania, IRQL, Bucharest, 2002: 37*

**Main Roma characteristics  
 most frequently mentioned by the majority**



Summarizing, we can say that segregated schools are a result of residential segregation; but in the same time, the social distance which divides Roma and majority population has a strong influence in maintaining *status quo*. This social distance is enhanced by substantial economic discrepancies and also by prejudices and stereotypes.

## **7. School participation *versus* quality of education**

Low school participation was and it is the main concern regarding Roma education. Some prejudices and stereotypes explain this lower school participation by a negative attitude of Roma toward school. Earlier but also latest sociological researches (Zamfir C., Zamfir E., 1993, 1996; McDonald C., 1999, Jigau M., Surdu M., 2002) identify as a main cause of reduced school attendance of Roma, the poverty affecting a large part of Roma. Poverty and extreme poverty affecting majority of Roma people is a principal barrier in access to education because although education it is free, parents need money in order to pay costs associated with schooling (clothes, shoes, writing materials, books, transportation, food and so on). These associated costs of education are in many cases prohibitive.

Another series of causes of lower school participation can be found on Roma culture and life styles influences: difficulties in school adapting to scholar environment due to a poor knowledge of Romanian language, seasonal migration of many Roma families for work, conflictual /contrasting values between Roma life style and school requests (liberty *versus* obedience) Moreover, the level of trust in school is very low among Roma, as for majority population also (Surdu M., Surdu L., 2002). Lack of trust in school is determined by lack of social opportunities after school graduation. The large extent of Roma lower participation represent a failure of Romanian educational system in counterbalancing external constraints (socio-economic or cultural) which restrain Roma access to education.

In the communist period, a series of coercive measures were applied, aiming to bring Roma children to school: penalties, interdiction to hire Roma parents without proof of their children enrolment in school, obligation of teachers to visit Roma families and to convince them to send their children to school. The main objectives of educational policy during the communist period were a complete schooling for compulsory education and illiteracy eradication. Consequently to this policy Roma school participation was higher than in the present. Also, the number of classes graduated by Roma was higher in communist period than in the present. Roma participation in college and vocational

school was also higher (Surdu M., 2000, 2002). Bringing Roma to school policy had a high cost consisting in a huge assimilation process of Roma by the majority population. Roma population was not acknowledged as a minority in the communist period being included under the label “co-inhabiting nationalities”. Therefore the possibility to study Roma language and culture was denied.

After 1989 the main concern of educational policies for Roma regarded raising school participation and reducing school dropped out. Lower levels of school participation and high percentage of Roma school drop out explain the main orientation of educational policies. According with latest available data<sup>14</sup>, Roma participation in kindergarten was only 17.2%, 4 times lower than for entire population. For Roma school age population (7-18 years) school participation was 53.4%, almost half from Roma children being never enrolled in school system (16.9%) or drop out the school (15.3%)<sup>15</sup>. In 1995 the Government introduced a regulation<sup>1</sup> stipulating that only children who regularly attend school can receive children allowance. This measure expressed in fact the Governmental concerns for raising Roma school participation and decreasing drop out. Another relevant educational measure was introduction of Roma culture and language in schools.

Educational policies with a direct focus on quality of education for Roma were not undertaken, although we can suppose that measure of hiring inspectors for Roma and Roma teachers can positively influence quality of education.

Lack of direct educational policies oriented toward improving quality of education at a systemic level<sup>16</sup> has in our opinion the following reasons. First of all, school participation problem, by its extent, become a priority putting in shadow quality of education concerns. Secondly, lack of a standardized quality evaluation system makes difficult planning of

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<sup>14</sup> See „*Romii din Romania: 1998*”, RIQL, C. Zamfir and M. Preda coordinators, collective paper under printing

<sup>15</sup> Data excerpt from *Indicatori privind comunitatile de romi din Romania*, Expert Publishing House, Bucharest 2002. 14.4% represents no-answer category, but we believe that in reality the drop out cases or not enrolling cases are recorded as no-answers. This is due to the undesirability status of declaring drop out or non attendance.

measures for educational quality improvement. Finally, lack of statistical data and indicators about schools with a high percentage of Roma leave the problem of quality of education largely unaware. Officially, discrepancies are recognized in quality of education between rural and urban, between developed zones and undeveloped zones. But because educational system does not have an evaluation standard for quality of education, a hierarchy of schools is not available. Although quality of education in schools with a high percentage of Roma is supposed to be lower than for the rest of the system, until now only case studies and qualitative researches addressed this problem.

Without questioning the importance of Roma school participation we believe that quality of education received by Roma pupils is also important. However, school participation depends largely on quality of education. We can suppose that in a school with a low quality of education pupils chances to pass the exams in order to access higher levels of education (vocational school, college) are lower. In addition, schools with a low educational quality are supposed to be less attractive, influencing negatively school participation and pupils involvement in school activities. In some cases low quality of education can influence school drop out.

In our opinion, quality of education is strongly related with school's environment. The main question we will try to answer is the following: Quality of education in schools with a high percentage of Roma is the same as for the rest of the system or it is different? Related to this question, other questions emerge: How is the infrastructure in the schools with a high percentage of Roma comparatively with the system? What are teachers' qualifications in these schools? How are pupils' scholar achievements? How education's beneficiaries (Roma children and parents) perceive quality of education in these schools? What expectations have teachers regarding Roma pupils' achievements?

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<sup>16</sup>Some NGOs like Education Centre 2000+ took actions in order to improve the quality of education within schools with Roma pupils. We will come back to these.

## **8. Factors of low quality of education in schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils**

Quality of education is a contextual concept<sup>17</sup>, depending on different requirements and objectives of various educational systems. In P. Rado opinion, “quality in education can be defined in three ways:

- To meet quality standards developed by experts (e.g. requirements of curricula or exams);
- To meet the requirements that were laid down in a <contract> (e.g. the special program that was offered to the parents by a school);
- To satisfy the demands of each individual <consumers>, that is, to meet the specific learning needs of each children”.

In this section we will try to evaluate quality of education in schools with a high percentage of Roma using a mix of the previous mentioned approaches and using available data. Regarding pupils’ school achievements we will use available indicators. An indicator which allows us to compare schools with many Roma pupils and the rest of schools from the system, is **ratio of promoted pupils on the capacity exam**. This exam is a very important one because is a filter exam allowing to enroll for college or vocational school only to pupils who pass this exam. Not passing this exam reduces extremely the social opportunities for pupils. Only with compulsory education (primary and secondary school) children may have, at best, unqualified jobs.

Another indicator, which allows us an evaluation of basic abilities of Roma pupils, is **functional illiteracy**. Unfortunately we don’t have data able to allow a comparison between schools with many Roma pupils and the rest of the system. But with this indicator we will evaluate ratio of Roma illiterates among primary and secondary Roma school graduates. In our view functional illiteracy evaluates in the same time system capacity to reach one of its main objectives, namely liquidation of illiteracy.

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<sup>17</sup> P. Rado, *Transition in Education*, Open Society Institute, 2001:69

Another viewpoint on quality of education evaluation is beneficiaries' evaluation. We will take into account an evaluation made by Roma parents and children about education received in school. This qualitative information cannot be generalized but it is important because give us some inputs about reasons of dissatisfaction among Roma parents and children. Quality of education received by pupils may be evaluated by parents' and children' expectations and also by their satisfaction regarding educational process.

Teachers' perceptions and attitudes are also important in evaluating quality of education from a school. We assume that, in schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils, low **expectations of teachers regarding Roma pupils** influence negatively the entire educational process, lowering quality of education in these schools.

We cannot have a comprehensive image about quality of education without considering **indicators regarding schools facilities and human resources** from schools with a majority of Roma pupils. Comparing these indicators in the case of schools with a majority of Roma pupils with the entire system emphasizes differences in quality of education. In our view infrastructure and teachers' qualifications strongly influence quality of education. In other words, if school inputs (infrastructure and teachers' qualification) are low, quality of education will be also low.

### ***8.1. Evaluation of quality of education by scholar achievements***

We choose for this part those indicators, which allow us to draw a comparison between schools with a majority of Roma pupils and the entire system. In order to describe scholar achievements we will use the following indicators:

- Attendance to the capacity exam;
- Ratio of promoted pupils on the capacity exam;
- Ratio of pupils' failing to get their remove;
- Attendance to the school competitions;

In addition we will provide an estimation of functional illiteracy incidence for Roma children in the case of children age group 10-16 years enrolled in school.

*Attending capacity exam* it is an expression of Roma pupils willingness to follow higher level of education. Schools with a high percentage of Roma score lower values on this indicator comparing with the entire system. So, if for the educational system attendance to capacity exam is **88%**, for the schools in which prevail Roma pupils attendance dramatically drop to **69,59%**. On this indicator we have data only for 132 schools while 253 don't answer to this question. Probably the high ratio of no-answers expresses in fact a high percentage of non-attendance to this exam. This means that the value of attendance indicator in the case of school in which Roma pupils prevail could be more reduced than data reveal.

*Ratio of pupils who promote capacity exam* is an indicator going a step further than mere attendance on capacity exam. This indicator informs us about schools' resources to prepare pupils in order to pass toward college or vocational school. While for the educational system ratio of pupils who promote capacity exam is **68%**, for the schools in which Roma pupils prevail the ratio is only **44,55%**. On this indicator we have data only from 63 schools in which prevail Roma pupils while 123 schools don't answer to this question. Ratio of pupils who promote capacity exam indicates a critical situation about schools' resources to train pupils. Data point out that more than half of Roma pupils learning in the schools in which Roma prevail fail to pass capacity exam.

*Ratio of pupils' failing to get their remove* it is an indicator calculated for the period 1995-1998 and it is computed for primary and secondary levels. This indicator can be considered a relatively good description of knowledge achieved by pupils, although according marks that conduct to pupils' failure it is a very subjective process, depending on teachers' perceptions and expectations. Increasing ratio of Roma pupils in a school is strongly related with an increasing of this indicator (ratio of pupils' failing to get their remove). Therefore, in schools with over 70% Roma pupils ratio of pupils' failing to get their remove is **11.27%**, being almost three times higher than for the educational system (**3.9%**). Pupils' ratio failing to get their remove it is a very important indicator. A successive failure (three consecutive years) leads to pupils' elimination from the school system because children go over legal age allowing schooling on primary school or



gymnasium. In this sense a high ratio of failures in schools is related with an increased drop out.

However, ratio of pupils' failing to get their remove represents also an evaluation of quality of education and implicitly a teachers' self-evaluation. We saw that Roma pupils' school failure depend on social and economic constraints but, in the same time, we consider that is also an expression of educational system failure to compensate for these constraints.

*Attendance to school competitions* evaluates the quality of education rather indirectly, but provide us a picture about how much are schools with many Roma pupils focused on performance. If rural schools are perceived as not encouraging performances, schools in which prevail Roma pupils are even worse. Attendance to school competitions for the entire rural education system is **10 %**, while in schools which prevail Roma pupils this ratio decrease to **1.7%**, being almost 6 times lower. In other words, if on average 1 pupil from 10 participates to school competitions, for schools in which prevail Roma pupils participates only 1 pupil from 60.

Situation of *functional illiteracy* reveals that some Roma pupils cannot have basic reading and writing abilities, although they pass classes. Practically, these pupils can be regarded as functional illiterates. Functional illiteracy situation highlights one more time the failure of educational system. We estimated functional illiteracy on a national sample representative for Roma population<sup>18</sup>. Although available data cannot be deducted by percentage of Roma pupils in a school, we believe that due to a lower quality of education in schools with a high percentage of Roma, most of functional illiterates come from latest type of school.

Ratio of functional illiteracy is 17.6% for pupils enrolled in IV grade. This ratio increases (35.7%) in the case of pupils who drop out on IV grade (Appendix 1). Increased functional illiteracy can be in part an explanation for drop out cases. It is surprising that

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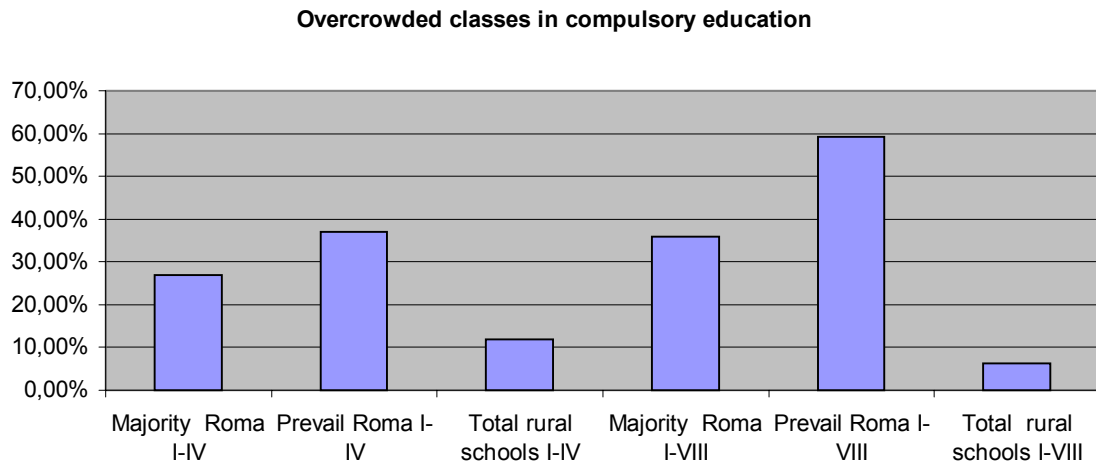
<sup>18</sup> RIQL survey, 1998

Roma pupils pass classes without having minimal reading and writing abilities. One third of Roma pupils who dropped out school on VI grade cannot read and write properly. This situation can be partially explained by low teachers' expectation regarding Roma pupils. Some teachers consider that for Roma pupils literacy is rather a performance indicator than a minimal request.

## **8.2. Evaluating quality of education by inputs: school facilities and human resources**

### **8.2.1. School facilities in educational units with a majority of Roma pupils**

We computed “overcrowded classes” indicator using Romanian school construction standards<sup>19</sup>. Overcrowded classes indicator reveals that schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils are in a higher ratio overcrowded schools than the rest of the system.



<sup>19</sup> “School construction standards require 1.8 – 2.1 sqm per pupil within the classroom and 2.7 – 3 sqm per child in kindergarten” (*Invatamantul rural in Romania: conditii, probleme si strategii de dezvoltare*, MER, IES, Bucharest, 2000: 71)

**Table 8. Overcrowded classes**

	Under minimum space (overcrowded)	Normal standards	Over maximum space (under capacity)
<b>Kindergartens</b>			
With a majority of Roma children	62.6%	5.3%	32.1%
In which prevail Roma children	69.9%	5.7%	24.4%
Total rural kindergartens	71.9%	15.6%	12.5%
<b>Schools classes I-IV</b>			
With a majority of Roma pupils	26.9%	14.0%	59.1%
In which prevail Roma pupils	37.0%	8.7%	54.3%
Total rural schools I-IV	12.0%	7.0%	79.0%
<b>Schools classes I-VIII</b>			
With a majority of Roma pupils	35.9%	9.4%	54.7%
In which prevail Roma pupils	59.3%	5.6%	35.2%
Total rural schools I-VIII	6.3%	9.9%	83.8%

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

Previous table shows that except kindergartens, where Roma participation is substantially reduced (4 times lower than average), for primary and secondary education, in the case of schools with many Roma pupils, overcrowded classes represent a common situation. **If percentage of Roma pupils in a school increases the likelihood to have overcrowded classes also increases.** Therefore, likelihood to have overcrowded classes in schools grade I-IV in which Roma pupils prevail it is more than 3 times higher comparing with the system. For schools grade I-VIII in which Roma pupils prevail this likelihood is more than 9 times higher than the system. In segregated schools insufficient scholar space negatively affects quality of education. In overcrowded classes it is more probable that teachers are more oriented toward discipline maintaining than on individual pupils' needs.

An important facility for an educational quality process is school's library. For Roma pupils school's library is an essential resource because most of them come from poor families and don't have opportunities to find and read books. **If percentage of Roma pupils in a school increases, probability that school don't have a library is higher.**

The following table exposes this association:

**Table 9. Presence of library in school**

Library	Yes	No
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	34.0%	66.0%
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	27.5%	72.5%
Total rural schools	65.7%	34.3%

Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998

The table indicates that, in schools with a majority of Roma pupils, library is missing in almost 2 thirds of cases. In schools in which prevail Roma pupils this facility is missing in almost three-quarters of cases.

*Situations of schools furniture* in schools in which prevail Roma pupils is considered unsatisfactory (by the School Principal) in 17.9% of cases comparatively with the system (12.9%).

### 8.2.2. Human resources

Teachers' qualifications and attitudes are an indispensable ingredient for an educational quality process. While teachers qualifications can be objectively evaluated by quantitative indicators, teachers' attitudes have a subjective component contained in their perceptions and expectations about Roma pupils.

*Ratio of school with a shortage of qualified teachers* is an indicator containing all school units with at least one unqualified teacher. The following table highlights differences on

this indicator between schools with Roma children and the educational system depending on ratio of Roma pupils.

**Table 10. School units with qualified teachers shortage\* by percentage of Roma pupils (in %)**

School units	Kindergartens	School classes I-IV	School classes I-VIII
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	57.1	66.3	100
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	83.3	83.5	100
Total rural schools	47.6	43.5	96.7

\* We include in the category “unqualified teachers” also those teachers qualified for other disciplines than the disciplines they actually teach, according to the specific regulations (1999/2000).

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

Biggest differences are in the case of schools grade I-IV. Schools in which Roma pupils prevail indicate a shortage of qualified teachers in a percentage almost double (**83.5%**) comparatively with all rural schools (**43.5%**).

The highest qualified teachers shortage is for schools I-VIII but this deficit affect relatively equally all schools from the system. Practically all schools over 50% Roma are confronting the problem of shortage of qualified teachers.

Ratio of kindergartens with a majority of Roma children indicating a shortage of qualified educators is almost 10% higher comparatively with the system. In the case of kindergartens in which Roma children prevail, this percentage is over 25%.

*Ratio of unqualified teachers in compulsory education (primary and secondary school)* is an indicator reflecting the intensity of lack of qualification phenomena. We can suppose that in schools with a high ratio of unqualified teachers quality of education is low. Following data present a general picture highlighting discrepancies between schools over

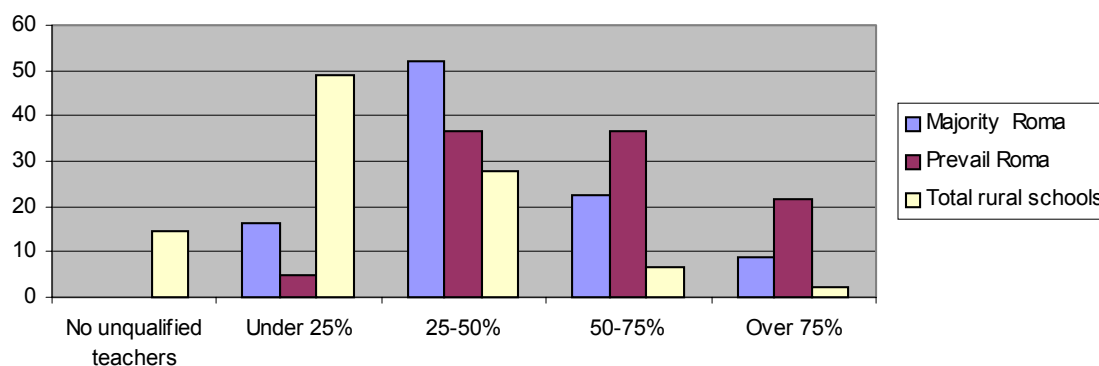
50% Roma pupils and the educational system regarding intensity of lack of qualification phenomena.

**Table 11. Ratio of unqualified teachers in compulsory education<sup>20</sup>**

	No unqualified teachers	Under 25%	25-50%	50-75%	Over 75%
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	0.0	16.4	52.2	22.4	9.0
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	0.0	5.0	36.7	36.7	21.6
Total rural schools	14.5	48.8	27.9	6.8	2.0

Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998

**Ratio of unqualified teachers in compulsory education**



Practically, there are no school over 50% Roma without unqualified teachers. It is obviously an association pattern between percentage of Roma pupils in a school and ratio of unqualified teachers.

In the category “50-75% unqualified teachers”:

- the percentage of schools with a majority of Roma pupils is 3 times higher than for the educational system.
- the percentage of schools in which Roma prevail is 5 times higher than for the educational system.

<sup>20</sup> The ratio of unqualified teachers at the scholar unit level was computed, according to the methodology used in *Învățământul rural din România: probleme, condiții și strategii de dezvoltare*, after eliminating

In the category “over 75% unqualified teachers”:

- the percentage of schools with a majority of Roma pupils is 4 times higher than for the educational system.
- the percentage of schools in which Roma prevail is 10 times higher than for the educational system.

*Ratio of unqualified teachers by types of teachers.\** As a tendency, school units with a high percentage of Roma have a higher ratio of an unqualified teachers than the educational system, whatever type of teacher we are referring to (instructor, schoolmaster, teacher).

\*We use the following labels: instructor for kindergarten, schoolmaster for classes I-IV and teacher for classes V-VIII. In Romanian educational system in primary education (classes I-IV) pupils have one schoolmaster. In gymnasium (classes V-VIII) pupils have more teachers specialized on different disciplines included in curricula.

**Table 12. Ratio of unqualified teachers by types of teachers**

	<b>instructors</b>	<b>schoolmasters</b>	<b>teachers</b>
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	45.2	39.2	48.3
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	57.8	49.7	58.8
Total rural schools	33.5	20.3	21.9

Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998

In schools with a prevailing number of Roma pupils, ratio of unqualified teachers is almost 3 times higher than for the educational system and ratio of unqualified schoolmasters is almost 2.5 times higher. In kindergartens in which prevail Roma children ratio of unqualified instructors is with almost 25% higher than the educational system.

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schools with less than 4 teachers, the case of more than 95% from the total schools grades I-IV. Consequently, the values of this indicator are estimated only for those units with more than 4 teachers.

*Duration of teachers shortage.* Lack of qualification in schools with many Roma pupils is a situation of longstanding. Ratio of schools in which prevail Roma pupils, hiring for more than 2 years unqualified teachers for majority of disciplines, is 2.5 times higher than for the educational system. Ratio of schools which not indicate shortage of qualified teachers is 15 times less in case of schools in which Roma prevail than in case of the educational system. In case of schools with a majority of Roma pupils this ratio is 8 times lower than for the educational system.

**Table 13. School units distribution (secondary education) depending on duration of qualified teachers shortage (in %)**

	No shortage	Shortage to some disciplines in the last 2 years	Shortage to some disciplines for over 2 years	Shortage to a majority of disciplines in the last 2 years	Shortage to a majority of disciplines for over 2 years
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	5.1	15.2	67.1	1.3	11.4
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	2.8	4.2	63.3	0.0	28.2
Total rural schools	43.5	14.0	30.6	1.7	10.2

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

*Teachers employment fluctuation* means frequent changes in school's personnel structure due to teachers moving from a school to another. Negative consequences on quality of education resulted from teachers' fluctuation are the following: a weak understanding of pupils regarding their motivations, abilities, aspirations; difficulties in adaptation to school environment for pupils; weak school achievements. The inconsistency in building up relations with pupils has negative consequences especially when teachers' fluctuation takes place on primary school. On kindergarten and primary school, beside of formal status, teacher is also an essential socializing person, who substitutes parental role. It is easy to trace a connection between teachers' fluctuation and a weak motivation for learning. To some extent, teachers' fluctuation can influence school drop out, at least for primary school.



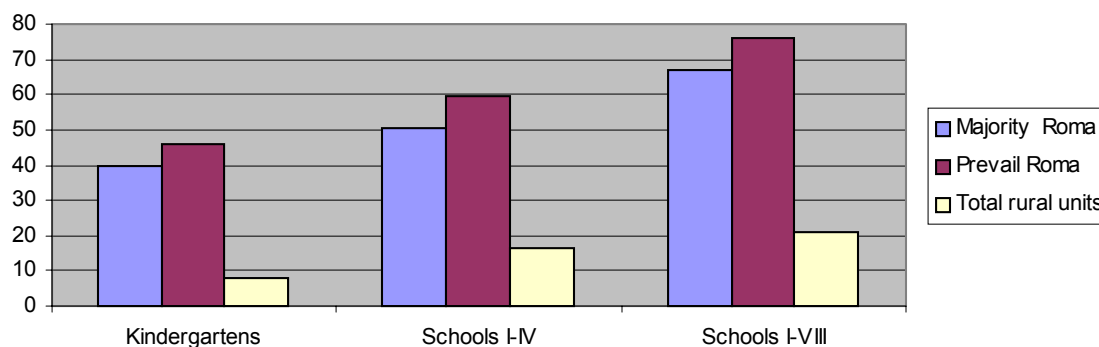
An increased ratio of Roma pupils in a school is more likely related to teachers' fluctuation in that school.

**Table 14. Distribution of school units with teachers' fluctuation depending on types of school (in %)**

	Kindergartens	Schools classes I-IV	Schools classes I-VIII
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	39.6	50.6	66.7
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	45.9	59.7	76.0
Total rural schools	7.9	16.7	21.0

Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998

**Teachers fluctuation on types of school**



We can make the following observations:

- Ratio of kindergartens over 50% Roma pupils with fluctuant instructors is over 5 times higher comparing with the educational system;
- Ratio of primary and secondary schools over 50% Roma pupils with fluctuant teachers is 3 times higher than for the educational system.

*Teachers' daily transportation to and from the school.* In some cases teachers don't have residence in the same locality with school where they teach. In these cases, transport infrastructure's problems can negatively influence school activity (especially in rural, where public transport's problems are bigger). Particularly during the winter teachers frequently come in late to the school's program (pupils who need transportation also come in late). Because of public transport's schedule teachers who need transportation cannot spend in school the same time as local teachers. From this reason, teachers from other localities cannot stay in school enough time in order to organize extracurricular activities. These kinds of activities usually take place over the school program. We observed that in schools with many non-local teachers the relationships between local and outside teachers are superficial or even tensional. In the same time cohesion between teachers and pupils is weak. Generally speaking, teachers who come from outside the community are less involved in pupils' needs and school's problems.

+ quoted from interviews

**Table 15. School units distribution by presence of outside community teachers (in %)**

	<b>Kindergartens</b>	<b>Schools classes I-IV</b>	<b>Schools classes I-VIII</b>
Schools with a majority of Roma pupils	21.4	21.8	31.7
Schools in which prevail Roma pupils	26.6	29.5	42.3
Total rural schools	7.8	12.7	30.5

*Source: Database MER, IES, RIQL, 1998*

Ratio of outside community teachers is 3 times higher in the cases of kindergartens over 70% Roma children than for the educational system. In the case of kindergartens with a majority of Roma pupils this ratio is over 2 times higher. In primary schools in which prevail Roma pupils ratio of outside community teachers is over 2 times higher than for the educational system.

### ***8.3. Quality of education evaluation by beneficiaries' expectations***

Most of individual or group discussions realized by us in different schools with many Roma pupils reveals an deep dissatisfaction of Roma parents regarding the level of knowledge and abilities achieved by Roma children in these schools. Parents complain about weak motivation of teachers to work with Roma pupils. Because some teachers from schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils have low expectations regarding Roma pupils, these teachers have also low standards regarding quality of education.

*“there are differences between Romanian children and Rudari [Roma kin] children. They [Rudarii] are asked to stay on the last desk and they are left alone, only to be quiet - teacher, Rudarie, Gorj county).*

Some teachers believe that Roma pupils have no chance to follow higher levels of education and they behave accordingly. These teachers have a low commitment, they underestimate Roma pupils potential and don't treat Roma pupils individually. Therefore, **the main objective regarding Roma education is the mere achievement of basic abilities (literacy)**. Moreover, some teachers consider reading and writing a performance indicator and not a basic ability, which must be accomplished in the first two years of school. Fixing literacy as a final objective of primary school (sometimes even of secondary school), teachers' requests and expectations are often very low. A proof in this respect is the fact that some Roma pupils, who pass classes for years, attend sometimes even the gymnasium without knowing to read and write. (Appendix 1).

The following excerpts refers to Roma parents' dissatisfaction regarding school achievements of their children:

*“ - Teachers are not motivated, they say they are gypsies and have no possibilities to go further at other schools. Teachers are not motivated, that it is.*

- I have a child in III grade, too. But he doesn't know even to write his name. And he goes daily to school. Children don't have even homework to do.*
- My child is in V grade and he doesn't know to write his name too.*

- *They [teachers] don't care about children. They don't care about gypsies. From this reason Romanian move their children from this school, because teachers are not motivated...*
- *Teachers should work harder with children. If the child doesn't want to learn, teacher must work with child again and again and then the child must learn...*
- *Children are not really learning because are only gypsies here and teachers are not preoccupied to work with them...In order to leave school earlier teachers let children go home at 10 or 11 o'clock." (Roma parents, Valcele, Covasna)*

*" – Children learn from I grade to IV grade, again and again, only A letter and B letter...  
- And they pass classes in this way and they arrive in VIII grade without knowing anything. They don't know anything. Here are a lot of children who graduated eight classes and they don't know to write. " (Roma parents, Coltau, Baia Mare)*

*"...we loose the time of our children. We send them to school but in the third class they don't know even a letter. I have to hire a private teacher to work with my child, because in school my child cannot learn even a letter from I grade to III grade. I cannot understand what kind of teachers children have here, at Bobesti school." (Roma parent Glina, Ilfov)*

*" - How can I be satisfied if teacher leave my child to sleep on the desk? ...Teacher doesn't give to my child any homework to do...*

*- Children are not interesting for them [teachers]. Teachers stay in common room (office) and smoke, drink coffee and talk...*

*- My child is in a VI grade and he doesn't know anything from school ...during six school years he doesn't know in this moment even to compute, he knows only what I teach him. I am satisfied because he knows what I teach him: to write and to read. Otherwise, he goes to school without learning anything" (Roma parent, Glina, Ilfov)*

This lack of teachers involvement described by Roma parents cannot be generalized. For example, in schools with many Roma children in which some NGOs developed projects /

programs for teachers training and, generally, for school development, educational processes evidently improves.<sup>21</sup> These programs were focused on interactive learning techniques, on cooperation between pupils, on children individuality, on extracurricular activities, on stimulating parents to cooperate with school. As a result of these programs schools become a more friendly and stimulating environment, allowing a qualitative education.

**Majority of Roma parents are aware about the quality of education discrepancies between schools with a high percentage of Roma pupils and schools with another ethnic majority.** For this reason some wealthy Roma parents prefer to enroll or to transfer their children in schools with another ethnic majority. In the same way act Romanian parents when they have to choose between a closer school but having a high percentage of Roma children and a far school without Roma (or with a low percentage of Roma pupils).

Most of Roma parents consider that it would be desirable for their children to learn in ethnic mixed schools not in schools with a majority of Roma children. Schools with a non-Roma majority pupils are perceived as better schools having better school facilities, human and financial resources. Parents who are in favor of mixed schools bring the following arguments:

- An increasing of education quality because of teachers' qualification and better facilities;
- An improvement of Roma pupils school achievements;
- Socializing Roma and non-Roma children together could have positive effects for Roma children (facilitating communication, cultural exchanges, avoiding social exclusion, interethnic tolerance);

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<sup>21</sup> See the program "Equal Opportunity for Roma Children Through School Development Programs and Parents' Involvement" performed by Education Centre 2000+ in over 25 schools in which learn a higher percentage of Roma pupils. The schools assessment in Chiliseni (Suceava) and Maguri (Timis) stressed out a series of positive results regarding the school climate, teachers-pupils relationships and school achievements.

- Increased expectations in the case of Roma pupils regarding their school future and opportunities (higher levels of education).

“ – *Is better for your children to study in a class only with Rudari [a Roma kin] or together with Romanian?*

- *Mixed.*

- *Mixed. If our children see that Romanian learn, our children will learn also. Our children will imitate Romanian children [...]*

- *Together with Romanian. In this way our children become civilized like Romanian.*

- *In downtown [in mixed school] are in the same class 2 or 3 Rudari girls and the rest are Romanian girls. Romanian girls help Rudari girls, who are more backward<sup>22</sup>. We are glad that children learn together...and our children become bright like Romanian children...*

- *If my child will see that other children learn, he will say in his own <let's learn myself, too>.” (Roma parents, Rudarie, Gorj)*

“*I would be glad [that Roma children learn mixed with Romanian children] because they will imitate one each other.*” (Roma parent, Valcele, Covasna)

“*Let's put them mixed, one Romanian and one Rudar, don't keep them separately*”  
(Roma parent, Tigveni, Arges)

“ – *Do you think that it is a good thing that Romanian learn together with Roma or it is better to learn separately?*

- *Mixed.*

- *Mixed.*

- *They must not make differences between Romanian and Roma children.” (pupils, Valcele, Covasna)*

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<sup>22</sup> We remark that some Roma people internalized some negative stereotypes regarding Roma from majority population. Therefore, Roma perceive themselves in a negative manner (uncivilized, backward), having a low self-esteem.

Particular cases of detrimental treatment of Roma pupils who learn in mixed schools make some Roma parents to be reluctant about possibility to mix Roma and non-Roma children in the same classes. Their reluctance is not against the idea of multiethnic school but against detrimental practices actually present in some mixed school. These practices refer to setting Roma children in the last desks, lack of Roma pupils' stimulation to be active in class, excluding Roma from extracurricular activities, tensioned relationship between Roma and non-Roma pupils and sometimes between Roma and their teachers. Some Roma parents are afraid that schooling together Roma and non-Roma pupils could rather strength segregation tendencies. Therefore, Roma children could be isolated in mixed schools because of majority prejudices and stereotypes and due to status differences. Economic and social status differences are visible in lack of school supplies, lack of adequate clothes and shoes, lack of meal, lack of money for extracurricular activities.

*“ –How would be better for your children, to learn together with Romanian or to learn separately?*

*- It would be better without differences [among children].*

*- Not to laugh by them [Roma children].*

*- And who make differences?*

*- Children among them and teachers also.*

*- Because my child had not a notebook, they [schoolmaster, principal] send him home.*

*- They don't think that we have no money to buy.*

*- They call us Gypsies. Here are only five Romanian children because almost all Romanian parents send their children to school in Sfantu [Sfantu Gheorghe city]. On the second or third class, they [Romanian parents] send their children there [in the city] because they say that is better there for the reason that here are only Gypsies children. <Open the window> they say, < because Gypsies smell>. Of course that Gypsies smell, we have no money to buy washing powder” (Roma parents, Valcele, Covasna)*

*“In this school children don't learn. Only Romanian interests teachers, not our children. They put our children in the last desk while Romanian stay in the front of class. My child was always put in the last desk.” (Roma parent, Tigveni, Arges)*

*“Our children are very bad treated. They feel bad in school. In the central school teachers put them in the lasts desks, while Romanian are put in firsts desks.”* (Roma parent, Tigveni, Arges)

*“It would be better to have here a school grade I-VIII only for us [Roma]. There[at downtown school], they don’t learn anymore, they forgot to write down their names”* (Roma parent, Tigveni, Arges)

*“When our children are together with Romanian children, they learn nothing, I have two girls in this situation... They [Romanian children] are more wealthy and stay aside”* (Roma parent, Tigveni, Arges)

Roma children are more afraid than their parents to learn in the same class or school together with non-Roma children. They are frightened of being isolated, bad treated or even beaten. These fears are more salient in the case of pupils learning actually in schools with exclusively Roma children.

- “ – How would you like to learn, together with Romanian children or separately?*
- To be only us, because they make a lot of noise. They beat among them and they beat us, too.*
  - They beat us.*
  - We want to be only us, because Romanian children beat us [...]*
  - Only us, because we know one each other. When I speak with him [with Romanian children], he squeals me to schoolmaster and schoolmaster warm my ears. But if I make a joke with a Roma child, he doesn’t squeals me.*
  - I don’t want to be mixed, I want to be only us. They [Romanian children] are bad, we cannot make jokes with them. With one of mine [Roma child] we can beat in the class but we remain friends.*
  - Children from downtown school [mixed school] beat our children when they finish school and when they go home.*



- *We want to be only us because those Romanian beat us.*” (Group of pupils, Rudarie, Gorj)

*“We want to learn separately because if someone steal something they blame us...would be better that they stay in a school and we in other school...If we are together, when somebody steal, they blame us* (pupil, Tigveni, Arges)

*“Would be better to be separately because teacher beat us. We are not believed by teacher, he believe only them and we are beaten”* (pupil, Tigveni, Arges)

**Appendix 1.**

**Functional illiteracy for enrolled children**

<b>Enrolled in ... class</b>	<b>Cannot read or read with difficulty</b>	<b>Read well</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	41	11	52
	78.8%	21.2%	100.0 %
<b>2</b>	58	36	94
	61.7%	38.3%	100.0 %
<b>3</b>	67	116	183
	36.6%	63.4%	100.0 %
<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>222</b>
	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>178</b>
	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>86.5%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>114</b>
	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>89.5%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>85</b>
	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>91.8%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>64</b>
	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

**Functional illiteracy for drop out school children**

<b>Drop out in class ...</b>	<b>Cannot read or read with difficulty</b>	<b>Read well</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	37	2	39
	94.9%	5.1%	100.0 %
<b>2</b>	27	4	31
	87.1%	12.9%	100.0 %
<b>3</b>	27	10	37
	73.0%	27.0%	100.0 %
<b>4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>
	<b>26.7%</b>	<b>73.3%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>28.6%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>
	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

*Source: RIQL database, 1998*

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<sup>i</sup> Conditioning children allowance by school attendance although not state particularly Roma children as target group address in fact this group. Due to discrepancies in school attendance between Roma children and majority children is obviously that this measure target to a greater extent Roma children and families. In the communist regime a similar measure was planned for "social integration of Roma" but was never put in practice. We are referring to a Central Committee of the Communist Party from 1983 (Achim V.: 160), which proposed that in order to bring Roma to school is necessary to constrain child allowance benefit by the school attendance.