



STUDY ON THE OBSTACLES TO EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO

Focus on Roma and Egyptian children

June 2013

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FOREWORD

Ensuring the basic human rights of Roma and Egyptian children is a major challenge for many European countries. Committed to the EU integration process, Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Government of Montenegro has pledged to ensure the right of every child to access to quality education. Progress in education sector reform has been highlighted in the recent provisional closing of Chapter 26 on Education and Culture within the EU negotiation process. However, efforts to better integrate Roma and Egyptian children into Montenegro's education system have been fraught with challenges. Rates of enrolment, attendance and primary school completion among these children remain low.

The "Study on the Obstacles to Education in Montenegro" provides a wide-ranging analysis of the impediments that often keep Roma and Egyptian children out of school. We hope the study will enable more effective programming, monitoring and evaluation initiatives so that more of these children can get the help they need.

No social problem is ever explained by a single causal factor or determinant. This study is unique as it uses a framework of analysis that simultaneously reviews all of the key determinants that contribute to Roma and

Egyptian exclusion and other co-related aspects of deprivation such as early marriage and inter-generational poverty. These determinants have been identified through global and regional studies on similar forms of social exclusion and disparity in the education sector.

Montenegro has progressed in the inclusive education sphere in the last decade. For example, more and more Roma and Egyptian children are being enrolled in primary school. In 2011-12, the Ministry of Education and Sports statistics reveal that 1,582 were enrolled at the beginning of the school year, compared to 536 ten years prior.

According to the Census, however, only about half of Montenegro's Roma and Egyptian children are in primary school at any given time. Roma and Egyptian children who do attend school often perform poorly and drop-out rates soar after the age of 11. Less than a third complete primary school and only 7% complete secondary school, compared to 98% and 86% respectively for the mainstream population.

The study shows that there is no single explanation for high rates of dropping out, but rather multiple determinants that often interact with each other. These include, amongst others: stigma and discrimination, poverty,

housing and hygiene, cultural attitudes and traditions of the community, low preschool attendance rates, quality of education, and gaps in monitoring systems and slow implementation of legislation designed to improve their prospects. Sustainable improvements in Roma and Egyptian education outcomes can only be delivered by simultaneously addressing these multiple obstacles.

Education has the power to break the intergenerational cycle of Roma and Egyptian poverty and deprivation. Preschool education is proven to contribute to better primary and secondary school outcomes and acts as a mechanism to reduce disparities in overall education performance during the life cycle of the child. Preschool participation improves Montenegrin language skills and prepares Roma and Egyptian children to be more

successful in primary school and to better integrate into the broader Montenegrin society.

Creating lasting change on a national scale requires concerted effort by multiple parties: schools, local governments, Roma and Egyptian parents and their communities, and the country's educational, social welfare and health sectors. The "Study on the Obstacles to Education in Montenegro" received the robust support of the Roma and Egyptian community, the Ministry of Education and Sport, MONSTAT, the Red Cross and the civil society sector. Working together is essential if we are to make Montenegro a place where all children are empowered to reach their full academic potential and enjoy their human rights.

Benjamin Perks
UNICEF Representative
to Montenegro

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ECE – Early Childhood Education

EU – European Union

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

LPA – Local Plans of Action

MONSTAT – Statistical Office of Montenegro

MoE – Ministry of Education

RAE – Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians

RE – Roma and Egyptians

SEN – Special Educational Needs

UN – United Nations

WHO – World Health Organisation



Photography:

UNICEF Montenegro/Zoran Jovanović Maccak

INTRODUCTION

Primary education in Montenegro is compulsory for all children aged from six to fifteen years, regardless of gender, race, religion, social background or any other personal characteristic. Although according to the latest Census conducted in 2011, 95% of all children of school-going age were attending school, in the Roma and Egyptian population, the attendance rate in primary schools was drastically lower (51% and 54% respectively). Unofficial estimates put the primary enrolment rate of Roma and Egyptian children at 25.2%, the completion rate of the first cycle of compulsory education at 32% (compared to 98% for the general population) and the corresponding rate for the second cycle at 7% (compared to 86% of the general population).¹ The government has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Montenegro is committed to ensuring the right of every child to education.

As a pre-accession country Montenegro aspires to meet specific EU standards. The accession process includes alignment of policies, legislation, and national action plans with EU

standards for social inclusion—including eliminating obstacles to Roma and Egyptian children in accessing education. Specifically, funding for Roma integration and equality has been made available in the context of EU enlargement through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. As a part of the IPA funding scheme, the Commission's Directorate-General for Enlargement continuously monitors the development of anti-discrimination legislation, administrative actions,² and the social and economic integration of Roma.³ Moreover following the March 2011 European Parliament Resolution on the EU Roma strategy, the European Commission Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion put forward *An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*, which is a part of the commission's wider Europe 2020 growth strategy. The European Council endorsed it in June 2011. Though the framework mostly pertains to the 27 EU member countries, the commission has committed to reviewing and supporting the Roma integration strategies and action plans of accession countries⁴ including Montenegro.

¹ *Montenegro After the Crisis: Towards a Smaller and More Efficient Government, Public Expenditure and Institutional Review*, Main Report, World Bank, October 2011

² UNICEF, European Social Observatory. [2011] *Preventing Social Exclusion through the Europe 2020 Strategy: Early Childhood Development and the Inclusion of Roma Families*. pp. 15.

³ European Union. [2011] *EU framework for national Roma strategies: Frequently asked questions*. <<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/216>> Accessed 14.9.2011

⁴ European Commission. [2011] *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020* pp. 11-12.

Montenegro has also committed to the Millennium Declaration, which includes a number of measurable and time-defined targets that relate to human development. The Millennium Development Goals include a target of 100% coverage of boys and girls in primary education by the year 2015, with special emphasis on the inclusion of children from marginalized groups, and the prevention of early drop-out from the education system.

Despite certain progress in terms of integration of Roma and Egyptian children into the educational system during the past decade in Montenegro, their enrolment rates, attendance and completion of primary education are still not close to the level stipulated by the Millennium Development Goals. Governments, such as the one in Montenegro, that wish to address Roma and Egyptian exclusion face numerous obstacles. However in Montenegro there remains limited reliable and comprehensive empirical evidence about the causes of Roma and Egyptian children's failure to register and their dropping out of school.

The main aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Roma and Egyptian children and the obstacles to their inclusion in quality compulsory education. The study will analyze existing legislation and policies in the area of education, education budget and expenditure, coordination mechanisms between relevant institutions, availability of essential commodities for learning, infrastructure, cultural norms and beliefs, and quality of education and existing

services. In addition, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Provide an in-depth insight into the problems faced by Roma and Egyptian children and their families relating to inclusion in compulsory education;
- Obtain basic data relevant to designing programmes, monitoring and evaluating the status of the Roma and Egyptian children in the education system and its progress in the coming years;
- Supplement general surveys on Roma and Egyptian population in Montenegro.

The report aims to review all of the major determinants or causal factors that any government would face in addressing the exclusion of vulnerable groups. For this purpose, a set of 10 major determinants and factors has been compiled from global and regional studies on exclusion and this determinant analysis is the framework of analysis used in the study. This determinant framework is introduced in detail below.

The report consists of a section on methodology, a description of the determinant analysis framework, and an executive summary. After these introductory sections comes the desk analysis, and a section that elaborates on the results of the empirical study—whose components are explained in the description of the methodology. A section with conclusions and recommendations, and an annex with examples of good practices come after the empirical study.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research is to enable better understanding of the multiple factors which may contribute to Roma and Egyptian inclusion in primary education. This requires the “measurement” of the phenomena and the provision of factors that can explain the processes behind non-enrolment or dropping out, both a quantitative and qualitative analysis were conducted. Besides that, the research was preceded by a desk analysis to provide insight into the existing strategies, research and programmes in education. The desk study also includes data from official institutions concerning coverage of children in education; examples of positive practices from other countries; and other relevant data. An assessment of the main quantitative indicators of education coverage is presented in the desk analysis. In a sense, the desk analysis consolidates what we already know about Roma and Egyptian exclusion in Montenegro and primarily relates to policies and strategies that the education system is undertaking to include Roma and Egyptian children. However there is an absence of data on how broader social, cultural, traditional and economic factors may also contribute to exclusion. A principle aim of this study is to strengthen knowledge on these broader issues.

Therefore, a quantitative study was also used to assess a number of other indicators potentially associated with non-enrolment and dropping out

of primary school, such as: socio-economic status, legal status of families with children who are not included in the primary education system; the values and attitudes of parents; and so forth. Specifically, the quantitative study aimed to identify the risk factors leading to non-enrolment or dropping out of primary school. In order to make the assessment of these factors possible two groups of households were compared in the survey. The two groups have a similar socio-economic status, but they differ according to one characteristic which is crucial for this research—households with children who are enrolled in and regularly attend primary school; and households with children who are not enrolled in primary school, or who have dropped out of it.

Considering that it usually is not possible to fully explain the mechanisms that affect phenomena through the results of quantitative studies, qualitative data was also supplied. Qualitative studies provide deeper insight into issues. The survey also includes findings from focus group discussions with parents of children who failed to enrol in primary school or dropped out of it, and with parents of a similar socio-cultural and economic status whose children are enrolled in primary school and regularly attend it.

Special attention was paid to the mechanisms by which the phenomenon of non-enrolment or

dropping out of primary school arises. These mechanisms are analyzed through case studies concerning children who were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it. For this purpose in-depth interviews were conducted with people who were crucial for non-enrolment or dropping out of primary school—the children, their parents or guardians, teachers or class masters, school psychologists or educationalists, and people from the municipality in charge of primary education. Care was taken not only to include in the case studies scenarios in which the various factors and processes that resulted in non-enrolment or dropping out of primary school, but also to present an example of positive practice.

Because of the focus on a relatively small part of the population, the methodology of this research does not offer the possibility of describing the population of all households with children who were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it. Regardless of the presence of various regions, municipalities, types of settlement, households with different ethnicities and different socio-economic and cultural contexts in the sample, the sample still cannot claim to be completely representative of all households, but care was taken that the size and structure of the sample allow reliable conclusions.

Within this study four smaller surveys were conducted:

1. **Desk analysis** – analysis of the existing data, relevant studies and strategies regarding the education of Roma and Egyptian children
2. **“Face-to-face” survey** – interviews with the household head or other household member who is the most familiar with the child’s/children’s education
 - a. The sampling frame (or target population) theoretically includes all households in Montenegro in which children were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out

of it, as well as households with a similar cultural background and socio-economic status in which the children regularly attend primary school

- b. The sampling principle is the so-called Snowball
- c. A total of 300 people were interviewed in 300 households. Within the sample of children of primary-school age, four subsamples were created:
 - i. Subsample of Roma and Egyptian households with children who were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it—a total of 100 households
 - ii. Subsample of households of majority population with children who were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it—a total of 50 households
 - iii. Subsample of Roma and Egyptian households with a similar cultural background and socio-economic status as Roma and Egyptian households in which the child is not attending school, but where the children regularly attend primary school—a total of 100 households
 - iv. Subsample of households from the majority population with a similar cultural background and socio-economic status as the households of the majority population in which a child is not attending primary school, but where the children regularly attend primary school—a total of 50 households
- d. The length of the questionnaire is circa 45 minutes
- e. The survey was conducted in August 2012
3. **Discussion in focus groups** with parents of children of primary-school age—a total of four focus group discussions were realized:
 - a. With parents of Roma and Egyptian children whose children were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it
 - b. With parents from the majority population whose children were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it

- c. With parents from the Roma and Egyptian populations with a similar cultural background and socio-economic status to those parents whose children were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it, but whose children regularly attend primary school
- d. With parents from the majority population with a similar cultural background and socio-economic status to those parents whose children were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it, but whose children regularly attend primary school

Focus groups with the Roma and Egyptians were realized in Podgorica on 3 September 2012, while focus groups with parents from the majority population were realized the next day in Bijelo Polje.

- 4. **Case studies** – 6 key scenarios of non-enrolment or dropping out from primary

school and one example of positive practice were elaborated and explained on the basis of data obtained from in-depth interviews with key people involved in the process of the child's education (4-5 in-depth interviews according to one scenario).

- a. Podgorica (Konik settlement), Bijelo Polje and Nikšić;
- b. In the period from 3-10 September 2012.

A final word on methodology: During the process of identifying the parents from the comparator group of the majority population whose children were not enrolled in primary school or dropped out of it and in conducting the field work, it was realized that most of them were parents of children with disabilities (CwD). Thus an additional section on major issues faced by this group has been added towards the end of the study. Given the close linkage between inclusion of Roma and Egyptian and CwD the situation of CwD appears throughout the study.

DETERMINANT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Within the EU, studies concerned with mapping the causes of low participation (including dropping out), poor academic performance and low educational attainment amongst Roma and Egyptians point out that these outcomes cannot be understood as single events, but rather as a process initiated by a whole range of many risk factors. Aligned with this notion, this report is organized around a framework of ten interlinked determinants developed by UNICEF, which help to analyze and monitor obstacles vulnerable children face in accessing essential services. The ten determinants are grouped into four broad categories including: the enabling environment, supply, demand, and quality. In this report these determinants influence the provision and access to

education. Governments throughout the EU often have multi-pronged strategies to simultaneously address all of the barriers to universal education.

Shown in the table below are some of the determinants that affect the education of Roma and Egyptians. As already mentioned, this framework is the basis on which this report is organized. Per the framework, the desk study section of this report primarily focuses on determinants within the “Enabling Environment” category of the framework. The rest of the ten determinants, in the categories of “Supply”, “Demand” and “Quality” are mostly described in the empirical study section of this document.

Table 1

Determinants and factors of risk identified by regional and global studies

Determinants and factors of risk identified by regional and global studies	
Enabling environment	Social Norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma and discrimination, particularly directed at: Roma and Egyptians or other minority ethnic groups, refugees and displaced persons, and children with physical or intellectual disabilities
	Legislation/Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legal framework does not or only partially guarantees inclusive education • Not permeable enough system of education • Poorly designed social protection policies
	Budget/Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient investment for an improvement in the quality of education • Policies targeting disadvantaged children are unfunded or insufficiently funded at both national and local levels • Expenditure on teaching staff represents more than 80% of the total annual expenditure with insufficient funding allocated to quality
	Management/Coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient investment for an improvement in the quality of education • Policies targeting disadvantaged children are unfunded or insufficiently funded at both national and local levels • Expenditure on teaching staff represents more than 80% of the total annual expenditure with insufficient funding allocated to quality

Continuation of the table 1

Determinants and factors of risk identified by regional and global studies

Determinants and factors of risk identified by regional and global studies	
Enabling environment	Availability of Essential Commodities and Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural areas and underdeveloped parts of towns—transportation and large distances between home and school • Shortage of infrastructure for early learning, particularly in rural areas • Schools do not have sufficient didactic materials and secondary language books to teach minority language children
	Access to adequately staffed services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficiently available preschool education • Shortage of qualified teachers and assistants • Lack of support for children who repeat a grade—lack of ‘catch-up’ programmes • Limited outreach and child-seeking services by education systems • Teachers are not trained in inclusive teaching practices
Demand	Financial Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family poverty causing the inability to pay school costs • Schools do not provide free transportation to and from school • Poorly designed ‘social cash transfers’ for families living in extreme poverty • Opportunity-cost of child labour for contributing to family income is high • Care for other family members and household responsibilities
	Cultural Practices and Beliefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dysfunctional family dynamics • Compromised parental support for continuation of education • Early marriage • Insufficient family communication about school • Compromised motivation and interest among young people for education
	Continuity of Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent absence from school, skipping classes or suspension • Mobility of parents - frequent changing of place of residence • Challenges with birth registration and legal identity papers
Quality	Quality Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-quality preschool education • Poor quality in-school support for children with special education needs (SEN) • Curricula are not responsive or flexible enough to respond to the needs of diverse learners • Inclusive education practices are not sustained due to poor-quality support



SUMMARY

Photography:

UNICEF Montenegro/Risto Božović

Study on the obstacles to education in Montenegro

This study endeavours to shed light on, and analyze the barriers Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities face in Montenegro in accessing quality education. It is hoped this paper will help national and local decision makers to continue policy reforms, launch new inclusive education initiatives, and serve as a touchstone for effective implementation.

The report is organized around ten determinants, or factors, affecting outcomes in education that any government seeking to promote inclusion may need to address. A desk analysis presents some official statistics and looks at relevant legislation, policies, budget framework, coordination and management. The empirical study conducted through surveys and focus groups presents data on a number of other determinants in the categories of education supply, demand, and quality. Lastly and most importantly are the conclusions and recommendations section, and an annex with examples of good practices.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Determinants within the Enabling Environment, at the system and society level, can support or deter equal access to quality education. The four determinants of the “Enabling Environment” category covered in this section are: Social Norms, Legislation/Policy, Budget/Expenditure, and Management Coordination.

A tenth of the citizens of Montenegro are of primary school age and 95% of them are attending primary education. The attendance rate is much lower among the Roma and

Egyptian population since only half of the primary-school-age children from this population attend school. Additionally, more than 10% of children from the Roma and Egyptian population, which have the highest percentage of primary school age children, are still not registered in the Birth Registry. Also, 34% of stateless children and 16% of children who are in the process of acquiring citizenship do not attend school. Other vulnerable groups of children who are at high risk of dropping out are children with disabilities and poor children. The proportion of children who are below the poverty line is 10%.⁵

Numerous empirical studies conducted in different European countries on absenteeism indicate that this is a complex, multidimensional problem caused by several risk factors. Throughout Europe **stigma and discrimination** towards the Roma and Egyptian population and children with disabilities is often cited as one of the main obstacles to their education. Non-enrolment and dropping out are contributed to by segregation of Roma and Egyptian children: segregation between schools, segregation within school and sometimes even in special schools. Often Roma and Egyptian children are caught in a vicious circle—schools do not support the language they use at home and their skills in the main language of education are poor, which can seriously impair their development and chances for a quality education. Often a prejudicial perception is created that Roma and Egyptian children are thought of as intellectually inferior with schools and teachers delivering a lower quality education to these students due to reduced expectations of their academic abilities. Roma and Egyptian children are furthermore

⁵ Report ‘Child Poverty in Montenegro’, UNICEF, November 2011. (http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media_19760.html)

often victims of abuse, physical and verbal insults within school environments with little done to curb such abuse. All of these factors act as barriers to educational enrolment, retention and success in school.

Evidence from a series of nationally representative surveys on social distance and discrimination indicate that discriminatory attitudes and sentiments towards members of the Roma and Egyptian population exist in Montenegro, as they do in most countries. Observing discrimination in access to education, according to these surveys, Roma and Egyptian and people with disabilities represent the most vulnerable groups, with 53% and 40% of citizens stating that Roma and Egyptian and people with disabilities respectively do not experience the same treatment as the majority population with regards to access to education. Similarly, in nationally representative Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys, stigma against children with disabilities in Montenegro has been identified as one of the main obstacles to their full inclusion into education in society.

The Government of Montenegro has introduced a number of **laws, national strategies and local strategic plans** in order to create an inclusive system of education that is equally responsive to all children. The two main directions of the strategies are: (i) developing mechanisms for continuous education of children and parents from the Roma and Egyptian population and controlling the quality of knowledge that these children gain and (ii) continuous education of children and parents from the Roma and Egyptian population, but also teachers and other school personnel, about the importance and

characteristics of inclusive education. Roma and Egyptian national strategies and action plans also exist at national and local levels to aid social integration, including integration in education. Often however, resources and/or the capacity to implement legislation, policies and actions plans are lacking. Moreover a comprehensive policy on inclusive education has yet to be developed.

Low achievement of Roma and Egyptian children at primary school may be affected by **attendance in preschool institutions**, which, among other things, is extremely important for overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. Low participation in these institutions reduces the chances of Roma and Egyptian children to master the official language before they start primary school.

According to the law in Montenegro two institutions are in charge of the process of enrolment in primary school and regulating non-enrolment and non-attendance of primary school: the state authority in charge of keeping vital records of citizens and the educational institution.

Systems to identify Roma and Egyptian children at risk and children with disabilities need strengthening; precise data and key information on them remain insufficient to develop effective education initiatives, and measure their impact. In particular there are no efficient information systems that would help identify Roma and Egyptian children who have problems in learning the official language. Connected to this, coordination among relevant sectors in order to address the multi-pronged challenges that Roma and Egyptian children face in accessing education is mostly absent.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Monitoring prejudice and discrimination against Roma and Egyptian children and their families
- Developing campaigns to foster knowledge of the Roma and Egyptian culture and positive attitudes towards children in Roma and Egyptian children and their families.
- Actively pursue the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and policy and carry out standard diversity training among relevant stakeholders.
- Develop or strengthen effective complaint mechanisms, the capacities of human rights liaisons and mechanisms for redress.
- Raise political will by making decision makers aware of the benefits of inclusive education for all, including its economic benefits. Develop clearly articulated objectives, goals and deadlines, and conduct regular evaluations and monitoring of initiatives under actions plans. Implement some central oversight of local implementation.
- Mechanisms for complaints and redress of discrimination and human rights violations should be strengthened, developed and paired with campaigns to raise awareness of laws and how to use these mechanisms. Capacity building of those responsible for enforcing laws and policies should also be conducted.
- Strengthen data-collection mechanisms on vulnerable children who are at risk of dropping out or who are out-of-school children (children with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian children, IDP/DP children). Make database accessible to all relevant state institutions in order to provide a better flow of information and strengthen cooperation between crucial stakeholders.
- Legislation should be amended so that children with disabilities can be more readily identified and counted. Additionally amended laws, which as of 2010 encompass more comprehensively the needs of Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities, should be fully implemented.
- Change the structure of expenditures and increase the proportion of financing directed towards quality-enhancing measures including: early childhood development, higher education and lifelong learning.
- Financing the expansion of free preschool should be stressed, considering its importance in reducing the educational and life-chances gaps between Roma and Egyptian and the majority population.
- Among other measures, inter-sectoral work should be strengthened to ensure that Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities are receiving coordinated holistic support.
- Design clear procedures and enforcement mechanisms that would enable effective implementation of the provisions of the Law on Primary Education relating to enrolment and dropping out of school and sanctions to follow if a child is not enrolled or drops out.
- Increase the number of Roma mediators to help enforce children's attendance at school and decrease the risk of dropping out.

SUPPLY


In order to deliver quality education to all children certain essentials need to be supplied. Determinants within the “Supply” category of the Determinant Analysis Framework have a decisive impact on Roma and Egyptian education, and include everything from supplying safe facilities to hold classes in, to staffing these facilities with highly trained teachers. Making sure that vulnerable children have the same chances to access education and to do well as other less vulnerable children requires that specific additional elements are supplied: these can range from free transportation for those in remote areas to ensuring the availability of quiet study spaces.

Problems that Roma and Egyptian children often face in accessing schools is **proximity**. Roma and Egyptian often live in housing that is distant from schools. A large majority of Roma and Egyptian families cannot afford to pay for safe transport to and from school, and according to parents’ statements free transport is often not available.

Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities often have education needs above those of majority-population children. Staffing schools with highly trained professionals, including ones who can accommodate bilingual students and supplying communities with quality preschools are especially important to ensure access and positive education outcomes for disadvantaged children. Preschool attendance in particular is widely accepted as being important for school success and a mechanism which reduces disparities in education. For Roma and Egyptian children **preschool institutions**, particularly those with a mixed ethnic composition, greatly facilitate later studies, in

part because it helps to increase **Montenegrin language skills and makes those children more ready to go to school**. There is a correlation between low preschool participation and primary school attendance. Most of the children encompassed by the study who do not attend primary school have never attended kindergarten, while kindergarten participation was much higher among pupils currently attending primary school, regardless of ethnicity. Access to preschools for Roma and Egyptian children is affected by a number of barriers including: availability of preschools, socio-economic situations and inability to pay fees; lack of awareness of the importance of early education; proximity of preschools to Roma and Egyptian households; lack of documentation and administrative difficulties in enrolment.

Additional measures to reduce drop-out rates and ensure regular attendance requires **coordination across sectors including education, child protection and social welfare and the health sector**. These additional sectors need to be staffed with personnel sensitive to the needs and situations of Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities, and who will actively seek out families whose children are not in school. When children stop attending school half of them do not officially drop out. This information cannot be interpreted as an indicator of potential return to school, since 84% of the parents explicitly stated that their child would not be back to school the following school year. In the highest percentage of cases dropping out of school is not followed by any reaction from official institutions such as schools, municipalities and Centres for Social Work. When there was assistance, Roma and Egyptian were assisted more frequently by Roma and Egyptian NGOs, or the Red Cross.



Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Free and safe transport for children living in remote areas could be provided.
 - In particularly remote areas, until adequate transportation measures can be put in place and especially in the winter, temporary school and preschool solutions could be considered, such as: multi-grade or satellite primary schools; home preschools that combine raising the awareness of the importance of preschool and literacy of parents, with quality preschool activities for their children.
 - A priority for Montenegro could be the expansion of free universal and mandatory preschool education for children ages 5-6 years old. The existing plans for preparatory classes for this age group should consider making sure that Roma and Egyptian children are mixed with majority school children to boost their Montenegrin language skills.
 - Enrolment in preschool could be made easier especially for parents who may be illiterate and who may be missing documentation. Both preschool enrolment fees and the enrolment priority of favouring families with two employed parents, should be waived.
 - Preschool and primary school staff and teachers could be trained in bilingual education to accommodate children whose mother tongue is not Montenegrin.
- Extra Montenegrin language classes in primary school should be provided and staffed.
 - Strengthening the system and role of Roma mediators to work with Roma and Egyptian children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction.
 - Measures to strengthen the capacity of social welfare centres and other relevant actors, including schools, to follow up with students who drop out, or who are not attending regularly, could be developed.
 - Better monitoring and database systems need to be established, as do better relationships with other relevant sector institutions in order to effectively track absences, repeating of grades, and dropping out. Information sharing on the actions and methods employed by NGOs working in this area can be helpful.
 - Employing measures to help inform Roma and Egyptian parents of the importance of preschool and their choices. Research has shown that parents of Roma and Egyptian children are not sufficiently informed about their preschool choices. Their children do not have to attend the local kindergarten for the Roma and Egyptian population, they can enrol their children in ethnically mixed kindergartens located elsewhere.

DEMAND

What Roma and Egyptian families and families with children with disabilities are able and willing to provide to facilitate their children's education are determinants within the "Demand" category of the Determinant Analysis. Their demand for education is determined by the financial situation of families, as well as for instance the value they place on it—they may not have enough information to assess correctly the return on investing in their child's education. Other factors also play a role and are explored in the study.

Children from the majority population do not enrol in school primarily due to what their parents perceive as **health reasons or some form of disability**. Roma and Egyptian children remain outside of the system, both through non-enrolment and dropping out, mainly due to what their parents perceive as **socio-economic reasons**, with some part of tradition also playing a role.

The poor socio-economic status of the households covered by this survey is reflected in low income, lack of basic livelihood, but also poor housing conditions, which is the biggest visible difference between Roma and Egyptian households and households of families from the majority population in the survey. The living quarters of Roma and Egyptian are generally smaller and cramped, so that children share a room with a number of other people. They rarely have a suitable space for study. Almost every household in the survey, regardless of ethnicity, has some sort of structural problem: leaking roof, polluted air, noise, and a lack of light. All these negative aspects are even more pronounced with Roma and Egyptians, particularly for Roma and Egyptian households in which the children are not included in the educational system. Besides this, in as many as one-third of the households it is very cold

during the winter and, in comparison with the majority population, Roma and Egyptians have more problems obtaining fuel for heating. One of the biggest disadvantages is a lack of running water and bathrooms in Roma and Egyptian households. This factor prevents Roma and Egyptian children from practicing routine hygiene, required for school attendance.

Children covered by this study mainly live in multi-member households with poor socio-economic status. In all studied groups monthly income is very low, and in 70% of cases it is no higher than €30 per household member per month. Nevertheless, households from the majority population are in a somewhat better position. Low income results from exceptionally high unemployment of parents, which, interestingly enough, is somewhat higher in Roma and Egyptian households where children regularly attend school than in households where children do not attend school. This might be due to employed parents needing children to attend to tasks at home while they work, including possibly taking care of younger siblings, since they most likely cannot pay for childcare.

As a result of low income these households have problems providing food and conditions for education. The majority of parents can afford only the cheapest food, and some are able to provide just two meals a day (one-fifth of the households). In as many as 13% of the households it often happens that children complain of being hungry, and in 18% of them it happens occasionally. Roma and Egyptians whose children are not included in the educational system often claim that they do not have enough money for children's clothes and textbooks, so their children do not have them. However, this information must be interpreted with some reserve due to reported cases of resale of the textbooks and school equipment which were received free of charge.

When it comes to the time which the child spends at home, half of the children, regardless of household type, help the older household members to do the household chores during that time. Helping with **household work** is more characteristic for Roma and Egyptian households with children who are not enrolled in school. According to the majority of parents, although the children take care of the household, they do not perform paid work. Children from both populations have frequent social relationships with their peers. Nevertheless, it is obvious that a relatively high percentage of Roma and Egyptian children have friends who do not attend primary school, which is particularly characteristic for Roma and Egyptian children who also do not attend school. Children who attend primary school socialize to a higher extent with children who also attend school.

Between parents of children who go to school and those who do not, regardless of ethnicity, there is a difference in the **level of importance attributed to finishing school** (at least primary), as well as the perceived usefulness of school knowledge as compared with non-formally acquired knowledge. The importance attributed to education by parents whose children were attending school was higher than that attributed by parents whose children were not attending. Discussion with Roma and Egyptian mothers showed that mothers whose children were attending school, although they live in exceptionally disadvantaged conditions, saw school as a way to a better life. On the other hand, mothers whose children were not enrolled in school or dropped out of school attributed their absence from education to their underprivileged situation, although they feel that school is important. For them school is not a ticket to a better life, because they believe “there is no work for Roma”. They also ascribed a higher level of importance to non-formal education. The responses about a lack of employment point to a larger context that should be taken into consideration when trying to understand Roma and Egyptian parents’ valuation of education.

Reasons for ambivalent attitudes toward education among disadvantaged families often stem from poverty and the parents’ own low educational attainment, as well as rational assessments of employment opportunities beyond schooling—which, in the case of Roma and Egyptians, are quite dismal.

Indeed the quantitative study confirmed that a significantly higher percentage of parents of children who do not go to school think that the child will not be able to find a job afterwards. Many of these parents are assessing discrimination against them in the labour market, and their diminished chances for employment with or without an education. Parents whose children go to school are more likely to say that they know someone successful, who found work due to their education. Successful examples of individuals from within the Roma and Egyptian community, as well as the elimination of discrimination, are important to raise the valuation of education among them.

Readiness of parents to help their children finish their education is a very important factor for children’s successful education. It is noticeable that parents of children who go to school are more ready to help their child finish primary school, while parents of children who do not attend school are more inclined to feel there is no way to help their child. The capacity of parents to be able to help their children gain an education in part relies on the parents’ own educational attainment. In comparison with the majority population, Roma and Egyptian parents are more often without a formal education (more than a half of mothers). In the majority population a higher percentage of fathers have secondary education. The majority of parents from the majority population are literate, and less than a half of Roma and Egyptians can read and write. The percentage is even lower among Roma and Egyptian parents whose children do not attend school. Without the ability to read or write it becomes

impossible to help with their schoolwork, for instance. Add to this the hopelessness in relation to employment opportunities even with an education, and the result is that many Roma and Egyptian parents are not fully motivated or able to help their children with their education.

This survey has confirmed previous findings that one of the reasons for Roma and Egyptian girls dropping out of school is **early marriage and the desire to protect their virginity**. Roma and Egyptian parents are more inclined to see adolescence as an ideal age for marriage, and all mothers expressed a fear that the girls would fall in love in school. Indeed data shows that the number of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in school drops after reaching age 11, and especially among Roma and Egyptian girls. However there were Roma and Egyptian mothers who hoped their daughters would not get married early, and would finish school. This points a view of marriage that is not entirely homogeneous amongst Roma and Egyptian, and that with the right interventions could possibly tip towards supporting girls finishing their education.

Other obstacles that contribute to Roma and Egyptian exclusion from the education is a **lack of documents**, fear that the child will be discriminated against on ethnic grounds or the child exceeding the age for starting school. Special attention should be paid to poor

knowledge of language as an obstacle to the education of Roma and Egyptians. It is mainly parents that take decisions about non-enrolment or dropping out amongst Roma and Egyptians; while in the majority population this decision is usually per a doctor's recommendation. The lack of documentation is particularly problematic amongst Roma and Egyptian, and in particular among IDPs. When it comes to households from the majority population, almost all parents and children have the necessary documents, which is not the case with Roma and Egyptians. A higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school do not have personal documents, in comparison with children who are enrolled in school.

Significant predictors of dropping out are the **regularity of attendance and frequency of repeating a grade**. Significantly higher percentages of children who have dropped out from the system, regardless of ethnicity, were absent from classes for more than one month. Regarding repeating classes, not only did Roma and Egyptian children outside the system repeat grades more frequently, but so did Roma and Egyptians attending school.

The health of children in and out of school is also discussed, giving clues to the extent to which it affects regularity at school and to the inclusiveness of schools.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Permanent housing solutions need to be implemented for those families still living in camps. Study spaces for children whose housing situations are not conducive to studying should be provided.
- All future steps aimed at disaggregation of existing camps and integration of Roma and Egyptians should be preceded by intensive activities aimed at preparation of a successful transition of children into integrated schools and neighbourhoods.
- Adequate water supply and heating also should be provided for those families who do not have access to these essentials.

- Providing shared bathrooms in Roma and Egyptian settlements; provision of free personal hygiene products.
- Developing financial aid assistance schemes to encourage school participation, and to eliminate financial hardship as a barrier. Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) that are not punitive could be a solution, if accompanied by proper supply-side measures (such as raising schools' capacity to accommodate children with SEN) and monitoring.
- Strengthen the ability of social welfare, child protection and health services among other relevant actors to identify and aid Roma and Egyptian families falling through the gaps, and not be receiving financial assistance, health or other services they are eligible for.
- Continue the distribution of free textbooks and school supplies; consider subsidies for school supplies.
- Measures to raise the level of employment amongst the Roma and Egyptian population should be developed. Well-conceived and accessible adult education classes, connected to employment, which transfer skills needed in the current labour market, are an example.
- Work with local employers in connection with employment programmes for Roma and Egyptians, to start eliminating prejudice amongst the majority population, to help increase employment chances for Roma and Egyptians.
- Schools should actively seek out the participation of Roma and Egyptian parents, establish relationships with them and help inform them of the benefits of education. Develop workshops, after-school programmes and other measures to both help children with their school work and raise the capacity amongst Roma and Egyptian parents to help their children.
- Adult literacy classes can be an option in communities where literacy among Roma and Egyptian parents is low. Second-chance schooling and adult learning classes attached to employment opportunities, as mentioned above, can help foster an appreciation for education.
- The education curriculum and the skills taught in schools need to be better aligned with the demands of the labour market. Connected to this, campaigns on the importance and benefits of education could be organized, including disseminating examples of Roma and Egyptians who acquired education and improved their situations.
- Antidiscrimination campaigns should be launched to eliminate prejudice and foster better understanding between the Roma and Egyptian and majority populations.
- Enhance cooperation with the media, and develop and conduct training programmes for journalists focusing on creating and fostering positive images of Roma and Egyptians.
- Efforts to effectively enforce the legal age of marriage should be made, accompanied by active community engagement, awareness raising and support to Roma and Egyptian communities in the area of women's and girls' rights. This can also include workshops on family planning and sex education classes.
- Second-chance schooling should be made available for young mothers.
- Schools should be sensitized to the issues around early marriage, and Roma and Egyptian sensitivities about the virginity of their daughters.

- Programmes should be developed to help Roma and Egyptian women have more control over their reproduction; and to raise their awareness, confidence, independence and empowerment in regards to marriage, family and their futures.
- The capacity for social services and schools to conduct outreach, to enrol children in school and to help them acquire documentation should be raised. Municipalities and relevant services should also improve their databases on Roma and Egyptian families and children, to help coordinate efforts between social welfare and local governments. This should include information on IDPs and non-Montenegrin citizens.
- More in-depth investigation into the mechanisms by which Roma and Egyptian are not registered at birth, and issues of citizenship and Roma and Egyptian IDPs should be addressed and resolved in every camp and community.
- Strengthened healthcare of Roma and Egyptian children should be developed including: outreach by actors in the health and child protection sectors in cooperation with schools; workshops on child health to raise awareness among Roma and Egyptian parents of preventable diseases and healthcare options; increasing the number of Roma and Egyptian children with assigned paediatricians sensitized to their specific needs.

QUALITY

All children should have **equal access to education**, and that education should be of the highest quality. **Quality education for Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities** relies heavily on how inclusive the environment, curriculum and teaching methods are, as well as whether or not a culture of tolerance and diversity is fostered. School infrastructure also determines quality— if a school is unsafe, ill-equipped, and not accommodating of disabilities it cannot be assessed as meeting adequate standards of quality. The research presented in this document was limited to questions asked of parents and children, and the data is confined to information on satisfaction with teaching staff and relationships among students.

Compared with other parents, the parents of children who dropped out of school express

a higher dissatisfaction with the attitude of teachers, other pupils and parents towards their child. The children themselves gave similar accounts. The dissatisfaction was more noticeable among Roma and Egyptians not attending school, and indicate that Roma and Egyptians who attend school are better accepted by peers and their parents. Besides dissatisfaction with social relationships, a higher percentage of the children not going to school expressed dissatisfaction with education in general. They more frequently expressed that they disliked going to school.

In order to contextualize the survey results, a short overview of the Evaluation of the Reform of the Education System in Montenegro (2010-2012) was presented in the section that relates to the quality of inclusive education. Recognizing that the legislation in the area of inclusive education is being comprehensively harmonized with relevant European and

international standards, the Evaluation emphasizes that implementation, along with the cooperation between sectors at the national and local levels, remains a challenge. Also, the Evaluation calls for additional efforts

to promote continuous training and education of teaching staff in schools to implement inclusive principles in practice and adapt the teaching methods to the individual needs of children.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Conducting assessments of the quality of inclusive education with a focus on Roma and Egyptian children.
- Child-centred and bilingual teaching methods and child-friendly concepts should be employed at the school level, and teachers and staff should be trained in them.
- Revisions to the curriculum should be considered in order to increase its relevance to diverse populations.
- Cooperation with associations of people with disabilities should be established by preschools and primary schools.
- Based on assessment by an expert team, schools should prepare individual educational programmes for children and monitor their progress. Close monitoring of children with SEN should be conducted by relevant school staff and in concert with social services outside the school setting. Parental involvement should be actively sought out as well.
- School inclusive education teams should be strengthened to help develop inclusive education measures, promote understanding, tolerance and a culture of diversity in schools.
- Extracurricular activities that mix Roma and Egyptians and children from the majority population, workshops, study groups and similar can be organized to aid academic achievement and build understanding and trust among children and parents.
- Roma mediators should be expanded and strengthened, increasing their numbers and capacity to effectively work with more children and their families.
- The system of Roma teaching assistants should be expanded and strengthened, increasing their numbers and capacity to effectively work with more children and their families. Their role and standards of work should be clearly defined through relevant laws, as well as educational and training programmes aimed at professional development designed.⁶
- Both pre-service and in-service diversity and conflict-resolution training of teachers, school staff and social service providers should be made standard.

⁶ The opinion of the Ombudsperson's Office to the Ministry of Education with regards to Implementation of Inclusive Education in Primary Schools, November 2011:
http://www.ombudsman.co.me/djeca/preporuke/15112011_MINISTARSTVO_PROSVJETE_I_SPORATA.doc



DATA OVERVIEW OF PRIMARY EDUCATION COVERAGE

Photography:

UNICEF Montenegro/Risto Božović

Study on the obstacles to education in Montenegro

The following chapter provides an overview of data regarding coverage and dropping out of children from primary education. To gain insight into both the current situation in the system of education in Montenegro, and into the position of Roma and Egyptian children within the system, two important types of data are highlighted. The first is data from the official resources (the Statistical Office of Montenegro-MONSTAT) on the number of Roma and Egyptian citizens on the territory of Montenegro, as well as the number of Roma and Egyptian children of primary-school age. The second is data on the coverage and dropping out of children from primary education, with a focus on data about the participation and performance of Roma and Egyptian children.

DATA ON EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN MONTENEGRO

One of the most relevant sources of data on compulsory education coverage in Montenegro is the publication *Children in Montenegro*, published by UNICEF Montenegro in cooperation with the Statistical

Office of Montenegro – MONSTAT. This publication is based on the results of the 2011 Census of the population, households and apartments. It updates and expands information on the situation of **children in Montenegro**, and is meant to be used in developing national activities to accomplish better results for all children.

According to the 2011 Census data, one out of ten citizens of Montenegro is of primary school age, and 95% of the children of this age are attending primary education (Table 4).⁷

As can be observed, 5% of children in Montenegro were not attending compulsory education in 2011.

In the publication **Children in Montenegro**, separate from the 2011 Census data, results of the 2003 Census on school attendance are published for the first time. presented below is data on primary school attendance for the children in Montenegro in 2003 and 2011, at state level and in individual municipalities (Table 5). Red colour is used for municipality data with a negative trend or increased dropping out.

Table 2

Census: total number of children of primary school age in Montenegro and primary education coverage

Children of primary school age in the Republic of Montenegro		School attendance - Primary education	
N	%	N	%
72 637	11.7	68 835	95

⁷ School attendance is defined as regular attendance of any accredited educational institution or programme, public or private, for organized learning at any level of education. Information on school attendance relates in particular to the population of official school age (children of primary education age – 6-14 years)

Table 3

Compulsory education coverage by municipalities in the Republic of Montenegro: 2003 and 2011

Municipality	School attendance – Primary education	
	2003.	2011.
Žabljak	97%	97%
Cetinje	95%	97%
Danilovgrad	93%	97%
Kotor	96%	97%
Ulcinj	92%	97%
Mojkovac	96%	97%
Pljevlja	96%	96%
Kolašin	94%	96%
Plužine	95%	96%
Herceg Novi	95%	96%
Budva	97%	96%
Nikšić	97%	96%
Bar	93%	95%
Tivat	95%	95%
Bijelo Polje	92%	95%
Šavnik	92%	94%
Andrijevica	90%	94%
Plav	88%	94%
Rožaje	85%	94%
Podgorica	94%	93%
Berane	93%	93%
Total	93%	95%

It is important to stress that certain caution is necessary when comparing 2003 and 2011 Census data, given that the reform of the system of education was implemented in the period between the two censuses, which included a gradual transfer from eight-year to nine-year primary school. So at the time of gathering the 2003 Census data, primary school lasted 8 years and primary-school-age children were children aged 7-14 years old. In the 2011 Census, primary school lasted nine years, and children started school at the age of six.

As can be noted, in 2011 the percentage of primary school age children who attended school increased from 94% to 95% relative to the previous census. Primary school attendance rates in Montenegro are highest in Žabljak, Cetinje, Danilovgrad, Kotor, Ulcinj and Mojkovac (97%). In four municipalities – Žabljak, Tivat, Berane and Pljevlja – the school attendance rate is at the same level as in 2003. In Podgorica and Berane, the school attendance rate among children aged 6-17 is lowest (93%).

An increase in the school attendance rate is recorded in the majority of municipalities, while a decrease of 1% was registered in Budva, Nikšić and Podgorica. When comparing 2003 and 2011 Census data, it should be taken into account that, according to the currently used methodology, displaced persons from Kosovo were not included in the population of Montenegro in 2003. Many of them are members of the Roma and Egyptian population, with a school attendance rate significantly lower than in other groups. Inclusion of this part of the population among the inhabitants of Montenegro, according to the 2011 Census, resulted in a decreased school attendance rate when compared with the 2003 Census data in the municipalities of Podgorica, Budva and Nikšić, that have the largest share of these population members.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN MONTENEGRO

Even though the primary focus of this study is on Roma and Egyptian children, and barriers and bottlenecks to their effective inclusion in mainstream education, in this section we will use the opportunity to present an overview of available evidence on 'out-of-school' children in Montenegro as a whole, particularly children with disabilities and poor children who do not attend.

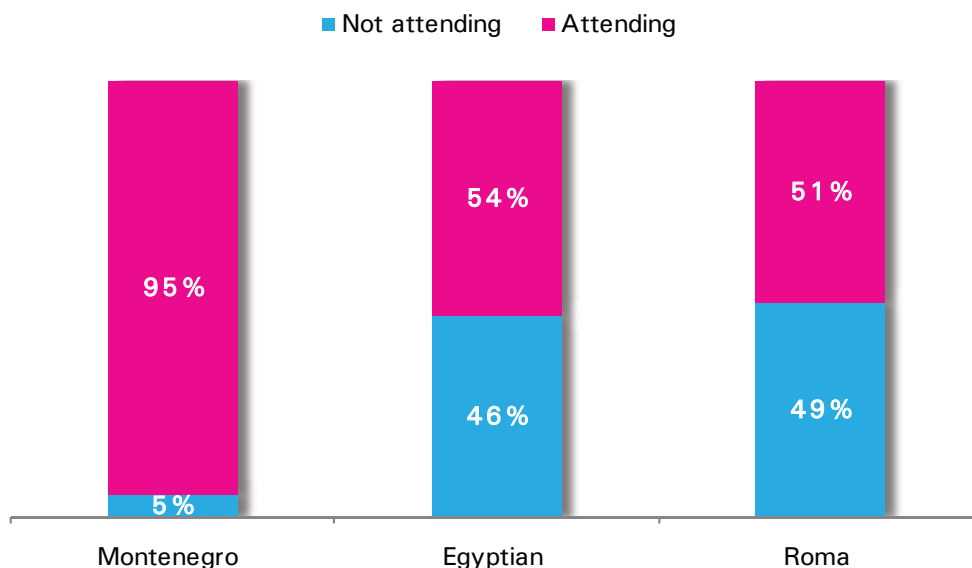
Identifying and accurately estimating number of children who are out of school is particularly difficult given that majority of them belong to hard-to-reach marginalized, hidden and vulnerable groups of population such as Roma and Egyptian children, refugees and DPs, children with disabilities and poor children.

The following overview of 'out-of school' children in Montenegro will, where available, rely on official data at the same time recognizing that there might be some issues relating to underreporting of certain population groups associated with it due to the methodology of data collection, the characteristics of the given groups, etc. Bearing this in mind, analysis of data relating to children from the 2011 Census has indeed for the first time shed some light on who the out-of-school children in the country are.

1. Roma and Egyptian Children

According to this data, coverage of Roma and Egyptian children with compulsory education barely exceeds half of the primary-school-age children (Figure 1). In the population of Egyptian children, primary-school attendance is somewhat higher than in the population of

Figure 1
Primary school attendance of Roma and Egyptian children in 2011



Roma children, but the mentioned values are still significantly below the national level.

It is important to note that adequate estimation of relevant parameters of inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children in primary education is not entirely possible, since alternative data shows that more than 10% of children from the Roma and Egyptian population, which has the highest percentage of primary-school-age children, are still not registered in the Birth Registry.⁸ There is also no official or reliable enough data on the exact number of children of primary-school age. Furthermore, due to the high drop-out rate among Roma and Egyptian pupils, the attendance rate is a lot lower than the enrolment rate, but again it is impossible for it to be calculated due to scant data.

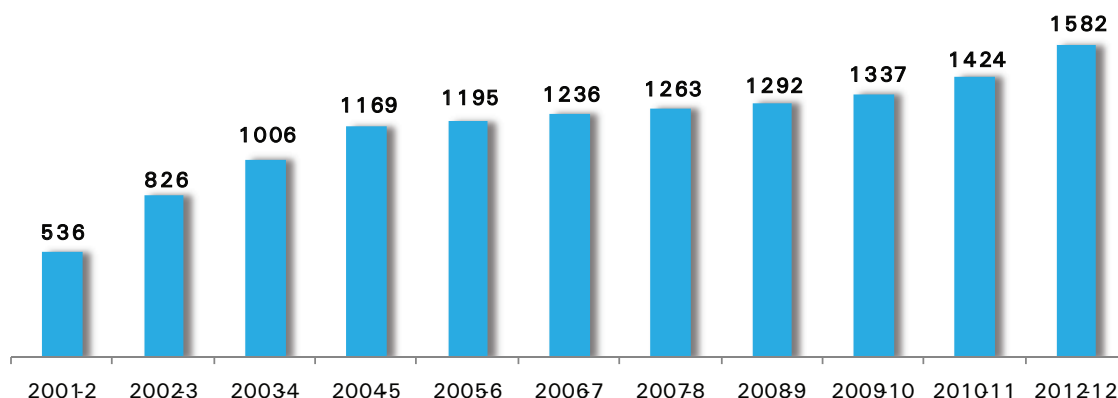
Presented below is the available data on the

number of Roma and Egyptian children included in compulsory education in the past decade.

Montenegro has achieved significant results in increasing the number of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in primary schools each year. However the degree of their educational inclusion is still not at a satisfactory level, since according to a Roma and Egyptian population database, there are 2,680 primary-school-age children in the Roma and Egyptian population, while according to unofficial data, this number is significantly higher. Also, high drop-out rates remain one of the most pressing problems for the education of Roma and Egyptian children in Montenegro. According to the World Bank, only 32% of Roma and Egyptian children complete primary education compared to 98% of all children in Montenegro.⁹

Figure 2

Number of children from the Roma and Egyptian population enrolled in primary schools at the beginning of the school year



Source: *Strategy for development of Primary Education 2012-2017*, Ministry of Education

⁸ Report by the coalition NGO Roma Circle on the implementation of the policy of protection of the RAE population in Montenegro at state and local levels in 2008.

⁹ *Montenegro After the Crisis: Towards a Smaller and More Efficient Government, Public Expenditure and Institutional Review*, Main Report, World Bank, October 2011.

2. Refugees and DPs

Refugees and displaced persons belong to some of the most vulnerable groups in society. This segment of the population is often characterized by unresolved legal status and citizenship, which prevents their employment, exacerbates poverty, lowers accessibility to basic social and health services, and education.

Census data from 2011 on education broken down by citizenship status of children shows that 34% of stateless children do not attend school. Of the total number of children who are in the process of acquiring citizenship, 16% do

not attend school and 15% of children who are citizens of a foreign country do not attend school. The lowest percentage of children that do not attend school is among children with Montenegrin citizenship (4%).

In the context of this Study, it is important to note that the majority of the refugees and DP population in Montenegro consists of Roma and Egyptians who fled to Montenegro after the outbreak of conflict in Kosovo in 1999. Census data shows that over one-third of Roma and around 45% of Egyptian children in Montenegro are either stateless or are in the process of acquiring citizenship.

Figure 3

Children aged 6-17 by school attendance and citizenship in%, 2011 Census

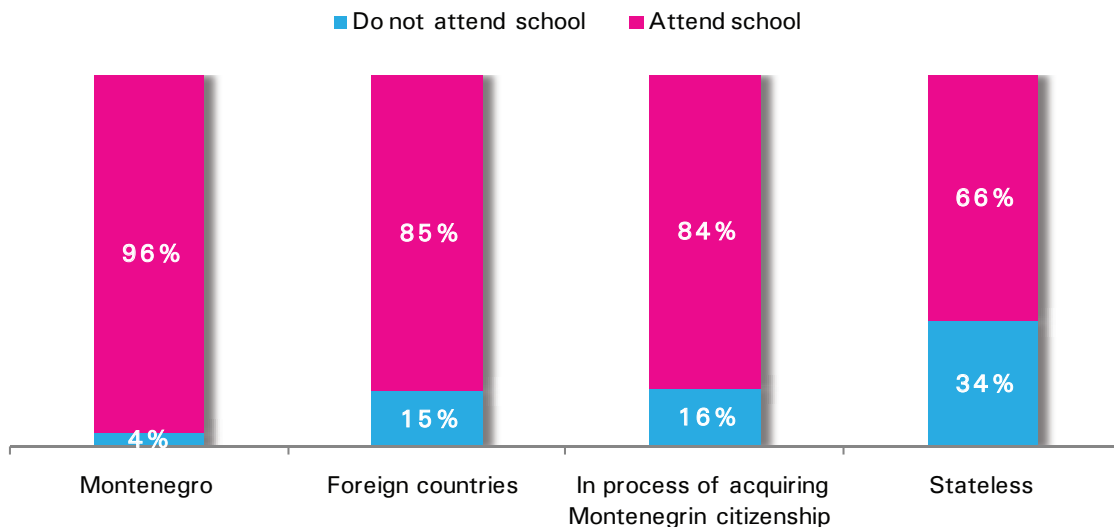
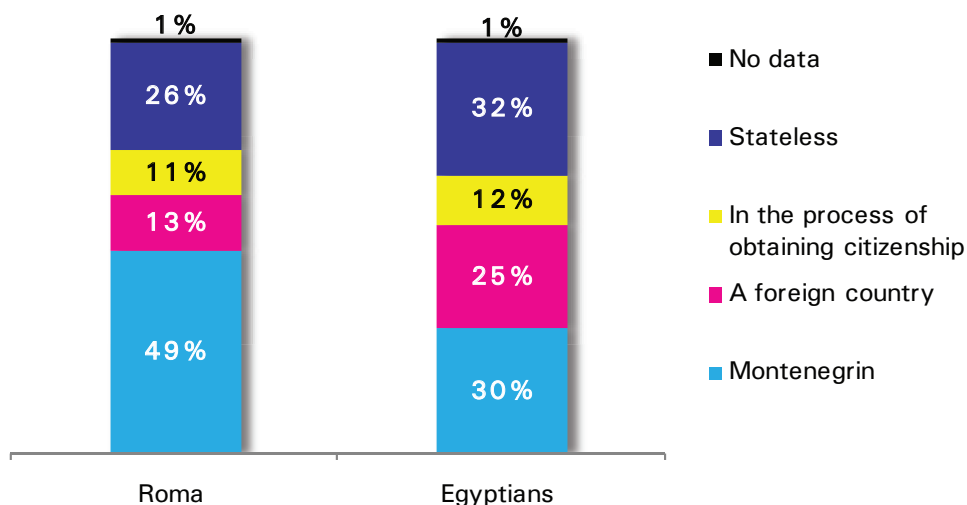


Figure 4
Roma and Egyptian Children by Citizenship Status, in %



All things considered, educational deprivation, when assessed by measuring the failure to attend primary school (children from 6 to 15 years old), is very much a characteristic of the Roma and Egyptian population, particularly of displaced Roma and Egyptians. Although primary education is mandatory, the school-attendance rate is very low among the Roma and Egyptian population.

3. Children with disabilities

The problem of data unavailability becomes even more serious when it comes to children with disabilities and this is a problem faced by **almost all countries in transition—particularly those with very low rates of childhood disability recorded in the census**. Factors contributing to significant

discrepancies and underreporting in estimates of child disability prevalence are: stigmatization and social exclusion of children with disabilities and their families, vague and contradicting definitions of disability, **limited functioning of systems** of early detection and diagnosis of child disability, and a lack of knowledge on disability in general.

Montenegro has no reliable data on disability prevalence among children, and estimates range from the very lowest figure in the Census (1.1% or 1,543 children) to a suspected disability prevalence rate in the MICS3 (12% of the child population). **The World Health Organization uses a global average estimate of 5.1%**. See the table below:

Table 4

Data on disability among children in Montenegro

Child Disability Rate in the 2011 Census*	1 543 or 1.1%
MICS Montenegro 2005—suspected disability rate (2-9 years of age)	12.5%
Child disability benefit recipients (2011)	1 599
Special Education Needs (SEN) Children with Commissions' referral (6-14 years, 2011/2012)	1 109
Children: 0-14 based upon 5.1% WHO national average estimate	6 500
Children: 6-14 (school-going age) 5.1% WHO national average estimate	4 056
Children aged 0-14 with some type of diagnosis from healthcare services (Institute for Public Health, 2009)	Total: 2 162
	0-5: 984
	6-14: 1 178

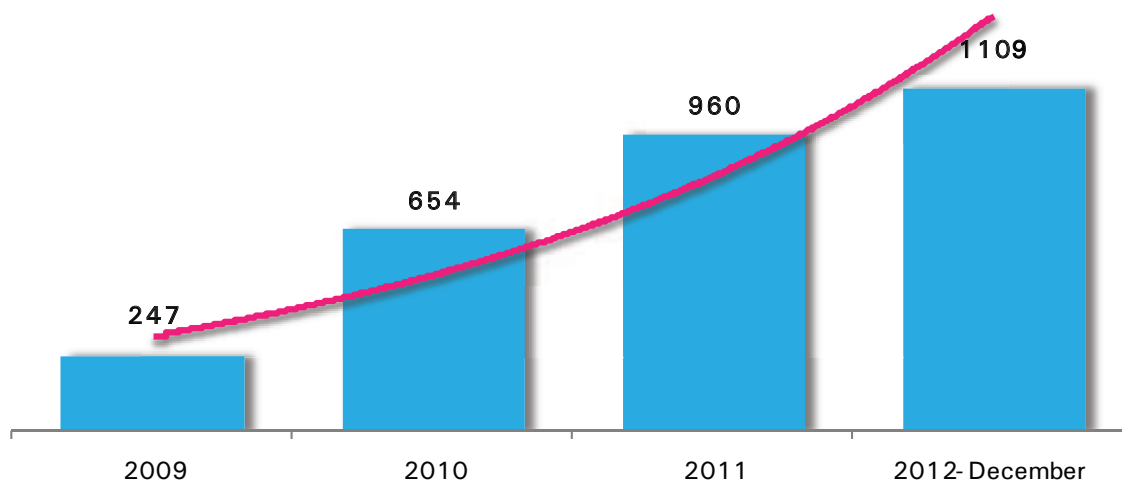
Additionally, legislation in the area of education recognizes children with disabilities as a sub-group of Children with Special Education Needs (SEN). The Article 4 of the Law on Education of Children with Special Education Needs defines children with SEN as:

1) children with disabilities (children with physical, intellectual, sensory and combined disabilities); and 2) children with difficulties and disadvantages (children with behavioural disorders, serious long-lasting illnesses, learning difficulties and other difficulties caused by emotional, social, language and

cultural obstacles). What is usually used as a proxy indicator for children with disabilities in the educational system is the number of children who were assessed by the Commissions for Orientation of Children with SEN in Education. The figure below shows significant progress made in terms of the number of children with disabilities assessed by the commissions since 2009. However, because of the **difficulties in assessing overall childhood disability prevalence it remains unclear how many of these children** are still out of school.

Figure 5

Number of SEN children with commissions' decisions/referrals



4. Children affected by poverty

The most recent study on child poverty estimated that there are approximately 14 500 children in Montenegro who live in poverty (10% of the total child population). UNICEF's Report 'Child Poverty in Montenegro' shows that children are particularly vulnerable and they are more affected by poverty than adults. Child poverty weakens equality and contributes to worse outcomes in health, nutrition, education and general wellbeing.¹⁰ It strongly contributes to the marginalization and social exclusion of children.

The children most vulnerable to poverty and inequity are the under-fives, those who live in the north of the country and in rural areas, those who live in single-parent households, and households with three or more children. The Report also identifies Roma and Egyptian

children and children of DPs and IDPs as particularly vulnerable.

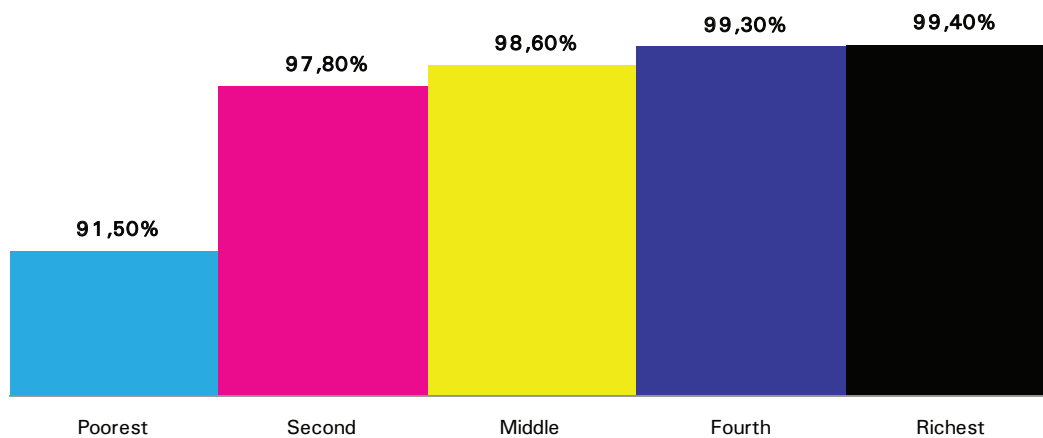
Evidence shows that child poverty has a strong correlation with access to education. The Report confirmed that children living in poor households have no adequate space for studying and their parents struggle to provide them with very basic textbooks, school supplies and transport costs to school and back. Also, poor households in Montenegro are on average 12 km away from the nearest primary school, 20 km away from the nearest high school and 19 km away from the nearest kindergarten.

The MICS3 conducted in 2005 shows a significant gap in school attendance between children coming from the richest 20% of the population and children coming from the poorest 20%.

¹⁰ Report 'Child Poverty in Montenegro', UNICEF, November 2011. (http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media_19760.html)

Figure 6

Primary school net attendance ratio by wealth index quintiles, Montenegro 2005





ANALYSIS OF DETERMINANTS IN EDUCATION

Photography:

UNICEF Montenegro/Risto Božović

Study on the obstacles to education in Montenegro

DESK STUDY

The desk study elaborates on determinants of equity in education, and those which fall within the “Enabling Environment” category of the Determinant Analysis Framework. Specific barriers and bottlenecks under each determinant are covered.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

This part of the desk study analyzes relevant legislation, policies, strategies, investment and expenditure, and other factors that can promote Roma and Egyptian education; and which are all a part of the “Enabling Environment” category within the Determinant Analysis Framework. The determinants in this category can, at the system and society level, support equal access to quality education. In other words, these determinants can set the ground work for the fulfilment of education for all, including Roma and Egyptian children. They can also serve to hinder equal education. For example if national policies and legislation run counter to equal education it would be harder for inclusive education initiatives to be created at the community level, or for Roma and Egyptian children to claim their right to education. The four determinants of the “Enabling Environment” category covered in this section are: Social Norms; Legislation/Policy; Budget/Expenditure; and Management Coordination. The specific

barriers and bottlenecks under each determinant, concerning equal access to quality education for Roma and Egyptian children in Montenegro, are analyzed.

Social Norms

Social norms and attitudes, including discrimination, can determine whether or not there is national attainment of equal education that is inclusive of diverse children. Children that belong to certain populations are more likely to be deprived of education even though it is a fundamental human right. Some of the common factors relating to stigma and prejudice that endanger children’s right to education are discussed below. Children who are the most exposed to stigma and discrimination usually belong to one of the following groups: children with physical or intellectual disabilities; minority groups such as Roma or Egyptians; refugees or displaced persons, as well as poor children.

1. Stigma and discrimination against children from vulnerable social groups

Social exclusion of Roma and Egyptian children severely endangers their access to education, making these children invisible to the system and leading to high rates of non-enrolment in school. Studies conducted in South-East European countries point to the

presence of very extensive differences regarding the rate of school attendance between Roma and Egyptian and children from the majority population, particularly in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro¹¹, caused by a high social exclusion rate.

Throughout South-East Europe, governments acknowledge that non-enrolment and dropping out are contributed to by segregation of Roma and Egyptian children, which is closely linked to stigma and discrimination. Segregation is a risk factor for the education of Roma and Egyptian children which is manifested in three forms in the system of education: 1) segregation between schools (formal or actual): the majority of Roma and Egyptian pupils attend schools where Roma and Egyptian children make up the majority and that are mainly located in the vicinity of Roma and Egyptian settlements; 2) segregation within school (formal or actual): in case of heterogeneous schools, Roma and Egyptian pupils are often secluded from other pupils by being gathered in special classes; and 3) segregation – special schools: Roma and Egyptian children are occasionally sent to special schools.

In Montenegro, segregation in education is linked to residential segregation. The Roma and Egyptian population in most cases lives in isolated settlements, often in refugee camps, where access to education is fairly limited. Among the localities where segregation in education has been observed are the municipalities of Berane and Podgorica.

The Government of Montenegro has recognized this in its Strategy for Development of Primary Education 2012-2017. One of the

measures aimed at ensuring universal access to quality education foresees the introduction of programmes for prevention of segregation of Roma and Egyptian children in schools.

Living separately from the majority population, the Roma and Egyptian populations are often excluded from the main areas of society in Montenegro. Social exclusion and poor economic conditions together contribute to the poor living conditions of RE in Montenegro and potentially erode their distinctive ethnic and cultural identity and tradition. The actual situation in the RE population in Montenegro (particularly internally displaced RE) is very often distant from the way the majority of the population live.

As a minority group, Roma and Egyptian parents and children in Montenegro may perceive a problem of achieving educational parity with the majority group of the society. Minority groups may perceive the education system to be favouring the values of the majority group. They may regard such education as subversive of their own culture (religion, language, etc.)

In its report on Montenegro from 2012¹², the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recognizes that Roma and Egyptian children are subjected to discrimination in access to education and in the school environment, adding that there are negative attitudes and widespread prejudice towards the Roma and Egyptian population, especially Roma and Egyptian IDPs from Kosovo.

Nationally representative public opinion surveys measuring social distance based on ethnicity in Montenegro were conducted in 2004 and 2007.¹³ At that time, the survey results have

¹¹ *Breaking the Cycle of Exclusion: ROMA CHILDREN IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE*, UNICEF, 2007

<http://www.unicef.rs/files/publikacije/Raskinuti%20lanac%20isključenosti-Romska%20deca%20u%20južnistocnoj%20Evropi.pdf>

¹² ECRI Report on Montenegro, February 2012, pp. 15, 20

¹³ *Ethnic distance in Montenegro*, Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM), 2004 and 2007

(<http://www.cedem.me/sr/programi/istraivanja-javnog-mnjenja/ostala-istraivanja/viewdownload/38-ostala-istraivanja/203-etnika-distanca-u-crnog-gori-maj-2007.html>)

shown distance toward the Roma and Egyptian community: more than 50% of citizens of Montenegro did not want to have members of the Roma and Egyptian community as their neighbours and 70% of citizens opposed having their child go to a class where a member of the Roma and Egyptian community is a teacher. The distance becomes even more pronounced when it comes to personal relationships and social communication—for 55% of citizens it is not acceptable to be friends with members of the Roma and Egyptian community. As expected, distance towards the Roma and Egyptian community is emphasized most when forming a family relationship with the Roma is concerned: 77% of citizens would find it unacceptable to become a distant relative with a member of the Roma and Egyptian community through a marriage with a relative and more than 80% could not imagine being married to a Roma or Egyptian or their child marrying a Roma or Egyptian.

Findings of the survey conducted in 2011 on Discrimination of Minorities and Marginalised Social Groups¹⁴, which examined discrimination in access to education, employment, health protection, and justice, show that on average members of the Roma and Egyptian community are the most marginalized and discriminated against in Montenegro. Observing discrimination in access to education, according to this survey, Roma or Egyptian and people with disabilities represent the most vulnerable groups, with

53% and 40% of citizens stating that Roma or Egyptians and people with disabilities respectively do not have the same treatment as the majority population with regards to access to education.

The conclusions of some qualitative reports are similar. Focus groups conducted for the *Report on Child Poverty in Montenegro*¹⁵ show that for poor Roma and Egyptian children unpleasant situations in school are common, but parents associate them more with ethnic distance than with poverty. Another worrying finding of the focus groups is that Roma and Egyptian children do not receive assistance and protection from teachers when they report bullying by their peers.

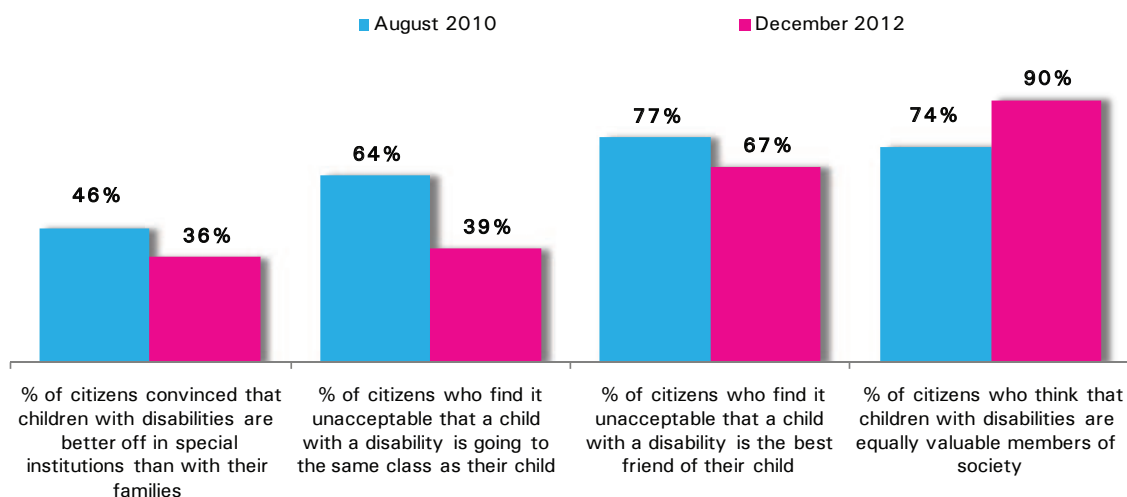
When it comes to children with disabilities in Montenegro, stigma has been identified as one of the main obstacles to their full educational inclusion and inclusion in the life of local communities in general. As a response, in 2010 the Government of Montenegro and UNICEF jointly launched the “It’s About Ability” campaign with the aim of combating stigma and creating positive images of children with disabilities in public.

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) surveys have been conducted periodically in order to assess the impacts of the campaign. The results since 2010 show significant improvements in the attitudes of the general public towards children with disabilities.

¹⁴ *Survey on Discrimination of Minorities and Marginalised Societal Groups*, CEDEM, June 2011 (<http://www.cedem.me/sr/programi/istraivanja-javnog-mnjenja/ostala-istraivanja/viewdownload/38-ostala-istraivanja/208-istraivanje-diskriminacije-manjinskih-naroda-i-marginalizovanih-drutevnihi-grupa-jun-2011.html>)

¹⁵ Report ‘Child Poverty in Montenegro’, UNICEF, November 2011 (http://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media_19760.html)

Figure 7
Impact of the 'It's About Ability' campaign



Matched with the reform of the education system and the system of social and child protection, the campaign is yielding some impressive results. However, additional efforts are needed to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities and integrate them into regular schools. In December 2012, there were 1,109 children with disabilities assessed by the Commissions for the Orientation of Children with SEN into Education. According to WHO estimates as many as two-thirds of children with disabilities of primary-school age are still out of schools.

Legislation and Policy on Education

Legislation and policies affect the form and quality of services; they are the basis on which different sectors, including the education sector, develop and organize their systems and programmes. They set the tone, stipulate and describe goals, basic principles and the

obligations of the authorities. Ultimately, they determine in part whether quality education will be available to all equally. The legal foundation of education in Montenegro is reviewed in this next section, with a special focus on inclusive education. Also covered is an overview of relevant policy documents that refer to the issue of inclusion and dropping out of primary school, both in the international community and in Montenegro.

In order to create an inclusive system of education that is equally responsive to all children, the Government of Montenegro is acting in two directions primarily: (1) developing mechanisms for continuous education of children and parents from the Roma and Egyptian population and controlling the quality of knowledge that these children gain; and (2) continuous education of teachers and other school personnel about the importance and characteristics of inclusive education.

1. Legal and Regulatory Framework on Inclusive Education in Montenegro

The Constitution of Montenegro, adopted in 2007, guarantees to all its citizens the right to education under equal conditions, while primary education is stipulated as free-of-charge and compulsory. For members of minority peoples and minority ethnic groups, the Constitution stipulates the right to education in their mother tongue and alphabet in state institutions, as well as a curriculum that includes their history and culture.

The General Law on Education (enacted in 2002, most recent amendments in 2011) is the principal act governing the basics of the system of education. For the citizens of Montenegro, this Law stipulates equality in exercising their right to education, regardless of their nationality, race, sex, language, religion, social origin or any other personal characteristic.

The Law on Primary Education (enacted 2002, most recent amendments in 2010) sets as its goal the provision of primary education for all citizens and upbringing for mutual tolerance, respecting diversities, cooperation with others and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Primary education is compulsory for all children aged 6 to 15, it lasts 9 years, and children who are to start school are those who turn six in that calendar year.

The Rulebook on the Form and Manner of Keeping Pedagogical Records and Content of Public Documents in School from 2004 stipulates the form and manner of keeping pedagogical records and content of public and other documents managed by schools, or

Adequate preparation for primary school that takes place within preschool education can be an important preventive measure against dropping out, and it is therefore important to provide a short overview of laws regulating preschool education.

issued to pupils in primary schools (and other schools).

The Law on Preschool Education (enacted in 2002, most recent amendments in 2010) has the basic goals of preschool education including: creating the conditions for life, development and education, developing social skills, learning to respect diversity and group participation, stimulating language development, developing creative usage of speech for reading, writing, and preparation for education.

Given that preschool education is not compulsory in Montenegro, it is of interest to give a brief overview of the **Rulebook on the Detailed Manner, Procedure and Criteria for the Enrolment of Children in a Preschool Institution**. According to this rulebook, enrolment of children in preschool institutions is performed on the basis of a public call announced by the institution. The request for enrolment of a child, together with the necessary documents, is submitted on a stipulated form. In institutions where more children want to be enrolled than it is possible to accommodate, admission is based on the criteria of employed parents (one or both), single parent and families with two or more children of preschool age.

Enrolment of children without parental care and children whose parents are entitled to family material allowance by the regulations on social protection of children from the most vulnerable groups of the population is performed without applying these criteria.

The Law on Education of Children with Special Educational Needs (enacted in 2004, amended in 2010) after adopted amendments, regulates not only the education of children with physical, mental or sensory disorders, behavioural disorders, severe chronic diseases, emotional disorders, children with combined problems and long-term sick children, but also children that have difficulties due to different social, language and cultural backgrounds. This points to intensified awareness of the problems of Roma and Egyptian children and making efforts to solve these problems.

Other laws in Montenegro relevant to the position of Roma and Egyptian children in the system of education are the Law on Social and Child Protection, as well as laws and regulations in the domain of the protection of human rights.

The Law on Social and Child Protection (enacted in 2005) stipulates the rights and

ways of performing activities in the domain of social and child protection to provide protection to families, individuals, children at risk, persons in need, and the socially excluded. When realizing these rights, citizens are equal, regardless of nationality, race, sex, language, religion, social background or other personal characteristics.

The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination from 2010 forbids every form of discrimination on any basis¹⁶, including discrimination in the sphere of education and professional training. Considered as discrimination in the sphere of education and professional training are the hindering or denying of enrolment in an educational institution at all levels of education, exclusion from this institution, hindering or denying the possibility of attending classes and participating in other activities, categorization, abuse or otherwise unjustified discrimination or unequal treatment of children/pupils.

The Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms (enacted in 2006, amended in 2007 and 2010) in accordance with the Constitution of Montenegro, provides minority nations and other minority ethnic communities with protection of human rights and freedoms guaranteed to all citizens, as well as protection of specific minority rights and freedoms, including the right to education in their own language. Teachers who have working knowledge of a given minority language perform educational work in regular schools in that language.

¹⁶ Discrimination is defined as every unjustified, legal or physical, direct or indirect discrimination or unequal treatment, or non-treatment of a person or group of persons in respect to other persons, as well as exclusion, restriction or preference of any person in relation to other individuals, based on race, colour, nationality, social or ethnic origin, connection with any minority people and minority ethnic community, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, sex, gender identity, sexual or other orientation, health, disability, age, material condition, marital or family status, membership of a group or assumed membership of a group, political party or other organization, or other personal characteristics.

2. Strategic Framework in the International Community

Key international documents in the domain of education on which the national strategy is founded are: Europe 2020: Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth; the Millennium Development Goals; and A World Fit for Children.

The European Union, within its basic strategic framework **Europe 2020: Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth**¹⁷, has set education as one of the major topics, as a way to fight inequality and poverty. In the domain of education the high incidence of early dropping out is pointed out, defined by the European Commission as a failure to complete compulsory school or secondary school, or the failure to obtain qualifications or a school diploma.¹⁸ One of the strategic goals to be achieved by the year 2020 is **reducing the early drop-out rate to below 10%**, which would improve the quality of education and reduce the risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

The European Commission emphasizes that **the reasons for leaving the educational system are highly individualized, but that dropping out from school is also a social phenomenon and, as such, can be determined by an abundance of factors and their interaction**. The predominant causes of dropping out of the system differ according to country and region, and it is not possible to define a unique 'profile' of a child that quits school, or make a detailed list of factors resulting in dropping out. As important factors,

EC indicates a poor, socially or educationally non-stimulating background setting and belonging to minority groups, such as the Roma ethnic community.

The **Millennium Development Goals** of the United Nations¹⁹ envisage by the year 2015, among other things, **100% inclusion of boys and girls in primary education**, as well as a reduction of the rate of illiteracy among its citizens older than 10 years to 1%. In the domain of primary education, particular emphasis is put on inclusion of all children from marginalized groups, especially Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian and children with developmental problems, overcoming the problem of their early school leaving, as well as improving the quality of their education.²⁰

The international document **A World Fit for Children**²¹, closely associated with the Millennium Development Goals, sets the objective that each child has to have access to quality primary education, which is compulsory and free of charge.

Some of the envisaged activities aimed at realizing these goals are the development and implementation of special strategies that make education available to all children, promotion of innovative programmes that stimulate the school and community to actively search for children who have dropped out from school and help them complete school, with the participation of the government, community, family and NGOs as partners in the process of education, enabling more extensive accessibility of primary education to children from vulnerable groups.

¹⁷ Adopted at the EU Summit on June 17, 2010

¹⁸ EC, Reducing Early School Leaving, http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywyp_en.pdf accessed on July 15, 2012, European Commission: [SEC(2010)] "Reducing Early School Leaving". The accompanying document to the *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Policies to Reduce Early School Leaving*, Brussels, 2010

²⁹ Adopted at the Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000.

²⁰ The mid-term report on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Montenegro has been outlined in the section "Analysis of the Current Situation".

²¹ Adopted in 2002 at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to children.

3. National Strategies and Goals

National strategies for the development of education, as well as the implemented education policy and standards, are based on the documents of the United Nations and the European Union.

In the national strategies and goals of Montenegro, the issue of overcoming problems in education that Roma and Egyptian children face, as well as the concrete issues of increasing inclusion and preventing the dropping out of these children from compulsory education are present. As the most relevant documents that fundamental policies and measures in the domain of compulsory education are based on, we would like to single out the following strategies and strategic documents:

- The Book of Changes (2001)
- Strategy for the Development of Primary Education with Action Plan (2011)
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" in Montenegro (2005)
- Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Population in Montenegro (2007) – for the period 2008-2012
- Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro (2012) – for the period 2012-2016

As for coverage of children by compulsory education, these strategies and strategic documents set very similar goals and principles. The basic guiding principle is the provision of education to all equally, regardless of sex, social or cultural origin, religion, nationality, physical and mental constitution or any other characteristic. Quality and available primary education for all children in Montenegro is the key priority of the mentioned strategic documents and it is a foundation of the planned measures and

activities at both the country and local levels. Foreseen measures and activities, among other things, include those aimed at the establishment of a reliable database of Roma and Egyptian children for enhanced monitoring of their enrolment in school and prevention of dropping out and increased coverage by preschool education, as well as expansion of services available for Roma and Egyptian children and their parents. Even though the government has shown a high level of commitment in fulfilling its strategic intents, implementation of these measures and activities still remains a challenge.

Past attempts to support children from the Roma and Egyptian population who come from poor families related primarily to additional financing aimed at meeting the needs of these children and providing support, such as distributing free textbooks, school supplies, clothes and footwear. These measures are stipulated in the Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Population in Montenegro (2008-2012) and the new Strategy for Development of Primary Education with Action Plan (2012-2017), as well as within several Local Action Plans for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children (Nikšić, Bar, Herceg Novi).

4. Local Strategic Plans

Strategic action plans at the local level provide insight into the focus of municipalities within Montenegro in terms of the Roma and Egyptian population and their position in the system of education. Many municipalities in Montenegro have local action plans for children, within which regulated activities are aimed at improving the realization of the rights of children in all spheres of life, increasing interest and the awareness of society about the situation these children are in and their needs, as well as strengthening the capacity of local communities in the segments engaged in upgrading children's position.

Local action plans (LPAs) for children were adopted in 2012 by the municipalities of Bijelo Polje, Bar, Cetinje, Kotor and Rožaje, and adoption of the LPA for Children in the Municipality of Ulcinj is expected in the first quarter of 2013. These LPAs define the measures and priority activities to be realized by the year 2016. The municipalities of Berane, Niksic and Tivat adopted their local action plans in 2007 and these documents are still in force. Among other areas, Local Action Plans stipulate measures and activities aimed at improving the position of children from the Roma and Egyptian population in the domain of education, but also protection and promotion of the position of Roma and Egyptian children in general, as well as their integration into the local community.

As one of the key goals of local strategies for children, singled out is the provision of all children with access to quality education and an increase in primary education coverage, with special focus on children from vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as Roma and Egyptian children, children with disabilities and children from socially exposed families.

Apart from action plans for children, the Municipalities of Tivat, Herceg Novi and Nikšić also have action plans for the inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population as a particularly vulnerable group of citizens, and these plans are still in force. They define the

In order to increase inclusion of children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population in the system of compulsory education and prevent early school leaving, local strategies for inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population stipulate numerous measures and activities aimed at the parents of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, school personnel, characteristics of the curriculum and ways and forms of conveying it to children, but also the material and financial aspects of education. Accordingly, these strategies stipulate action in the direction of raising parents' awareness of the importance of education for normal social development and a better life for children, increasing the degree of inclusiveness of schools and rooting out prejudice towards the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian population, educating children and parents about the necessity of inclusion of children in the regular system of education, promoting cooperation between schools and parents, increasing the number of assistants from the Roma and Egyptian population etc. The documents also stipulate providing necessary material resources and conditions, such as transportation and food for children, school supplies and textbooks.

Budget and Expenditures on Education in Montenegro

The financing of, and expenditure on education is also a determinant in enabling children from vulnerable populations access to quality education. Montenegro faces difficult choices in the twin challenges of improving the quality of education and curtailing fiscal expenditures in this sector. The future key challenge for the Montenegrin education sector consists of balancing fiscal sustainability considerations with increasing the quality of outcomes. Presented below are the information and main recommendations of the World Bank regarding budget and expenditures on education.²²

1. Investment for Improvement of the Quality of Education

Over the past 5 years, Montenegro has invested considerable resources in primary education to improve the quality of learning.²³

Between 2006 and 2010, total education expenditure increased by 50%, from €89.4 to €134.8 million. The largest nominal increases (year-on-year) occurring in 2007 (+30%) and 2008 (+24%). Altogether, the increase in the education budget between 2006 and 2009 exceeded the increase in average living costs (+15%), reflecting sizable real increases. Consolidation of education sector expenditures started in 2009 and continued into 2010, with both years showing a nominal tightening in spending.

In order to improve the quality and efficiency of education, Montenegro will face very difficult choices to ensure that there are sufficient

resources. The reform agenda will have to include the closing of small schools, increasing pupil-teacher ratios, making savings on energy efficiency, and/or reducing the costs of administration.

There is some scope for increasing class sizes overall, even though Montenegro's current averages are close to international mean values. Class sizes vary considerably across countries. In Montenegro, the average class size in primary education is 22.0.

Teachers are a critical factor in improving the quality of education. It is important to ensure that both the number of teachers is appropriate and there are opportunities for professional development. By international standards, the proportion of the Montenegrin education budget for salary expenditures is high—which means, inversely, that the level of expenditure on non-salary items is very low.

2. Expenditure on Teaching Staff and Utilities

As a share of the education budget, Montenegro spends 17% on primary education, as compared to the OECD average of 20% and the EU19 average of 19%.²⁴

The most important driver of the large increases in primary and secondary education spending in 2007 and 2008 has been the rise in teachers' salaries and, to a lesser extent, in spending on utilities. However, despite the increase, Montenegro's spending on quality-enhancing, non-salary items has remained low. In 2009, the proportion of the recurrent education budget used for gross salary costs was 93% in primary education and 92% in secondary education. In 2007, 11% of

²² Montenegro After the Crisis: Towards a Smaller and More Efficient Government. Public Expenditure and Institutional Review, Main Report, October, 2011.

²³ The education reform was supported by the Education Reform Project and an associated US\$5 million World Bank loan.

²⁴ Per-student primary education expenditure as a percentage of per capita GDP; see OECD (2010a).

recurrent spending in both primary and secondary education (including vocational education and training) was on non-salary costs. In 2008, the figure was 9% (again for both primary and secondary education); however, almost half of these non-salary expenditures were for utilities, rather than quality-promoting items like textbooks or other learning materials. In 2010, the proportion of non-salary expenditure is expected to be even lower, at 6%.

3. Funding of Policies that Target Disadvantaged Children

Overall enrolment rates in primary and secondary education are comparable to other European and OECD countries. Almost all children are, according to official statistics, enrolled in primary education at the appropriate age, which places Montenegro favourably amongst higher-income countries.²⁵

The situation of the Roma and Egyptian minorities, however, is quite different. Data from the Employers Survey²⁶ shows that a lack of education is a major obstacle for labour market integration of Roma and Egyptians.

To be able to make noticeable progress in getting the remaining pupils into school will depend on ensuring that those Roma and Egyptian children already enrolled attend school regularly and with a view to graduating. It is important to note that Montenegro suffers from a mismatch between acquired skills and knowledge and the needs of the labour

market, not only in case of the Roma and Egyptian population, but in case of majority population as well. For example, the Employment Agency of Montenegro (2010) found that the lack of trained labour in the market represented the single most important reason that employers had given for not being able to fill positions, and 61% of employees who received training in the previous year were trained in basic skills and knowledge (basic computer literacy and other courses, and knowledge of English language). Little attention is paid to upgrading labour market skills.

Montenegro will need to move beyond isolated reforms for different sub-sectors and develop a comprehensive lifelong learning system, including an expansion of provisions at the preschool and adult education level. First steps in this direction have been undertaken by the development of a Qualification Framework for Life-Long Learning, which will allow for more flexible learning paths and will make the recognition of degrees and prior learning easier.

In addition to cost considerations, Montenegro will need to change the structure of its education expenditures and significantly increase the proportion directed towards quality-enhancing measures. Early childhood development as well as higher education and lifelong learning will play an important role for Montenegro's future competitiveness and further reform efforts will need to focus on these sub-sectors.

²⁵ Montenegro After the Crisis: Towards a Smaller and More Efficient Government. Public Expenditure and Institutional Review, Main Report, October, 2011.

²⁶ Employment Agency for Montenegro, 2010

Management and Coordination

If measures and systems are not in place to monitor, manage and coordinate efforts around education, then it becomes difficult to implement initiatives that may promote education among Roma and Egyptians. Weaknesses and strengths in management and coordination determine education outcomes for vulnerable children. This final section of the desk study describes the system devised for regulating non-enrolment and non-attendance of primary school. Additionally described are measures designed to prevent leaving the educational system early.

1. Identifying and Addressing Issues of Early Dropping Out & Enforcement

Reviewing the laws currently in force in Montenegro, we find that two institutions are in charge of the process of enrolment in primary school and regulating non-enrolment and non-attendance of primary school: the state authority in charge of keeping vital records of citizens, and the educational institution.

According to the aforementioned Law on Primary Education, children who should be enrolled in school are those who will turn six in that calendar year (Article 31 regulating the

conditions of school enrolment). A child can start school before the age of 6, but also at a later age if the child is not ready for school at the age of 6. In both cases, the parents are the ones who suggest this, but the decision is made by the authorized committee.

The Law on Primary Education includes precise information about enrolment in primary school and about sanctions to follow if a child is not enrolled in school. According to Article 35, the state authority in charge of keeping vital records of citizens is obliged to deliver to the school a list of children of school age residing in settlements in the school catchment area by the end of February every year. The school is required to file a complaint to the competent inspection against parents of a child who is not enrolled in school, or does not meet the primary school obligation (Article 36). The school must file this complaint within 15 days after the enrolment deadline, or the day the child stopped fulfilling the primary education obligation. If the child is not enrolled in school, or does not attend classes, the parent is liable to a fine of a half to ten times the minimum wage in Montenegro (Article 81). If a parent fails to enrol the child in school even after the sentence, or if the child does not attend school again, the sentence can be repeated.

However, these legal provisions are rarely implemented in practice and enforcement mechanisms are insufficiently defined. Many of the children, who are out of school, have never been officially signed out of school and their parents are rarely contacted by the competent institutions or fined for not fulfilling their parental obligation. The Strategy for Development of Primary Education 2012-2017 recognizes that this is one of the problems that needs to be addressed through strengthening the coordination between the competent institutions. Primarily, by designing clear procedures and responsibilities so as to ensure that information on possible dropping-out could be received in a timely manner and schools, centres for social welfare and other competent institutions can react in line with the Law.

2. Identifying Children at Risk of Dropping Out and Taking Preventive Measures

Insufficient knowledge of the official language is a significant barrier to the successful education of Roma and Egyptian children and at the same time a cause of segregation.²⁷ It is often the case that children who do not speak the official language to a sufficient extent may be categorized as children with minor developmental and intellectual problems, therefore may be directed to special institutions. Those who are enrolled in primary

school and do not speak Montenegrin language well, are faced with extensive barriers trying to master the curriculum.

To date there have been no efficient information systems developed in order to help identify Roma and Egyptian children who have problems in learning the official language, although all children go through preschool assessment and screening. However, there are some measures foreseen to alleviate the problems of the language barrier for Roma and Egyptian children.

One of the ways to overcome this problem is to introduce teaching personnel from the Roma and Egyptian population who will help these children freely engage in studying. Introduction of Roma mediators is a measure for promoting communication between the community and the school, and a significant form of effort invested in preventing dropping out by Roma and Egyptian children from compulsory education.²⁸ Empirical data indicates that an insufficient number of teaching staff from the Roma and Egyptian population is one of the reasons for the dropping out by Roma and Egyptian children from compulsory education.²⁹

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommended and stimulated the programme of employing Roma assistants from the Roma or Egyptian population. The Ministry of Education and Sports, through the project “Reform of the System of Social and Child Protection: Improvement of Social Inclusion” (from January 2011 to halfway through 2013), plans to increase the number of Roma and Egyptian children in the system of education by employing a larger number of Roma assistants in primary schools.

In order to overcome the problem with the language barrier, classes of Roma language and culture in schools are planned, with a high percentage of Roma and Egyptian pupils involved at the state level. Additionally, in order to overcome the problem of segregation of Roma and Egyptian pupils, the instruments for testing children when starting school are being standardized, taking into account the specific socio-cultural context in which these children grow up. At the local level, measures are focused on the education of parents and children through the realization of different projects.

²⁷ From integrative to inclusive education: keeping up with the needs, http://www.disabilityinfo.me/1/studija_obrazovanje.pdf

²⁸ Monitoring report on the Decade of Roma inclusion 2005 -2015 for Montenegro, Decade Watch 2007 Update, <http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/DecadeWatch/DecadeWatch%202007%20Update%20-%20Final%20%2830-07-08%29.pdf>

²⁹ Mid-term report about the Millennium Developmental Goals in Montenegro, 2010 <http://www.undp.org.me/home/mdg/2010/MDG%20report%202010%20MNE.pdf>



Photography:
UNICEF Montenegro/Zoran Jovanović Maccak

EMPIRICAL STUDY

The following empirical study presents findings from the conducted survey, focus groups and in-depth interviews. The information gleaned from the surveys shed light on the determinants that contribute to inequalities in education, and which fall within the “Supply”, “Demand,” and “Quality” categories of the Determinant Analysis Framework. Specific barriers and bottlenecks under each determinant, in each category, are covered.

SUPPLY

In order to promote equality in education certain essentials need to be supplied to ensure that all children, including the most vulnerable and marginalized, have equal access to quality education. They include everything from the provision of facilities in which to hold classes, to the provision of well-trained teachers. These types of elements are the determinants within the “Supply” category of the Determinant Analysis Framework, and they have a decisive impact on Roma and Egyptian education. Some of these determinants are analyzed in detail below within the context of examining the living conditions of children who drop out, versus the living conditions of peers who stay in school. Additionally highlighted is an analysis of the availability of schools and preschools, and how their availability affects attendance.

Availability of Essential Commodities and Inputs

Children included in this survey generally live in inadequate housing conditions, especially children from the Roma and Egyptian population who do not attend school. In many cases households live far away from schools, and children need daily escorting back and forth, which in most of the cases represents an obstacle to their regular attendance at schools and ultimately to their education.

1. Proximity of Schools to Family Homes and Transportation

One of the obstacles that Roma and Egyptian children and other children who are outside the system of education are faced with is the large distance from their household to school. Parents from both populations complained about this problem, but quantitative data indicates that Roma and Egyptians are in a somewhat worse position, as they usually live in secluded settlements. A higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian households are distant from schools, that is, in comparison with the majority population a higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian households live at a distance of 20 or more minutes' walk from school.

This obstacle is overcome by the long walk to school or paid transport, but due to weather conditions or a lack of money in some cases this obstacle remains insurmountable. Members of the majority population whose children are not included in the school system mentioned, in a significantly higher percentage, that it is extremely difficult to get to primary school by walking. Roughly one-

fifth (22%) of parents report that the road to school is not safe, due to reasons such as transport, that is, fast driving, the absence of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bad roads, as well as wild animals (particularly in winter). Children mainly go to school with their peers (friends or siblings), while one in ten children go to school accompanied by an adult household member.

JOVANA – A GIRL WHO LIVES FAR AWAY FROM SCHOOL

Jovana is 8 years old, and she did not start school in time because the house in which she lived with her parents was at a distance of 60km from Nikšić and the closest primary school. At the moment she lives with her grandparents in their house in Nikšić, where she moved in order to be able to attend school. Usually her grandfather takes her to school. She rarely sees her parents, because they still live in the village of Ubli, in which Jovana was also born. Jovana's stay with her grandparents is just a temporary solution. Her parents hope that her father will manage to find a job, so that the whole family will be able to move closer to the city.

Before Jovana moved in with her grandparents and was enrolled in school in Nikšić, her parents tried to enrol her in the village school 7 km from their house. Namely, the idea was to organize teaching for Jovana and another girl living in the same village in their place of residence. Nevertheless, this did not happen, so Jovana did not have the opportunity to start school in her place of residence.

According to her mother, Jovana is a very shy and withdrawn child. The mother cannot easily accept being separated from

Jovana, and she is quite uncertain regarding Jovana's adaptation to the school environment.

Jovana's teacher is familiar with her family situation and she is very careful in her communication with her. She has already arranged with the school educationalist to see Jovana from time to time. The teacher also notices that Jovana is a very quiet and withdrawn child, but very intelligent, and quick-witted. Jovana goes to a mixed class, with children from the Roma and Egyptian population who are also as withdrawn and quiet as Jovana, so the teacher cannot give all her attention only to her, and she does not want to treat her differently from other pupils because it would harm her socialization. The school year has just begun, so the teacher cannot say anything with certainty, but she hopes that Jovana will quickly fit in with her peers and make friends with them.

According to the teacher, Jovana should not be sent back to Ubli again even if the school were opened in the village, because she will be used to a large number of children, and if she went to school with just one more child, she would feel uncomfortable.

Another example of a lack of transportation as a barrier to education for Roma and Egyptian children comes from an area where there is an ongoing attempt to desegregate. In Konik, the study found that a segment of children were placed in schools from other settlements to avoid segregation and Roma-and-Egyptian-only schools. However, to reach the mixed schools it is necessary to pay for transportation, which Roma and Egyptian parents cannot afford. Simultaneously, Roma and Egyptian parents claim that starting from the beginning of the new school year (2012/13), the free transportation that had been available has been discontinued. However, the information has been received from the Ministry of Education that transportation continues to be provided for Roma and Egyptian children in Podgorica.

The Ministry of Education provides transportation for Roma and Egyptian children to city schools only in Podgorica. In the remaining 20 municipalities, transportation is either not provided or it is provided on an occasional basis by local authorities. Recognizing that the distance of Roma and Egyptian settlements from the nearest educational institutions is an important obstacle to the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children in mainstream education, some municipalities have managed to organize transportation of Roma and Egyptian children to schools on a regular basis (most notably the Municipality of Tivat). However, many municipalities are struggling to provide the necessary budget for transportation, which is highly dependent on donor support. This problem has been particularly emphasized by the Municipalities of Pljevlja, Berane and Bar.³⁰

THE ARIFI FAMILY– CHILDREN WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL THIS YEAR DUE TO NO TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOL

The Arifi family has 6 members, the parents and their four children. The children are between 5 and 10 years old, and three of them are of school age. The family lives in a shack in the settlement of Konik in poor conditions, without access to running water. The mother takes care of the children, while the father earns money by collecting raw materials, so their monthly income is very small and rather unreliable. Additional problems for the family include the health condition of the youngest daughter. She had an operation a year ago in Belgrade, which was an additional burden on the family budget. However, the financial problem has been overcome with the help of NGOs and humanitarian organizations, and the girl is recovering successfully. This family is special because the parents, even

despite all the bad conditions, are very motivated and dedicated to the education of their children. This is evidenced by the children themselves who speak Montenegrin well, read and write, gladly go to school and are doing well there. The parents provide textbooks and neat clothes, so that all three children can go to primary school in Podgorica. It is a mixed school situated far from the settlement, thus requiring transportation. This school year, this was actually the barrier that temporarily interrupted the formal education of the Arifi children. Namely, free transportation was available till this school year, but since this practice was stopped, and the parents cannot afford to pay travel expenses, the children are not attending classes for the time being.

³⁰ Analysis of the inclusion of RAE children in the educational system of Montenegro within the Project 'Basic Right to Education', Save the Children and NGO Enfants Berane, December 2012
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/121765890/Analiza-uklju%C4%8Divanja-djece-RAE-porijekla-u-obrazovni-sistem>

Access to Adequately Staffed Services

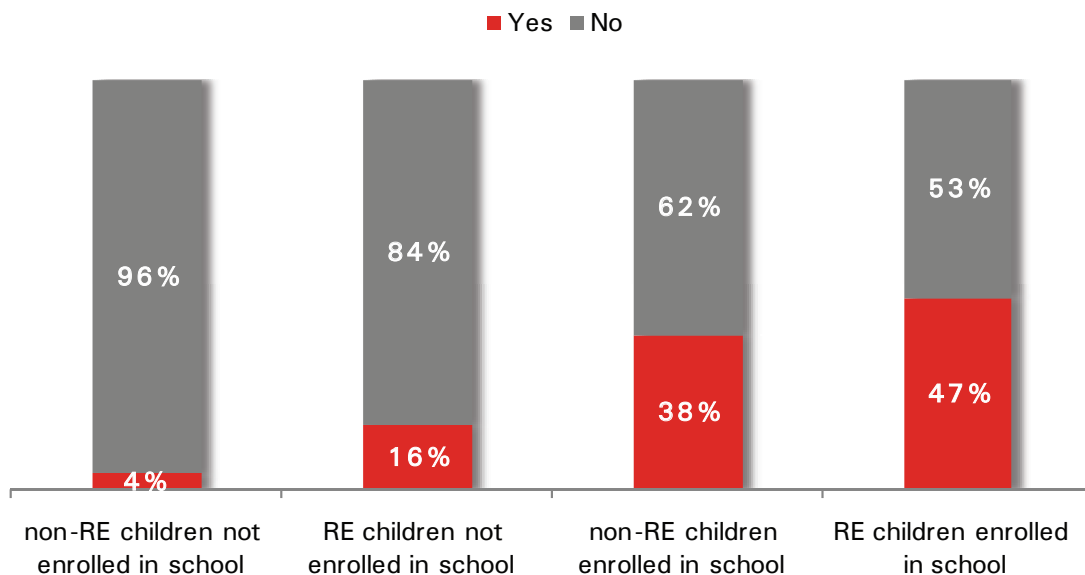
Children who are not currently included in the primary education system in most cases have never attended preschool, which indicates that the preschool programme is an important element of education. Preschool attendance and then elementary school attendance are related to knowledge of the official language, which is on the other hand determined primarily by using the language in households. Thus in almost all Roma and Egyptian families in which children are not in school, communication takes place in the Romany or Albanian languages. On the other hand, there are no bilingual classes for Roma and Egyptian children, nor do they have enough help in school enrolment. Parents of children who do not attend school, regardless of their

nationality, were not contacted by an institution when it was time for school, nor when their children dropped out of school.

1. Insufficiently Available Preschool Education

Preschool institution attendance is, at first sight, one of the visible differences between children who attend school and those who do not. A very high percentage of children who are currently out of the system of formal education have never attended a kindergarten (84% of Roma and Egyptian and 96% of children from the majority population), unlike 47% of Roma and Egyptian children and 38% of children from the majority population who do attend school now, and who were never included in the preschool programme.

Figure 8
Preschool attendance by groups of children



These significant differences indicate that the preschool institution is one of the relevant links in the system of education. Mothers of Roma and Egyptian children who participated in the focus groups also stressed that kindergarten is very important for their children, primarily for learning the language. The majority of Roma and Egyptians speak Albanian or Romany at home, so language is one of the barriers their children face in the course of their education. Children who attend a kindergarten of a mixed structure (children of different ethnicities) learn the language a lot more easily and master it before they start school. Such kindergartens also provide children with better conditions in terms of activities, infrastructure and meals than kindergartens located in Roma and Egyptian settlements, intended for Roma and Egyptian children only. Furthermore, parents have to meet certain requirements that enable children to attend “regular” preschool institutions, primarily in terms of hygiene; their children have to be bathed and tidy. Hygiene is, according to mothers who participated in the discussion, the main reason why parents do not enrol their children in these kindergartens, although they are entitled to choose the preschool facility child is going to attend. However, it seems that there is a problem of a lack of information, since one section of the Roma and Egyptian mothers from Podgorica keep saying that their children can only be enrolled in the kindergarten in the settlement, and yet that the conditions there are not adequate.

Inadequate conditions and a shortage of money are also confirmed as being the most common reasons for non-attendance of kindergarten in the quantitative study, where almost half of the children who did not attend

kindergarten (45%), according to their parents, did so due to their poor financial situation. Other mentioned reasons are distance from the preschool facility, the child’s poor health, etc.

Children are usually enrolled in kindergarten at the age of 4 or 5 (27% at the age of 4, 35% at the age of 5), and the total age range is 2 to 6 years of age. Consequently, children attended this institution mainly for one (40%) or two years (27%).

2. Importance of Using Secondary Language in Schools

An important characteristic of the household is the language which is mainly spoken in the household, since Roma and Egyptian children who have the chance to learn the Montenegrin language at home find it somewhat easier to overcome the language barrier which they face when they enrol in primary school. In the majority of Roma and Egyptian households the language spoken in the household is Romany, which is particularly characteristic of Roma and Egyptian households in which the children do not attend primary school. Namely, Romany is spoken in 83% of such households, Albanian in 16%, while the official Montenegrin language is spoken in just 1% of the households.

When it comes to Roma and Egyptian households in which children attend primary school, Romany is spoken somewhat less frequently (66%), while Montenegrin is spoken in approximately one in six households (16%).

Figure 9
Language used in the household

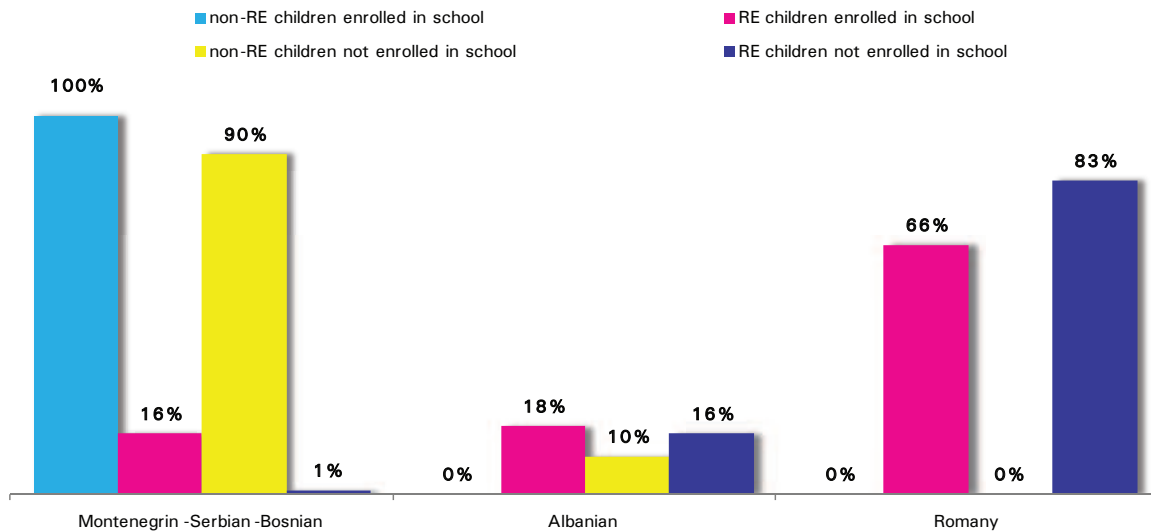
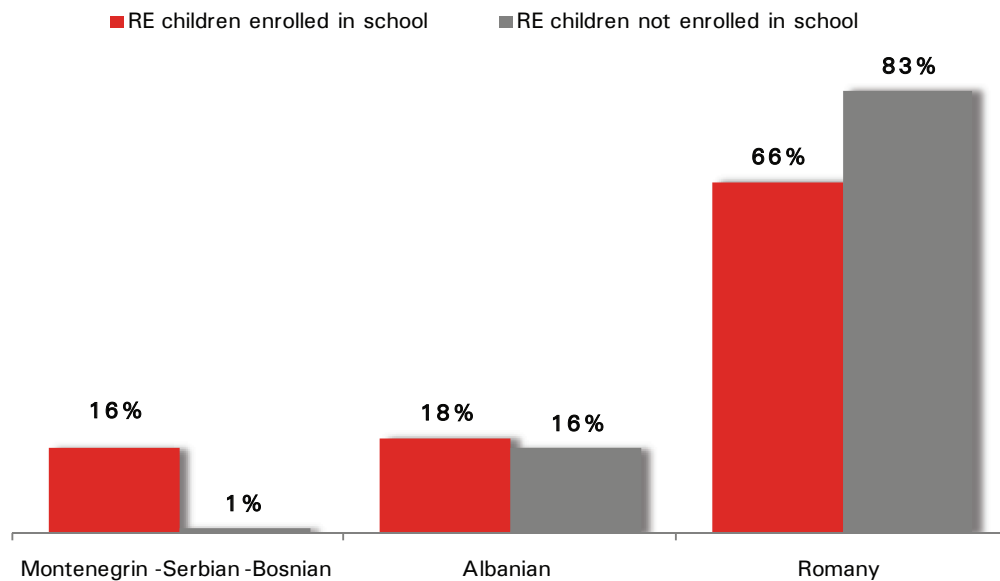


Figure 10
Language used in the household: Roma and Egyptian population



The results from focus group discussions showed that Roma and Egyptian parents perceive knowledge of the Montenegrin language as an important condition for school attendance. Namely, the importance of the language spoken at home was accentuated by the mothers of children not enrolled at school, as well as the mothers of children enrolled at school. On the basis of parents' emphasizing of the importance of the language spoken at home, it can be concluded that there are no bilingual classes available in schools in Montenegro.

"Children have problem with language. We speak Albanian and Romany at home, so children sometimes get mixed up."

"We did our best to speak Montenegrin whenever we could, so that the child can learn it more easily, to prevent problems in school."

These results suggest that the presence and use of minority languages in schools is of high importance. In order to prevent problems for children with an insufficient knowledge of the Montenegrin language, schools should engage in more frequent use of books and didactic materials in the Romany language.

3. Limited Outreach and Child-Seeking Services by Education Systems

Parents of children who are currently out of school were usually not assisted by any relevant institution in the enrolment process. However, it is obvious that the Roma and Egyptian population is being worked with on this matter, since a quarter of parents whose children dropped out of school later on, were assisted with enrolment by some institution or

organization. According to parents, these are mainly Roma NGOs, schools or the Red Cross, while other official institutions were not involved.

When children drop out of school, in half of the cases (48%) they are not officially withdrawn from school, which was confirmed by parents whose children "just stopped going to school and it was the end of their formal education". However, this data cannot be observed as an indicator of a potential return to school, since 84% of parents (86% of Roma and Egyptian, 80% of majority population) stated explicitly that their children would not return to school the next school year.

After dropping out of school, there is no reaction by official institutions such as the school, municipality, or Social Welfare Centre in the majority of cases. **As many as 93% of Roma and Egyptian parents and 83% of other parents whose children dropped out of school claim not to have been contacted by anyone after their children dropped out of school.** This finding is confirmed by case studies, since the interviewed parents were not contacted by anyone when their children dropped out of school. However, we cannot say that there is no reaction ever, at least when the reaction of the school is concerned. The section below gives a description of the actions of institutions in the event of the termination of primary education in Podgorica (Roma and Egyptian settlement of Konik).

FUNCTIONING OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KONIK

The “Božidar Vuković Podgoričanin” primary school is located in the settlement Vrela Ribnička, about 4km from downtown Podgorica. Educational work is conducted in 59 classes, or 49 classes in the main building and 10 classes in the facility located in the camp “Konik 2”. According to respondents in this research, the school director and school educationalist, classes are organized in the same way in both facilities, they have the same personnel, but the building located in the camp has no sewerage and it is in a very bad condition. During the past few months, it was connected to the water supply and its access area was rebuilt.

The school in the main building is attended by an equal number of Roma and Egyptian and children from the majority population, but the majority of Roma and Egyptian children attend lower grades due to the high drop-out rate. It is very important that children are not segregated at the school located in the main building, but this problem does exist in the branch school in the camp “Konik 2”. This school is attended only by Roma and Egyptian children who live in the camp.

At school, in both of its buildings, the official language of Montenegro is used. There is only one Roma assistant in the main school, while in the branch school each grade has one Roma assistant. Assistants are engaged by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Pedagogical Centre.

Branch school in the settlement of Konik

Teaching staff working with these classes are faced with certain problems when working with children. In their words, when Roma and Egyptian children start school, they are not capable of accepting the tasks and responsibilities stipulated by the school system, so they often violate school discipline and skip classes. On the other hand, in the majority of cases, teaching staff are not supported by parents, who do not consider education important enough (they rarely go to the school to ask about their children’s grades), thus are not trying to explain to their children how important it is to do their school assignments. Significant problems are also frequent absences (“I have 15 children in my class today, and tomorrow again 15, but completely different children.”) which makes it very difficult for children to master the school curriculum. According to teachers, children have no problem with learning, but they quickly forget what they have learned, which is a result of insufficient usage of that knowledge outside of school and insufficient exercise at home (“We give children a test at the end of the first semester, and then again at the beginning of the second, and their accomplishment drops by 30%. We have to start each of the grades 1-4 by repeating the alphabet.”)

After completing four grades in the branch school, children continue with their education in the main school building. Teachers estimate which children are ready to switch to another school and which are to repeat grade four.

FUNCTIONING OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KONIK

Stipulated procedures in case of enrolment, non-enrolment and dropping out of school

According to respondents, the duty of the competent municipal authority is to make records of children old enough to be enrolled in elementary school, and deliver this list to the school. Lists of school-age children are made by the place of abode, taking into consideration the parents' wish, and they are completed by the Red Cross and NGOs that keep records of the inflow

and outflow of children. Lists are delivered to the school, and then the school sends personal invitations to parents saying that their children should start school. If the child is not enrolled in the first grade, or drops out, the parent is invited for an interview, so that everything is done to keep the child in the educational system. If parents do not come to the school, the school should inform the judicial authorities about that. However, the school does not send a notice to the relevant institution and so no adequate sanctions can be applied.

DEMAND

In order for the provision of quality education to be successfully implemented and equally available amongst the most disadvantaged and marginalized populations, families need to be able to provide the necessary conditions for children to be able to attend, to be in stable situations, and have capacities that foster school attendance. These types of elements are determinants with the "Demand" category of the Determinant Analysis Framework. These factors, which have a decisive impact on Roma and Egyptian education, are analyzed in the section below.

Housing and Financial Access

The families involved in this survey generally live in inadequate housing conditions. Residential buildings are often in poor condition, ill-equipped, and without sufficient space or separate rooms for children. A significant problem in the Roma and Egyptian population, especially for families whose children do not attend school, is the lack of bathrooms with

running water. This lack inhibits adequate hygiene necessary for school attendance.

In addition, these families live in poor financial situations, especially the Roma and Egyptian families whose children do not attend school. Monthly incomes per household member are very low, and the unemployment rate is high among parents. These conditions affect the lives of children and their education: a significant number of families claim they are not able to provide children with three meals a day (approximately 20% of families covered by this research); the majority cannot provide children with new clothes; and Roma and Egyptians whose children are not in school have a particular problem with the purchase of textbooks and transport to school. Another problem for Roma and Egyptians is that they are often not able to provide their children with clean clothes. However, despite the poor financial situation, child labour is not common, but again slightly more present among children who drop out. On the other hand, children quite commonly help with housework, especially the Roma and Egyptian children who are not in school and children from the majority population who are involved in the education system.

1. Access to Adequate Housing Conditions, Water and Heat

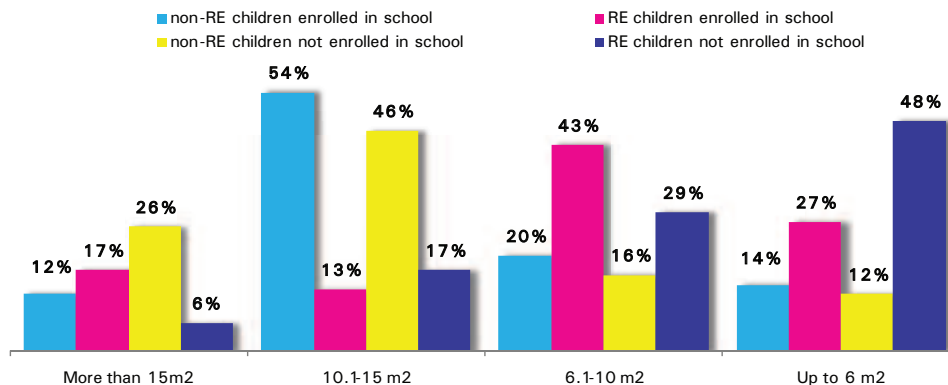
The poor financial situation and inadequate living conditions are two factors that inhibit children's wellbeing including their education. However, inadequate housing conditions are a factor which makes a difference in the life of the Roma and Egyptian and majority population of poor socio-economic status, and is the first topic that Roma and Egyptian people spontaneously mention during the interview or focus group discussions. This is in part a reflection on the fact that the Roma and Egyptian communities, displaced during the conflict in Kosovo do not have more permanent and adequate living accommodations.³¹

Although both of these groups, the Roma and Egyptian and majority population of poor socio-economic status, do not have adequate income and are short of food, clothes, footwear and other important items, the majority population that participated in the discussions are mainly satisfied with their housing conditions. In contrast to them, the Roma and Egyptians, particularly those from Konik often do not have a roof over their heads: "We live in tents, without electricity

or water, and we have no place to take a bath." or they are accommodated in dilapidated shacks in which they do not have even the basic conditions for living. It is worth mentioning that the situation in Konik worsened prior to the realization of the survey, when a fire left some 150 families or 800 people homeless. These people were temporarily accommodated in tents which were erected in the settlement.

The quantitative study has confirmed the findings of focus group discussions about severe housing conditions. Although in the majority of cases (83%) the Roma and Egyptians are the owners of the units they live in, the conditions are worse in comparison with the rest of the population. If we consider the floor area of a house/flat, that is the average area per household member, it is apparent that Roma and Egyptians often live in smaller homes, which is particularly the case among Roma and Egyptians whose children are not included in the education system (Figure 10). Logically, the same holds true for the number of separate rooms per household member in the housing unit: a significantly greater number of household members per room are recorded in Roma and Egyptian households in which the children are outside the school system.

Figure 11
Average household area per household member



³¹ ECRI Report on Montenegro (fourth monitoring cycle). (2012) ECRI Secretariat Directorate General II – Democracy, Council of Europe. Strasbourg. pp 7-8, 16
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/dsee/dv/0327_07/0327_07en.pdf>

Although the vast majority of children covered by this study, regardless of ethnicity, do not have their own room (over 90%), but share it with other children (50%) or with both other children and adult household members (40%), the Roma and Egyptian children stand out by virtue of the fact that, on average, they share the room with a number of other people. Just a quarter of the children have a separate room in the household or a place where they can study and do homework without being bothered, which is even less often the case with Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school (Figure 11).

The majority of the households covered by this survey face some functioning problems: almost

a half of the households face the problem of a leaking roof, heavy air pollution, one-third of them have the problem of excessive noise, and daylight is insufficient. All these negative aspects are even more pronounced in the case of Roma and Egyptians, while poor equipment in the household is particularly characteristic of the Roma and Egyptian households in which children are not included in the educational system. A smaller percentage of these households have a car, electrical appliances or savings (Figure 12). In compliance with the mentioned problems the result showing that two-thirds of the households from this survey (63%) evaluate their living conditions as unfavourable is quite expected.

Figure 12
Having a separate room where children can learn

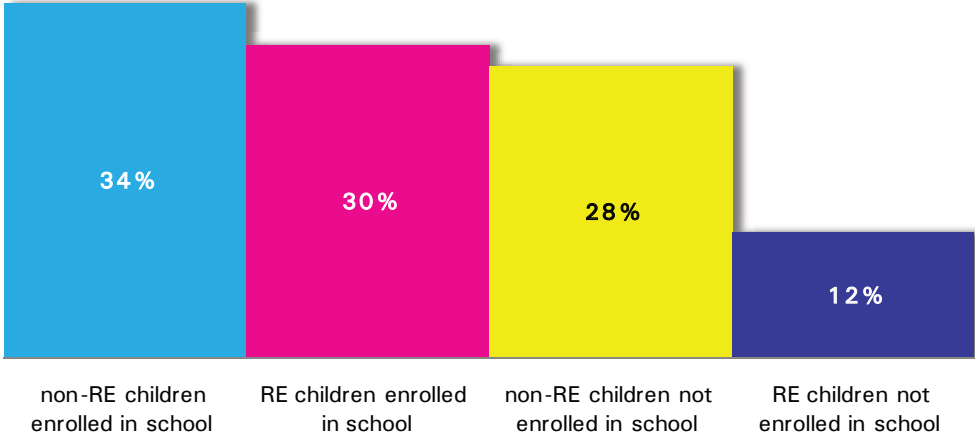
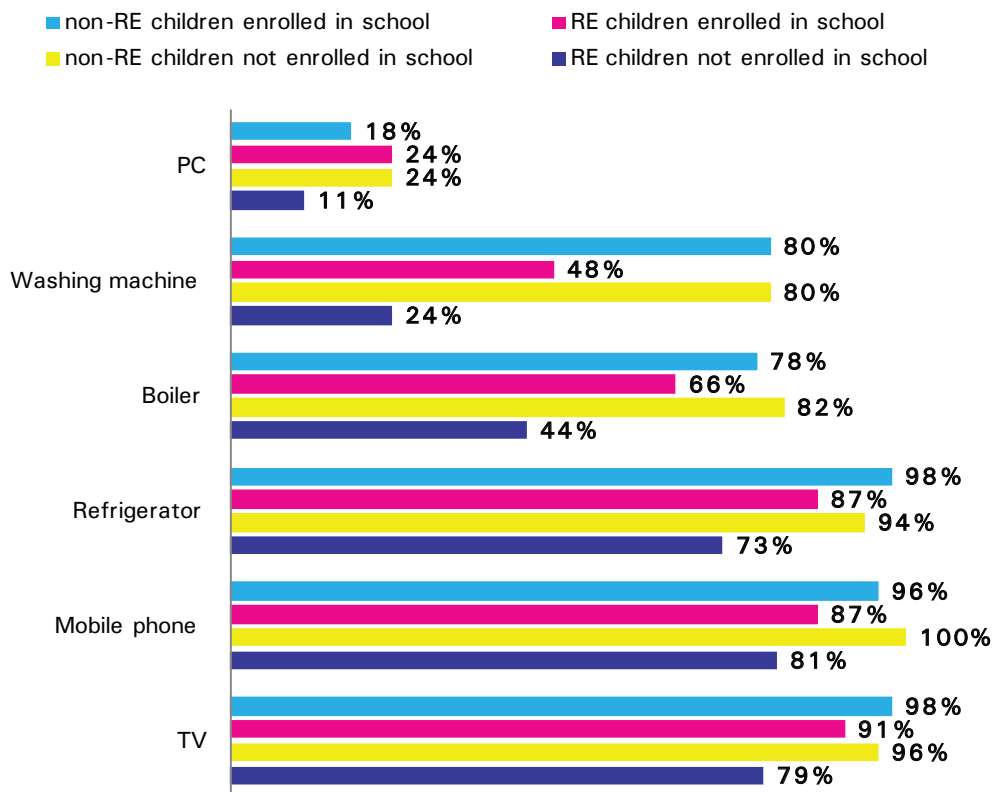


Figure 13
Household equipment



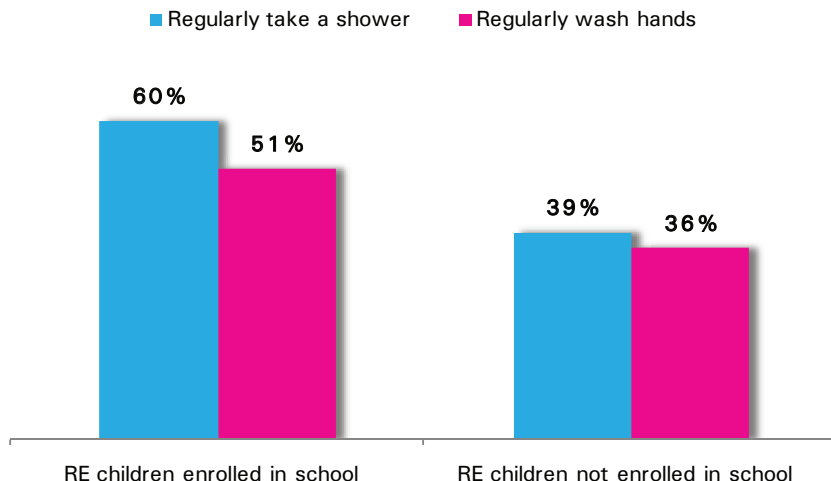
An acute problem that directly impacts children’s wellbeing and schooling is the issue of a lack of running water, and its prevention of adequate hygiene. Mothers who participated in focus groups strongly stressed the fact that their children “cannot go to regular school because teachers request them to be clean and tidy, and we do not have water”.

The majority of children from the interviewed households have well-developed habits regarding personal hygiene (a total of 78% of children from the interviewed households regularly take a shower, while 53% regularly wash hands before meals or after the use of the toilet). As described below, it is the lack of

water that contributes to poor hygiene amongst some Roma and Egyptian children, and consequently their non-attendance at school.

In Roma and Egyptian households where children attend primary school more children take a shower every day than in the households where children do not attend school – 51% compared with 36% of Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school, as well as children who regularly wash their hands – 60% vs. 39%.

Figure 14
Habits regarding personal hygiene: Roma and Egyptian population



Indeed the findings of this study confirm that the problem of water is an obstacle to education, since just a half of Roma and Egyptian families whose children do not attend school have access to running water, while more than 80% of Roma and Egyptians whose children attend school and the majority population included in this survey have a bathroom.

Figure 15
Access to a bathroom with running water

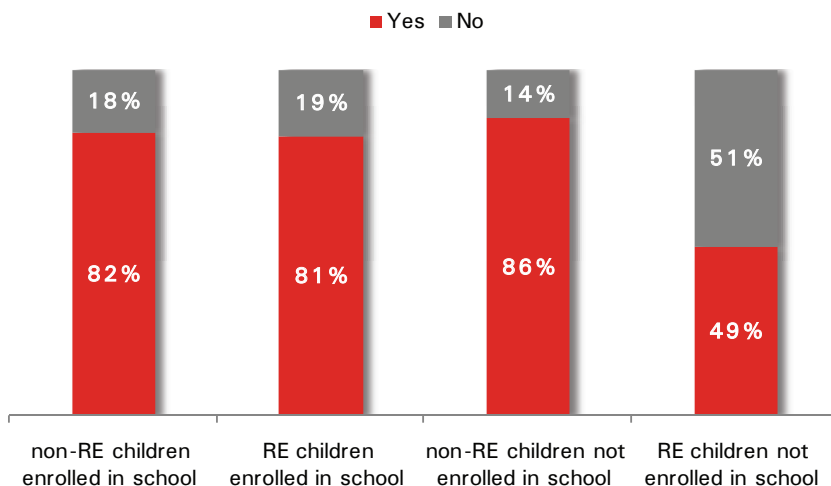
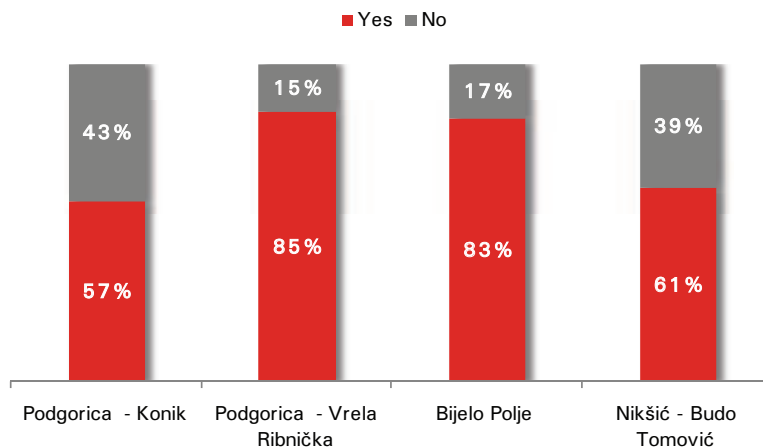


Figure 16**Access to the bathroom with running water in Roma and Egyptian settlements**

If the water supply in Roma and Egyptian settlements where the survey was conducted is analyzed, regardless of whether children from these households go to school or not, it is obvious that the situation is the worst in the Nikšić settlement of Budo Tomović, where 57% of the interviewed households have access to a bathroom with running water and the Podgorica settlement of Konik, where this percentage is 61% (Figure 15). However, when the households are additionally analyzed by school attendance and non-attendance of children, same conclusion is arrived at again that, even in the most vulnerable settlements, households with children attending school are in a better position. So 85% of families from Konik with children who go to school have access to water supply and only 33% of their neighbours whose children do not attend classes, have it.

It is very important that parents whose children do not attend primary school see the absence of their children's personal hygiene habits, resulting from inadequate living conditions, as a big obstacle to education. In discussion with mothers within focus groups we found that the absence of conditions to wash and dress the child in clean clothes is one of the reasons why mothers do not send their child to school.

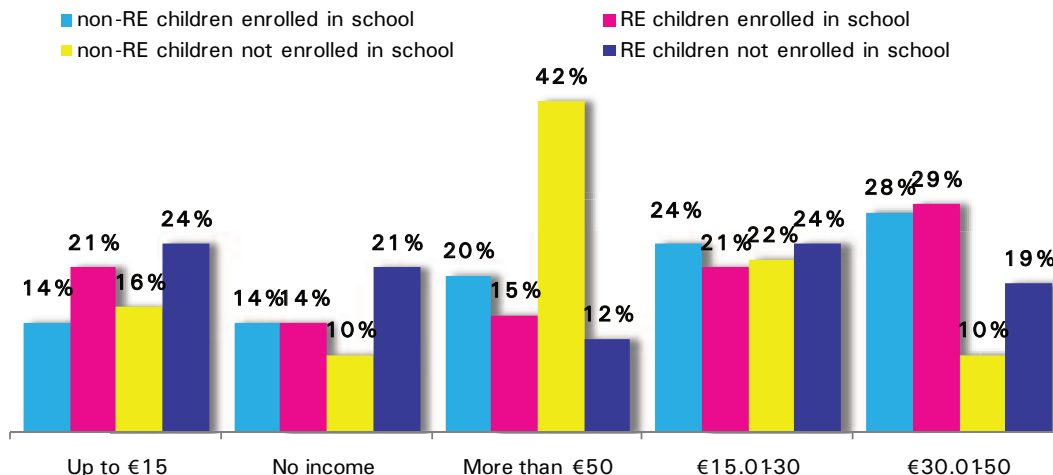
“How can he go to school? He doesn't have clean clothes or warm shoes. We don't have water to bathe him. Because of that they will not receive him at school.”

During the winter heating also presents a problem. According to parents, in as many as one-third of the households it is very often cold in winter, and in another quarter of the households it is occasionally cold. In comparison with the majority population, a higher percentage of Roma and Egyptians have a problem with obtaining heating fuel.

2. Inability to Pay School Costs

Since in this survey the sample covers households with a similar socio-economic status, the financial situation in the majority of them is mainly poor, without much variation. The monthly income per household member is small, and in 70% of cases it is up to €30 per household member per month, which is €1 a day in the best case, but often even less, since in as many as 16% of cases there was no income in the preceding month (Figure 16). Families from the majority population whose children do not go to school are in a somewhat better situation, since two-fifths of these households have a monthly income of more than €50 per household member.

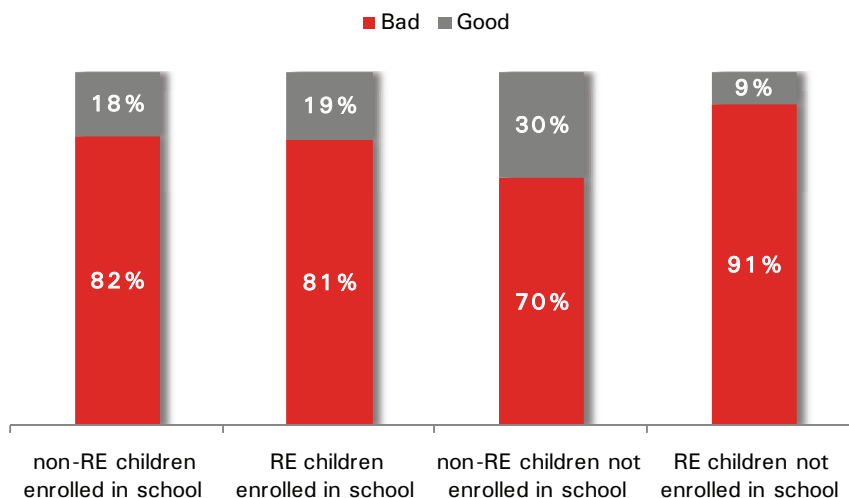
Figure 17
Monthly income per HH member



When the self-assessment of the financial situation is analyzed the data shows that Roma and Egyptians are in a somewhat worse situation in comparison with the majority population. When asked to evaluate their financial situation, more than 80% of them answer that it is bad, of whom almost 50% state

that it is very bad (Figure 17). On the other hand, only 17% of household representatives evaluate their financial situation as good, of whom just 1% assess it as excellent. A higher percentage of Roma and Egyptians whose children do not attend school express dissatisfaction with their financial situation.

Figure 18
Estimation of financial situation of the household



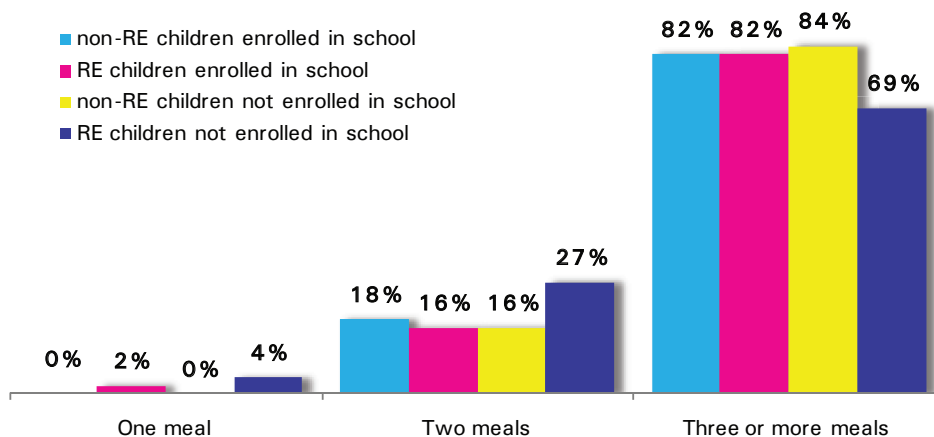
With such a small monthly income and unfavourable assessment of their own financial situation, it is logical to expect that the unemployment rate among the interviewed parents is exceptionally high. Unemployment is particularly characteristic of parents from the majority population whose children are not enrolled in primary school (64%). Regarding the Roma and Egyptians, it is very important to note that the unemployment of parents is higher in those households in which children go to school (59%) than in those households in which children do not go to school (45%).

Some of the findings obtained in the interviews within case studies showed that some Roma and Egyptian children whose parents must work, especially male children, often assume the role of household head. These children become responsible for taking care of younger siblings, and the family sees this as a reason to abandon school and spend time at home.

“She can't go to school any more, she has to look after her sister who is sick, there is no one else to look after her when we are at work.”

Regardless of their ethnicity, parents who participated in focus group discussions are worried about their children's nutrition and, consequentially, their health. Most of them say they manage to provide only the cheapest products, and some do not even manage to provide three meals a day. The interviews illustrate these problems. Namely, in one-fifth of cases food is consumed only twice a day. This applies to both adults and children (Figure 18). In as many as 13% of households it often happens that children complain about being hungry, in 18% of them it happens sometimes, and in another 17% households, only rarely. So, in almost half of households (48%) it happens that children express their need for food when it is impossible to be satisfied. This finding is also illustrated by the fact that it was recorded in one in ten households that some of the household members went to bed hungry several times during the past month because they could not afford to buy food. In another 32% of households, this happened once or twice during the past month. In the situation when children's basic needs are not met, realization of hierarchically higher goals, such as the motive to study, is very uncertain.

Figure 19
Average number of meals per day: children



The financial situation of the household, logically, influences the possibility of providing basic elements necessary for attending school, such as textbooks, clothes and snacks. That this really is the case, could be heard from parents who participated in focus groups, but it was also confirmed by the quantitative study.

“It costs €2-3 a day to buy notebooks, textbooks and snacks. My child says to me: “I don’t want to go because I have no money.” “And where am I going to find the money, son?”

So, in a half of households, due to the poor financial situation, it is not possible to provide textbooks for children (Figure 19), while in another third of them textbooks were provided by someone else (organizations, ministries, etc.). Roma and Egyptian parents whose children are not included in the system of formal education are more likely to say that they have no financial resources for textbooks, therefore their children have no textbooks (in 70% of households). This data still needs to be observed in a somewhat broader context. Namely, teachers who work

with Roma and Egyptian children, as well as social workers, tell us that the free textbooks and school supplies that children get at the beginning of school year are often sold, and children are left without them.

In almost eight out of ten households (77%) parents say that they do not have enough money to provide their children with adequate clothes for school, which is again more common among Roma and Egyptian whose children do not attend school (in 87% of households). The situation is the same with winter clothing: 78% of parents say that they cannot afford winter clothes, while among Roma and Egyptian parents whose children are not attending formal education, this is the case in nine out of ten households. However, half of the parents, even with all the difficulties, succeed in providing their children with clean clothes, while one-third mainly succeed, but not always (Figure 20). **In general, Roma and Egyptian parents are less likely to provide clean clothes than majority-population parents.**

Figure 20
Do parents manage to provide textbooks?

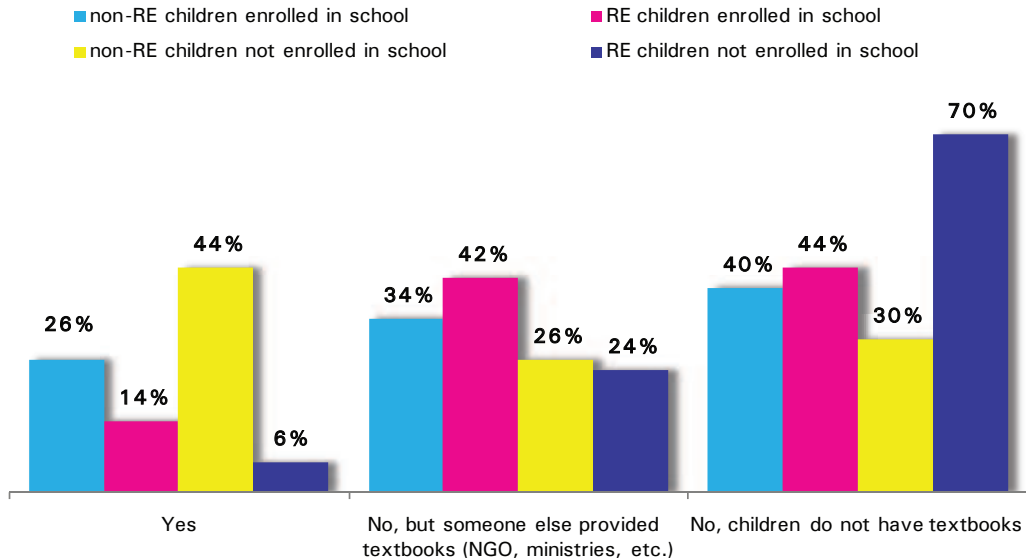
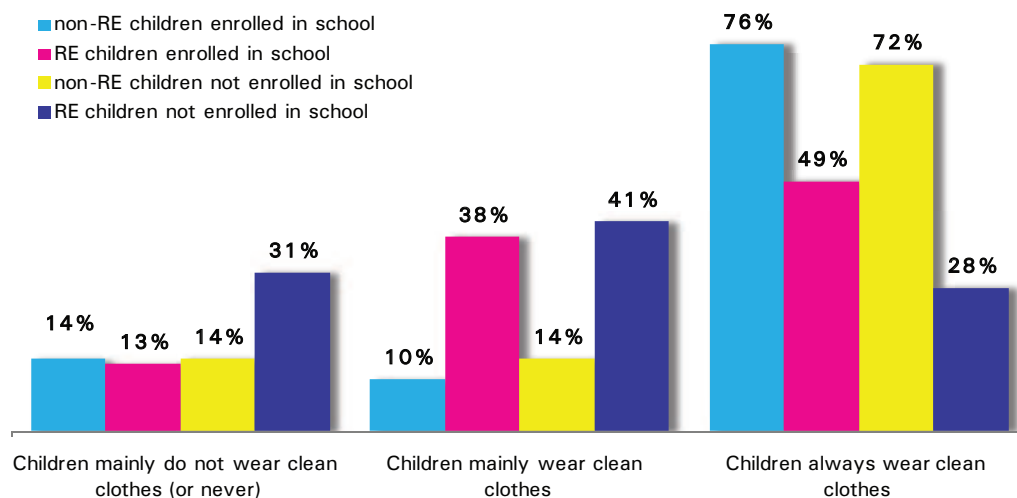


Figure 21
Clean clothes for school



3. Contributing to Family Income

Within discussions in focus groups it was spontaneously mentioned that children help their parents (mainly fathers) in collecting secondary raw materials or food leftovers from garbage bins. However, in the quantitative study the parents mainly did not report about the paid work of their children. The reason for that can be found in the fact that the mentioned activities actually do not belong to the category of paid work, although they do constitute work. It is important to note

that a very small number of children from the interviewed households perform paid work³² (in total, 8% of children regardless of the type of household in which they live). Namely, in the households of the majority population, child labour is somewhat more characteristic of children who are not enrolled in school (14%) in comparison with children who are (2%). When Roma and Egyptian households are concerned, there is no difference among children who attend school and those who do not attend it (8% of Roma and Egyptian children performed paid work).

³² Data refers to the period of one week prior to the survey.

FAMILY OF FATMIR K. IN WHICH ALMOST ALL CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL, AND THE SON IS ABOUT TO COMPLETE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Fatmir K. is Egyptian and lives in the Podgorica settlement Konik, in the building “The German House” located in the vicinity of the refugee camp of Konik. Fatmir and his family have a solid financial situation, they live in a flat with running water and electricity. He has 3 sons and 2 daughters. Fatmir and his wife, as well as two of their children – their son Ismet and daughter Azra were interviewed for the purpose of this study.

All of Fatmir’s children went to a kindergarten, and then they were enrolled at Božidar Vuković Podgoričanin primary school. According to Fatmir and his wife, going to kindergarten is very important for the children, since they learn the Montenegrin language there and get prepared for school. Insufficient knowledge of the official language can be a huge problem for children in primary school, so it is therefore very important that children go to a kindergarten. Also Fatmir and his wife tried, ever since children were little, to speak also Montenegrin besides Albanian, so that children would start to understand and use the official language on time.

Almost all children from this household have finished primary school or are still in the process of finishing it. Fatmir’s eldest son is enrolled in the 3-year secondary Hospitality School. The boy is very much aware of the importance of school for the

future, as well as of the consequences that not completing school had on finding employment. Ismet said that he was attending a 3-year secondary school, but that he was not fully satisfied with that, and was thus planning to get additionally trained as a hospitality technician, creating for himself more opportunities for employment.

The parents’ attitude towards school probably played a very significant role in this case. Fatmir and his wife think that school is very important, that it creates opportunities for finding a good job, so they raised their children in that spirit. However, there is one girl in this family who dropped out of primary school. Fatmir’s daughter Azra attended primary school till grade 6, and then she dropped out. In the girl’s words, going to school was a pleasant experience and she would like to continue. As the reason for dropping out, the girl said that she found mathematics very difficult, and that she could not master it. The interview with parents revealed another reason why Azra dropped out from school. Namely, the girl dropped out from school because her parents feared she might meet some boy and leave home to get married. There was no reaction from the responsible institutions in this case either – no one came for a visit or called the parents, and no sanctions were implemented for leaving compulsory education.

4. Household Responsibilities and Care for Other Family Members

When it comes to doing household work, as many as a half of all children, regardless of household type, help their older household members. Nevertheless, frequent help in doing household chores is more characteristic of Roma and Egyptian households in which children do not attend school.

In Roma and Egyptian households a higher percentage of children who do not go to school help the adults with household chores (61% vs. 47% of Roma and Egyptian children who attend school), but the time spent in doing household work is similar for children who help their parents.

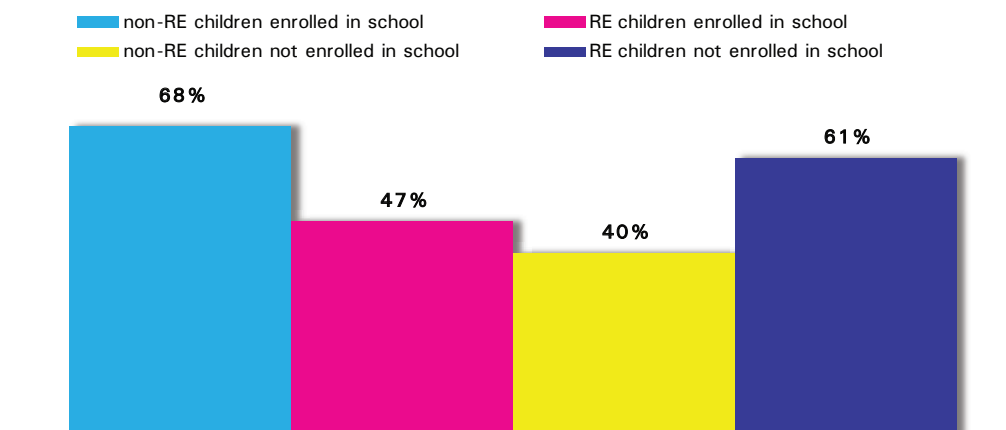
On the other hand, in the households of the majority population, a higher percentage of children who go to school help with household chores (68%) in comparison with children who do not go to school (40%), which is the result of poor health of the majority of children from the majority population who remained outside of the education system—among children from the

majority population who help their parents with household chores, those not attending school spend more time doing household chores than children who have school obligations.

The fact that Roma and Egyptian children more frequently do household work can be brought into connection with frequency of parent's engagement with household activities. Namely, as many as one in three Roma and Egyptian parents do not do any household work (36%), which is the case in 17% of households from the majority population. If we observe only Roma and Egyptian households, there are no significant differences between Roma and Egyptian parents whose children go to school and those whose children do not go to school, in the level of doing household work.

When it comes to the type of household work that children perform at home, a higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian children take care of younger children, their brothers and sisters (50%), in comparison with children from the majority population (5% of children who do not go to school and 26% of children who attend school).

Figure 22
Frequency of children doing household chores



Also, a higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian children in comparison with children from the majority population help in washing laundry, ironing, washing the dishes, cleaning the home or backyard (38% of Roma and Egyptian children compared to 23% of children from the majority population). Within Roma and Egyptian households, what distinguishes children who attend school from those not attending school is helping the adults with cooking: while 30% of Roma and Egyptian children who do not go to school cook meals, only 11% of Roma and Egyptian children who go to school do that.

Cultural Practices and Beliefs

The attitudes and beliefs and capacities of a population can have an effect on the education of their children. Roma and Egyptian children generally grow up in positive environments, they have well developed social networks, they spend time with their peers, and mostly grow up in harmonious families. However Roma and Egyptian parents' perception of education and its connection to their children's future, is dimmer. This outlook should be understood within a larger context. The reasons for ambivalent attitudes toward education among disadvantaged families can be numerous and often stem from poverty and the parents' own low educational attainment, as well as rational assessments of employment opportunities beyond schooling. Indeed, Roma and Egyptian parents are often without formal education or employment. The link between parents' education levels, unemployment, and child outcomes, including those in education have been well established.

The study found that parents whose children attend school are more likely to consider it important that their children finish school, and that finishing will help them find a job. These parents were also more actively engaged in their children's education. Parents whose children are not participating in education more often stated that their children are not able to finish primary school. Roma and Egyptian

parents, compared to parents from the majority population, more often give priority to non-formal education, and have lower aspirations when it comes to the desired level of education. Compared to Roma and Egyptian children who drop out, Roma and Egyptian children attending school have a higher percentage of fathers who completed primary school. The data also revealed that those who do not go to school, more often stated that they do not like to attend.

1. Free Time

Children rarely spend time alone (only 3% of children spend their free time alone, regardless of the household type). Roma and Egyptian children mainly spend their time with siblings, both those who attend school and those outside the system of education (73%). The situation is similar with children from the majority population who attend school: roughly two-thirds of these children spend their free time with their brothers and sisters (66%). Children from the majority population who do not attend primary school, to a considerably greater extent spend their free time with adult household members (48%), and somewhat less frequently with brothers and sisters (36%).

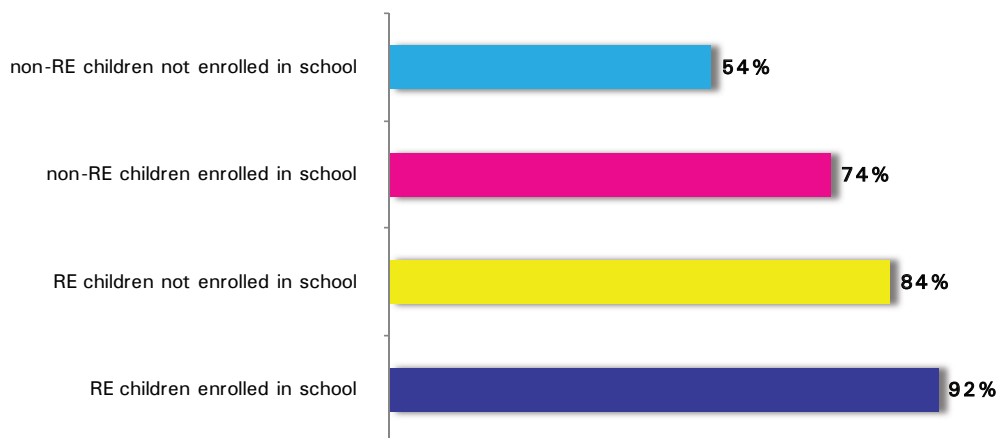
Children usually spend their free time playing and socializing (58%). Regarding the ways in which children spend their free time there are some differences between Roma and Egyptian and children from the majority population: a higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian children are taken for walks (24% against 10% of children from the majority population), while a higher percentage of children from the majority population spend their free time in front of the TV (22% against 10% of Roma and Egyptian children).

2. Friends

The majority of children have friends with whom they socialize and spend their free time (Figure 22).

Figure 23

Children who have friends and spend free time with them



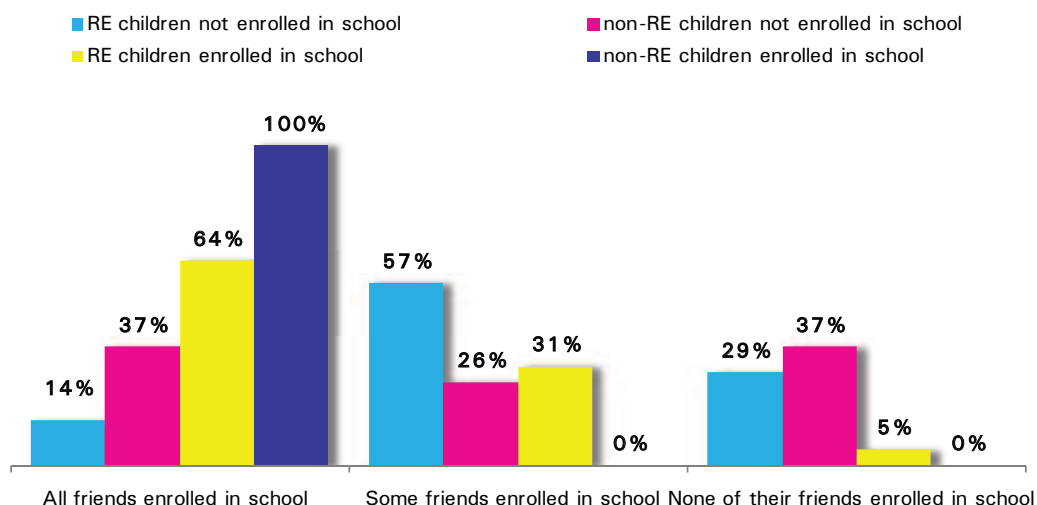
As can be seen, spending free time with friends is somewhat more characteristic of Roma and Egyptian children than of children from the majority population, as well as for children who attend primary school in comparison with those who do not attend school. It should be noted again that a high percentage of parents of children from the majority population say that their children have

never enrolled at primary school because of health problems or disabilities, which can be one of the factors which affects a lower level of social relationships with peers.

It is important to note that children who are enrolled in primary school more frequently socialize with children who also go to school (Figure 23).

Figure 24

If friends of the child are enrolled in school



Nevertheless, it can be noticed that there is a relatively high percentage of children whose friends do not attend primary school, which is particularly characteristic of Roma and Egyptian children who do not go to school either. As Figure 23 shows, attendance of primary school is associated with socializing with children who also go to school. For example, as much as one-third of the Roma and Egyptians who do not go to school (29%) only have friends who do not go to school, while this is the case with only 5% of Roma and Egyptian children who attend school. Similarly, as many as two-thirds of Roma and Egyptian children (64%) who attend primary school socialize with children who also go to school, while this is the case with only 14% of Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school.

Particularly interesting is the fact that children from the majority population who do not attend school have the highest percentage of non-school-attending friends (37%). However, it has to be pointed out that most of these children are children with intellectual or physical disabilities, who unfortunately have little or no opportunities to socialize with their school-going peers from the local community.

Almost all children socialize with their friends every day, or at least several times a week. Roma and Egyptian children socialize with other children to a somewhat greater extent (80% of Roma and Egyptian children socialize with their friends every day, against 50% of children from the majority population, while 20% of Roma and Egyptian children socialize with their friends several times a week against 45% of children from the majority population). Very similar results are obtained when we observe how often the child's friends come to the child's home – 48% of Roma and Egyptian children are visited at home by friends every day against 19% of children from the majority population.

Conversations with Roma and Egyptian parents shed light on such frequent socializing of their children with peers. Since the majority of Roma and Egyptian children do not have facilities at home to spend time with, such as toys, books, etc. the children, as they say, “*run around the settlement the whole day long with other children*”.

Compromised Parental Support for Continuation of Education

1. Knowledge about the Educational System

Parents are mainly aware of the age when children are supposed to start school. The great majority of them (94%) claim to know what age this is, but even with self-evaluation, it is obvious that Roma and Egyptians whose children do not go to school are less informed than other parents (85% are aware).

When interpreting concrete responses to the question about the right age for school, we have to take into account the reform of education that started being implemented in the school year 2005/2006. Starting from the mentioned school year, with the introduction of one more grade, all children in Montenegro are included in the system of primary education in Montenegro at the age of six and not seven, as it used to be. Given that this change is relatively new, particularly when compared with several decades of the practice of starting school at the age of seven, we cannot interpret the answer “7 years” as completely wrong, although it formally is wrong now. Half of the parents mention the age of 6 as the stipulated age to start school, while the other half think that it is the age of 7.

2. Attitude Towards Importance of Education

One of the basic conclusions reached during focus group discussions and in-depth interviews is that parents' attitude towards school greatly influences their children's level of education. As

KASTRID, A BOY WHO TAKES CARE OF HIS FAMILY AND HELPS HIS FATHER COLLECT FOOD

Kastrid is 14 years old. He lives in Konik (Podgorica) in a dilapidated cardboard house with his parents and five siblings. They have been in the same dwelling ever since they moved from Kosovo. Apart from cramped space, the problem is their domestic hygiene. In fact, they have no access to electricity and water, or toilet facilities.

Kastrid is the eldest child in the family. He attended primary school until grade 6. Then he dropped out. He speaks Montenegrin rather poorly, but he translated this interview for his mother because she speaks only Albanian. In his and his mother's opinion, he did quite well at school and he can read and write. However, he repeated sixth grade. He completed the first four grades at Božidar Vuković branch school in Konik, when he switched to subject teaching at the main school. The main school is in the vicinity of the settlement and it takes about 15 minutes there on foot, so transportation is not a barrier. This transfer to the fifth grade was not a barrier, either in the educational or in the social aspect. He had no problems

studying or in contact with his teachers and class mates.

The boy and his parents blame their poor financial situation for his dropping out and deny their role in the process. Formal education was interrupted at the moment when his younger sister (the second eldest) was sent to hospital. The mother spent a lot of time with her, the father collected food from trash containers, so Kastrid had to watch over his younger siblings. At the same time, while his mother was at home, he helped his father collect food and raw materials.

In Kastrid's case, similar to other children in the settlement, the school called the parents to come via the Roma mediator because he had dropped out of school. The parents, just as the majority of their neighbours, did not respond. The school did not react again. And the system stopped there. No other institution was ever informed about this case.

Environmental factors and poor financial situation affect this case to a great extent. The girl is still being medically treated, the family lives a very hard life.

mentioned above, this is a link that is widely accepted. Correlations found in the study include among others, the level of importance attributed to finishing primary education by parents connected to the school attendance of their children. A lower importance being attributed to education, and parental engagement in their children's education, can have many causes. The level of educational attainment, and the employment status of parents can potentially

impact their attitudes toward education. Without finishing primary school parents also have a harder time providing support to children, for instance in doing homework.

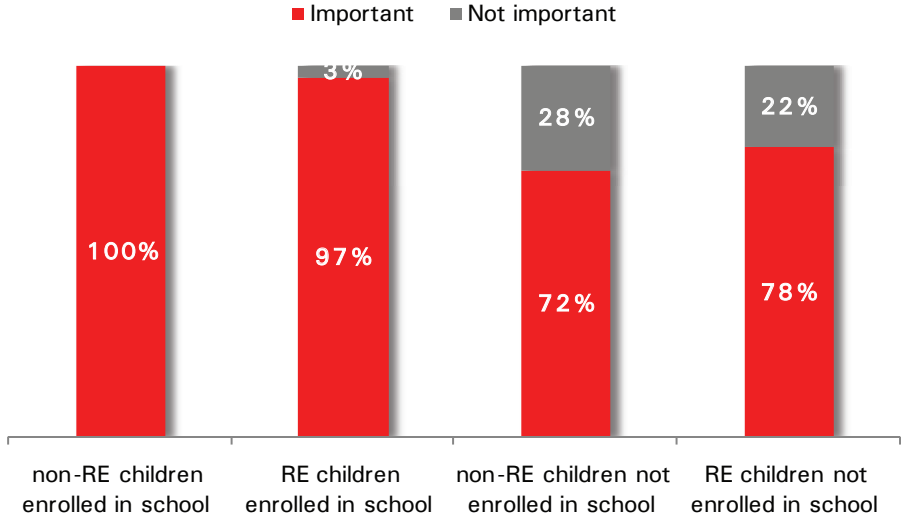
It is worth mentioning that unemployment amongst Montenegrin youth is upwards of 45.5%³³ and that the same figure is much higher for Roma and Egyptian youth, which may be one of the reasons for the low importance attributed to

³³ The annual unemployment rate based on the Labour Force Survey, 2010 (MONSTAT).

education by Roma and Egyptian parents. Other factors to consider are that most Roma and Egyptian families suffer intergenerational poverty. They do not have examples to point to of individuals who have finished school and went on to find gainful employment. In such a context a lack of significance being attributed to education can be understandable. During the study the sense of hopelessness amongst some Roma and Egyptian parents regarding education was expressed by Roma and Egyptian mothers whose children were not attending school: although they stated that “*school is good for children*”, they named their financial situation as the reason for not attending classes. For this group of mothers, school is no guarantee that their children will live better since “*there is no work for Roma*” anyhow. The following information should be considered within this context.

The significance attributed to the completion of at least primary school by parents can affect the participation of their children in formal education. Survey results confirm that there is a difference between parents of children who go to school and parents of children who do not go to school, regarding their opinion on the importance of completing primary school—regardless of whether they are Roma and Egyptian or members of the majority population. In both cases, parents of children who go to school are more likely to stress that it is important that their children complete primary school – 97% of Roma and Egyptian parents and 100% of parents from the majority population, compared to 78% of Roma and Egyptian parents and 72% of parents from the majority population of children who do not go to school.

Figure 25
Parents’ evaluation of the extent to which it is important for children to finish school



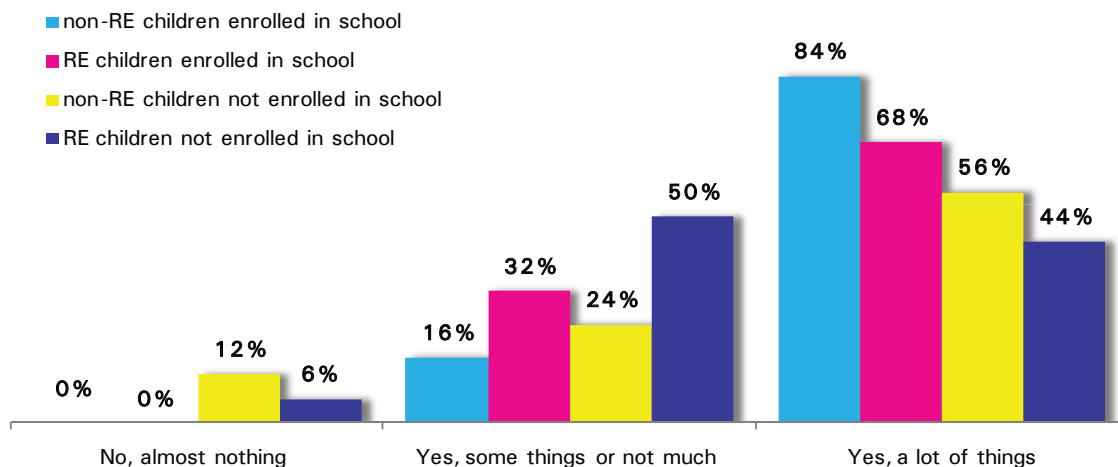
The difference of attitude towards primary school education between parents of children who attend school, and parents of children who do not attend school, is more obvious when looking at just the responses to the statement: 'it is very important that the child completes primary school'. A little over a third of Roma and Egyptian parents (36%), and somewhat less than 60% of the majority-population parents whose children do not go to school, believe that it is very important that their children complete primary school. On the other hand, parents whose children go to school are a lot more likely to think that it is very important that their children complete primary school – 82% of Roma and Egyptian and 92% of majority-population parents.

Of the parents who think that it is important that their children complete primary school, 39% believe it will make it easier to find employment, 18% believe it will afford their children a better future or easier life, 14% believe their children will be literate or learn something, and 10% simply believe school is important, or do not have a precise opinion as to why they think it is important. Parents who do not think it is important that their children

complete primary school tend to connect its importance with other factors. For instance expressing that there is not much use for it (more than 50%), and in the case of girls' education, that women should stay at home.

Parents from different populations have differing views on the usefulness of knowledge obtained during primary school, as well as on the importance of formal education over informal. An extremely low percentage of parents deny any usefulness of formal school knowledge (4%). But the estimated amount of useful knowledge varies (Figure 25). That many useful things are learnt during primary school is a belief shared by majority-population parents whose children participate in education (84%). A significantly lower percentage of parents from the other three groups share their attitude. There is also a difference within the Roma and Egyptian population. Roma and Egyptian parents of children who go to school seem to have a more positive attitude towards the usefulness of primary education (68% of responses: "a lot is learnt"), than those whose children dropped out or were never enrolled in the system (44% of responses: "a lot is learnt").

Figure 26
Usefulness of formal school knowledge



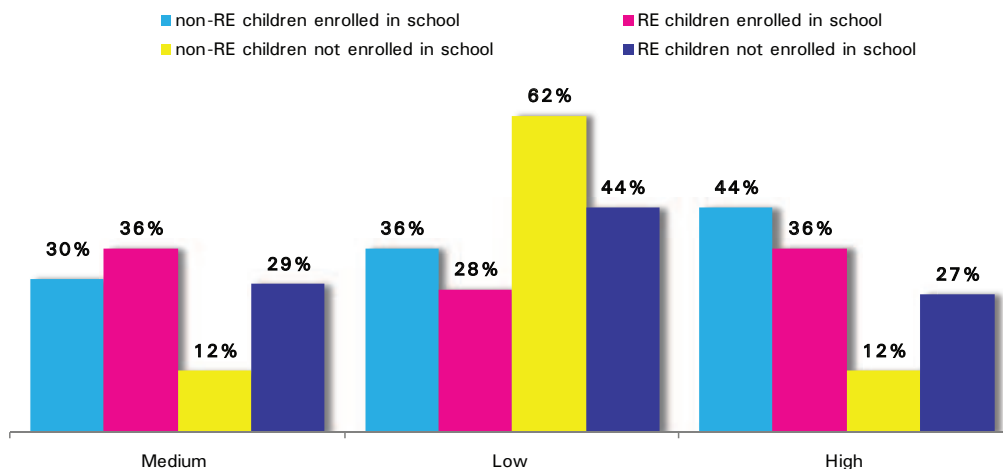
A similar situation was observed when comparing the importance of formal and informal education. Roma and Egyptian parents are more likely to consider informal education more important: 43% of them believe that informal education is a lot more important for children, while only 18% of parents from the majority population agree with this statement. Again there are differences within the Roma and Egyptian population. Roma and Egyptian parents of children who are not encompassed by formal education are more likely to place more importance on informal education.

Parents who consider formal education more important than informal education are more likely to perceive the completion of primary school as a factor that facilitates employment. The linkage of education with greater chances of employment is greater among parents whose children are attending school. A third of Roma and Egyptian parents with children in school and 44% of parents from the majority population with children in school think that completing secondary school will increase employability to a great extent. Another 40% of Roma and Egyptian parents with children in school and 14% of parents from the majority population with children in school, believe that

secondary school completion will somewhat increase chances of employment. Of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children do not attend school, only 27% believe that their children would find a job upon completing the process of education. Parents from the majority population whose children do not go to school are a lot more pessimistic on this issue. Upwards of 42% do not think that formal education would facilitate finding a job in any way and only 12% think that if in fact they did complete their education they would find work afterwards. However the fact that the majority of their children have some disability should be taken into consideration. Given the current circumstances, this diminishes this group of children's employability.

It is interesting to notice that as many as 36% of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children go to school believe that their children's chances of finding a job upon completion of education are high. This result is not unexpected. If parents do not believe that their children will find employment, they will not invest in their education—an attitude, which they possibly transfer to their children. It is therefore very important to build confidence among all parents and children that completing the process of

Figure 27
Estimated chances of finding employment after finishing school



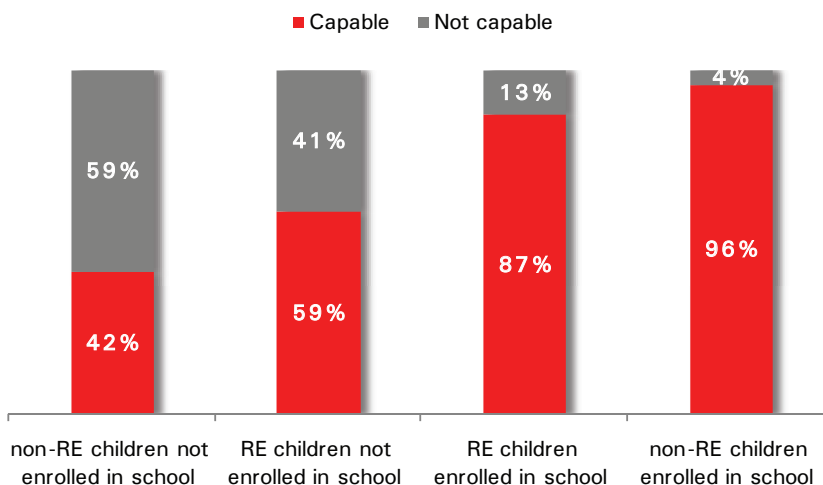
formal education increases chances of finding a job. This should have positive effect on children's motivation to start school and reach certain level of education. Related to this the study results indicate that role models are important in forming attitudes toward education. Parents of children who go to school were more likely to say that they know someone successful, who owed their employment and better life, to having completed formal education (78% of the majority population, 55% of Roma and Egyptians). As mentioned at the beginning of this section, examples of successful businesspeople from these communities, who completed some formal education, have a positive effect on parents' attitude towards education, and indirectly on their children's education. However, only one-third of Roma and Egyptians whose children do not go to school are aware of such positive examples.

Parents explain their attitudes towards education in different ways. A strong barrier to building trust in education as a vehicle toward future employment amongst Roma and Egyptian are the widespread stereotypes about them. It is in fact difficult for Roma and Egyptian to find employment, since no one wants to give

them a job. Parents from the majority population believe that due to their children's illnesses or disabilities, which are the most common reasons for their dropping out, finding a job will not be easy or will be impossible. The economic crisis and unemployment in the labour market also compounds these perceptions. However those who expressed their belief that their children will find a job, based their belief on the idea that it is easier to find work if you have a formal education.

Parents of children who do not go to school are more likely to believe that their children are not capable of completing primary school, than parents of children who do go to school. The survey shows that 41% of Roma and Egyptian and 58% of the majority population whose children currently do not go to school believe that their children cannot complete primary school. This may point to a need for more inclusive school environments and additional educational support for these children. On the other hand a majority of parents of children who go to school strongly believe that their children will successfully complete their primary education – 87% of Roma and Egyptian and 96% of majority-population parents.

Figure 28
Estimated capabilities of finishing school

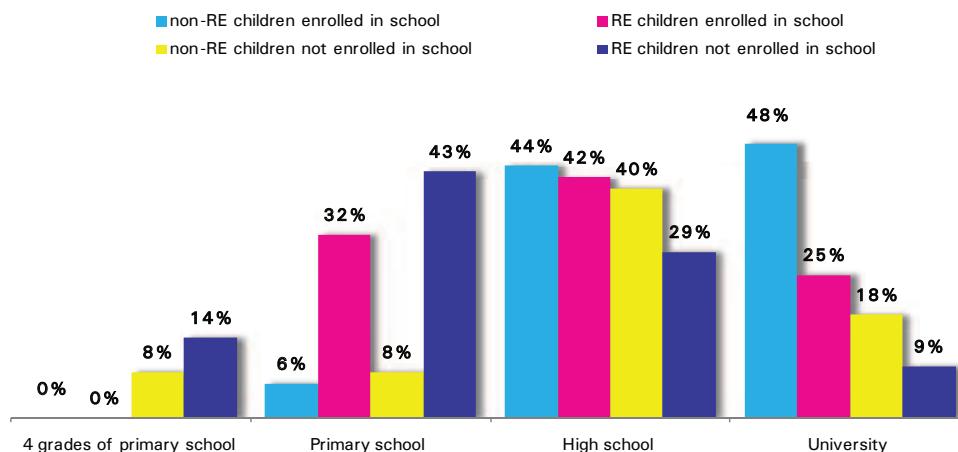


Asked in a different way, in terms of how likely they think it is that their child will complete primary school, 44% of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children are not attending school, and 52% of non-Roma parents whose children are not attending school believe that the chances are very low, almost non-existent. Unlike them, parents of children who are going to school were more optimistic, with 85% of Roma and Egyptian and 98% of parents from the majority population believing that their children will complete primary school. Indications are that the optimism of the majority population parents is stronger than the optimism of Roma and Egyptian parents, with 70% of parents from the majority population being sure that their children will complete primary school, compared to 48% of Roma and Egyptian parents. The pessimism of majority-population parents whose children are not attending school can be attributed to the fact that their children have disability. Roma and Egyptian parents whose children do not go to school gave two reasons for not believing their children would complete primary school: the first was that their children are not interested in school, and the second was that the family financial situation is prohibitive. Again this may point to the need for measures that would alleviate some of the

financial burden associated with attending school, and which would make schools more inclusive of and relevant to both Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities.

The educational aspirations that parents whose children attend school have for their children are logically higher than the aspirations of parents whose children do not attend school. Furthermore, indications are that majority-population parents, regardless of whether their children go to school or not, have higher aspirations than the parents of Roma and Egyptian children. While 14% and 43% respectively of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children who do not attend school would be satisfied with the completion of four grades, or nine grades of primary school, parents from the majority population whose children do not go to school aspire to somewhat higher levels of education. Only 8% would be satisfied with four or nine grades of primary school, while almost 40% think that their children should complete three- or four-year secondary school. Another 20% of these same parents aim for a university level education for their children. The conclusions are similar when comparing parents of Roma and Egyptian and children from the majority population who attend school. Majority-

Figure 29
Aspirations of parents (preferred level of education of their children)



population parents have higher expectations of their children regarding education. Upwards of one-third of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children go to school would be satisfied if their children completed primary school, as opposed to only 6% of majority-population parents. As expected, compared to Roma and Egyptian parents (25%) a higher percentage (48%) of majority-population parents whose children go to school plan on their children completing university studies.

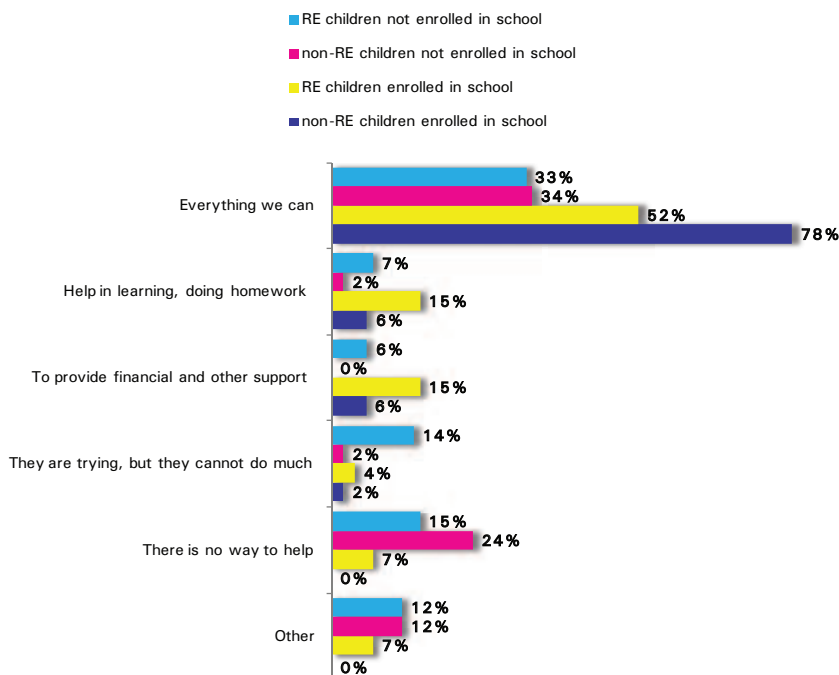
Furthermore, most parents from the majority population believe that it is much more important for a child to devote himself or herself to school tasks, rather than to household chores or work. The rest of the parents from the majority population mainly agreed with this attitude, but to a lesser extent (it is somewhat better to be devoted to school tasks). Amongst Roma and Egyptian parents 80% of those whose children go to school and 44% of those whose children

do not go to school believe that it is much better for children to be devoted to schoolwork. This difference may be a reflection in some cases of financial hardship. For instance in households where both parents have to work, Roma and Egyptian children may have to help with housework or take care of siblings.

Parental engagement with a child's education is a very important factor in improving academic achievement. Parents of children who go to school are more engaged with their children's education and, in their words, do everything they can to make sure their children complete primary school (52% of Roma and Egyptian and 78% of the majority population), compared with the parents of children who do not go to school (33% of Roma and Egyptians, 34% of the majority population). Additionally, parents with children going to school are more likely to say that they try to provide adequate financial conditions (Figure 29). Parents of children who

Figure 30

Parents' willingness to be engaged in order to help their children complete school



do not go to school are more likely to believe that their children cannot be helped in any way (15% of Roma and Egyptians and 24% of the majority population), and say that they try, but cannot contribute much to their children's performance at school (14% of Roma and Egyptians and 2% of the majority population). Low levels or in some case no educational attainment affects the capacity of parents to help their children with their education, and obviously adequately financing of a child's education is directly dependent on the financial situation of the family. Interventions that raise the capacity of uneducated parents, and which help with the costs of education should be considered.

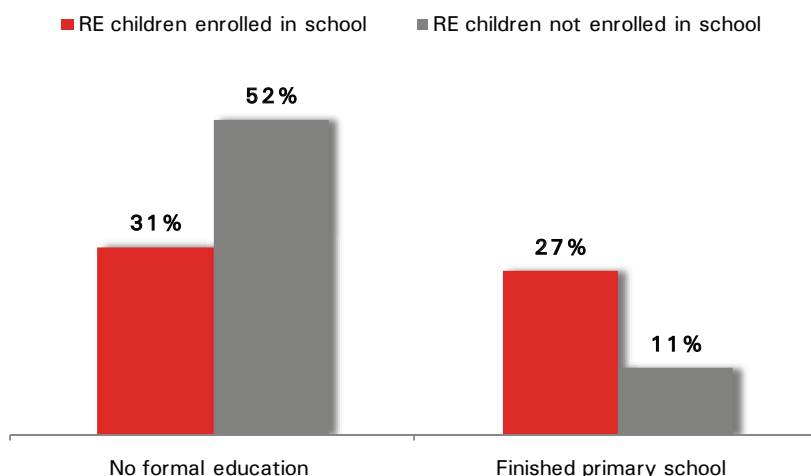
Literacy of Parents

As mentioned in the section above, the degree of engagement parents have with a child regarding their education, in part, has to do with the education level of the parents. And the more engagement there is, the more likely it is that the child will stay in school and will do well. A key determinant is the literacy of parents, and this section deals with this factor in particular. In the group of Roma and

Egyptian households parents often have no formal education. Within Roma and Egyptian households the education of the father seems strongly correlated with a child's attendance at school: fathers of children who are not enrolled in school also have not finished school.

As many as a half of Roma and Egyptian fathers whose children do not attend school do not have any formal education (52%), while among Roma and Egyptians whose children attend school a significantly lower percentage of fathers are without formal education – approximately one in three fathers (31%). Just 11% of Roma and Egyptian fathers whose children do not go to school have finished primary school (Figure 30). Among Roma and Egyptian fathers whose children attend school a significantly higher percentage have finished primary school (27%).

Figure 31
Education of the father: Roma and Egyptian population



In majority-population households the percentage of fathers with no formal education is negligible (just 2%). Furthermore a higher percentage of fathers from majority-population households have secondary education compared with fathers from Roma and Egyptian households. Of fathers from the majority population, 34% have finished 3-year vocational school, in contrast to just 1% of Roma and Egyptian fathers; additionally 15% of fathers from the majority population finished 4-year vocational school, compared to 2% of Roma and Egyptian fathers.

The education attainment of Roma and Egyptian mothers is worse than that of the fathers. More than a half of mothers from Roma and Egyptian households have no formal education—63% of mothers whose children do not go to school and 55% of mothers whose children go to school³⁴). Just 9% of Roma and Egyptian mothers have finished primary school, versus 36% of mothers from the majority population. There are almost no mothers from Roma and Egyptian households who finished secondary school.

No connection could be made between the literacy of parents in majority households and school attendance, but the picture is quite different in Roma and Egyptian households. In households of the majority population, regardless of a child's school attendance, almost every parent interviewed could read and write in Cyrillic (98%), as well as in Latin (99%) script. Of majority-population fathers, 81% of them could read and write in Cyrillic and 83% could do the same in Latin script. In contrast, approximately every second parent from Roma and Egyptian households with children attending primary school could read and write in Cyrillic (46%). Of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children are not attending school, the percentage that can read and write in Cyrillic drops to 31%. Approximately half (51%) of Roma and Egyptian parents with children in school could read and write in Latin

script, versus 42% of Roma and Egyptian parents with children not attending school.

Early Marriage

1. Characteristics of Roma and Egyptian Households

The children covered by this survey mainly live in households with several household members (5.7 on average). In Roma and Egyptian households the number of household members is generally larger: 5.9 in households where children go to school, and 6.2 in ones in which the children are not included in the system of education. Majority-population households, whose children attend school have 4.9 household members on average, while the number of household members averages 5.2 in ones with children not attending school.

Parents from the Roma and Egyptian population are somewhat younger than parents from the majority population. For example Roma and Egyptian fathers are mainly aged between the ages of 31 and 40, while fathers from the majority population are between 41 and 50 years old. In Roma and Egyptian households 32% of mothers are below 30 years of age, versus 17% in majority-population households. Among the majority population 46% get married at church or in a registry office; 16% of Roma and Egyptians marry this way.

Marriage at an earlier age happens more frequently amongst Roma and Egyptians. For example, 20% of mothers from Roma and Egyptian households got married at 15 years of age, versus 1% from the majority population; while 30% of Roma and Egyptian fathers got married between the ages of 16 and 18, compared to 5% of fathers from the majority population.

³⁴ This difference is not statistically significant

The entire sample showed that parents have their first child between the ages of 19 and 25 (49%). In Roma and Egyptian households 28% of parents have their first child between 16 and 18 years of age, this is the case in 8% of majority-population households. Among the majority population 44% of parents have their first children at the age of 25+ years; this is the case with 11% of Roma and Egyptian households. The age at which Roma and Egyptian parents have their first child does not differ significantly between households where children do and do not go to school.

2. Attitudes towards Marriage

In some Roma and Egyptian communities early marriage is more prevalent, as are virginity testing, teenage pregnancies and resulting higher drop-out rates among Roma and Egyptian girls in school. But studies in other SEE countries have also shown that an exacerbating factor can be “[...] prejudices held by [some] teachers relating to early marriages and teenage pregnancies [resulting in] lower expectations of Roma and Egyptian girls [including] expecting that they will drop out of school early.”³⁵ Moreover it is also “important to note that although early marriages are statistically higher in some Roma and Egyptian communities, [including in

Montenegro] compared to [...] national average[s], teenage pregnancies are to a large extent a majority-society concern.”³⁶ Better provision of sex education classes and workshops within communities could benefit all populations. Nevertheless “strict demands regarding virginity”³⁷ among some Roma and Egyptians, can lead to pressure to marry early and this has been correlated to higher drop-out rates among Roma and Egyptian girls.³⁹ Drop-out data shows that the number of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in school drops after reaching age 11, especially among Roma and Egyptian girls. All the interviewed Roma and Egyptian mothers (either in focus groups or in case studies), regardless of whether their children go to school or not, mentioned spontaneously how they “fear that their daughters will fall in love and be tricked”. The majority of them believe that the right age to start a family is between 15 and 17 years of age. In discussions some Roma and Egyptian mothers also indicated that what worries them is the potential for their daughters to lose their virginity before marriage. However, there were also Roma and Egyptian mothers who hoped their daughters would not get married in their teens, and would finish school. The different future that these particular Roma and Egyptian mothers envisioned for their daughters is why they enrolled them in school.

³⁵ Ravnbøl, Camilla Ida. [2011] *Women, Motherhood, Early Childhood Development: Exploring the question of how poor Roma women's status and situation influences children's survival, growth and development*. UNICEF. pp. 59.

³⁶ Ravnbøl, Camilla Ida. [2011] *Women, Motherhood, Early Childhood Development: Exploring the question of how poor Roma women's status and situation influences children's survival, growth and development*. UNICEF. pp. 44.

³⁷ European Roma Rights Center (2006) *Forced Arranged Marriage of Minors Among Traditional Romani Communities in Europe*. ERRC, Budapest. pp.3-4. <www.errc.org/cms/upload/media/02/BA/m000002BA.pdf>

MERSIDA AND ELMA, GIRLS KEPT VIRGINS FOR MARRIAGE

Mersida is 15 years old, and her sister Elma is a year younger. They live in a five-member family with their single mother. They lost all their property to the fire in Konik. Their temporary accommodation is in a tent. They live from collecting secondary raw materials. They are waiting for a container home to live in.

Mersida, in her mother's words, completed four grades in Konik. She started her fifth grade in another school, Božidar Vuković, but she left a few days after starting and never came back. Her mother explained that one boy stripped naked in front of Mersida in school one day. The girl got so scared by that act that she refused to go to school ever again. Next year, when her younger sister was to start that same school, she was scared to go there without her sister. The girl is very shy and she did not want to answer the questions during the interview. Her mother stated that she did not react to that situation and she did not report the case to anyone. None of the

school representatives know that something like this had happened.

Later on, the interview with the mother revealed the real reason for dropping out. Her mother is afraid that her daughters might fall in love and be "used", which would prevent them from getting married. When asked directly if they fear a kidnapping of the bride, the mother said that if a man took her as his bride it would not be a problem, "but if he uses her and leaves her on my doorstep, what am I to do with her?" The two younger children (a girl of 8 and a boy of 6) go to primary school, but their mother is not sure that they will complete it. In her words "they will go if they want to", but she also said that their financial situation was very bad, even worse than before the fire.

The chain of reaction was the same in this case as well. The mediator called the mother to come to school, but she never did.

Quantitative study data confirms a difference between the Roma and Egyptian and the majority populations' views on the appropriate age for marriage. Roma and Egyptian parents were more likely to perceive adolescence as an ideal age for marriage, whereas the majority population hardly at all mentioned any age under 18. What parents in Montenegro have in common, regardless of ethnicity, is a belief that girls should get married at a younger age than boys. It is also relevant to note that there are no significant differences on views on marriage in terms of whether or not the children of a family are attending school. So 47% of Roma and Egyptians whose children do not go to

school and 46% of Roma and Egyptian whose children do go to school, believe that the ideal age for girls to get married is under 18 years of age (Figure 31). In the case of Roma and Egyptian boys though, it is somewhat different, 36% of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children do not go to school and 27% of those whose children do go to school, believe that the teenage years are an appropriate time to get married (Figure 32). Among the majority population, less than 10% consider marriage under the age of 18 ideal. Another characteristic shared by parents regardless of ethnicity, is a belief that the ideal time for marriage is under 26 years of age. Only

Figure 32
Ideal age for marriage for females

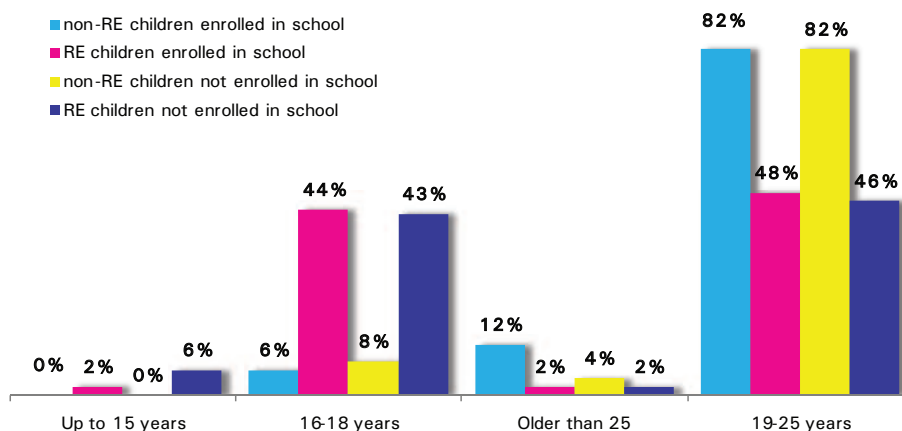
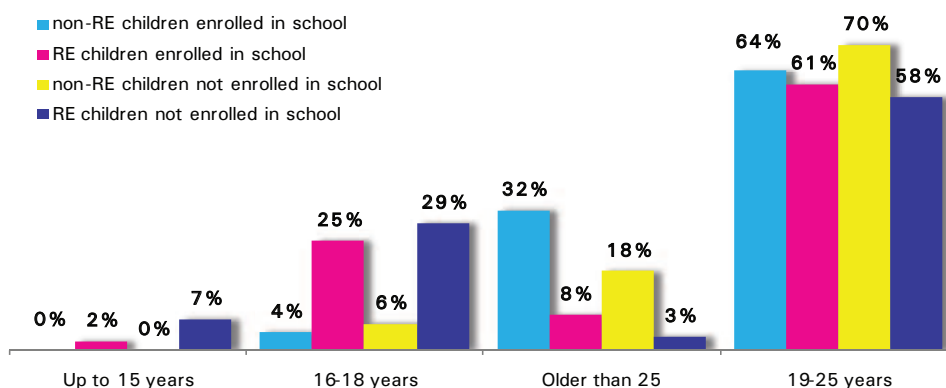


Figure 33
Ideal age for marriage for males

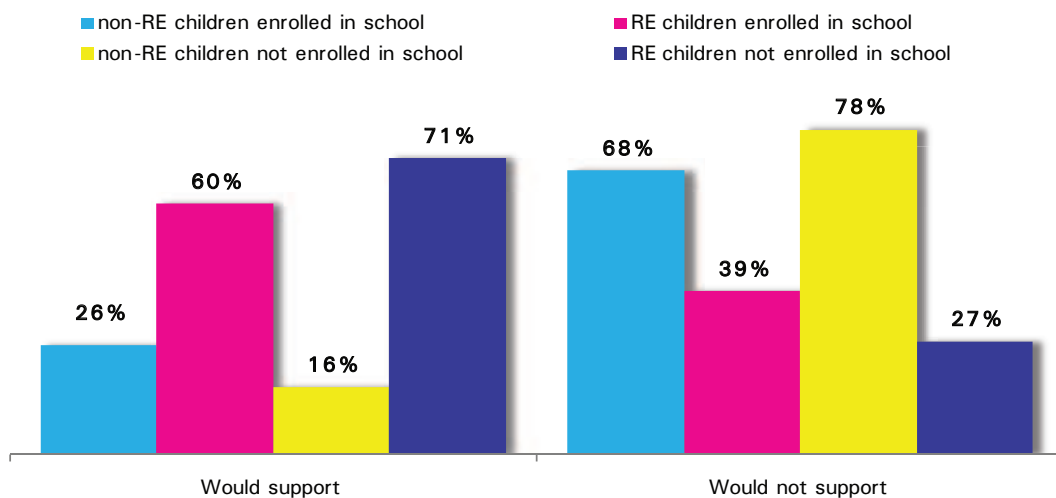


majority-population parents whose children go to school are more likely to think boys (32%) should get married after they turn 25.

In summary, the study shows that the majority of Roma and Egyptian parents would support a child's decision to enter marriage at an age

under 18 (71% of those whose children do not go to school and 60% of those whose children do go to school). Parents of other ethnicities mostly would not support marriage under the age of 18 (78% of those whose children do not go to school and 69% of those whose children do go to school).

Figure 34
Supporting children in early marriage



Compromised Motivation for and Interest in Education among Young People

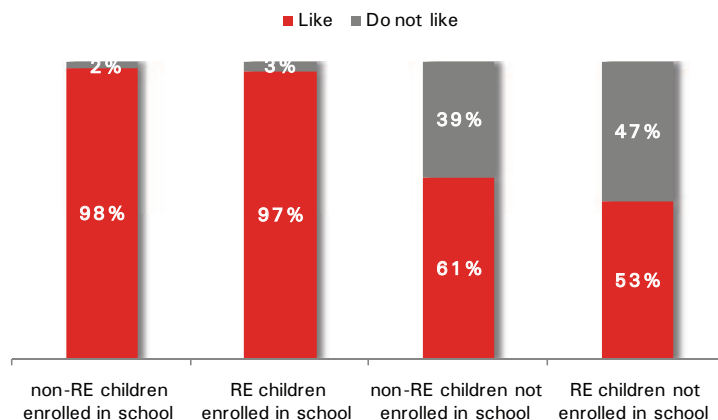
The degree to which a child likes or dislikes school most probably influences their chances of dropping out, and it is no surprise that children who stay in education like to go to school to a greater extent. Parents' evaluation of the extent to which their children like to go to school matches their evaluation of their children's opinion of school. So 97% of parents whose children go to school and 98% of their children "like, or like very much going to school". A similar evaluation is a lot less common among children who dropped out of school—a positive evaluation by 55% of the parents and 59% of the children in this group. As is obvious, more Roma and Egyptian children

attending school have a positive opinion of it versus ones not attending, as stated above, 98% versus 59% respectively. A special note should be given to the fact that half of the children who dropped out of the educational system, either of Roma and Egyptian or any other ethnicity, would like to return to school. The reasons for children disliking school can be numerous and varied, and certainly the quality, as covered below, including specific components of the education setting and methods, such as a relevant curriculum and friendly school environments, should be scrutinized.

Unfortunately this research did not allow further exploration of the reasons that have driven certain children and parents to form their opinions.

Figure 35

Parents' evaluation of the extent to which their children like to go to school



Half of the children who dropped out of the educational system, either of Roma and Egyptian or any other ethnicity, would like to return to school.

Continuity of Use

Roma and Egyptian children and other vulnerable children are not only at risk of dropping out of school, but also often attend school irregularly or repeat grades, due to a variety of factors. The ability to attend regularly and continuously, of course, determines outcomes in education. The majority of children from the majority population not participating in the education system have not enrolled in primary school largely for health reasons. Non-enrolment and dropping out among Roma and Egyptian students is mostly attributable to their poor financial situations. The study found that children who had dropped out of school were not attending classes regularly beforehand. They also often repeated grades. A lack of identity documents and birth certificates amongst a significant percentage of the Roma and Egyptian population is also a factor contributing to their non-enrolment and dropping out. Also covered is data on the health of children in and out of school. Both sets of data can give some clues as

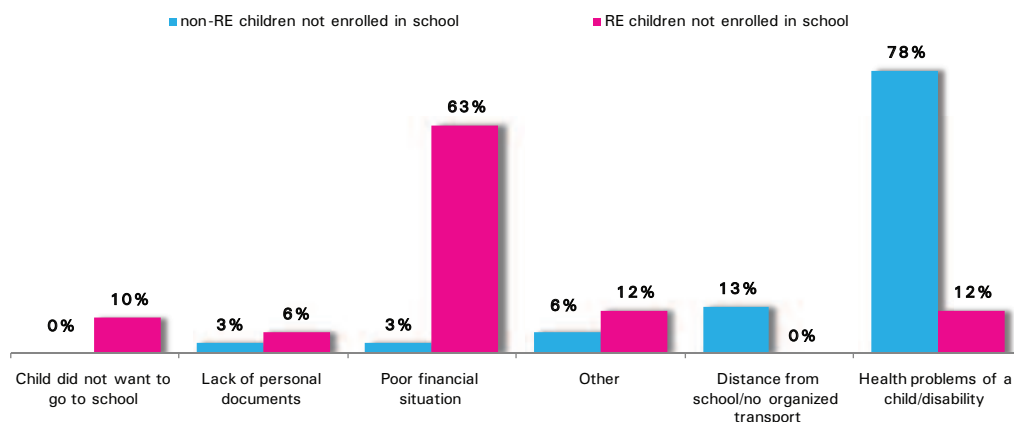
to whether or not schools are inclusive and meeting the needs of children with disabilities and Roma and Egyptian children.

1. Children outside of the system of education

Children who do not complete compulsory primary education can be split into those who have never entered the system, and those who dropped out of the system. This study encompasses 150 children who are outside of the education system, of whom **46% dropped out of school, while the rest were never enrolled.**

Amongst the majority population, it is somewhat more likely that formal education was not started at all (64%) than amongst the Roma and Egyptian population (49%). There are divergent reasons for non-enrolment and dropping out between the two populations (Figure 35). Specifically regarding enrolment, children from the majority population do not enter school primarily due to severe health conditions, disability and/or developmental problems (78% of children from the majority population who were not enrolled in school). This decision is more likely to be made by a doctor (53%), than by parents (31%).

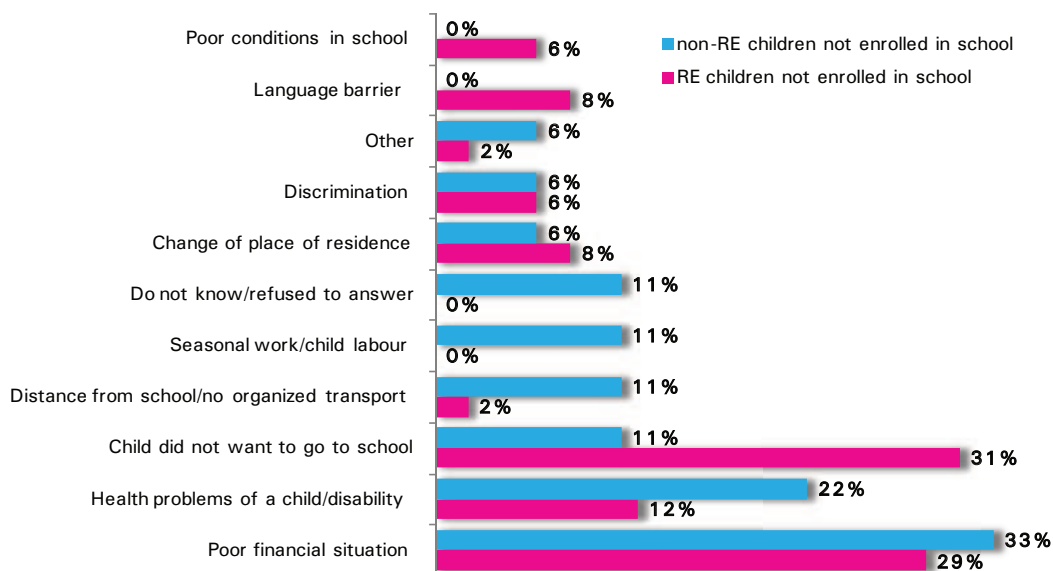
Figure 36
Main reason for non-enrolment in school



As cited by 63% of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children were not registered in school, poor financial situations and money shortages were the predominant reasons for non-enrolment. These are the same reasons for dropping

out amongst Roma and Egyptian children (in 29% of cases the reason for dropping out – Figure 36). According to 31% of Roma and Egyptian parents, formal education was also interrupted because the child did not want to go to school.

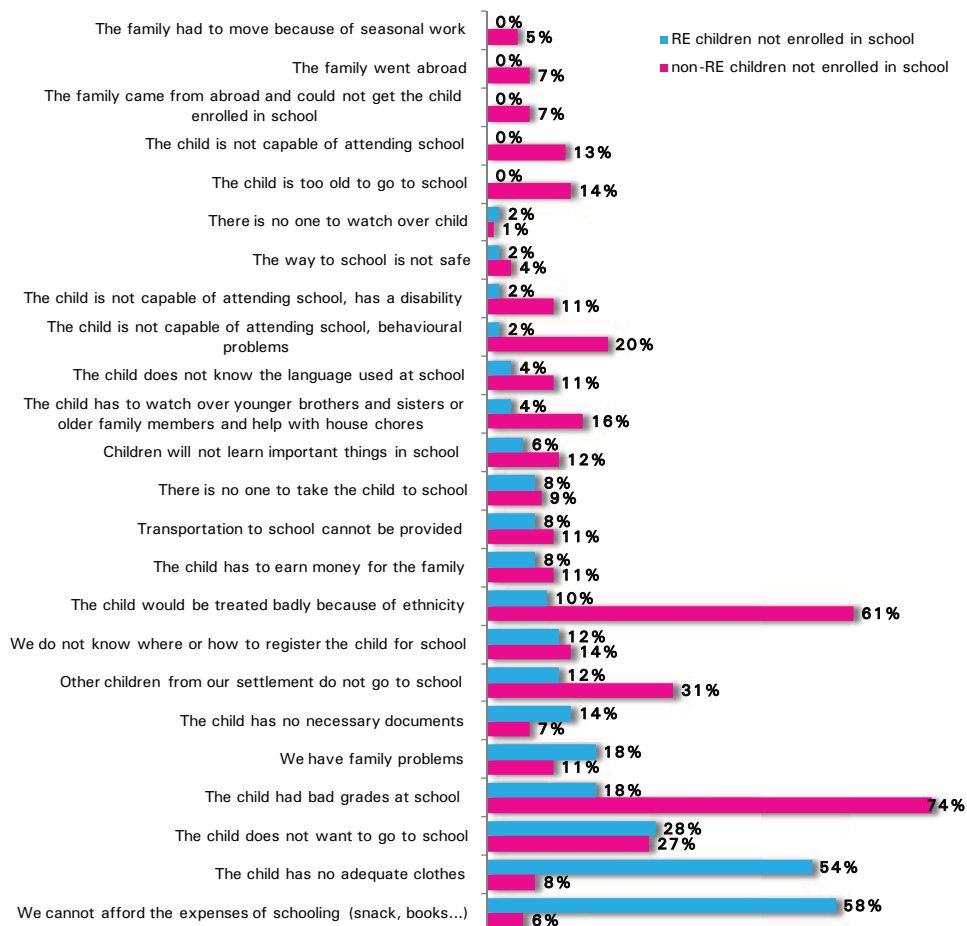
Figure 37
Main reason for dropping out



Among both Roma and Egyptian and majority-population children, other reasons such as distance from school, poor knowledge of language, changing place of residence are rarely crucial factors for non-enrolment or dropping out (less than 10% of cases). However, when parents list all the reasons why their children dropped out of the system of education, the picture becomes somewhat more complex. Namely, it is often a combination of factors that negatively affect the final outcome. As mentioned, a poor economic situation was cited as a major

determinant negatively effecting school enrolment and dropping out amongst Roma and Egyptians. Shortages of money for school expenses was cited by 74% of Roma and Egyptian parents as a reason for non-attendance at school, and 61% cited shortages of adequate clothing. The majority population singled out disability (54%) and developmental problems (58%) as the main reasons for non-attendance. Additionally, other barriers to enrolment and continuous attendance in school mentioned by Roma and Egyptian were: the absence of

Figure 38
All reasons for dropping out



documents; fears that their child would be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity; there being no one to watch over the child; and the child being too old for school (Figure 37). Barriers to education common to both populations are poor performance at school (27% of Roma and Egyptians, 28% of the majority population), and a lack of will on the part of their children to go to school (31% of Roma and Egyptian, 12% of majority population). It is very important to note also that 14% of Roma and Egyptian parents cited the fact that they are not informed enough about where and how to enrol their children in school.

Although language differences were mostly not mentioned as a barrier to participation in education, results still indicate that there are disparities between the language of instruction and the mother tongue of some children. This factor can be considered a potential obstacle in the process of education. While the vast majority of children who currently go to school (97% of Roma and Egyptians and 92% of the majority population) speak Montenegrin, a lower percentage of children who dropped out from the system of education know the

language (85% of Roma and Egyptians and 78% of the majority population).

Attendance at School

All children covered by the survey who were or are in the education system, share similar experiences regarding the number of schools they attended. It is usually only one school (93%). However there are significant differences between children who dropped out of school and those still attending, regarding regular attendance and the frequency of grade repetition. One-third of Roma and Egyptian children and one-fifth of majority-population children who dropped out of school, did not attend classes regularly before leaving school (Figure 38). Percentages among children attending school are 3% and 0% for Roma and Egyptian children and majority-population children respectively. The reasons for absences among Roma and Egyptian children, as described by parents whose children are not in school, are the same as the reasons for leaving school: children refusing to go to school (39%) and financial hardship (22%). However one in ten respondents cited poor knowledge of the language or health problems.

Figure 39
Regularity of school attendance

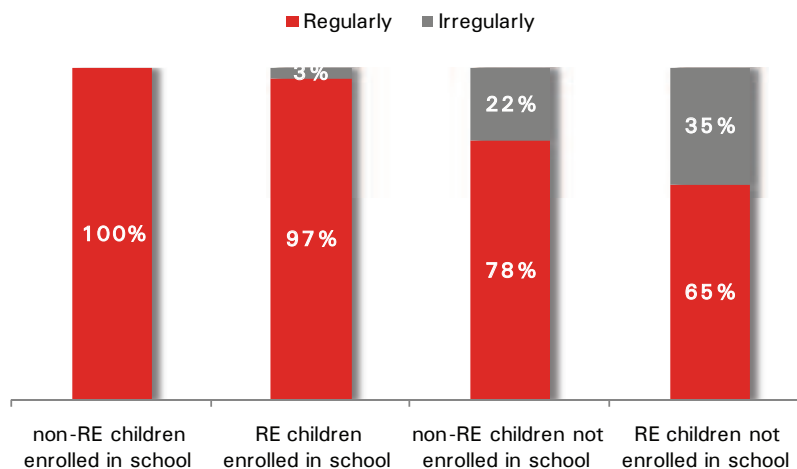
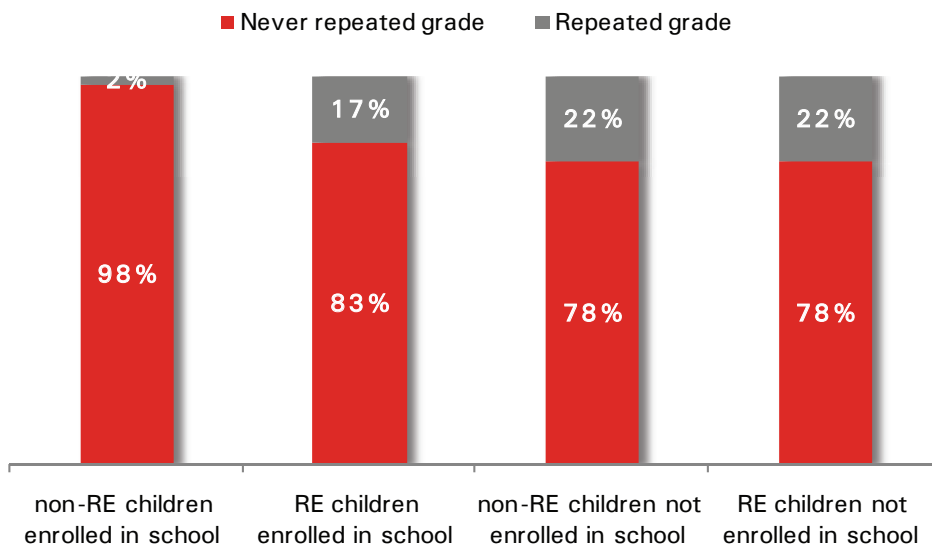


Figure 40
Repeating grades



Recorded differences in reasons for grade repetition are somewhat more complex, with some barriers being ones that Roma and Egyptians are more likely to face, compared to the general population. For instance, not only did Roma and Egyptian children and children from the majority population who dropped out of school repeat a grade (22% in both groups), but 17% of Roma and Egyptian children currently attending school also did. This almost never happens among majority-population children going to school (Figure 39). According to Roma and Egyptian parents, their children accomplished insufficient success because of a shortage of money, as well as some citing that their children “don’t like school and they don’t learn”. For Roma and Egyptian children who are attending school, the other important reason for repeating a grade are the health problems they are facing.

Given that the data indicates more frequent occurrences of irregular school attendance and grade repetition among children outside the education system, they can be considered significant predictors of potential dropping out, especially in the case of Roma and Egyptian children. Mitigating both should be a focus when creating programmes and social policies.

Challenges with Birth Registration and Legal Identity Papers

In order to help ensure enrolment it is important to consider whether parents and children have personal documents—a lack of them can be a serious formal obstacle to the enrolment of children in school. Survey results have confirmed this hypothesis. In majority-population households almost all fathers and mothers have birth certificates and personal ID cards. This is not the case with Roma and Egyptians, though there are some variations between the Roma and Egyptian communities.

21% of Roma and Egyptian fathers whose children do not attend school do not have birth certificates, versus 9% of Roma and Egyptian fathers whose children do attend school. Furthermore, 24% of Roma and Egyptian fathers whose children do not go to school do not have personal ID cards, compared to 6% of fathers whose children do go to school. The situation is very similar among Roma and Egyptian mothers: 20% of Roma and Egyptian mothers whose children do not go to school do not have birth certificates, versus 9% of mothers whose children do go to school, while 31% do not have personal ID cards, which is the case with 14% of mothers whose children go to school

A lower percentage of Roma and Egyptian children have personal documents as compared to children from the majority population. They are also less frequently registered at birth, thus more often lack birth certificates. Of Roma and Egyptian children not attending school 18% were not recorded in the birth register; 5% of Roma and Egyptian children going to school were not. Additionally a higher percentage of Roma and Egyptian children not attending

school are without personal documents, compared to Roma and Egyptian children in school. Of Roma and Egyptian children not going to school 22% do not have a birth certificate, in contrast to 10% of Roma and Egyptian children going to school.

There are differing reasons for not registering children at birth between the Roma and Egyptian populations whose children go to school, and those that do not. According to interviewed parents, in the case of Roma and Egyptian children not attending school, the dominant reason for not registering a child at birth is the lack of free time of the parents to register their children. In case of children who are in school, the main reason mentioned is the parents' own lack of necessary documents in order to be able to register the child.

Possibly connected to the issue of a lack of personal documents, the numbers of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled and not enrolled in school also differ according to their country of birth. One-third of Roma and Egyptian children who do not go to school were born in Kosovo (internally displaced persons), and only 14% of Roma and Egyptian children who attend school are from Kosovo. Although the majority of children are in fact registered in the municipality of current residence (in total 94% of children), it is important to note that among the Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school a lower percentage of them are registered (88%) in comparison with children who do go to school (97%).

Child Health and Developmental Difficulties as an Obstacle to Enrolment and Attendance

The majority of parents evaluate their child's health as good (84%). It is important that in households of the majority population where children do not attend school, more than a half of parents (54%) think that their child's health is poor, while in the remaining types of households almost all parents (93%) evaluate

their child's health as good. Such pronounced difference in the assessment of the child's health indicates that in the majority population, the child's poor health is one of the important factors of non-enrolment or dropping out of school, which was confirmed by the data obtained from discussion in focus groups with parents and case studies.

Among children from the majority population who do not attend school, in a significantly higher percentage of cases some sort of serious health problem or disability was diagnosed (only 38% of children are healthy, while 22% have disability, 18% have cerebral palsy, 12% have epileptic seizures, and 10% have speech/hearing problems). In the other types of households, the majority of children are healthy or do not have a disability (above 80%). The out-of-school status of children with the described problems may indicate a lack of adequate inclusive schools and classrooms that could accommodate them, and possibly limited outreach and child-seeking services to encourage their attendance at school.

Although the health of children in Roma and Egyptian households is generally assessed as good, it is worth mentioning that in the case of Roma and Egyptian children who attend school, their health is somewhat more frequently assessed as excellent (82%) than in the case of Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school (69%).

This data may point to both a lack of inclusive accommodations in schools for children with

SEN, and of environments and curricula that are child-friendly and supportive of diversity.

QUALITY

The determinants that fall under the category of quality have a decisive impact on the educational outcomes of vulnerable and marginalized children. Not only should all children have equal access to education, but they should have equal access to **quality** education. In order to level out disadvantage and to foster inclusion, schools and classrooms should meet standards in at least each of the following areas: Teaching quality and methods should be of the highest quality, inclusive, child-centred, and adjustable to meet the individual needs and skills of each child including SEN children; accommodations should be made for children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction; school infrastructure needs to be safe and adequate and supplied with all essential materials and equipment including for disabled children; curricula should be multicultural and relevant to Roma and Egyptian children as well as to other minorities; schools should be child-friendly environments and actively work against prejudice and hostility, and toward tolerance and the embracing of diversity. Without these and other factors Roma and Egyptian children as well as other marginalized children will not be meaningfully included in schools.

Since the research presented in this document was limited to questions asked to parents and children, what follows is data on their satisfaction with teaching staff and with the relationships among students. The findings of the survey will be then complemented by the main conclusions of the Evaluation of the Reform of the Education System in Montenegro 2010-2012.

Parent and Child Satisfaction with Teachers and Peer Relationships

In general children going to school and their parents had more positive evaluations of teachers and relationships among students, compared to children out of school and their parents.

The data from this study indicates that the parents of children who have left school are more likely to be dissatisfied with the attitude of the relevant actors involved in the provision of education to their children than the parents of children in school. These same parents are more likely to be displeased with the work of teachers, and unlike parents whose children are in school, are less likely to express satisfaction with the way their children are treated by classmates and their parents. A large majority of parents of children who go to school (91%) evaluated the work of teachers positively, as opposed to 71% of parents whose children are not in school.

There are noticeable differences between children going and not going to school, regarding social relationships especially amongst Roma and Egyptians. Roma and Egyptian children who go to school are better accepted by their peers, as well as by their peers' parents. Almost all Roma and Egyptian parents of children who go to school are satisfied with the way their children are treated by their peers (96%), compared to 71% of parents whose children do not go to school. The attitude of classmates' parents is evaluated positively by 95% of Roma and Egyptian parents whose children go to school, and 82% of Roma parents whose children do not go to school.

Children's testimonies of social relationships at school are very similar to their parents'. 95% of children going to school, regardless of ethnicity, are satisfied with the treatment by their peers and teachers. However children who used to be in the system have somewhat more negative testimonies.

More than two-thirds of the children in the survey had a positive rating of the way they are treated by their classmates and teachers. Those who were not satisfied with the relationships they have with their peers, reported problems with physical and verbal abuse. In addition to these problems, one-fifth of the children in the survey reported having been faced with other issues in the course of their education, usually financial hardship, fights, a lack of interest in school and living too far away from school

Evaluation of the Reform of the Education System in Montenegro (2010-2012)³⁸, Implementation of Inclusive Education

In order to complement the survey results analyzed in this document, the opportunity will be used to briefly present the main findings of the recent Evaluation of the Reform of the Education System in Montenegro (2010-2012) focusing on implementation and the quality of inclusive education in general:

- Legislative framework in the area of inclusive education is comprehensive, innovative and in continuous process of alignment with relevant European and international standards and norms;

³⁸ Evaluation of the Reform of the Education System in Montenegro (2010-2012), Institute of the Open Society Foundation, NGO Pedagogical Centre, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Bureau of Education and Bureau for Textbooks and Teaching Materials, December 2012

- Remaining challenges relate to the implementation of relevant laws and strategies and strengthening of the cooperation between sectors at the national and local levels;
- There is a need to enhance operational procedures and make them more effective, defining clear roles, responsibilities, coordination mechanisms and information flow between all stakeholders in the education process;
- Opportunities for training and education of teaching staff in the areas of inclusive education should be expanded and made continuous.
- The participatory approach to development of Individual Educational Plans needs to be improved both with regards to participation of parents, as well as among teachers involved in the education process;
- Individual Educational Plans remain a formal document, rather than a functional document aimed at improving the quality of educational work with the child for whom it was developed.

Recognizing the important role of the Ministry of Education in driving forward the reform process and implementation of inclusive education in Montenegro, the Evaluation points out that the number of children with special education needs (primarily children with disabilities and Roma and Egyptian children) enrolled in schools is increasing each year. However, several specific concerns have been brought up with regards to the quality of inclusive education:

- Insufficient training of teachers to work with children with Special Education Needs (SEN);
- Lack of properly trained teaching assistants for SEN children;
- Criteria for assessments of learning outcomes of children with SEN not uniformly implemented and sometimes only formal, thus not contributing to the personal development of the child;
- Teaching staff have insufficient expertise and training for development of **Individual Educational Plans**, especially with regards to: definition of short-term and long-term educational goals and tasks; means for evaluating children's progress in achieving academic goals; differentiation of teaching processes suitable for the needs of the child; creation of a holistic approach in the educational process; and the establishment of adequate inter-personal communication in the classroom;

The general impression is that Montenegro has made significant progress in the implementation of inclusive education in the country, especially in terms of setting the legislative and institutional framework for the reform. The Ministry of Education and all relevant stakeholders remain committed to continue working on improving the quality of inclusive education.

EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Because the results of the study indicate that, in the majority population, children with disabilities are mainly the ones staying out of the formal education system, this group of children will be paid special attention to in this section. According to the study requirements, majority-population households with at least one child not going to school were interviewed. It turned out that as many as 27 of the total of 50 interviewed children have some disability, and here the results of analysis of data obtained from these 27 children and their parents will be presented.

The difficulties that these children mainly suffer from are cerebral palsy (33%), epilepsy (11%) or some non-classified problem. Talking to parents during focus group discussions, the impression was that **children who had a severe disability stayed outside of the system**. These are children with mobility impairments (they cannot sit, but they spend most of the time lying in bed)



Photography:
UNICEF Montenegro/Risto Božović

that physically disable them from staying in school and attending classes, and children with developmental problems, such as speech impairment or lack of memory, which is according to their parents preventing them from attending classes.

Children with disabilities who are included in this study live in less adverse financial conditions in comparison with the other children encompassed by the study. Their housing facilities are mainly spacious enough (85% of households have more than 10 m² per member, and a half have more than 0.4 m² of separate space per member), they all have a bathroom with running water and essential appliances, such as a water heater, refrigerator, washing machine and TV. However, 55% of

these children's parents evaluate their housing conditions as unfavourable. Almost half of them cannot always provide heating fuel during the winter, while problems such as dampness, noise and pollution occur in one in four or one in five households.

The general financial situation is perceived as bad by 63% of families. The average income per household member is more than €50 in half of the cases, but a certain part of the need for money is cannot be satisfied. There is mainly no problem with the acquisition of food, since two meals a day is a minimum, while in more than 80% of these households children eat three or more times a day. **However, some things that children need cannot be provided.** So half of these families cannot

afford textbooks, while 60% cannot afford to buy clothes (either summer or winter), although the vast majority of them keep their children's clothes clean always.

Focus group participants indicate that their financial situation as parents of children with disabilities is **further aggravated by the fact that these children, due to their specific condition, have a special diet and are taking medications.** Additional expenses are also medical aids (wheelchairs and the like), as well as transportation to the nearest health facility that they have to pay for unless they have a car, which many of them do not. The state covers a part of the costs, but in the situation where insurance covers a substitute medication, parents invest additional money and effort to find the prescription drugs that their child needs (a substitute does not have the same effect as the prescribed medication does).

The families we are talking about had their first child as adult citizens. Almost all of them think that they devote enough time to their up bringing. The majority of parents of both sexes (more than 60%) had completed secondary school, and even those with lower education are literate. However, almost 60% of mothers and fathers are unemployed, and another third of mothers are housewives.

When focus group participants who were parents talked about the everyday routine of their children with disabilities, the impression was created that, **due to their condition, these children are almost exclusively at home with their closest family.** This data was confirmed by the quantitative study as well. The results are the following: children with disabilities spend most of their time with adult household members (67%) or with their brothers and sisters, while only one-third have peers to socialize with. They spend their time mainly at home, watching TV (19%), lying down (15%) or simply "indoors" (11%), while

only a quarter play and 4% go for a walk. Quite expectedly, these children do not help with chores. Focus group participants who are parents say that taking care of a child with a disability is a daily struggle, requiring all-day active engagement. They often do physiotherapy themselves; they do the exercises and try to teach children everything they can. It is a slow and long process, very often with the pattern "one step forwards, two steps back", but even the slightest progress brings the greatest satisfaction.

Only one out of the 27 children attended a kindergarten, while two were enrolled in secondary school, but they did not complete it due to their disability. The decision not to enrol the child in school, even where the parents were well informed about the time of enrolment, was usually made on the basis of expert medical assessment. What is important is that, in the case of these children, there is no reason other than perceptions about disability that is affecting their enrolment in school (finance, child labour, etc.) and that parents express a very positive attitude towards education and its relevance. The majority of parents agree that important things are learnt in school and disagree with the statement that the school of life is more important than formal education.

These parents say that their other children do go to school, either primary or secondary, and that parents pay attention to their education. Accordingly, **parents are mainly willing to do everything so that their children with disabilities can get formal education, but the majority agree that nothing can be done or that they do not know what might help them.** Almost all 27 parents believe that their children cannot complete formal education due to their health condition and that they will not, and that even if they completed it, they would not have any opportunity for employment because they were not capable of working.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Photography:

UNICEF Montenegro/Risto Božović

Study on the obstacles to education in Montenegro

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Social Norms

Discrimination against children from vulnerable social groups and children with disabilities

All countries battle with managing diversity and integrating minorities and children with disabilities into education. Discrimination against Roma and Egyptian children as well as prejudices against children with disabilities continues to be a pervasive problem in many European countries. Both have very detrimental effects on the meaningful inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities in education.

In several European countries, Roma and Egyptian children are often thought of as intellectually inferior, with schools and teachers delivering a lower quality education to these students due to reduced expectations of their academic abilities. Roma and Egyptian children

are furthermore often victims of abuse, physical and verbal insults within school environments with little done to curb such abuse.

Through a series of nationally representative Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices surveys, the stigma attached to children with disabilities in Montenegro has been identified as one of the main obstacles to their full inclusion in education in the society.

As mentioned earlier, nationally representative public opinion surveys measuring social distance based on ethnicity in Montenegro were conducted in 2004 and 2007.³⁹ The survey results have shown significant distance toward the Roma and Egyptian community. Also, findings of the survey conducted in 2011 on the Discrimination of Minorities and Marginalised Societal Groups⁴⁰, which examined discrimination in access to education, employment, health protection and justice show that on average members of the Roma and Egyptian community are the most marginalized and discriminated against in Montenegro.


Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- As a response to the stigma attached to children with disabilities in 2010 the Government of Montenegro and UNICEF jointly launched the "It's About Ability" campaign with the aim of combating the stigma and creating positive images of children with disabilities in public. This campaign was successful and should be continued. A similar campaign should

also be launched to deal with prejudice and discrimination against Roma and Egyptian children and their families. Such a campaign would also support the government's efforts to disaggregate existing Roma and Egyptian camps and prepare successful integration into society (more in Supply-side recommendations).

³⁹ Ethnic distance in Montenegro, Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM), 2004 and 2007 (<http://www.cedem.me/sr/programi/istraivanja-javnog-mnjenja/ostala-istraivanja/viewdownload/38-ostala-istraivanja/203-etnika-distanca-u-crnoj-gori-maj-2007.html>)

⁴⁰ Survey on Discrimination of Minorities and Marginalised Societal Groups, CEDEM, June 2011 (<http://www.cedem.me/sr/programi/istraivanja-javnog-mnjenja/ostala-istraivanja/viewdownload/38-ostala-istraivanja/208-istraivanja-diskriminacije-manjinskih-naroda-i-marginalizovanih-drutevnihi-grupa-jun-2011.html>)




Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- The government should actively pursue the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and policy. Including developing or strengthening effective complaint mechanisms, the capacities of human rights liaisons, and mechanisms for redress—and ensuring that all potential beneficiaries are well informed of them. Diversity training of officials and service delivery personnel, in all relevant sectors, as well as in local governments in general, should be standard.

Legislation and Policy on Education

Though Montenegro has legislation that prohibits discrimination, and in fact has Roma-inclusion strategies and action plans, including at the local level, implementation could be further accelerated.⁴¹ Moreover policy on inclusive education is mostly missing and key areas that would improve

the quality of education for Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities are not covered in education policy, including: teaching methods; language of instruction; school setting—including safe adequate infrastructure; a curriculum which is mono-cultural and non-inclusive; prejudice and animosity as described above.



Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- The political will to implement strategies, action plans, legislation and policies has to be raised. Awareness of the benefits, including economic, of social inclusion should be raised among decision makers. Clearly articulated objectives, goals and deadlines and requisite regular evaluations and monitoring of initiatives under actions plans, are necessary for implementation. The central government should help set the tone for local implementation—some oversight and monitoring, as well as mechanisms that would encourage local buy-in.
- Mechanisms for complaints and redress of discrimination and human rights violations should be strengthened, developed, and paired with campaigns to raise awareness of laws and how to use mechanisms. Capacity building of those responsible for enforcing laws and policies should also be conducted.
- Existing policies, strategies and action plans on inclusive education should be adequately budgeted to ensure their full implementation.
- Legislation should be amended so that children with disabilities can be more readily identified and counted—this includes their explicit inclusion and definition within legislation and policies. Additionally amended laws which as of 2010 encompass more comprehensively the needs of Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities should be fully implemented.

⁴¹ *Roma Education Fund. (2009) Advancing Education of Roma in Montenegro 2009 Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions. Budapest. pp. 14-15.*

Budget and Expenditures on Education in Montenegro

The level of education financing as well as the method of distribution can be discriminatory and exclusionary. Certain aspects of budgeting and expenditures in Montenegro in fact do not promote inclusive education of Roma and Egyptian and children with disabilities, and should be

improved. Compared to expenditures on salaries, the financing of education per student is low, as is expenditure on other non-salary items which are important to ensuring quality inclusive education. The proportion directed towards quality-enhancing measures is, simply stated, inadequate, as is the funding of policies that target disadvantaged children and which would enhance social inclusion.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- There is a need to change the structure of expenditures and significantly increase the proportion directed towards quality-enhancing measures including early childhood development, higher education and lifelong learning. In the end these will all play an important role in Montenegro's future competitiveness.
- Money should be directed toward both the supply and demand sides of education, "investment in education infrastructure to overcome disadvantage and financial incentives to increase enrolment and retention".⁴²
- Financing the expansion of free preschool should be stressed, considering its importance in reducing education and life-chance gaps between Roma and Egyptian and the majority population.
- Studies and research to test different models of investing in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and primary education in view of expanding the coverage and inclusiveness and improving the quality of education should be conducted.

⁴² UNICEF, 2011, *The Right of Roma Children to Education: Position Paper*. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS). pp. 21.

Management and Coordination

Weaknesses and strengths in management and coordination of education in general and of initiatives to aid inclusive education in particular, determine education outcomes for vulnerable children. A key to effective management is having precise data and monitoring and evaluation systems. These elements are all undeveloped in Montenegro in regards to Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities and their education. In particular there is a lack of information on Roma and Egyptian children including those who are DPs/IDPs. Without precise statistics it is impossible to move forward with policies and programmes intended to improve education for vulnerable children, confident that they are having their intended impact. Census and key information on Roma and Egyptian children without documents, who are not in school, who are

repeating grades, who do not know the language of instruction, and who are not attending school regularly are missing. Other information on their health, wellbeing and their family's wellbeing is missing as well. It is essential that better systems for monitoring are created, with baseline data on both Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities. Contributing to the lack of data is weak coordination among sectors and relevant institutions to identify children at risk, and which could gather data. Concomitantly, coordination around holistic targeted measures that could prevent dropping out and poor outcomes amongst Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities is also not strong. Meaningful inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities in education require coordinated and multi-pronged strategies, that are monitored and evaluated for the effectiveness and impact.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Establish better monitoring and data-collection mechanisms on vulnerable children who are at risk of dropping out or are out-of-school children (children with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian children, and IDP/DP children). Established

databases should be accessible by all relevant state institutions in order to provide a better flow of information and strengthen cooperation between crucial stakeholders.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- There needs to be better coordination in providing support to Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities in accessing and benefitting fully from quality education, including preschool. Among other measures inter-sectoral work should be strengthened. This can be done through the expansion of inter-sectoral commissions. Though the Strategy for Improving the Position of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Population in Montenegro in 2008-2012 had an inter-sectoral commission, it was weakly implemented.⁴³ If strengthened, these kinds of mechanisms could help ensure that Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities are receiving the education support they need, especially holistic measures targeted at their specific situations. Particularly when it comes to children with disabilities, it is necessary to further work on: awareness raising of the health sector professionals on the importance of multi-sectoral cooperation and approach, strengthening of the early diagnosis and intervention systems, intensifying direct work with children with disabilities and psychosocial support to their families, as well as improving accessibility to crucial information on the available services offered by education, social and child protection, and health sector.
- As mentioned above, legislation should be amended so that children with disabilities can be more readily identified and counted, which includes their explicit inclusion and definition within legislation and policies. Additionally amended laws, which as of 2010 encompass more comprehensively the needs of Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities, should be fully implemented.
- Some central oversight over local efforts to implement Roma action plans and policies is recommended.
- Design clear procedures and enforcement mechanisms that would enable effective implementation of the provisions of the Law on Primary Education relating to enrolment and dropping out from school and sanctions to follow if a child is not enrolled or drops out. A clear chain of responsibilities should be developed so that every institution involved in the process of enrolment and prevention of dropping out has a thorough understanding of what the actions to follow are (the state authority in charge of vital statistics, schools, centres for social welfare, courts). These institutions should be held accountable in cases where procedures are not observed.
- Roma Teaching Assistants (mediators) could play an important role in outreach activities to parents and in identifying children who are out of school and at risk of dropping out. Their engagement would improve cooperation and coordination between relevant stakeholders, including schools, and centres for social welfare, NGOs, parents and children. Increasing the number of Roma teaching assistants could be one of the priorities in future efforts to enforce children's attendance at school and decrease the risk of dropping out.

⁴³ Roma Education Fund. (2009) *Advancing Education of Roma in Montenegro 2009 Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions*. Budapest. pp. 15.



Photography:
UNICEF Montenegro/Risto Božović

SUPPLY

Transportation and proximity of schools

The large distance of some schools from family homes, and the lack of transportation to education facilities exacerbates the ability for Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities to participate in education. Especially amongst Roma and Egyptian an obstacle to attending school is the proximity of

schools to their family homes. Many Roma and Egyptian children live too far away from schools to make the trip safely on foot. Because their families also often contend with severe economic hardship, paying for transport is often not an option. Transportation should be available to all school-age children regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity or other factors. The following suggestions should be considered to eliminate proximity and a lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing education.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- When restructuring education financing, as mentioned above, the government and municipalities should explore investment in free and safe transport for children living in remote areas.
- In particularly remote regions, until adequate transportation measures can be put in place and especially in the

winter, other solutions should be considered. Multi-grade or satellite schools could be set up temporarily. However they should be established with strict stipulations on the length of time they would be used, and with concomitant actions taken for permanent solutions that do not segregate children.

Community infrastructure

Access to Quality Preschool and Adequately Staffed Services

The supply of quality education requires that teachers and service providers be expertly trained, especially in methods that are effective with marginalized and disadvantaged populations. The lack of access to preschool education particularly for Roma and Egyptian children is a major barrier to completing compulsory education in

Montenegro, as is the lack of accommodation in schools for Roma and Egyptian children whose mother tongue is not Montenegrin. Without improving access to quality ECE services for Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities their chances to successfully transition into mainstream school and reach their fullest potential in education is substantially lowered. Additionally actions by the government institutions to identify and address instances of dropping out are not adequate, and when they are done, they are carried out by NGOs.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- A priority for Montenegro should be the expansion of free universal and mandatory preschool education for children aged 5-6. Language preparation, where relevant, should be an integral part of the preschool curriculum. The existing plans for preparatory classes for this age group, should consider making sure that Roma and Egyptian children are mixed with majority-population schoolchildren to boost their Montenegrin language skills.
- For communities that may be remote and/or where illiteracy among parents is especially high, alternative preschool solutions can also be considered, but again not as a replacement for more permanent measures. An example could be organizing home preschools that combine raising the awareness of the importance of preschool and literacy of parents, with quality preschool activities for their children.
- Enrolment in preschool should be made easier especially for parents who may be illiterate and who may be missing documentation. Both preschool enrolment fees and the enrolment priority of favouring families with two employed parents, should be waived.
- Preschool and primary school staff and teachers should be trained in bilingual education in order to accommodate those children whose mother tongue is not Montenegrin. Extra Montenegrin language classes should be provided and staffed, to help Roma and Egyptian children in primary education who may need to catch up on the language of instruction.
- Strengthening the system and role of Roma teaching assistants to work with Roma and Egyptian children whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:


- Measures to strengthen the capacity of social welfare centres and other relevant actors, including schools, to follow up with students who drop out, or who are not attending regularly, should be developed. Better monitoring and database systems need to be established, as do better relationships with other relevant sector institutions in order to effectively track absences, grade repetition and dropping out. Information sharing on actions and methods employed by NGOs working in this area can be helpful. However every effort should be made to take over the assisting of families with school enrolment and dropping out, from NGOs by state or municipal officials and institutions. Attached to this, provisions for second-chance schooling would help re-integrate Roma and Egyptian children who drop out of school.
- Employ measures to help inform Roma and Egyptian parents of the importance of preschool and their choices. Research has shown that parents of Roma and Egyptian children are not sufficiently informed on their preschool choices. Their children do not have to attend the local kindergarten for the Roma and Egyptian population, they can enrol their children in ethnically mixed kindergartens located elsewhere.

Demand

Housing

Both Roma and Egyptians and the majority population of low socio-economic status lack adequate clothing, footwear and the means to pay for essential school materials. Beyond these essentials, inadequate housing especially for the Roma and Egyptian population is a particularly insidious obstacle. Poor housing conditions include, in some cases, a lack of running water, heating in the winter and rooms

for children to study in. All of these factors inhibit participation in the school system and contribute to poor education outcomes among Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities whose families are challenged with financial hardship. Especially hard hit are many Roma and Egyptian children whose families were displaced during the conflict in Kosovo and who are still living in camps. The government should address the living situation of these families and institute measures that will supply them with basic adequate housing, infrastructure and safe environments.



Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Disaggregation of existing camps should remain a priority for the government. Permanent housing solutions need to be implemented for those families still living in camps. In the meantime, municipalities and schools can assist with arranging appropriate spaces to do homework in. Study spaces for children, whose housing situations are not conducive to studying, should be provided through schools.
- All future steps aimed at disaggregation of existing camps and integration of Roma and Egyptian should be preceded by intensive activities aimed at preparation of a successful transition of children into integrated schools and neighbourhoods. These efforts should go hand in hand with an intensive C4D campaign, which would enable inter-cultural communication work to prevent the new neighbourhood from becoming a ghetto.
- Adequate water supply and heating also should be provided to those families who do not have access to these essentials. Other measures include: providing shared bathrooms in Roma and Egyptian settlements where children can take showers on a daily basis; provision of free personal hygiene products to households facing difficult financial situations.

Financial hardship

Poor financial conditions are one of the most common reasons for dropping out among Roma and Egyptian children. Without the means to provide textbooks, school supplies, clothes, adequate housing and healthcare, as well as in many cases three meals a day, Roma and Egyptian families and their children are at a severe disadvantage in accessing and

participating successfully in education. Results of this study undoubtedly indicate that, based on all these criteria, Roma and Egyptian children, and especially those who do not go to school, are in a worse position than their peers from the majority population. Gaps in social assistance should be addressed in making sure especially Roma and Egyptian families have enough financial means to send their children to school.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Various financial aid assistance schemes can be explored to encourage school participation, and to eliminate financial hardship as a barrier. Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) that are not punitive have been promising. These are cash transfers distributed with school enrolment and regular attendance, and do not affect negatively any other social assistance if these criteria are not met. They could be considered as a way to help especially Roma and Egyptian families buy the essentials for school attendance. But they should be explored cautiously. Adequate supply-side measures need to be in place, and their use should be closely monitored. In some cases Roma and Egyptian families had been receiving CCTs without school attendance. As Roma and Egyptian children often require additional attention at school, in some places where CCTs were piloted, officials were happy to mark absent Roma and Egyptian children as attending, and allowing transfers to go to families.⁴⁴ Better conceptualization and implementation of CCTs is necessary, including thorough monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that if CCTs are used they are in fact helping Roma and Egyptian children to receive a quality education. In tandem with CCTs, schools need to be given the right training and support to address the SEN of Roma and Egyptian children.
- Increase identification of Roma and Egyptian families who are falling through the gaps, and may not be receiving the financial assistance or health services that they are eligible for. Social welfare, child protection and health services among other relevant actors should be strengthened in their capacity to actively seek out and identify at-risk children and their families, and provide them with assistance, sensitive to their situations.
- Other measure include: the continuation of distributing free textbooks and school supplies with greater monitoring to ward off abuse; subsidies for school supplies.
- Measures to raise the level of employment amongst the Roma and Egyptian population can help families finance their children's education. Well-conceived adult education classes, connected to employment, that are accessible to Roma and Egyptian parents and which transfer skills needed in the current labour market, are an example. These kinds of measures should be developed with the particular situation of the Roma and Egyptians in mind, and with their participation. For instance Roma and Egyptian mothers may not always be available to attend classes due to child-caring duties. In this case childcare accommodations in tandem with the provision of adult learning classes would be appropriate.
- Work with local employers in connection with employment programmes for Roma and Egyptian, to start eliminating prejudice amongst the majority population and to help increase employment chances for Roma and Egyptians.

⁴⁴ UNICEF, 2011, *The Right of Roma Children to Education: Position Paper*. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS).

Compromised Parental Support for Continuation of Education

Parental support is integral to children's retention and success in school. Roma and Egyptian parents for a variety of reasons do not always have the capacity to properly support their children's education. Low levels of employment, low literacy rates as well as low educational attainment contributes to both a technical inability on the part of Roma and Egyptian parents to help children with

homework, for instance; and a transference of a hopeless attitude regarding the potential for education to increase life chances and employment. A significant part of the hopelessness is the feeling that their children would be discriminated against in the employment sector regardless of whether they have an education. Roma and Egyptian parents, especially those whose children are not attending school, were often not aware of the importance of basic education and the benefits of it.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Better and closer relationships between schools and Roma and Egyptian parents should be established, with schools sensitized to the capacities and situations of Roma and Egyptian parents and their families. Schools should actively seek out the participation of Roma and Egyptian parents, and help inform them of the benefits of education. Work with parents and children after school can be organized, to encourage investment in education by Roma and Egyptian, and to both help children with their school work and raise the capacity amongst Roma and Egyptian parents to help their children.
- The organization of literacy classes can be an option in communities where literacy among Roma and Egyptian parents is low. As mentioned above, second-chance schooling and adult learning classes attached to employment opportunities should be considered as a measure to help foster an appreciation for education.
- The relevance of formal education should be enhanced. The education curriculum and the skills taught in schools need to be better aligned with the demands of the labour market. Connected to this campaigns on the importance and benefits of education could be organized, including disseminating examples of Roma and Egyptians who acquired education and improved their situations.
- Measures such as antidiscrimination campaigns can be launched to help start to eliminate prejudice and foster better understanding between the Roma and Egyptian and majority populations.
- Enhance cooperation with media and develop and conduct training programmes for journalists focusing on creating and fostering positive images of Roma and Egyptians.

Early Marriage

Marriage amongst Roma and Egyptians happens at a somewhat earlier age on average in Montenegro than among the majority population. The survey revealed that views on the ideal age of marriage were lower amongst Roma and Egyptians than the majority population. Data also showed higher

drop-out rates among Roma and Egyptians after age 11 especially among girls. Views on the age of marriage and demands regarding virginity within some Roma and Egyptian communities may be contributing factors. A number of measures should be considered to overcome gender-based dimensions to exclusion from education.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Efforts to effectively enforce the legal age of marriage should be made. However this should be accompanied by active measures, community engagement, awareness raising and support to Roma and Egyptian communities around women's and girls' rights, and the benefits of all children staying in school. This can also include workshops on family planning and sex education classes.
- Enforcement and prevention work on early marriage and other criminal and abusive practices towards children may require special training and protocols for liaising with the Roma and Egyptian community, based on the type of community liaison policing practices that happen in some EU member states.
- Second-chance schooling should be made available for young mothers.
- Schools should be sensitized to the issues around early marriage, and Roma and Egyptian sensitivities around the virginity of their daughters.
- Programmes should be developed to help Roma and Egyptian women have more control over their reproduction; and to raise their awareness, confidence, independence and empowerment in regards to marriage, family and their futures.

Challenges with Birth Registration and Legal Identity Papers

A lack of official documents, ID papers, and birth certificates are a significant barrier to

enrolment in education amongst Roma and Egyptian, especially among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations who are IDPs. Without this documentation enrolment in preschools and schools is not possible.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:


- Outreach by social services to enrol children in school, acquire all necessary documents, make Roma and Egyptian communities aware of the importance of birth registration, and inform them that documents for children are not necessary for enrolment in primary school. Connected to this outreach, municipalities and relevant services should improve their databases to include all vulnerable and Roma and Egyptian families and children, to better coordinate assistance with Social Welfare Centres and local governments. This should include information on IDPs and non-Montenegrin citizens.
- More in-depth investigation into the mechanisms by which Roma and Egyptians are not registered at birth. This may for instance include: a lack of health insurance, a low rate of hospital births, illiteracy and unnecessary complexity in birth registration and acquisition of missing documents, fear on the part of Roma and Egyptian parents of repercussions if they themselves do not have documentation.
- Issues of citizenship and Roma and Egyptian IDPs should be addressed and resolved in every camp and community.

Child Health and Developmental Difficulties as an Obstacle to Enrolment and Attendance

The study also shows that children assessed by parents as having poor health, including those with disabilities, were mostly likely to be out of the school system. Both indicate that schools may need to increase supports for Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities, especially in regard to

inclusivity.

In general, Roma and Egyptian parents assess their children's health as good, and it is important to mention that in the case of Roma and Egyptian children who attend school, their health is somewhat more frequently assessed as excellent (82%) than in the case of Roma and Egyptian children who do not attend school (69%).



Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Strengthening the role and develop capacities of local inter-sectoral commissions for orientation of children with special education needs in education to provide support to parents of both Roma and Egyptian children and children with disabilities in determining the best option for a child in a participatory manner.
- Measures to assess and raise the health of Roma and Egyptian children should be developed including: strengthening outreach by actors in the health and child protection sectors in cooperation with schools; workshops on child health to raise awareness among Roma and Egyptian parents of preventable diseases and healthcare options; increasing the number of Roma and Egyptian children with assigned paediatricians sensitized to their specific needs.

Quality

Equal access to education is not enough; all children should have equal access to quality education. A quality education is one in which all children are effectively encouraged to reach their highest potential, and one which provides children with safe, inclusive environments, and relevant curricula.

The findings of the recent Evaluation of the Reform of the Education System in Montenegro (2010-2012) focusing on the implementation and the quality of inclusive education in general point out some of the positive aspects, but also the main shortfalls of the reform process. Recognizing that the legislation in the area of inclusive education is comprehensive, innovative and in a continuous process of alignment with relevant European and international standards, the Evaluation emphasizes that implementation, along with cooperation between sectors at national and local levels remain a challenge. Also,

additional efforts are needed to promote continuous training and education of teaching staff and assistants in schools to implement inclusive principles in practice and adapt the teaching methods to the individual needs of the children.

Though the survey did not include teaching staff and other school actors directly, questions posed to Roma and Egyptian parents and parents with children with disabilities on the health of children in and out of the school system, and their satisfaction with teachers and peers, hints at the quality within education. Children out of school and their parents were less satisfied with teacher and peer relationships at school. Additionally more children assessed as having poor health, including those with disabilities, were mostly likely out of the school system due to their health issues. Both indicate that schools may need to increase the quality of the education they are providing, especially in regard to inclusivity.

Recommendations for systemic and multi-sectoral addressing of identified obstacles include:

- Assessments of school quality should be conducted. Child-centred and bilingual teaching methods and child-friendly concepts should be employed at the school level, and teachers and staff should be trained in them. Revisions to the curriculum to make it more relevant to diverse populations should be conducted.
- Preschools and schools should establish cooperation with associations of people with disabilities. These associations have detailed knowledge of their issues, which could help preschools and schools or local governments to find and communicate with children and their parents.
- Based on the preliminary assessment by an expert team, schools should prepare individual educational programmes for children and monitor their progress. Children with SEN should be monitored closely with the cooperation of all relevant school staff, and with services, sectors and institutions outside the school setting. Parental involvement should be actively sought out as well. This can also include the involvement of the abovementioned inter-sectoral inclusion commissions if they are developed.
- Formation of school inclusive education teams, including members of Roma and Egyptian and majority-population communities, school staff, teachers and children. The teams can help develop inclusive education measures, promote understanding, tolerance and a culture of diversity in schools. Mixed workshops, study groups and after-school activities should be organized to help with academic achievement, build understanding and relationships among Roma and Egyptian children and children from the majority population and their parents; and to help develop the language skills of Roma and Egyptian children who do not speak Montenegrin.
- To improve the overall quality of education for Roma and Egyptian children the system of Roma teaching assistants should be expanded and strengthened, increasing their numbers and capacity to effectively work with more children and their families. Their role and standards of work should be clearly defined through relevant bylaws, as well as designing educational and training programmes aimed at professional development.⁴⁵
- Both pre-service and in-service diversity and conflict-resolution training of teachers, school staff and social service providers should be made standard.

⁴⁵ Opinion of the Ombudsperson's Office to the Ministry of Education with regards to Implementation of Inclusive Education in Primary schools, November 2011:
http://www.ombudsman.co.me/djeca/preporuke/15112011_MINISTARSTVO_PROSVJETE_I_SPORTA.doc

ANNEX 1: COMMON BASIC PRINCIPLES ON ROMA INCLUSION

European Council Conclusions on Inclusion of the Roma 2947th EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS Council meeting Luxembourg, 8 June 2009⁴⁶

Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion—as discussed at the 1st meeting of the Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion, April 2009.

Roma people are disproportionately affected by social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination. Roma communities have been part of European societies for centuries, often marginalized and sometimes persecuted. Over the last two decades, it is apparent that the socio-economic situation of many Roma people has stagnated or even deteriorated in a number of EU Member States. Many Roma people experience unemployment, low income, reduced life expectancy and poor quality of life. This represents a human tragedy for the individuals concerned as well as an immense loss for society as a whole. Moreover, far-reaching exclusion entails social instability and represents a problem in economic terms.

Therefore, the issue of addressing the problems which affect Roma people is increasingly recognized as being extremely urgent in both ethical and practical terms. The European Union recognizes that there is a need for more active and effective policies concerning Roma inclusion. The practical delivery of these policies rests above all with the Member States and, in particular, with regions and municipalities. Although the numbers and socio-economic conditions of the Roma in individual Member States vary greatly, there are several common denominators. Moreover, experience from several Member States shows that there are general policy approaches which have proved to be useful and can thus be recommended to others.

Principle No. 1: Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies

Policies aimed at the inclusion of Roma people respect and realize the core values of the European Union, which include human rights and dignity, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity as well as economic development. Roma inclusion policies are integrated with mainstream policies, particularly in the fields of education, employment, social affairs, housing, health and security. The aim of these policies is to provide the Roma with effective access to equal opportunities in Member States' societies.

⁴⁶ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/108377.pdf

Principle No. 2: Explicit but not exclusive targeting

Explicit but not exclusive targeting of Roma is essential for inclusion-policy initiatives. It implies focusing on Roma people as a target group but not to the exclusion of other people who share similar socio-economic circumstances. This approach does not separate Roma-focused interventions from broader policy initiatives. In addition, where relevant, consideration must be given to the likely impact of broader policies and decisions on the social inclusion of Roma people.

Principle No. 3: Intercultural approach

There is a need for an intercultural approach which involves Roma people together with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Essential for effective communication and policy, intercultural learning and skills deserve to be promoted alongside combating prejudices and stereotypes.

Principle No. 4: Aiming for the mainstream

All inclusion policies aim to insert Roma in the mainstream of society (mainstream educational institutions, mainstream jobs, and mainstream housing). Where partially or entirely segregated education or housing still exist, Roma inclusion policies must aim to overcome this legacy. The development of artificial and separate "Roma" labour markets is to be avoided.

Principle No. 5: Awareness of the gender dimension

Roma inclusion policy initiatives need to take account of the needs and circumstances of Roma women. They address issues such as multiple discrimination and problems of access to health care and child support, but also domestic violence and exploitation.

Principle No. 6: Transfer of evidence-based policies

It is essential that Member States learn from their own experiences of developing Roma inclusion initiatives and share their experiences with other Member States. It is recognized that the development, implementation and monitoring of Roma inclusion policies requires a good base of regularly collected socio-economic data. Where relevant, the examples and experiences of social inclusion policies concerning other vulnerable groups, both from inside and from outside the EU, are also taken into account.

Principle No. 7: Use of Community instruments

In the development and implementation of their policies aiming at Roma inclusion, it is crucial that the Member States make full use of Community instruments, including legal instruments (Race Equality Directive, Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia), financial instruments (European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, Instrument for Pre-Accession) and coordination instruments (Open Methods of Coordination). Member States must ensure that use of financial instruments accords with these Common Basic Principles, and make use of the expertise within the European Commission, in respect of the evaluation of policies and projects. Peer review and the transfer of good practices are also facilitated on the expert level by EURoma (European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds).

Principle No. 8: Involvement of regional and local authorities

Member States need to design, develop, implement and evaluate Roma inclusion policy initiatives in close cooperation with regional and local authorities. These authorities play a key role in the practical implementation of policies.

Principle No. 9: Involvement of civil society

Member States also need to design, develop, implement and evaluate Roma inclusion policy initiatives in close cooperation with civil society actors such as non-governmental organizations, social partners and academics/researchers. The involvement of civil society is recognized as vital both for the mobilization of expertise and the dissemination of knowledge required to develop public debate and accountability throughout the policy process.

Principle No. 10: Active participation of the Roma

The effectiveness of policies is enhanced with the involvement of Roma people at every stage of the process. Roma involvement must take place at both national and European levels through the input of expertise from Roma experts and civil servants, as well as by consultation with a range of Roma stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy initiatives. It is of vital importance that inclusion policies are based on openness and transparency and tackle difficult or taboo subjects in an appropriate and effective manner. Support for the full participation of Roma people in public life, stimulation of their active citizenship and development of their human resources are also essential.

ANNEX 2: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The problem of dropping out is characteristic of many EU countries. The European union has found, based on data and surveys, that efficient strategies for reduction of early school leaving, apart from educational policy, also need to include social protection policy and policy for the young, while measures need to

be preventive, interventional and compensatory. This section brings examples of good practice in the European union from the study reducing early school leaving, 2010.⁴⁷

Prevention

Preventive measures include systemic measures, such as the extension of the duration of compulsory education and development of the system for keeping records of children, which enables easier monitoring and providing continuous support to children at risk; then programmes of early growth and development, desegregation measures, more extensive support for professional development of teachers, increasing availability and promoting learning infrastructure in remote areas.

Systemic measures

Based on surveys that indicate that extending the duration of compulsory education results in a reduction in the number of children who leave school early⁴⁸, **one of the systemic measures implemented in a large number of countries is the extending of the duration of compulsory education** (Holland, Hungary, Poland, Italy). This measure was implemented in Montenegro as well, through establishing a compulsory preparatory preschool programme, thus extending the duration of compulsory education from eight to nine years.

Extending the duration of compulsory education in Poland. In the past decade, Poland has been gradually extending the duration of compulsory education. In 1999, compulsory education was extended from 14 to 16 years of age. The compulsory zero grade was introduced, with the aim of preparing children for primary school, reducing the primary school age from 7 to 6 years. According

⁴⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp_en.pdf

⁴⁸ GHK Consulting Ltd (2005) Study on Access to Education and Training, Basic Skills and Early School Leavers; Oreopoulos (2009) "Would More Compulsory Schooling Help Disadvantaged Youth?" in Gruber (ed, 2009) – The Problems of Disadvantaged Youth, NBER

to the Law adopted in 2009, children are included in compulsory preschool education at the age of 5, while they are included in compulsory primary education at the age of 6.

Extending of the duration of compulsory education in Italy. In 2007, Italian compulsory education was extended from 8 to 10 years (till the age of 16), and the obligation and duty to attend secondary education, secondary school or vocational school, lasting at least 3 years, was established till the age of 18. Before that, compulsory education lasted till the age of 14, and further education was not mandatory. The reform was implemented together with an expansion and diversification of the initial vocational education by introducing new crafts and profiles.

One of the significant preventive measures is the introduction of an efficient **system for keeping records of pupils**, that stores relevant information about every pupil, including adaptation and adequate implementation of pedagogical interventions for pupils who are under greater risk of dropping out of the system of education.

School number (Holland). With the introduction of this system of registration of pupils, there are complete and very reliable records of the drop-out rate on national, regional, city and school levels. Data on dropping out is associated with relevant socio-economic and demographic data at the levels of the region, city and county, thus creating an abundance of information that plays a major role in the implementation and adjusting of strategies.

Unique pupil number (England). Since 1997, every pupil in England has a unique registration number, which in an anonymous format contains information about the pupil and his or her performance at school. With this data, pedagogical interventions can be adequately directed and adjusted, especially in providing

support to pupils with poor performance or pupils who are at risk of leaving school.

Early growth and development programmes

Good quality of education in early childhood is considered to be the foundation for establishing the needs and capacities for future studying and the foundation for adopting skills necessary for further education, thus being an important preventive measure for “children at risk” that improves their physical condition, social and emotional development, development of language skills and cognitive abilities. Education and upbringing in early childhood provide children from socially underdeveloped settings with a better start in compulsory education.⁴⁹ Therefore developed countries direct their programmes most to preschool age, taking into account benefits of investing in early growth and development of children for their future life and for the society as a whole.

Quality preschool education in Sweden. Preschool education in Sweden is a useful and significant preparation for life-long learning and education, and fostering social cohesion. It is based on extensive investing with adequate planning and stress on preparation for transfer to primary school, as well as on adapted activities and organization of preschool education. Particular attention is dedicated to integration into the system of education and to qualifications of personnel, as well as to social competences and ways of accessing language development among child immigrants.

Also in other EU countries, projects are often directed at the youngest population. So, in **France** and **Holland**, children who are at risk have the priority when enrolling in early growth and development programmes at the ages of 2-5. In **Hungary**, children from vulnerable categories (usually defined through the status of parents and their level of education) have to have a place in

⁴⁹ EC, Reducing early school leaving, 2010.

kindergarten and priority with enrolment. All kindergartens have to have up to a quarter of places reserved for children from marginal groups.

Policy of segregation

In Hungary are there many citizens of Roma nationality with worrying education indicators. Many Roma pupils attend segregated schools or segregated classes within schools. In order to resolve this issue, the government, together with the Hungarian Institute for Pedagogical Research and Development and the Roma Educational Fund, promotes the development of integrated education, through providing grant programmes and technical support. Schools that used these assistance programmes were obliged to provide socio-economic balance in the population of pupils.

Desegregation in schools in Bulgaria. Roma organizations in 9 towns, as well as one regular school in Blagoevgrad, started the action of desegregation. About 3,500 of Roma children from schools attended by Roma only were transferred to regular schools, according to the strategic model from the year 2000. This model includes motivational campaigns among parents of Roma children with the aim of inclusion of children in regular schools located outside of Roma settlements, planned inclusion of Roma children in regular schools in order to avoid repeated segregation in the new school, providing academic support to Roma children who need to catch up with their peers, extracurricular activities that involve Roma and non-Roma pupils and transportation of Roma children by school bus to their new school. Evaluation indicates that the performance of Roma children integrated into classes has improved significantly when compared with the performance of their peers who attend segregated schools, while performance of non-Roma children remained stable. Socialization of Roma children with their non-Roma peers at school age is highly important for their social inclusion.

Intervention

Interventions at school level

Pupils leave school the least if they attend a school that is an inspiring place to study for all pupils. These are schools where active learning methods and practical teaching are used, and where democracy is fostered in everyday activities. EU promotes the concept of a Learning Community. Schools that aspire to “learning communities” agree about a common vision, essential values and goals of school development. This shared vision of teachers, parents and other interested parties increases dedication and supports the development of curricula at the school level, organization of teaching and learning and evaluation.

Learning communities (Spain). The goal of the initiative is to ensure success for all, by including all key actors. Learning communities focus on pedagogical innovations, for example dialogue learning or pedagogy aimed at promoting learning and open exchange and solidarity between pupils and school personnel. Pupils, teachers, school management, parents, interested community participants and representatives of the authorities in the sphere of education are involved in defining and creating school projects and they actively participate in the process of learning from one another. In Spain, more than 100 centres conduct projects based on the concept of “learning communities”. Implementation of this initiative encompasses several phases. The first step is thinking and an open exchange of ideas about motivation for changes. In order to be continued, the project has to be approved by a majority of relevant actors (teachers, directors, family and the administration). Once a school decides to promote a concept, all interested parties have to decide what they want to fix, in both an academic and non-academic sense. A combined steering board, in which all relevant

stakeholders are present, monitors the conducting of various phases of the transformation of the school into a learning community.

Networking with out-of-school actors

Programme of completing school (Ireland).⁵⁰ This measure favours local and inter-sectoral approaches, based on development of local strategies. Schools are grouped into clusters of secondary and primary schools. Each cluster has a local steering board made of directors, voluntary agencies, agencies stipulated by law, including district development boards, local action teams for prevention of substance abuse, partners in specific areas (local organizations engaged in social inclusion), a local programme coordinator, parents, interested community members and other agencies, and local partnerships focused on social inclusion, etc. The board develops and supervises implementation of the integrated plan for preventing early school leaving.

Clusters of schools get extra resources to organize activities such as continuous academic and non-academic support to pupils. In order to avoid the sense of bigotry or stigmatization due to singling some pupils out for specific support activities, the majority of activities target the whole class or the whole school.

Project of rural education (Romania).⁵¹ The project of rural education is a national-level project aimed at increasing the quality of education in rural areas, increasing the rate of pupils who complete compulsory education and facilitating transition to secondary school or university. This large-scale intervention

encompasses 4 components aimed at reducing differences in the accomplishments of pupils living in urban and in rural areas: firstly, a school model of professional development of teachers based on open distance learning and supported by a developed network of teacher mentorship, matching the needs of remote communities; secondly, investing in school infrastructure and teaching aids in order to make the school setting in remote areas more pleasant; thirdly, grant programmes for schools and communities aimed at improving both schools and communities, building local capacities for project management, supporting school development programmes and establishing local educational councils; and fourthly, establishing the National Database of Education for monitoring school performance as one of the essential conditions for creating evidence-based policies. The project was a great success in terms of increasing the rate of transition to secondary school and reducing differences in performance between schools located in urban and rural areas.

Increasing participation of parents

Strengthening links between home and school community (Ireland).⁵² This initiative is aimed at establishing cooperation between parents and teachers in order to promote the children's learning process, particularly targeting socio-economically deprived families or those coming from a socio-economically deprived setting. In order to go beyond parents' negative experiences with school, this initiative is trying to regain confidence by recognizing parents as a part of school (for example providing parent rooms), courses are offered for adults, parents participate in teaching mathematics and reading to children in primary school, and parents of children with

⁵⁰ Report on prevention of early school leaving in Ireland, Prevention and compensatory measures for reduction of early school leaving, <http://www.ksill.net/PeerLearningActivities/PlaDetails.cfm?id=22> taken from:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp_en.pdf

⁵¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp_en.pdf

⁵² http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp_en.pdf

disabilities also participate and help their children in class. In this way, parents gain knowledge and understanding of the process of learning and can provide greater support for their children at home. Another key function of the programme is the “coordinator between home and school”, with the role of a mediator and contact person. The coordinator visits families on a regular basis and can intervene, especially in situations of crisis, when the child is absent from school or in cases of inadequate behaviour.

Measures focused on pupils

Support and mentorship

Care teams and advisory teams (Holland).

These teams gather professionals who early – in a timely manner – identify risks and take adequate measures for the prevention of dropping out. They have direct contact with youth services, social workers, police and judicial authorities and they organize necessary assistance in order to prevent dropping out among the young. They try to make monitoring/mentorship available whenever necessary.

Support to return to regular education

SAS collection-transitional centres

(Belgium). SAS is a school programme of inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children aged 13 to 17, who have left school. Some SAS centres act through more direct cooperation with schools, or even work in schools, while other work independently from schools, but with pupils and their parents. The key principle is to offer a paid period of one year at the longest, so that pupils can study other activity areas (for example, activities associated with art), gaining different experiences, which can boost children’s self-confidence and enable them to face school challenges more easily. Although pupils are not registered as having left school, the period

spent in SAS centres is not acknowledged as a year of schooling. Pupils are to start school again from where they stopped. The idea behind this approach is to avoid stigmatization – labelling associated with continued schooling – repeating a grade. The key goal is to bring children back to regular school: academic education should take place at school.

Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Foundation (Hungary).

The Hungarian Belvárosi Tanoda secondary school is a part of the network of Tanoda centres focused on providing additional support for children from underprivileged settings. Belvárosi Tanoda is a second-chance school for those pupils who have dropped out of secondary school. It is focused on learning adapted to pupils, their personalities and abilities, helping pupils complete their education and get a degree. The school does not offer many classes throughout the year, but organizes smaller groups for some subjects. When necessary and possible, also one-on-one teaching is used and every pupil can address teachers, not only when it comes to learning, but also in other aspects of life. The pupil signs a contract containing personal goals for the upcoming school year and learns based on his or her own plan.

Buildings that do not look like classic school buildings provide a family atmosphere and create the feeling of security and acceptable environment for the young. Premises are used in a flexible way, including resting, cultural or sports activities and personal and group discussions. One of the key goals is to create rich social setting with different opportunities for studying social roles and for developing self-confidence. In 2007, this school had 100 permanent and 35 occasional pupils in general secondary education, 18 permanently employed and 13 occasionally employed teachers and 6 additional staff members.

Financial support

Measures of fighting early dropping out need to take into account the financial difficulties that result in many young people leaving school early. Some Nordic countries include in their "civil rights" also financial compensation for education. Financial stimuli can also be conditioned by regular class attendance.

Compensatory programmes

Second chance

While prevention of dropping out is a far better solution, second chance is an important option that offers the essential opportunity to continue education and training for those who have dropped out of the regular system early. However, those who have left school early are often faced with barriers regarding continuation of learning; many of their difficulties are associated with past bad experiences at school and a lack of confidence in their own ability to learn.

Some other efficient measures implemented in case of marginal and groups at risk in the European countries are:

- Special programmes for mastering the

language, especially for those whose mother tongue is not the language used for teaching (with the possibility of including also people whose mother tongue is the one used for teaching). It is particularly important that these programmes be conducted within programmes of early growth and development (or even earlier, at 3 to 6 years of age).

- Training teachers and other personnel in the regular school system regarding sensitivity to problems of children with special needs, as well as children from marginal groups. Adapting the curriculum and developing skills among teaching personnel for working with these children.
- Early inclusion of parents in the process of education of children, programmes related to education and support for the entire family, training sessions aimed at supporting education participants (teachers, psychologists). As frequent as possible meetings with parents who are rarely involved in community activities and education of children.
- Working hours of educational institutions adjusted to the working hours of majority of parents.



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