Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

JOZEF MIŠKOLCI
MARTINA KUBÁNOVÁ
LUCIA KOVÁČOVÁ

SGI

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education?
Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia
March 2017

Authors: Jozef Miškolci, Martina Kubánová, Lucia Kováčová
Reviewers: doc. Paedr. Alica Petrasová, PhD., Eben Friedman PhD.
Copy-editing and proofreading: Celia Speirs
Graphic design: Daniela Jankelová
Printed by: ADIN, s.r.o.
Number of Copies: 150

Slovak Governance Institute
Štúrova 3, 811 02, Bratislava, Slovakia
www.governance.sk

ISBN: 978-80-972608-1-1

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

JOZEF MIŠKOLCI
Slovak Governance Institute
Faculty of Education, Comenius University in Bratislava

MARTINA KUBÁNOVÁ
Slovak Governance Institute

LUCIA KOVÁČOVÁ
Slovak Governance Institute

Bratislava

2017

Acknowledgement:

We (the authors) would like to thank to all the respondents in this study for their time, openness and courage to share their professional and personal experiences and knowledge. Without their contribution it would have not been possible to create this publication. We would also like to thank to the expert reviewers Alica Petrasová (Faculty of Education, University of Prešov) and Eben Friedman (European Centre for Minority Issues) for providing a detailed feedback on the entire publication, and to Elena Gallová Kriglerová (Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture) for her valuable comments on the recommendation chapter.

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

List of abbreviations

CPPCP - Centre for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention

CSEC - Centre for Special Education Counselling

MPC - Methodological and Pedagogical Centre

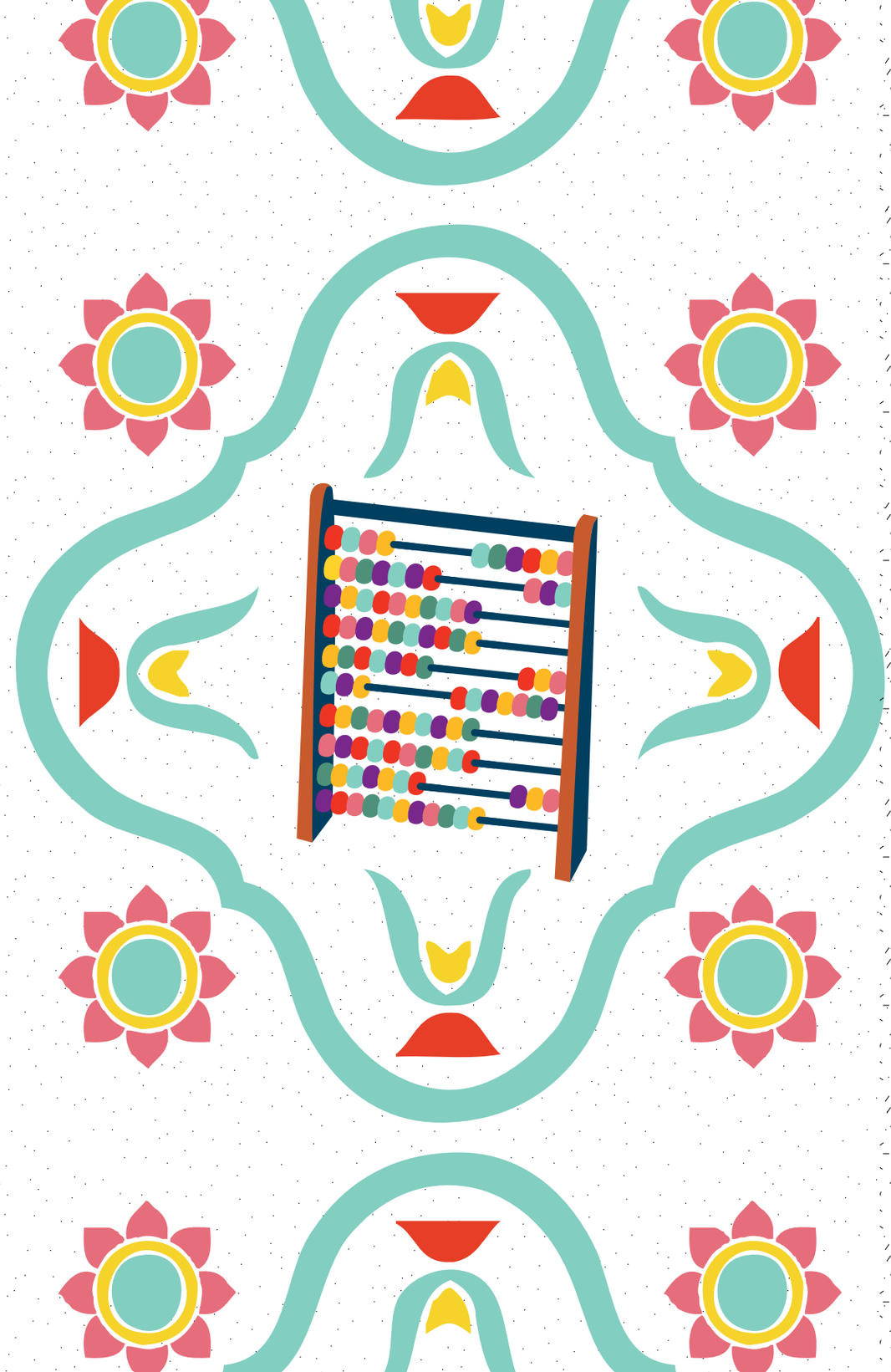
MRK - Marginalised Roma Communities (national project)

NICEM - National Institute for Certified Educational Measurement

PRINED - (National) Project of Inclusive Education

SDB - Socially disadvantaged background

SEN - Special educational needs



Executive summary

The current research confirms that Roma children are overrepresented in special schools in Slovakia, and even if they get into the mainstream schools, they usually experience difficulties in learning, their educational results and school attendance are lower than those of the average students in Slovakia and they are most at risk of early school leaving without completing upper secondary education. There is an explanation for all these phenomena which undermines the harmful stereotype that it is in the "nature" of the Roma students not to be interested in any kind of education and to underperform in it. This study aims to unpack the complex network of systemic pressures and processes which navigate the Roma students to either end up in a special school or underperform in a regular school. At the same time, the study aims to identify programs, practices and methods that help the Roma students succeed in mainstream education. Within the current legislation and overall social climate, various school stakeholders make choices which often navigate these students into educational dead ends.

To be precise, this study uses the most up-to-date qualitative and quantitative secondary data in the field of pre-primary and primary education and qualitative primary data collected through semi-structured interviews with twenty-four relevant school stakeholders (teachers, principals, a teacher's assistant, social field workers, a mayor, and employees of municipal offices and centres for pedagogical and psychological counselling) in three different locations within the Banská Bystrica region.

The publication explores the following three main problems:

- the low enrolment of Roma children in pre-primary education (chapter 3);
- Roma children studying in homogeneous ethnic environments in primary mainstream and special schools (chapter 4);
- and the overall low educational success of Roma students enrolled in mainstream education (chapter 5).

These themes are explored through the positions of the following relevant school stakeholders:

Roma children

If they have experienced anti-gypsyist attitudes, they might acquire a tendency to befriend primarily the Roma children and separate from the non-Roma children.

If living in extremely poor conditions, they often feel ashamed of their clothes and appearance and stay reserved.

Long walking distances to school and poor health may negatively impact on their attendance.

Seeing the Roma discrimination against their parents or other adult Roma may trigger doubts in them about the value of higher educational attainment for finding a job.

Roma parents *(especially from a low socio-economic background)*

They often do not have equal access to information and might be unaware of all the benefits of pre-primary education.

They often cannot afford to pay for all the overt and/or hidden costs connected to pre-primary and primary schooling.

Being on maternity leave disqualifies them from being exempted from paying for schooling and meals.

They are often misinformed about the benefits and/or negative consequences of special education for their children's future prospects.

They might prefer special schools as a more pleasant environment for their children, which is free of anti-gypsyism and where they can more easily experience success in learning.

Non-Roma parents

They often hold anti-gypsyist attitudes and are convinced that their children will catch some disease or learn bad manners from the Roma children.

They consider schools attended primarily by Roma students as schools of lower quality.

Kindergartens *(principal and teachers)*

Due to insufficient capacities, they often prefer to accept children whose parents are both employed and more in need of their children being taken care of.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

They often do not want to accept the Roma children for fear of losing the non-Roma children.

Mainstream schools *(principal, teachers, special educational needs (SEN) support staff)*

They are often very attentive to the anti-gypsyist attitudes of the non-Roma parents, and owing to the concerns of losing non-Roma children ("white flight"), they support the segregation of Roma children into special classrooms/schools or regular classrooms attended exclusively by Roma students.

They often create an elite classroom, hoping to attract the non-Roma parents.

They often blame the school failures of the Roma children on the lack of support of their parents, without attempting to compensate for it as the school's taken-for-granted duty.

Regular teachers often feel incompetent to address the learning needs of the Roma children. They feel they are not equipped with the range of teaching methods needed to enhance everybody's potential. They feel there are not enough SEN support staff at schools and feel inadequately supported by external institutions.

Municipal office

It often does not arrange free transportation to the pre-primary or primary school for the Roma students living some distance away from these schools.

It may delineate catchment areas for schools, which enables the creation of exclusively Roma regular schools and exclusively non-Roma regular schools, instead of supporting their equal distribution among all local regular schools.

It sometimes resists the involvement of the municipality in larger national projects aimed at Roma inclusion.

Centres for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention *(CPPCP)*

They are often under-staffed and cannot adequately support regular teachers in schools with the inclusion of Roma students.

They acknowledge that currently the regular schools are not well equipped to support inclusion, and thus, rather recommend segregation.

Centres for Special Education Counselling *(CSEC)*

They are often connected through personnel links to special schools, and thus, by diagnosing the Roma students with various SEN, they provide the clientele for the special schools.

They even actively approach the Roma parents in their homes and persuade them about the benefits of special schooling for their children or they inadequately inform the Roma parents about the consequences of erroneous placement of their children in special schooling.

Special schools

They often provide a very pleasant and welcoming environment for Roma children as their most probable students.

In order to sustain their existence, they actively collaborate with CSEC to have a sufficient number of SEN-diagnosed students, and the Roma fall under the category of "usual suspects".

Sometimes they even actively approach the Roma parents to persuade them about enrolling their children in their school.

Community and social field workers

They organise pre-school clubs for the Roma children and communicate the benefits of pre-primary education to all Roma parents.

They mediate the communication between the Roma parents and official educational institutions.

Non-governmental organisations

They organise direct interventions (e.g., teacher training) supporting desegregation or inclusion in schools.

They initiate court proceedings against the schools which segregate Roma students.

They conduct research and advocate on the topic of Roma inclusion at various levels and education-related institutions.

Church

It sometimes establishes a pre-primary or primary school free of charge which openly proclaims the goal of inclusion of all children (not just the Roma children).

In contrast, it also establishes schools which have fees unaffordable for the Roma parents and in this way become a refuge for non-Roma parents to avoid the Roma students.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Private sector

It often establishes non-state primary schools which have fees unaffordable for the Roma parents and in this way become a refuge for non-Roma parents to avoid the Roma students.

It sometimes financially supports Roma inclusion activities.

In several cases it has established non-state schools without any fees, which focus on attracting primarily the Roma students.

State

It establishes the whole system of processes (accountability, assessment of SEN, streaming, autonomy, finances, national testing, pre-service and in-service teacher training). Currently, there are strong pulls within the system for various school stakeholders to make choices supporting the exclusion and segregation of Roma students.

It supports national projects focusing on enhancing the inclusion of the Roma students in pre-primary and primary education.

Recommendations supporting the inclusion of Roma students in education

The presented recommendations can serve as a guideline for various stakeholders aspiring to improve the education of the Roma students in Slovakia, or some of its aspects. There are recommendations aimed at various stakeholders, such as the state, municipalities, pre-primary and primary schools, as well as so-called external non-state stakeholders, such as NGOs, churches, donors, charities, private companies, and local civic initiatives.

The recommendations are presented as two possible scenarios for the intervention:

SCENARIO 1

| Focus on program areas

This scenario combines a top-down and bottom-up approach in some of the three main program areas (enrolment in pre-primary education, enrolment in mainstream primary education and reducing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma).

It can either include advocacy for legislative changes or be applied without any legislative change at the state level.

An example of such intervention can be piloting a career guidance scheme in one region combined with mentoring and educational support for students (does not require legislative changes), or supporting the pre-primary enrolment of children from SDB, combining financial intervention with advocacy to enact guaranteed places in kindergartens for all children of a certain age (requires a legislative change).

SCENARIO 2

| Focus on specific localities

This is a local scenario with a complex intervention in the form of an inclusive plan. It applies a bottom-up approach under the current legal framework and without any legislative change required at the state level.

The process of creating the inclusive plan at the local level must be participatory to involve all local stakeholders, including the target group, such as the municipal office, school representatives, parents and students, local NGOs, and CPPCPs. The inclusion plan should set clear and time-framed goals, and it should define the roles of local stakeholders as well as specific tasks to be assigned to each of them.

Under both scenarios, the intervening stakeholders can apply various preferences and make choices depending on available funds, expertise and skills, preferred geographical coverage, or preferred segment of

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

municipalities with various levels of social and educational services available, or with various characteristics of the Roma population in them. Although making the whole education system more inclusive requires some legislative changes, interventions under both presented scenarios are possible even under the current legal framework.

In scenario 1, the research identified three main program areas, which are ordered according to the potentially highest impact on achieving the overall goal that "Roma children attend mainstream schools and achieve the same educational outcomes as non-Roma children", along with individual steps and specific measures to be taken at the state, municipal and/or school level, together with the options for involvement of the external non-state stakeholders (e.g., donors, NGOs, churches, private companies and grassroots civic initiatives).

Program area 1: Secure the enrolment of Roma children in pre-primary education: Provide sufficient capacities in pre-primary education; remove financial and other barriers to enrolment in pre-primary education; be pro-active in communication with Roma parents; and desegregate Roma children in preschools.

Program area 2: Secure the enrolment of Roma children in mainstream primary education: Legislate change in the system of assessing SEN or providing additional support for children prior to their entry to compulsory education; support various local stakeholders other than CSEC/special schools in order to inform Roma parents on school choice; remove financial barriers to education-related services; redesign the dissemination of results and overall scope of centralised testing; define school catchment areas that equitably distribute students (based on their ethnicity, social background, etc.); and communicate the introduction of inclusive measures in education through mass media.

Program area 3: Reduce the gap in educational performance between Roma and non-Roma: Support an inclusive school climate and processes; increase the number of SEN support staff in mainstream schools; provide systemic external SEN support by organizations on a regional or national level, well-equipped to provide support to the entire school staff; increase the quality of and access to further education of teachers plus knowledge sharing with other schools and stakeholders; remove financial barriers at primary schools; increase the teachers' wages; identify the most effective measures for the successful inclusion of Roma students with SEN in regular schools; and include Roma history and culture in the national curriculum.

In scenario 2, we describe the process of creating inclusive plans at the municipal level, starting with initial meetings with all local stakeholders, analysing the Roma inclusion in the locality using, e.g., a simple SWOT analysis reflecting the findings and a participatory creation of the inclusion plan, and making use of the three main program areas described above. Apart from the facilitation and initial analysis, the role of the external intervening stakeholder should also be to support the implementation of the inclusive plan, to help find sustainable solutions, to monitor the progress and to facilitate the review of the inclusion plan.

There are various ways in which the external stakeholder can be involved in the bottom-up scenario at the municipal level. They can, for example,

- provide funding for capacity increase in local pre-primary facilities,
- support the provision of alternative pre-primary education where capacities are insufficient,
- provide direct services such as a hygiene centre, hygiene packs, clothes, shoes, etc.,
- provide and support awareness-raising activities for parents and provide services such as school transport and the accompaniment of children,
- enable knowledge exchange between school stakeholders, e.g., study visits to localities successful in the inclusion of Roma children from SDB in education,
- provide curricular materials and diversity training to teachers and school management,
- pilot innovative local schemes, such as a broader involvement of "activation workers", and remove financial barriers for education-related services and equitable school catchment areas.

Introduction

Current research conducted by domestic and international researchers and institutions (for example, Kriglerová, 2015; Petrasová & Porubský, 2013; Brüggemann, 2012; Huttová, Gyárfášová & Sekulová, 2012; de Laat et al., 2012; World Bank, 2012; Rafael, 2011; Friedman, Kriglerová, Kubánová & Slosiarik, 2009) shows that Roma children and youth in Slovakia, particularly from a socially disadvantaged background (SDB), do not experience educational success, achieve low school performance and leave the educational system early without mastering skills and competencies needed for full participation in the labour market, civic and political life and cultural sphere. As a result of generally low educational attainment, in combination with ethnic discrimination in the labour market, the Roma are one of the least employable groups in Slovakia and thus are at higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. To fully understand the complexity of this issue, it is necessary to examine both qualitative and quantitative data on different structural, institutional, financial and attitudinal barriers the Roma children and youth experience, as well as to recognise particular motivations of local, regional and national actors to include or not to include the Roma in mainstream education.

The aim of this research study is thus to map out and examine the current situation of the Roma in the Slovak educational system using the original qualitative and most up-to-date quantitative data, specifically at the pre-primary and primary level of education. To be more specific, the authors conducted qualitative research in three Slovak municipalities in the region of Banská Bystrica, where they interviewed various local school stakeholders involved in the education of Roma children. These findings have been put in the broader context of large-scale secondary quantitative data (from the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information,

Eduzber by the Ministry of Education of SR, National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements). Additionally, the most recent and most cited research publications containing relevant quantitative and qualitative data on the topic were utilised to complement the original research findings. The research methodology used for this publication is described in detail in the following chapter.

The publication is divided into three main sections, covering the low attendance of Roma children in pre-primary education (chapter 3), Roma children studying in homogeneous ethnic environments in primary mainstream and special schools (chapter 4), and the overall low educational success of Roma students in mainstream education (chapter 5). The division into these three interconnected sections reflects three major difficulties or "problems" the Roma experience in pre-primary and primary education, as identified by the authors. These three chapters are followed by a set of policy recommendations (chapter 6) on the state, municipal and school level.

Importantly, the three major above-mentioned issues are examined through the lenses of key stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in the education of the Roma. Presenting and examining the research problem through the positions and motivations of key stakeholders is based on the notion that policy makers need to be familiar with the interests of all key stakeholders to be able to deal effectively with inequity in education. These interests are not essential but are shaped by a variety of factors such as the institutional framework, the system of funding, xenophobic attitudes of various parties, and a lack of knowledge of good practice. Recognition of the interests, attitudes and positions of relevant stakeholders, including the target group, allows policy and decision makers to design and employ the most suitable policy tools, stimulating stakeholders to act in accordance with the principles of equity in education and pro-actively participate in seeking policy solutions.

Even though the study focuses mostly on the interests of the target group (Roma children and students) and school stakeholders, it also brings a complex approach to the issue by examining the role of stakeholders in social policy, employment and health care as well. The problem of inequity in education affecting predominantly the socially excluded Roma children requires a complex approach and cannot be defined solely as a matter of improving the quality of the school system but rather as a matter of employing a combination of policies.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

The research study serves as a source of knowledge for researchers in social, political and educational sciences and for policy analysts from academia and research institutes. Since the publication also introduces policy recommendations (chapter 6), it can also be very useful for policy and decision makers at the local, regional and national level, experts and activists from the non-governmental sector, media, local stakeholders and other interested parties who aspire to comprehend the complexity of the difficult situation of the Roma in education in Slovakia and the mixture of interests and relations of involved stakeholders.

Methodology

As mentioned above, the main aim of this research study is to examine the current situation of the Roma in the Slovak education system at the pre-primary and primary level, with particular focus on the interests and motivations of key stakeholders involved. More specific goals are defined as follows:

- To examine the context of the low attendance of Roma children in pre-primary education and care;
- To examine the context of the over-representation of Roma children in special education and ethnically homogenous classrooms in mainstream education;
- To examine the context of the low educational success of the Roma students in mainstream education.

Individual chapters of this publication will examine the perspectives of the following stakeholders in education (not all stakeholders will be scrutinised in each chapter, since not all of them are relevant to all three discussed themes):

SCHOOL LEVEL

Roma children
Roma parents
Non-Roma parents
Pre-primary schools (principal, teachers and other staff)
Primary mainstreaml (state and non-state) schools (principal, teachers, special educational needs (SEN) support staff)

LOCAL LEVEL

Municipal office
Institutions for educational counselling and prevention
Special primary schools
Community and social field workers
Non-governmental organisations
Church
Private sector

STATE LEVEL

State (the Government, Ministry of Education, directly managed organisations of the Ministry of Education, etc.)
Non-governmental organisations

The research study utilises both quantitative (secondary only) and qualitative data (both secondary and primary). Regarding quantitative data, researchers used already processed data or analysed data mainly from the Regional Roma Survey 2011, Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (former Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education), National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements, OECD datasets and Atlas of Roma Communities. Due to a lack of ethnically

1 In this publication, "mainstream school" and "regular school" are used as synonyms and mean that the school is a part of mainstream education and not special education.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

based data on education, the research utilised the data about children from a socially disadvantaged background (SDB) as the term is often considered as a proxy for Roma children (see chapter 3).

The research study works with a variety of qualitative (or mixed method) research studies related to the issue of the inclusion of Roma students. The authors used data from the most recent and cited Slovak and international publications related to the topic, such as *Winding roads towards inclusive education in Slovakia* (Kriglerová, 2015), *Segregation or inclusion of the Roma in education: The choice for schools* (Huttová et al., 2012), *Toward an equal start: Closing the early learning gap for Roma children in Eastern Europe* (de Laat et al., 2012), *Answers to questions on (de)segregation of Roma students in Slovak education system* (Rafael, 2011), and *School as a ghetto* (Friedman et al., 2009).

Besides utilising secondary qualitative and quantitative data, the authors collected qualitative data in three municipalities, A, B and C, in the Banská Bystrica region (see Table 1). The municipalities and schools examined in this research study represent common examples of local stakeholders approaches to Roma students or the whole local Roma population. In other words, they do not represent unique good practice examples but examples where successful inclusive policy measures as well as inefficient measures and non-inclusive approaches, such as discriminatory and segregatory practices, are in place.

Importantly, the institutional framework regarding school functioning (school curriculum, funding, enrolment process in special schools, etc.) is the same for all the schools in the country. Therefore, the school stakeholders' motivations regarding inclusion of Roma students in education are shaped by the same set of rules and financial conditions across the country. It means that even though only municipalities from a single region were included in the sample, findings are applicable for the whole educational system in the country.

As shown in Table 1, the selection of the localities includes two towns and one village with the share of Roma population at 8-15%. All types of Roma settlements were present in the three municipalities, namely segregated settlements, settlements on the outskirts of municipalities and the Roma dispersed among the majority population. Encompassing municipalities with all the main types of Roma settlements in the sample ensures that specific barriers to education based on different housing conditions can be explored.

TABLE I: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES[2]

	Municipality A	Municipality B	Municipality C
Population size[1]	Less than 3 000	10 000 to 15 000	More than 15 000
% share of Roma population[2]	10–15%	10–15%	Less than 10%

In terms of the share of Roma population at the local level, the median percentage share of Roma population in Slovak municipalities is, according to the Atlas of Roma Communities (Mušinka, Škobla, Hurrle, Matlovičová & Kling, 2014), 17%. As can be seen in Table 1, the percentage share of Roma population in the selected municipalities corresponds with the median figure for all municipalities.

To better understand the rationale for choosing the Banská Bystrica region, the authors considered three regions where the Roma population primarily resides. Slovakia is divided into eight main regions (Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice, Nitra, Prešov, Trenčín, Trnava and Žilina). Out of these eight, the Roma population is the most numerous in Banská Bystrica (19.6% of the total Roma population), Prešov (28.6%) and Košice (31.4%) (Mušinka et al., 2014).

When deciding among these three regions, we noted that the Banská Bystrica region is characterised by a relatively high proportion of the Roma living dispersedly among the majority population (73%) while in the region of Prešov and Košice, the proportion of the Roma living dispersedly constitutes only 22.3% and 38.4%, respectively, and the remainder live in the segregated settlements inside, on the edge of or outside the municipality (Mušinka et al., 2014). It should be taken into account that such a lower level of segregation in housing in the region of Banská Bystrica is assumed to have a positive impact on the integration processes in the municipality.

The three regions are rather similar in terms of the level of xenophobic attitudes among the population. The recent findings of Macháček (2013) show the high inclination towards the ideas of far-right extremism in Slovakia (such as extreme forms of nationalism, anti-Semitism, authoritarian regimes, anti-Roma and anti-LGBTI sentiments and preferring group rights over individual rights), when 13.5% of respondents

2 To ensure data anonymisation, only basic information is provided about the municipalities.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

older than 16 completely agree with the ideas of ultra-right extremism and 71.2% agree with some of these ideas (p. 54). The differences between regions in the level of these attitudes, which have a potential to impede integration efforts, are not statistically significant.

The selection of municipalities and primary schools was also based on the researchers' previous research experience with them, to secure greater accessibility and a high response rate and to ensure that some inclusive measures and policies were really present there.

Based on the existing research, the authors identified the most crucial local stakeholders as listed in Table 2. The research was conducted in five mainstream public primary schools, one church regular primary school[3] and one special primary school. In total, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with the below-mentioned respondents (twenty-four persons in total). Thirteen interviews were recorded and transcribed, while respondents in two interviews refused to be recorded owing to the sensitivity of the information they provided. In four cases, more respondents (two or three persons) were present during one interview (social field workers, staff from the Centre for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention, and deputy principals of public primary school 3 in municipality C), at their own request, because they wanted to complement each other's responses. In these cases, the interviewer judged the situations individually and decided that the quality of data would not be negatively affected. Data anonymisation was guaranteed before conducting each interview to increase the validity of the respondents' statements. Additionally, four of the interviewees were of Roma origin.

Importantly, not all crucial stakeholders were directly interviewed, such as Roma and non-Roma parents, and Roma and non-Roma students. The reasons these groups were not interviewed are the following: (1) their motivations and positions regarding the exclusion/inclusion of Roma students are sufficiently covered in the secondary data and literature utilised for this publication; (2) their motivations and positions were indirectly covered in the interviews with other interviewed stakeholders (see further information about data triangulation below); (3) the scope of the research was limited and thus the researchers preferred to conduct interviews with stakeholders who were directly in charge of (educational and social) policy implementation.

3 Church primary schools in Slovakia have the same financial conditions (in terms of providing state funds) as state primary schools in contrast with other non-state (private non-church) schools which receive only limited funds for covering capital expenditures.

TABLE 2: THE LIST OF RESPONDENTS PERSONALLY INTERVIEWED IN THE RESEARCH

	Position	Organisation	Municipality
1.	School principal	Public primary school and Kindergarten	Municipality A
2.	Mayor	Municipal Office	Municipality A
3.	SEN teacher	Public primary school	Municipality A
4.	Three social field workers	Municipal Office	Municipality A
5.	School principal	Public primary school	Municipality B
6.	Teacher´s assistant	Public primary school	Municipality B
7.	Three social field workers	Local community centre - non--governmental organisation	Municipality B
8.	School principal	Public primary school 1	Municipality C
9.	School principal	Public primary school 2	Municipality C
10.	Two school deputy principals	Public primary school 3	Municipality C
11.	School principal	Non-state primary school	Municipality C
12.	School principal and three SEN teachers	Special primary school	Municipality C
13.	Employee	Department of Education of the Municipal Office	Municipality C
14.	Two employees	Centre for Pedagogical and Psycho-logical Counselling and Prevention (CPPCP)	Municipality C
15.	Social field worker	Municipal Office	Municipality C

In order to enhance the validity of the research, all collected primary data were triangulated. More specifically:

- *Data triangulation:* a range of data sources of primary data (interviews with a variety of stakeholders) and secondary data (a variety of research studies and datasets, both qualitative and quantitative) were compared and triangulated;
- *Investigators' triangulation*: three researchers conducted the interviews with stakeholders. All three researchers coded all transcribed interviews and provided each other with feedback when preparing the schedule of interviews and when coding, analysing and interpreting the data.

Roma children in pre-primary education

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND CARE IN THE EARLY YEARS

The early years of childhood are crucial for the further development of children, with a safe, healthy and stimulating environment required, so that children acquire new skills and develop their physical, emotional, social and cognitive potential. While the family care and support at home play a key role in child development, various external support services and interventions complement this mission. In this chapter, we focus explicitly on children educated at the pre-primary level.

As Shonkoff & Meisels (2000) explain, first researchers and advocates of early childhood intervention for vulnerable, disabled or at-risk children were motivated to act on behalf of children as a moral imperative, while later evidence emerged documenting returns from investment in the health and development of young children in general. The up-to-date evidence suggests that preschool education is associated with several positive educational outcomes. A recent PISA study (OECD 2010, Table II.5.6) reports that in most countries, students who have attended at least one year of pre-primary education tend to perform better than those who have not, even when controlling for socio-economic background. PISA research also shows that the relationship between pre-primary attendance and performance in PISA tests tends to be greater in school systems with a longer duration of pre-primary education, smaller pupil-to-teacher ratios in pre-primary education, and higher public expenditure per child at the pre-primary level (OECD 2013, p. 280).[4]

4 A review of other positive impacts of early childhood education and care is summarized e.g. in Brüggemann (2012).

Pre-primary enrolment is found to be correlated with further positive educational outcomes: de Laat et al. (2012, pp. 33-34) report a positive effect of pre-primary attendance[5] on children's self-perceived cognitive skills and self-confidence, a lower chance of special school attendance in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, a lower chance of receiving social benefits in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania, and a higher probability of achieving education at a secondary school (ISCED 3) in Slovakia and several other countries. It also finds that in Slovakia, Roma children enrolled in pre-primary education are much more likely to recognize numbers, the alphabet, and simple sentences in Slovak, while Roma adults who received pre-primary education as children were much less likely to have been enrolled into special schools (by more than half), were much more likely to have completed secondary school (by more than half), and are less likely to be on social assistance (by 20%).

THE CURRENT STATE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN SLOVAKIA

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Slovakia has a long tradition, with the first facilities emerging in the early 19th century, followed by the development of a large network of facilities during the period of socialism, along with their cost-free provision. However, after 1989, the number of public nurseries for children below 3 years of age diminished, and although the network of kindergartens designed for children aged 3 to 6/7 remains a strong part of the education system, Slovakia lags behind the EU average in the overall participation in early childhood education.

The low public provision of nurseries

With 4% of children aged 2 and under enrolled, Slovakia is among those European countries with a low level of participation. The public provision of nurseries for children aged 2 and under is low; for example, in the capital city Bratislava, with 426 000 citizens, there are only three public nurseries run by the municipality, with a total capacity of around 270 children (Bratislava municipality, 2016). Since the public (municipal) provision of early childhood care for children below 3 years is negligible, the demand is met rather by private providers. In Bratislava alone, there are 24 private nurseries or child-care centres open for different age groups of children below 3 years (monthly costs around 300 – 400 EUR). Maternity leave lasts in general 34 weeks, and the parental leave with a parental allowance (203.20 EUR monthly in 2016) is granted until the child reaches the age of 3. Alternatively, the parent can choose to benefit from the childcare allowance until the child reaches the age of 3; this ranges

5 Controlling for socio-economic background and parenting characteristics.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

from 41.10 EUR to 280 EUR, with the exact sum determined based on the real costs of early childhood care provision (SAIA, 2016).

The relatively wide network of kindergartens

Kindergartens regulated by the Ministry of Education typically enrol children aged 3 to 6 years (with an option to enrol younger children aged at least 2 years and also children aged 6 or more with a postponed entry to primary school). Preferentially enrolled children are those who are one year prior to their entry to primary school or children with a postponed entry.[6] A vast majority of kindergartens are municipal. Despite attempts to enact an obligation to municipalities to provide sufficient capacities for children in their domain, there is no such regulation in force in Slovakia, unlike in the other three Visegrad countries: pre-primary education is compulsory in Poland (one year for 6-year-olds and places guaranteed for all 5- and 4-year-olds, with extension to 3-year-olds since September 2017), Hungary (compulsory for 3-year olds and above until entry to primary school) and recently also the Czech Republic (one year compulsory for 5-year-olds since September 2017 and places guaranteed for all 4-year-olds, with extension of guaranteed places to 3- and 2-year-olds in the following two years) (EC, 2016).

Apart from their own revenues, municipalities in Slovakia receive a share of the state-administered taxes, depending also on the number of children enrolled in kindergartens, and they can make a relatively independent decision on the use of these funds.[7] Pre-primary education in Slovakia is not compulsory, and parents (except for those receiving the supplementary welfare allowance) pay for the school meals and also the school tuition determined by the school founders – municipal, private or church bodies.

In Slovakia, 68% of children aged 3 to 4 years attend early childhood education, compared to the OECD average of 81% and EU21 average of 86% (OECD, 2015, Table C1.1a). In the case of children aged between 4 years and the starting age of compulsory education, the EU average participation in early childhood education has fluctuated between 92% and 95% during the 2001-2012 period, while the rate in Slovakia has oscillated between 75% and 80% (Eurostat, 2016). Other neighbouring EU countries with a significant share of Roma population[8] have higher levels

6 Article 59 of the Education Act No. 245/2008 Coll.

7 However, there is a legal requirement that municipalities provide funds to private and church-owned kindergartens at the level of at least 90% of their public kindergartens' budget. This requirement covers only kindergartens included in the ministerial network of schools, not the private child-care centers.

8 In this study, we will make comparisons between the following five post-socialist coun-

of overall participation in early childhood education: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Romania record participation above 85%, and Hungary is outstanding with almost 95% participation, owing to a historically wide network of kindergartens, compulsory kindergarten for children aged 3 years and above, and a further support to children from marginalized backgrounds in accessing kindergartens.[9]

Several factors contribute to lower participation rates in early childhood education in Slovakia compared to the neighbouring EU countries with a significant share of Roma population, and one of them is presumably lack of capacities. Recently, the kindergartens had to accommodate a slight demographic revival, as the age cohort of 3 to 6 year olds had risen since 2008 by almost 30 000 children to a total of 236 035 children in 2016. During this period, the number of children attending kindergartens rose as well, but only by 20 000 children, and in September 2015, the pending applications for a place in kindergarten were at 13 482, i.e., 8.5% of all children attending kindergartens (CVTI SR, 2016). Especially in larger towns and in more economically developed regions, the excess of demand for a place in kindergartens and nurseries gives rise to a growing business of private child day-care centres[10] (Horváthová, 2006).

It is important to mention in more detail the group of children and students from families receiving supplementary welfare benefits that is referred to in the legislation as students from a "socially disadvantaged background" (SDB).[11] Because the self-declared ethnicity methods used

tries, current EU members, all of which have a significant share of Roma population: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

9 According to Brüggemann (2012, p. 32), local governments in Hungary have been obliged to offer free of charge kindergarten places to "multiple disadvantaged" children from the age of 3 since 2008. Moreover, a "kindergarten subsidy program" provides a one-time conditional cash transfer for "multiple disadvantaged" children, if they attend pre-school regularly.

10 The number of children enrolled in unregistered centers is unknown. Unlike municipal and private nurseries and public and private kindergartens listed in register of schools and school facilities by Ministry of Education, these centers cannot use the name "materská škola" (kindergarten), do not receive public subsidies and are not bound by detailed legislative regulations applied in registered kindergartens, such as requirements on qualification of teachers, curriculum applied, or catering norms and material conditions. Following several cases of violence against children in unregistered centers in June 2016, the Ministry of Education issued a statement explaining that these centers are private enterprises, not regulated by the ministry.

11 Until September 2016, students from SDB were identified by a means test, with eligible students being those from families with an average monthly income during the previous six consecutive months at or below the level of minimum living costs. Since September 2016, an 8-criteria system has been applied, with the CPPCPs identifying children to whom at least three out of eight criteria apply. The eight criteria considered are: non-functioning family, low-income family, at least one parent long-term unemployed, at least one parent not having completed primary school, inadequate living conditions, language of instruction at schools differing from language spoken in

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

in official census data, as well as the Ministry of Education data on students, significantly underestimate the Roma population,[12] other proxy indicators are used. Most commonly, education policy makers tend to use the term "students from SDB" to indicate primarily Roma students.[13] This is a common practice in most strategic documents of the Ministry of Education.[14] In three consecutive years starting from 2012, the State School Inspectorate examined the inclusive practices of primary schools in explicit relation only to students from SDB, despite simultaneously mentioning Roma students from SDB and the socially disadvantaged students from marginalized Roma communities in the respective reports. The state education testing agency NICEM is publishing the results of students in centralized testing in grade 5 and grade 9 of primary schools, including students from SDB.

Despite the exact overlap between the data on SDB and Roma students being unclear, aggregate data on the level of districts suggest that the correlation between the share of Roma population and share of students from SDB at primary and special primary schools[15] is very high (correlation coefficient=0.93).

the household, family living in a segregated community, and social exclusion of family or whole community (Farkašová & Zimmermann, 2015).

12 The most recent large mapping of Roma communities in Slovakia carried out by UNDP in 2013 (further referred as "Atlas 2013") estimates the Roma population, i.e., those who are generally considered as being Roma, at 402 840 inhabitants, with the share of total population at 7.45% (Mušinka, et al., 2014). However, the census by the Statistical Office SR (31 December 2011) indicates 105 738 Roma based on self-declared ethnicity, with a share of 1.96% of the total population. The Ministry of Education statistics contain figures on the ethnic structure of students based on self-declared ethnicity, and in the case of Roma students, they significantly differ from the estimates gained in various surveys based on the ascribed ethnicity principle. For example, in the Statistical Yearbook on Education for the school year 2015/2016, Roma students make up only 0.12% of the student population at public mainstream primary schools and 1.37% at special primary schools (self-declared ethnicity).

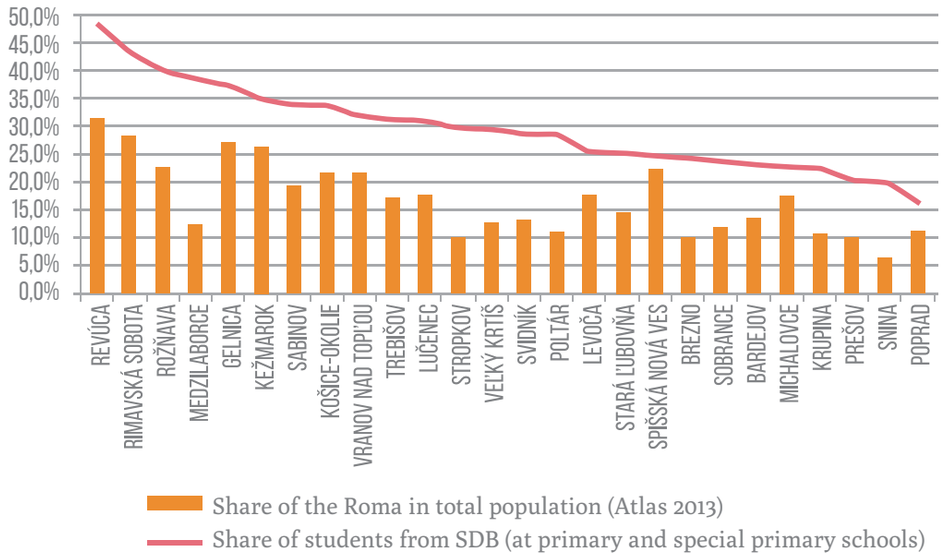
13 Adopting policies explicitly targeting socially disadvantaged or low-income families and their children and assuming that they affect primarily Roma is a practice used by Slovak policy makers and is based on the following presumptions: i) self-identification of Roma minority in surveys is low, and collecting ethnic data would not be efficient, and ii) such measures can be more acceptable to society because eligibility is based on general criteria regardless of ethnicity. However, this approach proves problematic in the case of measures where all Romani-speaking pupils would benefit, but only a portion of them qualifies (e.g., funding teacher assistants at schools based on the number of SDB children).

14 The exception is the recent concept paper (Government of SR, 2011) that defines some goals and indicators for the Roma and others for children from SDB or children from marginalized Roma communities, to address various levels of access to data.

15 Official statistics do not contain the number of children from SDB enrolled in kindergarten in comparable format (data for children in kindergartens collected by CVTI SR have different criteria for SDB than data for primary schools collected by the Ministry of Education of SR).

Among the 26 districts with the highest share of students from SDB at primary and special primary schools illustrated in the figure below, there are all the districts with the highest share of Roma population (all the districts with the share of Roma population above 8%).

FIGURE 1: THE DISTRICTS WITH THE HIGHEST SHARE OF STUDENTS FROM SDB IN 2014 INCLUDE ALL THE DISTRICTS WITH THE HIGHEST SHARE OF ROMA POPULATION

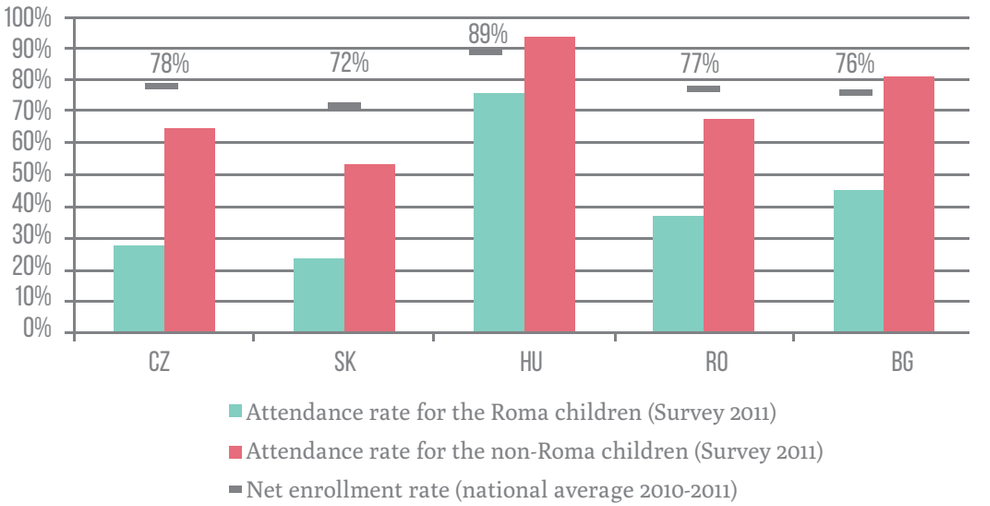


Source: Author's calculation based on Eduzber data by the Ministry of Education of SR as of September 2014 and data from Atlas 2013 by UNDP (Mušinka et al., 2014)

The low participation of Roma children in early childhood education and care

While Slovakia in general lags behind the EU in participation in early childhood education and care, there is an even wider gap in the case of Roma children: only one in four Roma children aged 3 to 5 attends pre-primary education in Slovakia compared to the national average of 72% (see Figure 2). For the age group between 4 years and the start of compulsory education, 34% of Roma boys and girls attend early childhood education compared to the national average of 77% (see Figure 3). The consequences of this gap are multiplied by the fact that marginalized Roma children grow up in an environment that lacks stimulation for their cognitive functions; e.g., they do not have experience with various materials and equipment, such as books, pictures, geometric shapes, pencils and crayons, and their vocabulary and comprehension, even in their mother tongue, is lower than their peers (Tomatová, 2004).

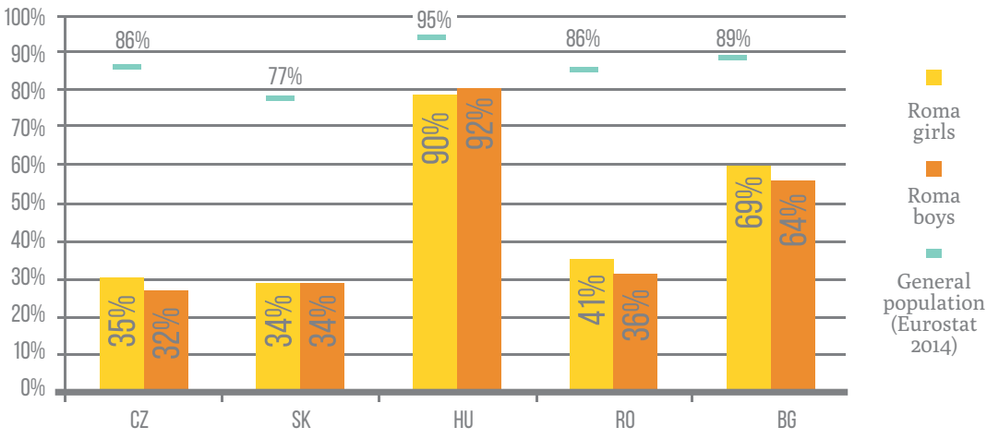
FIGURE 2: THE SHARE OF ROMA AND NON-ROMA CHILDREN AGED 3-6 (IN THE CASE OF CZ AND SK 3-5) WHO ATTEND A PRESCHOOL, NURSERY OR KINDERGARTEN



Sources: UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011 (school attendance rates), UNICEF TransMONEE Database (net enrolment rates)

Notes: For the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the age group is 3 to 5 because TransMONEE reference data also refers to this age group. For Slovakia, the net enrolment ratio is based on the school year 2009/2010.

FIGURE 3: CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 4 YEARS AND THE (COUNTRY-SPECIFIC) STARTING AGE OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION WHO PARTICIPATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (%)



Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS II 2016, Roma; Eurostat 2014, General population in European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2016)

Pre-primary education is not compulsory in Slovakia, but many parents believe that it is "a must" to enrol their child in a kindergarten for at least some time prior to entry to primary school. As Brüggemann (2012, p. 32) points out, the pre-primary attendance rates increase with age, and there are more 5-year-old Roma in kindergartens (39%) than those aged 4 (24%) or 3 years (11%). Still, only some 58% of Roma aged 7 to 15 report having had at least one year of crèche, kindergarten or preschool experience, as opposed to 91% of non-Roma living nearby. Again, the case of Hungary is outstanding here as the same proportion of Roma as non-Roma living nearby (95%) report at least a year spent in ECEC.

A similar picture is shown in a 2010 survey carried out by UNDP (2012, p. 109),[16] emphasizing the short length of pre-primary education of the Roma, where the largest group of Roma children (35%) attended kindergarten for only a year or less and only 6% attended kindergarten for three years or more, in contrast to nearly half of non-Roma children who attended kindergarten for three years or more and 16% for just one year or less. Kindergarten attendance of Roma children varies according to their type of settlement, and, as can be expected, higher kindergarten attendance (61%) is among Roma children living scattered among the majority population and lower among children from segregated settlements (45%), most of whom attended kindergarten for only a year or less.

MAPPING THE KEY ACTORS IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Roma parents[17]

Surveys of Roma parents show that one of the most significant reasons why they do not send their children to kindergartens is their low interest in pre-primary education. To be more specific, 22% of Roma parents simply do not want to enrol their children (UNDP, 2012, p. 109), and 37% of Roma parents do not perceive the need for a kindergarten because there is an adult who can care for them at home (de Laat et al., 2012, p. 40). Initiatives aiming at the increase of kindergarten attendance of Roma children have to address this issue and start their activities with meetings with

16 According to UNDP (2012), 53% of Roma children attended kindergarten for at least some time, compared to 88% of non-Roma children living nearby.

17 Field research conducted during the study included interviews with 24 stakeholders listed in Table 2 in the chapter on methodology. Neither the Roma nor the non-Roma parents and students were interviewed directly, and the description is based on the review of secondary sources where parents and students were directly interviewed and on the reflections about parents and students made by other interviewed stakeholders in our research.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

parents, explaining to them the benefits of kindergarten and presenting them with the practical issues related to enrolment. Social field workers in municipality A explain in more detail Roma parents' perception of kindergarten in the past and now:

> In fact they did not consider it important and they thought it will mean a lot of fees and that it will be difficult: to get up in the morning and go to kindergarten with little children instead of having them at home, and then take them home from kindergarten. This was the main problem together with the money they will have to pay. [...] If they have more children, they are on parental leave with one child and keep the older child at home too, because kindergarten is not compulsory. But they changed their mind, they saw the results and I see it very positive as well. This year was simply wonderful. We were quickly photocopying the enrolment forms to kindergartens that parents themselves requested because of their own interest. [...] The involvement of all actors contributed to this change, but the main drive was that they really saw the difference in the family, where the child attended the kindergarten compared with the child that did not (social field workers in municipality A).[18]

This is confirmed by lessons learned in the EU pilot project A Good Start presented by Salner (2012), who argues that kindergarten capacities and costs are the real barriers and might be accompanied by additional barriers keeping Roma children out. However, adequate intervention can reduce these barriers, as well as reduce the mistrust and fear of parents regarding kindergartens, and turn it into parental learning and interaction. The household survey of the A Good Start project in REF (2012) illustrates that the most frequent reasons for Roma parents to enrol their child in kindergarten were focused on the well-being and future prospects of the child: that the child could learn in kindergarten (58%), could better succeed in learning in primary school (53%), liked to go there (46%), and could play there (33%). While the project's financial support enabled enrolment and attendance in kindergartens, it did not remain among the main reasons for enrolment, with 14% of Roma parents considering free meals and material support an important reason why they enrolled their own child.

Although for those Roma parents whose children are already enrolled the benefits of kindergartens might gradually translate more into the child's well-being and its better future prospects, still, for parents with

18 In order to better protect the interviewees when expressing particularly sensitive and critical information, they will be anonymised even in terms of their location, so other stakeholders in the participating municipality cannot identify them.

non-enrolled children, the financial reasons, namely no money for school tuition, meals and clothing, remain among the most frequent barriers to kindergarten enrolment. According to UNDP (2012, p. 109), 21% of Roma parents do not send their children to kindergarten because they have no money. Among Roma living in segregated settlements, the financial barriers are the strongest (29%), and a frequent argument is also that there is no kindergarten nearby (17%). Similarly, the Methodical Pedagogical Centre (MPC) (2008, p. 10) presents the need to address the focus on practical aspects of enrolment by many Roma parents: that children get meals, the family receives clothing for the children and children can learn the official language in kindergarten.

There are several fees associated with kindergartens. Parents pay a tuition fee set by the municipality,[3] they pay for the school meals,[4] and there may be various other fees, e.g., for trips and extracurricular activities or contributions to the parents' association. Families receiving a supplementary welfare allowance (*dávka v hmotnej núdzi)* are charged no tuition fee, and the state also subsidises their school meals and school aids via the kindergarten budget. However, if a mother is on maternity/parental leave, such low-income family is not eligible for these subsidies. All children in the final year in kindergarten prior to entry to school are exempt from the tuition fee, but parents pay for the school meals and other fees. The practice of some municipalities (e.g., municipality C) is even more socialist than the national legislation requires, and they have extended the group of children exempted from tuition fees to include special needs children or disabled children, and other children from low-income families (e.g., families in material need where the mother receives a parental allowance). Even if fees for the school tuition and school meals are heavily subsidised, lack of money and a low living standard can translate also to other aspects, such as difficulty in maintaining hygiene and a lack of clothing and shoes.

Roma in our municipality do not enrol their children to kindergarten for various reasons. It is not only that they do not have money, because they would pay less if they receive social allowances, but also because it is difficult to keep hygiene, since there is only one source of drinking water for the whole settlement... and also, there is lack of funds on clothing. [...] Many people say that parents are here to take children to school, but when a mother is home alone and has also smaller children, it is difficult (social field worker in municipality C).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Along with reducing financial and material barriers (fees, clothing, transport and accompaniment), the communication with Roma parents and building their trust towards kindergarten are a common starting point of projects supporting Roma children's pre-primary enrolment. Many Roma parents, especially those with lower education, may lack information about the enrolment process (the venue and date of enrolment at kindergartens) or may have problems filling in the respective forms and getting them validated by a paediatrician for a fee.

Non-Roma parents

Similarly, non-Roma parents of children enrolled in kindergarten are an important voice in the process. Parental attitudes to the inclusive education of both Roma and non-Roma children in kindergartens were examined in the Ministry of Education of SR project "Let's go together to school": 38% of non-Roma parents had no objections to inclusion, 49% had partial objections and 13% had clear objections (MPC, 2008). The most frequent objections were the poor hygiene of Roma children and a risk of disease and parasite transmissions among children. Several parents stated they disliked Roma families' lifestyle and habits, and a few gave answers with a racist undertone. As many as 76% of non-Roma parents in the project believed that placing Roma children into Roma-only classrooms should not be allowed. Sometimes, the objections of non-Roma parents work against inclusion, as MPC (2008, p. 5) describes that some hidden problems with the integration of Roma children occurred during the project. For example, in one locality "children who are in one classroom together do not have lunch at the same table, they eat in another room" due to pressures from non-Roma parents on kindergarten management.

Still, a significant group of non-Roma parents that have partial or clear objections to the inclusion of all children in education implies that these need to be properly addressed. When a pre-primary classroom for Roma children was established in a kindergarten in Martin (a town in north Slovakia), parents of children already enrolled in the kindergarten were afraid that Roma children would steal and bring various infections. Parents were assured by the kindergarten principal that "the Roma children would commute to kindergarten under the supervision of a Roma assistant by a pre-arranged bus, and in the school, they would be constantly under the teachers' supervision. With regard to the fear of spreading infections, the parents were assured that the Roma assistant had training in hygiene and the school hygienic facilities were adequately reconstructed and improved" (Miškolci, 2015b, p. 50). Similar issues have arisen in municipality A:

We cannot request from parents in settlements that they prepare with children for school [...] but we request that their children come to school, do not have unreasonable absences and come clean. We repeat this all around and when it happens that the child is not clean, we call the mother to the school and solve it immediately, and we have an employee that does this so that the education process is not disrupted. So we teach the mothers again that they have to wash up their children in the morning and they have to use the hygienic station and wash their clothes. Otherwise it is difficult to have children communicate with one another and work together at school. The hygiene is the key (principal of public primary school with a kindergarten in municipality A).

Although the gap in pre-primary enrolment of 3-6-year-old Roma children (24%) compared to the national average (72%) is striking, the non-Roma children living in close proximity to the Roma lag behind the national average as well, with only 53% enrolled. As pointed out above, this might indicate a greater social deprivation of the population in these areas (unemployment and poverty) and a lack of pre-primary facilities there and calls rather for holistic policy measures focusing on the whole population in these areas. However, tensions appear when policy measures target the poorest Roma children exclusively. When considering bus transport for the Roma children from a settlement on the outskirts of the town to schools, the municipal employee explains:

> *[...] parents can ask me: "They have reduced prices in everything, they do not contribute to the state budget at all and [you] will provide a cost-free transport to them and not also to my children?" I am afraid of this. Many times I was thinking about the bus and how to tell them why they will not have it and the others always yes (employee of the Department of Education of the Municipal Office in municipality C).*

Kindergarten principal

The kindergarten principal determines the enrolment criteria and decides on the admission of children and their placement in individual classrooms. While the Education Act names the basic principles of admission to kindergartens (e.g., prohibition of discrimination, and preferential admission of children one year prior to enrolment in school or with postponed school entry), the principal can add and apply further criteria. Owing to insufficient capacities at many kindergartens, these criteria are meant to narrow the selection of children. Commonly applied is the preferential admission of children from families with permanent residence in a municipality, children who have both parents employed,

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

or children with older siblings already enrolled, and this can add to other barriers Roma children face at entry. (All of these additional criteria are applied in municipalities A, B and C). In localities A and C, municipalities actively seek to increase the capacities of kindergartens. In locality A, currently all Roma children attend at least a year of pre-primary education, some Roma children attend for even two years and there are a few children who entered the first grade of the regular primary school directly, without the need to attend the zero grade (principal of a primary school with kindergarten in locality A). In locality B, the majority of Roma children attend pre-primary education for some time, and the effect is clearly visible when they enter primary school, yet there are some families who do not enrol their children (principal of the public primary *school in locality B*). A similar situation occurs in locality C; social field workers confirm that parents themselves are now more active to enrol their children in kindergarten, yet there are capacity problems to admitting all children younger than five years (*social field workers in locality C*).

In a study by de Laat et al. (2012, p. 40), a survey of the reasons why Roma parents do not enrol their child in pre-primary education concludes that discriminatory practices (e.g., a child being ill-treated or situations which cause parents not to trust the teachers) are not the main barriers to entry, despite there being such cases. Hapalová & Dráľ (2011) mention a kindergarten in the Sabinov district that had a few non-Roma classrooms and one Roma-only classroom operating only in the morning shift. When the number of children in the Roma classroom dropped owing to migration to England, the kindergarten principal closed down the Roma classroom and refused to accept the remaining Roma children into non-Roma classrooms until the intervention of an NGO. Alexander et al. (2006, pp. 16-17) mention several cases of refusal to enrol Roma children in kindergarten being formally explained by no capacities.

The kindergarten principal plays a crucial role in the day-to-day management of the school and holds the potential key to creating an inclusive culture at the school, e.g., by communicating with parents, assigning children to classrooms, setting up common rules (equal access to meals, school events and extracurricular activities), etc., while balancing the needs and values of various groups of parents. The kindergarten principal is also an important part of the school readiness assessment, and the kindergarten is among the top three most frequent[19] initiating bodies filing a motion for assessment of a child from SDB, according to the Public Defender of Rights (PDR,2014, p. 24).

19 The three most frequent initiators are primary schools, parents and care-takers, and kindergartens.

Kindergarten teachers

The kindergarten teachers are in daily direct contact with the children and their parents. Their approach is crucial for increasing the enrolment and attendance of Roma children in kindergartens and ensuring that the Roma parents recognise the benefits of the kindergarten for their children. In municipality A, the principal identified the kindergarten teachers as one of the key stakeholders that contributed to a successful enrolment of all children in the municipality in the local kindergarten. This included the Roma children, whose mothers recognised that their children were well accepted in the kindergarten and that they felt happy there; now the mothers themselves go and enrol their children there (*principal of public primary school with a kindergarten in municipality A*). However, an opposite approach was taken in another municipality, when kindergarten teachers told a Roma child not to come to kindergarten at all on a day when a big event for children and parents was organised, presumably because it would annoy other parents that a Roma child from the settlement was attending kindergarten with their children (*social field worker*). Teachers and the school principal can play an important role both in addressing the problems and mediating between the two groups:

Parents from both sides are anxious about their children. A Roma mother comes and she is afraid that her child will be somehow discriminated or hurt. The non-Roma mothers are afraid that Roma children group themselves and have their vocabulary. So both sides have their fears and I think these can be solved only if the two sides meet, because often these are overly exaggerated things. And we start with this already in the kindergarten at meetings with parents where we tell them what the children learnt, how they get ready for school and there are both Roma and non-Roma parents so that they learn to communicate and agree on issues related to education of their children and generally about any issue in life (principal of public primary school with a kindergarten in municipality A).

Larger projects aimed at increasing the kindergarten attendance of Roma children all include teacher training activities, e.g., diversity training, multicultural education, Roma culture and language, improving teaching and diagnostic skills, and innovative teaching methods (MPC, 2008; MPC, 2015a; MPC, 2015b; Salner, 2012).

Municipal office

The municipality is the founder (and administrator) of the majority of Slovak kindergartens, and the mayor and local deputies are the main

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

municipal officials. The municipality determines the budget of local kindergartens and thus determines their capacities and sets the fees paid by parents. More broadly, it can provide a range of services aimed at (but not limited to) the poorest citizens, e.g., employ social field workers, manage local public transport including school buses, run a community centre, etc. Some of these services are subsidised by the state. The municipality runs a community centre in localities B and C. In localities A and C, municipalities are involved in the national social fieldwork projects, and there is a health assistant in locality A. In localities A and C, municipal offices actively seek to increase the capacities of local kindergartens. Some municipalities (e.g., in locality C) even extend the group of children exempted from paying tuition fees at local kindergartens to include special needs children or disabled children, and other children from low-income families (e.g., families in material need where the mother receives a parental allowance).

Miškolci (2015b) describes the case of Martin (a town in north Slovakia) and the role of the municipality in opening a kindergarten classroom for Roma children in a local kindergarten. The municipality communicated with school personnel and citizens, arranged a school bus and implemented a proportionate assignment of Roma children to primary schools from the settlement on the outskirts of the town.

Community and social field workers

The community and social field workers may play a vital role in linking the Roma parents with pre-primary schools and increasing their enrolment and attendance, as well as even providing certain services as an alternative to a public kindergarten.

For example, in municipality C, the social field workers organise a preschool club for children once a week in the Roma settlement or in the community centre, with the accompaniment of children to and from the activities. Early childhood care programs (e.g., pre-primary clubs and low-threshold pre-primary clubs) are included in the facultative services that community centres can provide according to the Standards for Community Centres (IA MoLSAF, 2014) and are among the most frequently provided services at community centres, with 85% of centres providing assistance in preparing children for compulsory education and during the schooling period. There are various forms of these regular activities, such as tutoring, pre-primary clubs, extracurricular activities, and clubs for children and youth (IA MoLSAF, 2015).[5]

The mayors and kindergarten management in all examined municipalities consider community and social field workers important in mediating communication between institutions (schools, health services, etc.) and the Roma community. An interviewed mayor expressed appreciation of their work, claiming that the Roma knew they can approach them with any problem and that it was always better to work with the Roma than do nothing (*mayor in municipality A*).

Several stakeholders expressed the need to gradually teach the Roma to manage things themselves:

> *[Roma parents] came only rarely to school [...] also because social field workers managed many issues on their behalf and we agreed together on a change and to teach them to do things themselves. So now the social field workers tell them to come to school to solve something, but do not take them the forms [...] and the parents are coming, they even come to parental meetings, which they did not attend before (principal of public primary school with a kindergarten in municipality A).*

Despite recognizing the benefits of social field workers, some municipal stakeholders are discontented that the actual effect of their work is not as they expect:

> *[The social field workers] look for children that should start compulsory education and were not enrolled yet [...] they often do things beyond their duties, saying: "You have a 5-year old child, why is he not in the kindergarten, you should have enrolled him, there are no fees regardless if you receive social welfare benefits or not." But you know, it is not compulsory. The problem is to get up in the morning (employee of the Department of Education of the Municipal Office in municipality C).*

Other municipal stakeholders sometimes face disapproval concerning social field workers among local deputies or among non-Roma citizens, who say:

> *"You do anything possible for the Roma and then they like it here and all of them will move here." But it is not true. We just try to do what we can, but they [the Roma] have nothing to do, they get up in the morning and have free time, walk in the streets, sit in front of the cultural house, at the station and it has a terrible impact on the white citizen going to work to see them with a bottle of cheap wine and doing mess (mayor in municipality A).*

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

State / Ministry of Education / Government

The Government of SR and the Ministry of Education shape the legal and institutional framework for pre-primary education and provide the funding mechanisms. No mainstreaming can happen without the strong involvement of this stakeholder. In the mainstreaming of general access to pre-primary education, Slovakia lags behind the Visegrad countries that apply systems of guaranteed places in kindergartens for all children of a certain age or have compulsory pre-primary education.[20] In recent years, the Ministry of Education of SR focused on increasing the kindergarten capacities[21] and administered several pilot project activities.[22] Recently, two large, EU-funded projects led by the Ministry of Education agencies also targeted kindergartens and piloted several measures to eliminate barriers to the preschool attendance of Roma children, yet there has been no mainstreaming so far and no sustainability measures for teaching assistants or inclusive education teams have been applied temporarily in these projects.

In the MRK 2 project, one teacher´s assistant was temporarily funded in each of the 110 kindergartens (in most of the project kindergartens, this position was created for the first time ever), and transport and accompaniment between home and kindergarten was funded in 15 localities of the 110 kindergartens (MPC, 2015a, pp. 83, 93-94). In the PRINED project, 50 teaching assistants were temporarily employed at kindergartens and inclusive education teams (consisting of specialists such as psychologists and SEN teachers) were formed. The evaluation report of the PRINED project (MPC, 2015b, p. 37) found that the participating kindergartens scored better in inclusion index items than primary schools did,[6] but still, the most inclusion in both was reached in the policies of all types of schools and the least in their practice.

20 Preschool education is compulsory in Poland (one year for 6-year-olds, with places guaranteed for all 5- and 4-year-olds, with extension to 3-year-olds as from September 2017), Hungary (compulsory for 3-year-olds and above until entry to primary school) and recently also the Czech Republic (one year compulsory for 5-year-olds as from September 2017, with places guaranteed for all 4-year-olds, with extension of guaranteed places to 3- and 2-year-olds in the following two years) (EC, 2016).

21 E.g., in 2015 the Ministry of Education provided subsidies to 113 municipalities to increase kindergarten capacities (EUR 9.5 million in total), and in 2016 there was an opportunity to get funding from ERDF to increase kindergarten capacities (more than EUR 79 million in total).

22 E.g., a project "Let's go to school together" was funded by the Ministry of Education with the support of the Roma Education Fund during 2006-2008. According to the monitoring report by the project staff in MPC (2008), the project was implemented by a local NGO and targeted nine kindergartens in the Prešov region where few Roma children were enrolled. The aim was mainly to support their regular attendance in mixed classes by reducing financial and other barriers to all low-income parents, motivating Roma parents and providing inclusive education training to kindergarten teachers and principals. The number of Roma children participating in the project rose from an initial 135 to 150 in April 2007.

Non-governmental organizations, churches

There are various projects targeting formal and non-formal education of children aged 6/7 years or younger organised by NGOs and churches. Several NGOs and a few churches, as well as a number of municipalities, run community centres and provide education activities for children and their parents.[23] Apart from the church primary school in locality C, other respondents do not perceive that Roma youth participate in activities organised by churches. In localities A and C, local civic organisations are active and support Romani culture, provide activities for Roma children and mothers, and co-operate with schools. Some children in one locality are supported also by the nationwide foundation Divé maky. Schools in the larger localities B and C participate also in events organised by the regional cultural centre and centres for extracurricular activities.

Podolinská and Hrustič (2010) provide an overview of church activities in Roma communities, with a few of them focusing explicitly on the education of children of pre-primary age; e.g., the Salesians in the settlement "Poštárka" in the Bardejov municipality run a primary school with a kindergarten and organise various other activities. People from this community perceive a positive impact of these activities on children and their access to a quality education; what they identified most were changes in the children's behaviour (quieter, fewer conflicts), improved access to education (also related to the boarding school in Kremnica) and improved hygiene and care for children (Podolinská & Hrustič, 2010, p. 84).

Having studied the lessons learned from the EU-funded pilot project "A Good Start", Salner (2012) finds that only a broader intervention in a community, extending beyond a narrow focus on education, brings sustainable results. The project "A Good Start"[7] relied on experienced local partners in each locality and created immense benefits by involving Roma (with or without qualification) at all project levels and providing systemic training (EU EPIC, 2016). A similar need for a more complex intervention in the community is present in projects led by the NGO ETP Slovensko. The projects "Community on the Way to Prosperity" and its continuation "We Build Hope – Making the Life in Roma Ghettos Better" are focused on building stronger partnerships on a local level and an intensive cooperation with institutions of formal education (kindergartens, schools,

23 To name just a few: ETP Slovensko, Človek v ohrození, Rómsky inštitút – Roma Institute, Krajská asociácia rómskych iniciatív - KARI, Kultúrne združenie Rómov Slovenska, Vyrovnávanie šancí, eMklub, and Združenie mladých Rómov Slovenska. IA MPSVR SR (2016) contains the complete list of community centers and other social services providers involved in the national project "Podpora vybraných sociálnych služieb krízovej intervencie na komunitnej úrovni".

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

extracurricular centres), mainly by testing innovative pedagogic methods and providing complex social and educational services to children, youth and parents in community centres and kindergartens. Randomised control trials are used to evaluate the project benefits (ETP Slovensko, 2016).

Roma students studying in an ethnically homogenous environment

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

In the previous chapter we dealt with the topic of Roma children attending pre-primary education and the barriers they and their parents experience in accessing pre-primary schooling. While primary education is compulsory in Slovakia, the Roma students still experience a variety of barriers in accessing standard quality education at this level of education as well. One of the most visible and potentially harmful barriers for Roma children in primary schools is their *segregation*. In this book, the concept of the segregation of Roma children in education is defined as:

> a phenomenon that, in combination with their ethnicity (and often social disadvantage), leads to their spatial, organizational, physical and symbolic discrimination or separation from other children. This, in turn, leads to objectively a considerably lower quality of education, resulting in insufficient personal development, social inclusion and integration. It is an education that is not in the best interest of this target group of children (Rafael, 2011, p. 164).

In terms of current Slovak legislation, Article 42 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees the right for education, while Article 33 states that identifying with any national or ethnic group should not be to anybody's detriment. In Article 3 of the Antidiscrimination Act No. 365/2004, education is defined as one of the areas in which equal treatment should be maintained. The School Act No. 245/2008 also postulates equal access to education for everybody and the prohibition of discrimination. All these legal documents represented a basis for the

decision of the District Court in Prešov in the precedent case of Roma student segregation in the regular school of Šarišské Michaľany. In this case, the court proclaimed that the school violated the principle of equal treatment and committed the act of discrimination on the basis of ethnic background. The school defended itself by stating that their measures were meant as compensatory and equalising to secure an individualised approach to the Roma children. Nonetheless, in the process of providing evidence, it became obvious that the children were placed into classrooms entirely on the basis of their ethnicity, regardless of whether they came from SDB or not. In addition, none of these allegedly "compensatory" measures led to successful "compensation" and catching up with children from non-Roma backgrounds, since the Roma children were never transferred to the classrooms with non-Roma students. In other words, these measures were not, in practice, temporary or compensatory but permanent and without provable benefit for the children (Farenzenová, Kubánová & Salner, 2013, pp. 20-21).

The segregation of Roma students from non-Roma students may happen in various ways. It occurs when Roma students

- are unjustifiably streamed into the special educational path, i.e., special primary schools or special classrooms within mainstream primary schools;[24]

24 When speaking about the special educational path, the cases of "specialised classrooms" and "zero grades" have to be scrutinised as well, although the School Act No. 245/2008 considers them as temporary compensatory measures happening within the mainstream schooling. To be exact, the School Act (Article 29) defines the so-called "specialised classrooms" as a temporary measure (lasting a maximum of one year) for students with SEN and/or from SDB. Hence, this measure is designed as strictly temporary and intended to support the students until they reach the educational level of their peers in mainstream classrooms and can be successfully re-integrated there. Nonetheless, proponents of inclusive education may still critique this measure as segregational, since it may trigger stigmatisation of the withdrawn students by other students and teachers. In addition, it is rather questionable whether the educational outcomes of students after completing the specialised classroom intervention will be (significantly) improved. With regard to zero grade, which is a preparatory year in primary schools for children who do not pass the school readiness tests, this measure is also intended as a temporary and compensatory measure. For some children who did not attend pre-primary education, it can really be a successful intervention, and students can continue smoothly in their education in a regular classroom at regular schools (a,s for instance, in municipality A). Nonetheless, attending a zero grade does not necessarily lead to a mainstream educational path. Actually, the opposite is often the case, when a great proportion of children from zero grades are transferred to special schools or special classrooms of regular schools (as, for instance, in municipality C). In addition, the students' attendance of zero grade can trigger their stigmatisation as well.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

- are educated in regular classrooms of mainstream primary schools but are spatially segregated from non-Roma students; i.e., they attend classrooms or whole schools which are attended exclusively by Roma students. (Some schools might also have a separate pavilion, floor or wing of the school building reserved exclusively for Roma students.) Areas of mainstream schools outside of the formal educational space (e.g., the corridor, canteen area, toilets, school playgrounds, and entrance doors) may also be informally reserved for Roma or non-Roma students, and Roma children might not participate at all in after-school care, particular extracurricular activities and school trips.

The first form of segregation occurs through a legislatively determined assessment of children who are "diagnosed" with SEN.[25] The second form of segregation occurs without any assessment procedures or simply as a result of residential segregation. Both these forms of segregation of Roma children may have a detrimental impact on their self-esteem and future educational and career prospects, as they inhibit the Roma children from accessing the same quality, depth and breadth of educational content as any non-Roma child commonly accesses within the mainstream education in Slovakia (Daniel, 2012; Huttová et al., 2012; Rafael, 2011). The segregation violates the Roma children's human right to equal education. In addition, if low-achieving students from SDB are educated in homogenous classrooms, they might be deprived of experiencing positive role models in academic excellence and educational motivation (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 112). Vice versa, the high-achieving non-Roma students, if educated separately, might be deprived of experiencing diversity in ethnic background, mental and academic abilities and other skills, which is a very valuable experience in terms of supporting social cohesion in the country (Rafael, 2011, p. 176). Segregation deepens the educational and social gap between the Roma and non-Roma students and negatively impacts on the school climate and the quality of their relations (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 110). Having said that, we should not stereotypically perceive all students from SDB and all Roma students as low-achievers and all high-achieving students as non-Roma. It is exactly the Roma students from SDB who have the potential to be high-achieving students that are most harmfully affected by the phenomenon of Roma segregation.

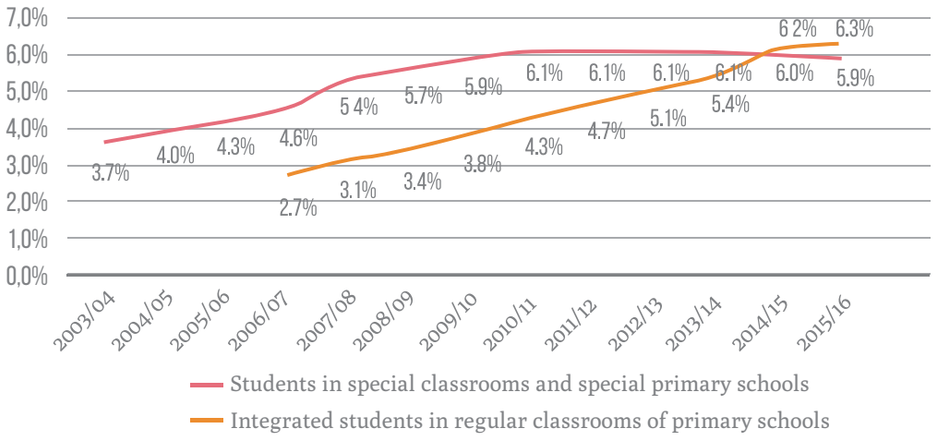
25 These assessments are conducted either by the Centre for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention or the Centre for Special Education Counselling.

THE CURRENT STATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN AN ETHNICALLY HOMOGENOUS ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVAKIA

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE, 2012) presented that in school year 2011/2012, 10.4% of students in compulsory education in Slovakia were diagnosed with SEN. Furthermore, only 42% of all students with SEN were educated in mainstream classrooms and schools. Out of 28 European countries that EADSNE covered, in only two countries (Lithuania and Scotland) were there more than 10% of the children with SEN; however, in both of these cases, 90% of these children were educated in mainstream classrooms and schools.

Slovakia is not only negatively outstanding among European countries in terms of the share of students diagnosed with SEN and education in special schools and special classrooms outside of the mainstream education. In the data, there is also a persistent trend, over the past years, of the share of students with SEN educated separately in special settings being at the level of around 6% (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: SHARE OF INDIVIDUALLY INTEGRATED STUDENTS AND STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL CLASSROOMS) WITH RESPECT TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2003-2015



Source: Authors' calculation based on Statistical Yearbooks of Education by Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (CVTI SR)

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

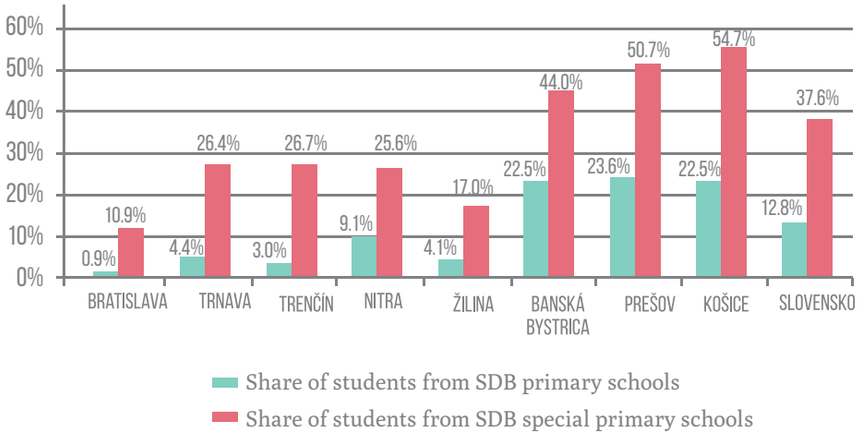
Overrepresentation of the Roma in the special educational stream was quantified by several sources. Based on a representative survey using the ascribed Roma ethnicity principle, Friedman et al. (2009) confirm that the Roma are overrepresented in special education: the share of Roma students is 60% at special primary schools and 86% in special classrooms at regular primary schools.

Brüggemann (2012, p. 68) complements this perspective by findings from the Roma Regional Survey 2011 by World Bank, UNDP & EC that the share of the Roma aged 7 to 15 who attend or have been attending special schools (not including special classrooms at regular schools) is 11% in the case of Slovakia (17% in the Czech Republic, 9% in Hungary, and 7% in both Serbia and Croatia).

The UNDP Household Survey conducted in Slovakia in 2010, using a different sampling methodology, found that 16% of the Roma aged 7 to 15 attended special schools and another 4% attended special classrooms (Brüggemann & Škobla, 2012, p. 2). This conflicts with the overall share of students in special education being at around 6% over the past seven years.

Overall data for Slovakia show that in 2014, there were in total 436 022 students at regular primary schools and 19 907 students at special primary schools. At special primary schools, more than a third of the students come from SDB, and at regular primary schools, they make up 12.8%. The share of students from SDB is higher in poorer regions with a higher share of Roma population; in the regions of Košice, Prešov and Banská Bystrica, 1 out of 5 students at regular primary schools and around half the students at special primary schools come from SDB (see Figure 5).

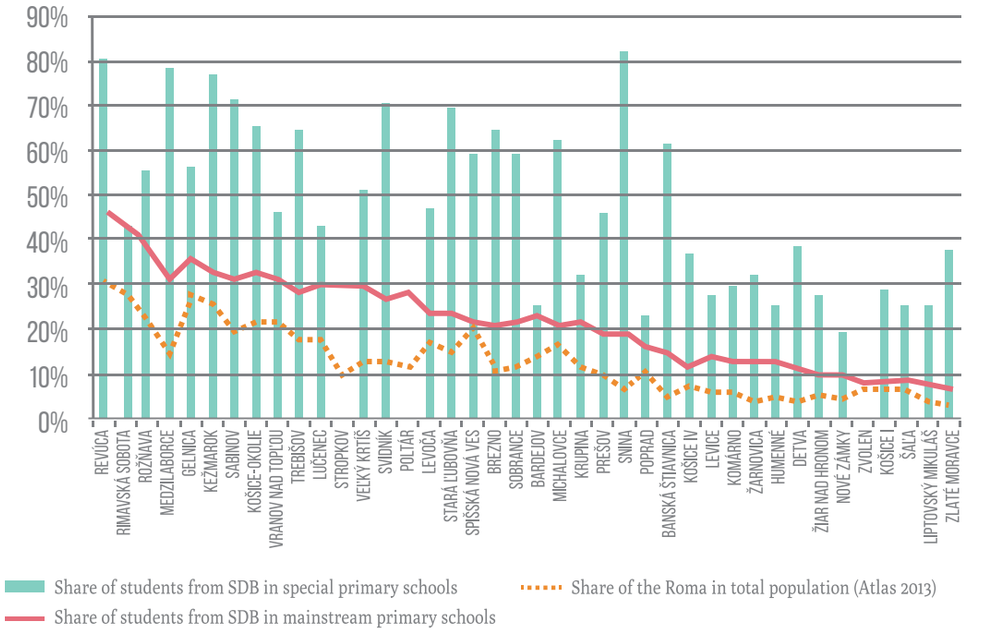
FIGURE 5: SHARE OF STUDENTS FROM SDB IN MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, BY REGIONS, 2014



Source: Authors´ calculation based on Eduzber data by Ministry of Education as of September 2014

A more detailed look at the 40 Slovak districts (see Figure 6) with the highest overall share of students from SDB suggests that the overrepresentation of students from SDB in special primary schools is a very common phenomenon, yet there are a few districts where these trends are less pronounced (e.g., Rimavská Sobota, Bardejov and Poprad).

FIGURE 6: SHARE OF STUDENTS FROM SDB IN MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, BY DISTRICTS, 2014 (40 SLOVAK DISTRICTS WITH HIGHEST OVERALL SHARE OF STUDENTS FROM SDB AT REGULAR PRIMARY AND SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS)



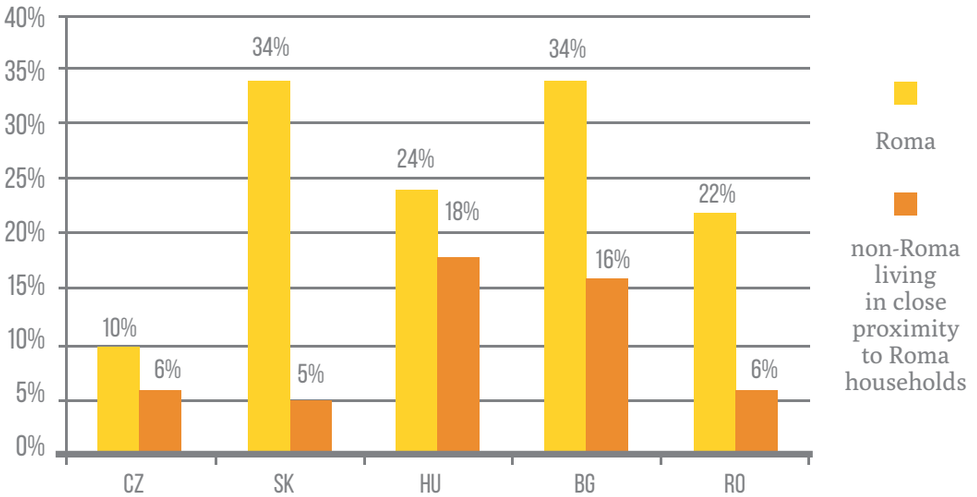
Source: Authors' calculation based on Eduzber data by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic as of September 2014; Atlas of Roma communities in Slovakia 2013 (Mušinka et al., 2014).

Note: There are four districts in Slovakia without any special primary school: Stropkov, Poltár, Košice III and Tvrdošín. Atlas 2013 calculates the share of the Roma in the total population of the city of Košice (7.6%) and Bratislava (2.1%), without details about individual districts (Mušinka et al., 2014).

Figure 6 demonstrates that the localities with a relatively high share of Roma population listed in the Atlas of Roma communities in Slovakia 2013 (Mušinka et al., 2014), which scrutinised the ascribed Roma ethnicity, mirror the localities with a high share of children from SDB. This indicates that the category of SDB can be, to a large extent, considered as a proxy for Roma ethnicity in the educational realm. Moreover, the share of children from SDB being educated in special primary schools gives a clear indication that they are greatly overrepresented – signifying that the Roma students are overrepresented here.

Apart from the overrepresentation of the Roma in special education, even among mainstream primary schools there is a high share of schools with a majority of Roma students (see Figure 7). Findings of the Roma Regional Survey 2011 by World Bank, UNDP & EC presented in Brüggemann (2012, p. 64) show that 34% of the Roma aged 7 to 15 attend mainstream schools with the majority of schoolmates being Roma, while this is true for only 5% of non-Roma living in their close proximity.

FIGURE 7: ETHNICALLY SEGREGATED SCHOOLS - SHARE OF THE ROMA AND NON-ROMA AGED 7 TO 15 LIVING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ROMA HOUSEHOLDS WHO ATTEND REGULAR SCHOOLS (I.E. NOT SPECIAL SCHOOLS) WITH THE MAJORITY OF SCHOOLMATES BEING ROMA



Source: Brüggemann (2012, p. 64)

MAPPING THE KEY ACTORS IN CREATING AN ETHNICALLY HOMOGENOUS ENVIRONMENT WITHIN PRIMARY EDUCATION

In the following part of the chapter, the two main forms of segregation – 1) into the special educational path; or 2) within mainstream education – will be discussed from the perspective of individual key stakeholders, who all contribute to perpetuating the phenomenon of Roma segregation in education. Most stakeholders actually do not have a distinct position but in some aspects perpetuate and in others inhibit the Roma segregation. Each group of stakeholders is rather heterogeneous, but members of these groups do experience some common systemic pulls and pressures, which they react to.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Roma children

Roma children can be considered not only as objects but also subjects of segregation by actively initiating and desiring it. Four interviewees (a *principal of a public primary school, a special education teacher, a social field worker in municipality A, and a community worker in municipality B*) reported that Roma children have a strong tendency to group themselves according to the ethnic identity line. This phenomenon is most salient after the fifth grade of primary school. It can be explained as a rather "natural" tendency to create friendships with peers who speak the same language (Romani), share the same identity (based on ethnicity or living conditions) and who live close by; thus, it can copy the residential distribution of the children. Nonetheless, the phenomenon can also be interpreted as these children already recognising their ethnic identity as different to the majority population as a result of experiencing various discriminatory incidents such as hate speech or bullying based on their Roma identity. At some point in their mental and emotional development they might also realise the gap (if there is any) between their and particular non-Roma peers' cognitive abilities, results and educational and material support from their parents, which may also motivate them to create bonds with peers with similar abilities and family background.

> *The mother of one Roma boy complained that why he joined the group with those Roma children and not the non-Roma ones, so they would impact on him differently, also his behaviour. But I cannot influence that if they meet after school as well (special education teacher at the public primary school in municipality A).*

While these utterances related to the second type of segregation, which happens within the mainstream educational setting, it is not unfeasible that a Roma student him/herself would wish to be educated in a special education stream where most of his/her friends are currently being educated. This, however, does not mean that all Roma students desire to group themselves according to their ethnic identity. Undisputedly, despite the prevailing negative attitudes of non-Roma students towards the Roma students, there are a lot of Roma children who commonly interact and wish to interact with and befriend non-Roma peers. Even if Roma children come from a residentially segregated environment, they may befriend non-Roma peers primarily through various targeted co-operative teaching methods within a classroom educational process or through various extra-curricular activities or after-school care (Petrasová & Porubský, 2013, p. 88).

Roma parents

Segregation is often justified by various non-Roma school stakeholders who claim that the Roma parents themselves want it for their children (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 97). This can really be the case for some Roma parents. Nonetheless, even in these cases, this preference has to be seen in the complex context of these parents. To be specific, the Roma parents are commonly misinformed or not given all the information about the long-term consequences for their children of segregation into the special educational path (PDR, 2015). When the CSEC diagnoses their child with mental disability and advises them that their child should be educated in a special school or special classroom, they are not invited to question this diagnosis, since it was conducted by these institutional professionals. Moreover, the parents are often presented with a number of persuasive arguments by various school stakeholders (e.g., school principals, teachers, CSEC employees) about the alleged benefits of this special educational path for their child without clearly communicating its negative long-term consequences (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 76).

All these arguments relevant to why some Roma parents prefer segregated schooling for their child in a special school/classroom can be clustered into three types:

- a more pleasant environment for Roma children, allowing them to experience success in learning (due to slower pace of learning, lower number of students in classrooms, individualised teaching, etc.) (Friedman et al., 2009);
- geographic convenience;
- lower costs related to schooling.

Perhaps the strongest argument for Roma parents preferring a special school/classroom to a regular classroom in a mainstream school is that the special schools and special classrooms are attended primarily by Roma students. To be precise, 59.4% of all students in special schools and 85.8% in special classrooms are of Roma origin (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 8). That is why the personnel of special schools/classrooms are more open to creating a pleasant environment for Roma children in particular. In contrast, in the mainstream educational path, the Roma students are discriminated against by teachers for not performing to their expectations or bullied by non-Roma schoolmates (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 79; Huttová et al., 2012, p. 97). Nonetheless, there is also the phenomenon that sometimes false rumours circulate within the Roma parent communities about the discrimination of Roma children in the local regular schools,

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

for instance that they eat with different, lower quality cutlery (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 80). These myths can also impact on their decisions to favour special education. Some Roma parents may also react positively to the argument that merely by being in a special school/classroom, a Roma child may experience success in learning and receive better school marks (results), since the educational content is less demanding for the children (Friedman et al., 2009, pp. 74, 76). The number of students in one classroom is also significantly smaller, so the teachers may better individualise their teaching methods to the particular characteristics of individual students.

A systemic issue is also the phenomenon of municipalities where the Roma make up the majority of local population and where is no regular primary school but only a special school or where the special school is significantly closer to the Roma settlement than the regular school (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 77). This geographical convenience to attend a special school instead of a regular school can be a strong impetus for some parents who are afraid to send their child too far from home. In municipality C, the special school is situated very close to the Roma segregated settlement (approx. 200 metres) and the regular primary school in their catchment area is quite a long distance away from it (approx. 2 kilometres). While this might seem an insignificant issue to some people, walking two kilometres for a 6-year-old child who has no money for public transport can be an insurmountable challenge for the child and for a parent to accompany the child to school if looking after one or more younger children at home (*social field worker in municipality C*). The parents might also prefer the special school because another child in the family already attends it and is able to accompany her/his younger sibling to the school or because the parents, like their children, attended the special school and were happy with it (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 40).

The financial challenges the most disadvantaged Roma families experience can also determine their preference for a school which will offer most services for free.

> *We do not need to even talk about a free-of-charge schooling as it is anchored in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. If that was the case, we would not be able to carry out any activity. At least, we do not charge for school attendance. But for lunches and after-school care you already have to pay. Then there is the fee of 10 Euro [for Parent Association], and at some schools the fee is even higher, and then the classroom fund and skiing trip (principal of public primary school 1 in municipality C).*

In other words, while education should be provided for free for everyone, in practice all public primary schools in Slovakia still collect "voluntary" fees which are not de facto voluntary. In this regard, we should distinguish fees which go above the obligatory education (e.g., lunches, after-school care, trips, extracurricular activities and clubs) and fees which are not de facto voluntary but are attached to obligatory education (contributions to the parents' association and to the classroom fund). For instance, not participating in the after-school care, extracurricular activities and clubs may curtail the equal participation of children in various aspects of school life (*social field worker and municipal office employee in municipality C*) and have significant negative consequences on educational ambitions and results (see the following chapter). The attractiveness of special schools lies in the fact that they are accustomed to not receiving any money from the parents but still are able to provide equal opportunities for everyone (free meals, school aids, trips, etc.). Free meals and school aids for every child in the school is legally possible if at least 50% of all students come from families in material need, which is usually the case for special schools attended primarily by Roma students (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 78).

Legally, any family which is provably in material need is eligible for free school aids and price reduction for meals (one lunch costs only 0.01 Euro for a child in material need) and after-school care (in municipality C, it costs 2 Euro per month for these children) (*municipal office employee in municipality C*). There is, however, one unreasonable exception to the material needs conditions – all family members are exempted from being considered in material need if one parent is on maternity or parental leave. Thus, if the parent is currently on maternity/parental leave, none of the older children is eligible for the price waiver, which makes a great portion of Roma families with school-age children ineligible (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 73).

Municipality C adopted a smart municipal regulation which considers the overall low family income as a criterion for being in material need, while being on maternity/parental leave is not taken into consideration (*municipal office employee in municipality C*). The one non-state (church) primary school in municipality C also made a school-level decision that students from SDB do not need to pay for the after-school care at all (*principal of non-state primary school in municipality C*). The school even established a solidarity fund – the so-called "Envelope" – into which various local donors, including parents, often contribute, while the resources from this fund can be used for paying for trips, clothes or anything needed for the children who cannot afford to pay for these materials or activities in which all the other children participate.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Despite all the above-mentioned arguments for the Roma parents preferring segregated education for their children, there is a substantial group of well-informed Roma parents who clearly perceive the segregation of Roma students as a factor of a lower quality of education (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 49). They are often aware that inclusion in the mainstream education is the only way that can push them further (p. 97). Hence, what matters is the level to which the informational deficit is compensated for the most socio-economically disadvantaged parents, who do not have the same access to information as the majority population.

While we have been speaking so far primarily about the first type of segregation, which relates to the special educational stream, the Roma parents may also play a role in perpetuating the second type of segregation happening within the mainstream education. To be precise, some Roma parents are reluctant to communicate publicly with the school and relevant school personnel:

> *They [Roma parents] did not want to attend [group parent-teacher meetings], they did not really want to attend these. They prefer having an individual dialogue, because they are afraid that they would react inadequately... The same problem as the children have, they also have, that at the group parent-teacher meeting others will look down on them, stare at them or have some comments (social field worker in municipality A).*

These Roma parents are not unwilling to co-operate with the school. In the case of group meetings, they just feel ashamed, awkward and concerned that they might experience unpleasant treatment from others, meaning particularly the non-Roma school personnel and non-Roma parents. This kind of avoidance and reluctance to communicate with the official representatives of the mainstream population or to participate in democratic processes is also experienced by various other disadvantaged groups abroad, especially people coming from migrant or aboriginal backgrounds (Young, 2000). In this sense, it is not an unknown phenomenon. Hence, to make the co-operation easier and more convenient for the Roma parents in Slovakia, it is important to organise individual teacher-parent meetings which would also be relatively time-flexible (*special education teacher in municipality A*).

Good practice examples of "inclusive schools"[26] in Slovakia organise individual teacher-parent meetings not only once or twice a year but more frequently (e.g., four times a year), and at least one of them is also in the format of a teacher-parent-student meeting; thus, the child-learner is present as well (Hapalová & Kriglerová, 2013, p. 211; Kriglerová, 2015, p. 56). One school even organised so-called regular "open classrooms" at which parents could be present (Kriglerová, 2015, p. 71). Another very useful strategy to enhance the co-operation of Roma parents with the school is to explicitly open the topic of the coexistence of Roma and non-Roma people and Roma segregation and integration (*special education teacher in municipality A*).

Moreover, due to the above-mentioned reluctance of the Roma parents to co-operate with the school directly in the school environment, the school should actively reach out to engage the Roma parents and not just create opportunities for them to co-operate. Regular schools do not usually understand this difference. They do not commonly actively reach out to the Roma parents and engage them in joint problem-solving processes (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 22).

Several interviewed school stakeholders reported that they actively encouraged parents' participation in the community functioning of the school. Parents participate and even co-organise various school cultural events (*principal of public primary school in municipality A; teacher's assistant in municipality B*). In this respect, social field workers or teacher's assistants may fulfil the role of creating the bridge between the school and Roma parents. Through long-term committed engagement, they are usually able to gain the trust of the local Roma community so the latter start to understand that they are not being paternalistically controlled and directed but considered and treated as valued partners in communication (*social field worker and principal of public primary school in municipality A*).

26 A perfect "inclusive school" does not exist anywhere in te world, and we may merely speak about the schools which demonstrate certain crucial features or principles of inclusivity or which authentically endeavour to approach the ideal of inclusion and welcoming diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2011). In Slovakia, several cases of public primary schools which show these features of inclusivity have already been mapped out, for instance: i) public primary school in Poprad (Kriglerová, 2015, pp. 37-60); ii) public primary school in Smolenice (pp. 61-72); iii) public primary school in Krásnohorské Podhradie (pp. 73-84); iv) public primary school in anonymised locality B (Huttová et al., 2012, pp. 23-24, 182-217); v) public primary school of J. G. Tajovský in Senec (Hapalová & Kriglerová, 2013, pp. 204-222); and vi) public primary school in Čičava (pp. 223-236). In this publication, we will repeatedly refer to these cases as "inclusive schools in Slovakia" or "Slovak inclusive schools", without pointing to a particular school from this list. Since several schools which participated in and were interviewed for this study exhibit some important features of inclusivity as well, in these cases we will make it explicit to which locality we refer (municipality A, B, or C).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Non-Roma parents

The social group of non-Roma parents is a strong player in this complex matrix of relations perpetuating segregation. Most importantly, we need to be aware that the general public in Slovakia is predominantly anti-gypsyist. Two thirds of a representative sample of the general public in Slovakia (761 respondents) presented a "clear aversion or disgust" towards the Roma by selecting the most radical option in the survey which stated "I would displace them out of Slovakia" (Macháček, 2013, p. 60). The openly racist statements were not uncommon when non-Roma parents were interviewed in education-related research studies as well (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 58). These attitudes are most frequently not perceived by these respondents as "racist" as they do not identify themselves as "racists" as such. Regardless of how we label these attitudes and emotions towards the Roma, they are undisputedly negative, which impacts on people's behaviour and speech.

Interviewees in this study also reported that non-Roma parents have a real fear of the Roma parents. To counter this fear, they use the argument that school-aged non-Roma children will one day grow up and in the work life they will still have to interact and get on well with Roma co-workers, clients or inhabitants in general (*principal of public primary school in municipality B*).

> *We always talk about that their [non-Roma parents'] children will once live in a world, which will not be without the Roma. Any job they will choose they will meet with this part of population and that it is to their advantage if they do not feel fear from the Roma but comprehend that they are people just as they are, and they know how to co-exist with them. So we always tell them, since kindergarten (principal of public primary school in municipality B).*

Nonetheless, the local relations between the Roma and non-Roma population significantly influence or even mirror what happens in schools (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 75).

> *Well, they [non-Roma parents] do not like it, when those [Roma] children attend the school. "Why should my child attend the same classroom with such a dirty, stinky Roma child? Don't I pay enough so my child would attend a classroom with decent children?" (social field worker in municipality C)*

While in all three researched municipalities various stakeholders endeavoured to improve the relations between the Roma and non-Roma students at schools, the social tensions between the local Roma and non-Roma populations prevailed (*mayor in municipality A; principal of public primary school in municipality B; principal of public primary school 1 in municipality C).* For instance, the mayor in municipality A complained that constantly seeing unemployed Roma adults (approximately 90% are unemployed), as they walk through the town, hanging out with other Roma friends in front of a shop and drinking, while non-Roma employed people walk to or from work, simply causes social friction.

The non-Roma parents have various tools which they commonly use to apply their anti-gypsyist attitudes. They may withdraw their child from a particular school and enrol him/her in another school with fewer Roma children. They may exert pressure on teachers and school leadership through the School Council[27] or any informal communication stream to create classrooms exclusively for non-Roma students. Last but not least, they may impact on the self-governing bodies of the municipality by delineating catchment areas for schools, so certain schools would not be attached to areas predominantly inhabited by the Roma population (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 92). This is, however, not to say that all non-Roma parents desire Roma segregation. While many parents might be under the influence of a strong anti-gypsyist social and political discourse, once they experience that the presence of Roma children in the school does not impact on good quality education for their child, they usually come to accept it as something normal or tolerable (*deputy-principal of public primary school 3 in municipality C*).

Mainstream schools

The mainstream schools are generally very attentive to these anti-Roma attitudes of non-Roma parents and even proactively act on them. For instance, the social field worker in municipality C described a case when one school said explicitly to a Roma child that she/he should not attend a particular school event (a carnival) for fear that the presence of Roma students would disturb non-Roma parents and create an image of a predominantly Roma school. This is just one example of the spatial segregation the Roma children commonly experience within mainstream schools. The regular schools, however, resort to various more detrimental segregational measures to minimise the risk of non-Roma parents withdrawing their children from the school because of the

27 The School Council is a school self-governing body, which has various crucial competencies in influencing the overall policies and functioning of the school, including selection of the school principal. Parents are represented on the School Council (Hanuliaková, 2010).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

high proportion of Roma children in the school. For instance, the regular schools push Roma parents to agree with their children being educated in special schools or special and specialised classrooms, segregated from the non-Roma students. The schools create elite selective classrooms and low-performing classrooms, while the latter always "happen" to be attended exclusively by Roma students. In this way, they create whole sections of the school building (e.g., one whole floor or pavilion) occupied exclusively by Roma students (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 26).

The phenomenon of non-Roma parents withdrawing their children from a mainstream school because the school is attended by a critical number of Roma students is called "white flight" (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 125; Huttová et al., 2012, pp. 89-92). Nonetheless, white flight does not happen only at school level but also in relation to after-school activities. Once a certain number of Roma students enrol in an afterschool activity or course, the non-Roma students start to withdraw from it. The latter may avoid any cultural school events designed primarily for the Roma students, and the Roma and non-Roma students may sit separately during school events or in the canteen during lunch breaks. This phenomenon is also called "symbolic segregation" (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 80).

In the legislative context of free school choice for parents and per-student formula financing[28] of schools, the schools have to compete for students (or parents) in order to secure a budget for their functioning. The schools with mixed ethnic populations of students often fear that if the school is attended by a critical mass of Roma students, the non-Roma parents will accelerate withdrawing their children and place them at a different school (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 90). The most essential reason for the flight strategy is that non-Roma parents associate a school with a prevailing Roma student population as a school with "lower quality" (p. 91). This concern for white flight was presented in all researched municipalities (*principal of public primary school and mayor in municipality A; community worker and principal of public primary school in municipality B; and municipal office employee in municipality C*). In the highly competitive system among schools for students, some schools even misuse the presence of Roma students and spread the rumour that the Roma students are educated primarily in the other school to attract the non-Roma parents (*principal of public primary school in municipality B*). Nonetheless, on the topic of white flight, it needs to be added that ethnic origin is not the only factor

28 "Per-student formula financing" signifies a mechanism of financing by which the school receives a certain amount of money per child attending the school. Thus, the higher the number of children in the school, the higher the budget the school receives. In addition, the school receives a higher amount for students who are diagnosed with SEN (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 75).

impacting on making the decision to flee the school. It is only the non-Roma parents, who are economically active and well-informed about the educational system, who can afford and are willing to make this choice (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 93).

In practice, to attract the non-Roma population, schools *(primary school in municipality B and all public primary schools in municipality C)* often use the strategy of creating at least one selective or elite classroom in each school grade, which specialises either in foreign languages or natural sciences, in which well-performing students are placed. Nevertheless, experts in inclusive education (e.g., Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2010; Ballard, 2013; Booth & Ainscow, 2011; Kriglerová, 2015; Slee, 2011) do not consider such a strategy as an inclusive one, since it separates the well-performing students into one space and deprives the non-selected (low-achieving) students of being inspired and motivated by the former. In order to avoid white flight, a more inclusive approach, instead of creating elite classrooms, is to offer a wide selection of educational programmes and to put an emphasis on high-quality education, attractive for both Roma and non-Roma parents (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 92)

While creating elite classrooms or classrooms for low achievers and supporting other forms of symbolic segregation are manifestations of the second type of segregation which happens within a mainstream educational path, the mainstream schools may resort to the first type of segregation by establishing special or specialised classrooms[29] or zero grade classrooms. Educational experts worldwide (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010; Slee, 2011; Tomlinson, 2012b) lead a lively debate on the benefits and detriments of this form of segregation in contrast to inclusive education, which seeps through all levels of the educational system of Slovakia as well. These controversies were manifested in interviewed participants' utterances in this research study, too.

29 The main difference between the "special classroom" and the "specialised classroom" is that the former is established for students with diagnosed SEN, while the latter is established for both the students with SEN and students from SDB. The second most important difference is that while the special classroom is a de facto permanent measure for the entire primary education of a child (even though it does not have to be permanent), the specialised classroom is legislatively limited to last a maximum of one year. The specialised classrooms are very rare in Slovakia because they are not economically viable for schools. While the specialised classrooms must have a maximum of one-quarter of the students of a regular classroom, the school receives a very similar amount of money for a child educated in a regular classroom and a child in a specialised classroom (Farenzenová et al., 2013, pp. 34-39).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

> *The children that were not enrolled in the special school and have some diagnosis or some troubles are here in a group with children that are successful. That is why they try to adjust to the majority and attempt to progress. Hence, the fact that the children are somehow integrated among other children is positive. (teacher's assistant in municipality B)*

> *You've got an example of two iron balls attached to your feet; you are normal as I am, but how should I catch up with you with those balls? I will never catch up with you. [. . .] They will experience success in that special primary school [. . .] He will even receive the A grade. But in a regular classroom, when he is integrated, he will seldom reach that level of being A-grader. I don't know. He will always be at the bottom (municipal office employee in municipality C).*

While the former interviewee adheres to the principles and benefits of the inclusive approach, the latter justifies the segregation of some children in the special school or special classroom. Having very limited financial resources and support conditions available in the mainstream schools makes the arguments for segregation very relevant for many school stakeholders (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*). Nonetheless, the issue of segregating some Roma children into special classrooms/schools becomes morally unjustifiable when they are segregated merely to avoid white flight; in this case they are segregated primarily on the basis of their ethnicity (although de jure justified in that the segregated children are also diagnosed with SEN). In this respect, the process of becoming enrolled in a special school or special classroom becomes a matter of diagnostics and SEN assessment, which will be discussed in detail in the following part of the chapter.

The issue of enrolling students in zero grades is a rather controversial one, as well. For a child to be enrolled in a zero grade, an employee of CPPCP has to assess the child with a school readiness test and propose education in the zero grade, and the legal guardian of the child has to agree to it (*employee of CPPCP in municipality C*). In a situation where the pre-primary school enrolment of Roma children is so low in comparison to the average population (see the previous chapter), it is considered as a valuable compensatory temporary measure until the pre-primary school enrolment no longer rises significantly (Klein, Rusnáková, & Šilonová, 2012). Nonetheless, the zero grades pose a number of challenges to Roma inclusion. First, the zero grade is counted within the 10-year compulsory education in Slovakia (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 33), which means, in practice, that once the students have finished the ninth grade

of primary school, they do not have to continue studying at the upper secondary education level. These students often end up being early school leavers without attaining any upper secondary education and skills (see the following chapter). Second, the schools with the zero grade, which are most often attended exclusively by Roma children, usually do not distribute these children among all classrooms in the first grade. They stay in the same composition and create a predominantly Roma classroom throughout their entire primary education (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 69). Third, the zero grades do not always lead to the mainstream educational path but, to a great extent, are still a passage to a special classroom or special school, as indicated in the following statement:

> *Three years ago we had eleven children [in the zero grade]. Eight of them got enrolled in the first grade. Four of them got enrolled in the second grade and even two of these are going to repeat the grade. [. . .] So three children went directly to the special school and then four children, who had problems, from the first grade (principal of public primary school 1 in municipality C).*

When speaking about the spatial segregation happening within the mainstream educational path, when even the space within classrooms, school corridors or other parts of schools becomes symbolically separated for Roma and non-Roma students, we need to discuss the space and the environment of the school itself. In this respect, for instance, the physical environment of the Slovak inclusive schools is barrier-free and welcoming, with various posters and works of different students on the walls (Hapalová & Kriglerová, 2013, p. 216). In one school, the back sections of the classrooms have carpets, sofas and cushions (each child owning one cushion), which are used for various group activities or so-called "community" meetings (Kriglerová, 2015, pp. 44-45).

To improve a school climate beyond its physical environment, the good practice example of an inclusive school in Slovakia organises a number of events and discussions to eliminate prejudices and to create a welcoming and appreciating environment for all diverse individuals (Hapalová & Kriglerová, 2013, pp. 206, 212). For instance, in one incident in a school when one child put down another child on the basis of her/his different ethnic and language background, it was immediately addressed and discussed with the whole class (Hapalová & Kriglerová, 2013, p. 209). The application of a participative principle among the children, when they are not treated as mere objects of education but as co-creators and problem-solvers, plays an important role in creating a positive school

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

climate as well (Kriglerová, 2015, pp. 45, 79). Whenever there is a conflict among the children or a bullying incident, the teachers attempt to solve it with the children themselves (p. 80). In this sense, the goal of children feeling safe, happy, and self-confident is of primary importance for an inclusive school (p. 62). The children are also encouraged to feel respect and understanding for diverse individuals. For instance, they help other children with disabilities to overcome the physical and symbolic barriers in the school (p. 63).

The participatory approach of inclusive schools does not relate merely to students but also their parents. These schools actively reach out to engage the parents in the school life; for instance, they organise frequent individual teacher-parent-student meetings (Hapalová & Kriglerová, 2013, p. 211).

In terms of being able to include all students in the mainstream education, supporting the active participation of all students in their learning and increasing their educational performance, the school staff interviewed in this research and in other similar studies (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 52) perceive themselves as having very limited possibilities. They put most of the responsibility for the educational performance of Roma children on their parents, their essentially different "mentality" and their poor socio-economic background. Although the impact of the family background on students' performance is undisputable, in this attitude of blaming the parents for students' educational failure and for their "inevitable" exclusion to the special educational stream, one may observe a great risk that the school staff already presume or expect this failure like a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Mamas, 2012, p. 1234). If the school does not blame the particular Roma parents, they perceive the Roma segregation as an inevitable and even beneficial phenomenon, being the consequence of various external factors (e.g., lack of finances, non-Roma and Roma parents' preferences, and Roma students' preferences) (Huttová et al., 2012, pp. 96-97). Perceiving oneself as helpless in the face of external factors has a great risk of low expectations and resigning from any additional effort to subvert the unfavourable situation of Roma students (p. 57).

In an attempt to identify inclusive trends in the school educational programs of Slovak primary schools, Iuventa (2015) conducted an analysis covering altogether 30 primary schools with a higher share of students from SDB. The authors of the study classified the schools into four categories: segregation prevails (40%), integration prevails (27%), inclusion prevails (13%), no reflection of students from SDB (20%). At schools with inclusive trends prevailing, teachers identify the deficits of students from SDB

(language barrier, lower cognitive and social skills) and often perceive that these are caused by a lack of pre-primary education and support in the family. The objectives of education at these schools are to prepare students for further education, develop their skills and build their own identity. Students from SDB are educated in mainstream classrooms, and while some of them may also be educated in special classrooms, there are no tendencies to exclude a significant number of students from SDB. These schools have an SEN teacher and a teacher's assistant. They offer a variety of extracurricular activities, emphasising the attendance of students from SDB in the school clubs. They apply other supporting financial measures beyond the state subsidies. Teachers often use team-work, experiential learning, the flowing reading method and various school aids, and they adjust the classrooms. The schools also apply a career guidance system, multicultural education and various measures that ensure the active co-operation of families with the school. Positive results are low absentee rates and the progression of students to 4-year study programs at secondary schools.

Principals in mainstream schools

The current legislation in Slovakia puts the principal in the role of addressing all the above-mentioned pressures and contextual conditions. Hence, he/she has the primary responsibility for making the decisions on segregation or inclusion. In doing that, the principals have in mind the goal of securing not only the educational functioning of the school but also its mere existence, by attracting enough parents in order to receive sufficient financial resources for running the school. While in several cases they manage to sustain a relatively inclusive school, in others they may resort to the most obvious cases of segregation of Roma students. Nonetheless, it needs to be pointed out that even principals who are strong supporters of inclusive education have to face powerful anti-gypsyist pressures, not only from non-Roma parents and other external stakeholders such as CPPCP, CSEC or local special schools but their own teams of teachers. That is why, while having some de jure superior position in the structure of school stakeholders, principals should not be viewed as solely accountable if the schools practise the segregation of Roma children.

> *We worry about whether we handle the behaviour and hygiene [of the Roma students]. Those are two big things we need to deal with constantly, because then the non-Roma children leave the school [to a neighbouring town school]. Hence, then they leave and integration deteriorates. If you want integration or inclusion to function, you need to have some amount of [non-Roma] students as well (principal of public primary school in municipality A).*

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Teachers in mainstream schools

In the schools which are attended by some proportion of Roma students, the hiring strategy should be oriented towards teachers who are willing to work with them, experiment, and go through additional training and who are identified with the vision that every child deserves high-quality education (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*). The reality is that many teachers themselves hold anti-gypsyist attitudes, and these should be detected in the hiring process (*community worker in municipality B*).

The teachers in regular schools often prefer the Roma students to be educated in segregated spaces, because the former feel that their teaching methods do not work on the latter. These teachers are just not acquainted with the great variety of teaching methods available for them to use in order to foster the successful inclusion of all students in their classes.

In the Slovak inclusive schools, teachers use a large spectrum of teaching methods in order to individualise their teaching approach to support and maximise the development of every child's potential. They endeavour to interconnect the knowledge with the daily lives of the children and search for thematic connections. They support learning in pairs or small groups to develop soft skills in the children. They also use tablets and other IT equipment, so the children view learning as playing (Kriglerová, 2015, pp. 49-50). They are genuinely interested in the children's opinions and try to stimulate the children's inner motivation to learn, so they enjoy learning and do not feel any stress from it (pp. 66-67). They use, for instance, the Content Language Integrated Learning teaching model (*principal of public primary school 1 in municipality C*), Step by Step method (*principal of special public primary school in municipality C*), Montessori approach (*principal of public primary school 2 in municipality C*), Kovalíková integrated thematic teaching (*principal of public primary school 1 in municipality C*), flowing reading technique Sfumato (*principal of special public primary school in municipality C*), Hejný method, Dalton method, Feuerstein method, strategy of critical thinking development, etc. (Réveszová, 2013, p. 139). They do not overly use a reprimanding approach (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 106) and try to enable each child to experience success in learning (*teacher's assistant in municipality B; principal of non-public primary school in municipality C*). They do not stigmatise the Roma children if they do not have an item of learning equipment, such as an exercise book or pen, but automatically lend or give them one (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*).

In the international survey TALIS, 76% of teachers under 30 years old in Slovakia reported that they feel inadequately prepared and trained to teach students with various SEN (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 54). This relates to low-quality teacher training in tertiary education but also to inadequate opportunities for high-quality further education for teachers.

With regard to further education, the teachers in one Slovak inclusive school are supported to experiment and innovate in their teaching. They attend various courses about innovative teaching methods and anti-prejudice training (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 55), and most importantly, they organise so-called "model classes", so other teachers can observe and then give feedback and reflect on the teaching methods used in the class (Kriglerová, 2015, p. 48). In the primary school in municipality A, more than half the teachers had completed their training in special education (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*). In order to be able to individualise their teaching methods, teachers intensively collaborate, share knowledge and experiences and support each other (p. 65). Every single week, they have a staff meeting where they discuss cases of individual students, various teaching methods and the most updated research (p. 43).

With regard to the educational content, the Slovak inclusive schools also incorporate facts about the Roma history, culture and language into their curriculum. They support children feeling proud of their Roma identity or demonstrate to the non-Roma children that each ethnicity has a rich history and culture and should be respected and welcomed (Kriglerová, 2015, p. 81).

Special Educational Needs support staff in mainstream schools

In terms of supporting the development of all individual children and their potential, the SEN support staff (psychologist, special education teacher, curative teacher, social pedagogue, teacher's assistant, etc.) play a vital role. In the Slovak inclusive schools, they assess children to propose the most appropriate support and co-create individualised educational plans for the children; they withdraw children for individual intervention or individually assist them in the classroom; and last but not least, they advise and intensively collaborate with other teachers on how to best individualise the teaching methods for a particular child or children (Farenzenová et al., 2013, pp. 61-66; Kriglerová, 2015, pp. 50-52). In this sense, the role of SEN support staff must be rather flexible, since they must be able to react promptly to emerged situations, which often requires coordination with other teachers and other relevant school stakeholders (Kriglerová, 2015, p. 65).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

There are, however, some risks attached to the role of SEN support staff. Their role is often perceived very narrowly as mere assistants to one child, who is either individually withdrawn from the classroom or who is seated next to the teacher's assistant or special education teacher but practically excluded from interactions with other classmates. In other words, SEN support staff may strengthen the symbolic segregation just as they can support inclusion. In this respect, the practice of withdrawing an individual child or small group of children for focused therapeutic or special educational intervention should only be conducted when it does not stigmatise the child/children, while the practice of direct assistance during the class should not be limited to one or a few children. During the class, the SEN support staff should assist all the children in the classroom and the regular teacher (Booth & Ainscow, 2011).

Each school participating in this research study employed at least one special education teacher and teacher's assistant, and they highly praised their contribution to the whole school community. While the special education teacher usually assists individual children or consults with other regular teaching staff on how best to individualise their teaching, the teacher's assistant not only assists teachers in the classroom but also tutors individual students after school or builds contacts and communicates with the local Roma parents (*teacher's assistant in municipality B*). That, however, does not apply to all schools. Sometimes even the special education teachers play a crucial role in communicating with the Roma parents. For instance, in the primary school in municipality A, the special education teacher regularly explained to parents the concepts of segregation and integration or inclusion and the benefits of the latter (*special education teacher in municipality A*).

Municipal office

The municipal office has various competencies relevant to the issue of segregation or inclusion of Roma students. Most importantly, it is the founder of public pre-primary and primary schools and prepares legislative acts at the Municipal Council level. These acts delineate different catchment areas for individual schools, so the Roma students are distributed equitably among all schools in the area. To be precise, parents have free choice to select the school for their child; however, the legislative system is designed so that schools are legally obliged to accept the children with a permanent address in their catchment area. If the school does not have adequate capacity or for any other reason, the principal may refuse to accept a child coming from outside of their catchment area. This makes the issue of delineating catchment areas for

schools particularly salient, as schools might object to accepting Roma children not coming from their catchment area (*municipal office employee and deputy-principal of public primary school 3 in municipality C*). The delineation of the catchment areas can be a matter for strong political pressures, in which non-Roma parents may advocate for not having too many Roma students in their school (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 92).

In the town of Martin and in municipality C, they adopted a shared responsibility approach towards distributing Roma students equitably among all town schools. To be more specific, in Martin, the Municipal Council adopted a motion which divided the individual streets of the Roma settlement areas among all the public primary schools, so approximately 10% of the student population in each public primary school are of Roma ethnicity. They also arranged free bus transportation from the municipal budget, with an adult supervisor or guide so the parents would not need to be afraid about the youngest ones (Miškolci, 2015b). In municipality C, the Municipal Council adopted an alternative scenario with a similar effect. They agreed that the zero grade (attended almost exclusively by Roma students) would open each year in a different regular public primary school, and that the children from zero grade should continue studying in the relevant school. The Municipal Council also adopted a policy that the catchment area for non-permanent residents of the town (usually the inhabitants of illegal buildings in the Roma settlement) would be furthest away from the Roma settlement (approx. two kilometres). In this way, they manage to distribute the Roma students equitably to all schools, not merely the one closest to the Roma settlement.

Last but not least, the municipal office also plays a crucial role in coordinating and initiating collaboration among various institutional school stakeholders. All interviewees in municipality C (*employee of CPPCP, employee of the Department of Education of the Municipal Office, social field worker, and principals of non-state primary school, special primary school and public primary schools 1, 2, and 3 in municipality C*) reported very well-functioning co-operation among various stakeholders relevant to the education of Roma children. Several years ago, a so-called "Prevention Team" was established in municipality C. It consisted of the Municipal Office, CPPCP, social workers (employees of the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family), the Regional Public Health Authority, principals of all primary schools and kindergartens, community workers, state and town police, and local NGOs working in the field of education and drug abuse prevention. This team meets regularly once or twice a year and is able to react promptly to any emerged situation, such as when a juvenile commits a crime. Through these meetings, the members of

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

the team have established well-functioning informal personal relations, and in these situations they are able to call each other and react within hours. Besides the crisis situations, through these contacts, for instance, the CPPCP arranged a kindergarten place for one Roma child (*employee of CPPCP in municipality C*).

In terms of collaboration with various school stakeholders, municipalities are generally not that successful in actively engaging the Roma representatives in the self-governing and social life activities of the municipality (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 76). This issue is particularly important as the social relations between the social groups in the municipality are usually mirrored at the school level. Hence, if the Roma people are not involved in any aspect of municipal political and social life, it cannot be expected that they will be involved in the school life either. As discussed in the previous section on Roma parents, these have to be pro-actively approached if providing opportunities for being engaged is not enough.

Institutions for educational counselling and prevention

The issue of "diagnosing" SEN in various children is a rather problematic and disputed one among academics, researchers and activists in education, special education and inclusive education. On the one hand, there is a group of experts refusing diagnostic categories ascribing various psychological or physical "defects", "deficits" or SEN to children. On the other hand, there is a group of experts not refusing in principle the diagnoses of children but arguing for improving the process of SEN assessment (Miškolci, 2015a, p. 244). The former group of experts (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010; Ballard, 2013; Slee, 2011; Tomlinson, 2012b) argues that the deficit diagnostic categories can be stigmatising and can lower teachers' expectations. In using them, we are ascribing the problem to the child and not to the school's inadequately addressing the child's unique characteristics and capabilities. We perceive the child as a problem to be dealt with by specialists in special education. We do not see the diversity of students as a welcome asset but as a burden. These experts argue that instead of focusing on searching for a particular deficit in the child, we should merely look for support methods which may assist the child to develop in various areas of capabilities. In contrast, the latter group of experts (e.g., Farenzenová et al., 2013; Klein et al., 2012; Rafael, 2011) do not refuse the deficit categories but argue that the SEN diagnoses are misused for labelling various disadvantaged groups, such as the Roma children. Hence, they argue that the current diagnostic process is not adequate and has to be significantly improved. In addition, some of them argue that the number of disability or SEN categories should be radically reduced, while enabling the existence of special education as a parallel stream of education to the mainstream education (Miškolci, 2015a, p. 245).

In Slovakia there are two institutions for educational counselling and prevention which deal with assessing SEN: 1) the Centre for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (CPPCP), and 2) the Centre for Special Education Counselling (CSEC) (NC SR, 2008). Within this academic dispute between using and not using SEN/disability categories, the employees of CPPCPs and CSECs can generally be considered either as supporters of the latter position or even a third one, which advocates maintaining the status quo. This position is understandable, since these employees are trained and paid for assessing the children with various psycho-medical diagnoses or SEN.

The offices of CPPCP and CSEC are spread across all regions of Slovakia and employ approx. 1,300 psychologists, special education teachers, social pedagogues and speech therapists. Since primary schools employ approx. 500 of these specialists, the CPPCP and CSEC employ more than 70% of all specialists. Since there are approx. 2,200 primary schools in Slovakia, even if all these SEN support staff in CPPCP and CSEC were distributed among schools, we would still only have a special education teacher in every second school and a psychologist in every third school (Farenzenová et al., 2013, pp. 59-60). In this sense, we can speak about a general shortage of SEN support staff in the Slovak educational system.

Although there has been an expert discussion about merging the two institutions, the CPPCP and CSEC have remained two distinct institutions with rather different vested interests until today. The main difference is that the CPPCP provides the parents and teachers with complex counselling for all children except for those with a health disability (NC SR, 2008). In contrast, the CSEC provides primarily special education-related counselling to children with various health disabilities and is very interconnected with the system of special schools (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 44; Friedman et al., 2009, p. 75).

The CPPCPs are responsible and active on the pre-primary, primary and secondary educational level. They conduct preliminary psychological assessments, screenings in kindergartens and psychological assessment of school readiness when enrolling in primary school (*principal of public primary school in municipality A; special education teacher in municipality B; employee of CPPCP, municipal office employee in municipality C*), and they consult and advise teachers about the teaching methods most suitable for particular children (*principal of public primary school in municipality B*). In the case of the school readiness assessments, the CPPCPs are responsible for proposing deferral of enrolment into primary school or enrolment in the zero grade. The employee of CPPCP in municipality C stated that they

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

never propose deferral for Roma children coming from SDB, since this measure would not fulfil its intended purpose. In the case of these children, they either propose the zero grade or kindergarten enrolment. Since it has good personal contacts with the kindergarten principal, the CPPCP may immediately arrange the child's enrolment into the kindergarten (*employee of CPPCP in municipality C*). At the end of the zero grade, the CPPCP does rediagnostics of all these children to see how they have progressed (*employee of CPPCP in municipality C*). Although CPPCPs cannot usually propose enrolment in a special school or special classroom, they become legally eligible to do so when doing the rediagnostics (*municipal office employee in municipality C*).

Since 1 September 2016, the CPPCPs have also been responsible for assessing SEN resulting from SDB. Until 1 September 2016, primary schools received an allowance for all children from SDB, even for those who were performing excellently and also for those who performed poorly or had SEN. Since 1 September, the schools have received the allowance only for those students who have SEN and come from SDB, and if they are included in the mainstream education. This policy was intended to be pro-inclusive, encouraging the schools to include children coming from SDB, who also have SEN, in mainstream classrooms. The impact of this policy may only be evaluated in the future. Nonetheless, it puts an immense workload on the CPPCPs, as all children from SDB, who were automatically acknowledged as having SDB status after fulfilling certain criteria and without any psychological assessment, now have to be (re) assessed by employees of the CPPCP (*employee of CPPCP in municipality C*).

Hence, to briefly summarise the process of SEN assessment, if the child was not sent for a psychological assessment at the moment of enrolment into primary school, most often the class teacher at the regular school will propose to the parent that the child be assessed. As the first step, the child is always assessed by the local CPPCP, sometimes also in the space of the regular school (*principal of public primary school in municipality A; principal of public primary school in municipality B*). If the CPPCP comes to conclusion that the child has some kind of mental disability or any other health disability, the child is sent to the local CSEC for another SEN assessment. Only the assessment of CSEC may lead to a proposal for the child to be educated in a special school or special classroom (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 45; Friedman et al., 2009, p. 51). As mentioned above, the CPPCP may propose the education in a special school or special classroom merely if it does the rediagnostics (one year after the first diagnostics) (*municipal office employee in municipality C*). After the CPPCP or CSEC proposes to the parent any educational option (zero grade, deferral, special classroom or special school), the parent always has to give his/her full consent for it.

While this system of SEN assessment seems reasonable, it has several shortcomings and risks, which may significantly stimulate the over-representation of Roma students in schools:

- dubious appropriateness of the testing tools;
- personal and spatial interconnections between special schools and CSECs;
- misuse of informational imbalance;
- enrolment in a special school without being diagnosed;
- rareness of rediagnostics;
- rareness of transfers from the special educational stream to mainstream.

The diagnostic testing tools used in Slovakia are criticised for not being appropriate to assessing the Roma children, especially those from SDB. They are standardised for ethnic Slovaks and Hungarians, and they assume a certain set of skills and knowledge which are associated with the middle social class of the mainstream society (Friedman et al., 2009, p. 57; Tomatová, 2004). In addition, they do not use the Romani language as the language of testing.

> *They do not search for the causes, why the child does not know it. One of the causes is also the language barrier that the child does not know the particular term in Slovak, but nobody bothers to find that out. Neither in the counselling centre, nor in the school. And since the child is ashamed and withdrawn, he/she will not say: "I do not know what it means." But to me as a Roma assistant, he/she told me and then I explained the term to them (social field worker).*

While there are doubts about the appropriateness of the diagnostic tests, of even more serious concern is the personal and spatial interconnection between the CSECs and special schools. Various researchers have already pointed out cases when the principal of a special school is the same person as a director of CSEC or when teachers of special schools are also employees of CSEC and commonly diagnose students. They also pointed out that a significant proportion of CSECs were situated at the same address as a special school (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 44; Huttová et al., 2012, p. 74). This introduces a severe conflict of interests since the CSECs should be neutral and independent institutions. This rather gives an indication that CSECs are so interlinked with special schools that the former may merely function as "recruiting" agencies for providing enough student clientele for the special schools to keep them running. This suspicion was confirmed in one of the interviews:

> *They [special schools] are able to secure the special pedagogue, who will come and diagnose the child. Of course, he/she will do it the way they want it, and so the child can be enrolled in the special school. Thus, they have got it legislatively secured (social field worker).*

It is rather obvious that parents from SDB do not have the same access to information as the mainstream population. This information asymmetry may sometimes be misused by the personnel of CSEC or special schools.

> *For instance, our Roma parents do not know that even when their children are diagnosed in the counselling centre, all their decisions, which are issued by the counselling centre, have merely an advisory character. It is not presented so to the Roma (social field worker).*

> *You know when two experts turn up and say four foreign words, then that mother simply agrees: "OK, so he/she will be attending [the special school]" (principal of public primary school in municipality B).*

These utterances confirm that the Roma are not always fully informed that the recommendations of educating their children in a special school/classroom are not a binding decision but merely recommendations issued by an institution with particular vested interests.

Amnesty International (2008) even pointed out cases where the diagnostics were conducted only after the child was enrolled in a special school. For instance, in November 2007, the inspection of the Košice Regional Education Office found that in the municipality of Pavlovce nad Uhom, out of 28 newly enrolled students in the local special school, 18 had not undergone any SEN assessment at all (p. 8). This case of non-existing SEN assessments raises questions about whether the diagnostics are really the deciding factor for enrolling a child in a special school or whether there are some other more decisive factors, such as the motivation of the schools to secure their survival and functioning.

Last but not least, the Slovak legislation does not oblige the special schools or mainstream schools educating children in special classrooms to conduct regular rediagnostics of children attending the special educational stream. It is up to the parents to request the rediagnostics (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 66). Although the schools report that they do conduct rediagnostics at least once in three years, these are primarily

used to adjust the individualised plans instead of to transfer some children back to the mainstream education. These transfers are very rare (approx. 1%), since the child, by being educated in a special school/classroom, has missed so much educational content that it is almost impossible for him/her to catch up (p. 33).

Despite all these concerns about the functioning of CPPCP and CSEC and how especially the latter may contribute to the over-representation of Roma children in special education, these institutions may also play a very beneficial role in supporting children experiencing difficulties in learning in the mainstream education.

> *In the following two weeks we will have a re-evaluation meeting and we will call [employees of CPPCP and CSEC], educational counsellor, special education teacher, deputy school principal, principal, classroom teacher and parent. And we sit down and re-evaluate. That means we are examining whether that integration is beneficial or whether the child needs some more relieves. What needs to be continued in and what needs to be changed. How the child works. What his/her results are. We do this twice a year (principal of public primary school 2 in municipality C).*

In this constellation of accountabilities and relations with other stakeholders in the educational system, while not being financially dependent on the size of its clientele (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 75), the CPPCP has favourable conditions to be the most neutral player and supporter of inclusive education. Nonetheless, due to the prevalent deficit discourse on children experiencing difficulties in learning and the inadequate support mechanisms and insufficient number of SEN support staff in mainstream schools, even CPPCP's employees often prefer segregated education for Roma children. They are simply convinced that the mainstream schools are currently not prepared and adequately equipped to include these children so they would really benefit from this inclusion (*employee of CPPCP in municipality C*).

Special schools

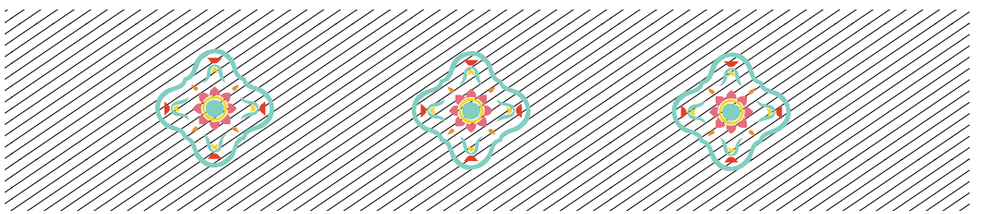
According to Friedman et al. (2009), in special primary schools 59.4% of all students are of Roma ethnic origin (p. 8). The over-representation of Roma students in special schools is also demonstrated in Tables 4-6 at the beginning of this chapter. The curriculum of special schools for children with mild mental disability, which is the most frequent SEN ascribed to Roma students, is reduced to 60% of the general curriculum

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

in mainstream education (p. 30), which is why it de jure equals the first four grades of regular primary education (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 41). This significantly limits their options for education following the special school and also their employability in adult life.

As explained above in detail in the section on Roma parents, there are several alleged advantages to their children being educated in special schools. Many of them are very relevant for Roma parents and employees of mainstream schools. For instance, the special school in municipality C has really managed to create a very pleasant learning environment for its children (almost all Roma children), using a wide variety of innovative teaching methods and extracurricular activities. Nonetheless, one of the arguments against the inclusion should be challenged as highly problematic. Opponents of inclusion of Roma students often argue that the Roma children may actually learn much more in the special schools, since there is lower number of students in the classroom and teachers may better individualise their teaching methods. While it is true that there is a lower number of children in special classrooms and hence a lower student-teacher ratio, there is no robust scientific evidence that would prove that the Roma or any children with a disability achieve better educational results in special schools than in regular classrooms of mainstream schools (Armstrong et al., 2010; Ballard, 2013; Huttová et al., 2012; Slee, 2011; Tomlinson, 2012b).

Since the special schools are the most pertinent stakeholder in the academic debate against or for inclusive education as they are the very subject of this debate, in the Slovak context they are understandably more inclined to argue against inclusion. It should, however, be mentioned here that in some other educational systems, e.g., in Serbia (Friedman, Pavlović Babić & Simić, 2015) and in Norway (Fasting, 2013), the special schools may fulfil a rather different role (being consultants and supports to the mainstream school teachers) to the role in the Slovak system. The Slovak special schools do feel this pressure of the discourse on inclusive education and often perceive it as a threat to their very existence. This often makes them not only a passive but an active player against the inclusion of Roma children in the mainstream.



This pro-activity of special schools, for instance in recruiting Roma children, was voiced by two crucial stakeholders in the interviews:

> *For instance the special school developed these activities that before the enrolment into the First Grade they went around the children from those Roma families, those simpler ones, and that woman of theirs came and said: "You must come for the assessment to our place, because I have background materials from the kindergarten." What kind of background materials could they have? Anyway, they should not have come to any families. They invited several of them and persuaded them: "Yes, your child does not fit [to mainstream school]," because each child is a bearer of per-student formula money, for the special schools, too. [. . .] And then she [the Roma parent] came that she wants to enrol her child in the special school, the Roma alone, because there is less children in the classroom, they do not need to do home works, they do not need to have school aids (principal of public primary school in municipality B).*

> *They persuade the [Roma parents] with arguments that are very relevant for them. "Your older child attends the school, it will be easier for you when he/she accompanies the younger one and you do not need to. You have it closer, and you have this and you have that." That parent, since he/she is on a lower level, says to him/herself: "Yes, they are right, I do not need to get up and lead him/her all the way to the other part of town when they have the special school right here" (social field worker).*

These utterances confirm that the special schools are not passive stakeholders leaving it to the CSEC to do the diagnostics of SEN and then propose to the relevant parent that their child be educated in a special school. They actively persuade their potential "clients" before the latter even enter the educational system. That is, however, not to say that all special schools practise this. Nonetheless, these statements indicate a severe trespassing of legal competences and ethical principles, with severe negative consequences for the lives of children.

Community and social field workers

As it was explored in the previous chapter, the community and social field workers may play a crucial role in enhancing the attendance rate of Roma children in kindergartens or may provide some alternative services to the classical kindergarten for the Roma children of pre-school age. In the following chapter, the role of community and social field workers

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

will be explored in supporting the Roma children in their regular school attendance and their involvement in after-school activities, which have an impact on their educational results. The community and social field workers play an indirect role in the realm of desegregation as well. They may act as the least biased informants to the Roma parents about the long-term negative impact of educating their children in special schools or special classrooms, which significantly limits their future educational and career opportunities. To fulfil this task, the community and social field workers, however, have to be very well-informed and sensitised to this topic, which is not automatic in all cases.

With regard to the spatial segregation within mainstream schools, the potential impact of the community and social field workers is minimal or none, since this realm is considered to be an autonomous sphere of the school to decide about, and the community and social field workers are not in an equal power position with the mainstream school representatives. Their sphere of potential influence is more the parents. Thus, if they observe spatial segregation, they may rather influence the parents to protest against these practices.

Non-governmental organisations

As in the case of community and social field workers, non-governmental organisations which focus in their activities on interventions in the marginalised Roma communities (e.g., Človek v tísni, ETP, Equity) may play a vital role primarily in securing the pre-primary school enrolment of disadvantaged Roma children, their primary school regular attendance, and involvement in after-school activities. In the realm of their spatial segregation or education in special schools and special classrooms, the non-governmental organisations may play at least three different roles:

- direct interventions in schools and municipalities supporting them in desegregating and becoming more inclusive (e.g., eduRoma, Človek v tísni);
- initiation of court proceedings against the schools which segregate and discriminate against the Roma students (e.g., Center for Civil and Human Rights);
- research and advocacy think-tanks and organisations which monitor the situation of the segregation of Roma students and advocate through various publications, campaigns and meetings with politicians, providing expert opinions to various media (TV, print, radio) and consulting with public administration officials, etc. (e.g., Slovak Governance Institute, Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture, Amnesty International, eduRoma, Milan Šimečka Foundation, and Orava Association for Democracy in Education).

Non-governmental organisations, due to their flexibility, openness and ability to bring new ideas, can act in the school policies as motivating factors and strong innovators. Their assistance is essential because they sensitively monitor the trends in education in Slovakia and abroad. It is necessary to open the education market and allow the non-governmental organisations, to a greater extent, to offer educational (and accredited) services to schools and the general public (Petrasová, 2009). When mentioning the non-governmental organisations, some of which conduct high-quality, rigorous research, it is important also to mention universities or academia in general. The researchers who investigate the topic of Roma segregation are often interlinked with and carry out various research, advocacy or intervention activities via the non-governmental sector as well.

Private sector

Private companies which do not do business in education specifically may function as donors to various school stakeholders (e.g., schools themselves or NGOs) active in the realm of the desegregation of Roma students in education. This is, however, rather a rare phenomenon, which may have various explanations. Either the school stakeholders are not skilled enough in fundraising from the private sector and only rarely approach the latter for funding, or the latter is reluctant to donate to this realm as a result of general anti-gypsyist public opinion.

The private sector is also, in its essence, a proponent of neoliberal competition values. Consequently, representatives of the private sector (and/or economists) may sometimes have a tendency to transpose these neoliberal attitudes and values on the functioning of the educational system, which should be based on radically different attitudes and functioning mechanisms if aiming to support equity in education (Armstrong et al., 2010; Ball, 2012; Grimaldi, 2012; Slee, 2011).

With regard to private sector organisations which actually do business in education, we speak mostly about non-state (private) primary schools or private CSECs. The non-state regular primary schools do not need to be opponents of Roma inclusion per se. Nonetheless, many unintentionally function or were purposefully set up to function as a refuge for the non-Roma population to "flee" from the regular schools which are predominantly attended by the Roma students. When speaking about the non-state special schools, as in the case of the public special schools, there is a risk that the vested interest of sustaining their functioning may lead them into (unintentional or conscious) Roma segregation. The private

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

CSECs, if not linked to a particular public or non-state special school, may act as a very neutral player in the diagnostic process. Nonetheless, if they are personally or financially linked to the special schools, their vested interests in sustaining the Roma segregation become relevant.

State

The state, manifested through legislation and public administration institutions, is a crucial stakeholder in impacting on the desegregation of Roma students. The current legislation sets the rules and processes which are supposed to be implemented and followed at both the municipal and school levels. While the state may influence very many aspects of the educational system and the inclusion of Roma students, at the risk of over-simplification, it is possible to cluster these aspects into six main realms:

- financial mechanisms: financing schools, students with SEN and students from SDB, in particular, to provide mainstream schools with adequate resources to employ enough SEN support staff;
- pre-service and in-service training of teachers: the quality and relatedness to practice of the preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers to work with students with SEN or from SDB;
- assessment of SEN and SDB: who conducts the assessment, how, and how often it is done, so it supports inclusive principles;
- external SEN support: the role of external institutions (e.g., CPPCP, CSEC, State School Inspectorate, Methodology and Pedagogy Centre, NGOs) in supporting inclusive education;
- national testing: what and who is being tested, how the test results are used (e.g., by National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements, State Pedagogical Institute, NGOs);
- synergies with other departments of social life: collaboration of various ministries, support of national projects in Roma inclusion in the fields of housing, health care, social field work, security, media, etc.

The state is the most powerful player in the sense that it sets up the rules and processes of the functioning of schools. In this respect, the financial rules and processes especially play a role in how the schools really manage to support the inclusion of Roma students. As explained above, based on the per-student formula financing, the schools currently receive a budget depending on the number of students they enrol. If the schools are also attended by students with SEN and from SDB, they receive a higher amount of financial resources for these students (Farenzenová et al., 2013, pp. 73-76). This creates a highly competitive environment among the schools, which need to "fight" for their students or parents in order to secure their sustainability.

> *It is all because of this money and this per-student formula system of financing, which should have already been cancelled, because it does not create a healthy competitive environment (principal of public primary school in municipality B).*

The trouble is not only the competitive environment among the schools but also the fact that the schools, even with the additional funding for students with SEN and from SDB, receive so little overall funding that they barely manage to survive and cover at least their minimal costs for running the school (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 109). This message also appeared in all interviews with principals of primary schools in all three municipalities participating in this research. While the schools receive approximately 1,100 € per child without any SEN per year, the additional financial contribution for a child from SDB is merely 100 €. The contribution for a child with SEN varies depending on the severity of the SEN, but for instance, for a child with mild mental disability the school receives double the amount for a child without any disability (Farenzenová et al., 2013, p. 76; Huttová et al., 2012, p. 71).

If we continue thinking in the framework of the psycho-medical categories of SEN, in terms of inclusion of the students with SEN, the first significant trouble is that the financial rules do not stimulate the principals to include them in the mainstream classrooms. The schools receive approximately the same amount of money when the student with SEN is educated in a mainstream classroom as when he/she attends the special classroom or special school. Hence, if the state has the objective of supporting the inclusion of students with SEN, this objective should be translated into a process of providing a greater amount of money for a student with SEN included in a mainstream classrooms than placed in a special classroom.

One alternative model is that schools do not diagnose a deficit (SEN or disability) in students but assess them as complex individuals, while some of them may benefit if a particular additional support is provided for them (e.g., employing a teacher's assistant, special education teacher, social pedagogue, etc., buying compensatory IT software and teaching aids or funding specific training for teachers). In other words, not a deficit but the most appropriate additional support is assessed and proposed by some competent employee of the school itself, without labelling the child with any psycho-medical category. This assessment may then lead to an application for funding for this additional support. Another alternative model is that schools receive extra funding for students with SEN, not based on any assessment process but as a lump sum to each school; for instance, each school may receive an additional 15% of their total budget for students with mild SEN and 1% extra for students with severe SEN. This latter model is practised, for instance, in Norway, Malta and Romania (Farenzenová, 2013, p. 172).

Again, staying within the framework of conducting SEN assessments, in order to minimise the risk of over-representation of Roma children in special schools, there has to be adopted some strong measure inhibiting the personal connections between the diagnosing institutions and special schools (as mentioned above). The only institution that should be eligible for the SEN assessment job is the regular school itself. Nonetheless, in this case, each regular school must employ, at least part time, a special education teacher and/or a psychologist. Hence, a significant proportion of staff currently employed by the CSEC and CPPCP have to be transferred to the regular schools, while the counselling centres have to transform themselves from diagnosing institutions into primary external SEN support institutions to the regular schools and the remaining special schools. To be more cost efficient, this may require the merging of CSEC and CPPCP as well. The re-assessment of SEN should also be conducted regularly, at least on a biannual basis, while the students educated in special schools should also be re-assessed by the special education teachers of regular schools, so there would be a higher chance that these students would be re-integrated into mainstream schools.

Principals of all primary schools participating in this research appreciated the expert support received from the CPPCP and/or CSEC. Nevertheless, the employee of the CPPCP in Municipality C complained about being severely understaffed, which does not allow them to be as helpful an external SEN support institution for the regular schools as they would wish to be, e.g., as consultants to teachers on teaching methods or as advisers to parents on support techniques. This role of external support or consultant on the

most appropriate individualisation teaching techniques may also fulfil some of the purposes of other public administration institutions, such as the State School Inspectorate or the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre, by providing feedback on observed teaching or providing model teaching training by an experienced external teacher and trainer directly in the classrooms. The State School Inspectorate has already started to monitor the segregation of Roma students in schools and point it out. Nonetheless, the Inspection does not have adequate and effective mechanisms to secure the implementation of their desegregational proposals. An important player in providing external SEN support may also be the non-governmental organisations experienced in this area.

As mentioned above, in the international survey TALIS, 76% of teachers under 30 years old in Slovakia reported that they feel inadequately prepared and trained to teach students with various SEN (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 54). The teachers are currently not being systematically prepared and trained for this task, neither in universities nor during the in-service training. In the latter case, the teachers complain about the low relevance and applicability of the courses to their teaching needs, including those provided by the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (Santiago, Halász, Levačić & Shewbridge, 2016, pp. 189-191).

As indicated in the practice of the USA, UK and Australia, the competitiveness among the schools (*principal of public primary school in municipality B*) may become significantly exacerbated by supporting standardised national testing in basic reading and mathematics competences and creating school league tables out of these (Armstrong et al., 2010; Ball, 2012; Grimaldi, 2012; Slee, 2011; Tomlinson, 2012a). Creating league tables out of results from these standardised tests introduces a very powerful incentive for regular schools to get rid of low-achieving students by transferring them into special classrooms or special schools. School results in Testing 9, which is a standardised test in mathematical and reading competences conducted in all regular primary schools in Slovakia, already become a decisive measure for some students to choose a particular school, as implied by the principal of a non-public primary school and public primary schools 1 and 3 in municipality C.

> *She [a parent] has never encountered this that the teachers would be preparing the children beforehand for this test, so it is not anything new for them. [. . .] So she said that this was one of the reasons she did not enrol her child into the eight year grammar school. [. . .] Since we publish the results of this test on the Internet, that internet helps it and we put the entire league table of schools, so they can compare. It is evaluated by the independent company [sic] INEKO, so we publish it there as well and the parents spread it out quickly among themselves. They say to themselves that the school has successes in this in the long run (principal of non-public primary school in municipality C).*

Last but not least, as very strongly indicated by all interviewed participants of this research, any change towards a successful inclusion of Roma children in schools cannot happen if the effort is not happening in synergy with other important aspects of social life, such as housing, health care, social field work, security and media. It has been emphasised that the local relations of the Roma and non-Roma population are simply mirrored at the level of local schools. Unless the state provides support in all these areas, for instance in the form of various national projects (community social field work, health communities, Roma civil watch, etc.), inclusive efforts at the level of school are doomed to failure or merely to very marginal success. The often-mentioned good practice example of inclusion of Roma students in the primary school of Spišský Hrhov has also been determined by the synergic impact of interventions in all these areas of political and social life within the municipality of Spišský Hrhov (Mušinka, 2012).

Roma students in the mainstream primary school classrooms

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING THE QUALITY OF MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS

As explored in the previous chapter, a large number of Roma students in Slovakia are enrolled in special schools and classes or ethnically segregated primary schools and classes. Schools characterised by segregation are of lower quality, and as a result, Roma students leave the school system early without achieving sufficient education and skills. A certain number of Roma students are enrolled in the mainstream classrooms in Slovakia, though. The Roma pilot survey 2011 shows that 16% of Roma students less than 15 years old in Slovakia attend primary school classrooms that are ethnically mixed, and 25% of Roma students attend classrooms with at least some non-Roma classmates (WB/UNDP/EC, 2011). Nevertheless, mere enrolment in the mainstream unsegregated classes does not guarantee better school results and educational success. Non-segregated education is rather a precondition for an inclusive school system. Socially disadvantaged Roma students, although enrolled in non-segregated classrooms, still experience a variety of difficulties and barriers in the access to educational success. Therefore, it is important to examine those barriers and explore policies that will address them effectively, so Roma students, especially from SDB, will be given opportunities to gain the skills and education needed for every aspect of life.

This chapter presents the overall situation of Roma students enrolled in ethnically mixed classes[30] of mainstream primary schools and explores causes for the generally worse school attendance and school performance and the early school drop out of Roma students in Slovakia. This chapter includes the clarification of housing and health care conditions to which Roma households are exposed, the perspective of Roma students and families on education, as well as the role of key local stakeholders in increasing the school attendance rate and results and in preventing early school leaving. It is important to note that there are several overlaps between this and the previous chapter, as the previous one deals with the desegregation and thus enrolment of Roma students in ethnically mixed classes as well. Nevertheless, this chapter gives insights into the barriers faced by Roma students already enrolled in ethnically mixed classes of regular schools in the access to quality education and points out that the struggles do not end by merely enrolling Roma students from SDB in mainstream education without employing proper pro-inclusive measures.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, SCHOOL RESULTS AND GRADE REPETITION OF ROMA STUDENTS

One of the key factors of educational success (defined broadly as the acquisition of different competences and skills needed for full participation in different aspects of society etc.) is regular school attendance which has the potential to enable students to acquire knowledge and skills on a regular basis. Children and youth who do not attend school regularly tend to perform worse in school and not complete their education, which means that they will likely be unemployed and face social exclusion as adults. This is the case of Roma students in Slovakia as, according to the Regional Roma Survey 2011, about 20% of Roma students miss at least four school days a month compared with 8% of the non-Roma living in close geographical proximity to the Roma settlements (WB/UNDP/EC, 2011). It means that the school attendance of Roma students in Slovakia is irregular and characterised by frequent absences.

Given that the students are not provided with individualised support to master educational content and other competences, the irregular school attendance and frequent absences inevitably lead to worse school

30 Quantitative data presented in this chapter are related to Roma or students from SDB in the mainstream education system and not Roma or socially disadvantaged students enrolled in ethnically mixed classrooms specifically. This is caused by a lack of quantitative data on the situation in education of solely ethnically non-segregated Roma students in mainstream education.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

performance. The absence of relevant ethnic data on education in Slovakia does not allow us to explore all aspects of the school performance[31] of Roma students specifically. Nevertheless, PISA 2009 results show that Romani-speaking students‘ performance in all reading, mathematical and scientific literacy is significantly poorer than that of Slovak-speaking students. According to Brüggemann and Bloem (2013), Romani-speaking students achieved in the PISA testing in 2009 on average 150 fewer points in all three disciplines than Slovak-speaking students. [32] The authors interpret these results as: “*Romani-speakers lag behind their peers by almost 4 years of schooling” (*Brüggemann and Bloem, 2013, p. 14).

The school performance of the category of children from SDB can be taken into account when examining the school performance of Roma students particularly. Data of the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements (NICEM) from the national Testing 5 in 2015 in Mathematics indicates that primary schools with a higher share of students from SDB perform on average worse than schools with a smaller share of socially disadvantaged students (NICEM, 2016a). In other words, the higher the number of students from SDB enrolled in the school, the worse national testing results the school achieves in Mathematics. As NICEM further states, in the case of schools with more than 26.4% of students from SDB, the degree of correlation between the national testing results in Mathematics and the share of students from SDB ranges from moderate to strong (NICEM, 2016a). Therefore, socio-economic conditions (in combination with other characteristics such as different cultural background and mother language different from the language of instruction in the school) considerably influence the school performance of students in Slovakia.

Different findings can be seen in the results of Testing 9 in 2015 in Mathematics. The data shows no significant differences in the results between socially disadvantaged students and students who do not face socio-economic disadvantages (NICEM, 2016b). However, it is important to note that while in Testing 5 the share of socially disadvantaged students was 5.8% of the entire sample of students (the overall share of students

31 In this publication, the concept of school performance refers not only to the formal evaluation of students (in the form of school marks) but also to all the skills and knowledge needed for succesful participation in the labour market, for active citizenship and political life, family life, etc.

32 Nevertheless, as the authors note, the share of the Romani-speaking students in Slovakia who took part in the 2009 PISA testing was small. To be more specific, the share of the Roma students was about 1.2%. of the whole sample even though it is estimated that the share of 15 year old Roma is more than 10%. Such underrepresentation might be given by various factors such as the different first home language than Romani, the unwillingness to identify themselves as Roma due to stigmatisation or irregular school attendance (Brüggemann and Bloem, 2013, pp. 7-8).

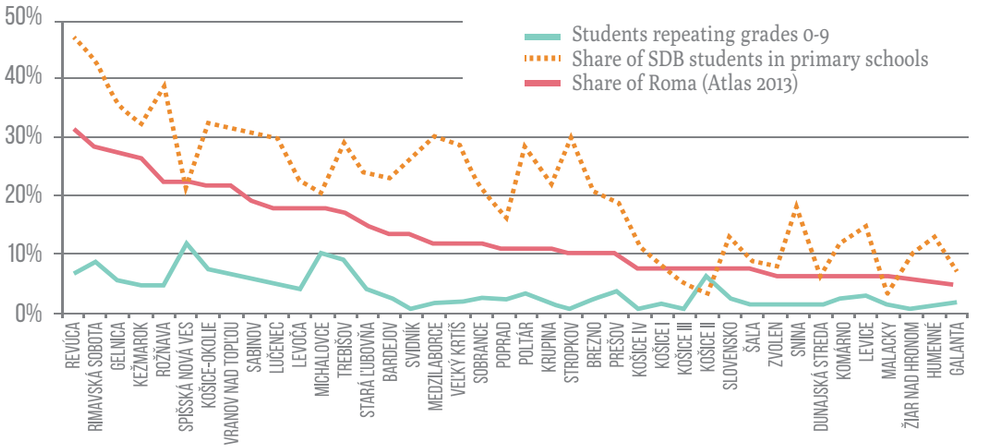
of SDB in the public primary school is 12.9%), the share of students from the same category was, in Testing 9, only 2.4% (NICEM, 2016b). The lower share of socially disadvantaged students in Testing 9 can be explained by the early school leaving (see figures for early school drop outs below) or the fact that that they do not participate in the testing due to staying at home because of the test or due to frequent school absences as mentioned above.

Nonetheless, the strong correlation between school performance and the socio-economic conditions of students' families and the educational attainment of parents in Slovakia is confirmed by the OECD data as well. According to the OECD (2015), the family background of the students in Slovakia strongly affects their overall educational attainment. More specifically, almost 67% of the adults (25-34 year old) reach the same educational level as their parents (p. 2). Given that according to the 2011 Regional Roma Survey only 21% of Roma men and 15% of Roma women attain upper secondary education (UNDP, World Bank & EC, 2011), which is one of the main preconditions of success in the open labour market, the Slovak schooling system does not provide Roma students with opportunities to get education and skills sufficient for integration into the labour market and full participation in political, civic or cultural life. In other words, the education system in Slovakia does not support social mobility and does not effectively assist Roma students in attaining better education than their parents and improving their socio-economic status.

The worse school results and, therefore, unfulfilled school conditions for entering the subsequent grade result in grade repetition. Brüggemann and Bloem (2013), using 2009 PISA results, examined why Romani-speaking students tend to repeat grades more often than Slovak- and Hungarian-speaking peers at both primary and lower secondary level in Slovakia (p. 13-14). When taking into account both socio-economic status and ethnic background, Figure 8 indicates that districts with a higher portion of both Roma students and students from SDB are characterised also by a higher portion of students who repeat grades in the public primary schools. Grade repetitions have a negative impact on students' performance, since grade repetitions (perceived as failures) lower students' motivation, take students away from their peers to different groups of students and may also cause students to leave the education system without completing primary school (since repeated grades are included in the overall length of compulsory education).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

FIGURE 8: SHARE OF STUDENTS REPEATING GRADES 0-9 IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS (2015) IN 40 SLOVAK DISTRICTS WITH HIGHEST SHARE OF ROMA IN ATLAS OF ROMA COMMUNITIES 2013



Source: Authors' calculation based on Statistical Yearbook of Education 2015/2016 by CVTI SR, Eduzber data by the Ministry of Education as of September 2014, and Atlas of Roma Communities 2013 (Mušinka et al., 2014)

Note: The share of Roma in the municipality of Košice and Bratislava is reported for the whole municipality without differentiating between the individual districts of Košice I-IV and Bratislava I-V. Students repeating grades 0-9 in public primary schools only.

Early school dropouts and consequences for upper secondary education

The Slovak school system is characterised by the high rate of early school leavers among the Roma. A large proportion of socially disadvantaged Roma do not complete upper secondary or even primary education and, thus, leave the school system without achieving formal education and skills that would enable them to become integrated into the labour market. To be more specific, as Figure 9 shows, the Slovak districts with a high share of Roma and a high share of students from SDB are characterised by a high share of students who complete the compulsory education at primary school before grade 9. Regarding this, according to the 2011 Regional Roma Survey, only 15% of Roma women and 21% of Roma men complete upper secondary education, in comparison with 85% of non-Roma women and 88% of non-Roma men living in close geographical proximity to Roma settlements (UNDP, World Bank & EC, 2011).

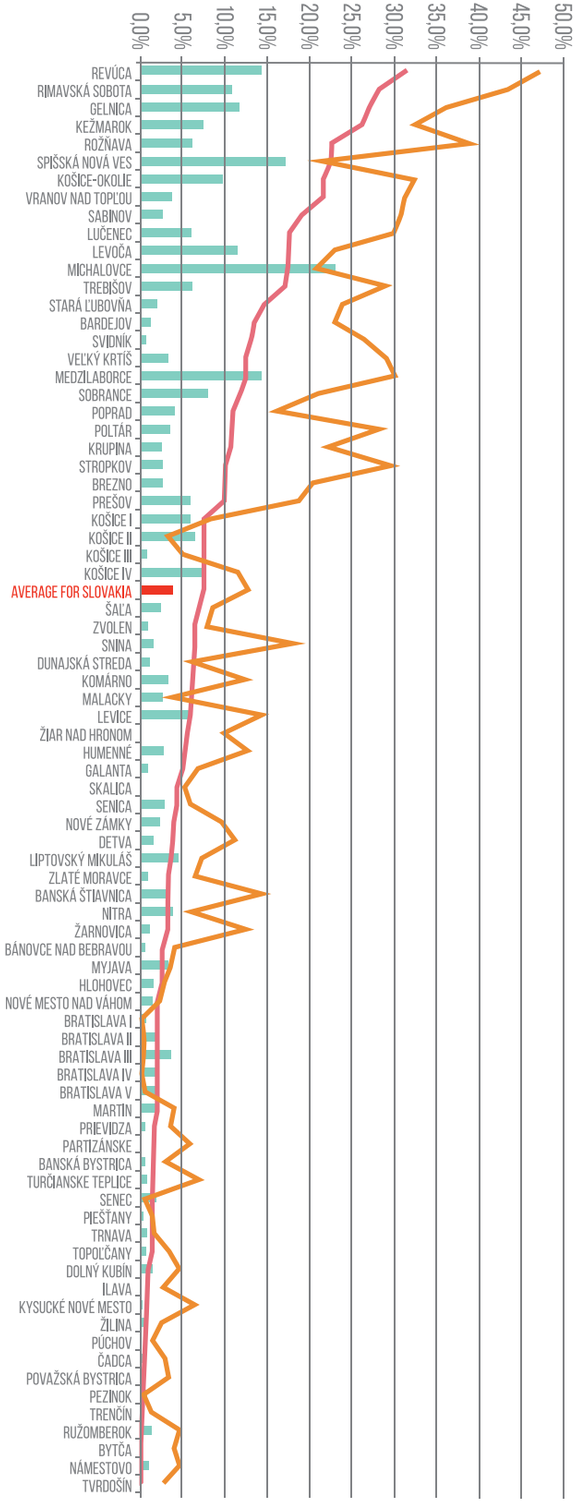


FIGURE 9: STUDENTS FINISHING 10-YEAR COMPULSORY EDUCATION AT PRIMARY SCHOOL BEFORE GRADE 9 (EXCLUDING THOSE THAT LEAVE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EARLIER), 2015, BY DISTRICTS

Source: Authors' calculation based on Statistical Yearbook of Education 2015/2016 by CVTI SR, Eduzber data by the Ministry of Education as of September 2014, and Atlas of Roma Communities 2013 (Mušinka et al., 2014).

Share of students ending compulsory education at primary school before grade 9 (excluding those that went to secondary school earlier)

Share of SDB students in primary schools

Share of Roma (Atlas 2013)

Even though the length of compulsory education in Slovakia is ten years, which in practice means that students are supposed to complete at least nine years of primary school and one year of high school (upper secondary education), the Roma youth often drop out of the school system even without completing primary school. It is because (1) the Roma children often attend zero grade, which is included in the length of compulsory education, and (2) Roma students tend to repeat grades more frequently than their non-Roma peers, as specified above.

Housing conditions and health

The living conditions of a large portion of the Roma population in Slovakia are characterised by spatial segregation when Roma households or whole settlements are placed out of the municipality, often with no or restricted access to local infrastructure and services (school, health care, employment).[33] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the spatial segregation often leads to the segregation in education (either in special education or within mainstream education). Nonetheless, even if the Roma students attend schools that are not ethnically segregated, spatial segregation and segregation in housing significantly affect the conditions for school commuting and thus the overall level of school attendance. The poor housing conditions the large portion of the Roma in Slovakia have to face are often related to tense local inter-ethnic relations, the high rate of unemployment of the Roma causing low family incomes, and excluding the Roma in crowded, low-standard housing.

Poorer housing conditions notably influence the health conditions of the excluded Roma families and cause the higher occurrence of different diseases. The higher level of morbidity[34] and poor hygiene is caused

33 According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013, 40.4 % of Roma settlements are located at the edge of municipalities, 30.7 % are located in the municipality and 16.6 % are segregated and located outside municipalities (Mušinka et al., 2014, p. 78).

34 Among the most frequent health problems the Roma children face are hygiene-related ones (lice, fleas, scabies), but they also suffer infectious diseases such as pneumonia, hepatitis and tuberculosis (WB/UNDP/EC, 2011). A severe health-related problem, that might be an important factor in the low school attendance of Roma students, is drug addiction, more specifically substance misuse mainly in the form of inhalation of toluene. According to Popper et al., more than 37 % of the drug addicts living in the Roma settlements start inhaling before the age of 10, and 42.9 % of the drug addicts begin inhalation between the ages of 10 and 15 (2011). Besides the desire to experiment and peer pressure, the main reasons for the occurrence of drug addiction in impoverished Roma communities are escaping from reality and difficult living conditions, supressing hunger, dealing with the cold, boredom and the associated lack of opportunities to meaningfully spend leisure time (Popper et al., 2011). The substance misuse has an inevitable impact on school attendance, and even if the drug addicted students attend school, they are unable to interact with teachers and their peers, or they sleep during the lectures (Popper et al., 2011).

primarily by poor access to clean water and sanitation,[35] and poor access to health care, but also poor nutrition caused by the socio-economic conditions in which many Roma families live (UNDP, 2012; Popper, Szeghy & ŠarkŐzy, 2009). As a consequence, the primary schools with a higher portion of socially disadvantaged Roma children have to deal with hygiene-related obstacles such as lice, fleas and scabies that might be transmittable to other students or school staff:

> *All the time we are dealing with lice, fleas, bed bugs and so on. And because of this we insist that children [from Roma settlements] go to the school without school bags (principal of public primary school in municipality A).*

MAPPING THE KEY ACTORS IN IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND SCHOOL RESULTS AND PREVENTING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

As in the two previous chapters, there can be identified several stakeholders that play a key role in increasing school attendance, improving school results and, thus, preventing early school leaving of the socially disadvantaged Roma students. Importantly, improving educational conditions requires the engagement of various actors in a range of fields including education, housing, social field work, employment, health care and hygiene, and inter-ethnic communication, as the primary schools themselves do not have enough tools to successfully tackle all the barriers socially disadvantaged Roma students face in achieving educational success at school.

Roma students

Since individual students with all their individual characteristics must be placed at the centre of the attention of the educational system, it is necessary to map all their preferences and the difficulties they experience in the access to high-quality education and skills. It is important to understand in what conditions Roma students from socially disadvantaged background live and what obstacles they have to overcome on a daily basis and to recognise their motivations and attitudes, so the school system and other stakeholders can address them with targeted and systemic policies.

35 The Regional Roma Survey 2011 states that only 57 % of households in Roma settlements have piped water inside the dwelling, about 5 % have piped water in the yard and the remaining share of households have to use the public tap or dwell or draw water from the surface of a mineral spa or spring (WB/UNDP/EC, 2011).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

As mentioned above, a large portion of socially disadvantaged Roma students live in segregated settlements outside or inside the municipality. Segregation in housing and the associated longer home-school distance forces Roma students from an early age to overcome long distances on a daily basis to get to the school facilities:

> *The student of the first grade [of the primary school] must come through the whole town on a daily basis, to attend the first grade. I think it is a horrible to imagine [that he had to commute such a long distance]. And if she [Roma mother] has at home more children, it is difficult to take him [the Roma student] to the school on a daily basis (social field worker).*

The public transport, if available, linking the settlement and the school may make it easier for Roma students to commute to the school. Nevertheless, the commuting increases the family budget (social field worker) and thus burdens Roma households. Even though the state covers the travel expenses of all students who attend primary school outside their place of residence in the school catchment area (if there is no choice to attend a school in the place of residence), it does not cover the travel costs of Roma parents who wish to accompany their children on the way to the school. Also, if there is no bus or train connection, municipalities have no obligation to secure the regular transportation of the Roma to the school in their catchment area.

The higher commuting distance between school and the place of residence may also be a result of the division of catchment areas of schools rather than the fact the Roma live in remote areas out of the municipality. As argued in the previous chapter, the division of catchment areas is a common tool of Roma segregation in schools when catchment areas of schools correspond with the districts of the town and consequently with the ethnic division of the population in a particular municipality. Nevertheless, the higher commuting distance might also be caused by the efforts to proportionally divide the Roma students among all the schools in the municipality and thus avoid creating ethnically segregated schools. This was the case of municipality C where, according to the social field worker, the principal of the public primary school, which was the closest to the local Roma settlement, initiated the division of school catchment areas so not all Roma students would attend one primary school. As a consequence, Roma students have to go to a school in a catchment area that is further away (social field worker). Therefore, the division of school catchment areas which aspires to take into account the ethnic composition of schools (and hence to desegregate) may lead to longer commuting

to school for Roma students, which may negatively affect the school attendance, provided that no further measures are implemented (such as free transportation with accompaniment or desegregation in housing). Currently, Slovak municipalities have no obligation to take into account the ethnic composition of students in local primary schools when deciding the structure of school catchment areas. Municipal Councils (legislative bodies) are responsible for the structure of the school catchment areas.

Apart from external factors affecting the school attendance rate of Roma students (e.g., school commuting conditions, health conditions), there can also be identified intrinsic motivations, the level of self-esteem, and different attitudes (grounded in the lack of educational success they experience in the school) substantially influencing their willingness to attend and complete their education. As stipulated above, the regular primary schools, due to the unpreparedness of regular teachers to work with students of diverse characteristics and the lack of SEN staff, cannot provide educational services that are sufficiently individualised and responsive to the needs of Roma students (Huttová, Gyarfášová & Sekulová, 2012, p. 35). Consequently, the Roma students perform worse than their peers, as is presented above, and do not often experience the success that would motivate them to pursue education.

To understand fully the low motivations of the Roma youth to pursue higher goals in education and future careers, it is necessary to comprehend the whole environment in which the Roma communities live in relation to future employment prospects. According to Petrasová and Porubský (2013), primary school Roma students from SDB perceive education as less beneficial for future life opportunities (e.g., in the labour market) in comparison with their non-Roma peers who are not from SDB (p. 35). Similarly, around 31% of Roma boys and 24% of Roma girls younger than 23 think that the education they achieved is sufficient (despite the fact that it is low), which means that they do not see the direct link between education and good or any employment (World Bank, 2012, p. 76). The Roma youth is very likely fully aware of the high rates of unemployment among the Roma or in the region, ethnic discrimination in the labour market[36] and the associated worse future employment prospects. As a result, they may lower their expectations and often dismiss their future plans and desires because they do not believe they are able to have a good career or succeed in different aspects of life (such as in politics, civic life and culture).

36 The survey results of the European Union Agency of Fundamental Rights show that 49% of the Roma in Slovakia experienced, within the last five years, discriminatory practices when searching for paid employment (FRA, 2014, p. 28).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

The Roma youth, mainly in their teenage years, often leave the school system to take a job (even temporary, unstable and low paid) to increase the very tight family budget. By 2013, an opportunity for Roma teenagers to increase the family budget was participation in the Activation Works, as they were accessible for the long-term unemployed older than 16. The recent amendment of the Act on Employment Services included the change of the age limit from 16 to 18. It means that teenage Roma younger than 18 are no longer eligible to take part in the Activation Works, but they might be tempted to take seasonal jobs or illegal work. As a result, they drop out after the completion of compulsory education.

Regarding upper secondary school, the socially disadvantaged students are eligible for the social stipend that is provided by the self-governing regions. Nonetheless, Lajčáková (2015) states that Roma parents and students leaving primary school often do not even know about the opportunity to get a social stipend for high school (either from regional offices or the Roma Education Fund) (p. 70). A lack of information about further opportunities to attend high school may significantly lower the motivations to complete primary school. Nevertheless, it is also questionable to what extent the amount of social stipend[37] is motivational for Roma students to regularly attend high school, given that earnings (although occasional) they may have as Activation Workers (63 EUR in 2016) or in seasonal jobs might be higher and are transferred to the young Roma individuals directly (not to parents or schools, as in case of social stipends).

Importantly, the restricted access to services and facilities (such as playgrounds, local gyms or children's clubs) and the low incomes of Roma families have a negative impact on the after-school time of Roma students. According to Popper et al. (2011), less than a fifth of Roma children from segregated communities spend their free time actively by taking part in extracurricular activities (pp. 68-69). Among the main barriers to spending leisure time meaningfully, they mention not enough opportunities in the local area and a lack of finance, but also discrimination and segregation in terms of using public facilities such as playgrounds (pp. 74-75).

Popper et al. (2011) also point out that Roma children often do not even try to use public facilities because they think that the facility is just for the non-Roma; in fact, they would not feel comfortable sharing public facilities with the non-Roma due to expected discrimination and their poorer appearance caused by cheaper clothes (p. 75). Consequently, the Roma

37 The amount of the social stipend for attending high school provided by the Local Labour Offices ranges from 22 to 45 EUR, depending on the family income and the school results.

students do not have the freedom to spend their time actively, acquire skills and boost their self-esteem by engaging in different pastimes or hobbies.

At primary school level, all students (regardless of their socio-economic status) are eligible for one cost-free extracurricular activity through the voucher system. It means that the student is allowed to choose one extracurricular activity from the list of activities the school offers. Nonetheless, according to one special teacher, many Roma students do not use the voucher and go home after school. She thinks that the problem is related to the school-parent communication and the fact that the Roma parents do not know about the opportunity to choose one extracurricular activity at the beginning of the school year (*public primary school in municipality A*). In addition, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, socially disadvantaged Roma families cannot pay for the school trips, which are financially covered by parents themselves. As a result, the Roma students might be excluded from these activities, which negatively affects their self-esteem and the overall school climate.

Interviewed school stakeholders in all three municipalities (*principal and special education teacher of public primary school in municipality A; principal of public primary school in municipality B; principal of public primary school 1, deputy principal in public primary school 3 and municipal office employee in municipality C*) reported that Roma children often do not attend any afterschool leisure activities organised by the primary schools, the Centre for Leisure Time Activities or the afterschool care ("School Club of Children"). The afterschool care is established in almost all public primary schools in Slovakia for students from first grade to fourth grade. All the above-listed interviewees claimed that paying fees for the afterschool care, although relatively low for the general public (2 to 6 Euro per month, depending on whether the child comes from SDB), is one of the biggest barriers for the Roma children to participate in it. In the afterschool care, the students can do their homework, collaborate and tutor each other, and prepare for the next school day.

In municipality A, the school participated in the national project "Training teachers in inclusion of marginalised Roma communities" (2011-2015) supporting a whole-day educational system, which relieved the Roma parents of paying any fees, and the school even actively reached out to the Roma community to secure the children's attendance of the afterschool activities. With this proactive approach of the school, the attendance rate of the Roma students at afterschool activities significantly increased (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*). The church public

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

primary school in municipality C adopted a policy of fee waiving for afterschool care in the case of children coming from SDB. This policy also secured a high attendance rate of the Roma children in the afterschool care (*principal of non-state primary school in municipality C*).

Roma parents

The closer school-parent cooperation enables school stakeholders to be acquainted with the family background and student's individual characteristics and thus target individual approach services more efficiently (Kriglerová & Gažovičová, 2012; Rafael & Fešková, 2011). Nevertheless, the school stakeholders interviewed in the research tend to blame parents for their unwillingness to cooperate with the school. Some parents do not go to the group school-parent meetings and are difficult to reach due to segregation in housing (*special teacher at the public primary school in municipality A*). According to the research study by Huttová et al. (2012), while Roma parents themselves reported that some of them might give up on high educational aspirations for their children, they considered education as an important value and attempted to transfer this attitude to their children as well (pp. 48-50). According to the World Bank (de Laat, Ali, Illieva, Sykora & Lepeshko, 2012), 85% of Roma parents wish for their sons to complete at least upper secondary education, and 81% wish the same for their daughters (p. 41).

The school employees are aware of the need to communicate with Roma parents to a greater extent and build relationships based on trust and intense cooperation (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; principal and teacher's assistant of the public primary school in municipality B; principal of public primary school 2 in municipality C*). Roma parents often do not want to go to these meetings at the school since they expect to be treated disrespectfully (*social field workers*).

In municipality A, group school-parent meetings were organised by the social field workers outside the school environment, so the Roma parents were encouraged to come. This suggests that previous bad experiences and a lack of trust prevent Roma parents from seeking more cooperation with local school stakeholders.

Nonetheless, when Roma parents are actively invited to participate in school activities such as the Christmas party and feel that they are welcome, they tend to come and actively participate in these activities (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B*). This means that if the school systematically makes an effort to involve the Roma parents in the school

life and the school´s attitudes towards the Roma are not negative and discriminatory, the Roma parents are more likely to cooperate.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the data shows that the Roma parents perceive education as an important value and want their children to attend school and complete their education (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 48-50; de Laat, Ali, Illieva, Sykora & Lepeshko, 2012, p. 41). Nevertheless, the positive attitudes towards education do not mean that they are prepared and well-equipped to assist their children and fully support them in pursuing their education. As mentioned previously, only a small portion of the Roma tend to complete upper secondary education and thus may lack skills to assist their children in doing homework or mastering different educational content and skills. The school stakeholders claim that the Roma parents, because of their low education, do not help their children with homework (*special teacher at the public primary school in municipality A; teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B*). Also, according to Tomatová (2004), due to material need, many Roma households are not equipped with educational means such as books, stationery or even toys, so parents cannot help their children to develop various skills at home at all (p. 59).

Regarding regular attendance, according to the respondents, Roma parents from a disadvantaged background do not control whether their children attend the school regularly or not, mainly in the higher grades of primary school (*teacher's assistant at public primary school in municipality B)*. That might be related to the above-mentioned awareness of the Roma about the high unemployment rates of the Roma particularly, discriminatory practices in the access to the labour market, high unemployment in the region where Roma communities are located and the resulting low motivation to pursue education. Under such conditions, it might be particularly difficult to motivate their own children to attend school regularly. Additionally and as stipulated above, the Roma students and parents are generally ill-informed about future educational opportunities due to the poor quality of career guidance and orientation services (mainly in relation to the high school choice). As a result, Roma parents are not able to advise their children about different educational and career possibilities.

To understand the irregular attendance of Roma students, it is also necessary to describe the context of socially excluded Roma households. As the mayor of municipality A clarified, a large portion of the local Roma are not employed, and they have lost daily habits such as getting up at a certain time, which is a must for regular school attendance. In this respect, social field workers added that the Roma parents from the local

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

settlement, due to long-term unemployment, except for doing occasional and seasonal work, cannot teach their children daily routines.

Non-Roma students

Another important factor for educational success is relationships with school- and classmates, and in the case of Roma students particularly, also inter-ethnic relations. Data (Petrasová & Porubský, 2013) shows difficulties in communication and building friendships between Roma and non-Roma students, but also between the Roma from segregated settlements and Roma living inside the municipality (p. 77). Such difficulties in building relationships in the classroom might be based on problematic interethnic relations and stereotypes about the Roma minority. Farkašovská (2011) found that non-Roma youth living in the region with a high concentration of the Roma hold stereotypical attitudes towards the members of the Roma ethnic minority related to their behaviour, hygiene, lifestyle or cultural habits (p. 24). The research on the attitudes of the Slovak primary school students towards ethnic minorities showed that 28.3% of students in the 8th and 9th grade (approx. 14-15 years old) strongly agree and 16.6% of them rather agree that the criminal acts committed by the Roma should be judged more strictly (Kriglerová & Kadlečíková, 2009, p. 54). Such a perception of the Roma minority inevitably influences inter-ethnic relations in the school environment as well.

As suggested above, different ethnicity is not the only factor for feeling different and not belonging to the class or school community. Poor hygiene resulting from poor housing conditions may also significantly influence the teachers' and classmates' attitudes towards Roma students who are viewed negatively and prevents them from forming closer relationships (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*). Poor hygiene in combination with material need may cause low self-esteem and an unwillingness on the part of Roma students to participate fully in the school life. Roma students coming from materially deprived families are aware of the poor conditions they live in and the fact that they cannot afford material goods as other classmates can (*social field workers*). The classmates point out the differences in material conditions and it may even lead to bullying:

> *[The Roma boy] just felt upset that they [the classmates] made laugh of him because of hygiene habits. Specifically, [the classmates] made laugh of the boy that he could not fit in. The children saw what sneakers he had. Anytime, they were in so [bad] housing conditions, that he did not wear socks, for example, I mean that boy. […] And he felt very upset, because of this he does not want to go [to the school]* (*social field workers*).

If the Roma and non-Roma students are not provided with services (e.g., by the school psychologist, community workers and others with close cooperation with the families) to deal with self-esteem, bullying, and building relationships in the class, they may be prone to absenteeism or even drop out before completing their education.

Non-Roma parents

Non-Roma parents whose children attend classes with Roma students often worry about the Roma students state of hygiene and hygiene habits, bullying or other inappropriate behaviour directed against their children (*principal of public primary school in municipality A; principal of public primary school in municipality B*). Some parents even have openly racist claims and do not want their children to attend school with the Roma at all (*social field worker*).

Non-Roma parents have to be frequently informed how the school deals with hygiene-related issues and assured that the quality of education will not be affected by the higher rate of Roma students from SDB in the class so they will not withdraw their children and enrol them in another school with a smaller number of Roma (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the public primary school in municipality B; principal of the non-state primary school in municipality C*).

According to the school employees of primary schools with ethnically mixed classrooms, inclusion of the Roma students in the mainstream education may also depend on explaining the benefits for all children of learning how to live with each other (*special teacher at the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the public primary school 3 in municipality C*) and that if children learn how to cooperate in their school life, they will learn how to cooperate in life outside the school (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A*).

Principal and school management

The positions of principal and school management are crucial for implementing inclusive measures in education. Firstly, the principal has decision-making power over employing regular teachers. If he/she considers inclusion as the main goal of the school, selection criteria will reflect that fact, and selected teachers will most likely apply an inclusive approach in teaching. This approach is applied in the public primary school in municipality A, where the principal insists that newly arrived teachers identify with inclusive principles and apply them in practice.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Secondly, the principal is also the one who makes decisions about employing SEN staff (teacher's assistants, special education teachers, speech therapists, school psychologists, etc.). Primary school principals are not obliged to hire special teachers, school psychologists, speech therapists or other SEN staff for students in regular classes, except for a teacher´s assistant. The primary school must employ at least one teacher's assistant if the number of students from SDB enrolled in the school exceeds one hundred. Besides this exception, hiring SEN staff depends (besides sufficient funding) on the attitudes of the principal or the school management towards inclusive education (Roma inclusion in education particularly) and the level of responsiveness towards the individual needs of students.

Thirdly and especially important, is to what extent the principal and school management make an effort to develop relationships with Roma parents. Intense communication and cooperation with parents lead to better understanding of family background and individual barriers Roma students face in experiencing educational success.

For instance, public primary school 2 in municipality C decided to open a classroom for the students from the nearby settlement where they could find desks and computers for doing homework and school projects, as they did not enjoy suitable learning conditions at home. Such understanding of family background thus enabled the principal and school management to address specific difficulties the students experience, which led to introducing this inclusive measure.

Fourthly, principals may also support teachers and SEN staff in their efforts to work with Roma students effectively, for instance in terms of pursuing further in-service training or using new teaching methods. As stipulated in the previous chapter, sensitised and well-prepared teaching staff are a crucial factor in the successful inclusion of students with different characteristics in education. In the public primary school in municipality A and non-state primary school in municipality C, the principals encouraged and made conditions for regular teachers to attend programmes of special pedagogy at local universities as they found it useful for working effectively with the Roma students from SDB. Regarding applying new methods in teaching, a teacher's assistant in the public school in municipality B has been supported in teaching Mathematics (as a part of the after-school teaching activities) through computer games. For this purpose, the school management decided to technically equip not only regular informatics classrooms but also the classroom used solely by the teacher's assistant that serves just for his

after-school activities (*teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B*). The principal of the public primary school 2 in municipality 2 also supports teachers who introduce Montessori teaching methods in regular classes.

Teachers

Regular teachers, admittedly playing a key role in applying inclusive measures in education, face different obstacles in performing their work effectively. The principals articulated the need to support teachers working with students from SDB by way of benefits, good quality in-service education programmes and SEN staff (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the public primary school in municipality B*). The principal of the public primary school in municipality A further claimed that many teachers are not prepared to use inclusive methods in education. Another problem presented is the overall workload Slovak teachers have to tackle. The principal in the public primary school in municipality C also claimed that many teachers have to do a lot of bureaucratic work and create educational plans, and they are not prepared for it at all.

As described in the previous chapter, the professional development of teachers and the mutual exchange of knowledge between teachers were some of the most frequently recommended policy measures to effectively include Roma students in education (Miškolci, 2015a, p. 246). To reiterate, the teachers have to develop different skills to be well-equipped for working with students with different characteristics and disadvantages. Most importantly, it is necessary to strengthen teachers skills in individualising teaching methods so they are able to adjust them to the particular needs of students.

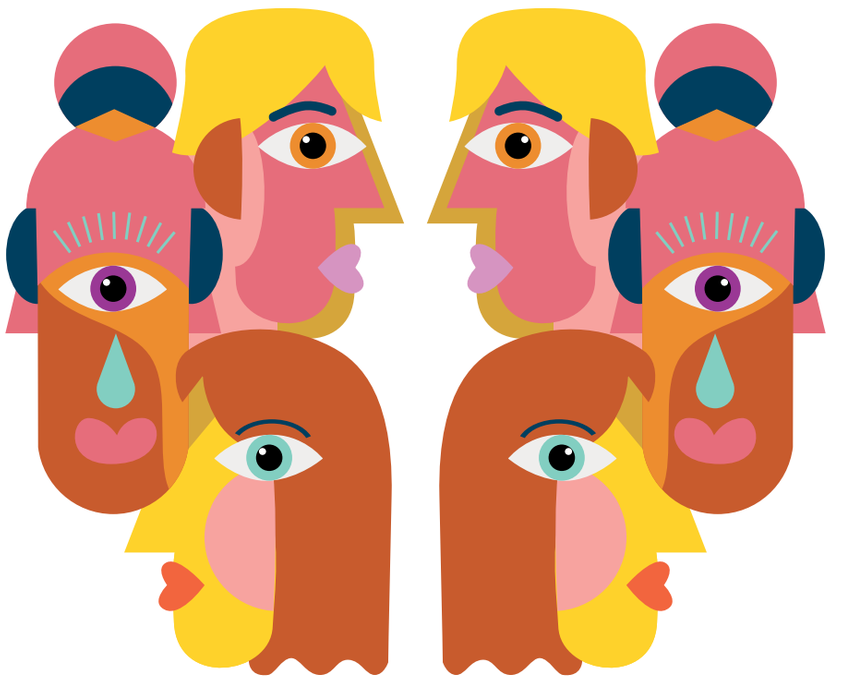
As the Slovak society is characterised by a high level of hostility towards minorities, it is also important to focus on the teacher's attitudes towards Roma students. Petrasová and Porubský (2013) claim that Slovak teachers identify the Roma students themselves as a main problem in terms of their low educational results. More specifically, they see the problem coming from cultural differences and the social welfare system and do not tend to see shortcomings in the school system as such when discussing the Roma in education (p. 70). Social field workers working directly with Roma families in municipality B identified several occasions when teachers in the local primary schools made racist remarks towards Roma students in the classroom.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Moreover, teachers play an important role in building the self-esteem of Roma students, who generally have low ambitions and motivation in education as specified above. In this respect, Petrasová and Porubský (2013) state that Slovak teachers perceive the future of Roma students negatively as prospective and highly dependent on the overall situation in the Roma community (p. 70). Such low expectations from the Roma students, in combination with ethnic prejudices, negatively affect the overall teaching and learning process in the classroom and thus the attitudes of Roma students towards the school.

SEN staff

To ensure that the schools provide individualised services, it is necessary (besides improving both the formal pre-service and in-service training of teachers) to increase the number of qualified SEN staff in the schools. The stakeholders perceive the role of SEN staff (especially teacher's assistants and special education teachers) as crucial for the successful inclusion of Roma but also all students with different characteristics (*principal and special education teachers of the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the public primary school in the municipality B; employees of the Centre for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention in municipality C; principal of the public primary school 2 in municipality C).*



School stakeholders identified several benefits of teacher's assistants that might be categorised as:

1. **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT IN THE CLASS:** Teacher´s assistants are supposed to help students during the regular classes so they are able to master educational content and keep up with the rest of their classmates (*principal of the public primary school 2 in municipality C*). The teaching in the classroom is smoother when the teacher's assistant is present, and if a particular student needs further clarification, the assistant will provide him/her with individual assistance (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the non-state primary school in municipality C*).
2. **AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING:** In several schools from the sample, teacher's assistants provide students with after-school tutoring, which is particularly helpful when students miss classes and lag behind in mastering educational content or need any additional support (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the public primary school in municipality B; principal of the public primary school 1 in municipality C; principal of the public primary school 3 in municipality C*).
3. **ORGANISING EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** Teacher's assistants also tend to organise extra-curricular activities (such as sport activities, cultural events or courses, e.g., digital graphics), often particularly for both non-Roma and Roma students, and assist in organising school events (*principal of the primary school in municipality A; teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B; principal of the public primary school 1 in municipality C*).
4. **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS:** Particularly if the project "Healthy Communities" (described below) is not being implemented in the Roma settlement or community, teacher's assistants are supposed to visit families directly and inform parents about disease, the poor hygiene of their children or different behaviour-related issues and propose solutions to deal with them (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B*).
5. **OTHER SUPPORT, SUCH AS EMOTIONAL:** Due to the high trust between students and a teacher's assistant, the Roma students often seek out assistants to talk about different personal and family related issues (*principal and teacher´s assistant of the public primary school in municipality B)*. This is especially important if the school cannot employ a school psychologist.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

The Slovak primary schools generally lack teacher's assistants due to insufficient funding. Employing a teacher's assistant is covered by the contribution for students from SDB. In the school year 2015/2016, the contribution for students from SDB was 106 EUR per student. The school employees claim that the funds the school receives cannot cover the labour costs of as many teacher's assistants as needed in the schools (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A*). Even if a school applies for the teacher's assistants, it does not get as many teacher's assistants as needed, which means that the number of teacher's assistants does not reflect the needs of the students (*principal of the public primary school 1 in municipality C; principal of the non-state primary school in municipality C*). As a result, a teacher's assistant has to divide his/her time among many students. There is a lack of teacher's assistants mainly in higher grades where students need help not only to master educational content but to overcome different personal problems related to puberty (*teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B; principal of the non-state primary school in municipality C*).

It is very beneficial when the teacher's assistant or any school staff member is a local Roma, who knows the local Roma community and speaks the Romani language if it is used in the local Roma community. Not only does knowing the local context and Romani language help the youngest children who enter the educational system without knowing the language of instruction in overcoming this initial barrier, it also provides a role model for the Roma children and the entire Roma community (Huttová et al., 2012, p. 70). The Roma teachers or SEN Support Staff may assist in conflict resolution between the Roma and non-Roma school community members and enable the Roma children to overcome their feeling of alienation if they experience any due to their ethnic identity (p. 86). Having a Roma staff member even has a very positive impact on the overall discourse, in how other staff members speak about the Roma students and the local Roma community (p. 87).

The principals would also appreciate employing school psychologists to deal effectively with bullying or different conflicts between students (not inevitably only between Roma and non-Roma students) (*principal of the public primary school 2 in municipality C; principal of the public primary school in municipalities A and B; principal of the public primary school 1 in municipality C*). It is mainly students in the higher grades who are aware of their poor socio-economic conditions and experience self-esteem issues (*principal of public primary school in municipality A*).

Special education teachers are particularly useful in adjusting teaching methods to the needs of students, for instance methods in Mathematics or handwriting fonts (*principal and special education teacher of the public primary school in municipality A*). In the primary school in municipality A, the special education teacher does not work directly in the classrooms but takes students at particular times to her own classroom. Special education teachers not only provide individualised services to students but also advise teachers what method to use for particular students (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B*).

Cooperation with the teacher's assistant, special education teacher and regular teachers also helps to assess the overall progress of the integrated students and any changes needed regarding the services provided by the school (*public primary school 2 in municipality C*).

Centre for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (CPPCP)

When discussing better support and further in-service training for teachers and SEN staff, school stakeholders perceive the Centres for Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention (CPPCPs) as useful. CPPCPs provide teachers and SEN staff with training and advise how to work with students with different disadvantages. To be more specific, the teacher's assistant in municipality B appreciated that he was given a demonstration of how to work with a student directly in the class room. He said: "*We sat together with the student, who has a diagnosis, and she demonstrated to me how to work with him. How to teach him letters, to write and to read.*" The special education teacher from municipality A positively assessed the training related to how to teach students with dyscalculia, different methods for students with particular learning difficulties, and how to make individual plans for integrated students (*public primary school in municipality A*). Nevertheless, CPPCPs are currently understaffed so they are not able to provide more direct support services in regular primary schools. As a result, CPPCPs do fewer prevention activities and focus on the already existing problems in the schools (*employees of the CPPCP in municipality C*).

CPPCPs also cooperates with the school staff in preparing individual plans for the integrated students and tracking their progress (*principal of the public primary school in municipality A; principal of the public primary school in municipality B; teacher's assistant at the public primary school in municipality B; principal of the non-state primary school in municipality C*).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

In municipality C, the representatives of the CPPCP meet also with other local stakeholders such as from the local police department, local NGOs and the municipal office or social field workers and make plans how to deal with different difficulties Roma children and youth face (*employee of the CPPCP in municipality C; employee of the Department of Education of the Municipal Office in municipality C*).

Social field workers

As mentioned above, spatial segregation is a crucial factor in the school attendance rate of Roma students. The school stakeholders cooperate with social field workers mainly in cases of school absences and examine the reasons for them (*principal of the public primary school 2 in municipality C*). As social field workers visit families personally and are well informed about family backgrounds and socio-economic conditions, they are a good source of information for other school staff.

Some Roma parents living in the segregated or remote settlements who do not attend group school-parent meetings are difficult to contact and inform about important school-related matters or their children's hygiene and health issues (such as the occurrence of fleas or lice or poor hygiene conditions) (*special education teacher at the public primary school in municipality A).*

In some municipalities, social field workers even accompany students on their way to school, which is especially important for school attendance of the Roma students living in segregated settlements:

> *Even if some [socially disadvantaged Roma] child did not go to the school, he [social field worker] visits the family and asks why he did not come. Both the school attendance is secured and the Roma families are satisfied because [their children] go to the school accompanied by an adult* (*employee of the Department of Education of the Municipal Office in municipality C).*

Social field workers function as mediators because they have developed regular and direct contact with the Roma families; they are perceived as useful because they have built up trust with members of Roma communities (*mayor in municipality A*). This is important for constructively solving different issues between school and families. Highlighting the importance of social field workers by local stakeholders shows that facilitating the school attendance and performance of socially excluded Roma students must be linked to dealing with social problems the Roma families face.

Health care assistants

Health care assistants are considered useful for tackling hygiene and health-related difficulties of Roma students; they are a part of the national project "Healthy communities".[38] Health care assistants are supposed to provide inhabitants of socially excluded Roma communities with various health care and hygiene associated services, such as providing first aid, accompanying the Roma to doctors and mediating communication between doctors and Roma patients, providing assistance during vaccination, picking up medicine from pharmacies for Roma inhabitants, etc. Since health care assistants work directly in the Roma settlements, they can effectively communicate between parents and the school about different hygiene or health care-related issues. The local stakeholders particularly appreciate that they also act preventively through providing Roma parents and students with lectures on hygiene maintenance and the prevention of diseases (*special education teacher at the public primary school in municipality A; social field workers in municipality A; mayor in municipality A*). Such health care services help the schools to deal with the health care and hygiene-associated issues mentioned above.

Municipalities

Municipalities and more particularly the Municipal Office (an executive body) and the Municipal Council (a legislative body) may apply different tools useful for the successful integration of Roma children in education. The role of these two local bodies may be categorised thus:

The Municipal Office:

- FOUNDS THE PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND (CO-)FINANCES DIFFERENT SCHOOL ACTIVITIES;
- APPLIES FOR AND IMPLEMENTS THE NATIONAL PROJECTS.

The Municipal Council:

- APPROVES THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE MUNICIPALITY IN THE NATIONAL PROJECTS AND, MORE PARTICULARLY, CO-FINANCING IF NEEDED;
- ENACTS LOCAL LEGISLATION WHICH MAY REGULATE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL POLICIES SUCH AS SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS OR SCHOOL FEE WAIVERS.

38 The programme "Healthy communities" ("Zdravé komunity") was run as an NGO initiative between 2003 and 2014. In 2014 the programme became the official governmental policy financed by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic. The goal of the programme is to improve health and hygiene conditions in the segregated Roma settlements. Currently, 213 health care assistants are providing services in 218 socially excluded localities.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Municipal Office is a founder of the public primary schools and decides financial allocations. Besides the prescribed budget based on the per-student formula financing, the municipal office may co-finance or fully finance activities or items related to the schools, above the budget. To be precise, the municipal office in municipalities A and C, for instance, co-finances the afterschool care, the Centre for Leisure Time Activities, lunches in schools, and sometimes even teacher's assistants and fully finances the construction of kindergarten buildings (*mayor and principal of public primary school in municipality A; principal of non-public primary school in municipality C*).

Importantly, the Municipal Office applies for the national projects such as social field work or Healthy Communities. It also means that the Municipal Office needs to prepare all the materials for the application and then is responsible for the implementation. Some national projects (e.g., social field work) must be co-financed; thus, the Municipal Office needs to single out the funds from the municipal budget.

In this regard, the mayor cannot decide independently whether to apply for the national project; he/she needs the approval of the Municipal Council. It means that the involvement of the municipality in the national projects depends both on the mayor and local MPs. In the case of municipality A, the local MPs were not really reluctant to approve the involvement in the national project "Social Field Work". Nevertheless, according to the mayor, they made certain negative remarks about providing the local Roma with too much support.

The Municipal Council, as a legislative body, is responsible for enacting locally binding regulations. There are a few examples of how the Municipal Council may positively or negatively influence the inclusion of the Roma in education by local regulations. First, the local regulations define the school catchment areas which, as noted in the previous chapter, influence the ethnic composition of the local schools (mainly if there is more than one school in the municipality). That is the case in municipality C, as described in the previous chapter. Secondly, the Municipal Council may decide about financial assistance for families from SDB in the form of waivers. That is the case in municipality C, where, according to the local regulations, the primary school students of low-income families pay just a symbolic price of 0.01 EUR for the school lunch. Importantly, low income is not defined as material need but is based on a low income; thus it does not exclude families where the mother is on maternity leave and therefore non-eligible for the benefit for material need (*employee of the Department of Education of the Municipal Office)*.

Church and non-governmental organizations

There is a variety of NGOs dealing with Roma inclusion in education. Besides NGOs doing research and analysis of educational policies (such as the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture, Institute for Public Affairs, Slovak Governance Institute) and NGOs conducting advocacy activities and campaigning to promote equity in education (e.g., Amnesty International), there are several NGOs that implement direct interventions at the local level to improve the education of Roma children in the mainstream schools.

One of the most important direct interventions implemented by NGOs was piloting teacher´s assistants in the early '90s and the beginning of the 2000s by the Wide Open School (Škola dokorán). Currently, one of the largest interventions regarding mainstream education is being implemented by ETP Slovakia, which is testing the Feuerstein teaching method in selected primary schools with a large proportion of Roma students from SDB. The aim of ETP´s activities is to test the teaching methods and advocate for them so they are included in the state school curriculum. Several NGOs provide community centres where different help is provided, such as additional school support, extracurricular activities and strengthening parental skills. The NGO People in Need provides a wide network of community centres where different activities are implemented, such as extra school support and career guidance services.

It is also important to mention locally established NGOs. In municipality A, the civic organisation conducts cultural events for the local Roma and cooking courses for young Roma women (*mayor in municipality A*). In municipality B, the local NGO runs a community centre where REF stipends for Roma high school and university students are administered and other social assistance services for the Roma families are provided (*social field workers in municipality B*). Nevertheless, in both cases, the NGOs are represented by just 12 people.

The specific roles of the local churches and NGOs differ from municipality to municipality. According to the social field workers, in municipality A, the local church does not provide the Roma families with any specific activities, but they further claim that active involvement often depends on the individual priests (*social field workers in municipality A*). According to the mayor, the local church provides the locals with children's summer camps, but most of the Roma families cannot afford the fees for them. Similarly, in municipality B, there are not targeted activities for the Roma families (*social field workers in municipality A*). In municipalities B and C,

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

the respondents did not mention any significant activities of the church regarding the local Roma community.

There are also several activities the church organizations arrange for the Roma children and parents from SDB. According to the research "God between Barriers" by Podolinská and Hruštič (2010), a variety of churches provides services directly in Roma communities. Regarding the education of Roma children specifically, the churches mainly arrange extracurricular activities, provide after-school tutoring, organise cultural events and provide needy families with material help.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this chapter serve as a guideline for various stakeholders aspiring to improve the education of Roma students in Slovakia, or partial aspects of it. Therefore, this chapter contains recommendations in the form of systemic changes requiring large public investment or new legislation, along with recommendations that can be implemented immediately without any legislative changes or large public investment. Thus, the recommendations are aimed at a variety of stakeholders, mainly the state (e.g., the Ministry of Education and other related state institutions such as the State School Inspectorate, Methodological and Pedagogical Centre, and National Institute of Education), municipalities, pre-primary schools and primary schools, and also the so-called external non-state stakeholders, such as NGOs, churches, donors, charities and private companies, and grassroots civic initiatives. All these stakeholders may aim to explore the potential areas of their involvement in this issue and at the same time get acquainted with the complex picture of the difficulties the Roma students face in access to quality education.

To achieve the overall goal that **"Roma children attend mainstream classrooms of regular schools and achieve similar educational outcomes as non-Roma children"**, we describe two main scenarios of involvement for the intervening stakeholders. Of course, an ideal intervention would combine both changes at the national level and an intervention in many specific localities. However, we try to suggest options for various stakeholders, both the nationwide ones and the smaller local initiatives.

To be more precise:

SCENARIO 1: Selecting a specific program area (or part of it) and supporting selected stakeholders implementing these measures either at the national or local level.

SCENARIO 2: Selecting a pool of localities in which to apply a complex intervention in the form of an inclusive plan.

SCENARIO 1: FOCUS ON PROGRAM AREAS	SCENARIO 2: FOCUS ON SPECIFIC LOCALITIES
Choose between the program interventions in a pool of localities or at the national level.	Select a specific locality or a number of localities.
Select from 3 program areas: enrolment in pre-primary education, enrolment in mainstream primary education, or reducing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.	Apply a complex intervention in the form of an inclusive plan. The inclusive plan can cover any relevant aspects of the program areas in Scenario 1 in accordance with the level of development and individual preferences of particular localities.
Combines both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. It either includes advocacy for legislative changes, or is applied without any legislative change at the state level.	A bottom-up approach, applied under current legal framework and without any legislative change required at the state level.
Select a specific program area (or part of it) and support selected stakeholders implementing these measures either at the national level or in selected localities.	The process of creating the inclusive plan at the local level must be participatory so that all stakeholders are involved (including the target group) and enabled to express their preferences.
Examples: *Piloting a career guidance scheme in one region, combined with mentoring and educational support for students from SDB during secondary studies (does not require legislative changes).* *Support to pre-primary enrolment of children from SDB, combining the financial intervention with advocacy of enacting guaranteed places in kindergarten for all children of a certain age (requires legislative change).*	Set clear and time-framed goals in the inclusion plan. Define the roles of local stakeholders (such as municipal office, school actors, local NGOs, CPPCPs, etc.) and enable them to define the specific tasks to be assigned to all of them.

Both scenarios enable the relevant stakeholders to apply various preferences and make choices depending on available financial resources, expertise and skills, preferred geographical coverage, or preferred segment of municipalities with various levels of social and educational services available, or with various characteristics of the Roma population in them. The main difference between the two scenarios is that the former one describes possible intervention and advocacy activities at various levels (school, municipal and state level); thus, all possible stakeholders may find ways for themselves to contribute to making the schools and the whole educational system more inclusive. This scenario may, but also may not, include state-level legislative changes. In contrast, the latter scenario is primarily a local or bottom-up approach, initiated by municipalities and/or schools themselves and supported by external non-state stakeholders (donors, NGOs, churches, etc.), to make their environment more inclusive through defining individualised "inclusive plans". However, both scenarios, in their essence, already overlap in a number of interventions, measures or practices. In this sense, they can definitely be implemented in combination, which is, in fact, the most desirable option in order to enhance their impact.

The changes in making the whole educational system more inclusive would be more significant if the current legislation were amended as well (see details below). Nonetheless, the current legislative arrangement does allow a relatively large space for manoeuvre in making at least the individual schools more inclusive, although these do have to face and actively challenge the external mechanisms and pressures towards the segregation and exclusion of students who are most at risk of being excluded. In this sense, the involvement at state level has the highest probability of bringing about the highest-impact changes. Nevertheless, no legislative change will secure making the educational system more inclusive if the municipal and school levels do not generate inner motivation and drive (with the assistance of external non-state stakeholders) to become more inclusive (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011; Slee, 2013). In this sense, the legislative changes are inevitable but not sufficient to make the whole education system more inclusive. Hence, the social change should be happening at all levels simultaneously in order to bring about the most profound impact.

Regardless of the choice of scenario, there are **important prerequisite wider social policy measures, which are already being implemented in Slovakia, in the localities with a Roma population, with a relatively significant impact on achieving the overall goal.** These social policy measures create

synergies with education (from pre-primary and beyond). They form the prerequisites of increasing the enrolment, attendance and school results of children in marginalised communities. Certainly, the Roma communities vary largely across municipalities (their socioeconomic status, relations with non-Roma and the level of integration) and so do the needs of municipalities to apply these social measures: in some municipalities, only a few are key prerequisites, while in others involvement in all measures is needed. Involvement of a municipality in these measures increases the likelihood of success in any education-related intervention planned. These social policy measures are the municipalities' involvement in the following national projects (reflecting the various needs of municipalities):

COMMUNITY FIELDWORK (PROGRAM "TERÉNNA SOCIÁLNA PRÁCA" AND OTHERS)
HEALTH-CARE ASSISTANCE (PROGRAM "ZDRAVÉ KOMUNITY")
MEASURES RELATED TO HOUSING (E.G., MICRO-LOANS AND LEGALISATION OF ROMA HOUSES AND PLOTS OF LAND)
SECURITY (PROGRAM "OBČIANSKE HLIADKY")
DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES (PROGRAM "DEINŠTITUCIONALIZÁCIA SOCIÁLNYCH SLUŽIEB")

Various external stakeholders (e.g., donors, NGOs, churches, private companies, grassroots civic initiatives and others) may intervene in different ways regarding these prerequisite social policy measures being implemented at the municipal level:

identify municipalities not involved in these national programs despite their usefulness; share information and assist municipalities in applying for participation in these national programs;

make use of the existent list of municipalities already participating in these national programs and plan additional educational interventions, preferably in these municipalities, including those that apply for participation;

advocate at the state level the necessity to maintain the year-over-year continuity of the national projects and to plan sustainability measures after the 2016-2020 funding period;

actively participate in the implementation of national projects in cooperation with municipalities or other stakeholders.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

SCENARIO 1: Program areas with potentially the highest impact on achieving the overall goal that "Roma children attend mainstream schools and achieve the same educational outcomes as non-Roma children" and applicable on the national level or in selected localities.

We identified three main program areas with potentially the highest impact on achieving the overall goal. For each program area, individual steps are defined, always starting with those having the highest priority and potential impact within the area. For each step, there are recommended measures to be taken at the state, municipal and/or school level, along with the options for involvement of the external non-state stakeholders (e.g., donors, NGOs, churches, private companies, grassroots civic initiatives and others). In addition, as mentioned above, the municipalities may differ significantly in the level and areas of Roma inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, the local interventions have to be individualised to the level of development in these areas. The interventions should take into account the local context, socio-economic conditions and relations between the non-Roma and Roma in the given locality, and they should include relevant stakeholders. For instance, in some municipalities, several proposed steps can be skipped, since the relevant municipality or school has already implemented and mastered them, while in other municipalities, all the proposed steps have to be carried out in order to move towards the overall inclusive goal.

With respect to the involvement of external non-state stakeholders, the recommended measures can be of two types: 1) advocacy activities such as lobbying, communicating with key stakeholders and persuading and 2) direct interventions, such as providing services directly in the municipality (training of teachers, investing in pre-school facilities, extra-curricular activities, etc.). Importantly, many measures require employing both types.

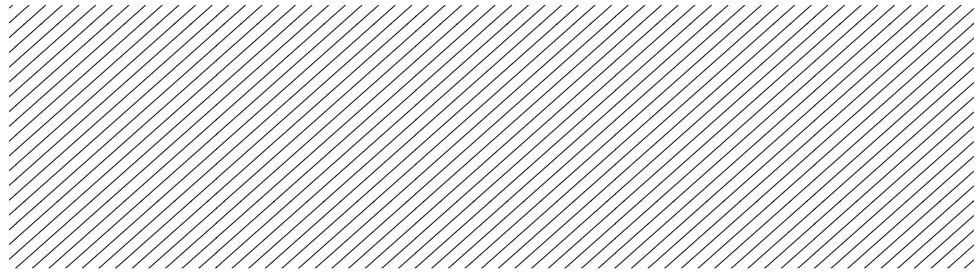
Program areas with potentially the highest impact on achieving the overall goal:

PROGRAM AREA 1: Secure the enrolment of Roma children in pre-primary education	
Step 1:	Provide sufficient capacities in pre-primary education.
Step 2:	Remove financial and other barriers to enrolment in pre-primary education.
Step 3:	Communicate pro-actively with all parents.
Step 4:	Desegregate Roma children in preschools.

PROGRAM AREA 2: Secure the enrolment of Roma children in mainstream primary education	
Step 1:	Introduce legislative change in the system of assessing SEN or provide additional support for children prior to their entry to compulsory education.
Step 2:	Support various local stakeholders other than CSEC/special schools in order to inform Roma parents on school choice.
Step 3:	Remove financial barriers to education-related services.
Step 4:	Redesign dissemination of results and overall scope of centralised testing.
Step 5:	Define school catchment areas that equitably distribute students (based on their ethnicity, social background, etc.).
Step 6:	Communicate the introduction of inclusive measures in education through mass media.

PROGRAM AREA 3: Reduce the gap in educational performance between Roma and non-Roma	
Step 1:	Support an inclusive school climate and processes.
Step 2:	Increase the number of SEN support staff in mainstream schools.
Step 3:	Provide systemic external SEN support by organizations on a regional or national level, well-equipped to provide support to the entire school staff.
Step 4:	Increase the quality of and access to further education of teachers, plus knowledge sharing with other schools and stakeholders.
Step 5:	Remove financial barriers at primary schools.
Step 6:	Increase the teachers' wages.
Step 7:	Include Roma history and culture in the national curriculum and support the learning of the Romani language in schools.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia



PROGRAM AREA 1: SECURE THE ENROLMENT OF ROMA CHILDREN IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

STEP 1: PROVIDE SUFFICIENT CAPACITIES IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

Context: Slovakia lags behind neighbouring countries in all indicators of preschool participation of 3-6-year-old children, in the national average, as well as participation of two specific groups, the Roma children and also the non-Roma children living in their close proximity. There are two alternative solutions considered in the Slovak discourse: either 1) setting at least a year of pre-primary education as compulsory for all children, or 2) keeping pre-primary education voluntary, while increasing capacities, removing barriers to access and providing parents with a guaranteed place in a pre-primary facility if they express an interest. The advantage of the first option[39] seems to be a straightforward mainstreaming (both on the supply side of local capacities and demand side of parents), but it requires reaching agreement with municipalities over a change in their competencies and increasing their budget. The proponents of the second option[40] argue that substantial improvement is possible even under current settings, if barriers to access are removed. However, the main weakness of this option is the cooperation of the municipality, unless there is enacted at least an obligation for municipalities to provide capacities in pre-schools (with financial contributions from the state) and thus to guarantee places in a preschool facility for all children of a certain age.

39 Suggested e.g. by Huttová et al.(2012). Vavrinčík (2015) argues for compulsory education and provides a useful review of arguments for/against both alternatives. Former governmental Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities suggested compulsory preschools only for children from SDB since 3 years of age, but other stakeholders (e.g. Ministry of Education, Public Defender of Rights) refused this idea and pointed out it would be discriminatory and could lead to segregation.

40 Government of SR (2011) set the target to increase the share of marginalised Roma children aged 3-6 in kindergartens to 50% in 2020. Farenzenová et al (2013) suggest a set of measures to increase enrolment of socially disadvantaged children: provide preschool capacities for children from age 3, eliminate financial and material barriers, provide transport, accompaniment or reimburse travel costs where necessary, inform parents about benefits of preschool education.

STEP 1: Provide sufficient capacities in pre-primary education

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
Municipal	**Municipality:** Apply for the Ministry of Education funding for kindergarten capacity increase or use own sources.	Provide funding for capacity increase in local pre-primary facilities. Support the provision of alternative pre-primary education services where capacities are insufficient. Advocate in municipalities not willing to invest in the education of Roma in kindergarten so they apply for the Ministry of Education funding or use municipal financial resources.
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Provide more funding and adequate regulation enabling the participation of all children in pre-primary education (requires significant legislative change in the case of the compulsory pre-primary education option). The funded schools should commit themselves to practising desegregation.	Advocate on the state level for an adequate provision of pre-primary education.

STEP 2: Remove financial and other barriers to enrolment in pre-primary education

Context: In municipalities with available kindergarten capacities, marginalised Roma can face financial and other barriers to enrolment or regular attendance (such as lack of clothing and shoes, long kindergarten-home distance, etc.)

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
Municipal	**Municipality:** Waive/minimse fees for kindergarten tuition, school meals, transport and all other informal financial contributions (e.g., school trips, workbooks, supplementary textbooks and magazines for learning languages) for low-income families.	Advocacy at the municipal level to set an adequate fee structure at kindergartens reflecting the economic situation of families and balancing municipal resources. Financial intervention, such as providing individual grants or stipends to cover the costs related to kindergarten attendance for parents in need.
School	**Pre-primary school:** In co-operation with other stakeholders (NGOs, charity, etc.) address issues related to hygiene, safety, and lack of clothes, shoes and transportation.	Direct intervention such as launching a hygiene centre, providing hygiene packs, clothes, shoes, and other material help.
State	**Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Provide more funding for free pre-primary education for all children even younger than 5 years (either compulsory preschool or guaranteed free place), or re-enact the cap for the schooling fee at kindergartens.	Advocacy for removing financial barriers to pre-primary education.

STEP 3: Communicate pro-actively with all parents

Context: In many localities, there is an urgent need to approach Roma parents directly in their homes or other suitable environment and raise their awareness about the benefits of pre-primary education for their children, or after-school care, etc. Parents often lack practical information (on financial issues, enrolment procedure, rules and daily regime at schools, school meals, etc.) or have concerns about their children's safety (due to long-distance commuting or a hostile pre-school environment) that need to be addressed. If the parents do not speak Slovak or Hungarian, it would be advisable to provide the communication in the Romani language as well. In order to ensure good relations and social cohesion on the local level, it is necessary for the stakeholders to communicate actively with the non-Roma parents and address their questions and comments.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
Municipal	**Municipality:** Social field work with awareness-raising activities and home visits.	Advocate in municipalities not involved in social field work programs and/or not willing to invest in the education of Roma in kindergarten so they will get involved in the respective national projects.
School	**Pre-primary school:** Home visits, awareness raising, open days at school, transport/support of an NGO/school/field worker at enrolment day for the marginalised Roma parents.	Support and provide awareness-raising activities for parents. Directly provide services related to preschool attendance, e.g., home-school transport and accompaniment of children.

STEP 4: Desegregate Roma children in preschools

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
School	**Pre-primary school:** Facilitate communication with all groups of parents, addressing the fears and needs of parents by appropriate measures (esp. possible objections of non-Roma parents related to safety, health and hygiene).	Enable knowledge exchange between school stakeholders, e.g., study visits to localities successful in including Roma children from SDB in pre-primary education. Facilitate communication and mediation between stakeholders by professional facilitators. Financial intervention, e.g., in health and hygiene-related items.

PROGRAM AREA 2: SECURE THE ENROLMENT OF ROMA CHILDREN IN MAINSTREAM PRIMARY EDUCATION

Pre-primary education has a positive impact on outcomes in this program area.

STEP 1: Introduce legislative change in the system of assessing SEN or provide additional support for children prior to their entry to compulsory education

Context: Personal and professional links between special schools and CSECs are considered to be one of the reasons for the high share of SEN children educated in special schools and classes. The division of competencies between CPPCP and CSEC is unclear, and there are high maintenance and administrative costs for running two distinct institutions. That is why CPPCP and CSEC should be merged. CSECs also have a conflict of interest since they often have the same founders as special schools. In further redesigning their competencies, the option should be considered that the merged institution provides mainly support functions, with the assessment of SEN carried out at the level of schools (which would require at least the part-time presence of SEN staff at each school). In other words, since it is not possible to effectively separate the assessing institution and the special schools, the option should be considered that the entire process of assessment of disability and/or additional learning support is transferred to the regular schools only, as it is practiced, for instance, in Australia (NSW DEC, 2013). As explored in detail in Chapter 4, the current assessment process of SEN/disability in Slovakia is based on a defectological paradigm, i.e., on diagnosing a "defect" or "deficit" in students. A paradigmatic shift should be considered in this area – from looking for a defect in students to either looking for the most appropriate "additional learning support" or entirely abandoning the process of making the funding for schools conditional on the number of children with SEN/disability and providing each school with extra funding for additional support to students, while determining the amount of extra funding on the basis of various regional socio-economic indicators (e.g., local unemployment rate, single parent rate, ethnic composition).

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Enact a legislative change to merge CPPCP and CSEC and redesign their role. Change the system of assessing SEN and additional support while shifting the focus from the child's deficit to specifying the child's strengths and most appropriate additional learning support. This assessment and learning support should be implemented in line with the most recent knowledge in educational, psychological, socio-pedagogical and special educational fields.	Advocacy towards policy makers, mainly the Ministry of Education, political parties and members of parliament.
Municipal	**Municipality:** Strengthening the informed consent of parents by means of social field work.	Advocacy activities on the municipal level to encourage the municipal employees (e.g., social field workers) to proactively approach Roma parents and explain the consequences of enrolment of their children in special education. Directly organise awareness-raising campaigns in Roma communities to strengthen the informed consent of parents, discouraging them from enrolling their children in special schools and explaining the benefits of enrolment in mainstream education.
School	**Regular primary school:** In co-operation with the CPPCP/CSEC institution, pilot an experimental model to better define the learning support needs of students.	Develop an experimental model to better define the learning support needs of students and pilot it in co-operation with schools, the CPPCP/CSEC institution and other stakeholders.

STEP 2: Support various local stakeholders other than CSEC/special schools in order to inform Roma parents on school choice (Step 2 can also be applied if step I is not undertaken.)

Context: Roma parents are often not informed or directly misinformed about the consequences of enrolment of their child in special schools. Awareness raising and informed consent are necessary. Furthermore, the state is the main founder of special schools and should maintain that in every municipality there is always also mainstream education available, i.e., that there is no municipality where the only school available is a special school. In the school year 2015/16, there are 12 cases of municipalities with only special primary schools or detached special classes and no mainstream school or classroom available.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR:** Solve the several cases where the only primary school available in a municipality is a special school. (E.g., transform the special school into a mainstream primary school providing education also to children with SEN, upon agreement with the respective municipality, or establish a system of cost-free transport to mainstream schools in municipalities nearby).	Advocacy on the level of the Ministry of Education and in municipalities.
Municipal	**Municipality:** Approach parents via social field workers and community centres; arrange awareness-raising activities and home visits.	Provide or support awareness-raising activities for Roma parents from SDB so they are well-informed about the consequences of enrolment of children in special education. Advocate in municipalities not involved in social field work programs and/or not willing to invest in the education of Roma in kindergarten.
School	**Primary school:** School management to have at school, on enrolment day, a professional from CPPCP/CSEC to provide fair diagnostics on enrolment and approach parents; Promote the decision of parents to enrol children in the mainstream; Diversity training to change the attitude of teachers and school management rejecting Roma in mainstream schools.	Provide awareness-raising activities for parents. (See the recommendations for the municipal level above.) Provide diversity training for teachers and school management so they are sensitised and well-equipped for working with children from SDB/different ethnic background and specifically able to understand different barriers the Roma from SDB experience in the access to education.

STEP 3: Remove financial barriers to education-related services

Context: While the legislation enacts that education at public primary and secondary schools is cost-free, there are several items that are financed by families (e.g., student workbooks for foreign languages and other subjects, school stationery and school aids), and some education-related services (school meals, after-school care) or activities (school trips, excursions, swimming lessons, skiing lessons) are defined as voluntary. Some of these are partially subsidised by the state for the whole population (school meals, after-school care), some for selected schools (skiing lessons, open-air school trips "škola v prírode") and some for the children of families receiving social welfare benefits (school meals and school aids). There are several problems associated with the current settings:

There are low-income families that are not eligible for the current subsidies for school meals and school aids because they are slightly above the threshold.

If there are more than 50% of children eligible for these subsidies, the whole school population becomes eligible, so this makes schools with a higher share of the Roma (esp. special schools) more attractive for marginalised Roma and strengthens tendencies for Roma-only schools.

It is a matter of debate where to draw the line between cost-free education and voluntary extra services and activities. (E.g., if learning to swim should be part of the skills that all young people should master, it should not depend on the ability to pay for a swimming course at school). Moreover, if children from SDB cannot afford to participate in these voluntary extra activities, they may feel excluded and unhappy at the school, which negatively affects their overall school performance.

There are also other less visible fees associated with education (fees for a box in the dressing room, contribution to the class fund, contribution to the school parents' association, etc.).

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR:** In line with the recognition of the right of students to education in the place where they live, remove financial barriers to education-related services. Various options are open that differ in financial costs and size of student population covered. The most acute is removing the financial barriers for all the population for items/activities necessary for the education process (esp. textbooks and students workbooks), as well as redefining the population eligible for subsidies related to children from SDB (e.g., that low-income families with mothers on parental leave do not drop out of this category). Also, the issue of schools with over 50% of the student body from SDB needs to be tackled so that municipalities/schools that prefer a more proportionate division of the student population are not a financially less attractive option. Several more budgetary demanding options can be considered as well, such as reducing the costs to families and increasing subsidies for after-school care and school meals.	Advocacy on the level of the Ministry of Education so that financial barriers to different education-related services are removed. (See the recommended measures in the left-hand column).
Municipal	**Municipality:** Remove financial barriers for low-income families by setting the fee structure at local after-school care and school canteens so it reflects the economic situation of families and balance the available municipal resources; Involve participants in active labour market policies (esp. the "activation workers") in a broader range of activities, including work at schools (accompaniment of children, guarding, maintenance of school areas, other simple services at schools).	Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing with successful localities. Pilot schemes with removed financial barriers at local schools. Pilot broader involvement of "activation workers" at schools.

STEP 4: Redesign dissemination of results and overall scope of centralised testing

Context: Currently the standardised national tests (Testing 9 and Testing 5) provide only very limited information about the overall school quality. The results from these tests are also used for creating school league tables. This practice creates great pressure on schools to perform well and may strengthen the incentive of schools to get rid of "low achieving students", e.g., by transferring them to special schools, so that they can improve their position in the school league table and increase the attractiveness of their school to parents enrolling their children. In other words, high-stake testing may increase the proportion of Roma students being educated in special schools.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR:** Redesign the centralised testing to obtain more accurate data on overall school performance and redesign the public access to this data or curtail the possibility of publicising any school league tables on the basis of this data.	Advocacy on the level of the Ministry of Education to apply the recommended measures in the left-hand column.

STEP 5: Define school catchment areas that equitably distribute students (based on their ethnicity, social background, etc.)

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Oblige municipalities to take into account the ethnic and socio-economic composition of schools when defining school catchment areas.	Advocacy on the Ministry of Education level to apply the recommended measures in the left-hand column.
Municipal	**Municipality:** Define school catchment areas that equitably distribute students among local schools, taking into account their ethnic and social status.	Advocacy on the municipal level to apply the recommended measures in the left-hand column. Piloting local schemes with equitable school catchment areas. Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing with successful localities.

STEP 6: Communicate the introduction of inclusive measures in education through mass media

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Fund projects supporting media campaigns and promoting the idea of inclusive education.	Implementation of media campaigns explaining and supporting the introduction of inclusive measures in education.

PROGRAM AREA 3: REDUCE THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE BETWEEN ROMA AND NON-ROMA

STEP 1: Support an inclusive school climate and processes

Context: According to the Regional Roma Survey 2011, only 15% of Roma women and 21% of Roma men complete upper secondary education in comparison with of 85% of non-Roma women and 88% of non-Roma men living in close geographical proximity to Roma settlements (UNDP, World Bank & EC, 2011). The length of compulsory education in Slovakia is ten years, and students are supposed to complete at least nine years of primary school and one year of high school (upper secondary education). Yet the Roma youth often drop out of the school system without even completing primary school. This is because the Roma children often attend zero grades (counted as a year of compulsory education), and Roma students tend to repeat grades more frequently than non-Roma.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
School	**Primary school:** <u>Safe environment</u> Create a friendly environment responding to the various needs of all children attending the school in order to increase students' participation in the educational culture, process and community; Establish an anti-bullying system at schools which is not based on repressive measures. In this respect, co-operation with other stakeholders may be useful; <u>Communication and guidance</u> Facilitate communication between parents and school; involve teacher's assistants, SEN staff, and external actors (social field workers, local NGOs, churches); build communities and facilitate the development of values;	Advocacy on the school level. Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing between school stakeholders from various localities. Facilitate communication between all the stakeholders. Provide training to teachers and SEN staff so they are better-equipped to provide students with SEN with individualised services.

School	Establish systemic career guidance from the early grades. Co-operation with parents and other stakeholders, such as upper secondary schools, employers and entrepreneurs, Labour Offices, and local community centres, may be useful; Inclusive teaching practice Establish inclusive teams at schools (teacher's assistants, special teachers, school psychologist, speech therapist, etc.) or provide these services in schools which cannot afford the whole team (e.g., at municipal level in bigger towns or at micro-regional level); Strengthen and facilitate knowledge exchange and intensive co-operation among all school staff; Use teaching methods that take into account diversity among students, their capabilities and needs, and that help them overcome their disadvantages; Change the school culture, policies and practices while taking into account the diversity of students; In the school curricula, provide educational content that reflects the student population, e.g., incorporate issues of Roma history or Roma language in teaching; Training Make use of available teacher training that helps the school staff acquire skills in using appropriate teaching methods or in sensitization to ethnic prejudices.	Provide curricular materials to teachers so they can individualise their services and apply different teaching methods that would reflect the diverse needs of their students. Provide expert guidance and support to schools so they are able to implement different inclusive measures, improve the school climate and provide students with complex services including tutoring. Support mainstreaming of successful piloted projects of inclusive educational support to children.

STEP 2: Increase the number of SEN support staff in mainstream schools

Context: The concept of SEN support staff in schools refers to the "inclusive teams" model piloted in the national project PRINED. Despite schools being in need of SEN support staff, the current funding scheme makes it hardly possible to employ staff such as teacher´s assistants adequate to the needs of the children, or a special teacher, school psychologist or speech therapist even for a part-time position. A broad range of children (not only marginalised Roma children or SEN children) would benefit from SEN support staff being present at schools.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR:** Increase the overall budget for education; There are more options to change the funding scheme, e.g., i) change the per-pupil funds allocated for respective categories of SEN children to also include children from SDB if they are educated in mainstream classrooms (formally, SDB is one of the SEN categories, but it is not included in SEN per-pupil funding), or ii) instead of assessing SEN externally, schools should formulate appropriate support for particular children, with Education Departments in the eight respective District Offices balancing the request with the available budget (assessing SEN and necessary support to children educated in mainstream classrooms at the level of schools requires at least the part-time presence of SEN staff at each school).	Advocacy on the Ministry of Education level.

School	Primary school: Continuous planning of the personnel policy at schools. The interdisciplinary approach and support to individual children is a key in removing obstacles and barriers to the learning and participation of each learner.	Advocacy on the school level. Provide training to school leadership on interdisciplinary SEN support strategies, funding opportunities to hire extra SEN support staff, coaching, and personal management.

STEP 3: Provide systemic external SEN support by organizations on a regional or national level well-equipped to provide support to the entire school staff

Context: Some of these functions are currently provided by CPPCPs, CSECs and State School Inspectorate. With an increase in personnel capacities at the counselling institutions, these employees could devote more time to the guidance and training of teachers (face-to-face model lectures and guidance on methods appropriate for SEN children) and could provide more services directly to schools/teachers/students in their domain.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Provide legislative change and redesign the systemic external SEN support; Increase CPPCP capacities.	Advocacy on the Ministry of Education level. Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing with other countries.
Municipal	**Municipality:** In mid-sized towns with these services established, municipalities can facilitate communication between stakeholders; **NGOs** can provide external support.	Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing with successful localities. Financial intervention.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

STEP 4: Increase the quality of and access to further education of teachers, plus knowledge sharing with other schools and stakeholders

Context: To raise the quality and relevance of training for teachers and prospective teachers (especially in terms of teaching students with multiple disadvantages), there should be more model teaching and more training provided directly in classrooms. Another area that is underdeveloped and has a high potential to improve the quality of teaching practice is knowledge sharing among school staff across Slovakia.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Consider changes in the teacher training scheme and decentralise its financing to schools (to increase its quality and relevance for teachers); Support knowledge sharing among school staff across Slovakia, possibly on the basis of a network of institutions and individuals with experience in inclusive education.	Advocacy on the level of public stakeholders.
Faculties of Education	**Faculties of Education:** Training for prospective teachers (especially in terms of teaching students with multiple disadvantages), should contain more model teaching and more training provided directly in classrooms; Support knowledge sharing among school staff across Slovakia.	Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing between faculties. Provide in-service training for teachers in quality teaching and teaching individualisation.

Providers of teacher training	**Teacher training providers:** Provide more model teaching and more training provided directly in classrooms, especially in terms of teaching students with multiple disadvantages.	Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing. Provide in-service training for teachers in quality teaching and teaching individualisation.

STEP 5: Remove financial barriers at primary schools

See Step 3 in program area 2.

STEP 6: Increase the teachers' wages

Context: OECD reports that teachers in Slovakia in 2013 earned 57% of the average wage of the university-educated population in Slovakia, while the OECD average is at 80%. Slovakia and the Czech Republic (52%) are at the bottom of OECD countries in this indicator. There are research findings that teachers´ wages significantly influence the quality of education in Slovakia and that higher wages lead to greater attractiveness of the teaching profession. Without adequate remuneration, the teaching profession will not attract the best university students, and the Slovak education system risks the exodus of the most qualified teachers, especially in certain subjects (IT, languages), into non-teaching professions mainly in urban areas with above-average earnings and more job opportunities.

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR, Government of SR, National Council of SR:** Increase the teachers' wages.	Advocacy on the level of public stakeholders, support for already existing teachers´ initiatives lobbying for higher remuneration for the teaching profession.

STEP 7: Include Roma history and culture in the national curriculum and support the learning of the Romani language in schools

Level	Recommended measures for public sector stakeholders	Recommended measures for non-state external stakeholders (NGOs, donors, charities and private companies, churches, or grassroots civic initiatives)
State	**Ministry of Education of SR:** Include Roma history and culture in the national curriculum.	Advocacy on the Ministry of Education level.
Faculties of Education	**Faculties of Education:** Include Roma history and culture in the curriculum for prospective teachers and pro-actively train and encourage them to teach about Roma history/culture across subjects. Include the option of studying the Romani language for those who are interested in it.	Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing. Provide training so the prospective teachers are well-equipped to include Roma history and culture in teaching.
Schools	**Primary schools:** Include Roma history and culture in the school-based curriculum, including extra-curricular activities and school cultural and social events. Offer the subject of the Romani language if students are interested in studying it.	Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing. Provide training so teachers are well-equipped to include Roma history and culture in teaching.

So far we have discussed *Scenario 1: Program areas with potentially the highest impact on achieving the overall goal*, which included intervention and advocacy activities in the three main program areas and the relevant steps to be carried out by various levels of stakeholders. These activities combine both the top-down and the bottom-up approach and may, but need not, include state legislative changes. In the following text, *Scenario 2* will be discussed, which does not require legislative change at the state level but is rather a bottom-up approach. It would be highly beneficial if Scenario 2 were to be implemented with the support of experts from the NGOs or academic sector experienced in the work of inclusive education and inclusion of Roma in municipalities.

SCENARIO 2: Inclusive plans in a selection of localities aiming to achieve the global goal that "Roma children attend mainstream schools and achieve similar educational outcomes as non-Roma children"

The intervening non-state stakeholder (e.g., an NGO, donor or academic institution) can approach a selection of localities with the aim to apply there a complex intervention in the form of an inclusive plan at the municipal level and at the level of individual schools. The primary subject of this intervention is the municipality, followed by schools, and if necessary, neighbouring municipalities may need to be approached (e.g., to prevent white flight, or to address the issue of small schools with grades 1-4 and students continuing their compulsory education in the 5th grade and beyond in another municipality nearby).

A higher chance of having a faster or greater impact requires selecting municipalities from the pool of candidates that already fulfil the prerequisite conditions in the introduction to this chapter and, thus, are involved in some relevant national projects (community field work, health-care assistants, etc.).

For the purpose of this publication, an inclusive plan on the local level means the overall plan of Roma inclusion in education with short-term, mid-term and long-term goals. Besides setting clear and time-framed goals (desirably with measurable indicators of success), the inclusion plan should include defining the roles of various local and regional stakeholders (such as the municipal office, school actors, local NGOs, CPPCPs, etc.) and assigning specific tasks to all of them. This means that the process of creating an inclusive plan on the local level must be participatory, so all stakeholders involved (including the target group) must be given an opportunity to articulate their opinions, interests and perceptions of particular inclusion-related problems. As participatory policy making is a relatively new phenomenon in the Slovak context and stakeholders might not be experienced in this respect, it is advised that the creation of an inclusive plan is facilitated externally by a non-state stakeholder in order to make sure that all stakeholders identify themselves with the inclusive plan.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

The scenario of implementing inclusive plans in selected localities requires external mentor capacities (provided by the intervening stakeholder) and includes the following steps:

Creating inclusive plans at the municipal level

STEP 1: Organise an initial meeting with all the municipal stakeholders (e.g., municipal office, all kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools, community centre, local NGOs, church, private companies, municipal police, CPPCP, CSEC and representatives of local ethnic communities). Introduce them to the idea of the inclusive plan, its process of participatory creation and recommended structure; give the stakeholders an opportunity to express their ideas about which areas related to Roma inclusion they are already good at and which might need some improvement.

STEP 2: Analyse the overall situation regarding Roma inclusion (not only in education) in the municipality, e.g., previous experience with different policy measures (for example by using a simple SWOT analysis).

STEP 3: Organise a second meeting with all the relevant municipal stakeholders and present to them the initial SWOT analysis. Facilitate the discussion of the stakeholders to enable them to give feedback to the analysis and to give space for the stakeholders to determine their own preferences about the areas on which they want to work in the follow-up phase; this discussion should lead to the participatory creation of the inclusive plan at the level of the municipality, while this plan can make use of the three main program areas and most of their individual measures described before in Scenario 1. (See the adjusted list below, with only those measures that are feasible without legislative/other nation-wide changes.)

STEP 4: Support implementation (find solutions that are sustainable or need only initial financial donor investment and training for stakeholders).

STEP 5: Monitor progress in the implementation of the inclusive plan.

STEP 6: Review the initial inclusive plan.

STEP 7: Disseminate good practice to other localities.

While this process of creating an inclusive plan was designed for the municipal level, a very similar process may happen at the level of individual schools, even in cases when no inclusive plan is established at the municipal level. Understandably, in the case of school inclusive plans, the list of invited relevant school stakeholders needs to be slightly revised, involving, for instance, children as well.

While the implementation of Scenario 2 may bring about considerable impact limited to the selected municipalities which decide to create and implement their inclusive plans, this scenario does not require any state legislative changes, is expected to have a considerable local impact and may spill over to other municipalities in the country. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, changes in legislation would increase the impact of local initiatives. Merely the concentrated effort at all main levels – school, municipality, and state (requiring some legislative changes as well) – may bring about a more sustainable and large-scale impact on the inclusion of Roma students in education.

Examples of the options for involvement of external non-state stakeholders in the bottom-up scenario at the municipal level

PROGRAM AREA 1:

Secure the enrolment of Roma children in pre-primary education

- Provide funding for capacity increase in local pre-primary facilities.
- Support the provision of alternative pre-primary education services where capacities are insufficient.
- Advise municipalities on how to set adequate fee structures at kindergartens reflecting the economic situation of families and balancing municipal resources.
- Provide direct services such as a hygiene centre, hygiene packs, clothes, shoes and other material help.
- Provide and support awareness-raising activities for parents and provide services, e.g., school transport and accompaniment of children.
- Enable knowledge exchange between school stakeholders, e.g., study visits to localities successful in the inclusion of Roma children from SDB in education.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

PROGRAM AREA 2:

Secure the enrolment of Roma children in mainstream primary education

- Directly organise local awareness-raising campaigns in Roma communities to strengthen the informed consent of parents, discouraging them from enrolling their children in special schools and explaining to them the benefits of enrolling their children in mainstream education.
- Directly organise local awareness-raising campaigns focusing on relations and social cohesion on a local level.
- Develop an experimental model to better define the learning support needs of students and pilot it in co-operation with schools, CPPCP/CSEC and other stakeholders.
- Provide diversity training to teachers and school management.
- Enable knowledge exchange and good practice sharing with successful localities.
- Pilot schemes with removed financial barriers at local schools.
- Pilot the broader involvement of "activation workers" at schools.
- Pilot local schemes with equitable school catchment areas.

PROGRAM AREA 3:

Reduce the gap in educational performance between Roma and non-Roma

- Support the mainstreaming of successful piloted projects of educational support to children.
- Enable knowledge exchange between municipal and school stakeholders and good practice sharing with successful localities.
- Facilitate communication between all the stakeholders.
- Provide training to teachers and SEN staff.
- Provide curricular materials to teachers.
- Provide expert guidance to schools so they can implement different inclusive measures, improve their school climate and provide students with complex and individualised services.

CROSS-SECTIONAL AREA:

Social policy and employment

- Encourage the municipal offices and provide them with support so they can get involved in national projects of social field work, the de-institutionalisation of social services and health care programmes ("Healthy communities"), launch hygiene centres, and apply other social or health care policy measures related to dealing with poor hygiene, health conditions and low employment in Roma communities.
- Encourage and support municipal stakeholders (mainly the municipal offices and local NGOs) so they can start different projects, such as community centres, where different services can be provided such as extra-curricular activities for Roma children and youth, courses for strengthening parental skills, career guidance, etc.
- Encourage and support the municipal offices and other relevant local stakeholders so they can communicate Roma inclusion issues on the local level more effectively (e.g., by means of professional facilitators).
- Provide the municipal offices with support in dealing with low employment in Roma communities by, for example, extending "activation works" activities to school-related ones, providing long-term unemployed Roma with opportunities to complete their education (primary and/or secondary) in cooperation with local primary and secondary schools, applying socially responsible public procurement where the Roma long-term unemployed can be involved, providing the Roma with employment services (career guidance, communicating with potential employers, improving social skills) directly in the community in cooperation with the local labour offices, etc.

Conclusion

Even though numerous studies and analyses point out long-lasting discriminatory practices and the non-inclusive approach in the Slovak educational system towards the Roma children and youth (but not only towards them), insufficient effort has been made to address the inequalities in education. As a result, the Roma especially from SDB constantly face various barriers in accessing quality education and do not achieve the skills and education needed for improving their quality of living.

As demonstrated in this publication, the discriminatory practices and non-inclusive approach are results of the motivations and attitudes of relevant stakeholders, which are shaped by institutional and structural arrangements and mechanisms but are also widely spread and unchallenged xenophobia against the Roma. Additionally, stakeholders often lack information and may tend to look at the problem from their very narrow perspective, which prevents them from dealing with it in an inclusive way. For instance, if a primary school lacks funding to employ SEN staff and its teachers feel ill-equipped to provide students with individualised teaching, it cannot be expected that the school will be welcoming to the children from SDB. The school staff simply feel inadequate to handle the particular challenges that might ensue from educating these children in the school and will do anything to avoid it. Similarly, if Roma parents themselves have had negative experiences with the school environment, e.g., due to their disrespectful treatment, they will be less likely to pro-actively seek closer cooperation with the school.

Understanding these motivations and attitudes enables researchers and policy makers to recognise why particular stakeholders act the way they do and provides inspiration for policy makers to effectively incentivise or nudge all these different stakeholders to behave in accordance with the principles of inclusiveness. In this regard, this publication proposes particular recommendations for policy tools and incentives which may contribute to shifting the stakeholders' motivations and behaviour towards greater inclusion. Nonetheless, it also states that it is important to provide the stakeholders with the freedom to seek their own solutions relevant to their local contexts as there are no "one size fits all" solutions (even though there can be identified several policy practices that are very likely impactful in different environments). In this respect, we are aware of the fact that social change is a very gradual process with no sure answers and guidelines. That, however, does not free us from the responsibility of trying to search for those answers, implement them in practice and evaluate their impact on how they have really brought us closer to the vision of an inclusive, equitable and just society.

References

Alexander, J., Hodál, P., Csontosová, Z., Haas, L., & Kubánová, M. (2006). *Diskriminácia v školstve: Ako sa brániť* [*Discrimination at School: How to Defend*]. Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute. Retrieved from http://www.governance.sk/index.php?id=377

Amnesty International. (2012). Výročná správa Amnesty International 2012: Stav ľudských práv vo svete. Bratislava: Amnesty International Slovensko. Retrieved from http://www.amnesty.sk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Skratena-verzia-Vyrocnej-spravy-AI-2012-SVK.pdf

Amnesty International. (2010). AI: Medzi rómske a nerómske deti stavajú školy múr. [The schools are building walls between the Roma and non-Roma children]. Article published by aktualne.sk on September 3, 2010. Retrieved from http://aktualne.atlas.sk/ai-medzi-romske-a-neromske-deti-stavaju-skoly-mur/slovensko/spolocnost/

Amnesty International. (2008). *A tale of two schools: Segregating Roma into special education in Slovakia*. London: Amnesty International.

Armstrong, A. C., Armstrong, D., & Spandagou, I. (2010). *Inclusive education: International policy & practice*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Ball, S. J. (2012). *Politics and policy making in education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ballard, K. (2013). Thinking in another way: Ideas for sustainable inclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *17*(8), 762-775.

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2011). *Index for inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools*. Bristol: Center for Studies on Inclusive Education.

Bratislava municipality. (2016). *Štátne jasle. [State nurseries]*. The database published on 17.12.2007. Retrieved from http://www.bratislava.sk/statne-jasle/os-11009736

Brüggemann, C., & Bloem, S. (2013). The potential of international student assessments to measure educational outcomes of Roma students. *Sociológia - Slovak Sociological Review*, *45(6)*, *519-541*

Brüggemann, C. (2012). *Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011*. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

Brüggemann, C., & Škobla, D. (2012). Roma integration and special schools in Slovakia: What has been achieved since 2005? Bratislava.

Centre for Scientific and Technological Information (CVTI SR) (2015). *Štatistická ročenka školstva 2015: Materské školy. [Statistical Yearbook of Education 2015: Kindergartens]*. Bratislava: Centrum vedecko-technických informácií SR (CVTI SR). Retrieved from http://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka-publikacia/statisticka-rocenka-materske-skoly.html?page_id=9602

Daniel, S. (2012). *Segregácia? Zlé slovo s ešte horšími dôsledkami [Segregation? Bad word with even worse consequences]*. Bratislava: Multikulti.sk.

De Boer, A., Pijl, S. J., & Minnaert, A. (2010). Attitudes of parents towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *25*(2), 165-181.

De Boer, A., Pijl, S. J., & Minnaert, A. (2011). Regular primary schoolteachers' attitudes towards inclusive education: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *15*(3), 331-353.

De Laat, J., Ali, R., Illieva, V., Sykora, C., & Lepeshko, N. (2012). *Toward an equal start: Closing the early learning gap for Roma children in Eastern Europe*. Washington D.C.: World Bank.

EADSNE. (2012). *Special needs education country data 2012*. Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. Retrieved from https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/sne-country-data-2012_SNE-Country-Data2012.pdf

ETP Slovensko (2016). *Budujeme nádej – zlepšovanie života v rómskych getách*. [We build hope - improving the living in Roma ghettos]. Retrieved from http://etp.

sk/projekty/budujeme-nadej-zlepsovanie-zivota-v-romskych-getach/

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2016). *Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Roma – Selected findings*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014a). *Poverty and employment: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Luxemburg: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014b). *Roma survey – Data in focus Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States*. Luxemburg: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

European Commission (EC). (2016). *Eurydice: Description of National Education Systems*. Retrieved from https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Countries

European Commission (EC). (2015). *Special Eurobarometer 437: Discrimination in the EU in 2015*. Brussels: European Commission.

European Platform for Investing in Children (EU EPIC). (2016). *A Good Start* (AGS). Retrieved from http://europa.eu/epic/practices-that-work/practice-user-registry/practices/a_good_start_en.htm

Eurostat (2016). *Data on Education. Main Tables*. Retrieved from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/education/data/main_tables

Farenzenová, M., & Miškolci, J. (2014). Social Inclusion of Roma Students in Martin, Slovakia In Batiz, A. and Bernáth, G. (2015). *How to set your face against the bogeyman of majority perceptions. Strategic communication proposals for planning and delivering successful Roma inclusion programs at local level*. Budapest: Motivation Education Association. Retrieved from http://motivaciomuhely.hu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/OSI-MtM_Why-we-fail..._Strategic-communication-proposals_final.pdf

Farenzenová, M. (2013). Oplatí sa vzdelávať inkluzívne? Financovanie pro-inkluzívnych opatrení [Is it worth educating inclusively? Financing pro-inclusive measures] In M. Hapalová & E. G. Kriglerová (Eds.), *O krok bližšie k inklúzii [A step closer to inclusion]*. Bratislava: Člověk v tísni Slovensko, Centre for the research of ethnicity and culture.

Farenzenová, M., Kubánová, M., & Salner, A. (2013). *Cestovná mapa pre riešenie problému nadmerného zastúpenia rómskych detí v špeciálnom školstve – analýza realistických krokov [Road map for resolving the issue of overrepresentation of Roma children in special education - Analysis of realistic measures]* Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute.

Farkašová, E., & Zimmermann, M. (2015). *Žiaci zo sociálne znevýhodňujúceho prostredia* [Pupils from socially disadvantaged background]. Bratislava: Výskumný ústav detskej psychológie a patopsychológie. Retrieved from https://www.komposyt.sk/pre-odbornikov/specialno-pedagogicka-cinnost/preview-file/1-3-1-ziaci-zo-socialne-znevyhodnujuceho-prostredia-474.pdf

Farkašovská, E. (2011). *(Ne)tolerancia a diskriminácia – postoje a skúsenosti mládeže Spiša Správa z fókusového zisťovania [(In)tolerance and discrimination – attitudes and experience of youth from Spiš region: Report of focus groups results]*. Bratislava: Proxima.

Fasting, R. B. (2013). Adapted education: The Norwegian pathway to inclusive and efficient education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *17*(3), 263-276.

Friedman, E., Pavlović Babić, D., & Simić, N. (2015) *Inclusive education in Serbia: Policies, practice, and recommendations*. Belgrade: World Bank.

Friedman, E., Kriglerová, E.G., Kubánová, M., & Slosiarik, M. (2009). *Škola ako geto: Systematické nadmerné zastúpenie Rómov v špeciálnom vzdelávaní na Slovensku [School as a ghetto: Systemic over-representation of the Roma in special education in Slovakia]*. Bratislava: Roma Education Fund.

Government of Slovak Republic (Government of SR) (2011). *Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020 [National Roma integration strategy for the Slovak Republic until 2020]*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/slovakia/national-strategy/national_sk.htm

Grimaldi, E. (2012). Neoliberalism and the marginalisation of social justice: The making of an education policy to combat social exclusion. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *16*(11), 1131-1154.

Hanuliaková, D. (2010). Pracovné orgány riaditeľa školy: Poslanie predmetových komisií [Working groups managed by the school principal: The mission of subject committees]. *Manažment školy v praxi*, *12*, 8-11.

Hapalová, M. & Dráľ, P. (2011). Regulácia a riadenie školského systému [Education system management]. In Rafael, V. (ed.) (2011). Odpovede na otázky (de)segregácie rómskych žiakov vo vzdelávacom systéme na Slovensku [Answers to Questions on (de)Segregation of Roma Students in Slovak Education System]. Bratislava: Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti – Open Society Foundation. Available at: http://www.eduroma.sk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/desegregation-en.pdf

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Hapalová, M., & Kriglerová, E. G. (Eds.). (2013). *O krok bližšie k inklúzii [A step closer to inclusion]*. Bratislava: Člověk v tísni Slovensko, Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry.

Horváthová, J. (2006). Neregulované súkromné škôlky [Unregulated private kindergartens]. Article published on June 22, 2006 in weekly magazine Trend. Retrieved from http://www.etrend.sk/trend-archiv/rok-/cislo-J%C3%BAn/neregulovane-sukromne-skolky.html

Huttová, J., Gyárfášová, O., & Sekulová, M. (2012). *Segregácia alebo inklúzia Rómov vo vzdelávaní: Voľba pre školy? [Segregation or inclusion of Roma in education: The choice for schools?]*. Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of SR. (2016). *Providers of social services involved in the national project "Podpora vybraných sociálnych služieb krízovej intervencie na komunitnej úrovni". Bratislava: Implementation Agency of Slovak Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (IA MPSVR SR)*. Retrieved from https://www.ia.gov.sk/sk/narodne-projekty/narodny-projekt-podpora-vybranych-socialnych-sluzieb-krizovej-intervencie-na-komunitnej-urovni/poskytovatelia-zapojeny-do-projektu

Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of SR (IA MoLSAF). (2015). *Komunitné centrá: Evaluačná správa. [Community Centres: Evaluation Report]*. Retrieved from https://www.ia.gov.sk/data/files/np_kc/Dokumenty/V_stupy/Evaluacna_sprava_november_NP_KC_fin.pdf

Implementation Agency of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of SR (IA MoLSAF). (2014). *Štandardy komunitných center NP KC [The Standards of Community Centers in the National Programme Community Centres]*. Retrieved from https://www.ia.gov.sk/data/files/np_kc/Dokumenty/Pr_lohy_pr_rucky_zmena_IA_MPSVR/Priloha_c._6_Prirucky_-_Standardy_komunitnych_centier_NP_KC_IA_MPSVR.pdf

Iuventa (2015). *Výskum školských vzdelávacích programov a pedagogickej praxe na školách s vysokým zastúpením žiakov zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia so zameraním na princípy inkluzívneho vzdelávania. [The study of school educational programs and pedagogical practice in schools with high share of students from socially disadvantaged background with a focus on the principles of inclusive education]*. Bratislava: Iuventa.

Klein, V., Rusnáková, J., & Šilonová, V. (2012). *Nultý ročník a edukácia rómskych žiakov [The zero grade and education of Roma students]*. Spišská Nová Ves: Roma Education Fund.

Kriglerová, E. G. (2015). *Kľukaté cesty k inkluzívnemu vzdelávaniu na Slovensku*. [*Winding roads towards inclusive education in Slovakia*]. Bratislava: Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Kriglerová, E. G., & Gažovičová, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Škola pre všetkých? Inkluzívnosť opatrení vo vzťahu k rómskym deťom*. [*The school for everyone? Inclusiveness of measures towards the Roma children*]. Bratislava: Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry.

Kriglerová, E.G., Kadlečíková, J., Alenová, Z., Mistrík, E., & Rafael, V. (2009). *Kultúrna rozmanitosť a jej vnímanie žiakmi základných škôl na Slovensku. [Cultural diversity. Pupils' perceptions of diversity in primary schools]*. Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

Lajčáková, J. (2015). *Rovné šance I.: Podpora stredoškolského vzdelávania rómskej mládeže prostredníctvom dočasných vyrovnávacích opatrení. [Equal chances I.: Supporting secondary education of Roma youth by means of affirmative action]*. Bratislava: Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture.

Macháček, L. (2013). Vzťah slovenských občanov a mládeže k pravicovému extrémizmu [The relationship of the Slovak citizens and youth towards right-wing extremism] In R. Štefančík, L. Macháček, E. Poláková, L. Spálová, A. Kluknavská, M. Bieliková & Ľ. Šrámek (Eds.), *Pravicový extrémizmus a mládež na Slovensku [Right-wing extremism and youth in Slovakia]* (pp. 37-91). Brno: Tribun EU.

Mamas, C. (2012). Pedagogy, social status and inclusion in Cypriot schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(11), 1223-1239.

Ministry of Education, S., Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. (2012). *Transformácia vysokoškolského vzdelávania učiteľov v kontexte reformy regionálneho školstva [The transformation of the initial teachers' tertiary education in the context of pre-tertiary education reform]*. Retrieved from http://www.minedu.sk/data/att/1903.pdf

Miškolci, J. (2015a). Hľadanie expertného konsenzu o najúčinnejších politikách na inklúziu rómskych detí vo vzdelávaní na Slovensku [Searching for the expert consensus on the most effective policies in inclusion of Roma children in education in Slovakia]. *Slovak Journal for Educational Sciences*, *6*(4), 234-260.

Miškolci, J. (2015b). Social inclusion of Roma students in Martin, Slovakia. In G. Bernáth, M. Farenzenová, A. N. Ivasiuc, V. Kelemen, J. Miškolci, L. S. Makaveeva & N. Szűcs (Eds.), *Why we fail and how to succeed? Roma project (case study) analysis and preparation of recommendations on strategic communication* (pp. 46-52). Budapest: Motivation Education Association.

Mišurcová V., Čapková, D., & Mátej, J. (1987). *Úvod do dejín predškolskej pedagogiky*. [Introduction to history of pre-school pedagogy]. Bratislava: SPN.

Methodological Pedagogical Centre (MPC). (2015a). *Evalvačná správa z implementácie inkluzívneho modelu vzdelávania v materských školách II: Záverečná evalvačná správa. [Evaluation report of implementation of inclusive model of education in pre-primary schools II: Final evaluation method].* Bratislava: Metodicko-pedagogické centrum. Retrieved from http://www.npmrk2.sk/sites/default/files/Evalvacna-sprava-2.pdf

Methodological Pedagogical Centre (MPC). (2015b). *Evalvačná správa z projektu PRINED – Projekt INkluzívnej EDukácie. [Evaluation report from the project PRINED]. Bratislava: Metodicko-pedagogické centrum.* Retrieved from prined.sk/na-stiahnutie?task=download&tmpl=component&id=136

Methodological Pedagogical Centre (MPC). (2008). *Monitoring report to the project "Let's go to school together" – The conception of integrated education of Roma pupils in Slovakia – Support to Implementation.* Prešov: MPC. Retrieved from http://www.mcpo.sk/downloads/Publikacie/Fondy/MonitorSpravaAJ.pdf

Methodological Pedagogical Centre (MPC). (2002). *Vyhodnotenie prieskumu o postavení rómskeho dieťaťa a žiaka vo výchovno-vzdelávacom systéme SR. [Assessment of the survey about the status of a Roma child and pupil in the educational system of the Slovak Republic].* Prešov: MPC, Retrieved from http://www.rocepo.sk/downloads/RocPrieskum/romske%20deti%20a%20ziaci.doc

Mušinka, A., Škobla, D., Hurrle, J., Matlovičová, K., & Kling, J. (2014). *ATLAS rómskych komunít na Slovensku 2013 [ATLAS of Roma communities in Slovakia 2013].* Bratislava: UNDP.

Mušinka, A. (2012). *Podarilo sa: Príklady úspešných aktivít na úrovni samospráv smerujúcich k zlepšeniu situácie Rómov [It succeeded: Examples of successful activities at the level of municipalities aiming at the improvement of the situation of Roma].* Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove.

National Council of Slovak Republic (NC SR) (2008). *245/2008 Z.z. Zákon z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Collection of Laws No. 245/2008 Act from 22 May 2008 on education (Education Act) and on amendments and additions of other acts].* Bratislava. Retrieved from http://www.uips.sk/sub/uips.sk/images/PKvs/z245_2008.pdf

National Council of Slovak Republic (NC SR) (2004). *Act No. 365/2004 Coll. Of 20th May 2004 on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination and on amending and supplementing certain other laws as amended (Anti-discrimination Act).* Retrieved from http://www.snslp.sk/CCMS/files/AntidiskriminacnyZakon_ENG-1.1.2015.pdf

National Institute for Certified Educational Measurement (NICEM) (2016a). *Testovanie 5-2016. Priebeh, výsledky a analýzy. [Testing 5-2016. Process, results and analyses].* Retrieved from http://www.nucem.sk/documents/46/testovanie_5_2015/SPRAVA_T5_2015_na_zverejnenie.pdf

National Institute for Certified Educational Measurement (NICEM) (2016b). *Testovanie 9-2016. Priebeh, výsledky a analýzy. [Testing 9-2016. Process, results and analyses].* Retrieved from: http://www.nucem.sk/documents/26/testovanie_9_2016/SPRAVA_T_9-2016_final.pdf

OECD (2015). *Education at a glance 2015: OECD indicators.* Paris: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2015-en

OECD (2013). Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators. OECD Publishing. Retrieved from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en

OECD (2010). PISA 2009 Results: Overcoming Social Background: Equity in Learning Opportunities and Outcomes (Volume II). PISA. OECD Publishing. Retrieved from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264091504-en

Open Society Institute (OSI). (2007). Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma. (Vol.1&2) EU Monitoring and Advocacy Programme, Education Support Program, Roma Participation Programme. Budapest: OSI.

Petrasová, A. (2009). *Kriticky mysliaci učiteľ - tvorca kvality školy (sprievodca zavádzaním štandardov) [Critically thinking teacher – the creator of quality of school (guidelines for implementing the standards)].* Prešov: Rokus.

Petrasová, A., & Š. Porubský. (2013) *Vzdelávacie cesty rómskych žiakov zo sociálne znevýhodneného prostredia. Správa z výskumu. [Educational paths of Roma students from socially disadvantaged environment. Research report].* Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

Podolinská, T., & Hrustič, T. (2010). *Boh medzi bariérami: Sociálna inklúzia Rómov náboženskou cestou. [The God between the barriers: the success of social inclusion of Roma through the religious pathway]* Ústav etnológie SAV. Retrieved from http://www.uet.sav.sk/files/socialna_inkluzia_romov_nabozenskou_cestou.pdf

Popper M., Szeghy, P., Poduška, O., & Kollárik, R. (2011) *Iná realita: chudoba, sociálna deprivácia a užívanie inhalantov v rómskych osídleniach na východnom Slovensku.* [*Different reality: poverty, social deprivation, substance misuse in the Roma settlements in Eastern Slovakia*]. Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

Popper, M., Szeghy, P., & Šarközy, Š. (2009). *Rómska populácia a zdravie: Analýza situácie na Slovensku* [*Roma population in Slovakia: Analysis of the state of affairs in Slovakia*]. Bratislava: Partners for democratic Change Slovakia.

Public Defender of Rights (PDR). (2014). *Správa verejnej ochrankyne práv: Vplyv*

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

praxe testovania školskej spôsobilosti na základné práva dieťaťa z nepodnetného prostredia s kultúrnou, sociálnou, jazykovou bariérou, najmä z rómskej národnostnej menšiny [The report of the Public Defender of Rights: The impact of school readiness test practice on the fundamental rights of child from disadvantaged background with cultural, social and language barrier, mainly from Roma ethnic minority]. Bratislava: Kancelária verejného ochrancu práv. Retrieved from http://www.vop.gov.sk/files/Sprava%20VOP%20FINALNA%20VERZIA.pdf

Public Defender of Rights (PDR) (2015). *Správa verejnej ochrankyne práv o výsledkoch prieskumu získavania informovaného súhlasu od rodičov žiaka základnej školy [Report of ombudsman on the results of survey about informed consent of parents of primary school students]*. Bratislava: Public Defender of Rights. Retrieved from http://www.vop.gov.sk/spravy-z-prieskumov-a-priority-za-rok-2015

Rafael, V. (Ed.) (2011). *Answers to questions on (de)segregation of Roma students in Slovak education system*. Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

Rafael, V., & Fešková, Š. (2011) Učiteľ ako rozhodujúci činiteľ desegregácie. [Teachers as a crucial factor for desegregation] In Rafael, V., Ed. (2011). *Odpovede na otázky (de)segregácie rómskych žiakov vo vzdelávacom systéme na Slovensku [Answers to questions on (de)segregation of Roma students in Slovak education system]*. Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

Réveszová, Z. (2013). Čo môžu urobiť učitelia, keď systém nepomáha? Inkluzívne metódy v pedagogickej praxi [What can the teachers do when the system does not help? Inclusive methods in the pedagogical practice]. In M. Hapalová & E. G. Kriglerová (Eds.), *O krok bližšie k inklúzii [A step closer to inclusion]*. Bratislava: Centre for the research of ethnicity and culture.

Roma Education Fund (REF). (2012). *A Good Start: Survey Spotlight on its Localities and Households*. Budapest: Roma Education Fund. Retrieved from http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/ref-ags-household-survey-screen_0_0.pdf

SAIA. (2016). *Maternity leave, family care*. Retrieved from http://www.euraxess.sk/en/main/services-practical-information/employment/maternity-leave,-family-care

Salner, A. (2012). Presentation at the Dissemination Conference of A Good Start Project on June 4, 2012 in Brussels. Retrieved from http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/dissemination-conference-good-start-project

Santiago, P., Halász, G., Levačić, R., & Shewbridge, C. (2016). *OECD reviews of school resources: Slovak Republic 2015*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Who really wants the inclusion of Roma children in education? Mapping motivations of various school stakeholders in Slovakia

Slee, R. (2011). *The irregular school: Exclusion, schooling and inclusive education*. Oxon: Routledge.

Shonkoff, J. P., & Meisels, S. J. (Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomatová, J. (2004). *Na vedľajšej koľaji: Je proces zaraďovania rómskych detí do špeciálnych základných škôl znevýhodňujúcim činiteľom? [Sidetracked: Is the process of placement of Roma children in special primary schools a discriminating factor?]*. Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute.

Tomlinson, S. (2012a). The irresistible rise of the SEN industry. *Oxford Review of Education, 38*(3), 267-286.

Tomlinson, S. (2012b). *A sociology of special education* (Routledge Library ed.). Oxon: Routledge.

UNDP. (2012). *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma Households in Slovakia 2010*. Bratislava: UNDP Europe and the CIS, Bratislava Regional Centre. Retrieved from http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/report-living-conditions-roma-households-slovakia-2010.html

Vavrinčík, M. (2015). Rómske deti do škôlok. A povinne!(?) [Roma children into kindergartens. Compulsory!(?)]. Article published on September 8, 2015 in the web magazine mulktikulti.sk by Nadácia Milana Šimečku. Retrieved from http://www.multikulti.sk/svk/%C4%8Dl%C3%A1nky/r%C3%B3mske-deti-do-%C5%A1k%C3%B4lok.-a-povinne!-().html

World Bank (2012). *Diagnostics and policy advice on the integration of Roma in the Slovak Republic: Economic cost of exclusion, employment and social protection, financial inclusion, education, housing, health, monitoring and evaluation, EU financing*. Retrieved from *http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/570461468303056342/Main-report*

World Bank, UNDP & European Commission (WB/UNDP/EC) (2011). *Regional Roma Survey 2011*. Retrieved from http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/sustainable-development/development-planning-and-inclusive-sustainable-growth/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe/roma-data.html

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

About authors

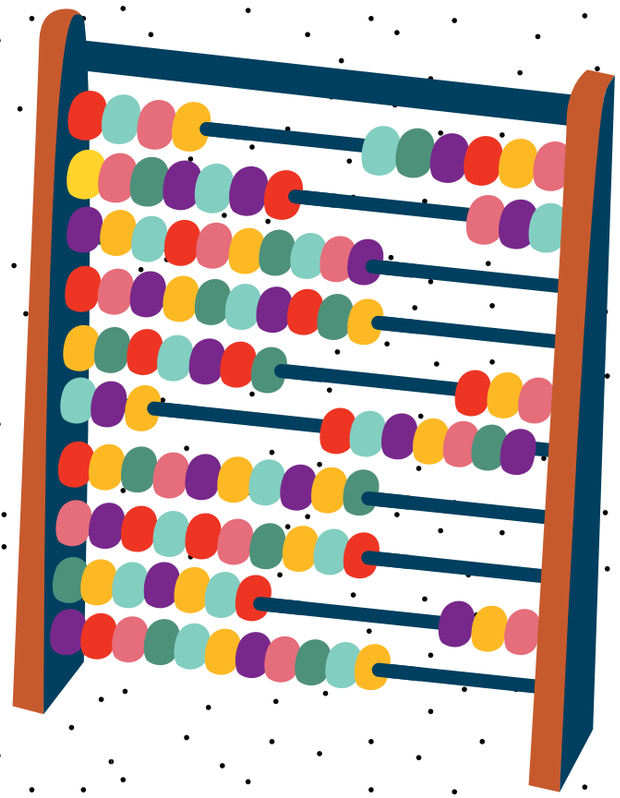
Jozef Miškolci earned his doctoral degree in education at the University of Sydney in Australia in 2014. His main areas of research are inclusive education, comparative education, educational policy, and human rights in education. At present, he works as a researcher at the Faculty of Education of the Comenius University in Bratislava and partly in the Slovak Governance Institute.

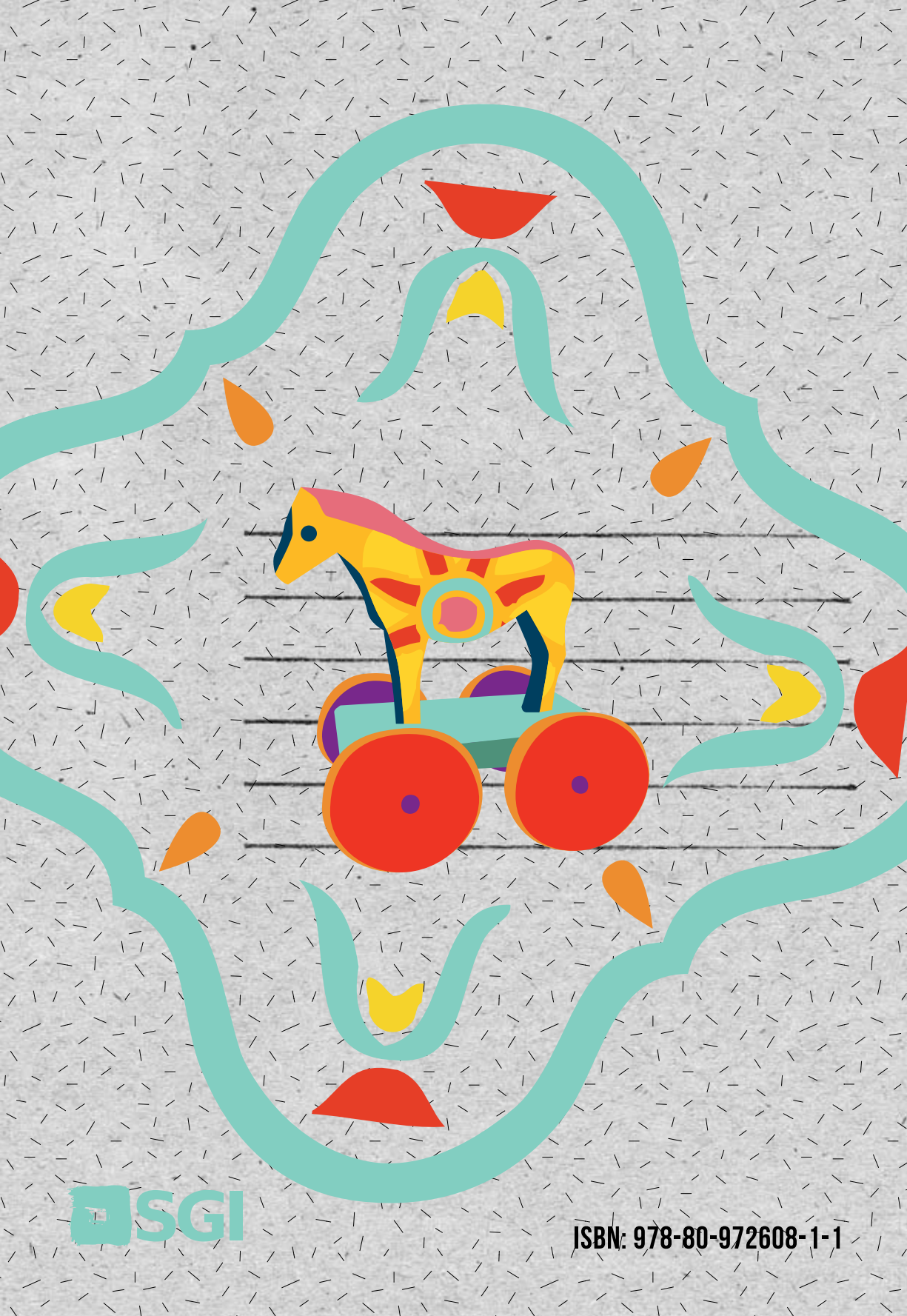
Martina Kubánová is a researcher in the Slovak Governance Institute and a freelance translator. Her research interests are school financing and education cost-effectiveness, minority education, private tutoring, as well as evaluation of educational projects. She earned her MA degree at the University of Economics in Bratislava and studied Applied Economics at Academia Istropolitana Nova.

Lucia Kováčová is a researcher at the Slovak Governance Institute in Bratislava. She earned her MA degree in Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest with the specialisation in equality and social justice. Her research interests are labour integration of ethnic minorities and inclusive education of disadvantaged children and youth.

Contact information:

SLOVAK GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE
(INŠTITÚT PRE DOBRE SPRAVOVANÚ SPOLOČNOSŤ SGI)
ŠTÚROVA 3, 811 02 BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA
SGI@GOVERNANCE.SK
00421 910 444 636 (OFFICE)





ISBN: 978-80-972608-1-1