



Educación y cultura

**Socrates**

PROYECTO SÓCRATES COMENIUS 2.1

“MINORÍAS ÉTNICAS Y EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA: EL ALUMNADO  
GITANO”

INVESTIGACIÓN EN RUMANÍA

INFORME

## Description of the Target Group and Methods of Investigation

In order to be certain that we accomplished the stated goals and purposes of Socrates Comenius 2.1 project, we needed to establish clear interviewing criteria. These criteria needed to reveal variables that were influencing the education process and identifying potential strategies that would facilitate better access to and completion of general education for Rroma students.

Based on the initial criteria guidelines from FSGG and our knowledge of the Roma population in Romania, we determined to interview secondary level pupils ages 11 years to 16 years of age under the classification of either enrolled or non-enrolled and also those students who began but did not complete their classes. We also interviewed teachers and parents (or family members of students). All of the interviews sub-classified as to gender, age, ethnic origins, and locations.

Beyond the FSGG interview criteria, and perhaps unique to the Romanian Roma population, are the influences of tribal ethnicity on secondary education. Historically each tribe of Rroma was associated with its own occupational survival strategy; i.e. the Rudari were woodworkers, Caladarai work with metals, and the Usari are travelers with artistic specialties. Considering that from the educational perspective they had almost the same opinion we decided to categorize this tribes as a group and we named this rroma group as **Traditional Rroma**. The other category based on ethnicity was the group of the students that one of the parents where rroma or from a line of families with rroma routs but also Romania, Hungarian, Turkish or other nationalities and called this group **Mixed Rroma**.

In selecting the students to be interviewed equal importance was given to gender and we attempted to obtain a cross section sampling of different age groups whenever possible. The same process was used for selecting those interviews to be conducted with children no longer attending school.

Interviews with teachers were held to those who taught the interviewed students.

Parent or family member interviews were also restricted to those directly related to the student and non-student children.

To have national credibility for the interviews we selected Rroma groups from four geographic regions in Romania. The regions were: 1) Bihor county in the west, 2) Brasov county in the south central region, 3) Constanta in the southeast, 4) and Galati in the east. In each region interviews were conducted in both urban and rural schools. In most instances the interviews were conducted within school buildings, exceptions being interviews conducted in some homes or community buildings.

We completed interviews in 14 schools. Some schools visited were non-integrated schools with only Rroma students while others had a mixed school body. We interviewed: 53 enrolled students, 28 not enrolled students, 63 parents, and 53 teachers. The students where selected according with criteria established by FSGG and the variables chosen were to be representative for the Romanian section of the study: boy/girl, rural / urban and traditional Rroma and mixed Rroma. The students from the Traditional Rroma group were from different tribes: caldarari, rudari and ursari. The students from the Mixed Rroma group were from the families where one of the parents is rroma (second or third generation) and the other belongs to the Romanian, Hungarian and Turkish ethnic group.

## How We Collected Information

In order to begin our collection of data, we initially contacted the Romanian Minister of Education. We wrote explaining the project description and requested permission to enter the schools in accordance with the established procedures. We were then referred to the Education Inspectors for Roma students in the selected counties. These Education Inspectors selected the schools and School Directors for us to work with in accordance with the established criteria. We then made contact with the School Directors to establish the dates of the interviews and procedures for conducting the interviews. The school directors made the student selections in accordance with the established criteria.

The Romania Socrates interview team consisted of five (5) persons. One individual was responsible for teacher interviews and the remaining four (4) team members were divided into two (2) groups. Each group of two was assigned to one (1) person to interview (ask the questions) and one (1) person to write the answers to the questions. In addition to the actual interview, time was scheduled at the beginning and end of the interview days to speak with the School Director for a sharing of information, being careful not to compromise confidentiality.

## COMMENTS ON THE ROMANA STUDENT'S DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER AND AGE

### Description of the sample of the roma students

In our sampling of roma students enrolled in Secondary School there were a total of 53 students who participated. This number included 22 girls between the ages of 12 and 16 years of age, and included 31 boys between 12 and 16 years of age. In some schools the roma boys are in larger numbers than are the girls. This is especially true for the students from the traditional Roma tribes (families), because their traditions limit the girls' education to an average of 2 levels but no more than 4 levels. In these areas of the country where the traditional roma tribes are located, the primary schools have roma girls but there are no girls in the secondary schools. The students from mixed roma families continue their education for as long as they can or as long as they can afford. They allow the children to be educated without having differences between genders.

### Distribution by Gender & Age

<u>Age</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>Total</u>
12	7	8	15
13	3	6	9
14	6	6	12
15	5	7	12
16	1	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>

The percentage of the roma boys and girls as distributed by age showed a consistency in enrollment numbers beginning with the boys at 12 years of age with 26.7% up to the age of 15 years of age where the percent was still 23.3%. This reveals that almost the same number of boys that are enrolled in the secondary school are also finishing the secondary school. For the girls the situation is different. The number of girls that are enroll in secondary school and the number that graduate from Secondary School changes a quite a bit.

There are cases when girls and boys are abandoning school or they repeat the academic year, most frequently this is in the rural schools because of poverty. This is a powerful factor that hinders many of the children's development and education status.

From the discussion that we had with some of the School Directors, School Inspectors and teachers, we were informed the percentage of roma students that are graduating from secondary schools in the city schools is greater than the ones from the rural school. And the gender variable is continually changing from a year on par with the demographic evolution.

Roma students and mixed roma students are located in schools throughout the country and many of them are found in the rural schools. The disadvantages for the ones living in the countryside are: the lack of preschool education, the changing of the teachers, and poverty. In the majority of the mixed Roma family's basic daily needs are not being fulfilled. Infrastructure in the community does not exist. Very few jobs are available for the adults. Many of these adults are illiterate. In these situations, education is a great need because it can help break the cycle of poverty and lack. Education makes a difference in people's lives and in their futures.

## **Comments on Teacher's Questionnaire – Romania**

### **Classroom Assessment**

The assessment of the degree to which classroom peace, routines and rules were acquired showed that both boys and girls have an interest in school and for achieving good results. A typical comparison between girls and boys that held true was that the girls pay more attention to details and are more careful to have everything they need to do their school work. In the rural areas in particular, the ability to bring all that is required to do the schoolwork depends upon the family's economic status regardless of whether the student is a girl or boy.

### **Interpersonal Relationships**

The roma students, both boys and girls have acceptable relationships with non-Roma classmates. The majority of roma students, in general have good relations with all students. As well, their relationship particularly with students from other ethnic or cultural groups was in general, very normal. The students from mixed Roma families, had relationship with others from different ethnic or cultural groups that were very normal to them because of the ethnic and cultural influences in their own families.

In the schools with students from both traditional Roma families and mixed roma families, there can be conflict based upon thoughts regarding customs. It was noted that students from wealthier, traditional Roma families consider themselves to be the "true Roma" people and therefore, they set themselves apart from those students of mixed Roma families.

There were no exceptional problems discovered with regard to the Roma students' other school relationships. In general the majority had acceptable relationships with both Roma and non-Roma students.

### **Academic Performance and Achievement**

Both boys and girls are happy to do class work as they get assistance in accomplishing tasks and feel a sense of accomplishment. It was again noted that the girls are more dedicated to accomplishing the completion of their homework in order to receive good grades.

In the schools in poorer areas, the Roma students have no homework because their schoolbooks are sometimes kept at the school so as to not be lost. Additionally, because many of these students' attendance varies dramatically, the teachers in these areas are keeping the school materials so they will be able to track the student's achievements – progress and regressions.

Both boys and girls from the mixed roma families seem more interested in their education than some of the boys and girls from the traditional roma families because they know their future is dependent upon their education. Many of the students from traditional roma families are involved in the family business, and therefore, they don't believe the years in school are really training for their life's work. They are more interested in being involved in the family's business with their parents learning to do the family work. Many of the boys from ages 11-13 years are in training in the family business.

### **Relationships between the Family and the School**

In a comparison of family members who attend parent-teacher meetings, an average of 5.7 girls' family member and an average of 4.3 boys' family member attended the school's parent-teacher meetings. Of the parents who attended, more were interested perhaps than others to see how things were going with their child at school and if the teachers had something good to say about their child. It was observed that, in general, if a child had done something disrespectful, was disobedient, had destroyed something or received bad grades that about 90% of the parents would not attend the parent-teacher meetings following one of these happenings. Exposing the negative performance brings shame to the family and thus, they prefer to not meet with the teacher. The opposite is true when the student has good results at school. The parents are then interested and proud to attend the parent-teacher meetings.

### **Cultural Diversity**

The overall assessment pertaining to the impact of cultural diversity on the Romanian roma students is that cultural diversity is not the real issue at this time. The desperate poverty of these people is the real problem. Relations are more often than not based upon the socio-economical background of the family. In general, the traditional roma students, both boys and girls, openly admit or recognize their ethnic background. The mixed roma students are many times confused with regard to their ethnic origins. Many of these students do not know which ethnic group they are identified with because they are roma mixed with Romanian, Hungarian, or Turkish for the first to third generation. Many switch ethnic identity when there are benefits involved. When there is assistance for Roma given they are Roma. When there is assistance given to those of Turkish or Hungarian ethnicity, then they identify with that group. The mixed Roma are not recognized by the traditional roma community nor are they recognized by the Romanian, Hungarian, Turkish communities.

Elements of the Roma culture have begun to be incorporated into some of the classrooms across the country. A few years ago educational legislation was passed that started with a pilot program being conducted in a few schools in the country. Teachers were trained in the areas of roma culture, language and history. This program is now systematically being introduced into each county in the country. Teachers are still being trained in these areas to teach roma culture, history and language. In our sampling, we interviewed students from schools with the new inter-cultural curricula and those who have not had the availability of roma culture classes. There were some instances that the roma student refused to attend rromani class(es) because they preferred to learn the language of their father's nationality. Still in other schools the rromani classes were refused or not introduced because the students and their families did not believe there was need. Some of the families already speak rromani and know the rroman history. Still others stated that the Romanian language is more important because of their business dealings.

## Analysis of the Enrolled Roma Secondary School Students – Romania

(Based upon questions answered by the students)

These are the results of Romania's study of the enrolled Roma Secondary School students. This presentation includes the general analysis by the category groupings of 1.) gender –boy/girl; 2.) ethnicity – traditional Roma/Mixed Roma; and 3.) location – rural/urban. The analysis has been performed based upon the results of interviews conducted with the Roma secondary school students. Additionally, these students' comments are included regarding the specific subject areas.

### Situation within Current Educational System:

One of the areas that were analyzed with regard to the situation within the current educational system was that of the reasons for students failing to complete schoolwork. From the comparative analysis performed on gender, we see that these questions were answered in a larger number by the boys (18 of 32), with almost half of them stating that they had difficulty understanding their school subjects. Two commented, "I do not understand their (teacher's) explanations." And from another boy, "I did not learn before and I don't understand anymore."

The girls are completing their schoolwork, in general, however, only 5 of 21 of them responded to these questions and 2 of those mentioned the lack of time to do their work – "I had things to do at home". Of both boys and girls only 1 mentioned that their environment at home was not suitable for learning.

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Question total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Reasons for failing to complete work</b>						
Boredom, does not feel like it	4	22.2%	1	20.0%	5	21.7%
Lack of time	5	27.8%	2	40.0%	7	30.4%
Does not understand/difficulty understand.	8	44.4%	1	20,0%	9	39.1%
Lacks suitable learning environment	1	5.6%	1	20.0%	2	8.7%

Of the students, both boys and girls, that had difficulty in understanding their school subjects; many were from the rural areas. In the rural areas of Romania, poverty is a predominant barrier to completing and/or successfully completing classes. The students are missing school because of the lack of school supplies, food, and clothing, the necessity to work or help with the family. These facts are the negatives that impact in their abilities to achieve the necessary knowledge in order to have good academic results.

### Situation at the Primary Educational Level

The next area examined was that of these students' situation at the end of Primary School. This subject area included their academic standing, peer relationships and their relationships with teachers.

The numbers show that the percentage of the girls with good academic results is higher than that of the boys, but the majority of the boys responded that they had an average academic standing.

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Question total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Academic standing</b>						
Good	11	35.5%	14	66.7%	25	48.1%
Average	17	54.8%	6	28.6%	23	44.2%
Bad	3	9.7%	1	4.8%	4	7.7%

Regarding peer and teacher relationships, it appears the girls are friendlier perhaps than the boys. "We live in the same neighborhood and we are friends and play together," commented a girl. There was, however, over 75% of both boys and girls that felt they had good relationships with both their peers and teachers. One of the boys commented about his classmates, "We are all friends because we are the same, Rroma."

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Question total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Peer relationships</b>						
Good	22	75.9%	17	81.0%	39	78.0%
Average	7	24.1%	4	19.0%	11	22.0%
Bad						
<b>Relationships with teachers</b>						
Good	23	74.2%	17	81.0%	40	76.9%
Average	7	22.6%	4	19.0%	11	21.2%
Bad	1	3.2%			1	1.9%

## Learning Expectations

### Purpose of learning

Under the major category of learning expectations, the first area examined was that of what the students believed the purpose of learning was. The majority of the students, boys and girls, answered that the purpose of learning was for their futures. They answered that it is necessary to be educated because they must have this learning for their futures. A small number perceived learning as being directly connected with the access to skilled employment. Still, for the rroma students, especially in the rural areas, the purpose of learning is connected with "being somebody". To them this means not living based on a day-to-day survival. As commented by a couple of the boys, "To be somebody" or "to have a job to be able to take care of my family."

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Question total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Purpose of learning</b>						
Necessary for the future	23	82.1%	17	85.0%	40	83.3%
Necessary to gain access to skilled employment	4	14.3%	3	15.0%	7	14.6%
To acquire knowledge	1	13.6%	0	0.0%	1	2.1%
To teach sons or daughters	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Still for others it means a necessary process for having a job that requires professional training, or the process needed to obtain a driver's permit. "I want to get my driver's permit so I'll be able to do business," said a boy from a traditional Rroma family. A girl from a mixed Rroma family stated, "I need to learn because I want to be a Romanian language teacher."

In the rural areas, the majority of the students answered, "to be somebody". Learning is thought of in a correct way, but the achievements that come through this learning and the results of having professional training are not fully understood. In many of their views, a person is somebody when he/she has a job that provides money for food and clothing. Only a few of them connect learning with professional careers.

For the rroma students from the traditional rroma families, learning is necessary in order to obtain a driving license here in Romania. This is especially true for the boys as most of the girls

are not enrolled in the secondary school. In Romania, the law requires a person to have graduated at least from secondary school in order to qualify to train for a driving license. The boys from these families also have a need to be able to read and write because it is necessary for their family businesses that provide them with a secure future. They feel this security regardless if they have professional training or not.

The mixed roma students are concerned about their futures, but the concept of education is seen through the socio-economic environment that they live in.

Of those students interviewed there was only 1 boy interested in acquiring knowledge by learning. None of these students understood learning as being a necessary responsibility for the training or helping their future families, i.e. sons and daughters.

### Short-term future expectations

These enrolled students were asked what they thought they would be doing after completion of Secondary School. The analysis of these numbers revealed that the girls are more interested in continuing their education than are the boys. The goal to continue on to higher/university education was indicated by 4.2% of the boy and 15.8% of the girls. One of these students commented, "After this I want to finish high school and maybe go to the university to become a journalist." Twenty-five percent of the boys indicated their goal after Secondary School would be work while none of the girls expected to work directly after completing Secondary School. A majority of those who answered this question expect/desire to have more education in the mid level vocational studies area. One of these boys said, "I want to finish the school to repair cars and buildings." Notwithstanding, out of the total of 53 roma students, only 43 answered the questions about future expectation. This may indicate that 10 of them could not express themselves or failed to know what to say with regard to their immediate future after completion of Secondary School.

In the rural areas, the almost impossibility of continuing their education beyond secondary school is a real barrier for some of these students. The high schools and vocational training schools are too far away from the villages they live in, and their financial status is usually at a level of a day-to-day survival. The roma students, especially mixed roma, have a mindset that does not include more education than secondary school. The future for both the short and long terms, is working after graduating the secondary school. Recently, some of the teacher have been noticing that some of the roma students that have a desire to learn and have good academic results, are abandoning school because they are depressed about the impossibility of them going to the high schools in the cities to get professional training.

The roma students from the traditional roma families are not as concerned about education beyond the secondary school level. Their lives and futures are established by their families. One boy said that, "I would like to go with my father on business trips to learn to do business."

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Short-term future expectations</b>						
Mid-level vocational studies	16	66.7%	16	84.2%	32	74.4%
Higher education/university	1	4.2%	3	15.8%	4	9.3%
Work	6	25.0%			6	14.0%
Not do anything						
Help out at home						
I don't know, have not decided	1	4.2%			1	2.3%

### Long-term future expectations

Specific profession requiring degree studies	7	23.3%	10	47.6%	17	33.3%
Specific profession requires mid-level/vocational degree	3	10.0%	3	14.3%	6	11.8%
Specific profession requiring only basic training/no training	10	33.3%	3	14.3%	13	25.5%
No specific profession	7	23.3%	3	14.3%	10	19.6%
No work						
Marry and remain at home	1	3.3%			1	2.0%
I don't know/have not decided	2	6.7%	2	9.5%	4	7.8%

51 students answered the questions about their long-term future expectations from the total of 53 interviewed. The numbers show that the boys are more interested in jobs that require basic or no specific training (17 boys of the 30 and 6 girls of the 21). More of the girls are willing to learn and be trained to have professions that require degree studies. Only one boy and one girl did not know or had not decided what their future expectation was, and none of those interviewed considered not working. There were 10% of the boys and 14.3% of the girls that wanted to have professions based upon completing mid-level or vocational degrees.

The students from the urban areas, both boys and girls, gave us fast and definite answers about what they wanted to be or do in the future, but the students from the rural areas did not have the confidence to express their dreams about what they will like to become in their futures. These questions about the future and learning's purpose for them took sometime for them to understand and then to dare to answer!

For many of the boys from the traditional Roma families, they do not think in terms of professions. They only need to continue their family business or to have their own business. One such boy told us, "I want to build me some houses, to buy some cars, to do business and to be rich."

### The Family's View of School/Education

In the area of the parent-school relations, the students answered that the relations between the school and their families were good in the urban and rural areas. Some students commented, "They (my parents) think that the school is good; the teachers are teaching us good things and this is good for us." Another such comment was, "Is good with the school. We need to be good and listen to the teachers because they work to teach us in class." The communication difficulties appear in situations where the student has done something that would shame the family, i.e. missing school without permission, breaking goods, misbehaving toward a classmate and/or teacher. In these situations, the mother or father are shamed by the behavior of their son or daughter, and they will not go to school when it is required.

The communication between the school and the families is very important. In some of the communities in the rural areas, we had noticed that because of very strong and good relations, regardless what the students might have done, the students have a better academic situation and the attendance in class is high.

One roma student, a boy, declared that, "my parents have a poor perception of school because the curriculum is hard." None of the boys or girls mentioned that their parents had a poor perception of school in terms of student body, teaching staff or organization.

We need to specify that especially in the rural areas, among the mixed roma, the concept of school, (i.e. what the school needs to be or to have; how the teachers need to function; or how the teachers need to organize or deal with various situations) is not known. They do not have a conceptual view of education or what an overall function of the school should be. They understand schools or schooling more on a basis of common sense or what they know through comparisons with other schools in villages close to them.

In the urban and rural schools the parents of the mixed roma students have an attitude of submission toward teachers because they view them as being important for their sons and daughter's education. There are times when this submissive attitude prevents them from standing up for their child in cases that are not within the family or child's control.

The educational background of the family and their attitude toward their children's studies was another area that these students were questioned about. Of the 53 students interviewed, there were 4 boys and 1 girl who did not know the answer to the question regarding the educational background of their parents. There were 13 students (11 boys and 2 girls) who said that their parents have very low level or no formal education at all. The majority of the parents have elementary or mid-level studies. From the sampling of students that we questioned, the 32 boys and 21 girls, the analysis revealed a higher percentage of girls coming from families whose parents have at least some formal education. This factor seems to have a positive impact on their academic results and their future plans.

The majority of the families without formal education are from the rural areas.

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Question total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Educational background of the family</b>						
High studies achieved by either parent/sibling			1	4.8%	1	1.9%
Mid-level studies achieved by parent or older sibling	7	21.9%	6	28.6%	13	24.5%
Elementary studies achieved by at least one parent	10	31.3%	11	52.4%	21	39.6%
Very low level or no formal education at all	11	34.4%	2	9.5%	13	24.5%
I don't know	4	12.5%	1	4.8%	5	9.4%
<b>Family's attitude towards studies</b>						
Positive perception, aware of importance	25	92.6%	19	90.5%	44	91.7%
Negative perception, sceptical, under obligation	2	7.4%	2	9.5%	4	8.3%

With regard to the family's attitude towards studies, the majority of the parents have a positive perception and an awareness of the importance school studies. One parent commented that, "It is good to know, to have a job and to gain money for your life." Another comment was, "It is good to go to school, for the future, to know how to behave and how to read, write and count." Only 2 of these students from both the boys and girls mentioned that their parents have a negative perception towards school studies.

### **Parent's Expectations of Education**

From the studies' analysis, we can see that the parent's expectations of education for the boys are for them to complete mid-level vocational studies or at least low-skill professions. These expectations for the boys are in a higher percentage than they are for the girls. The girls mentioned that their parent's expectations for them are to have higher studies or mid-level /vocational studies. There were 3 of the 19 girls interviewed did not answer this question. From the total of 29 boys that gave us an answer to this question, there 4 who did not know their parent's expectations of education for them. One student from each category said that their parents wanted them to leave secondary school.

In the rural areas, some of the parents with little or no education or with less formal education are encouraging their children to go to school and to do good. They desire this for them in order for them to at least finish secondary school and if is possible, to go forward for additional training. Some of them are so very poor that the seeming impossibility of their children going to high school gives them the attitude that school does no matter because nothing can be changed.

The traditional roma students answered that their parent's expectation of education is to finish the secondary level, to get the driving license and to be more involved in the family business with their fathers.

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Parents' expectations of education</b>						
Expectations of higher studies	2	6.9%	6	31.6%	8	16.7%
Expectations of mid-level/vocational studies	10	34.5%	6	31.6%	16	33.3%
Expectations of compulsory education/low skill profession	11	37.9%	2	10.5%	13	27.1%
Study until employment is found	1	3.4%			1	2.1%
Does not know	4	13.8%	3	15.8%	7	14.6%
That I want to carry out my wishes			1	5.3%	1	2.1%
Want me to give up studies/to leave secondary school	1	3.4%	1	5.3%	2	4.2%

In the question concerning the parent's attitudes towards education concerning gender, there were 10 boys from 30 boys and only 1 girl from 21 girls that said their parent's opinion would change with regard to their gender. Some of the students (8 boys and 6 girls) didn't know what the parent's opinion would be, and the remaining students mentioned that the parent's opinion would remain the same. Among the mixed roma, the traditional perception about the boy's and girl's status in the family and society are no longer applied anymore. Their parents have the same attitudes toward education regardless of the gender.

The traditional roma families are respecting their cultural traditions and rules about differences between the genders.

<b>Attitudes according to gender</b>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Opinion would remain the same	12	40.0%	14	66.7%	26	51.0%
Opinion would change	10	33.3%	1	4.8%	11	21.6%
Does not know	8	26.7%	6	28.6%	14	27.5%

Consideration was also given in the questioning as to what degree the student's and parent's opinions coincided. In general, the opinions and interests do coincide. One student commented, "They know that education is good for me and I agree." Another comment given was, "They are parents and they want the best for me and they know what is good for me."

There were a number of students that answered they didn't know their parent's opinion about educational expectations and attitudes according to gender. These were mainly from students in the rural areas. Many of these families are not applying Roma traditions to their lives, and are too busy surviving, i.e. working for food with their children in the fields; dealing with sicknesses or divorces. Education is not seen as a priority for the day.

Three boys and 1 girl mentioned that they are not in agreement with their parent's opinion.

#### Degree to which student-parent interests coincide

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
Opinions-interests coincide	25	89.3%	20	95.2%	45	91.8%
Opinions-interests do not coincide	3	10.7%	1	4.8%	4	8.2%

## Cultural Identity and Intercultural Education

There was a very positive response from these 53 students with regard to their identifying with their own ethnic group. All of the 53 students interviewed answered this question about recognizing their ethnic group to which they belong.

Of those interviewed, only 1 boy of the 31 boys and 4 girls of the 21 girls stated that they are not roma, because one of their parents is not roma or that they are Romanian or Hungarian and their grandfather or grandmother was roma.

The traditional roma students are proud to be roma and they have no problems being called roma. This is what they are. Many of the mixed roma don't know what they are or which ethnic group they belong to. In general, if one of the parents is roma, the child will be categorized as roma and not the other ethnic group of the other parent.

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Identification with own ethnic group</b>						
Positive identification: explicit	30	96.8%	17	81.0%	47	90.4%
Negative identification: hidden	1	3.2%	4	19.0%	5	9.6%
No answer	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%

The students were asked whether the Roma culture was addressed at their schools. The school curricula in the secondary school has the roma culture, history and tradition in just some areas in the country. Those that have already been made part of a project that had began few years ago. Teachers are in training and the curricula are in process. In some of the schools that were part of our research, this project was in process and in other areas it has not begun yet.

The majority of the students that were interviewed were from the schools that the roma culture curricula changes had not been made.

Some of the traditional roma students were more interested in the Romanian culture because their business is in Romanian and the roma language is not necessary. Many of these students already speak romani.

In one of the schools in the south of the country, when the students were asked if they wanted to have Turkish language or Roma language, those of mixed roma ethnicity of roma and Turkish parents chose the Turkish language.

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Roma culture addressed at school</b>						
Yes	8	25.8%	2	9.5%	10	19.2%
No	20	64.5%	18	85.7%	38	73.1%
No, but should be addressed	1	3.2%			1	1.9%
Only other minority cultures			1	4.8%	1	1.9%
I don't know	2	6.5%			2	3.8%

## Family Social Background

These enrolled students were asked questions regarding their family's social condition, which includes the employment in the family, the number of inhabitants per home, and any family problem.

The social condition of the family is very important to the roma students. These factors are very impacting upon their futures. Formal education is important to them, but their lives many times are so focused on survival and fulfilling their basic needs that education is not viewed as a necessity. The basic needs that they focus on are shelter, food, clothing, shoes, etc. In the rural areas in particular, many of their homes shelter between 6 and 12 persons, and are just one small room made from sticks, or manure and straw bricks. These kinds of villages generally have no infrastructure such as roads, running water, gas, and electricity. The majority of the adults from these communities have no professional training, thus no jobs. Approximately 35.3% are living on an income from the social benefit. The monthly amount of money is very small, not enough even for 1 week just with bread (for families with more than 4 persons). One boy stated,

“My grandmother and grandfather have social and they still need to work digging ditches. My mother is working day by day when she can find work, but sometimes she stays home with my brothers.”

The traditional roma families have their own businesses. Many of these men are unskilled and self-employed and have an income that offers a secure life for their families. There are some of these families that are very wealthy having houses with 10-20 rooms and having 2-5 cars. They are showing their wealth through goods that they own.

Another segment of the parents are hired workers at 25.5 %. Many of these families are located in the urban areas where finding an unskilled job can be easier. From our interview sampling we also found that 23.5 % of these families are unemployed.

The social conditions of the roma families, particularly those of mixed roma ethnicity that are living in rural areas beyond the villages are in a critical status. Their children are in danger of following the same path as their parents that of being under educated, poor, hungry and lacking even the basic needs of life.

**Family social condition**

Hired worker	6	20.0%	7	33.3%	13	25.5%
Skilled self-employed worker						
Unskilled self-employed worker	7	23.3%	1	4.8%	8	15.7%
Social benefit/pension recipient	9	30.0%	9	42.9%	18	35.3%
Unemployed	8	26.7%	4	19.0%	12	23.5%

**Number of inhabitants per dwelling**

The roma families many, especially the mixed roma families located in the rural areas. The majority of the students from the research sampling of 32 boys and 21 girls are from families with more than 4 persons per dwelling. This large number of persons in a small house contains not just the immediate family of the students but also grandmothers, grandfathers and sometimes aunts, uncles and cousins. They work together and are taking care of one another. One girl's state was, “We are 13 people in 3 rooms and is hard. There are my mother and 2 little brothers and her parent's and her sisters and brothers.”

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Number of inhabitants per dwelling</b>						
4 or fewer persons	8	25.8%	12	57.1%	20	38.5%
Between 5 and 7	16	51.6%	4	19.0%	20	38.5%
More than 7	7	22.6%	5	23.8%	12	23.1%

**Level of Family and Social Problems**

The problems in the roma families are almost always based on lack of basics need – poverty. The lack of finances is directly connected to the lack of education and welfare. Almost half of the students mentioned that they have problems in their family. Some of these students voiced concerns

- about their parents because they are sick;
- for their brothers and sisters with the same problems; (One boy said, “ My brother is sick. He has had 5 operations on his arm.”)
- for themselves because they are unable to take control for their own futures particularly with regard to education. They are needed to stay home and take care of their younger siblings while the parent are working; because some are from divorced families which create even greater problems;

- about the fact that they can lose the houses that they live in because of family debt, or because the house is falling down or because the house is not finished and the winter is coming.

One of these girls said, "The problem is money – there is not enough to pay the debt and the second is that I miss my parents. My grandmother is diabetic and until now she received the medicine for free but now she needs to buy it and it is hard. The family is helping her."

"I am afraid that the house will not be finished and winter is coming over us and we have no place to go" was a sad concern voiced by one of the boys.

The other half of the students had nothing to say. While the majority of the students from traditional roma families responded that have no problems.

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Level of Family and Social Problems</b>						
Yes	18	62.1%	15	71.4%	26	52.0%
No	11	37.9%	6	28.6%	24	48.0%

### Socio-emotional Situation

The socio-emotional situation at school as revealed by these students was, in general, that the roma students feel good about going to school and that they wanted to continue to study. There was an overall majority of 78% of both the boys and girls who responded with this answer. One example was, "I like the school. I want to go forward." Another student said, "I feel good at school. I like my classmates and it is fun." None of the students questioned responded that they felt bad and wanted to give up and leave school. The girls seemed to enjoy being at school and said it is a happy part of their lives.

	<u>Boy</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Socio-emotional situation at school</b>						
I feel good, I want to continue	21	70.0%	19	90.5%	40	78.4%
I feel regular, it depends on classes and days . . .	9	30.0%	2	9.5%	11	21.6%
I feel bad, would like to give up studies, leave school	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%

In our research, clearly the majority of all the students had a good attitude about school, teachers and education. These boys and girls, as a whole, desire to be 'somebody' and to have a hopeful future. They very much want to break the chain of poverty and feel that they are benefiting from being educated.

### Romania: Enrolled Secondary School Students Educational Status at the end of Primary School

At the end of Primary School, the academic situation of the students interviewed showed that in general the roma students, both boys and girls, had passed all their subject areas. The differences found were that a small percentage of the roma boys excelled above the girls in not instrumental areas. The roma boys seem to have a natural affinity for the not instrumental subject areas.

## Educational Status at the End of Primary School

<u>Subject Areas Passed</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
All Areas	18	90.0%	27	96.4%	45	93.8%
Instrumental Subject	1	5.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.1%
Not Instrumental	1	5.0%	1	3.6%	2	4.2%

In general, the students interviewed passed all of their exams. Some of these students, both boys and girls, are academically first in their classes. There are roma students interested in being first in their classes, especially some from schools in the urban areas where they will have more opportunity to continue their education. Some of the students from the rural areas struggle with the lack of hope of continuing their education because of the lack of availability of schools near their homes.

Primary School education, of course, is a key to the continuance of the roma students' ability and motivation to continue Secondary School. In general, during Primary School the students have one (1) teacher for four (4) years of school, and this aspect is a powerful influence. We have noticed through this interviewing process that the changing of teachers during this period as many as 3 to 6 times has a very negative impact on the roma students. This changing of primary school teachers seems to occur more in the rural schools. The children have commented that these changes confuse them and some of them abandon school as a result. The first contact many of these roma students have with the educational system is the first level of primary school, as there are few kindergartens in the rural schools. The stability represented to these students of having a primary teacher for four years is invaluable. The children enter the school with excitement and feel important because many of their home environments do not allow for individual attention and the schoolteacher is an important member of the community giving them attention. The changing of teachers during this period leaves the young student confused and many do not cope well with these changes.

For both boys and girls, the academic results are influenced by the preschool education or lack of that preschool education; the educational level of the parents; the socio-economic situation of the family; and their location whether rural or urban. At the present time, nearly all of the professional training schools and high schools are located in urban areas. The villages are many times too far from home for the rural students and the cost of transportation is beyond their reach and these factors equal no hope or motivation to do better.

## Romania: Enrolled Rroma Secondary School Students Last Academic Year Achievements

The assessment of the academic achievements of the rroma students in the last school year showed that 26% of the rroma girls passed all their subject areas. This was a difference of 8% over the percentage of rroma boys who passed all of their subject areas. However, the boys achieved a higher passing rate in the non-instrumental subject areas at a rate of 17.9% as opposed to the girl's passing percentage of non-instrumental subjects at 5.3%. Many of the rroma students seem to have natural abilities in the non-instrumental areas of workshops, music, crafts and sports.

### Last Academic Year Completed

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Girl/Boy</u>
All	5	26.3%	4	14.3%	19.1%	84.2%
One instrumental subject	7	36.8%	11	39.3%	38.3%	-6.2%
Two instrumental subjects	1	5.3%	2	7.1%	6.4%	-26.3%
Non-instrumental subjects	1	5.3%	5	17.9%	12.8%	-70.5%
Freely chosen	5	26.3%	6	21.4%	23.4%	22.8%
Total	19	100.0%	28	100.0%	100.0%	

Mathematics are a favorite subject especially for the boys from traditional rroma families who have their own businesses. Some of the boys mentioned that they would like to be politicians or to have jobs in the government because those people are rich and have great influence.

The girls from the secondary schools spoke of future goals of being nurses, educators and hairdressers. Most of these girls were from mixed rroma families.

## Romania: Enrolled Rroma Secondary School Students Areas Completed Last Trimester

Last trimester results achieved by the interviewed rroma students, showed that 8.5% more of the girls passed all their subjects than the boys. Additionally, 43.8% of the girls' passed two instrumental subjects, which were 33.5% more than the boys passed. The boys, however, had a higher percentage (27.6%) in passing of the one instrumental subject. The boys also had a higher passing percentage in the non-instrumental subjects than the girls achieved. The numbers and percentages showed that the girls had completed the last trimester with better results than the boys. We found that the girls, in general, had more interest in the instrumental subjects and had a better understanding of them, which brought about better academic results. The boys are more interested in sports, languages and workshops that better develop their natural interests.

## Last Trimester - Subject Areas Completed

<u>Subject Areas</u>	<u>Girl</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Girl/Boy</u>
All	3	18.8%	3	10.3%	13.3%	81.3%
One instrumental subject	1	6.3%	8	27.6%	20.0%	-77.3%
Two instrumental subjects	7	43.8%	3	10.3%	22.2%	32.9%
Non-instrumental subjects			4	13.8%	89.0%	
Freely Chosen	5	31.3%	11	37.9%	35.6%	-17.6%
Total	16	100.0%	29	100.0%	100.0%	

## COMMENTS ON COMPENSATORY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

### COMPENSTORY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The information gathered from the teachers' questionnaires pertaining to the need for compensatory educational programs for roma students, showed that 15% of the girls and 11% of the boys were attending these compensatory programs. The lack of kindergarten is a basic disadvantage for many of these students. It has a negative impact in primary school and continues into secondary school also. Some schools are offering roma students the opportunity to attend classes to compensate for lost hours, but not all of the students are willing or can attend these kinds of programs.

In general, we can say that the majority of roma students are graduating year after year without a compensatory educational program.

### Romania: Enrolled Roma Secondary School Students Compensatory Program

	<u>Girl</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Total</u>
Yes	3	15.0%	3	11.1%	6	12.8%
No	17	85.0%	24	88.9%	41	87.2%
Total	20	100.0%	27	100.0%	47	100.0%

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

From the total students in the sampling for this research study, only 1 boy was evaluated as having special education needs. The percentage table shows a probability of 2.1% roma students in need of special education with regard to both boys and girls.

## Romania: Enrolled Roma Secondary School Students Special Education

	<u>Girl</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Boy</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Total</u>
Yes	0	0.0%	1	3.6%	1	2.1%
No	20	100.0%	27	96.4%	47	97.9%
Total	20	100.0%	28	100.0%	48	100.0%

In Romania there are separate schools having special educational programs for children with special needs. Some of the roma students are attending these schools during the primary and secondary school years. The availability or openings in these special schools are based upon the number of places available to accommodate children from across the country. Sometimes all of these schools are full so the remaining children with special needs are integrated into the regular schools. There have been recorded some good results, but usually the progress is not there. For many of these children, they just cannot keep up with the curriculum in the regular school, and as a result, they abandon or must repeat the same academic year a few times before they drop out of school.

For children with special needs from rural areas with the additional hardship of a poor financial status, it is very hard for them to attend these special schools.

## Analysis of the Parents of Romanian Students Includes Parents of both Enrolled and Not Enrolled Students Based on 46 Parents of Enrolled Students and 25 Parents of Not Enrolled Students

The overall perception of both the primary and secondary schools was viewed as good by parents of both the enrolled students and the not enrolled students. The parents of the not enrolled students, particularly from the rural communities, stated their belief in the benefit of kindergarten for their children. The academic situation of both the enrolled and not enrolled students, as viewed by their parents, was good to average with a higher percentage of good results by the enrolled students. One comment that was made more than a few times that negatively impacted the academic results of the students particularly in primary school was, "They changed the teachers many times. They had 5 teachers in 4 school years. Some will stay a few months and some maybe a year." And, "They changed the teachers many times. In the first year my daughter took first place, but after that year the teacher left and another came. She had to repeat the 2<sup>nd</sup> level. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> level, still another teacher came and after that another and she had to repeat the 4<sup>th</sup> level twice." As a result, parents commented that they thought academic achievement was achieved best when teachers did not change during the primary years.

When the parents were asked questions about the impact of a high percentage of Roma students in the school, clearly the majority responded that it was good or fine with them.

	<u>Enrolled Students</u>		<u>Not Enrolled Students</u>	
<b>Schools with a high percentage of Roma students</b>				
This is fine for me	35	76%	21	84%
This is good for some things but bad for others		0%		0%
This is not good for me.	6	13%		0%

However, some parents mentioned that in some situations they would like the number of Romanian students to be larger because they believe their children benefit in speaking the Romanian language through the influence of these students. One such comment from the parent of an enrolled student was, "It's not good. During break times they speak Rromani language and don't speak well Romanian language, and at school they do not understand and have low marks. Mixed with more Romanian children is better because they learn better the language."

Regarding the parents thoughts about an ideal secondary school, few of the parents could express what the ideal school would be, but they mentioned that the teachers should meet the students' needs of being kind, understanding, patient and good at helping them. Many of the parents also spoke of the need for good administration for the schools. On this subject the parents commented: "We need to help the school be more beautiful and the parents to have a good relationship and to educate the children good." And was stated, "They need to

	<u>Enrolled Students</u>		<u>Not Enrolled Students</u>	
<b>Ideal secondary school</b>				
Teachers met students' needs	11	24%	15	60%
Respect shown for all cultures		0%		0%
Schools with only Romanian students		0%		0%
Good administration	23	50%	8	32%

bring computers to the school; put in a heating system in the building; need to have uniforms so there is no apparent difference in wealth. The educational system and the teachers should be well organized.

The numbers of responses to questions asked of the parents' about gender importance in school studies look to be about the same. The majority of parents of both enrolled and not enrolled students answered that gender made no difference (74% and 84%). From parents' comments for the mixed Rroma, gender does not make a difference in educational needs. However, the traditional Rroma have differences based on gender with regard to education.

For many, the girls do not complete more than 2-3 levels of school before they are married at ages 9-11yrs. Being married, the girls are staying at home with their mother-in-law being trained on how to be a wife.

The long-term future expectations for their children were varied in accordance with their geographic location, ethnicity and economic conditions.

	<u>Enrolled Students</u>		<u>Not Enrolled Students</u>	
<b>Attitude towards studies based on gender of the student</b>				
Gender makes no difference	34	74%	21	84%
There are differences based on gender of students	8	17%	4	16%

Many of the parents from mixed Rroma families have no clear concept of what future means. They are living their lives from day to day, and to express the future for their children was not easy. Some of them have positive thoughts, especially those from urban areas. One hopeful parent commented about their child's future, " To learn well, to integrate into society, to have a word to say, to be able to have a job at the City Hall or maybe to finish the high school or university." Many of these mixed Rroma in the cities are poor but in a city there are possibly

more opportunities to find work. These parents are encouraging their children to go to school and they are doing what they can to help them. From the families of mixed Roma in the rural areas, many of the parents have only completed school to the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> levels and their work possibilities have only been in the agricultural fields. These families are generally very poor with larger numbers of children and their hope for a better life is dismal for themselves and their children. Their major concern is the food for tomorrow. The comment of one of these parents speaks accurately of their view of future, "I see a bad future because of this poverty."

	<u>Enrolled</u> <u>Students</u>		<u>Not</u> <u>Enrolled</u> <u>Students</u>
<b>Future expectations</b>			
Married with children	2	4%	4
Working	10	22%	4
Married and working	6	13%	3

Some parents of the not enrolled students mentioned that the future expectation for their children is for them to be back in school. Some of the students missed Secondary School because they had no knowledge about the educational system. The students that complete the primary school are automatically enrolled in Secondary School. One of these parents commented, "No, nobody told me (about the secondary school.) I have been gone to work in the field." Some of the parents had expected to receive an announcement after Primary School as to what to do next for their children. Still other parents could not help their children to go to school anymore because of their economic situation. The children had to help them work in the agricultural fields.

The parents of the students from traditional roma families have a much clearer view of the future for their children. One parent commented, "I see him with a Mercedes, to make money, to make gold, to be a business man and to like it. These families are not in as much economic need. They want their children, particularly the boys to be involved in the family business with their fathers. The goal of attending the secondary school is connected with the obtaining of driver's license for the boys. The law now requires the completion of level 8 to apply for the driver's license exam.

Purpose of education is not a subject that could clearly be answered. Whether the parent of an enrolled or not enrolled student; whether parent of traditional roma student or mixed roma student; whether the parent of boy or girl student; regardless of their geographic location (rural or urban), they understand the connection of an education with future possibilities, but the means to get that education and the sacrifices necessary are sometimes too much to consider. Foremost in their minds is daily food. Then regarding school attendance they know they must have clothing, shoes, notebooks, pencils and other school supplies in order for the children to integrate with other students. One such parent spoke of the reason her child did not attend school, "No, no he is not going to school because the children are laughing at him because he has no shoes, he has no notebook and he is hungry." Even for the families that have economic resources to send their children to school say assistance is needed to support children's education countrywide. When asked question about whether assistance is needed to support children's educational studies, close to 100% of the parents responded yes that it is needed. However, there was only about 3% who stated that they were receiving this needed assistance. A very small number of roma students receive scholarship aid. These scholarships are given based on the school's budget, academic achievement and family economics. There is rarely enough money in the schools' budgets to issue scholarships to the number of students deserving. Other needs mentioned by the parents needed to help their children be educated were:

- The not enrolled students, the extended opportunity for “alternative education program” for dropouts. Few of the rural areas have this possibility.
- The need of construction materials to repair or finish houses made of wood/sticks, dirt and straw.
- The need for clothing and shoes
- The need of medical assistance
- The need for utilities such as electricity, running water, gas, etc.

Both the parents of enrolled and not enrolled students are aware of the value of education for their children in varying degrees. It becomes more apparent in each interview or conversation with these parents that there must be developed more and broader opportunities for these young people to be placed on equal footing to begin their lives. Education is foundational beginning for the possibility of a successful adult life.

## Analysis of Not Enrolled Students – Romania

We chose to use three groupings of students within the roma secondary school student interviews as relevant variables that would hopefully lead to the discovery of what barriers prevent these students’ from continuing and completing the educational process, and what are the contributing factors for those who stay or desire to stay in school through to graduation.

The first grouping was that of gender. The purpose of using gender, as a group of study was to discover traditions or cultures or prejudice that might be making differences between boys and girls from roma families attending the secondary school level. The second grouping for study was between roma secondary students in urban and rural geographic locations. Were there any advantages in one area that were not available to another merely based upon physical location? And the third grouping of study was between the secondary school students from traditional roma tribes (families) and the secondary school students from mixed roma ethnicity (families).

The condition within the current educational system for not enrolled roma students across Romania as discovered through the interview answers has shown a basic positive overall perception. The majority of these not enrolled students in each of the groupings were almost equally divided into those who didn’t know of many school improvements that could be made, and those who suggested the school facilities; resources, and/ or materials could be improved. With regard to school improvements, we noticed that although there is need for some improvements in all of the areas, there are more needed in many of the rural areas. For example, out of 10 not-enrolled students 9 of them answered that they lacked the understanding of how school needs to be or lacked the understanding of what is needed. It appears these students’ exposure or the ability to dream regarding what could be better or what would help them is not a part of their lives. There were some specific suggestions as to improvements these students thought to be necessary. “To have heat in the classrooms to not be too cold because the children cannot stay in the school when is cold”, was commented by one of the not enrolled boys.

Upon reflection, these students also remembered that they missed classes but liked the classes. Their favorite subjects of study were language-literature, math and foreign languages. The least favorite subjects identified by the students were natural science-biology and math.

It is impressive to report that well over half of these not enrolled students reported their relationship with their teachers as being, in general, good, close, with some humor, and that they listen and teach well. Of the total interviewed in the categories only 2 students felt they had a bad or negative assessment of the teacher’s role. One not enrolled female student comments: “. . .to have teachers that are more severe

because these ones are too nice. When we were going to the blackboard in front of the class, we were joking, laughing, and tearing the notebooks. Now I am very sorry."

In addition, the students' relationships with their peers were perceived as good overall. When asked specifically if there were relational problems with non-Roma classmates there were no responses indicating peer problems. Overall they felt they had a good relationship with everyone, but sometimes it depended on the individual person and had no bearing on the group they belonged to.

With regard to the schools' Counseling Departments, these are not available yet in the majority of schools. This responsibility is included in the main teacher's curriculum. Therefore, these students were not asked to give a response in this area.

### Participation in activities

These not enrolled students were not participants in many school or extracurricular activities. About 60% of these students did not remember participating in any school activities. The students, in general, indicated they were more involved in activities at home such as helping to care for family members or working with the family in the fields or in the family business. Of those stating they did participate in school activities (about 40%), more of these activities took place outside of the school than in schools. The activities outside of school such as excursions and visits to museums for the most part require money for participation. This of course, caused problems for many of the students. However, many of the teachers tried to arrange activities that did not require the students to pay for participation.

### Academic Situation

The academic situation of these students in their remembrance is very favorable. These students remembered receiving passing grades in all or at least some subjects. A small percentage of them remembered failing subjects or only passing in the less academic subject areas.

### Academic Situation

	<u>Passed All</u>	<u>% Per</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>% Per</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>% Per</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>% Per</u>
	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Workshop/less</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Per Que</u>
			<u>Subjects</u>		<u>academ</u>			
Boy	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Girl	6	60%	1	10%	2	20%	1	10%
Urban	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Rural	5	62.5%	1	12.5%	2	25%	0	0%
Roma	8	66.7%	3	25%	0	0%	1	8%
MixedRoma	6	46.1%	5	38.5%	1	7.7%	1	7.7%

Absenteeism and tardiness were the major reasons these students gave for receiving failing grades in their subjects. When asked questions about the reasons they did not complete either class or home work, there were greater percentage differences between the traditional Roma students and the mixed Roma students. For the mixed Roma students 64% responded that their home conditions prevented them from completing their work for school. The students from traditional Roma families listed different reasons for not completing their schoolwork. Some said they didn't have enough time to complete their schoolwork due to other obligations. One young Roma boy commented that he only finished Level 6 at school because his father required him to travel with him on his business trips. Others remarked that sometimes they didn't understand the work or that it was just too difficult and thus received failing grades.

### Reasons for failing grades:

	<u>Not</u>	<u>% Per</u>	<u>Sees</u>	<u>% Per</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>% Per</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>% Per</u>
	<u>understand</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>too</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>or Tardy</u>	<u>Question</u>
	<u>Subject</u>		<u>Negative</u>		<u>Difficult</u>			
Boy	3	37.5%	0	0%	1	12.5%	4	50%

Girl	2	20%	1	10%	0	0%	6	60%
Urban	2	33.3%	0	0%	1	16.7%	3	50%
Rural	1	12.5%	1	12.5%	0	0%	6	75%
Roma	3	33.3%	0	0%	0	0%	6	66.7%
Mix Roma	5	35.7%	1	7%	1	7%	7	50%

Only 2 of the students indicated that failing grades were due to the teachers in some way. With regard to the students' learning skills, the majority of them responded that they only did their work sometimes or when it was easy. About a third of the students remembered having done their class work as well as homework. In some schools, teachers said they are evaluating the students' home situations and not assigning work to be done at home. Some of the teachers are having the students keep their notebooks at school and consequently, only requiring class work of the students. At least, 1 out of 2 students said the reasons they did not do schoolwork was because home conditions were not conducive for studying. In many of their homes they do not have basic amenities such as electricity, running water, gas, and are many times involved in domestic activities. Others indicated the same inability to do schoolwork because of their frequent absences due to home-related obligations and the difficulty of the school subjects.

### Inter-culture Studies in the School

From the interview question on the topic of inter-culture in the schools, about 76% of these not enrolled students remembered discussions and or classes about the Roma culture, as well as, other cultures in their areas. There were about 19% who said they did not remember such discussions, but felt history and cultural classes about the Roma culture should be included in school.

#### Focus on Interculturality at School

	<u>Yes, Roma Culture</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Per Cultures</u>	<u>Yes, Other % Question</u>	<u>Per</u>	<u>No, but should do this % Question</u>	<u>Per</u>	<u>I don't know % Question</u>	<u>Per</u>
Boy	5	50.0%	3	30.0%	1	10.0%	1	10.0%	
Girl	1	9.0%	6	55.0%	4	36.0%	0	0.0%	
Urban	4	44.0%	3	33.0%	1	11.0%	1	11.0%	
Rural	3	30.0%	5	50.0%	2	20.0%	0	0.0%	
Roma	6	46.0%	5	38.0%	1	7.6%	1	7.6%	
Mixed Roma	4	28.0%	6	43.0%	4	29.0%	0	0.0%	

### Learning Expectations

The learning expectations of the not enrolled students revealed young people who have an overall general understanding that the purpose of learning is to help them in future work or in getting by in life. They also indicated that to acquire knowledge or to learn more is the purpose of learning. These answers were followed up with a general understanding that learning has to do with future and the future means work. Of the 70 interviewed 47 responded that their future expectations were to work. About 2/3 of these who believe who believe work to be their future did not know what type/profession of work they would perform.

The more revealing of the answers given were perhaps those not given by these not enrolled students. None of these students responded to the inquiry regarding the purpose of learning that included the thought that they would one day need to teach their own sons and/or daughters, and none responded that the purpose of learning would be to be receptive to other ideas or people. Unfortunately, there was also the percentage of 17% of these young people who did **not** know or had not thought about their futures.

As noted in the chart (below), there is sameness in answers regarding the purpose for learning, but statements given by some of these not enrolled students reveal differences in reasoning.

Two examples of these statements are: 1.) A student from a mixed Roma family who replied to the questions, "Why did you study?" and "What is the purpose of studying?" He replied, "To become acceptable, to go forward and to earn money for bread." In contrast, 2.) A student from a traditional Roma

family had a specific focus and responded to the question, "Did you like to study? Why?". He said, "Yes, I wanted to get my driver's license."

**Purpose of Learning:**

	<u>Required</u> <u>for the</u> <u>future</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>To</u> <u>Get</u> <u>Knowledge</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Teach My</u> <u>Children</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Open to</u> <u>Ideas &amp;</u> <u>People</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>
Boy	7	63.6%	4	36.4%	0	0%	0	0%
Girl	4	44.4%	5	55.6%	0	0%	0	0%
Urban	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%
Rural	2	25%	6	75%	0	0%	0	0%
Roma	6	50%	6	50%	0	0%	0	0%
MixedRoma	7	53.8%	6	46.2%	0	0%	0	0%

Considering the jobs that are available to those who have not completed Secondary School, the outlook for work will be limited. However, most of the not enrolled students answered that they would work, but the majority did not know a profession or specific line of work they desired to have. As noted in the (below) there were too many of these young people who did not know or have a plan for the future.

**Future Expectations (from learning):**

	<u>Work</u> <u>profession</u> <u>not</u> <u>Defined</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Work,</u> <u>profession</u> <u>Defined</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Work at</u> <u>Home</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Nothing</u> <u>or</u> <u>Do</u> <u>Not</u> <u>Know</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>
Boy	6	54.5%	4	36.4%	0	0%	1	9.1%
Girl	4	36.4%	1	9.1%	2	18.2%	4	36.4%
Urban	5	50%	4	40%	1	10%	0	0%
Rural	3	33.3%	1	11.1%	2	22.2%	3	33.3%
Roma	5	35.7%	3	21.4%	3	21.4%	3	21.4%
MixedRoma	7	53.8%	4	30.8%	0	0%	2	15.4%

**Family Attitudes towards School**

In the section of the interviews regarding the Family Attitude toward School, the not enrolled students answered that they believed their parents' view of Secondary School was good in an overall perception. The others believed that their parents were ambivalent or didn't care regarding secondary school. There were no negative views of the student body, teaching staff or subject matter and none of their parents had a bad overall perception of secondary school, as revealed through these questions and answers.

As we know, the educational level of the family can be an important indicator toward the future of their children's education. This appears to be the case for these not enrolled students. Most all of these students' understanding of their parents' educational level indicated basic to very low education of at least one parent or no education at all. There were a few who did not know the educational level of their parents.

### Educational Level of the Family:

	<u>Higher Education 1</u>		<u>Mid-level Education 1</u>		<u>Basic Education 1</u>		<u>Very low or no ed. at all</u>	
	<u>family member</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>family member</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>at all</u>	<u>% Question</u>
Boy	0	0%	0	0%	3	30%	7	70%
Girl	0	0%	1	11.1%	5	55.6%	3	33.3%
Urban	0	0%	0	0%	6	60%	4	40%
Rural	0	0%	1	11.1%	3	33.3%	5	55.6%
Roma	0	0%	0	0%	3	25%	9	75%
MixedRoma	0	0%	1	9.1%	8	72.7%	2	18.2%

These not enrolled students were also asked questions regarding what their mother and/or father's future expectations for them were. Overall there were 52% of these not enrolled students who did not know the future expectations that their father/mother had for them. Among the remaining responses given, there was diversity between gender, ethnicity, and location. However, overall twenty-six percent said their parents expected them to be salaried employees and about 10% felt they would be expected to work in the family business and about 12 percent thought they would be expected to stay at home or get married. This held true for the comparative categories of Boy/Girl and Urban/Rural.

However, between the students from traditional Roma families and those students from mixed Roma ethnicity there was greater diversity in answers. The "mixed" Roma fell into only two of the possible six categories. In their responses, 29% responded that the expectations for them would be salaried employment and the other 71% responded that they did not know their parents' expectations for them. The responses from the students from traditional Roma families were more definitive. Half of these students indicated they were expected to have salaried employment or work in the family business. An additional 30% of these young people said the expectation for them was to get married. The remaining 20% from the traditional Roma families indicated they did not know what their parents expected for them.

### Expectation of Parents Regarding Child's Future

	<u>Salaried Employ.</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Per Family Business</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Per Get Married</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Per Don't Know</u>	<u>% Question</u>
	Boy	2	20%	2	20%	0	0%	6
Girl	3	30%	0	0%	1	10%	6	60%
Urban	2	20%	2	20%	2	20%	4	40%
Rural	2	25%	0	0%	1	12%	5	63%
Roma	3	30%	2	20%	3	30%	2	20%
Mixed Roma	4	29%	0	0%	0	0%	10	71%

### Parental Attitude as Function of Gender

	<u>Yes, Same Attitude</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Per No, Opinion Changes</u>	<u>% Question</u>	<u>Per Does Not Know</u>	<u>% Question</u>
	Boy	6	55%	3	27%	2
Girl	9	82%	2	18%	0	0%
Urban	6	60%	3	30%	1	10%
Rural	6	60%	3	30%	1	10%
Roma	7	50%	6	43%	1	7%
Mixed Roma	13	93%	0	0%	1	7%

In relation to the responses of these not enrolled Roma students their parents' attitudes toward the functions of their children was definitely not based upon their being a boy or a girl. The majority from each category was of this opinion. There were a smaller percentage of the students from traditional Roma families (43%) who felt their parents' opinions would change depending upon their gender.

### Socio-family Background

Of great importance to this study for the Roma students in Romania, was the subject area of the socio-family background. This subject area included the socio-family status; the number of inhabitants per home and socio-family problems. It was through these interview questions and the answers from the not enrolled students, that we were told the socio-family status of about half of these families are that they are receiving social aid /pensions. There were also close to 28.5% from families who are self-employed using non-skilled means. Additionally, there were 18.5% who were unemployed and only 4% who are salaried employees.

In the analysis of results between urban and rural areas, we found that 40% of the parents in the urban areas are self-employed in non-skilled areas of collecting cardboard, metals and other recyclable items. In the rural areas, these not enrolled students had no understanding of being employed with an official work card, paid taxes and medical benefits. As indicated in the chart below, the rural respondents said 33% of their parents were self-employed. They know employment to be working for an individual and being paid cash. About 10% of these same students indicated that their parents were salaried employees. In further discussions, we were discovered that salaried employment usually meant they worked in the seasonal agricultural fields or were paid to do yard work for others that resulted in daily cash payments with no work card and therefore, no taxes paid for medical benefits and unemployment.

### Socio-family Status

	<u>Salaried</u> <u>Employ.</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Self</u> <u>Employ</u> <u>No Skill</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Social</u> <u>Recipient</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>
Boy	1	9%		4	36%		6	55%		0	0%	
Girl	0	0%		2	18%		5	46%		4	36%	
Urban	0	0%		4	40%		5	50%		1	10%	
Rural	0	0%		3	33%		3	33%		3	33%	
Roma	1	7%		6	43%		7	50%		0	0%	
MixedRoma	0	0%		1	7%		8	57%		5	36%	

Of the families of these not enrolled students, a little more than half indicated they were in homes of 5-7 persons and 31% of them were in homes of 1-4 persons.

### Number of Inhabitants per Home

	<u>4 or</u> <u>Less</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Between</u> <u>5 and 7</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>More</u> <u>than 7</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Question</u>	<u>Per</u> <u>Question</u>
Boy	5	45,5%		5	45,5%		1	9%	
Girl	2	18%		7	64%		2	18%	
Urban	4	40%		5	50%		1	10%	
Rural	2	20%		6	60%		2	20%	
Roma	5	36%		8	57%		1	7%	
MixedRoma	4	29%		7	50%		3	21%	

In addition, well over half of the families have socio family problems as indicated by the students' answers. The larger differences in responses to this question were between the boys and girls and the students

from traditional Roma families and students from mixed Roma ethnicity. As an example, a former student from a mixed Roma family stated, "I could not go (to school) anymore because my father was sick and mama was home so I had to stay home and take care of my brothers. I had to work (in the fields). I had no time for school."

Another student comment indicating socio problems was, "I liked to study but I had no possibility because there was not enough money. My mama and dad were working the fields daily. Then my mama died and my father became an alcoholic and left us with my uncle."

With an overall percentage of 63% indicating socio-family problems, it is apparent that these problems contribute to creating a barrier to their continuing schooling.

#### Socio-family Problems

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Per</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Per</u>
		<u>Question</u>			<u>Question</u>	
Boy	5	45%		6	55%	
Girl	9	82%		2	18%	
Urban	6	60%		4	40%	
Rural	6	60%		4	40%	
Roma	7	54%		6	46%	
Mixed Roma	11	79%		3	21%	

#### Socio-emotional Situation

When asked about their socio-emotional situation at school, 57% of these not enrolled students said they had felt comfortable in school and had wanted to continue. Of these not enrolled students, there were only 6% who said they felt bad or did not like school and wanted to drop out.

#### Reasons for Dropping out of School

The reasons for dropping out of school could have been numerous as the students were allowed to give multiple responses. There were not many variations in their responses. These not enrolled students concurred by a percentage of 71% that the reason they dropped out of school was to take responsibility at home or to help out at home.

In the case of some not enrolled students from traditional roma families, marriage was the reason given that necessitated their remaining at home instead of attending school. When the traditional Roma girls gets married they do not continue school as this would bring shame to the family because of her married status. This marriage restriction does not apply to the boys who get married. They may choose to attend school without shame. One of these boys said, "I got married when I was at the 7<sup>th</sup> level and I dropped out to be in business with my father."

There were over 21% who said they dropped out because their families didn't approve of them going to school or because of environmental situations. There were 13% who responded that they didn't like to study or just didn't like having to get up and go to school.

#### Reasons for Dropping Out of School

	<u>Don't</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Per</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Per</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Per</u>	<u>Responsib/Help</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Per</u>
	<u>Like</u>	<u>Question</u>		<u>Didn't</u>	<u>Question</u>		<u>Too</u>	<u>Question</u>		<u>at Home</u>	<u>Question</u>	
	<u>to</u>			<u>Approve</u>			<u>Difficult</u>					
	<u>Study</u>											
Boy	3	21%		2	14%		2	14%		7	50%	
Girl	0	0%		3	27%		0	0%		8	73%	
Urban	2	20%		1	10%		0	0%		7	70%	
Rural	0	0%		4	33%		0	0%		8	67%	

Roma	1	6%	4	25%	1	6%	10	63%
MixedRoma	3	20%	1	7%	1	7%	10	66%

Overall, when looking strictly at the numbers and percentages there seem not to be major differences between the groupings. The percentages stay pretty close. However, there are big differences for the “why” they are not continuing their education. For many of the not enrolled students, they are exactly where their traditions and customs require them to be. For others, they are where life allows them to be.

Of those interviewed there is not, as a major reason for dropping out, any listed responses regarding racism, discrimination, marginalization or a feeling of discomfort at school as a basis for not being enrolled in school. The basis of their status as not enrolled students appears to be one of socio-economic circumstances.

## Final Situation Report- Romania Secondary School Evaluation of Roma Children

The Student’s overall perception of school was good and most reported that they did enjoy going to school. Those who had dropped out or did not enroll in secondary school also maintained that their perception of school was very positive and that they enjoyed attending classes whenever they could.

Students commented that the school facilities, resources and or materials could be improved. Some commented they would like to have heat in the winter and indoor toilets like the Romanian students.

In the rural schools, some of the students did not understand the questions regarding school improvements. They had no knowledge of other schools (buildings and materials) for comparisons or dream knowledge.

We found that many of these students are not studying and/or failing to complete the schoolwork. The student’s addressed this shortcoming with a variety of reasons, most of which are related. Family responsibilities that fell to the children such as caring for siblings or ill family member, and seasonal jobs such as agricultural work were common factors. Some of the boys from the Roma families are also required to travel with their fathers for business reasons. Also cited was the fact that there is no suitable learning environment in many of their homes due to the lack of basic utilities, electricity, running water or gas. Coupled with this was the explanation of not having school supplies, clothes and shoes to wear to classes, and lack of nutrition at home...all of which affected their motivation for study. These facts have contributed toward significant absenteeism and tardiness among the students as well.

Some of the students reported that they did not understand the assignments or the teacher’s explanation of work to be done. Others commented that their current failure was due to the lack of foundational knowledge of the subjects, which they had not learned previously.

At this time there seems to be reasonable/normal relationships between the Roma students and their peers and teachers. Students stated their relationship with their teachers was good and very few reported having difficulties with their teachers.

Most all of the students and their teachers indicated they felt that their relationships with peers, both Romanian and Roma, were good.

With regard to expectations of the value of learning, both the enrolled and non-enrolled children expressed their view that education was important for obtaining a better future. They felt that learning was an important factor in gaining good jobs or perhaps being able to alter their lives towards accomplishing something significant versus just having to continue living day to day in a survival mode.

Several of the enrolled students expressed loftier goals of being able to enter professions as teachers, politicians or having a place in business. These students have a desire to move into higher education. However, the majority of the enrolled students in city schools tend to focus on completing high school and moving into vocational schools for further employment training. Enrolled children from the rural areas have limited opportunity to accomplish this because it would require either relocation or extensive daily travel, even to finish their high school education.

Most of the non-enrolled children are hoping to gain employment but do not really have a plan for the future or know what kind of work they will be able to obtain.

The young men from the traditional Roma families would also mention things like having a driving license and the ability to participate in the family business as their goals. Most of the young women have the cultural expectation of marriage at an early age.

It is obvious that the enrolled students tend to have given more thought towards their future plans than those children not attending. With regard to long-term expectations, almost all of the enrolled students responded with boys seemingly more interested in jobs that don't require specific training while the girls seemed more interested in positions requiring further study at university level. Urban area students had much clearer goals about their futures than those from the rural areas.

The family's view of school and education along with the educational level of the family seems to be of importance for students continuing their education. The majority of the parents of the enrolled students have accomplished at least elementary or mid-level studies. Enrolled girls are the largest in this grouping having parents that have acquired some formal education. In general, the parents of enrolled students have an expectation for boys to complete mid-level vocational studies or at least as much education as would permit low-skill professions. The girls, however, reported that their parent's expectations for them were to have higher studies or at least mid-level studies.

Of the not enrolled students most reported their parent's education as either basic or minimal with at least one parent have none at all. Not enrolled students believe their parents have a good overall perception of school but some stated that they didn't care if the students attended secondary school. They see school as being important for their children, but their lives are so focused on survival and fulfilling their daily basic needs that education is not viewed as a necessity. The basic needs focused on are shelter, food, clothing, shoes, etc.

The majority of the enrolled students of secondary school said their parents have a positive perception of schooling and realize the importance of school studies to their futures – i.e. jobs, how to behave, read, write and count. Many of the parents have a very high regard toward

the teachers. Yet they also said they were not sure about their parent's future expectations for them. Most thought their parents only wanted them to have regular employment or in the case of the traditional Roma families, about half of these students thought their parents expected them to have salaried employment or work in the family business.

In the rural areas, the enrolled students said that even though their parents have little or no education or less formal education they were encouraging them to go to school and do good work.

The students said that there was very little difference in their parents expectations for them with regard to gender. They thought the parents expected the same of them regardless if they were boy or girl.

Everyone felt that good relationships between parents and the school are important. The students indicated that their parents respected the teachers and school and believed they were doing good things. The communications between the school and parents seem to be very important and in some of the rural communities these relationships are very strong and as a result the students have a better academic standing and attend more regularly.

Elements of the Roma culture have begun to be incorporated into some of the classrooms across the country. Educational legislation was recently passed that began with a pilot program being implemented in a few schools in the country. The plan is that these changes will continue in their implementation until all the schools can benefit.

Teachers are being trained in the areas of Roma culture, language and history. This program is systematically being introduced into each county in the country. In our sampling, we interviewed students from schools with the new inter-cultural curricula and those who have not had the availability of Roma culture classes. There were some instances that this was perceived negatively. Some of the Roma students who refused to attend Romani classes said it was because they preferred to learn the language of their father's nationality. Still in other schools the Romani classes were refused or not introduced because the students and their families did not believe there was a need. Some of the families already speak Romani and know the Romani history. Still others stated that the Romanian language is more important because of their business dealings.

The overall assessment regarding the impact of cultural diversity on the Romanian Roma students is that this is simply not the real issue at this time. Their focus seems to be primarily on their desperate as the real problem.

The socio-family background of all the children seemed to be of primary importance as it affected their education. This will include the economic situation of the household, the number of people living together in the household and whatever family problems were currently being experienced. Many of the families are receiving social aid and the parents, if employed at all, are in very low paying jobs that require no acquired skills. Many are "self-employed" in activities such as collecting cardboard materials or other recyclables.

Many of the villages they are living in do not infrastructure such as roads, running water, gas and electricity. The social benefits they receive are barely sufficient for one week worth of living expenses. Many of the families are collected together in urban areas in these appalling condition simply because it is easier for them to find day labor jobs that will feed their children. Although a rural life might be more attractive for them...they cannot find work there.

The traditional Roma families are working in family businesses. Many of these men are unskilled and self-employed but do have an income that offers a secure life for their families. There are other traditional Roma families who have considerable wealth.

The social condition of the Roma families is in a critical status. The children are in a situation that leaves them little option other than falling into the same tragic conditions that their parents are forced to live in....a continuing saga of being under educated, poor, hungry, and lacking most of the basic essentials for living a healthy life.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Subsequent to analyzing and commenting on those subjects that best express the educational situation for Rroma Secondary School Students, and commenting and comparing on the chosen criteria, we would like to conclude with some factors that contribute to the improvement of the educational situation as viewed by the target groups of teachers, parents and students. We have chosen three variables that were felt to be of major importance. They are:

1. Socio-Economic situation of the family
2. The Educational System
3. The relationships of the school, family/students and community

**The socio-economic situation of the families** is an important factor impacting the education of Roma students. Poverty among the Roma families is a reality and a barrier preventing these children and adults from living lives with standard education, equal opportunities, equal treatment in social areas such as medicine, housing, employment and government.

There are differences between the traditional Rroma families and the mixed Roma families because of economic situations of their families. Being children and living in the same neighborhoods makes them friends and the relationships are good. However, the possibilities of learning in the home environment and having the basic necessities fulfilled are quite different for the mixed roma students.

The students from large mixed Roma families particularly in the rural areas live in houses made from straw, wood sticks and mud. These houses are without any public utilities such as running water, electricity or gas. The students from these living conditions want to learn and be educated and to succeed even as far as the university, but for almost all it is an impossibility. As stated many times, their general lifestyle is focused on food and tomorrow's basic needs. The parents can desire to encourage their children to go to school, but their life situations prevent these from becoming a reality for their children. For these rural students, completion of the secondary school is the end of education for them. Vocational training schools and high schools are not available to them in their villages. Currently, these schools are only available within the cities. Because of the school locations, the students must have money for transportation daily to the schools or find and pay for housing in the cities to attend the higher level school. This is usually not an option for these families and the students.

Some of the parents are concerned that their children cannot have more education and that this will result in continued poverty with the same lack of power to make life changes. For many traditional roma families their lives would not be described as an existence from day to day. These families tend to focus on the boys and on them becoming educated enough to complete secondary school so that they will be able to run the family business. Generally, these

boys need to know how to read, write, count, and communicate in order to help their fathers in the family business.

Some of both the enrolled students and the not enrolled students from poor families are aware of their life situations and that their futures are directly connected to the amount of education they can complete. But they seem trapped into doing only what has been done before. There are also those from these groups who feel disadvantaged because of their family ethnicity. They are many times unfavorably compared with Romanians, Hungarians and Germans. Their feelings from these comparisons leave them feeling labeled as being unsuitable and unable to accomplish anything in life. These students stated they wanted to do the best they can and that they are concerned for their family situations, i.e. sickness, debt and need. The majority of these students indicated that they are happy to go to school. However, many of them do not see the differences in their schools buildings and educational materials. Many times the schools these children attend are not as good as other public schools. Additionally, when asked about what could be done to improve their schools, they had few ideas. Overall, there is a spoken desire by these students to complete secondary school and maybe even high school or a vocational training. They long to become what they term 'somebody', i.e. important for their families, themselves and/or their communities.

**The Educational System.** The educational process and the educational system countrywide is another decisive factor contributing to the possibilities in the futures of the roma children. Education is vital. Access to education by these students must be without challenges and this is not possible in the current system. The educational system must be made readily available for rich and poor alike and flexible enough to supply solutions to educational needs for those adults or children that have abandoned or dropped out of school.

Today the educational system in Romania is in transition. Changes are being made in order to improve education. This process is a long one and can be fulfilled when considerations and/or changes are made with regard to a broader social and economic spectrum and to the changing job markets. All the systems within a society are established to work together for the benefit of the people and the nation, and working together they can sustain themselves in effort to succeed.

The Socrates Comenius 2.1 Project gives us a view into the possibility of transition within the educational system. Those directly and indirectly involved in this research project, i.e. students, teachers, school directors, parents, community leaders, etc. through questions and discussions offered information that we consider worth sharing. This information is not presented to cause offence but are stated as situations and facts that impact the future of roma student both positively and negatively from an educational and life perspective.

**From persons involved in the educational process** of the roma students, we found that good changes occur when:

-School directors and teachers being involved in different projects and activities financed by the E.U. are more interested in applying new methods and strategies that improve working with the roma students.

-The access to various programs and projects offered to the schools for improving the education of roma students has resulted in: educational facilities, laboratories, computers, printers, fax and internet access, telephones, etc. A negative aspect of one of these programs was the feeling of

reverse discrimination for the Romanian, Turkish, Hungarian students when only the roma students were part of the project.

-Some of the school directors and teachers improved their work by attending a training course for teachers about Management of Time and Communications.

-There were cases where the school directors authorized a change in the school's curriculum to accommodate the roma students' needs. This change was made for those students who were required to work in the fields with their parents. They were offered the opportunity to complete their school work in the off season.

-Scholarships for roma students with outstanding academic results or for some having financial difficulties were offered.

-Alternative educational programs for dropout students and adults that positively impact them and give them hope.

-The "educational offer" for the students who finished the 8<sup>th</sup> grade gives the students another chance to continue school and prepare for a better future.

-Students and their parents were encouraged by an opportunity made available to them in some of the rural schools. The school Inspectorates and school Directors found a way to offer the students in their villages the opportunity to complete Vocational Training School in their own villages. This opportunity allows a student to complete Primary School, Secondary School, and Vocational Training all in their village. This opportunity has had a positive impact on the academic results of the students and has revived motivation and hope.

-Some school Inspectorates from different counties organized themselves into teams of teachers and school directors to go out to train other teachers and directors in the rural areas in areas such as: education management, accessing funding and grants, etc.

### **Parent observations and comments**

-They have noticed the differences in the actual school buildings in other villages for the Romanian students, and these parents believe this is wrong.

- School is too expensive and they need financial help or other types of aid for their families so they would have the possibility to send their children to the schools.

-The school facilities need to be improved and the school supplies should be available without charge for those who do not have money to buy them.

-There is no hope for their children because the children need to work and then don't have time for school.

-Parents are interested in having good relationships with the teachers. They would like to help and be involved in extra school activities.

-Kindergarten needs to be available for the children even in the poor roma communities, because they want to send their children to school. They consider kindergarten to be an important help to begin school.

These are comments from some of the parents who participated in the research project. There were other parents who did not comment because of lost hope for education in their children's lives. They are not interested in their children attending school nor are they interested in any type of relationship with the school.

#### **Other Observations from interview team:**

-Some of the teachers of the Secondary School are treating the roma children differently from other students. They are placing them in classes for limited performance because they believe the roma students do not have the same capacity to learn.

-In some parts of the country there are separate schools for the roma students, and of course, these students notice the differences between their schools and the schools for the "Romanian" students.

-Teachers face a variety of problems. They are challenged with teaching the roma students when they have no specialized training for or understanding of the traditions, cultures, behaviors, etc. that these students have. Thus, there is the need for training in roma culture, language and history for both the teachers and students. These issues can be made even more difficult when there are even differences between the traditional roma tribes from different areas of the country. In addition, the mixed roma students are from mixtures of cultures and traditions. They do seem more flexible with the school requirements because the many of the families are poor and uneducated. They tend to do as they are told as far as their lives allow. The result is that the majority of these students end up with incomplete or low level educations.

-There has begun in some areas of the country an educational arrangement between the teachers (school) and the roma students and their families. This agreement allows the parents to take the students from the schools to work with them in the fields and the absences do not negatively affect their status at the end of the school year.

-We observed a major difference between the urban and rural schools in their ability or levels of teaching students at various levels within the class. Many times in the rural schools those teaching the students are technically not qualified or trained as teachers. This results in the teacher's inability to understand and address situations that are not like the average. This situation is creating an academic gap between students educated in the rural schools as compared with those educated in urban schools.

-Some teachers showed a lack of interest in applying the school curriculum at levels that enable roma students' to discover and develop their own abilities.

#### **School Directors and Teachers agree that:**

-The way the educational process is developed in the Primary School has an important impact on the continuing education at the Secondary School. Many of the roma students' success or school abandonment is directly related to the school experiences they had in the Primary School.

-Another factor that can hinder or result in early drop out of roma students in the primary schools, is the missing preschool training. Some of the roma children do not attend kindergarten because of poverty and some do not attend because the kindergarten is not available to them.

-Some of the difficulties that occur in the student's development and academic achievement are a result of a lack of professionally trained teachers. This occurrence is more prevalent in the rural areas where the schools many times must begin classes without qualified teachers.

-The socio-economic situation of the families has a tremendous affect on the educational process of the roma students.

-The relationships between the school and the community can positively or negatively impact the education process.

-The lack of resources for the educational process needs to be resolved particularly in the rural schools.

-The lack of money allocated for schools should be resolved. The school budgets are way too small compared with the needs to be covered. In particular, many of the rural schools are inadequate. The buildings are old with the toilets outside, furniture that is 30 years old and no heating systems.

-The teacher's jobs are not evaluated adequately from a financial perspective. The result of this is that the educational system is losing these professionals to other jobs or some teachers lose their motivation and interest to continue under trying conditions. This upheaval with the teachers, of course, has a major negative impact on the students who are exposed to the turmoil.

-The identity crisis going on among the mixed roma population is another negative factor that has a socio-emotional impact in the lives of the students. This crisis is that of not knowing which ethnic group they are really a part of. A child from a family with one roma parent will be classified as roma by other members of society, but some of them want to be classified as the nationality of the other parent, i.e. Hungarian, Turkish, Romanian.

-Equal opportunity for and in education needs to be offered no matter the ethnic group, economic status, or geographic location.

### **3. Relationships (School –family/student – community)**

Visiting many schools in different parts of the country gave us the opportunity to observe differences in the educational process. We saw good relationships between the school and the parents and students. Additionally, we saw good relationships between the school and local government and the church. The relationship between students and parents was positively influenced by the total of these relationships. When the above mentioned relationships are healthy this builds a positive and more secure environment for the students and families. In particular, it provides an opening that aids in the communication of the availability of "helps" from

the local authorities such as the City Hall, Church, Medical Center, Police Force and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

In the communities where these relationships are working, we observed the steps being taken to prepare the current and next generations to be contributing members of the community. From this we also noticed in relation to the school students, that the number of dropouts is insignificant. The students are fed a meal at the school that has been sponsored by outside funding and there are some families receiving needed clothing assistance. The school budget is established based on the real needs of the school and distributed as far as the money will go. In these more progressive schools, there are also alternative education programs available to those who apply. The academic results of the students is good and the potential for continuing their education beyond the Secondary School is being planned and created for them. In some of the villages, vocational training is being made available with the help of the School Inspectorate of the county.

The most important relationships in the urban schools are between the school and the parents concerning the future of the students. Unfortunately, with the large number of students (sometimes 900 students in 2 school buildings) that are being schooled in shifts (up to 3/day) and the parents' work schedules, the needed relationships are many times hindered by these circumstances. Many of these families have moved to the cities because of more opportunity for work than in the rural villages. As a result of these moves, many of the mixed roma adults have more than an 8<sup>th</sup> level education and a number of them have completed High School and/or Vocational Training Schools. Still other urban parents have no education and are poor and ashamed. The result of these circumstances is that these parents usually do not want any relationship with the school.

These three variables are not the only factors contributing toward the development of the students, but we believe this information, the analysis, comments and conclusions may also contribute to improving the education of roma school students in Romania.