

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?!?

Macedonian challenges and perspectives on ESL and drop out: The case study of FOSM Roma Education Project



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KEY statistics on Roma

- 2.66% of total population are Roma
- 88,8% poverty rate (30.2% is the national average)
- Over 80 % unemployment rate

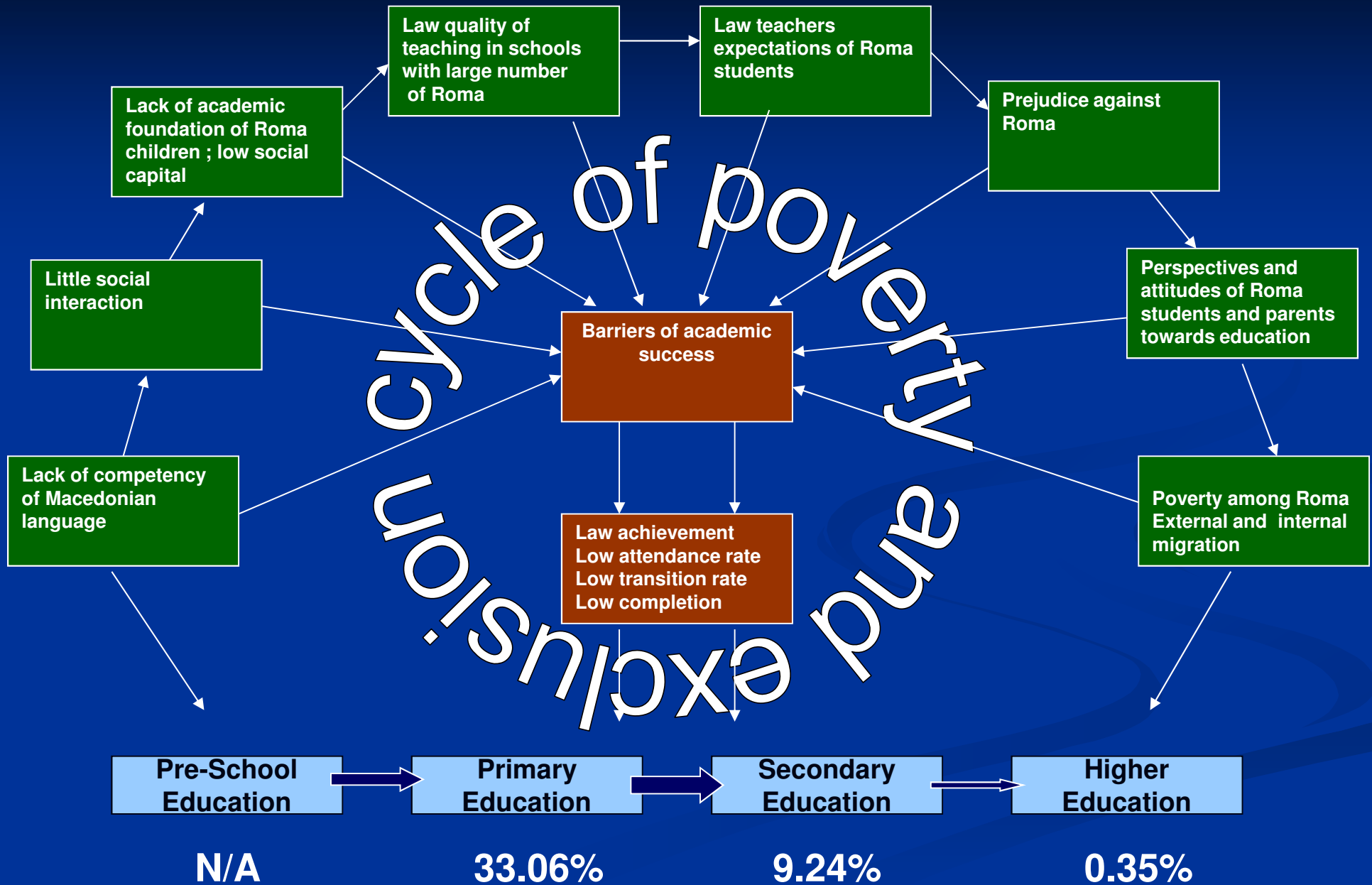
Educational attainment of Roma > 15 (census 2002)

- 37.4% have completed primary education
- 28.6% have incomplete primary education
- 0.8% still attend primary school
- 23.2% have no education
- 9.2% have completed secondary education
- 0.3% have attained any form of postsecondary education

Roma transition rate much below the national average (source: REF estimations)

- Enrolment in primary education: 90-95%
- Completion of primary education: 45-50%
- Enrolment in secondary education: 19%
- Completion of secondary education: 45% of the enrolled
- Enrolment in higher education: 1.5%

PROBLEMS TO EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE OF ROMA



CASE STUDY: LOGICAL MODEL OF THE FOSM ROMA EDUCATION PROGRAM

LONG TERM OUTCOMES
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
INITIAL OUTCOMES
OUTPUTS
ACTIVITIES
INPUTS

Critical mass of educated Roma that will break the cycle of poverty and exclusion.

Improved educational status will lead to increased number of Roma graduates at all levels

Improved achievements rate
Decreased drop out rate
Improved attendance rate

Roma preschool children enrolled in primary school with equal knowledge and educational experience as their peers

Inclusive learning environment within the schools

Enhanced motivation and self esteem of targeted Roma students

Roma students succeed in learning

Increased learning capacities and individual skills

Improved social interaction

Parents recognize the value of education.

Improved individual skills of teachers and organizational capacities of schools.

Alleviated financial burden of Roma families related to schooling

Good working and personal relationship established with the mentors.

2,500 Roma students at all levels; over 400 primary and 115 secondary school teachers, 5 primary and 57 secondary schools and over 1,000 Roma parents exposed to educational interventions of REP

- Developing competencies in Macedonian language and math
- Hygiene habits
- Developing social and cognitive skills
- Parents involvement

- After-school support in homework assignments
- Tutoring
- Parents involvement through meetings and workshops

- Teacher trainings in:
 - child-centered methodologies
 - anti-bias
 - school improvement plans

- Mentorship training
- Ongoing provision of school based mentorship support
- Subject based tutoring
- various trainings, summer schools, Matura preparations, parents involvement

- Ongoing discipline oriented peer mentoring and tutoring support
- Academic training modules
- Additional academic support (English language and computer courses)
- Student initiatives and projects
- Access to Internet and library resources

5 Roma Education Support Centers provide support to 180-250 pre-school age Roma children annually in 5 Roma communities

5 Roma ES Centers in cooperation with 5 primary schools provide educational support on daily basis to 750 to 900 Roma primary school students

364 Roma high school students are provided with scholarship assistance and mentorship support in 57 secondary schools from all cities in RM

300 Roma university students are provided with scholarships, peer mentorships and additional academic support

Pre-school component SO1: to prepare pre-school age Roma children for entering primary school

Primary school component SO2: to improve school performance of Roma primary school students

Secondary school component SO3: to improve school performance of Roma high school students

University component SO4: to promote equal opportunities and increase the academic achievements of Roma University students

The goal of the Roma Education Program is to help Roma students remain in the school system and improve their school performance and attendance, through positive interventions at all levels of education.

Main REP accomplishments

- The completion rate of REP primary school beneficiaries is 20-22% higher than the completion rate of the other, non-project students (90-94% versus 70-74%); significant decrease of dropout rate among project beneficiaries (from 2% to < 1%); Improved GPA and school attendance; girls perform better than boys;
- 298 out of 364 secondary scholarship students (or 82%) successfully completed the secondary education (obtaining vocational or general secondary education degree). This is significant 26% increase compared to 56% national completion rate of Roma students in 2004;
- 80%-90% of Roma university students-scholarship and tutoring support recipients every project year successfully complete the academic year and continue to the next;
- REP contributed to the increase of the educational attainment of Roma in the country - Number of Roma primary, secondary and university graduates doubled on a national level compared to baseline year;

Main REP accomplishments (2)

- 92 university students graduated, more than half of them got employed as civil servants and have been assigned at different positions in the Macedonian public administration (state advisors, directors of departments and/ or head of units, chief of the cabinet etc), being in a position to directly influence public policies related to Roma;
- 423 primary school teachers trained in child-centered methodologies, education for social Justice, school improvement plans, intercultural education; 115 secondary school teachers trained in education for social justice and mentoring of students; Over 1,000 Roma parents participate in project activities and 50 of them are members of decision making bodies (Parents Councils, School Boards) at project schools;
- Ministry of Education and Science took over the model of FOSM scholarships/mentorships for high school students (as of 2008) and continued to implement the project to date. FOSM Roma Education Projects are recognized as good practice projects in SEE and Europe (UNICEF, ETF, Amnesty International, EC IPA Funded project in MK etc)

What works well?

- **Additional education assistance enable the Roma students to progress equally to their non Roma peers., while the scholarships compensate the high opportunity costs. The assistance proved to be needed and effective;**
- **The community involvement bring for project ownership and school-community partnerships;**
- **The involvement of Roma NGOs contributes to community empowerment since it give the Roma community opportunities to participate in solving their own educational problems (Local Roma NGOs selected based on their education programs portfolio and experience);**
- **TT empower the schools by investing in the school staff and giving them possibility to improve the school results of Roma students (has spill-over benefits since it build social capital);**
- **The schools are get involved in collaborative planning process with their Roma NGO partners; attitudes towards the Roma students are gradually changing, teachers are more open and responsive to their needs;**

What doesn't work?

- **NGO projects and donors support perceived as substitute for the state support (limited Government funds and declarative statements for the implementation of the educational measures for Roma). NGOs cannot and should not replace public sector in their responsibilities;**
- **Limited financial and human capacities of the local self-government to address the problems of Roma at local level;**
- **Bias free school environment is the most difficult task to achieve;**
- **“There are also other students in need”;**
- **In-service teacher training plays important role, but limits its effects on the trainees, unless pre-service teacher training incorporates methodologies for work with disadvantaged students;**

Key Macedonian challenges with ELS and drop-out

- Paradox: achievements of Macedonian students at international tests are low and constantly decreasing (PISA, TIMS, PIRLS) but the number of excellent students at the end of the school year is increasing (over 50% of all students):
- Macedonia has very low enrolment in pre-school education;
- The new concept of 9 years primary school didn't solve the issue of over-extensive and inefficient curriculum;
- Inadequate and inefficient supporting systems for underachieving students: legal amendments in 2009 and 2011 provided for obligatory compensatory classes and obligatory parent counseling, but didn't introduce significant changes;
- Source: (Spasovski, O. Krek, J, Vogrinc J. and Metljak M (2013) *Education of Students with Low Learning Achievements*, FOSM 2013
- No adequate students tracking system; Problems with re-registration of returnees from seasonal work or from abroad in the middle of the school year;
- Teachers are insufficiently prepared for work with students with low achievements and learning disabilities;
- Stereotypical expectations from the children from vulnerable groups;
- Vocational education reform is lagging behind;
- No second chance opportunities;

What to do to prevent ESL and drop-out?

- Free of charge and mandatory pre-school education (at least 2 years before primary school, particularly for girls and children from disadvantaged groups) ;
- Increasing expenditures for particular disadvantaged groups (free meals, scholarships etc);
- A favorable developmental environment in school (wide array of activities and teaching approaches for early support and prevention, including individual educational plans , informed counseling of and greater cooperation with parents);
- In-depth analysis of the effects of the curricula change in the first 2 cycles of the 9 years primary education;
- Support not punishments to the schools:
- Quality factors: providing more teachers and have smaller class size;
- Development of school tracking system ;collection of accurate national statistics on ESL and drop-out;
- Ensure proper pre-service and in-service teacher training ;
- Flexible pathways to vocational education and training ;
- Offering second chance opportunities: