

Save the Children Romania - Data from the Alternative Report at the UN Committee on Children Rights

Gaps in Education

The gross rate of enrolment in the pre-school system increased continuously, from 73% in 2004-2005 to 76.2% in 2006-2007, representing a 3.2% growth. At the same time, gaps between rural and urban areas increase, worsening the disadvantage of children from rural areas in terms of preschool education (a 5.9% difference in 2006-2007).

In many cases parents have to supplement the expenses of the educational process from their own contributions: acquisition of teaching material, payment of private security staff, maintenance, recreational activities etc. These situations create disadvantages for certain children coming from poorer families who cannot afford such contributions.

In 2000-2001, the dropout rate in primary and secondary education was 0.6%, and then increased constantly, up to 2% in 2006-2007, fact that shows that this indicator increased 3 times in the specified period.

MECT's annual report 2008 reveals gaps between children from rural and urban areas, both in terms of participation to education and in terms of school dropout and transition to higher levels of education. In previous years, the differences between residence areas were placing rural areas at a disadvantage, but the situation changed in the last reference year, as shown by the table below:

School dropout rate in primary and secondary education, MECT

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total	0,6	1,2	1,2	1,5	1,7	1,8	2,0
Urban	0,7	1,4	1,2	1,3	1,5	1,8	2,2
Rural	0,6	1,0	1,3	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8
Females	0,6	1,1	1,6	1,3	1,4	1,6	1,8
Males	0,7	1,3	0,9	1,7	1,9	2,0	2,2

The poorer quality of the educational offer leads to discouraging the youth from rural areas to continue their studies. The table below shows that chances in terms of accessing secondary education are considerably lower in rural areas (differences reach up to 26.8% in 2004-2005):

Gross rate of enrolment in high school and vocational education, MECT

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Total	74,7	74,4	76,4	75	80
Urban	90,4	89	87,8	86,6	92,5
Rural	53,9	55,4	61	59,9	63,9
Females	76,7	76,1	78	75,9	80
Males	72,7	72,8	74,9	74,2	80

Although from a legislative and educational policy viewpoint several measures have been promoted in recent years to facilitate access of Roma children to education, including by a complex, modular offer of programs of the "second chance" type, they still have problems like poverty, segregation and discrimination. Illiteracy among Roma people is still at a high rate, and 80% of the children benefiting from no form of education belonging to this ethnic group¹.

The participation of young Roma people to education presents significant gaps in terms of gender as well. According to a study published by the Open Society Institute² in 2006, Roma culture generally encourages girls to leave school earlier than boys. The study points out that half of the interviewed Roma women declare that their own children are confronted with discrimination issues at school, while 19% of them say that the schools their children go to are mostly Roma. Discrimination attitudes against Roma children were also highlighted by Save the Children

¹ Roma Education Fund, Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions - Advancing Education of Roma in Romania, 2007, pg. 38

² Broadening the agenda. The status of Romani women in Romania, Open Society Institute, 2006, p 11.

research³, where 12% of the investigated children would not like to have a Roma child as their desk mate.

³ Save the Children, GMDC