Roma Early Childhood Inclusion+
Special Report on Roma Inclusion in Early Childhood Education and Care -
Czech Republic

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Reaching & Investing in Children at the Margins
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David Greger, david.greger@pedf.cuni.cz
Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Education, Institute for Research & Development of Education
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Authors:
Arthur Ivatts,
Karel Čada,
Lenka Felcmanová,
David Greger,
Jana Straková

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Iliana Sarafian, Filip Rameš
Investments in ECEC especially beneficial for children from disadvantaged background

Heckman & Masterov 2004; Ruhm & Waldfogel 2011; EC 2006; Sammons 2010.
Structure of the Report

• Executive summary
• Chapter 1: Inequalities in ECEC in the Czech Republic for Young Roma Children
• Chapter 2: Roma Children in Preschool Education
• Chapter 3: Conclusions and Recommendations (49 pp.)
Chapter 1: Context, inequalities in Czech Ed. System and in ECEC

- Highly differentiated ed. system, uses early tracking (streaming) based on ability
- First age of selection 6-8-11-years-old?
- Many different types of tracking (between-school as well as within school tracks)
- Large (and growing) differences between the schools.
- High relationship between school-SES and average school results.
PISA 2009 Increase in reading score related to unitary increase of the ESCS index at individual and school level (15 years old)
TIMSS 1995 till 2007 – declining average achievement, **growing inequalities**

**TIMSS 8th Graders Math and Science**

**ICC, between-school variance**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>8th Graders</th>
<th>MATH</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIMSS 1995</td>
<td>21 in %</td>
<td>12 in %</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIMSS 1999</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>TIMSS 2007</td>
<td>32</td>
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Differences between schools are growing
TIMSS 2011, 4th grade, mathematics (Greger, Soukup 2014; Greger 2015)
Lack of Public Childcare Provision for Children Younger than 3 Years (The Czech Republic exhibits one of the lowest participation rates in childcare for children under 3 years among EU countries (less than 3 percent, the second lowest participation rate after Poland))
In sufficient Kindergarten Capacity and criteria for admission to kindergarten are unequal

- there is currently a shortage of available child places in kindergartens. Analysts estimate the number of missing available child places to be in the region of 27,000 (Hůle 2015).

- There are no clear guidelines for acceptance or rejection by kindergartens in response to child place applications. In 2011, the Czech Ombudsman noted: “The criteria guiding the entrance procedure to kindergarten should concern themselves with the child and not a judgement about the parents” (parents employments, time of application etc.)
Chapter 1: ECEC in the Czech Republic

- Low involvement in pre-primary education of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and high levels of postponed primary school enrolment.
  - There is no systematic monitoring of the participation rates of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in kindergartens.
  - Data based on research findings (in chapter 2)
  - The Czech Republic has a relatively high level of school enrolment postponement. In 2013/14, 15 percent of pupils postponed their school enrolment. Neighbouring countries have much lower school postponement rates (8 percent in the Slovak Republic and Germany, and 4 percent in Austria).
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Chapter 1: ECEC in the Czech Republic

- **Education of Roma and other disadvantaged pupils in schools with reduced curricula**
  - Schools/classes for pupils with “mild mental disabilities” are called “practical basic schools” according to the current legislation. This was an attempt by the government to demonstrate compliance with the 2007 milestone D. H. Judgement. The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights decided that 18 Roma pupils who were placed in special schools in the Ostrava region between 1996 and 1999 were discriminated against by the Czech Republic (Case of D. H. and Others v. the Czech Republic). Subsequently, the European Commission called on the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic to take measures to prevent future discrimination against Roma children in education (Devroye 2009).
Chapter 1: ECEC in the Czech Republic

- **Education of Roma and other disadvantaged pupils in schools with reduced curricula**

  - The D. H. case brought to the attention of the Czech society in general that **Roma children were 27 times more likely to be placed in a special school than a non-Roma child** (Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues [CAHROM] 2015, 6).

  - Studies on the educational pathways of Roma pupils revealed that Roma children are ten times more likely than majority children to be diverted to schools or classes outside mainstream education (Gabal Analysis and Consulting 2009 and 2010; Ballas et al. 2012). Gabal Analysis and Consulting (2009) reported that **40% of Roma children complete their compulsory education in practical basic schools.** The same study also showed that only 30% of Roma boys and 50% of Roma girls who had initially been enrolled in mainstream basic schools finished their studies in the same class in which they had started their education.
Mainly based on secondary data analyses of 2011 regional Roma survey (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and UNDP 2012) and review of other complementary research.

First part documents „risk factors“ for Roma children living in socially excluded localities associated (poor housing conditions, high unemployment, language, unavailability of public services etc.). In 2006 there were identified 300 socially excluded localities, while in 2015 already 600 such localities were identified.

Although there have been more non-Roma living in such localities in recent years, the majority of residents are Roma (approximately 87 percent) (GAC 2015)
Comparative analysis of educational pathways of Roma and non-Roma pupils has shown that kindergarten attendance affects the achievement of socially excluded children (Gabal Analysis and Consulting 2010). Children who attended kindergarten are clearly more successful in their educational pathways.
Chapter 2: Roma Children in Preschool Education

• The regional Roma survey confirmed the differences between Roma and non-Roma children in their participation in preschool institutions. A total of 28% of Roma children aged 3 to 6 years were enrolled in a preschool institution (only 48% of Roma children in primary education had previous experience with preschool education), compared with 64% of non-Roma children in that age group.

• According to findings from the “Mapping Analysis of Socially Excluded Localities in the Czech Republic,” participation in pre-school institutions in socially excluded localities is highly variable: from 10 to 100% of the relevant age cohorts.
Chapter 2: Roma Children in Preschool Education

• The difference in the participation rate in preschool education proved to be more significant for Roma children living in urban (33%) as opposed to rural locations (17%). (GAC 2015)

• More than half of Roma children attending kindergarten were enrolled in kindergartens with only a few Roma pupils. In contrast, 14% attended institutions where they formed the majority, and 28% spent their time in kindergartens with 50/50 Roma and non-Roma.
• **For socially excluded Roma families, the financial aspect of preschool education plays a dominant role;** this factor is almost never mentioned as a barrier by non-Roma families;

• The fee for those who pay often ranges from CZK 300 to CZK 600 per month; the fee level is decided by the kindergarten director.

• However, the most significant cost item is expenses for meals in kindergartens. A total of 88 percent of Roma parents whose children attend preschool education pay for meals, most frequently from CZK 500 to CZK 600 per month.

• **Transport costs are insignificant for most parents.** According to the Office of the Czech Government (2012), 92 percent of Roma children attending kindergartens walk to school without any transport costs involved.
• Economic reasons are among the reasons some Roma parents gave for not enrolling their child(ren) in kindergarten. A total of 48% said they would definitely send their children aged 3 to 5 to a kindergarten if it were free of charge. Another 25% would at least consider this possibility. A total of 24% would certainly send their children to a kindergarten if the cost of meals was covered, and 24% would reconsider preschool enrolment if free meals were available (Office of the Czech Government 2012).
• The 2011 regional Roma survey data confirmed the strong influence of preschool education on all pupils’ competencies. In all the monitored aspects, differences were displayed between Roma children who attend kindergarten and Roma children who do not. For example, 59% of Roma 5-year-olds who attend kindergarten are able to identify 10 letters of the alphabet, compared to 37% of those who stay at home. Similar differences can be traced in other monitored aspects.

• It is interesting that the relationship is not the same in non-Roma families. The differences between majority population children who attend kindergarten and those who do not are much less significant.
Chapter 3: Conclusions & Recommendations

- The establishment of a standing National Preschool (ECEC, age range 0 to 8 years) Working Group to be set up and Chaired by the Minister of Education. The standing National Preschool (ECEC) Working Group would need to have wide ministerial representation, formalized access to all relevant data, and the support of appropriate expert consultants, including directors of relevant educational institutions. The standing National Preschool (ECEC) Working Group would also need to be vested with sufficient powers, funds, and authority to commission investigatory and feasibility studies to identify, quantify, and regularly report to Parliament any measures and changes in national, local, and institutional policy, provision, and/or practice required to ensure that all families have ready and universal entitlements to quality, equitable, and inclusive ECEC services for children age 0 to 3 and age 3 to 6, irrespective of their needs, socioeconomic backgrounds, or ethnic status.
• Continued national debates surrounding an agreed professional consensus on the definition and understanding of “inclusive education” and “pupils with special educational needs,” and for these to be compatible with international best practices and expectations and enshrine equal dignity, respect, and treatment for all children irrespective of their diversity of need, background, or ethnic heritage.

• A Government commitment, based on an objective feasibility study and as a prioritised part of a national ECEC strategy, to increase support to families of young Roma children, including, but not limited to, increased access to creches, together with a rapid and adequate expansion of kindergartens for ages 2/3 to 6; prioritised within a set timeframe.

This policy commitment should have a number (12 mentioned) of recommended characteristics including:

• For such institutions to be free of fees and/or additional costs for children aged 3 to 6 years (initially for children in families suffering socio-economic hardship).

• Free school meals, transport.

• Decisions over kindergarten site locations and the drawing of geographic catchment areas to ensure equality of coverage and the avoidance of ethnic segregation ... etc.
• All necessary legislative, legal, or administrative actions taken by the appropriate authorities within central government to ensure that **within one year** the pre-primary preparatory year (whether compulsory or an entitlement) is implemented **only** within kindergartens and mainstream basic schools.

• To establish a national policy of data collection reliant upon routine mechanisms and standard indicators for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of all public service provision, particularly the operation and practice of educational institutions and all public service provision related to legislatively approved educational reforms.
Thank you for your attention!!! and feel free to download and inspect RECI report in more detail.