

Schooling for Roma Children in Greece: Challenges and Practices

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Abstract

Equality and inclusion of representatives of vulnerable social groups are high on the agenda of all major international organizations. In terms of education, the enrolment of children from these groups remains a challenge, even in countries where enrolment of children from the general population is achieved (Guyon, Martin-Dametto, Pérotin, Thibert 2015; Downes, Nairz-Wirth, Rusinaité 2017; Hanemann, McCaffery, Newell-Jones, Scarpino 2018; European Union 2020, Unesco 2020,2021). In the case of Greece, Roma children are a population that still today faces problems of educational (and social) inclusion. Since 1997, Greece has designed and implemented a program for the schooling of Roma children. Its results, while not disappointing, have not lived up to expectations (Nikolaou 2009; Kiprianos, Daskalaki, Stamelos 2012; Stamelos 2019). Experience shows that there are four different levels in the schooling process: a) persuading the family to send the child to school; b) persuading the school not to pose administrative problems enrollment; c) helping the student Roma to stick with school and; d) helping the Roma student learn. At national (Greek) level seems that Roma schooling is a complex social (not just educational) phenomenon that needs to be addressed at several levels and in a multidimensional way with the cooperation of various public and private sector services and agencies and civil society (NGOs). Moreover, it is a problem that could not be improved by short-term, piecemeal interventions. On the contrary, stability and perseverance over time seem to be prerequisites for the successful enrollment of Roma children.

Keywords: European policies, inclusive education, multidimensional challenges, schooling attendance, schooling programs of Roma children