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## Participation of Low-Qualified Adults in Formal Education – Their View of Barriers And Challenges

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### Abstract

The study presents the results of research aimed at interpreting the factors that determine participation in formal education among adults with low levels of education from marginalised Roma communities. Qualitative research was conducted using an embedded theory strategy with two groups of participants - one group was participating in vocational education and training at the time of the research and the other was not. The primary sets of factors that emerged from research, and which significantly shaped the decision to participate or not to participate in education, were experiences of initial education, socioeconomic situation and perceptions of self-efficacy. Although prior learning experiences have a significant influence on the formation of attitudes towards education in adulthood, the research findings revealed the fundamental importance of incentives from the external environment for the decision to enroll in education. These were specific key person(s) who showed activism, provided support, assistance and guidance, and helped overcome barriers to engaging in education. Participants not in education did not identify such incentives in their statements. Education was shown to have a positive impact on self-efficacy, on belief in one's own abilities among learners, while in the latter group, reconciliation or blaming others for one's situation was predominant.

**Keywords:** barriers to education; initial education; low-qualified adults; participation in adult education; self-efficacy