



The aim of the Last Desk research is to evaluate the education policies towards Roma minors in the city of Rome. The schooling path for minors living in legal and illegal settlements moves along segregation traces: the most obvious and clear one is the housing segregation, on its own a precondition for other types of exclusions, which is a real shadow over the schooling of Roma minors. Therefore the research question that lies behind the survey is: what are the results of the schooling policies aimed at Roma minors? In which way the housing segregation affects the right to an education?

METHODOLOGY

The strength of the research has been the adoption of a mixed method, which combined a quantitative approach with a qualitative one. The quantitative one focused on bilateral meetings between institutional foster bodies, winners of tenders aimed at acquiring data by monitoring the activities implemented by each single institutional body; the organization of the information through the creation of matrixes organized per school year; the data processing and analyses directed at evaluating the outcome of the project's activities. The quantitative data collected by the monitoring activities of the foster institutional bodies was elaborated by the SPSS statistical programme. With the existence of data regarding the majority population, the data on Roma minors was compared with data regarding non-Roma minors equal in age. In brief, the sources of the data shown here are: the MIUR (Ministry for Education, University and Research), ISTAT (National Statistical Institute), Roma Schooling Office, the Roma, Sinti and Camminanti community Office of the Municipality of Rome, the associations and social cooperatives involved with the schooling of Roma minors.

The qualitative survey focused on the creation of 11 groups targeting various individuals who were involved on different levels, either as key players or observers, with the schooling of Roma minors: primary and secondary school teachers, adolescents and pre-adolescents from the Roma "camps", school mates, Roma parents, representatives of the institutions and of the schooling institutional bodies.

THE RESULTS

The quantitative analysis highlighted the dramatic results of the schooling policies (the data is to be understood as an average between the 2009/2010 and the 2014/2015 school year). In spite of an investment of over 2 million per year:

- Between those enrolled at school, **a Roma minor out of 5 has never shown in class.**
- Out of 1800 enrolled at school, only 198 attended at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the school hours. **9 Roma minors out of 10 do not attend school on a regular basis**, which by law forbids their admission to the end of the school year scrutiny.
- **A Roma minor out of 2 is behind with schooling** and is attending classes non-compliant with his/her age
- **Nearly one Roma minor out of 5 evades compulsory schooling.**

CHART

SUMMARY TABELLA COMPARING ROMA AND NON-ROMA



PHENOMENON	ROM STUDENTS	NON-ROM STUDENTS
REGULAR ATTENDANCE	12%	99%
LATE SCHOOLING	50%	13%
SCHOOLING EVASION	18%	0,2%

The qualitative analysis instead highlighted how the violation of the housing rights determine also a violation of the rights to education:

- Living in a settlement means the lack of adequate sanitation systems, on which depends the possibility of appearing neat and tidy for classes, the lack of spaces apt for doing homework.
- Living in a settlement means the need of benefitting (because of the distance from public services) of school busses. In Italy the busses used by Roma students have an ethnic feature by being reserved only to Roma people. Moreover the system is completely **wasteful**, as Roma students arrive every day with a minimum of one-hour delay and go home one hour ahead of time. This parallel timetable is not an exception, but a common practice, to an extent that Roma students are **unofficially authorised** to follow a different school timetable in comparison to the other kids.
- Living in a settlement means lacking the possibility of having any linguistic contact with the majority of the society. As a result, Roma minors do not speak a sufficiently fluent Italian and are not able to follow classes. This leads the teachers to adopt **parallel course programmes**, specific for Roma, which are simplified compared with those used for 'normal' students. Furthermore, this creates education gaps and, later on, schooling delays which bring Roma students in secondary grade without knowing how to read or write (with no basic skills).
- Moreover, living in a settlement means living in a more or less homogeneous context in terms of social exclusion and **cultural asset** - which means it is difficult to find an educated adult figure capable of helping minors with their homework. This adds to the creating educational gaps in a first place and schooling delays later on.
- Roma minors deem the schooling institution as extremely distant from their background. The skills taught in school, beginning with reading and writing, have no practical use in a settlement context – which continues to be almost the only point of reference for the majority of the Roma children.
- The feelings of Roma minors in class: the schooling experience is dealt with a lot of **pain** – because of the stigma and exclusion they experience in class, conceived as **useless** - teachers use different course programmes and are not **INVESTING** on Roma minors – and **impractical** when related to their future.
- The ambitions of Roma minors (surveyed in this research) are limited to the role models they are surrounded by within the settlement (mainly examples of exclusion), where economic and social success has **NO** links with education. A successful schooling project necessarily needs to invest in the job placement of those who study, thus creating positive examples.
- The classmates' feelings towards Roma students: the other kids show an unequivocal feeling towards their Roma classmates – which is mainly fear – fear of disease contagion, fear of physical proximity – thus no one is to hold hands with them – fear of entering the background they come from – no child would go to a birthday party held in a Roma settlement without being escorted by police or *carabinieri*.