



Cooperation Between Stakeholders to Ensure the Roma Child's Right to Education: An Analysis of Teachers' Experiences

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Annotation. The aim of the article is to draw on the experiences of teachers working with Roma children to shed light on the role of cooperation in guaranteeing the right to education for Roma children. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative content analysis was performed in accordance with the inductive logic of categorization based on the research data. The findings revealed positive and negative aspects of parents' cooperation with the school in ensuring Roma children's right to education.

Keywords: *child's right to education, cooperation, parents, Roma children, school, teacher.*

Introduction

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) defines the right of the child to education and mandates that the State creates conditions for this by establishing educational structures, improving various forms of education, providing necessary assistance and support, ensuring the availability of educational materials, and taking measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce dropout rates. Article 29 (1) not only enhances the right to education recognized in Article 28 with a qualitative dimension reflecting the rights and inherent dignity of the child but also emphasizes the need for education to be child-centered, child-friendly, and empowering (General Comment No. 12, 2009).

European countries give priority to multicultural education, which promotes equality and social justice. In the meantime, it also reduces marginalization and discrimination in society and education, thereby fostering social cohesion (Fehérvári, 2023). Education should incorporate diverse values, enable the overcoming of boundaries between religion, nationality, and culture, and reconcile differences through open dialogue. Children can have unique potential to bridge historical differences between groups in society (General Comment No. 12, 2009).

The inclusion of Roma children in education is a topical issue in European countries. The Council of Europe emphasizes that Roma children must have access to quality education and support not only as a matter of children's rights but also as a matter of strategic investment by countries in order to address the problem of their inclusion in education and thereby increase their ability to contribute to the development of socially inclusive and sustainable societies (Buces, 2023). Member States should ensure that all Roma have the same opportunities for real and equal access to and participation in all levels and forms of education, whereas Roma children should have equal access to quality and inclusive education (European Union Council Recommendation, 2021). Every child has the right to receive a quality education, which requires a focus on the quality of the learning environment, teaching and learning processes and materials, and learning outcomes (General Comment No. 12, 2009).

In Lithuania, Roma inclusion is implemented in accordance with international obligations under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Council of Europe, 1995) and other international conventions and treaties. Besides, in 2020, the European Commission presented the EU Strategic Plan for Roma Equality, Inclusion, and Participation 2020–2030, which calls on EU countries to develop national strategic plans for integration that address the needs of Roma, including in education (The Council of European Union, 2021).

Research shows that Roma children face various learning difficulties (Pescaru, 2018; Ferreira, et al., 2021; Hellgren & Gabrielli, 2021; Gómez-González et al., 2024). This means that schools must make additional efforts to organize the learning process and

address issues related to learning and school attendance to ensure the child's right to education within an inclusive education context. The social, economic, and cultural exclusion experienced by Roma in Europe and Lithuania is also emphasized by other scholars (Myers et al., 2010; Constantinescu & Constantinescu, 2013; Klaus & Siraj, 2020; Gómez-González et al., 2024; Report of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, 2024). Exclusion causes problems for Roma children in the field of education, such as learning difficulties, underachievement, school dropout, and, ultimately, dropping out of the education system (Gould, 2017; Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2020; Hellgren & Gabrielli, 2021; Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2023; Survutaitė, 2023).

The participation of Roma children in the education system is hampered by various factors, such as the negligent attitude of Roma parents towards their children's learning and education (Zachos, 2012; Kaleja, 2014; Peček, & Munda, 2015; Pescaru, 2018), school absenteeism of Roma children (Kontvainė, 2016, 2020; Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2020; Klaus & Siraj, 2020; Hellgren & Gabrielli, 2021), various learning difficulties (Macura & Dimitrijević, 2016; Helakorpi et al., 2020; Pop, 2021), language barriers (Helakorpi, et al., 2020; Tonković et al., 2022), and cultural and traditional characteristics (Štuopytė, 2008; Petrušauskaitė, 2014; Helakorpi et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important for teachers to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the right of Roma children to education. Other authors also note that it is essential to provide more assistance and support to Roma children in order to create equal opportunities and favorable conditions for participation in the education system (Constantinescu & Constantinescu, 2013). The successful implementation of the principle of inclusion in schools is not possible without constructive and effective cooperation, teamwork between teachers and educational support professionals in planning and implementing activities. Interpersonal relationships based on mutual respect, agreements, attention, and understanding among all members of the school community are prerequisites for successful inclusion (National Education Agency, 2022). The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania emphasizes cooperation between educators, education support specialists, parents, and other education and child protection institutions (Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania – Reconstituted Seimas, 1991). It also mandates internal cooperation within the school in providing educational assistance to pupils. The Law specifies the obligation of parents (guardians, custodians) to collaborate with the head of the school, other education providers, teachers, and specialists providing special, psychological, social-pedagogical, special educational assistance, and health care in resolving the child's educational issues and to follow their recommendations (Article 47(2)). When parents (guardians, custodians) fail to ensure the child's right to education up to the age of 16, such as not providing conditions for education at home or ensuring school attendance, and the school has exhausted all its resources and possibilities, the law requires the school to inform the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (Article 19)

(Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania – Reconstituted Seimas, 1991). Despite the legislation regulating the cooperation of all stakeholders, there is a lack of scientifically based practical recommendations on how to implement such provisions effectively.

The aim of the study is to explore the possibilities for the inclusion of Roma children in the education system through the implementation of their right to education. The entire study covered aspects of Roma children's inclusion in the education system, including the attractiveness of the school, accessibility, and the cooperation of stakeholders within the school community and with other institutions providing support to the child and family. In this article, the aspect of collaboration of a general education school in ensuring the right to education for Roma children is analyzed.

Meanwhile, the aim of this article is to reveal the cooperation between stakeholders in guaranteeing the Roma child's right to education, based on the experiences of teachers.

The research object of this paper is the cooperation among stakeholders in ensuring the Roma child's right to education. The main research question is: what are the realities of stakeholder cooperation in guaranteeing Roma children's right to education? Additional research questions include: which stakeholders are involved in addressing the difficulties in the educational process of Roma children? How do stakeholders work together in addressing the challenges?

Research methodology

Research methods. The type of research chosen for the study is qualitative. According to Žydzūnaitė and Sabaliauskas (2017), qualitative research is not focused on facts or statistical figures but on the experiences of individuals. When conducting qualitative research, the research participants express their opinions, and the researcher fully accepts their statements, recognizing them as individuals capable of expressing and speaking about the processes involved. The data is collected through semi-structured interviews. The main goal of the qualitative interview process is to obtain data that is as broad and open as possible, reflecting the research participants' perspective, and revealing the purpose of the research (Gaizauskaitė & Valavičienė, 2016). During the interview, the researcher delves into the opinions, attitudes, experiences, motives, feelings, etc. of the research participants. The structure of the semi-structured questionnaire is flexible and allows us to manage the interview process by changing the wording of the questions, the sequence of the questions, and by asking additional questions, etc. as needed. The responses of the participants were transcribed on the same day after the interview. Separate coded files were created on the computer for each participant (coding the participants M1, M2, M3....M21), without disclosing personal information.

Selection of the research sample and organization of the study. The research employed a purposive sampling type for participant selection. The criteria for selecting participants were: 1) educational work with Roma children; 2) a minimum of 1 year of educational experience working with Roma children. A total of 21 teachers who met the established selection criteria for study participants participated in the study.

Semi-structured interviews lasting 45–90 minutes were recorded with the consent of participants. Collection of the research data was stopped in compliance with the data saturation principle. When it was noticed that the answers obtained during interviews started repeating the earlier received data, the new research participants were not included in the research.

Ethics of the research. The study was based on respect for personal privacy, benevolence and attitude not to harm a research participant, confidentiality (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). The participants of the study participated voluntarily. They were introduced to the purpose, the method of study data collection and the procedure of the study; anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. The study participants participated in the study on a voluntary basis and agreed that their interview would be recorded. They were briefed on the purpose of the study, the method of the study data collection and the procedure of the study, their anonymity and confidentiality, and an opportunity to withdraw from the study were ensured. So, the study adhered to ethical standards consistent with European social work research guidelines (Sobočan et al., 2019). Participants were informed about the study's purpose, and their consent was obtained (Wiles, 2013). The study participants were assigned a code by using a letter (M1, M2, M3 and so on). The encoded data of all the study participants are available only to the researcher Žydzūnaitė and Sabaliauskas (2017) state that such measures break the connection between the research data and the study participants who provided the data in order to maintain anonymity and ensure that the research results do not harm the study participants.

Qualitative research data analysis. The method of content analysis was chosen to examine the collected data. Qualitative content analysis was performed in accordance with the inductive logic. The following sequence was followed when performing qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2014): multiple reading and rethinking of transcribed interview texts, data coding, identifying meaningful units in the text, grouping codes into subcategories, forming categories from subcategories, integrating categories/subcategories into the context of the phenomenon under analysis, and analyzing the research data in the context of insights from other researchers.

The study data were analyzed by a team of researchers. Before beginning to analyze the data, the researchers agreed regarding data analysis principles. Zhang and Wildemuth (2017) note that when study data are analyzed by a few researchers, it is necessary to discuss data encoding rules and to practically verify that all the researchers uniformly understand them. Primary data analysis was performed by each researcher

individually by encoding the data and uniting them into primary subcategories and categories. During the further course of the study, the researchers compared the singled-out primary subcategories and categories, discussed them and finally formed them by mutual agreement.

Research results

The analysis of teachers’ experiences revealed that the successful inclusion of Roma children in the education system, in order to ensure their right to education, depends on effective cooperation among all stakeholders: between the educational institution and the child’s parents/guardians (custodians), cooperation among teachers within the educational institution, and between the educational institution and other organizations (see Table 1).

Table 1
Cooperation Between All Stakeholders in Ensuring the Right to Education of the Roma Child

Categories	Subcategories
Positive Cooperation Between the School and the Child's Parents / Guardians (Custodians)	The school and parents align unified requirements for the child
	Parents are interested in their children's education
	Parents show initiative to cooperate
	Parents, together with the school, address emerging issues in their child's education
Parents Avoid Cooperation with the School	Parents do not attend parent meetings
	Parents do not take advantage of the school's opportunities to discuss their child's learning situation remotely
	Parents avoid answering phone calls
	Parents do not show up for scheduled appointments
	Due to computer illiteracy, parents are unable to use the online gradebook
Teachers' Cooperation Within the Educational Institution	Among teachers
	Between teachers and class teachers
	Among teachers, class teachers, and educational support specialists
Collaboration Between the School and Other Institutions	With participants of the child protection system
	With children's day centers

The study revealed both positive and negative aspects of school collaboration with Roma parents – some parents are inclined to collaborate with the school and jointly address their child's learning difficulties, while others tend to avoid collaboration with the school and are unwilling to address their child's educational problems.

Positive cooperation between the school and the child's parents/guardians (custodians). Successful inclusion of Roma children in the education system depends on positive cooperation between Roma parents and the school. Positive cooperation is demonstrated through the alignment of expectations between the school and parents, parental engagement in their children's education, parents' initiative to collaborate, and their ability to jointly address challenges with the school. Some Roma parents are aligned with the school in their expectations of the child: *"The child's behavior changes more readily when the school and parents set consistent expectations for him. The child's resistance to expectations decreases because neither school nor home supports his inappropriate behavior"* (M4). *"It is important for the family and the school to have aligned expectations for the child's learning"* (M19). Parents that are prone to cooperate with the school show interest in their children's education: *"In the online gradebook, I see that the girls' mother regularly logs into the gradebook, monitors how the children are doing"* (M21), and parents show initiative to collaborate with the school: *"Sometimes the mother calls, asks if the child came to school, asks how he is doing in his studies"* (M9), *"Parents call us, write, ask, they show initiative themselves"* (M14). Also, parents who cooperate favorably, together with the school, address emerging educational problems of the child: *"When difficulties arise and you call, the mother reacts, answers the call, answers the message, there is mutual contact"* (M3), *"There is an older brother who is six years older and is taking care of his younger brother. He has no experience of raising children. Child protection specialists told him that he cannot hit or scold his brother. He asked, 'So what should I do?' I told him that he needs to talk to the child, discuss the situation, and look for solutions together. That's how I advised him on how to raise his brother"* (M16), *"You can find common ground with parents if you prove to them that the efforts are for their children's benefit"* (M6). Thus, successful inclusion of Roma children in the educational process and addressing related learning problems significantly depends on parental involvement in their child's education. The study shows that smooth cooperation between parents and the school includes sharing information about the child's school attendance and learning, and, if needed, jointly solving problems. According to teachers, parents find the assistance of teachers, as professional educators, important when consulting on child-rearing issues.

Parents avoid cooperation with the school. The study revealed that it is challenging for the school to address the learning problems of Roma children when parents avoid cooperating with the school: they do not attend parent meetings, do not use the school's opportunities to discuss the situation with the teacher individually via remote means, do not answer phone calls, do not attend agreed meetings, and, due to computer

illiteracy, are unable to use the electronic gradebook. The study found that some Roma parents do not attend school meetings: *"I have not seen the parents. They have not come even once all year. There have already been three meetings. They say the mother cannot come, and the father is working. We do not talk much on the phone"* (M2), *"The mother does not attend meetings at all. Previously, during COVID, there were remote meetings, so maybe she couldn't join, now there are in-person meetings, but she still does not come to the parent meetings"* (M3). The study data reveal that although the school provides opportunities for parents to discuss their child's learning situation individually with the teacher remotely, parents do not use them: *"Teachers' meetings with parents are organized remotely. Parents must register in advance. So far, not a single Roma parent has registered"* (M16), *"Parents can come to the school and discuss their child's learning situation individually. Many parents gladly use this opportunity, but Roma parents have never come, even though they need it the most"* (M15). The study shows that some Roma parents are reluctant to answer phone calls from class teachers: *"When there are difficulties with school attendance or learning, we call the parents, but they very rarely answer the calls, and they never call back"* (M14), *"Half the school year has already passed, but I still haven't talked to the parents. I have called many times, but they have never answered"* (M10). Roma parents tend not to attend agreed meetings and do not inform the school if they cannot come: *"I call, we agree on when the parents will come to the school to discuss the child's learning situation. We agree on the meeting time, but they do not come and do not inform me if their plans change"* (M7), *"The problem is not only with children's school attendance but also with parents' irresponsibility – they do not keep on agreements. We agreed on a time to meet, but they do not come. For them, it is normal. And this situation often repeats"* (M6). Cooperation with Roma parents is complicated by their illiteracy and, therefore, their inability to use electronic information and communication tools: *"Usually, all information for children and parents is provided in the electronic gradebook, but Roma parents do not log in because they do not use the internet at home"* (M7), *"If a Roma child has learning difficulties, it is pointless for me to leave parents a message in the electronic gradebook because they will not read it anyway. Some are illiterate and cannot read or respond"* (M11). The study shows that the reluctance of Roma parents to cooperate with the school limits the school's ability to promptly address the difficulties and problems related to Roma children's education. Various initiatives by teachers to contact parents and inform them about their child's learning difficulties and attempt to solve them are unsuccessful. Parents' lack of interest in their child's situation prevents the school from helping the child. Since part of the responsibility for the child's educational success depends on the parents' attitude towards the importance of their child's education and the learning conditions they provide.

Teachers' cooperation within the educational institution. The research highlighted that ensuring the right to education for Roma children requires successful

cooperation within the school: among teachers; among teachers, class teachers, and educational support specialists. Teachers working with classes that include Roma children collaborate and discuss attendance and learning issues faced by the children: *"If there's a problem, the teachers who work with those children share their experiences on how to solve emerging issues, we discuss: what do you do, what works, what doesn't work"* (M1), *"We, the teachers, share our experiences, talk about how everyone is doing with Roma children, how we manage to motivate them to learn"* (M13), *"We have teacher meetings where we discuss the difficulties arising from Roma children's lack of school attendance, learning difficulties, and how to help the child"* (M6), *"Sometimes I don't know what to do, so I ask other teachers how do they get along with Roma children"* (M8), *"If I have problems with Roma children, I simply ask other teachers for advice"* (M15). Additionally, teachers work closely with the class teacher: *"In case of difficulties with a Roma child, teachers first cooperate with the class teacher"* (M10), *"Subject teachers usually turn to the class teacher if the child has learning difficulties or does not attend classes. We consult with the class teacher whether to assign the child a consultation or if specialist help is needed. We just discuss what kind of help is needed and make sure the child gets it"* (M12), *"I talk to his class teacher about why he doesn't attend, what problems are in the family, how to solve the problem of Lithuanian language barrier, he doesn't do the tasks because he doesn't understand the task itself"* (M17), *"If the subject teacher has difficulties with the child's attendance or behavior and needs to contact the parents, we cooperate with the class teacher. The class teacher calls, informs the parents, and together with the parents, we decide what to do next"* (M16). The study shows that teachers and class teachers cooperate with educational support specialists – social pedagogues, special pedagogues, psychologists, and speech therapists. The results indicate that teachers and class teachers work with social pedagogues to solve the problems of school attendance among Roma children: *"The biggest problem with Roma children is their school attendance"* (M2), *"Regarding school attendance, I constantly communicate with the social pedagogue. Parents only respond to the social pedagogue's phone calls"* (M6), *"If class teachers fail to contact the parents, we then cooperate with the social pedagogue. She tries to solve the attendance problem"* (M15), *"If I can't reach the parents by phone, I inform the school administration and the social pedagogue. And she helps"* (M9). With special pedagogues and speech therapists, teachers and class teachers work together to meet the child's special educational needs: *"When a child is enrolled in a special program, we closely cooperate with the special pedagogue"* (M5), *"If needed, there is a speech therapist and special pedagogues, we cooperate with them"* (M17), *"If there are special educational needs, I try to find out how to help the child"* (M20), *"I consult with the special pedagogue and the speech therapist every day"* (M3), *"When it is determined that a Roma child has special educational needs, all specialists, teachers, and class teachers gather together and decide what kind of support each will provide to the child"* (M4). Teachers and class teachers consult with psychologists to

create an emotionally favorable environment in the classroom and to address emotional and behavioral difficulties faced by the children: *“When cases of bullying occur, we consult with the school psychologist”* (M21), *“When a child has behavioral, psychological problems, we consult with the psychologist on how we can help”* (M17). Roma children are a specific group with unique needs, so to ensure their inclusion in the learning process and to solve emerging problems, the school utilizes all available resources. The study demonstrated that the school takes a responsible and consistent attitude to the inclusion of all children, including Roma. The school has developed explicit collaboration practices among school specialists, including different collaborative relationships and methods to help Roma children engage in the learning process. While the school tries its best, it is not always possible to successfully involve Roma children in the learning process, as the biggest challenge lies in the absenteeism from school. When teachers are unable to solve the learning issues and related difficulties of a child, educational support specialists should be involved.

Collaboration between the school and other institutions. The study showed that seeking to ensure children’s right to education, educational institutions collaborate with other organizations, such as child protection agencies and children’s daycare centers. Cooperation with child protection agencies involves the Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service as well as social service centers. The study identified that if a school is unable to resolve issues of school absenteeism internally, it turns to the Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service for assistance. They also participate in case management meetings and the process of providing support to the child. The data indicate that schools primarily contact the Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service due to Roma children’s absenteeism: *“The social pedagogue at the school addresses the problem of school absenteeism, but if the problem cannot be solved, the school seeks help from the child protection agency”* (M10), *“Class teachers inform the social pedagogue. If parents do not respond or the problem remains unresolved, the school contacts child protection. Many Roma parents have dealings with child protection services”* (M3), *“Roma children often do not attend school. If we can’t find a solution, we contact child protection. Child protection agencies enforce parental responsibility more strictly”* (M19). The study shows that school representatives collaborate with social service centers by participating in the process of providing support to the child and family: *“The social pedagogue usually participates in case management meetings, but sometimes teachers also get involved in supporting the family and participate in case management meetings”* (M6), *“If a social service center is providing support to the family, the issue of school absenteeism is temporarily resolved. The child attends school for a while but then disappears again”* (M4), *“The social pedagogue collaborates with the social worker, which is working with the family”* (M2), *“When social workers put pressure on Roma families, the children start attending school more regularly. Increased family supervision and provided benefits are more effective than teachers’ arguments to motivate the child to attend school and learn”* (M7).

The study revealed that Roma children attend day centers after school, where they are engaged in activities and helped with their homework. In day centers, Roma children develop social skills by interacting and collaborating with other children, contributing to their successful inclusion in the education system: *“My Roma girl attends a children’s day center. There she learns to communicate, listens to others’ opinions, gets used to not being late for activities, and follows the instructions of the staff... The skills gained there help at school: arriving on time for classes, being attentive when doing tasks”* (M1), *“Boys really like and attend sports clubs. There they learn discipline, responsibility, following rules, order, and respect for each other. Coaches are great authorities for Roma boys”* (M12), *“In day centers, children learn to spend their free time meaningfully, and through various activities, they learn communication, organizational, and cooperation skills that are useful in the learning process”* (M16). In day centers, children have the opportunity to do their homework: *“They get help with their homework at the day center”* (M6), *“Not all Roma children have the conditions at home to do their homework. By attending children’s day centers, Roma children usually do their homework. Besides, there they receive help and learn how to learn”* (21). The study found that the main issue affecting Roma children’s inclusion in the education system, which leads to other educational problems such as knowledge gaps and learning failures, thereby decreasing motivation to learn, is school absenteeism. Thus, it is possible to identify a cycle of problems that can only be resolved by addressing school absenteeism. The biggest influence on a child’s school attendance is the parents’ attitude towards education and their efforts to ensure the child gets to school. Consequently, the school is looking for assistance from family support institutions, the Child Rights Protection Service, and social service centers to encourage parents to take responsibility for their child’s right to education. Children’s daycare centers also play a significant role in the successful integration of Roma children into the education system by motivating them to become more independent and assume responsibility for their own learning.

Discussion and Conclusions

The successful inclusion of Roma children in the education system and resolving the corresponding issues depend on effective collaboration among schools, parents (caregivers), teachers working within the same educational institution, and other external institutions. The study demonstrates that positive cooperation between the school and the child’s parents (caregivers) is linked to school and parents’ expectations for the child, parents’ interest in the child’s learning, common solutions to the child’s educational problems, and parents’ initiative in collaboration. The family environment is a crucial factor determining a child’s attitude toward learning and the successful implementation of their educational opportunities (Gustaitienė & Širiakovienė, 2020;

Hellgren & Gabrielli, 2021). Cooperation encourages all members of the educational process to improve, reflect, and express their positions. It is essential to consider the role of the home environment for teachers when interacting with pupils and their parents. The importance of the family environment and cooperation with the school is also emphasized by other researchers (Constantinescu & Constantinescu, 2013; Ferreira et al., 2021; Gómez-González et al., 2024). Other studies have also confirmed the lack of involvement of Roma parents in their child's learning process (Ferreira, et al., 2021), their disregard for their children's education, failure to attend meetings they are invited to, and unwillingness to cooperate with the school (Hellgren & Gabrielli, 2021). The unsuccessful cooperation between the school and parents is due to the indifferent attitude of Roma parents towards ensuring their child's right to education and future prospects, thus, resulting in no expectations for their child's education (Zachos, 2012; Doubek & Levínská, 2014; Peček & Munda, 2015; Pescaru, 2018; Gómez-González et al., 2024). Thus, ensuring the child's right to education is impossible without the cooperation of parents and the school; therefore, the task of the school is to find attractive and acceptable ways of cooperation for parents, as the success or failure of cooperation depends on the attitude of Roma parents. As already mentioned, one of the unfavorable factors for the participation of Roma children in the education system is the lax attitude of parents towards the child's learning and education. Cooperation is one of the means that enables influencing the attitude of Roma parents so that it meets the best interests of the child. Therefore, schools should consistently cooperate with parents in resolving obstacles to the child's inclusion in the education system and ensuring their right to education, introducing parents to the possibilities of helping the child in and outside the educational institution and, at the same time, finding the best solution that meets the child's needs.

However, the study also highlighted the reluctance of Roma parents to cooperate with the school – parents do not attend parent meetings, do not take advantage of opportunities to discuss the child's situation individually, do not answer phone calls, fail to show up for scheduled meetings, and illiterate parents are unable to use modern electronic communication tools. To promote the inclusion of Roma children in the education system, the school has established collaboration between various specialists working in the school. Collaboration between teachers, psychologists, social pedagogues, and other educational specialists can provide additional resources and tools to deal with complicated social difficulties and provide individual support to students experiencing emotional difficulties (Cusinato et al., 2020). This suggests that the role of the teacher in the modern education system is becoming increasingly complex and involves not only pedagogical skills but also the ability to build collaborative networks with other participants in the educational process. Teachers become school community leaders who foster a favorable learning environment and promote positive and friendly social interactions that are essential factors in developing students' emotional well-being

and success (Schmidt et al., 2021). Activities that are well-planned and effective help overcome obstacles, solve emerging educational problems, increase Roma children's attendance, reduce the risks of school dropout, and positively impact learning outcomes (Survutaitė, 2023). The help of experts from other organizations, such as child protection and social services agencies, is employed to address the problem when the school lacks internal resources.

In addition, children's daycare centers are essential to Roma children's inclusion into the education system. A key element of inclusive practice and culture is the collaboration and participation of all interested parties, which facilitates the learning process, improves the quality of education, and creates conditions for attaining better educational outcomes (Merchán-Ríos et al., 2023). On the one hand, participants in the child rights protection system provide assistance and support to the family (application of case management to the family), which is important for the child's inclusion in the education system. On the other hand, the territorial units of the Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour perform the function of family control, which is particularly necessary in solving the problem of Roma children's absenteeism from school. In addressing learning difficulties, the school collaborates with children's daycare centers, which maintain close relationships with Roma families and communities, resulting in a positive impact on the educational outcomes of Roma children and their families. This partnership aims to ensure the right of Roma children to education.

Limitations

Limitations of the study: the study was carried out within the boundaries of the Vilnius City Municipality; thus, the findings of the study reflect the situation of Roma children's participation in the education system in Vilnius.

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Suinteresuotų šalių bendradarbiavimas užtikrinant romų vaiko teisę į mokymąsi: mokytojų patirčių analizė

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Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – remiantis mokytojų, dirbančių su romų vaikais, patirtimis, atskleisti bendradarbiavimo raišką užtikrinant romų vaikų teisę į ugdymą. Tyrimui pasirinktas kokybinio tyrimo tipas, duomenys buvo renkami pusiau struktūrizuoto interviu metodu, analizuoti turinio analizės metodu. Tyrime dalyvavo 21 mokytojas, turintis romų vaikų mokymo patirties. Tyrimas parodė, kad, užtikrinant romų vaikų teisę į ugdymą, išryškėjo tėvų bendradarbiavimo su mokykla pozityvūs ir negatyvūs aspektai. Palankiai bendradarbiaudami

su mokykla romų tėvai sutaria su mokykla dėl reikalavimų, keliamų vaikui, ir jų laikosi, domisi vaiko mokymusi, rodo iniciatyvą bendradarbiauti ir tai sudaro prielaidas užtikrinti vaiko teisę mokytis. Vis dėlto išryškėjo ir tėvų vengimas bendradarbiauti – tėvai nesidomi vaiko mokymusi, nesilanko tėvų susirinkimuose, iškilus mokymosi problemoms, nekomunikuoja su mokytojais ar net ignoruoja jų telefonų skambučius, neateina į sutartą pokalbį aptarti vaiko problemų, nebendradarbiauja pasitelkdami šiuolaikines komunikacines elektronines priemones dėl neraštingumo. Mokykla tik savo ištekliais ir pastangomis negali visapusiškai užtikrinti vaiko teisės į mokymąsi. Romų vaikų mokymasis mokyklai kelia daug iššūkių. Siekdami romų įtraukties, mokytojai bendradarbiauja tarpusavyje, su klasės vadovais ir švietimo pagalbos specialistais. Kai mokykloms vidinių išteklių nepakanka kylančioms problemoms išspręsti, jos bendradarbiauja su VTA sistemos dalyviais ir vaikų dienos centrais.

Esminiai žodžiai: *bendradarbiavimas, mokykla, mokytojai, tėvai, romų vaikai, vaiko teisė į mokymąsi.*

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