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School Governance and Social Inclusion

Involvement of Parents

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C E P S

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Parent participation in the life of schools in South East Europe

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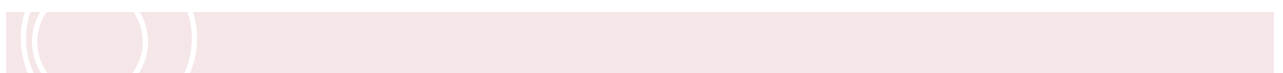Tea Pahic, Research assistant

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Executive Summary

Schools and families share responsibilities for the socialisation and education of the child. The involvement of parents in the life of schools and their participation in school activities and decision-making is a major vehicle for constructing shared goals and co-ordinated practices. It is a democratic accountability mechanism to be pursued as a value per se, and can be a strong predictor of the child's academic achievement.

However, parent participation is an underexplored area in the public education systems of SEE countries. For the purpose of better understanding how and to what extent parents are involved and influential in school life, and to explore the ways in which variations in school-based activities seeking to engage parents reinforce or ameliorate social exclusion, a large-scale study was conducted in ten SEE countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

The analysis of legislative acts and other documentation revealed that educational bodies with parental participation are regularly found at the school level, such as school boards and parent councils, while representation is negligible above the school level. Schools in all SEE countries have school boards with decision-making power in which parents also participate, with varying shares, although their number never prevails. In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia school parent councils with a consultative role also exist, comprised of class parent representatives. Romania also has a national federation of parent associations, Bosnia and Herzegovina cantonal associations of parent-school co-operation, Kosovo a parent committee established by the Minister, while Albania has several free parent associations. At the municipal level, no parental organisations or participatory bodies have been detected.

The main part of the research consists of a comparative empirical analysis which explored the views of parents on parent-school collaboration and their participation in school life according to six broad dimensions (parent-teacher meetings, getting relevant information from school, assistance with learning at home, volunteering at school, participating in school decision-making, and mediating community-school relationships), along with parents' role attribution between the family and school, parental beliefs about school-parent partnerships, parents' motivation and sense of self-efficacy. The empirical research was inspired by Epstein's framework of parent involvement (Epstein, J. L., 1995, 1996. 2001, Epstein et al. 1996), Sheridan and Kratochwill's conceptualisation of partnership versus the traditional approach to family-school relations (Sheridan S. M. and Kratochwill, T. R., 2007), Hoover-Dempsey's model of the parental involvement process (Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., and Sandler, H. M., 1997, Hoover-Dempsey, K.V. et al., 2005, Green, C. L., et al., 2007), scattered research evidence from the SEE countries indicating a prevalent traditional approach in school-family relationships (e.g. Polovina, N., 2007), a recent study on principals' views on parent participation showing limited efforts and effectiveness in meaningfully engaging parents on the school side (Pop, D. et al., 2009) and a preliminary qualitative study including focus groups from all participating countries conducted with the aim to refine the research questions and create a valid instrument.

A total of 11,125 parents were surveyed with structured face-to face interviews, selected by stratified random sampling. The stratification was undertaken according to relevant geographical regions and by the location of the community served by the school (urban/rural). 30 schools were selected from each country and between 20 and 40 parents were randomly chosen from each school, proportional to the size of the school as well as five parents' representatives. In each country, a booster sample of parents was interviewed from two additional schools in communities which contained a high proportion of inhabitants who are Roma (except in Moldova, where other excluded communities were targeted). The main structure of the sample (including the main sample, parent representatives samples and Roma booster samples) was the following:

- Sample A (mainstream – regular parents sample): 9058

- Sample E (Roma parents from the excluded parents sample): 504

- Sample B (parents' representatives sample): 1354

- Parent representatives from Sample E school: 85

- Sample E (non-Roma parents from the excluded parents sample): 124

The questionnaire which was the basis for the interviews captured the following data:

- socio-economic data on the child's family (wealth indicator, education level, education aspirations etc.) and basic information about the child (age, gender, school achievement etc.);

- a report on participation in school life, which combined Epstein's dimensions of participation (whether the school invites parents to participate according to each dimension) with basic characteristics of the participation process (how parents feel about it, do they participate if invited, do they assess it as useful, are they motivated, do they feel competent etc.);

- mediating variables – self-reports on the motivation of parents, their beliefs about school-parent partnerships and perceptions of school openness, and of the work of the parent representatives; and

- a self-assessment of parents' satisfaction with the child's well-being and progress at school, the communication with the school and with the influence the parent can exert.

Parent representatives and parents from minority groups were surveyed with special additional sets of questions.

Main findings and recommendations

Schools in SEE countries do not take advantage of the different parent participation possibilities that school life offers – the repertoire for initiating and practicing participation most often consists of the most traditional and legally binding form of an invitation to participate at class meetings and the sending out of periodical report cards – whereas parents' inclination to participate in the different aspects of school life is strong, they usually respond to invitations, assess all dimensions of participation as beneficial, and feel both capable and obliged to participate. Schools do not recognise parents as resources in many important areas of volunteering, extracurricular or curricular involvement where consulting with parents and involving them could also be in the self-interest of the schools, and they usually exclude them from decision-making on any financial or management issues. For example, almost 70 percent of parents have never received any written information about school rules or content or how to help with learning, or a newsletter on school activities, 66 percent have never received invitation to volunteer with sports, social and cultural activities, about 85 percent have never received an invitation to help with lessons – tell a story, talk about their job, play an instrument, or assist with additional school services such as the library, playground, lunchroom, almost 80 percent have never been asked for any opinion in respect of financial management, 66 percent on extracurricular matters, 60 percent regarding health and safety issues, 82 percent regarding school management issues, 75 percent regarding education issues such as the content of lessons, textbooks, teacher selection or assessment, pupil workload or homework.

Parents themselves have adjusted their views, expectations and behavioural patterns to this prevalently traditional paradigm of parent-school relationships. They even view parents more as obstacles to parent-school co-operation than the schools. They believe more strongly that parents are not interested, do not have time, do not know how to communicate than that teachers are not interested, do not have time, do not know how to communicate, but still their satisfaction with the possibility of their influence is less than their satisfaction with the school in general. Parents at schools with poorer families are on average more satisfied than parents at richer schools, i.e. wealthier parents have higher standards and are less likely to be satisfied with the school in general and with their decision-making possibilities.

Roma parents are even more excluded than the majority parents – schools are unaware of and not using one of the most effective mechanisms for overcoming marginalisation; hence, those who are most strongly in need of a strong partnership with the school are invited to participate the least often.

In the context of lacking invitations and initiative from the school's side, and the largely traditional orientation, the individual strivings, beliefs and attitudes of parents do not make a significant difference, and do not seem to have the expected mediating role in enhancing parent-school partnerships. Much of the variance in parental satisfaction is explained by differences between schools: there are some schools where most parents are dissatisfied, schools where most are satisfied, and many gradations in between. In relation to general satisfaction, 38 percent of variance, in relation to satisfaction with decision-making and 35 percent of variance is found at the school level.

The biggest contribution to parental satisfaction with education and with their own influence comes from families who see their parent representatives as effective. Parental participation seems to have a substantial impact on satisfaction with education only if mediated through the representatives' effectiveness, but not directly through individual efforts of parents. The contribution of parental initiative to satisfaction is negative – parents who take responsibility, try to initiate actions and influence school policies are much less satisfied with education and with their own influence at the school level than the more passive parents.

Hence, parent representatives are important bridges between schools and parents. The role of parent representatives is legally established in all SEE countries, and the prevalently more traditional than partnership orientation of parent-school co-operation, as well as the social distance between schools and parents, makes this role a central one. However, parent representatives do not assume this role in a full-fledged way. They themselves do not rate their own influence in the school decision-making processes highly, many parents claim they do not even know their representative and that the representative does not communicate with them often enough. Data indicate that parent representatives are left on their own, without any systemic support and hence their personal skills, capacities and engagement are the most important factors of their success or failure, and not the role they assume as such.

The need for school support in education is high in SEE countries. It seems that SEE families caught up in the region's rapid economic and social transition are on one hand somewhat neglecting both material and intellectual support for the education of their children and, on the other, they attach a high value and high aspirations to their children's education. Many currently neglected aspects of potential parent-school co-operation, especially providing relevant information and assistance with homework, involving parents in meaningful curricular and extracurricular activities could become highly important for overcoming these gaps at the family level and contribute to better national education outcomes.

The recommendations based on these results are threefold:

1. National and local policymakers, school principals, advisors and teachers should do much more to attract, invite and include all parents as important resources and partners in the life of their children's schools and in schools generally. Schools should invest time, energy and creativity to discover, set up, and make use of the currently neglected dimensions of parent participation, and develop partnership-oriented co-operation with parents.

2. Parent representatives should be given a much better founded role. National policies should be developed to ensure better ways of selecting parent representation and provide training opportunities for parent representatives. Parents should be empowered to take more initiative in building up their potential for involvement in school life through a wide range of training and media activities. Associations of parent representative bodies at the municipal, regional or national level should be established to give a voice to parents and create forums to discuss education-related issues and support school-level representatives with information and advice.

3. Special care must be taken to nurture the inclusion of parents from vulnerable groups, especially Roma. Schools should actively reach out to Roma parents and involve them substantially. Legal provision should ensure that parents of a Roma origin have a seat on school boards and parent councils. This would ensure that Roma parents' needs are addressed, that they are informed appropriately, and that school policies take their views into account.

Finally, in order to support a developmental leap in parent-school co-operation new legislative solutions are certainly needed, but they will not be sufficient to bring about substantial and sustained change. School development support and guidance need to become functional good examples and best practices need to be identified, rewarded and disseminated, schools should co-operate among themselves in terms of exchanging examples of best school-parent partnership practices and, above all, a new information and resource-sharing mechanism which includes and empowers parents in a more direct way needs to be established.

Introduction

What is the role of parents in public education in SEE countries? Is it restricted to helping the child, motivating him or her to learn and achieve, assisting with homework and ensuring he or she adheres to the school's rules? Or is there more to it? Can parents influence the school as well? Can they help ensure a school culture and climate which fits their child best? Can they participate in different school activities to help make the school more like home? Can they have a say in issues which are typically within the teacher's ambit? Can they have a view which would influence the education process? Do parents want this at all? Do they feel competent to participate? How do they see whether they are effective? Do they face problems and barriers? If so, of which kind? How do they overcome them? Are all parents in the same situation or are those who belong to marginalised groups deprived of their participation possibilities as well? How do parent representatives see their roles? And how do other parents see these representatives?

These were the broad questions which inspired this study. They were based on a general view of the OSI national foundations that parent participation is an underexplored area in SEE countries' public education systems, and that it has much room for improvement. In addition, they were partially derived from the results and methodology of a previous study on school principals' views on parent participation and their account of what parents and schools do when it comes to co-operating with each other[1].

General methodology

The main purpose of the study, which influenced further decisions regarding the general methodology used, was defined as follows:

- To gain a sound understanding of the different ways parents are involved in and influence school education in SEE countries.

- To test and possibly refine relevant findings obtained from the school principal survey carried out in the first phase of the initiative.

- To explore the ways in which variations in school-based activities seeking to engage parents bolster or improve social exclusion.

The exploration of parental participation was approached in the study through a variety of mutually reinforcing layers in the following way:

- A literature review was conducted with the aim of selecting the most appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches for exploring parent participation in SEE countries.

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1 Pop, D. et al. (2009): *Involvement of Parents: South East Europe Cross-Countries Survey of Principals' Views*. CEPS: Ljubljana

- A desk review was carried out to ascertain the types of legislation which regulate the role of parents, their organisations and connections to the school in all SEE countries which participated in the study.

- In all participating countries focus groups were organised using the same guidelines in order to give an insight into the specific national contexts[2]. Based on the focus group results, the instrument for the main part of the study was constructed.

- The main part of the study consisted of an extensive face-to-face survey with parents from the general population, with booster samples of parents who are representatives and of parents from marginalised groups – around 11,000 parents in total, as well as the principals[3] of the same schools.

Research team

The study engaged a wide research team. Apart from the lead research team of four people, country research teams were formed that conducted the desk review and the focus groups and wrote the national-level research reports. Three field research companies were engaged to conduct the survey in the ten participating countries. After the data were collected, the OSI gave a number of stipends to graduate researchers to utilise the datasets for pursuing further questions related to different particular issues of parent participation at the country and regional level.

Participating countries

The following countries participated in the study: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

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2 Detailed results of the qualitative study were published separately (see http://www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/outputs.htm).
3 The data from the principals do not form a main part of this report and will be subject to separate and additional analyses.

What is parent participation?

Although some practices of school and family are conducted separately, schools and families share responsibilities for the socialisation and education of the child. They share goals and should create over-lapping spheres of influence. The involvement of parents in the life of schools and their participation in school activities and decision-making is the major vehicle for constructing shared goals and co-ordinated practices fitted to the specific context of the family and the school. Parent participation in school life is also a democratic accountability mechanism to be pursued as a value per se, but research shows that parental involvement is by itself also a strong predictor of the child's academic achievement, and its influence largely transcends the influence of socio-economic status on educational achievements (Jeynes, W., 2007).

A deeper understanding of issues connected to parent participation can be pursued via three meaningful perspectives:

1. the dimensions of parent participation: the types of school-level activities which are designed for parents to participate in, which are open for parents to participate in, and in which they are invited to contribute;

2. the role attribution between schools and parents: who should do what, what do schools expect from parents, what do parents expect from schools?; and

3. the process of participation itself.

Dimensions of parent participation

Epstein, one of the most frequently cited authors on parental involvement (Epstein, J.L, 1995, 1996, 2001, Epstein, J. L. et al., 1996) has proposed a framework of parent involvement that includes six main types of activities that connect families, schools and communities focusing on the key role of the child as a student in interactions between families and schools, parents and teachers, or the community:

parenting: while families provide for the health and safety of children, and create a home environment that encourages learning and good behaviour in school, schools can provide training and information to help families understand and promote their children's development;

communicating: schools are accountable for reaching families and providing them with information about school progress and student performance/progress – the means of communication should be appropriate for parents and their cultural specificities, while the process needs to be two-way;

volunteering: parents can make significant contributions to the environment and functions of a school, schools can get the most out of this process by creating flexible schedules so more parents can participate, and by working to match the talents and interests of parents to the needs of students, teachers and administrators;

learning at home: parents can help their children in school-related activities with the guidance and support of teachers;

decision-making: schools can give parents meaningful roles in the school decision-making process, and help them make the most of it; this opportunity should be open to all segments of the community, not just people who have the most time and energy to spend on school affairs; and

collaboration with the community: schools can co-ordinate the work and resources of the community, businesses, colleges or universities and other groups to strengthen school programmes, family practices and student learning and development; schools can help families gain access to support services offered by other agencies, such as healthcare, cultural events, tutoring services and after-school child-care programmes.

Inspired by Epstein's work, the current study investigated the views of parents on parent-school collaboration and their participation in the school's life not uni-dimensionally, but according to six broad dimensions. The study looked in detail at the following dimensions of potential parent-school collaboration: parent-teacher meetings, getting relevant information from school, assistance with learning at home, volunteering at school, participating in school decision-making and mediating community-school relationships.

Role attribution between schools and parents

The roles of parents and schools, the two key agents in education and socialisation, are inherently interwoven, which poses a special challenge in attributing responsibilities. One can distinguish two ways of conceptualising this interdependence: the partnership approach and the traditional way of conceptualising family-school relations (Sheridan, S. M. and Kratochwill, T. R., 2007). Table 1 describes the characteristics of these two approaches while Table 2 describes the underlying features of the partnership approach in greater detail.

Table 1. The differences between traditional and partnership orientations

Partnership orientation	Traditional orientation
Clear commitment to work together in order to promote child's performance/achievement	Emphasizing the school role in promoting learning
Frequent communication that is bidirectional	Communication initiated just by the school, infrequent and problem-centred
Appreciating the cultural differences and recognizing the importance of it contribution to creating the positive learning climate	"One size fits all" – cultural difference is a challenge that needs to be overcome
Appreciation of the significance of different perspectives	Differences are seen as barriers
Roles are clear, mutual, and supportive	Separate roles distance participants
Goals for students are mutually determined and shared	Goals determined by school, sometimes shared with parents
Plans are co-constructed, with agreed upon roles for all participants	Educational plans devised and delivered by teachers

When analysing specific facets of the family-school partnership, Sheridan and Kratochwill tend to stress collaborative relationships and shared responsibility for educational outcomes.

In the collaborative approach, mutual trust between the family and the school is crucial. Only if both partners see each other as equal can their efforts jointly contribute to the best outcomes for children. However, trust is not a given, but needs to be nurtured. Trust is reciprocal in nature: trustworthy school authorities invite the trustworthy behaviour of parents. According to Adams, Forsyth and Mitchell (Adams, C. M., Forsyth, P. B., and Mitchell, R. M., 2009):

- parent trust varies by factors that affect the opportunities for parents to make discernments about the trustworthiness of the school;

- differences in organisational characteristics of the school lead to variations in parent-school trust;

- most inter-school variability can be explained by parents' sense of influence;

- systematic steps taken by the school in order to enhance parent influence result in more trust; and

- the first step that can be taken is allowing parents to share in educational responsibility.

Table 2. Defining characteristics of the family-school partnership

Characteristics	Key indicators
Relationships among partners are **collaborative, interdependent, and balanced**	Diverse individuals and vantage points work together as coequal parties, share in the identification of goals and solution of problems, and forge trusting relationships
	More than simply working together, the notion of partnerships involves a fundamental restructuring of how individuals work together across home and school systems
	Roles are complementary – each partner makes a unique contribution that is mutually beneficial
	All have generally equal opportunity in decision making
Responsibilities for educating and socializing children are shared	Resources, power, and responsibilities are shared
	Goals are mutually determined
	Outcomes achieved in the context of the partnership are uniquely superior to those achieved by any one party in isolation
Maintenance of a **positive relationship** is a priority	Failure to develop relationships can undermine the formation of successful partnerships
	Personal needs are put aside to allow the needs and goals of the partnership to take precedence
	To be successful, partners must believe that the other person is trustworthy, is working toward a mutually held goal, and holds positive regard toward the other
	All believe that the partnership and the anticipated outcomes are worthy of the expenditure of time and energy necessary for its maintenance
Services are **flexible, responsive, and proactive**	Unique family–school contexts define the form the partnership takes
Differences in perspectives are seen as strengths	A range of diverse experiences, skills, and views are brought to bear on the solution of problems
	Unique knowledge, resources, talents, and expertise brought by parents and educators enhance the potential outcomes for students
There is a commitment to **cultural competence**	Cultural values and traditions of the family and school are respected
	Services that are sensitive to important cultures and traditions of schools and families are most likely to be effective
Emphasis is on **outcomes and goal attainment**	Partnerships have clearly specified goals, and progress is monitored through data-based decision-making processes
	Programs are not offered because they are available; rather, they are considered fully with attention to the degree to which they fit within the overarching priorities of the partnership

In the traditional perspective this is missing and the relationship can easily boil down to blaming just the school or just the family for a child's failure which, in turn, prevents the development of collaboration and partnership in complementary ways.

However, the partnership orientation does not seem to be universal in current education systems. Research from the SEE region indicates the prevalence of a traditional view on family-school relationships, with distinct roles and responsibilities and less attention devoted to trust-building.

A study on parents in Greece (Poulou, M. and Matsagouras, E., 2007) found there is a clear differentiation between teachers and parent's roles, while teachers are expected to organise the learning and to inform parents of the child's academic progress and parents are responsible for the child's social and emotional development. In addition, parents preferred formal ways of communicating with teachers such as parent-teacher conferences, help with children's misconduct at school, informing teachers about the child, or maintaining concrete and superficial relations with teachers.

The same authors (Poulou, M. and Matsagouras, E., 2007) found a similar attitude while studying teachers' expectations teachers also perceive their roles as very distinct from parents and conceptualise their co-operation in a quite limited and school-centred way.

A study from Cyprus (Deslandes, R. and Rousseau, N., 2007) examined the congruence between teachers' and parents' role construction and their expectations regarding their involvement in homework. The findings highlight that the teachers expect more from the parents than the parents are aware they expect them to be far more involved than they actually are.

A study on family-school co-operation in Serbia conducted in 2001, with around 9,000 respondents at 85 roundtables organised on the issues of democratisation of education (Kovač-Cerović, T. and Levkov, L., 2002) showed there was an agreement between school employees, students and their parents that parental involvement and presence in schools needs to be more significant. Still, the parents ranked it as priority number one, while for the teachers it was in 5th place and for the students in 10th (Stanković, D., 2006). Most parents participating in the roundtables lacked information and school assistance on how to support their children's learning.

Based on a school documentation analysis in Serbia, Polovina and Stanišić (Polovina, N. and Stanišić, J., 2007) concluded that parents visited the school and contacted the teachers concerned about the issues of grades, school absenteeism and discipline problems, while the number of visits decreased with a student's age. Absenteeism and lower achievement were correlated with a lower frequency of meetings with teachers. An action study also conducted by Polovina (Polovina, N., 2007) revealed that parent-teacher relations were burdened by dissatisfaction, frustrations and a readiness to quit and disengage , while the expectations of the other side were very high (teachers expected a lot from parents and vice versa).

These findings from SEE countries lead to the conclusion that the roles of parents and teachers are seen as separate and reveal a traditional, school-centred model of school-family relations in which there is no support and most probably no room for direct and honest communication between the school and the family. Inspired by these findings, the current study also addresses role attribution between the family and the school and parental beliefs about school-parent partnerships.

Participation process

According to all explored models, the participation process is a complex multifaceted process with multiple and recurrent determinants.

On one hand, parents develop role constructions , defined as parents' expectations of themselves with regard to parent involvement and their actual involvement practices based on these expectations (Diamond, J. B. and Gomez, K., 2004). The involvement practice depends on family characteristics, where the family's socio-economic status is a strong predictor of parental involvement, as well as gender and educational level, along with parents perceiving themselves as more efficient and seeing their role closer to teachers, which promotes parental involvement (Grolnick, W. and Slowiaczek, M., 1994; Grolnick, W., Benjet, C., Kurowski, C. and Apostoleris, N., 1997), and parents' perceptions of their beliefs and thoughts about themselves as parents they need to believe they are able to make a difference (Hoover-Dempsey, K., Bassler, O. and Brissie, J. 1992).

On the other hand, all of this, including the actual involvement experiences, largely depends on the school's initiatives and is primarily influenced by the relationships with teachers, children and relevant aspects of the context (Green, C. L., et al., 2007). Research also shows that increasing the opportunities for parent visitation with teachers in school settings helps foster the home-school connection (Waanders, C., Mendez, J. L., and Downer, J., 2007).

Summarising the research findings in this area, Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues (Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H. M., 1997, Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., et al., 2005, Green, C. L. et al., 2007) point out three main sources of parental involvement:

- psychological motivators promoting involvement
  - parental beliefs (they believe they *should* be involved)
  - the parent has a sense of efficacy for helping the child's school success (it will make a difference, I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn)
- perceived invitations to become involved
  - school invitations (e.g. structure, management practices, a welcoming school climate, school practices that ensure parents are well informed about their child's progress)
  - child invitations (My child asked me to help explain something about his or her homework)
  - specific teacher invitations (My child's teacher asked me or expected me to supervise my child's homework)
- parent's perceptions about life context elements that enable involvement
  - the parent believes they have knowledge and skills helpful for the child's school success (individuals with the same level of skills and knowledge may perform differently given variations in personal efficacy beliefs about what one can do with that set of skills and knowledge, I know enough about the subjects of my child's homework to help him or her)
  - the parent believes they have the time and energy for involvement (I have enough time and energy to attend special events at school).

Two similar models can describe the interrelationships of different factors in the parent participation process.

The first is the model described by Waanders, Mendez and Downer (Waanders, C., Mendez, J. L., and Downer, J., 2007), showing that parent and contextual factors are moderately associated with the construct of parental involvement.
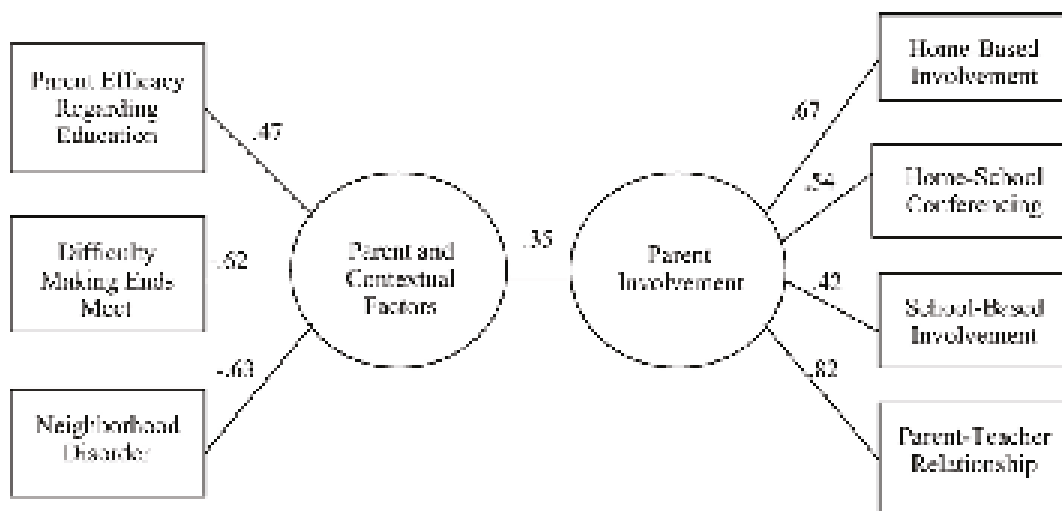

Figure 1. Model of parent involvement, Waanders, Mendez and Downer (Waanders, C., Mendez, J. L., and Downer, J., 2007)

The other model, developed 1995 (Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H. M., 1997) and revised in 2005 (Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H. M. (2005), describes the involvement process in greater detail. This model shows how the process starts with the parental perception of an invitation for participation, proceeds to actual parental involvement behaviours which in turn influence the child's perception, its attribution characteristics and leads to student achievement.
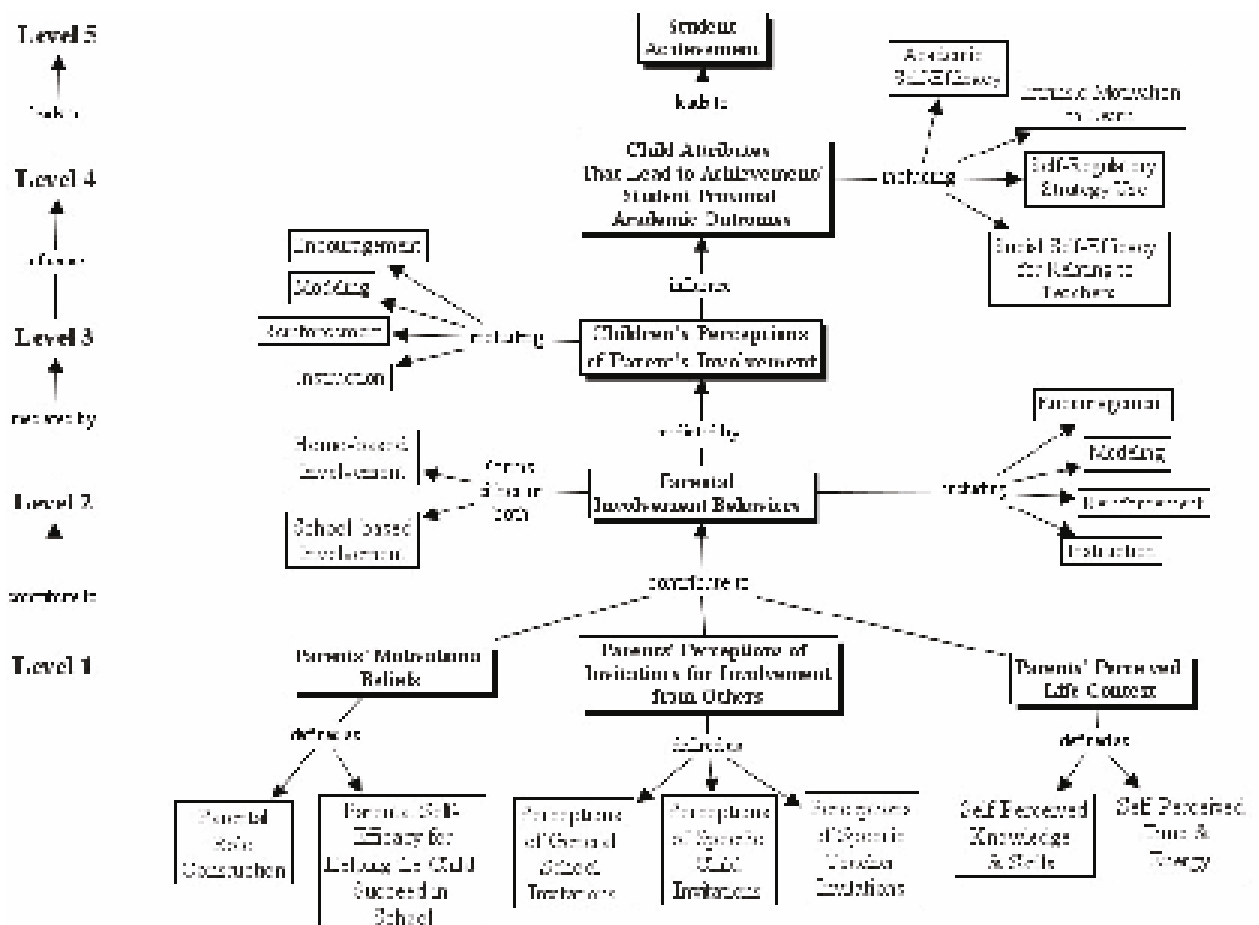
Figure 2. Revised model of the parental involvement process (Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H. M., 2005)

Inspired by studies highlighting the important mediating role of parents' perceptions, their role construction and their motivation and sense of self-efficacy, the study included an important set of variables capturing these mediating processes, looking into the parents' perception of each dimension of participation, their assessment of parent representatives, and parent representatives' self-assessments, but also in more general terms.

Legal provisions for parent participation in SEE[4]

On top of their different historical and political backgrounds, in some respects SEE countries also have diverse paths of education developments addressing the particular problems their education systems face. Still, parent participation is an issue which seems to be regulated in similar ways.

The two school-level bodies with parental participation most often found are school boards and parent councils.

Schools in all SEE countries have school boards with decision-making power. The composition of these school boards varies, as does their size (between 5 and 15, most often 8 or 9), but parents participate in them in all countries – from at least 1 such as in Montenegro and Romania to a number that equals that of teacher representatives such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria (2) Macedonia (3) and Serbia (3). Nevertheless, school boards in all SEE countries also include representatives of the founder and/or municipality and in some countries also of the Ministry of Education (Montenegro and Macedonia), regional school administration such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina or representatives of political parties like in Croatia; hence there are never more parents than other participants.

School parent councils are also a common practice of parent participation in 6 of the 10 countries which participated in the study, namely in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. They comprise a parent representative per class and have a more consultative than a decision-making role. In Romania, parent councils can also be a legally registered entity.

In Albania and Romania, class parent councils are also active while in Bosnia parent and student councils can form a joint body.

Yet, at the national or regional level, parent representation seems to be less present – only four of the ten countries have bodies of parent representation of varying status. Romania has a national federation of parent associations, Bosnia and Herzegovina has cantonal associations of parent-school co-operation, Kosovo has a parent committee established by the Minister, while Albania has several independent parent associations. At the municipal level, no parental organisations or participatory bodies have been detected.

Hence, parent involvement and representation in SEE countries happens predominantly at the school level. Unlike in most EU member states, parents in SEE are, with some small exceptions, not participating in education policy-making at levels above the school – they do not affect municipal, regional or national education policies. Therefore, exploring the ways parents are included in school-level activities seems to be the appropriate first step in understanding and assessing parent participation in SEE countries.

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4 The analysis is based on data from desk reviews which were part of the national reports for each country.

Survey

The parent survey is the main part of this study. The field research was conducted during September-December 2009 by the IPSOS agency in seven countries, IMAS in Romania and Moldavia and OSI Bulgaria in Bulgaria.

Sample

The procedure employed in all 10 participating countries was stratified random sampling, using as a population the schools that constituted the national samples for the 2008 AEIQ Principals' Study, Pop, 2008 (with the exception of Croatia and Bulgaria, where the population in turn represented all elementary schools in the country). The stratification was done according to relevant geographical regions and by location of the community served by the school (urban/rural). In the first stage, for each country the schools in the population were divided among m regions in each country and the two possible locations (urban/rural). Out of each of the m*2 groups, a specific number of schools was chosen according to the Lahiri method (with the probability of being selected depending on school size) so that 30 schools were selected from each country. From each school, a specified number of parents (between 20 and 40) were randomly chosen; this number was proportional to the size of the school.

In Croatia and Bulgaria, given that they did not take part in the AEIQ Principals' Survey, all elementary schools in the country were divided along the lines presented in the first paragraph and the Lahiri method was also applied.

In each school, five parents' representatives were selected randomly using information provided by the school and in the interviews were asked the same questions as for the other parents along with an additional set of questions, while the principals were asked a related but different set of questions.

In each country, a booster sample of parents was interviewed from two additional schools in communities which contained a high proportion of inhabitants who are Roma (except in Moldova, where other excluded communities were targeted).

The main structure of the sample (including the main sample, the sample of representatives and Roma booster samples) was the following:

- Sample A (mainstream – regular parents sample): 9,058
- Sample E (Roma parents from the excluded parents sample): 504
- Sample B (sample of parents representatives): 1,354
- Parent representatives from Sample E school: 85
- Sample E (non-Roma parents from the excluded parents sample): 124

The absolute frequencies for each group for each of the 10 countries in the sample are shown in Table 1. The distribution of the sample of parents according to urban/rural environments is seen in Table 2.

Table 1: Number of mainstream parents, parent representatives, minority parents and principals for each country in the sample

	Sample A (mainstream - regular parents sample)	Sample E (excluded / Roma)	Sample B (parents representatives sample)	Parent representatives from Sample E school	Total Parents	Principals
Albania	903	61	149	10	1,123	32
Bosnia and Herzegovina	923	60	150	10	1,143	32
Bulgaria	887	30	127	0	1,044	32
Croatia	908	60	144	10	1,122	32
Kosovo	921	60	150	10	1,141	32
Macedonia	936	68	150	10	1,164	30
Montenegro	936	64	146	10	1,156	31
Moldova	934	124	60	10	1,128	32
Romania	784	34	128	5	951	32
Serbia	926	67	150	10	1,153	32
Total	9,058	628	1,354	85	11,125	317

Table 2: Breakdown of the parents sample according to urban/rural community for the 10 countries

	Urban	Rural	Sum
Albania	596	527	1,123
Bosnia and Herzegovina	569	574	1,143
Bulgaria	548	496	1,044
Croatia	632	490	1,122
Kosovo	577	564	1,141
Macedonia	619	545	1,164
Montenegro	617	539	1,156
Moldova	527	601	1,128
Romania	441	510	951
Serbia	611	542	1,153
Sum	5,737	5,388	1,112

Instruments[5]

Based on the literature review, the desk review of legislative solutions for parent participation and a qualitative study using focus group data from all the participating countries, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed so as to capture:

- socio-demographic data on the child's family (a wealth indicator, education level, education aspirations etc.) and basic information on the child (age, gender, school achievement etc.);

- a report on participation in school life, which combined Epstein's dimensions of participation (whether the school is inviting the parents to participate according to each dimension) with basic characteristics of the participation process (how do parents feel about it, do they participate if invited, do they assess it as useful, are they motivated, do they feel competent etc.).

- mediating variables – self-reports on the motivation of parents, their beliefs about school-parent partnerships and perception of school openness and of the parent representatives' work; and

- a self-assessment of the parents' satisfaction with the child's well-being and progress in school, the communication with the school and with the influence the parent can exert.

In addition, the parent representatives and parents from minority groups were surveyed with special additional sets of questions.

After piloting, the questionnaire was translated into the languages spoken in the participating countries and administered by the field research companies.

Dataset

The survey design (sample and questionnaire) allows a description of the overall picture of parent participation in the participating SEE countries, the detection of country-by-country and within country region-by-region, urban-rural, minority-mainstream parent differences, as well as between-school differences at all levels of analysis. The design also allows the main factors of different facets of parental satisfaction to be extracted, as well as relations between different variables at all levels.

The current report focuses only on descriptive data at the overall, country-by country and mainstream-Roma sample level along with the main factors which contribute to parental satisfaction since these robust findings can be crucially important for the development of education policy in each SEE country. However, the reader should bear in mind that the description of differences between the mainstream and Roma sample data should be regarded more as illustrative than conclusive due to the differences in the sample size – the sample of Roma parents was derived from just two schools per country. The same holds true for the interpretation of differences between the Roma subsamples from different countries.

Additional detailed reports are provided for each country as separate publications and further analytical work has commenced in order to utilise the dataset for additional analytical purposes.

The dataset is also in principle available to interested researchers upon the submission of a request to CEPS (ceps@pef.uni-lj.si).

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5 A more detailed description of the instrument and the instrument itself are attached in Annex 1.

Main findings

The main findings of the survey will be presented in five chapters:

A - parents' perceptions of the possibilities of participation, coupled with the parents' report on their response, motivation, assessment of own responsibility and of the usefulness of the participation area, for each of the selected participation dimensions;

B - the role and experiences of the parent representatives;

C - parental beliefs regarding the obstacles to parent-school co-operation and the roles of parents and schools;

D - the main factors contributing to parental satisfaction with their child's education and their influence on school life; and

E - socio-economic and educational characteristics of the families and their perception of the child's adjustment to school requirements.

According to the study goals the results within each chapter will be presented as cross-country comparisons presenting separately views of mainstream and Roma parents.

A – Parents' perceptions of participation

Parents' perceptions of participation were captured with a set of modal instances of participation for each of the participation dimensions derived from Epstein's model. For each of the modal instances, data were gathered showing how often parents perceived they were invited to participate, as well as whether they responded to the invitation and appraised the invitation of the school as legitimate. In addition, for each of the dimensions data were collected on motivation, beliefs and self-assessments inspired by Hoover-Dempsey's analysis of the main sources of parental involvement: whether parents felt capable to participate, appraised participating in the type of activity as a parental duty and felt it useful for the child's benefit. In this way, for each type of possible participation dimension the entire participation cycle was captured.

A 1 – Meetings

Periodic parent-teacher meetings are the most common way of communication between the school and the family.

Parents' attitudes to and opinions on meetings

Parents from the study (with very rare exceptions) assess that parent-teacher meetings are useful and that they can help their child (Figure 1.a.), they also feel it is their duty to attend such meetings (Figure 1.b.) and predominantly feel capable and competent to make the best use of these meetings for the benefit of their children (Figure 1.c.). It is interesting to note that somewhat more Roma parents from Serbia, Montenegro and Romania stress their capability to use the meetings for the benefit of their children than do mainstream parents from the same countries.
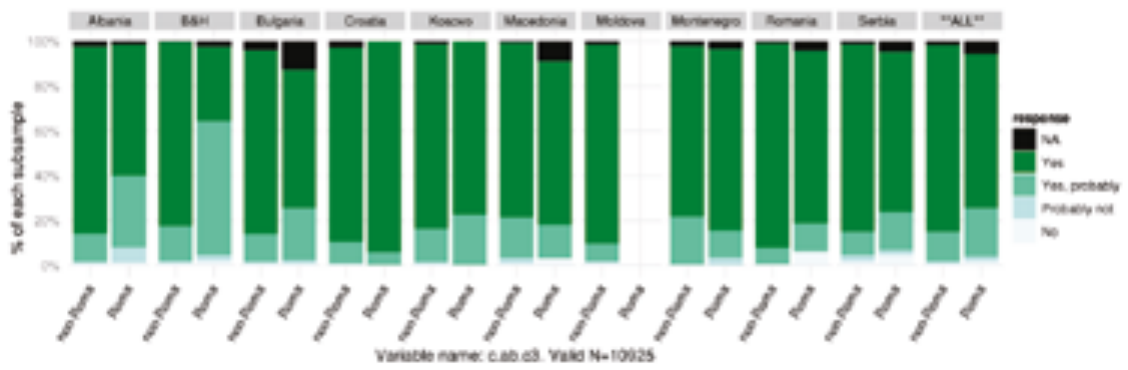
Figure 1.a. Do you think doing this kind of thing can help your child?
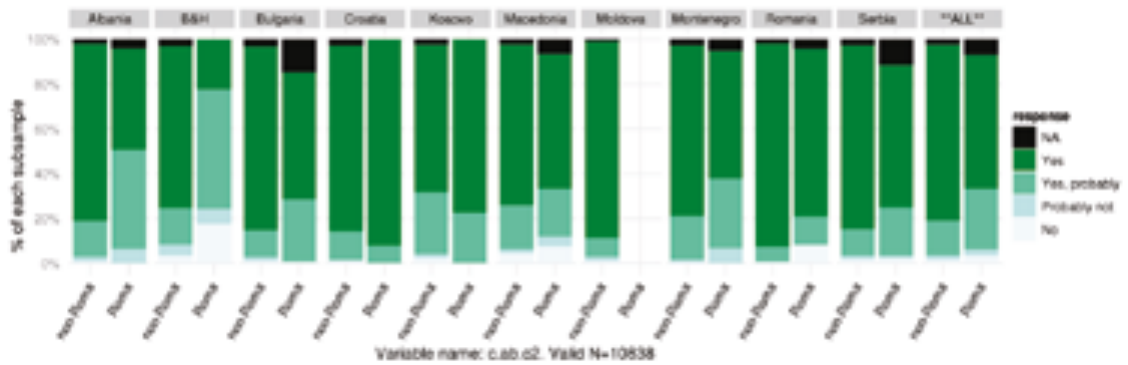
Figure 1.b. Do you think that at least someone in your family has a duty to attend this kind of thing?
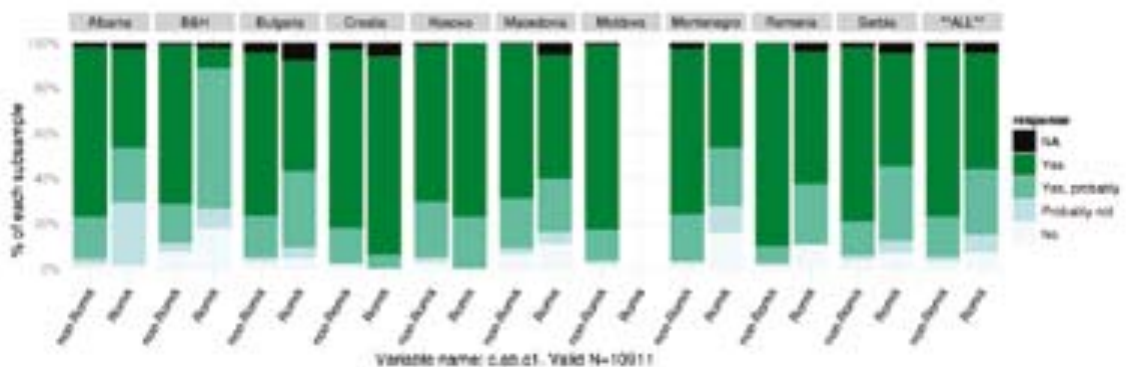

Figure 1.c. Class, group or individual parents meetings: – Does at least someone in your family feel capable and competent to make the best use of this kind of meeting?

Actual participation in meetings

Two types of meetings were explored in greater detail: class meetings and individual meetings. The results are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Indeed, the majority of parents in all SEE countries say they are invited to **class meetings** two, three or more times a year (Figure 2.a.). Overall, 54 percent of surveyed parents were invited three or more times to class meetings during the academic 2009/10 year. This practice seems to be widespread in all SEE countries, except Bulgaria and Kosovo where parents report a lower frequency of invitations to class meetings.

Roma parents report a similar pattern of invitation as the mainstream parents. In some countries, namely Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, somewhat more Roma than mainstream parents report being invited to class meetings three or more times, indicating the greater care of schools towards ensuring the presence of Roma parents at class meetings, or the greater emphasis Roma parents place on these meetings.

There is a high level of consensus among parents that the school should be inviting them to class meetings, with the exception of some Roma parents from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (Figure 2.c.)

In addition,, most parents report they attend class meetings regularly, every time they are invited. This holds true especially for majority parents, and for majority parents from Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro – more than 80 percent of them report regularly attending class meetings (Figure 2.b.). However, in all countries except Macedonia and Romania, Roma parents attend class meetings less frequently than the majority parents.
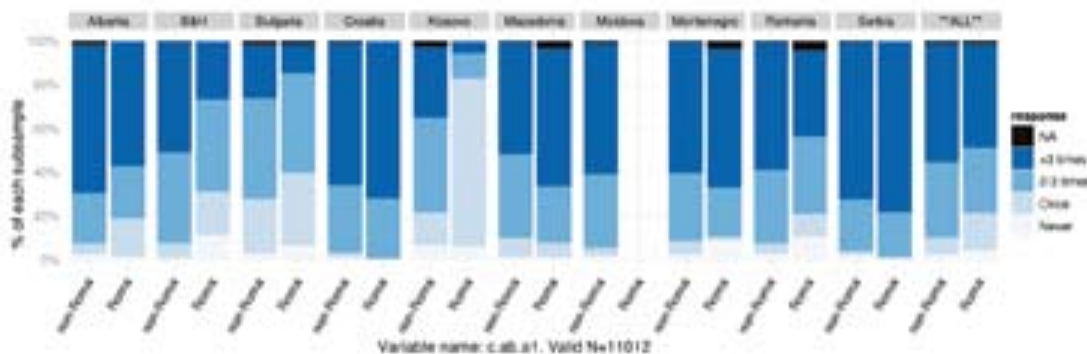

Figure 2.a. Class or group parents' meeting – How often did the school invite someone from the family to this kind of meeting last year (including compulsory parent meetings)?
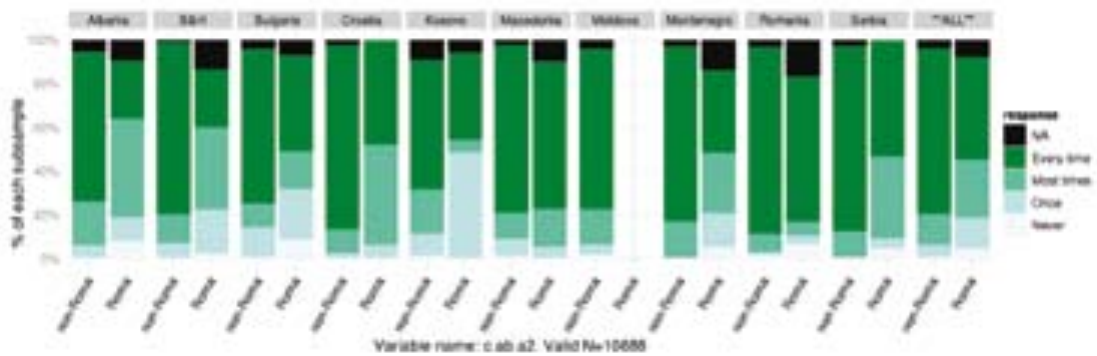
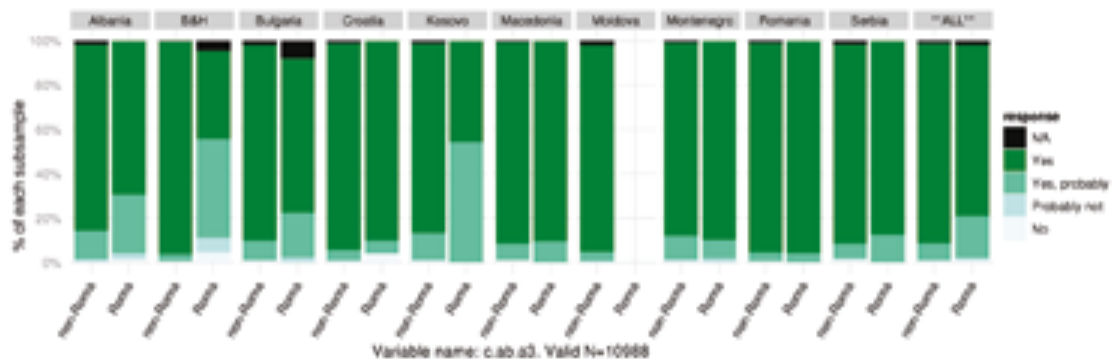**Figure 2.b. Did someone from your family go?**

Figure 2.c. Is this something the school should be inviting parents to?

The situation is quite different regarding **individual meetings**. According to the parents' reports, schools rarely invite parents to individual meetings (Figure 3.a.) – about 50 percent of parents have never been invited to an individual meeting to discuss the child's education. Especially low rates of these meetings are reported in Moldova and Serbia, while some countries in which class meetings are less frequent, such as Kosovo, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, invite parents to individual meetings more often, especially Roma parents.

Both mainstream and Roma parents see the organising of individual meetings with parents as a legitimate activity of the school (Figure 3.c.), and they respond to these invitations, at least partially, but again the Roma parents respond to a somewhat lesser degree, except in Croatia (Figure 3.b.)
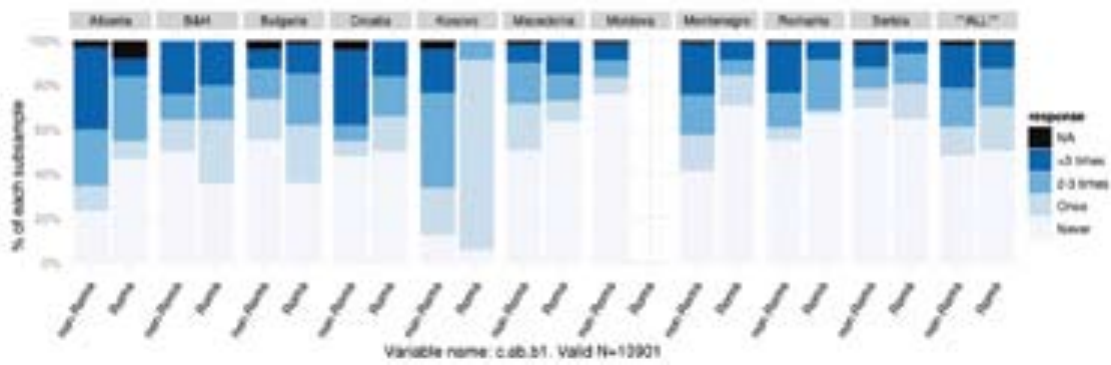
Figure 3.a. Individual meetings to talk about my child's education – How often did the school invite someone from the family to this kind of meeting last year?
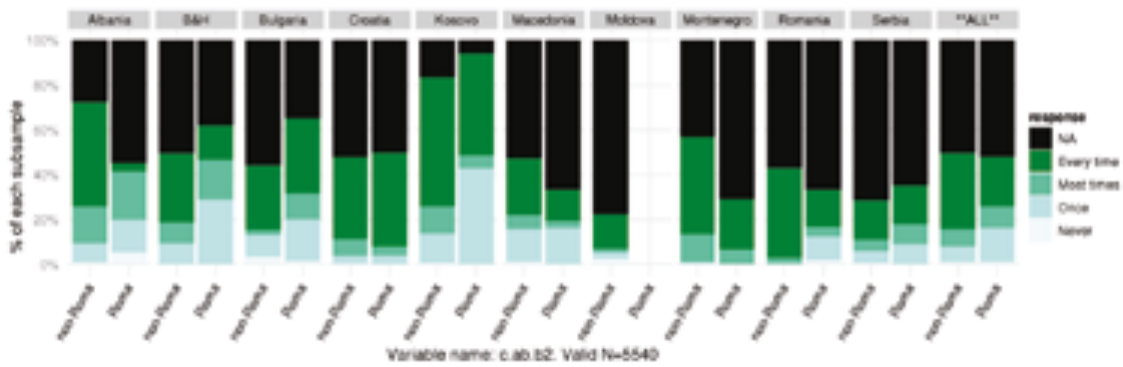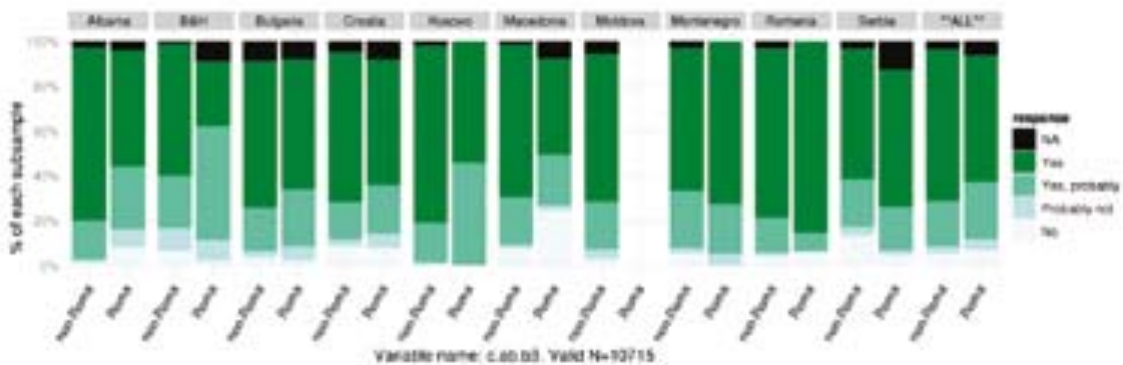

Figure 3.b. Did someone from your family go?

Figure 3.c. Is this something the school should be inviting parents to?

A – 2 Written materials

The schools also communicate with parents through written information. A whole array of written information with this purpose can exist: progress reports, newsletters, or specific topical instructions. The data on the ways parents experience these materials and the frequency they receive them are depicted in Figures 4 to 8.

Parents' attitudes to and opinions on written materials

Parents from all of the studied countries believe the written information about the child, the school, and relevant educational or socialisation related issues are useful, as helping them in their parenting role (Figure 4.a.). Differences among parents' views from the various countries are in this respect small, also small are the differences between Roma and mainstream parents' appraisals, except in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and to a lesser degree in Serbia where Roma parents see the written materials as somewhat less useful than the other parents do. In most countries, parents feel a clear duty to read the written materials they receive from their children's school (Figure 4.b.) and they feel competent and capable of doing so (Figure 4.c.). There is a slight difference between Roma and mainstream parents in their assessment of their own competence in most of the countries, with the difference being biggest among parents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Serbia and Romania.
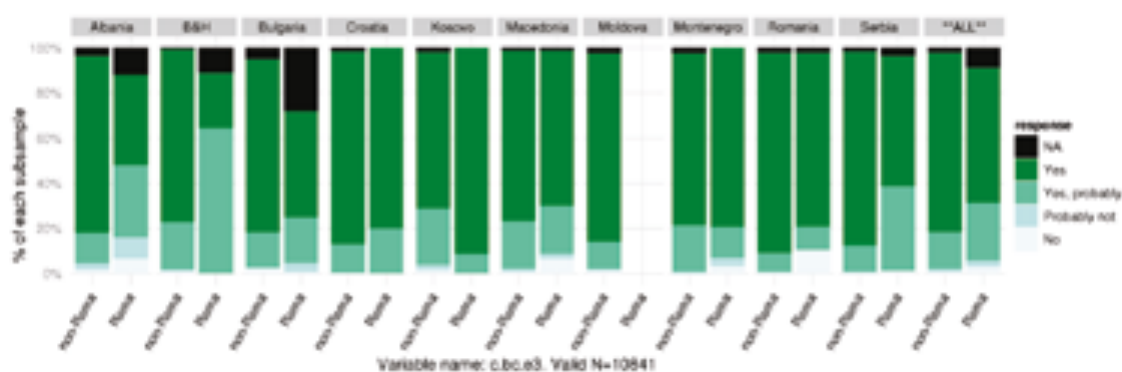

Figure 4.a. Do you think that reading this kind of thing can help your child?
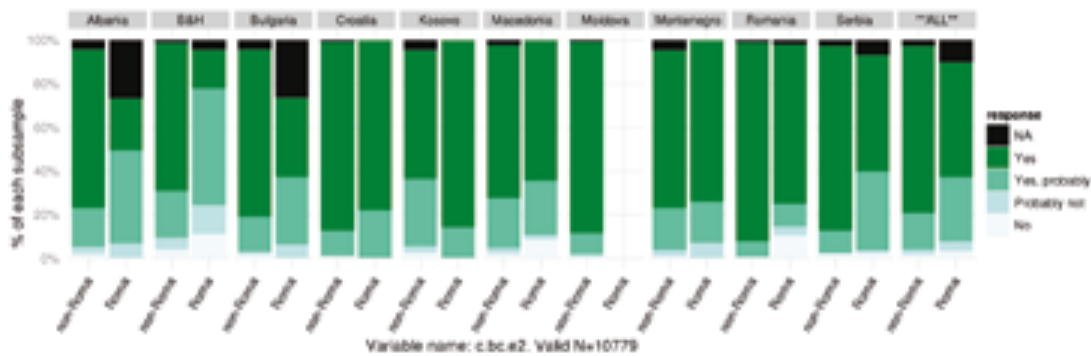
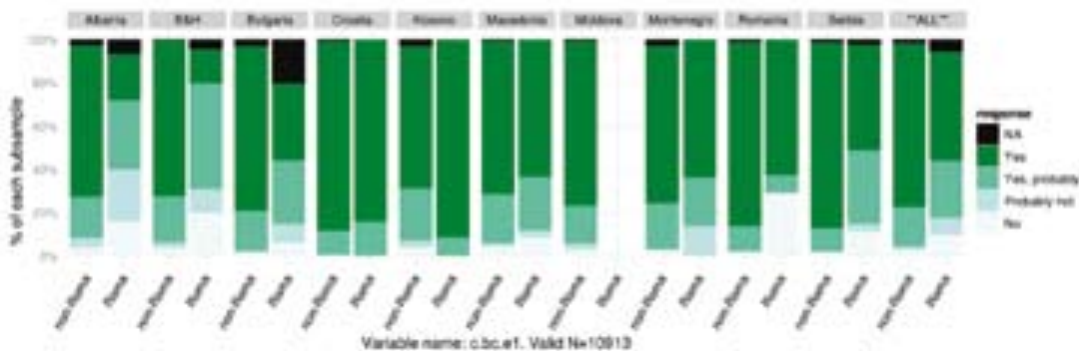**Figure 4.b. Do you think that at least someone in your family has a duty to read this kind of thing?**

Figure 4.c. Any kind of written information from the school, including all of the above examples – Does at least someone in your family feel capable and competent to read this kind of thing?

Actual response to written materials

When it comes to the concrete examples of written information sent from the school, **periodic or summary progress reports** are those kinds of written information received from the school which the parents are most familiar with. However, according to the parents' reports, sending feedback and reports on a periodic basis is not a universal practice in SEE countries (Figure 5.a.). Overall, less than 30 percent of parents report having received written feedback on their child's progress three or more times during the last year, an additional 30-35 percent report having received it two or three times a year, more than 10 percent once and around even 25 percent say that they have never received such a written report. Roma parents report having received reports even less frequently and more than 40 percent say they have never received them.

In addition, countries have very different practices in this respect. Most parents from Romania and Bulgaria state they had never received written feedback during the last year, while the majority of parents from Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova had received them at least two or three times. The biggest discrepancy in practices between Roma and majority parents is found in Montenegro – Roma parents there report having received reports more than two times less frequently than majority parents.
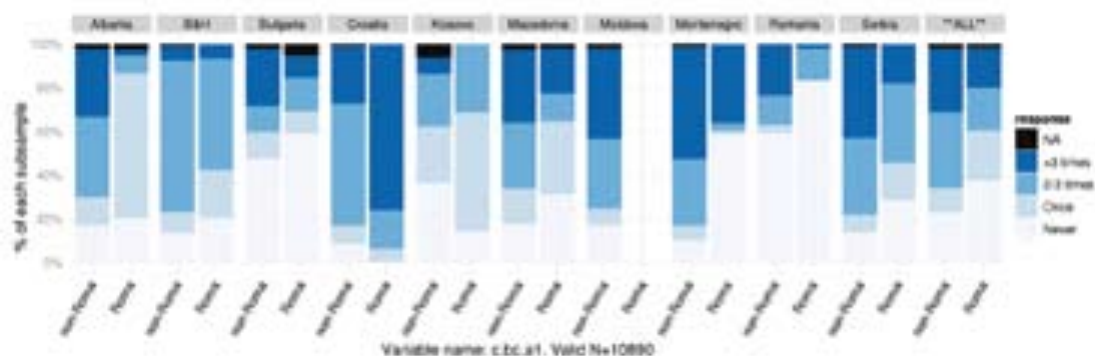
Figure 5.a. Written feedback on the child's progress – written assessment, numerical grades, final reports and/or similar, whether given at a class meeting, sent via the child, sent to your house, or similar – How often did the school send this kind of information last year?

Both Roma and mainstream parents read the progress reports, the predominant majority of them every time (Figure 5.b.), and agree that schools should be sending progress reports and written feedback (Figure 5.c.). Only a small share of Roma parents from Macedonia reported that they never read the reports, and only a very small share of parents from several countries stated that schools should not send them.
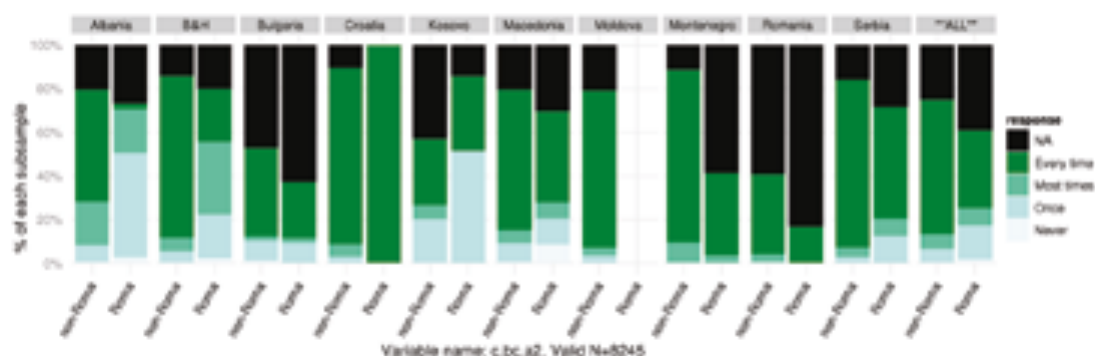

Figure 5.b. Did someone in your family read it?
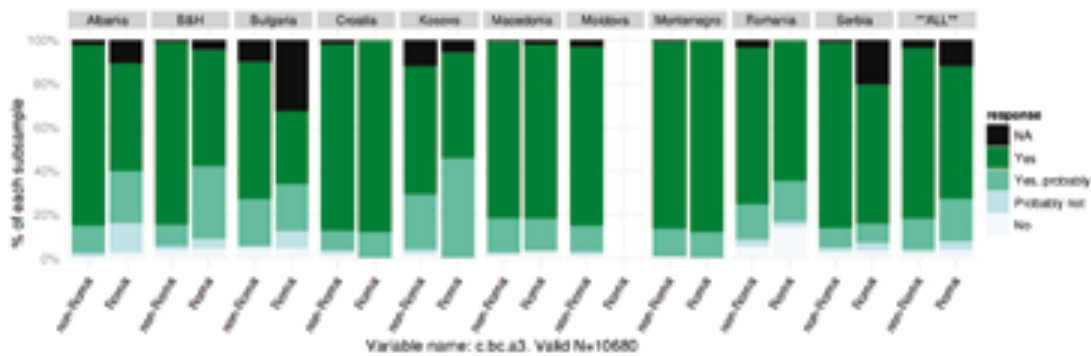
Variable name: c.bc.a3. Valid N=10680

Figure 5.c. Is this something the school should be sending families?

Schools in SEE countries even more rarely send **written information on how to help the child learn, about the school, rules, the content of lessons**. Overall, only around 30 percent of parents had received such information at least once during the last year and the predominant majority (almost 70 percent) of parents from all countries, except Albania and Kosovo, had never received any written information on school rules or content or how to help with learning (Figure 6.a.).

On the other hand, almost all parents from all the countries think that the schools should be sending this kind of information to families (Figure 6.c.) and those who have receive them have also read them every time, or at least once (Figure 6.b.)
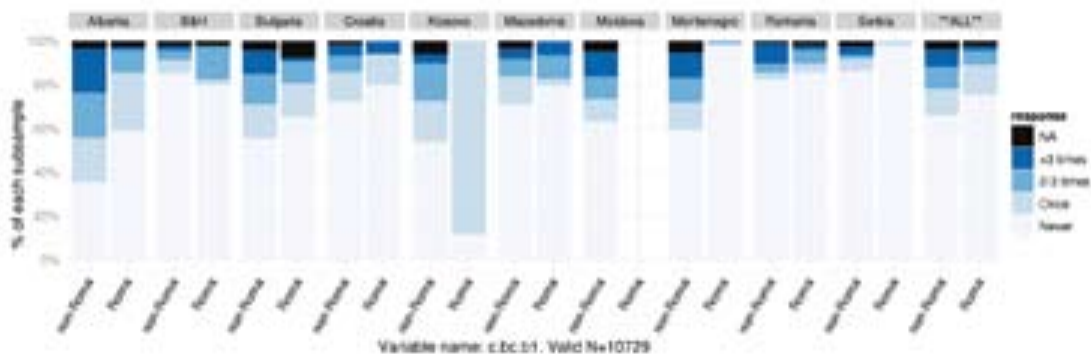

Variable name: c.bc.b1. Valid N=10729

Figure 6.a. Written information on how to help your child learn, about the school, rules, the content of lessons – How often did the school send this kind of information last year?
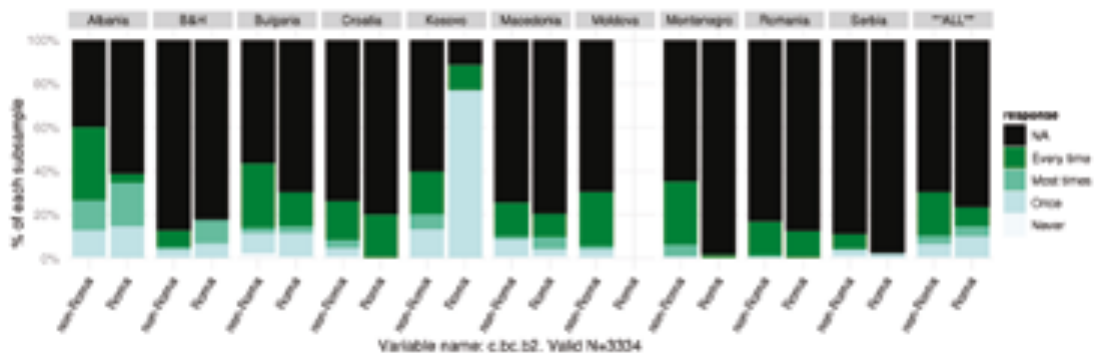
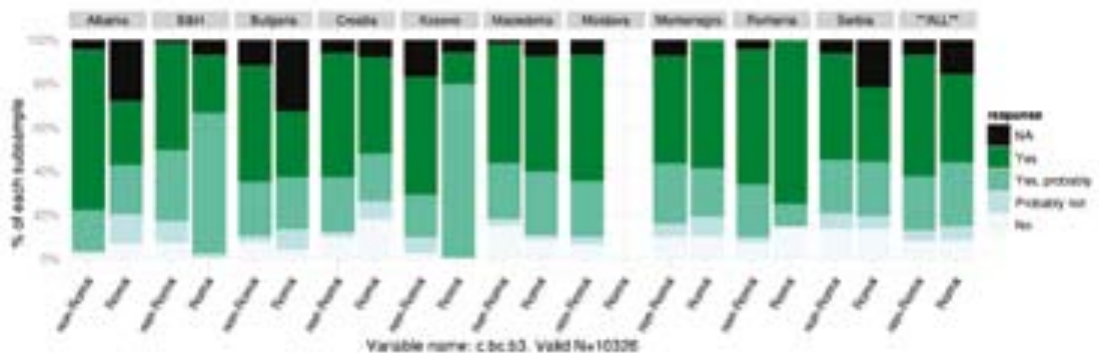**Figure 6.b. Did someone in your family read it?**

Figure 6.c. Is this something the school should be sending families?

Schools send **newsletters** to families very infrequently. The clear majority of parents (more than 70 percent) from all countries, with the exception of Albania and Kosovo, report having never received a newsletter (Figure 7.a.), although the overwhelming majority of parents state that the school should provide them with this kind of written information (Figure 7.c.) and those parents who received newsletters read them at least once (Figure 7.b.).
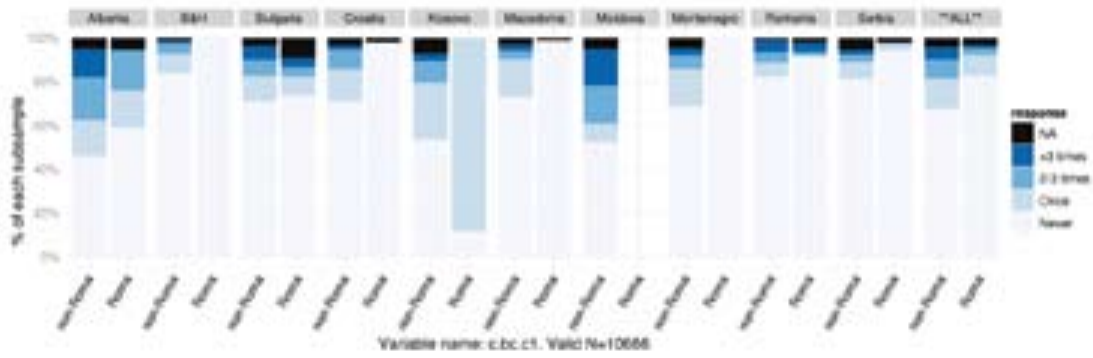
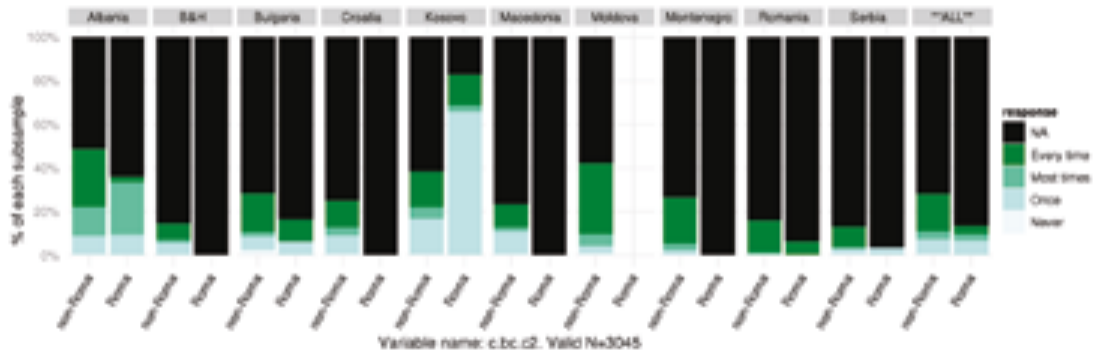**Figure 7.a. School or class newsletter – How often did the school send this kind of information last year?**

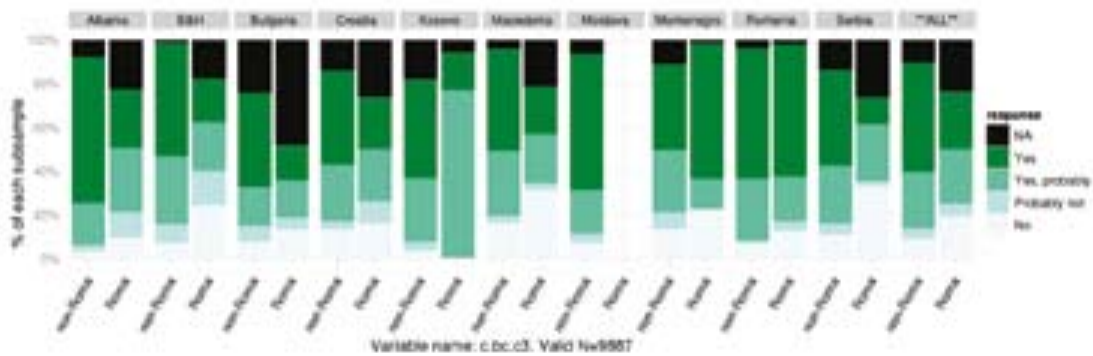**Figure 7.b. Did someone in your family read it?**

Figure 7.c. Is this something the school should be sending families?

Additional written information on **relevant topics like drugs, violence** etc. is also rarely provided to parents in written format (Figure 8.a.); again, more than 60 percent reported having received this kind of material from the school. Even more than for newsletters, all parents with rare exceptions agree that schools should send parents written information on these important child-rearing topics (Figure 8.c.) and that they read them at least once when received (Figure 8.b.)
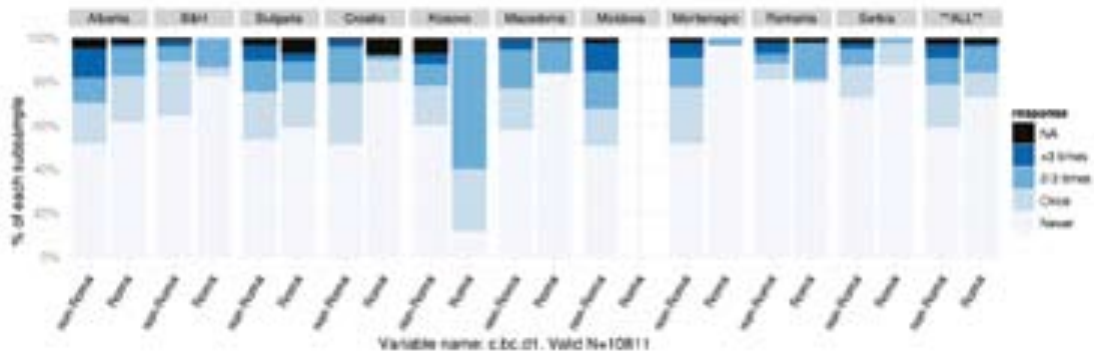

Figure 8.a. Written information on other things (health, drugs, violence …) – How often did the school send this kind of information last year?
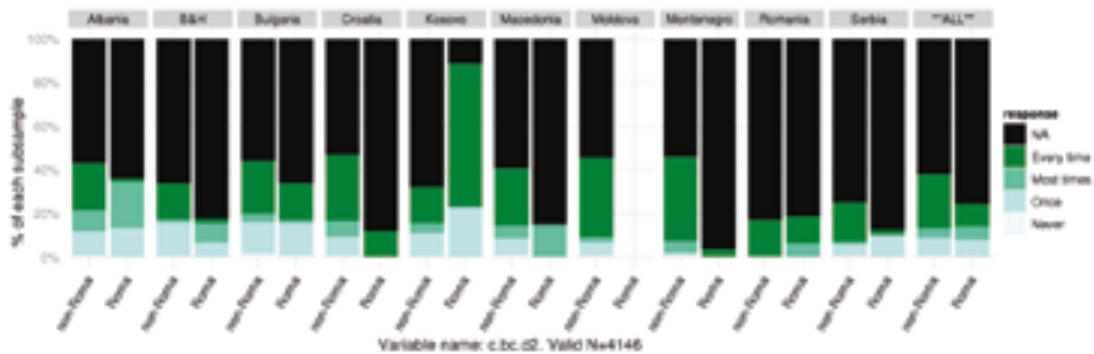
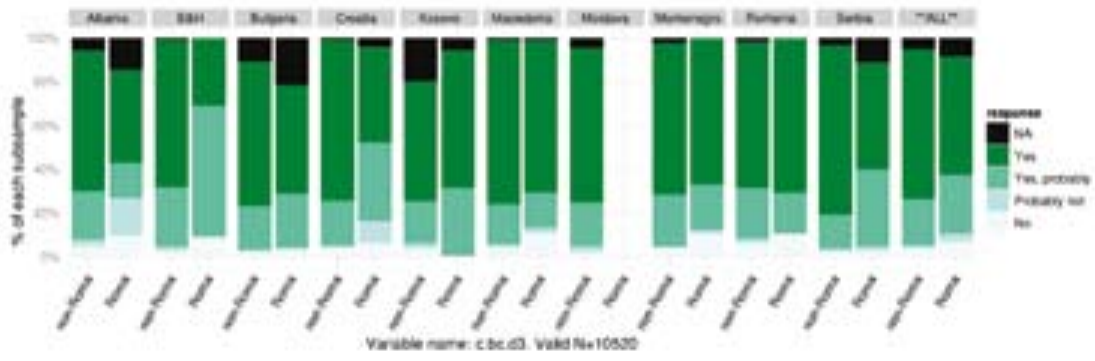

Figure 8.b. Did someone in your family read it?

Figure 8.c. Is this something the school should be sending families?

A-3 Helping with homework

Another aspect of parental involvement in school life is helping with homework.

Parents' attitudes to and opinions on helping with homework

Overall, parents from SEE countries mostly think it is legitimate if the schools ask the parents to help with homework (Figure 9.a.). However, there are substantial differences between countries and especially between the Roma and mainstream parents. Somewhat more Roma parents tend to see the schools' request that parents help with homework as legitimate than majority parents do, with the discrepancy between Roma and non-Roma parents' views being the biggest in Serbia (where more than half of the mainstream parents think schools should not ask parents to help with homework), and in Montenegro, Croatia and Macedonia.

On the other hand, more mainstream than Roma parents feel competent and capable to help with homework (the discrepancy being the biggest in Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Serbia) but, overall, most parents feel fairly competent (Figure 9.b.), assess that their help makes a difference (Figure 9.d) and that it is their duty to help the child do their homework (Figure 9.c.).
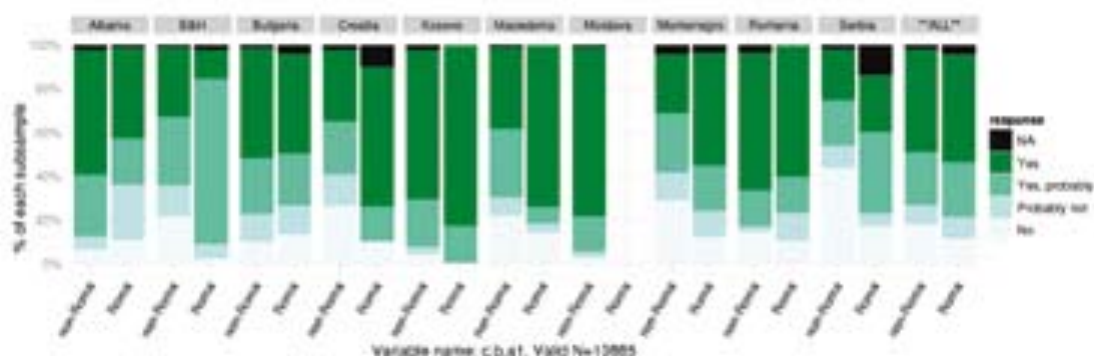

Figure 9.a. Helping with homework – Is this something the school should be asking families to do?
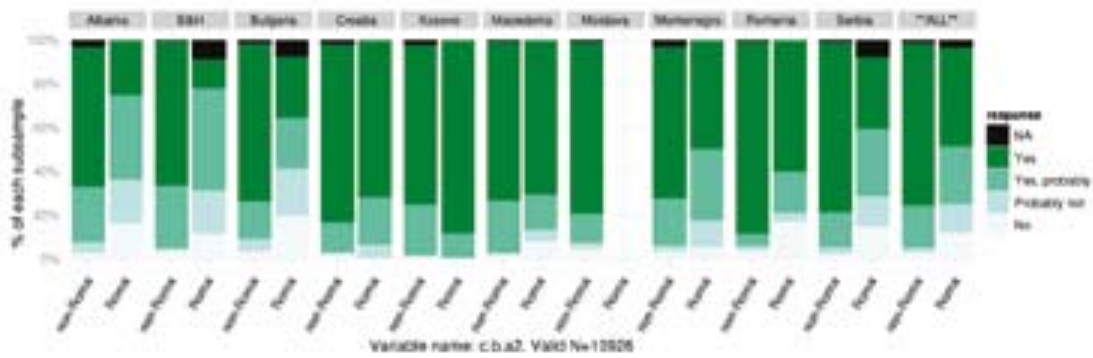
Figure 9.b. Is there someone in your family capable and competent to do this kind of thing?
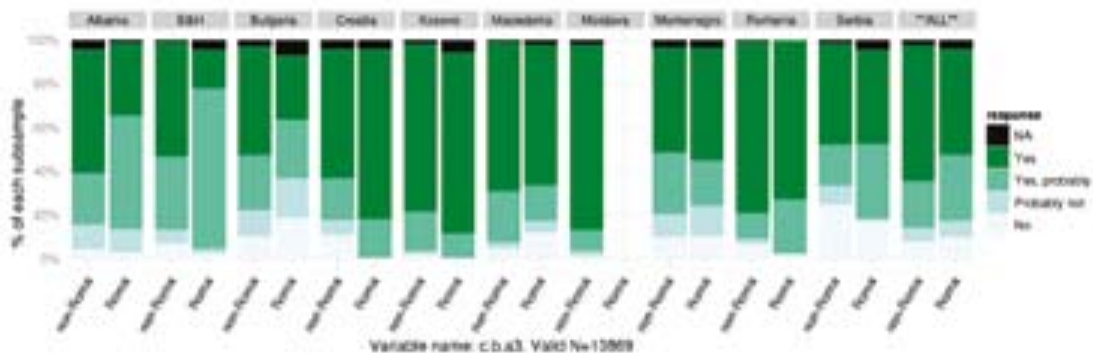

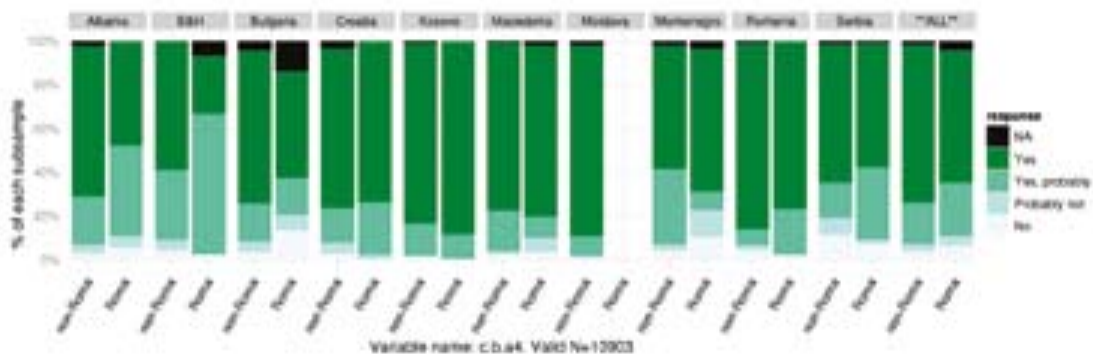Figure 9.c. Do you think it is your family's duty to do this kind of thing?

Figure 9.d. Do you think doing this kind of thing can help your child?

Actual involvement in homework

In respect of the time devoted to homework, overall most children devote between 1 hour and 2 hours in the mainstream and between 30 minutes and 2 hours in the Roma samples. However, there are substantial differences between the countries (Figure 9.e.). In Albania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania more children spend a greater amount of time doing homework than in the other SEE countries, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Roma children spend somewhat less time for homework than the children of mainstream parents in all countries.

In all countries, mothers are those who most often assist with homework (Figure 9.f.). Fathers only rarely assume this task, while Roma children are often helped by someone other than their parents (especially in Croatia) and, in addition, far more frequently than non-Roma children they do their homework alone (especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina).
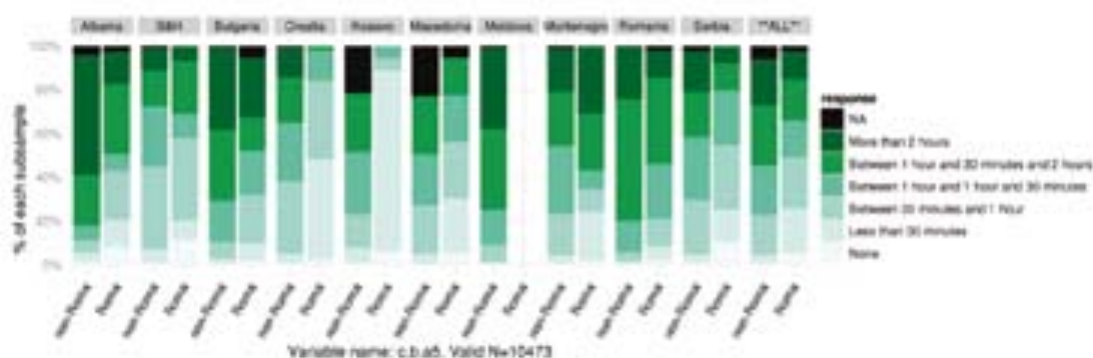

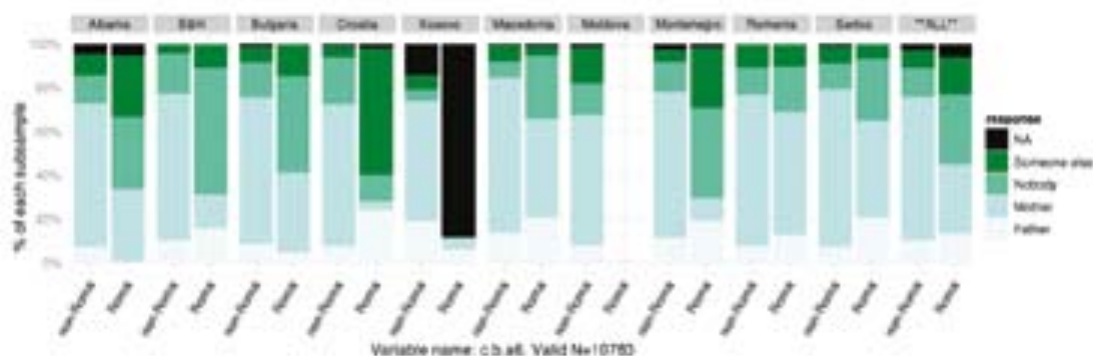**Figure 9.e. How much time does your child spend each day doing homework?**

Figure 9.f. Who normally helps your child with homework?

A-4 Volunteering

Volunteering in different kinds of school activities such as assisting in lectures, library, sports or other kinds of extracurricular activities, or with upgrading the classroom anterior etc., could be a productive way of involving parents and creating parent-school partnerships.

Parents' attitudes to and opinions on volunteering

Parents from all SEE countries, both Roma and mainstream, agree that their volunteering could help the child – overall, about 80 percent (Figure 10.a.); also, the majority of them feel that some kind of volunteering could be their parental duty (Figure 10.b.). This is especially the case in Kosovo, Moldova and among the mainstream parents in Romania and Albania, while parents in Serbia feel volunteering in school activities as their duty to a smaller degree. According to the parents' reports in each of the families surveyed, in the majority of them there is at least one person who is competent and capable to volunteer in some kind of school activity – in Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova even more than two or three (Figure 10.c.). Roma parents in all countries except Montenegro feel to a somewhat lesser degree that someone from their family is competent to volunteer.
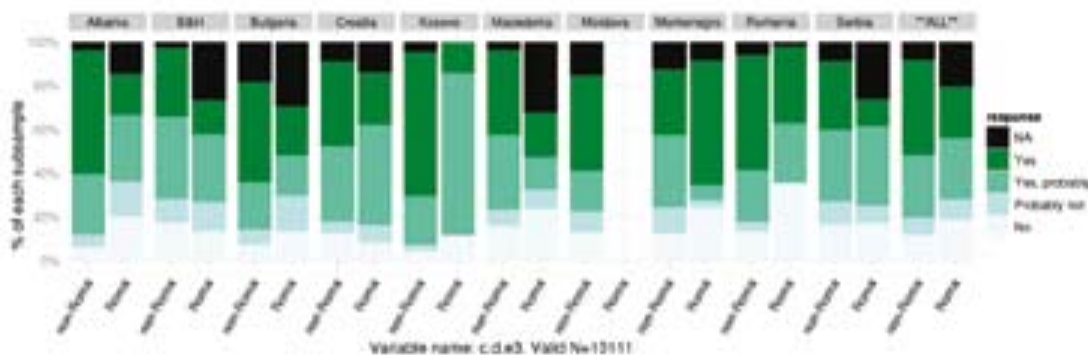

Figure 10.a. Do you think that volunteering for the school can help your child?
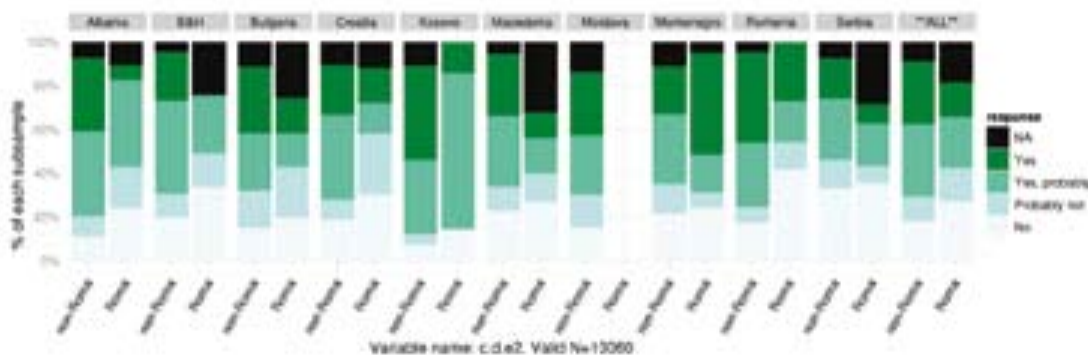
Figure 10.b. Do you think there is at least someone in your family who has a duty to help in this way?
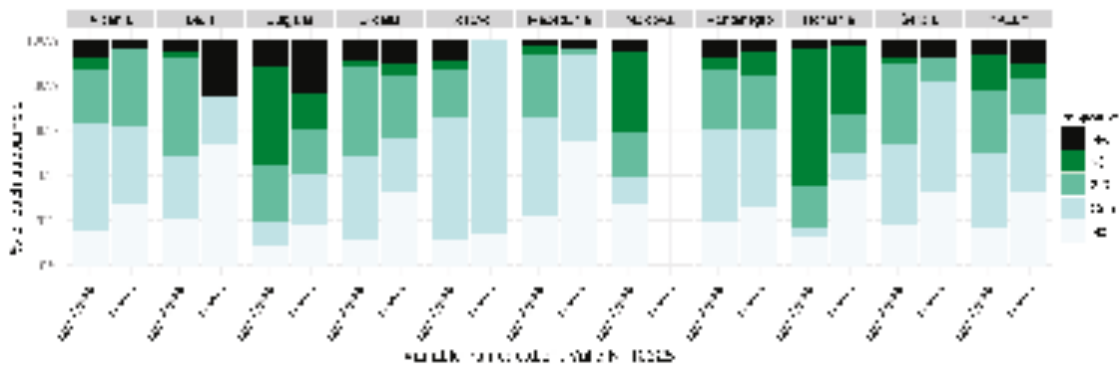
Figure 10.c. Summary: All kinds of volunteering – Is there at least one person in your family who feels capable and competent to help in at least one of these ways?

Actual volunteering carried out

Different possibilities for parental volunteering were explored in the study – the data are presented in Figures 11 to 14.

Asking parents to help with maintaining or improving **school infrastructure** – cleaning, painting or building was reported to have happened at least once or more times by the majority of parents from Moldova and Albania. In Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina this seems to be a rare practice (Figure 11.a.). Overall, around 70 percent of parents report that this kind of assistance has never been requested from them. Those parents who were asked to volunteer in this respect contributed every time, or at least once (Figure 11.b.), although many of them (almost half the parents from the ex-Yugoslav countries, but also around one-third of parents from Romania) feel that schools should not be asking parents for this kind of involvement (Figure 11.c.).
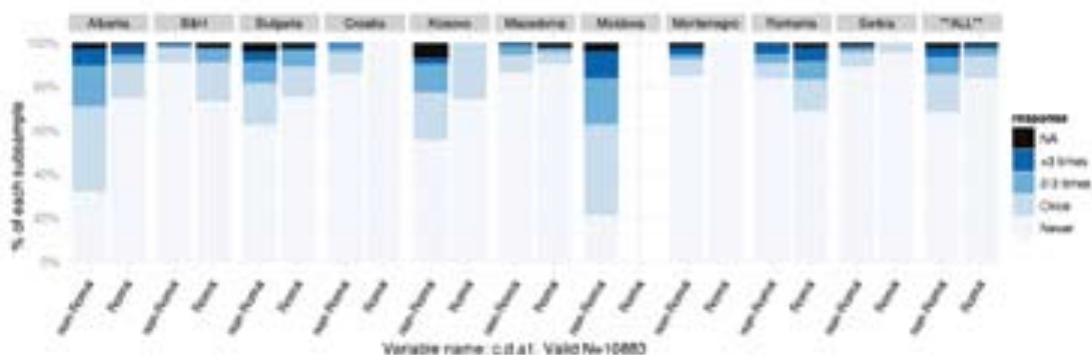
Figure 11.a. Help maintaining or improving the school infrastructure – cleaning, painting, building etc. – How often did the school invite your family to do this last year?
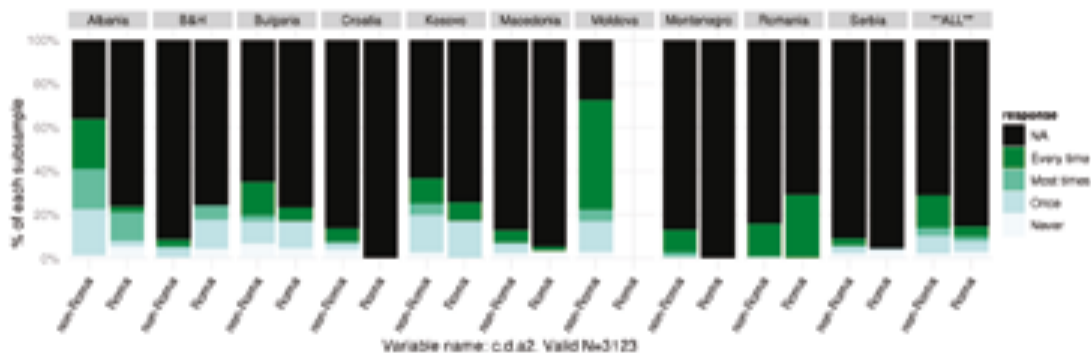
Figure 11.b. Did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?
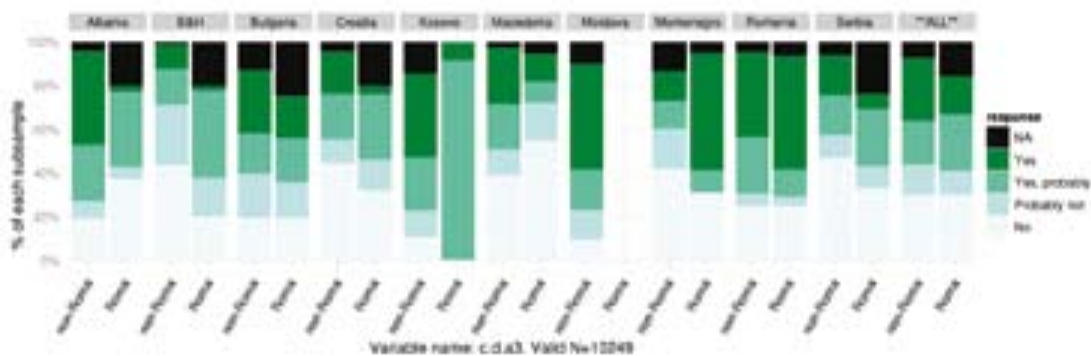
Figure 11.c. Is this something the school should be asking families to do?

The situation is somewhat different when it comes to volunteering in school activities that involve working with children.

About 70 percent or more parents in all countries think that schools should be asking them to volunteer with **sports, social and cultural activities** – plays, concerts, field trips etc. (Figure 12.c.), but schools ask them to do so only rarely (Figure 12.a.). Overall, 66 percent of parents had never received such an invitation. In Romania, Serbia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina an invitation to volunteer in sport, social and cultural activities of the school is even less frequent – only 10-20 percent of parents report having received any invitation in this respect during the last year. Roma parents in all countries are invited even less frequently.
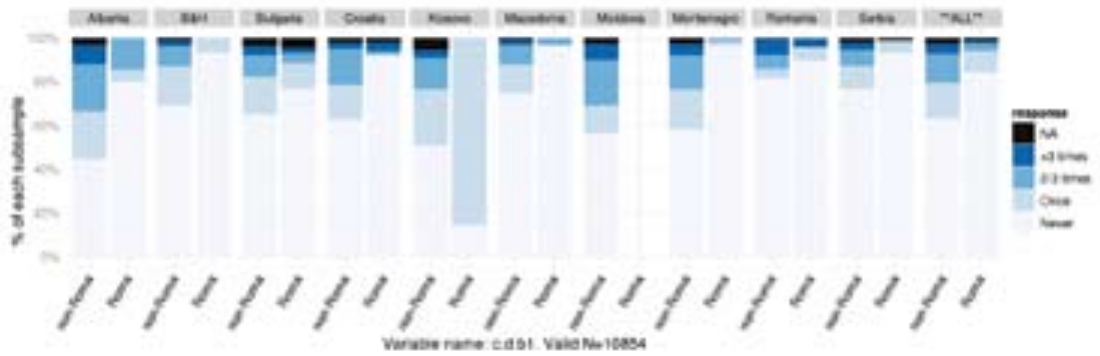
Figure 12.a. Helping with sport, social and cultural activities – plays, concerts, field trips etc. – How often did the school invite your family to do this last year?

Figure 12.b. Did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?
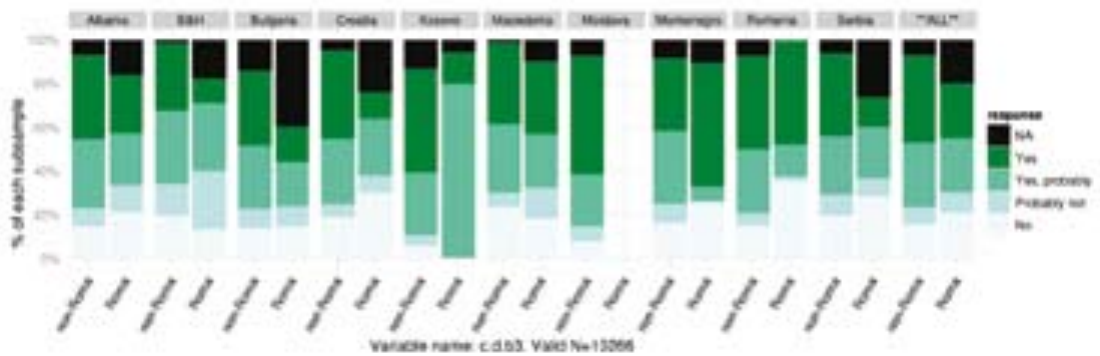
Figure 12.c. Is this something the school should be asking families to do?

Involving parents as volunteers in the educational activities of the school as **helping with lessons** – telling a story, talking about a job, playing an instrument, teaching assistance to teachers seems to be almost non-existent in SEE countries (Figure 13.a.). Overall, 86 percent of parents had never received such an invitation from the school and in several countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) none of the surveyed Roma parents had ever been invited to contribute in such ways. On the other hand, the majority of parents think schools should involve them as volunteers in many educational activities (Figure 13.c.). This holds true for the majority of Roma parents as well, except in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, where only around half of them think schools should involve them as volunteers in this respect. On the rare occasions parents have been asked to volunteer, they have done so (Figure 13.b.).
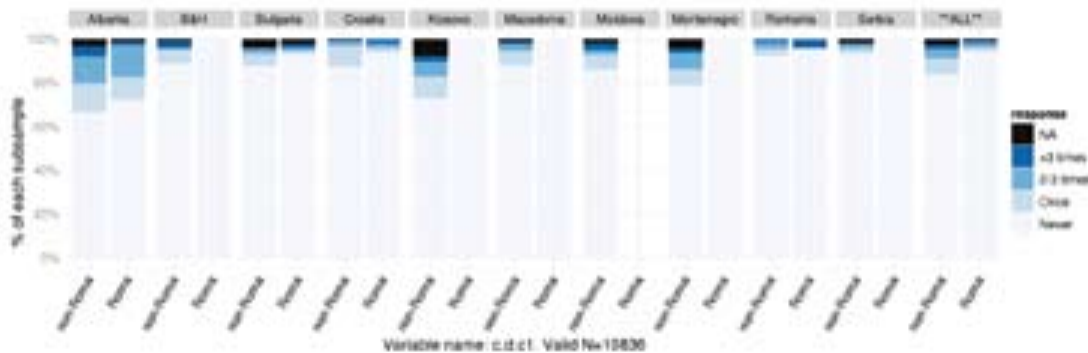
Figure 13.a. Helping with lessons – telling a story, talking about a job, playing an instrument, teaching assistance to teachers? – How often did the school invite your family to do this last year?
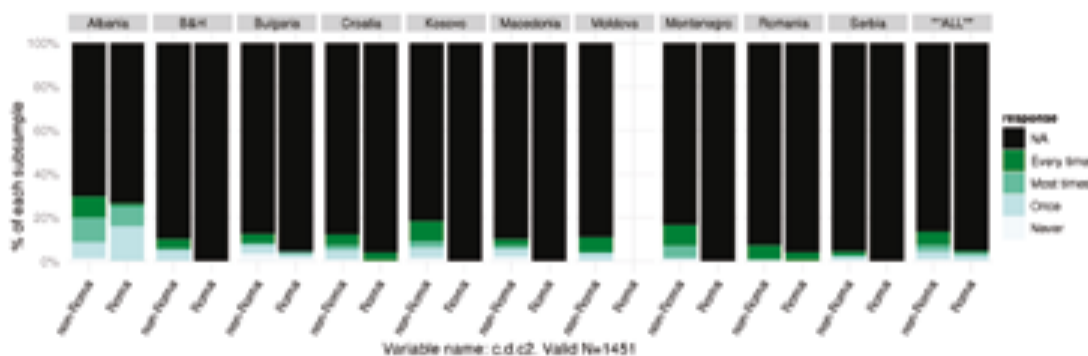
**Figure 13.b. Did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?**

Variable name: c.d.c3. Valid N=6868
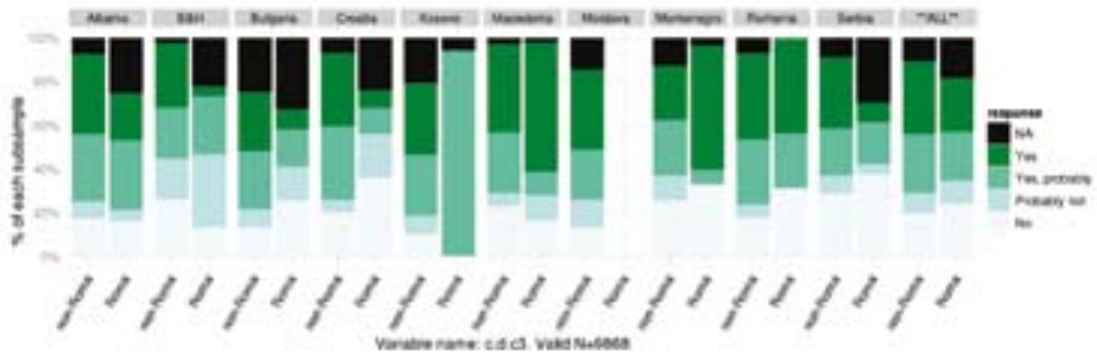
Figure 13.c. Is this something the school should be asking families to do?

For assistance with **additional school services** such as the library, playground, lunchroom, the schools are also not asking parents to volunteer except a little in Albania and Kosovo (Figure 14.a.). Again, overall more than 85 percent of parents report they have never been asked and also, in some countries (Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), Roma parents had never been invited to volunteer in this respect during the last year. Parents who were invited have responded to the invitation and volunteered (Figure 14.b.) but, altogether, parents are ambivalent about whether schools should or should not be asking parents to volunteer in providing additional services in schools – with a substantial variation between countries (Figure 14.c.).

Variable name: c.d.d1. Valid N=10861
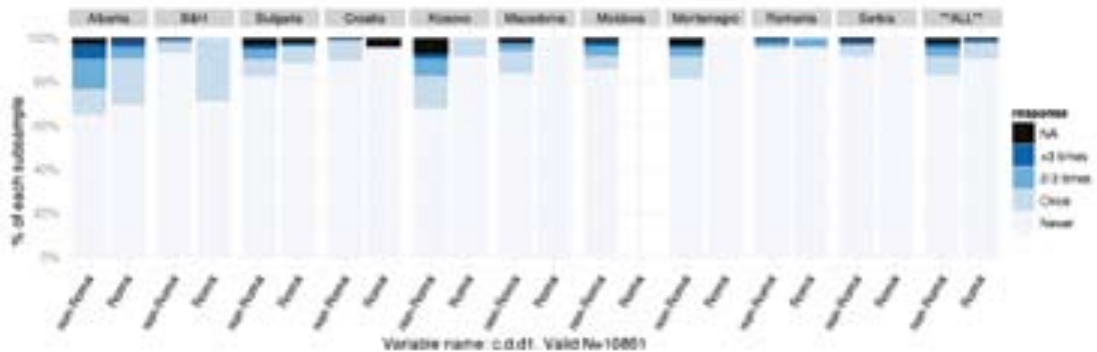
Figure 14.a. Helping with school services such as the library, playground and lunchroom – How often did the school request/invite you to do this last year?
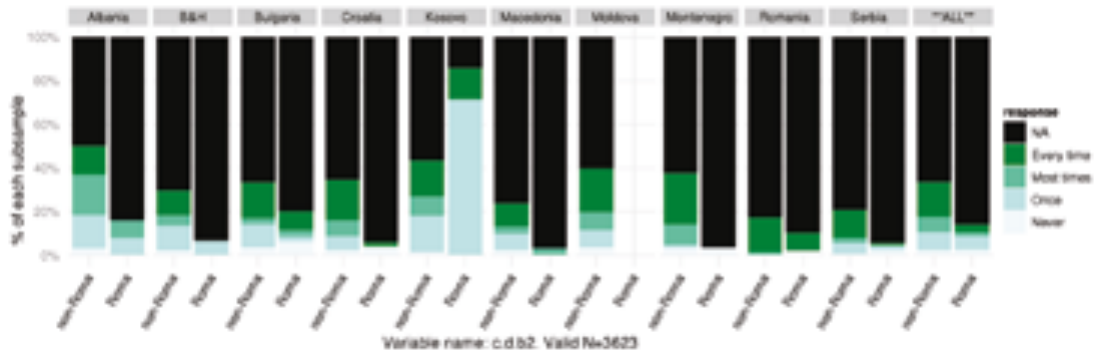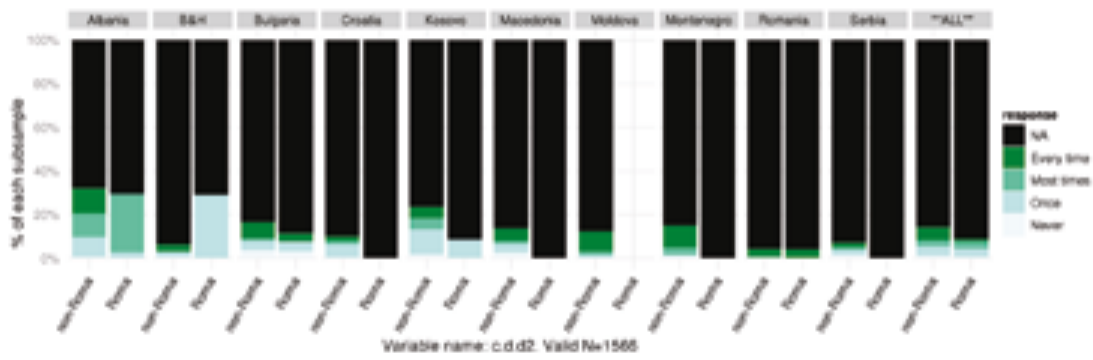
Figure 14.b. Did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?
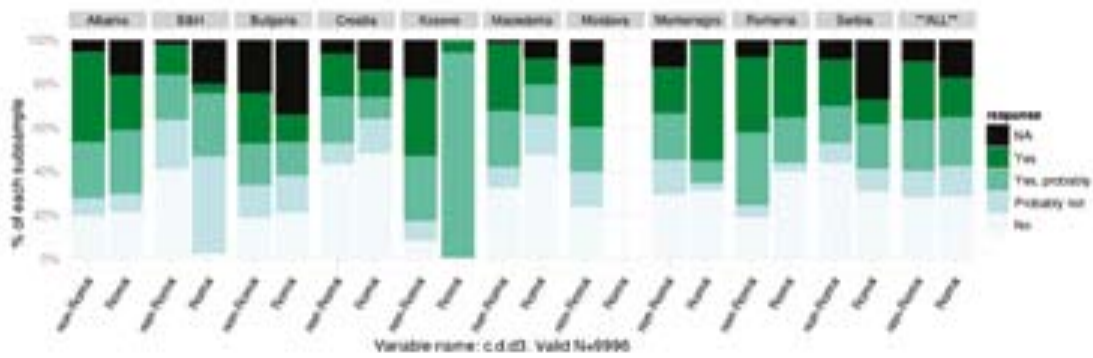
Figure 14.c. Is this something the school should be asking families to do?

A – 5 Participation in decision-making

Exploring parental participation in school decision-making is an important subtopic of the current study. This topic was explored in greater detail through additional questions to those parents who participate on school boards or parent councils (the two parent representation bodies most common in SEE countries). However, the views of all parents were also collected on their experiences regarding their participation in some kind of decision-making at the school level and on soliciting their opinions on financial and organisational matters, education, health or violence issues. Data on this participation dimension are presented in Figures 15 to 22.

Parents' attitudes to and opinions on participation in decision-making

More than 80 percent of parents see their participation in school-level decision-making processes as helpful to their child's education and well-being in all countries and across the subsamples (Figure 15.c.), a notable difference between the mainstream and Roma parents' views was only found in the Albanian sample. Most parents feel it is their duty to participate in decision-making at the school level (Figure 15.b.), with some variation across countries and between the subsamples. It is to be noted that in some countries (Romania, Kosovo and Montenegro) even a somewhat higher percentage of Roma than non-Roma parents express the feeling of a duty in this respect. In addition, an overwhelming majority of parents feel competent and capable to contribute to any kind of decision-making in the school (Figure 15.a.). A consistent difference was, however, found in the sample between majority and Roma parents throughout all countries but one (Kosovo) – somewhat fewer Roma parents were confident regarding their capacity to contribute in this respect. Nevertheless, even in this subsample the majority (over 60 percent) of parents expressed a positive view. A lack of parental capacity to meaningfully participate in school decision-making is a view often expressed by the schools – the findings of the current study, based on parental self-description, seriously challenge and refute these views held by the schools.
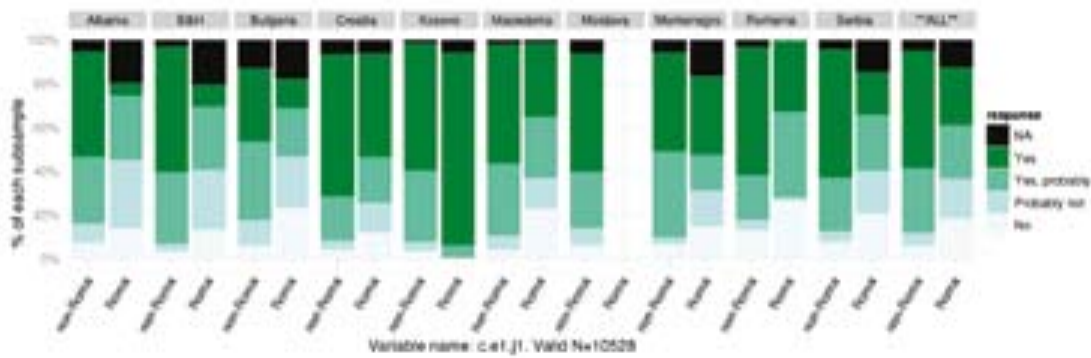
Figure 15.a. Summary: All kinds of participation in decision-making – Do you feel you are capable and competent to contribute to decision-making in any of these ways (personally or as a family)?
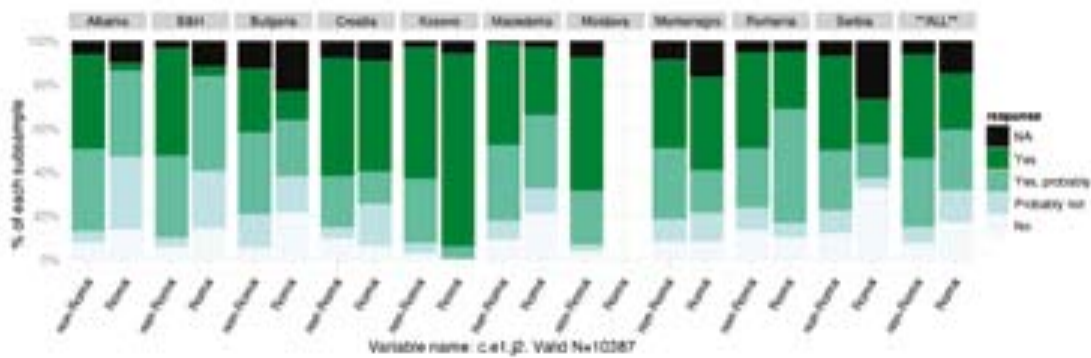
Figure 15.b. Do you feel it is your duty to do at least one of these things (personally or as a family)?
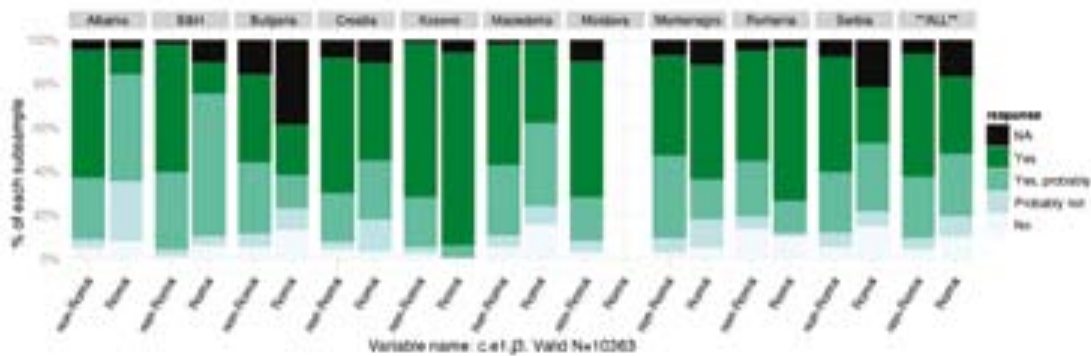
Figure 15.c. Do you think doing one of these things can/might help your child?

Actual participation in decision-making

Financial management is an area concerning which parents are rarely asked for their opinion. Overall, 79 percent say they have never been asked for any opinion in this respect by the school. In Moldova, Albania and Romania more parents had the opportunity to give an opinion on financial management matters than in ex-Yugoslav countries, where this practice is negligible. Roma parents report about giving an opinion even less times than mainstream parents, except in Romania, while in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia they had never been consulted on these matters during the last year (Figure 16.a.).

Parents have different opinions about whether the school should consult them on financial management issues – in each country and in each subsample some of the parents are in favour of being consulted and others are against (Figure 16.d.). Parents from Montenegro, Macedonia and Croatia seem to be mostly reserved, but even there 30-40 percent of parents think that schools should be asking for the opinions of parents on financial issues. When asked, most parents give their opinion (Figure 16.b.) and report that their opinion was taken into account by the school at least to some extent (Figure 16.c.).
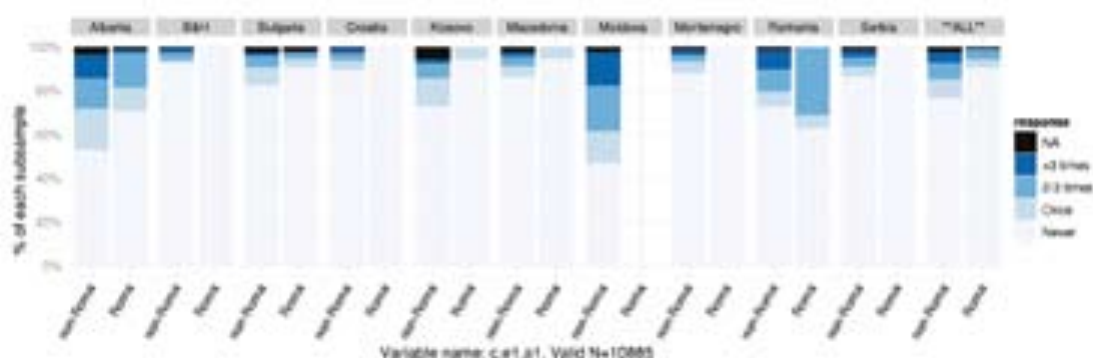
Figure 16.a. Were you (personally or as a family) asked for your opinion on school financial management – how money is spent by the school – buildings, equipment, materials etc.? – How often did the school ask for your opinion on this last year (personally or as a family)?

Figure 16.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?

Figure 16.c. Did the school take it into account?
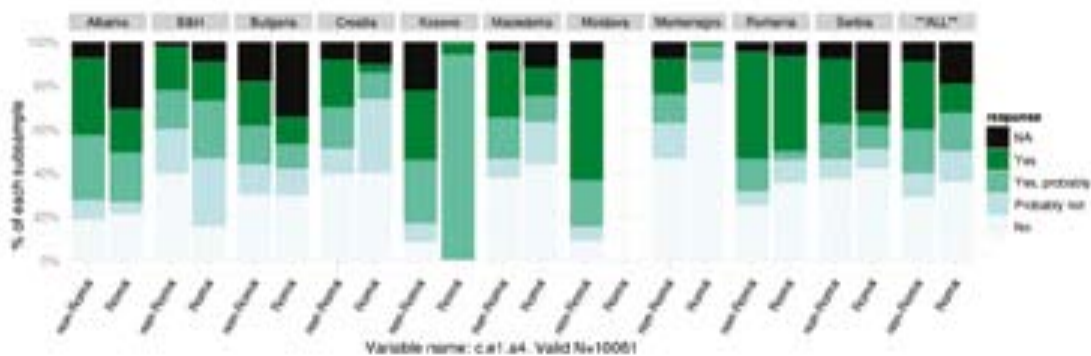
Figure 16.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

Schools ask for the opinions of parents on **extracurricular matters** somewhat more often than on financial issues, but still overall 66 percent of parents had not been asked for any opinion from this realm during the last year (Table 17.a.). Countries do not differ much in their practice of not consulting parents on these issues and the treatment of Roma parents is not much different than with the mainstream parents. The parents, when asked, responded to the consultation offer (Figure 17.b.) and report that the school has mostly taken their opinion into account (Figure 17.c.).

However, contrary to the infrequent invitation rates, the survey data show that the vast majority of parents, both Roma and mainstream, in all of the SEE countries think that the school should be consulting them on these issues (Figure 17.d.).
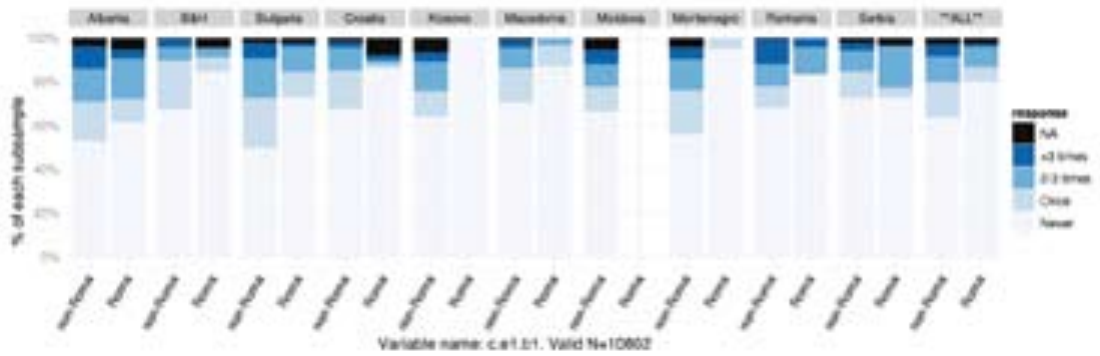
Figure 17.a. Were you asked for your opinion on extracurricular activities (extra sports, foreign languages, arts etc.)? – How often did the school ask for your opinion on this last year (personally or as a family)?

Figure 17.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?

Figure 17.c. Did the school take it into account?
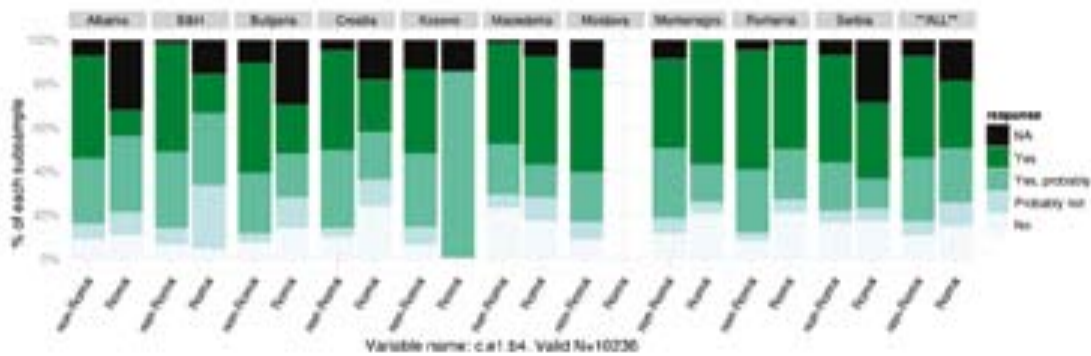
Figure 17.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

Schools seem to be more forthcoming in soliciting parents' opinions when it comes to the **organisation of school events**, celebrations, excursions etc. – 65 percent of parents reported having been asked for their opinion at least once in the last year (Figure 18.a.). In all countries, Roma parents are asked less frequently than majority parents, in Macedonia only a negligible share of Roma parents reported that their opinion had been requested.

Most parents from all countries agree that schools should consult them on these matters (Figure 18.d.), when asked, they give their opinion (Figure 18.b.) and, according to their reports, schools take their opinions into account at least somewhat (Figure 18.c.).
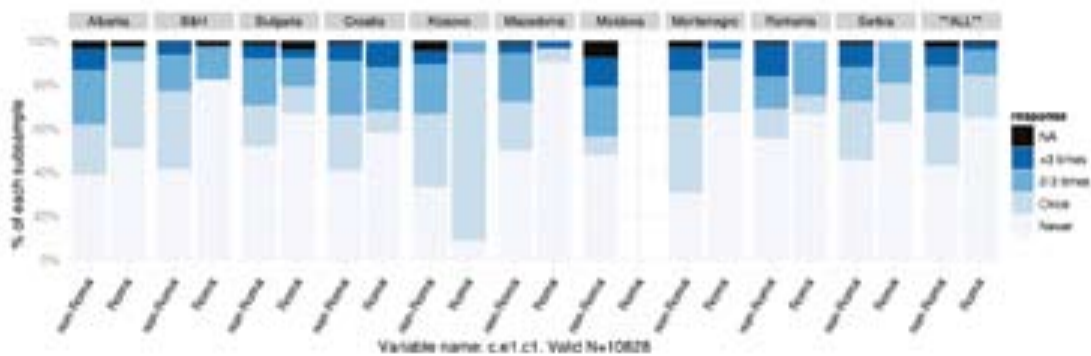
Figure 18.a. Were you asked for your opinion on the organisation of school events (celebrations, excursions etc.) – (not just being asked to help)? – How often did the school ask for your opinion in the last year (personally or as a family)?

Figure 18.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?

Figure 18.c. Did the school take it into account?
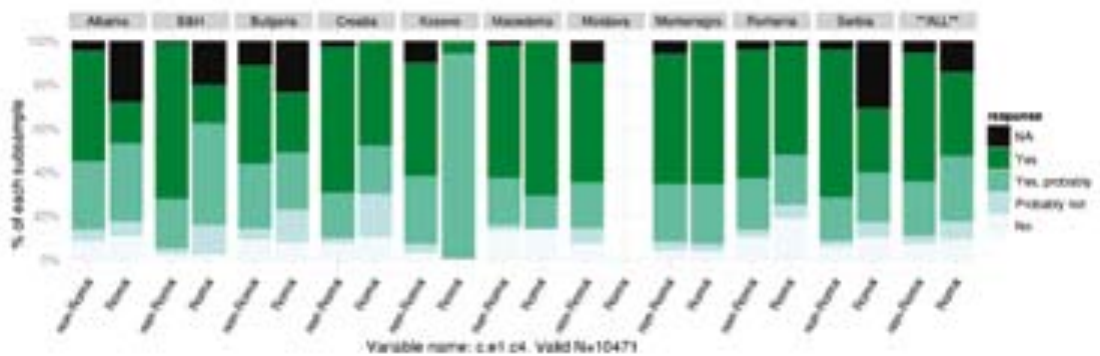
Figure 18.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

Regarding **health and safety** issues, schools are seeking parents' opinions less than as regards school

events. Almost 60 percent of parents report never having been asked during the last year and, when it comes to Roma parents, this share is half as much (Figure 19.a.) and in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina only a few Roma parents report positively, while in Kosovo none do. As in case of the other areas of possible influence on school activities, almost all parents feel that the school should be consulting them regarding health and safety issues (Figure 19.d.), whenever consulted most of them gave their opinion (Figure 19.b.) and report that it was taken into account by the school (Figure 19.c.).
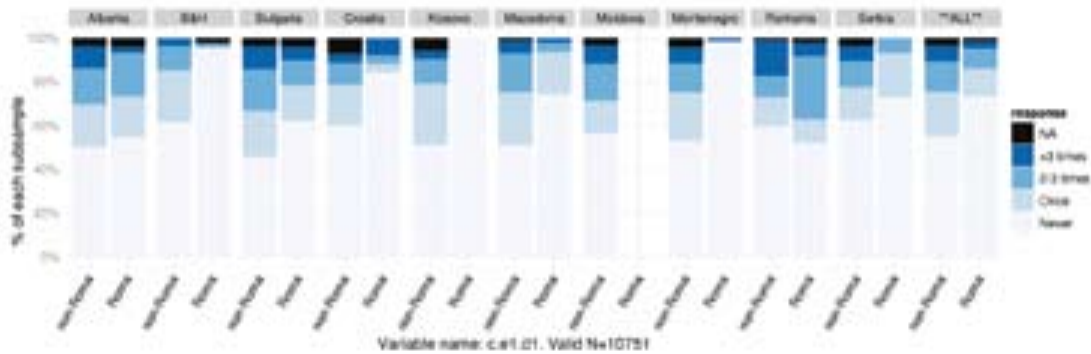
Figure 19.a. Were you asked for your opinion on health and safety issues (watchmen, road crossings, cameras, drugs, relationship with police etc.)? – How often did the school ask for your opinion in the last year (personally or as a family)?
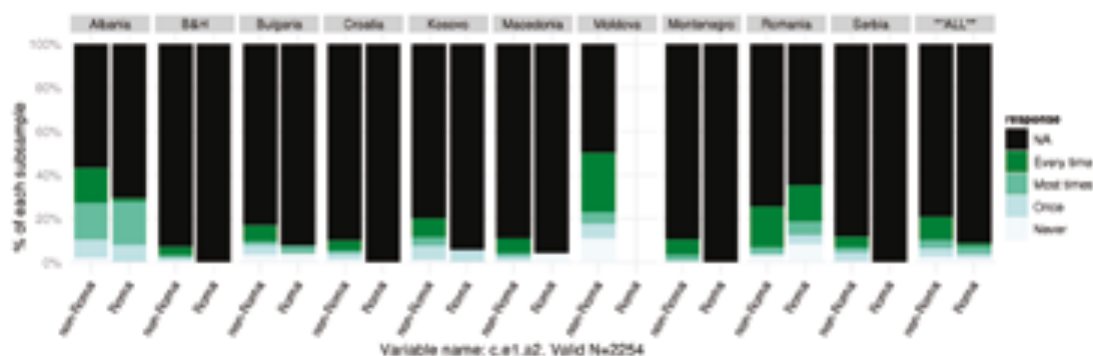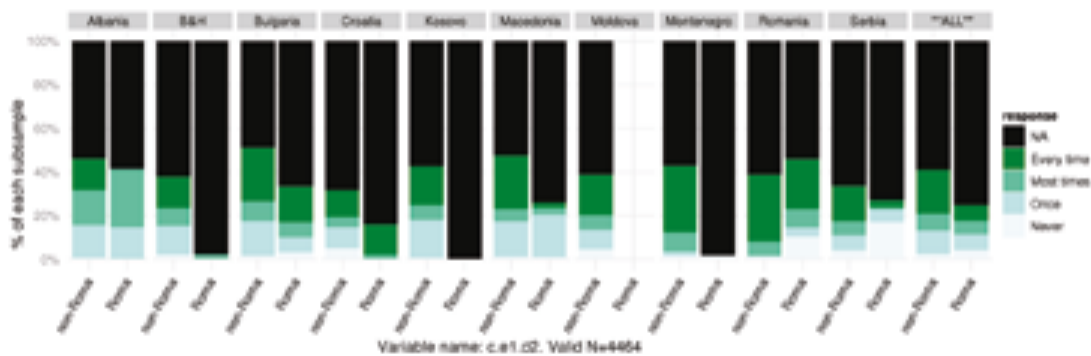

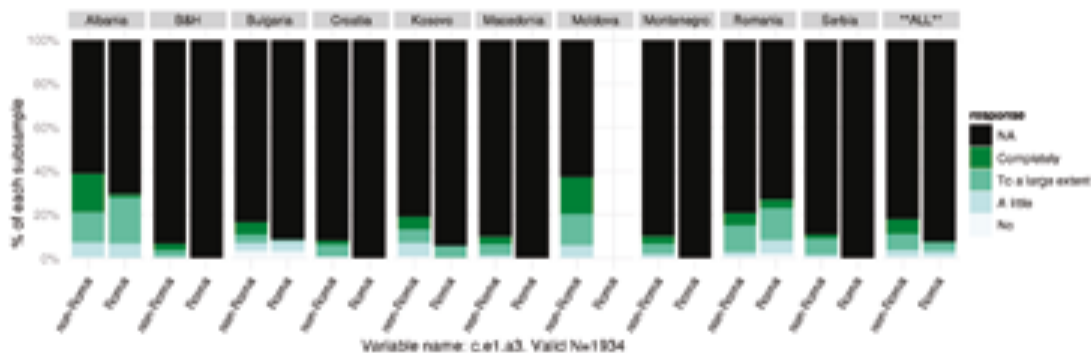**Figure 19.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?**
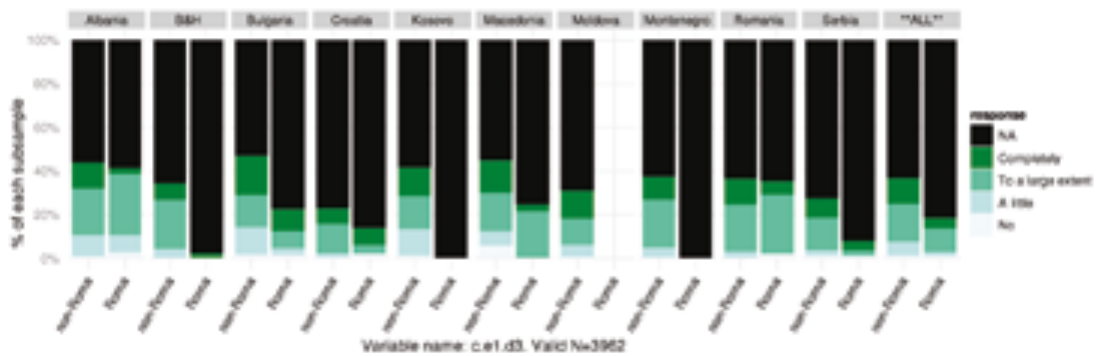
Figure 19.c. Did the school take it into account?
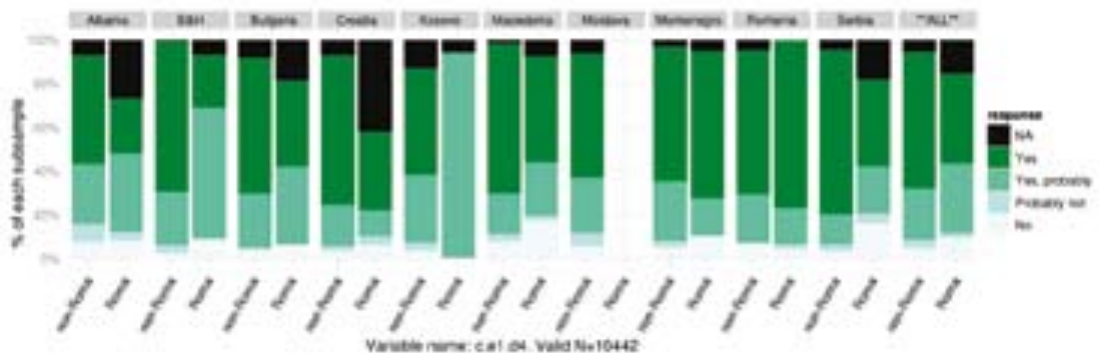
Figure 19.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

Of all the areas of potential influence on decision-making, parents are least frequently asked for their opinion **regarding school management issues** such as shifts, opening times, merging or closing classes or schools, changing location, changing the type of the school – 82 percent of parents have never been consulted on these matters (Figure 20.a.). However, this could also reflect the situation where schools themselves are not often making such decisions. Parents themselves are also unsure whether the school should consult them on these issues (Figure 20.d.), similarly as with regard to giving an opinion on financial management issues. Their responses are distributed among "yes" and "no" almost equally, except in Kosovo where the majority of parents feel the school should be asking them when it comes to such major management issues. Nevertheless, when consulted, almost all give their opinion (Figure 20.b.) and they report that it was taken into account to a substantial extent (Figure 20.c.).
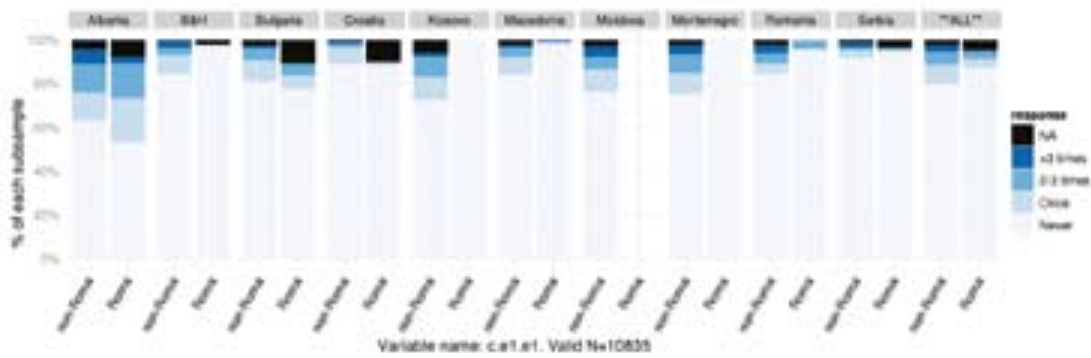
Figure 20.a. Were you asked for your opinion on overall school management – shifts, opening times, merging or closing classes or schools, changing location, changing the type of the school etc.? – How often did the school ask for your opinion in the last year (personally or as a family)?
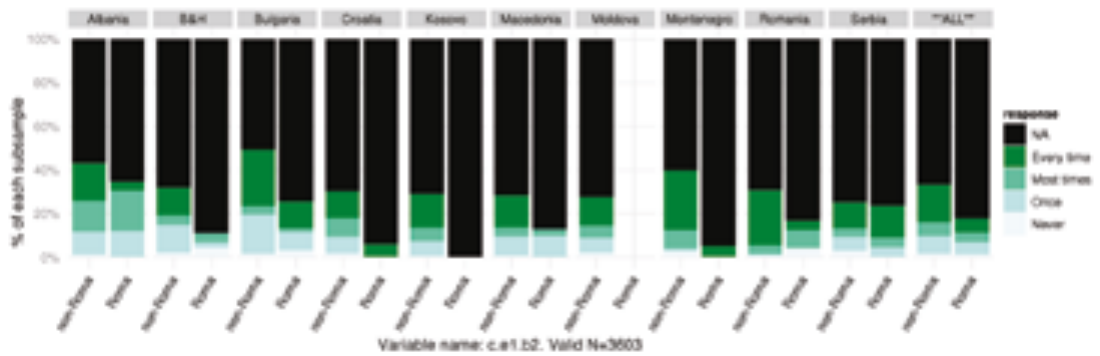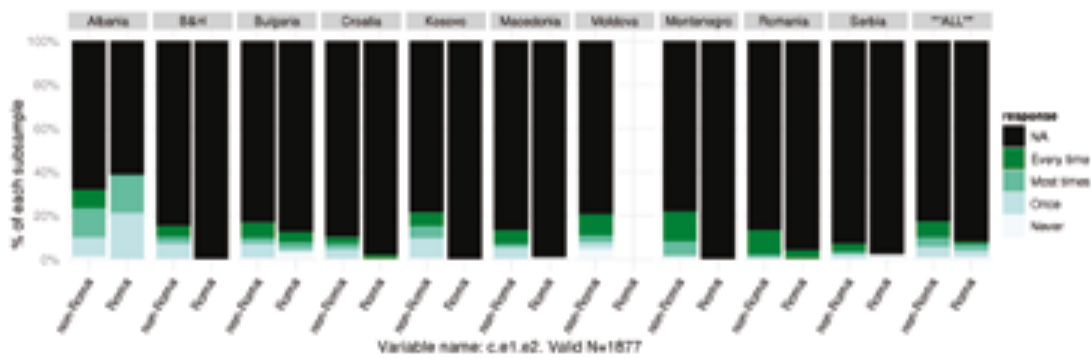

Figure 20.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?
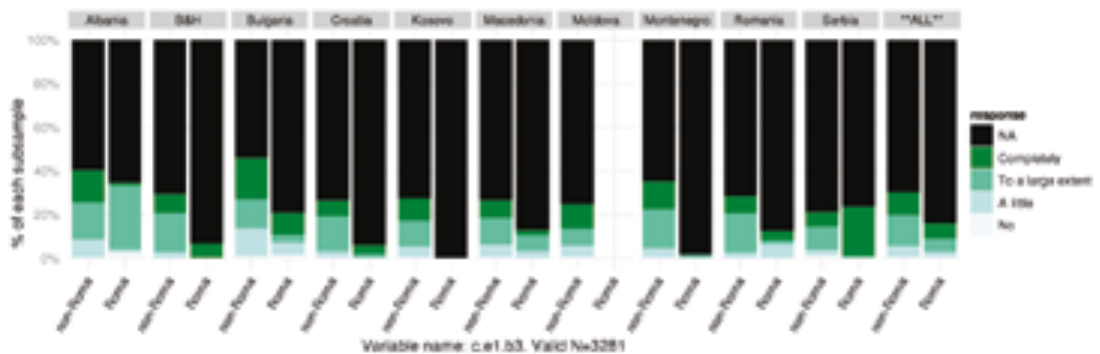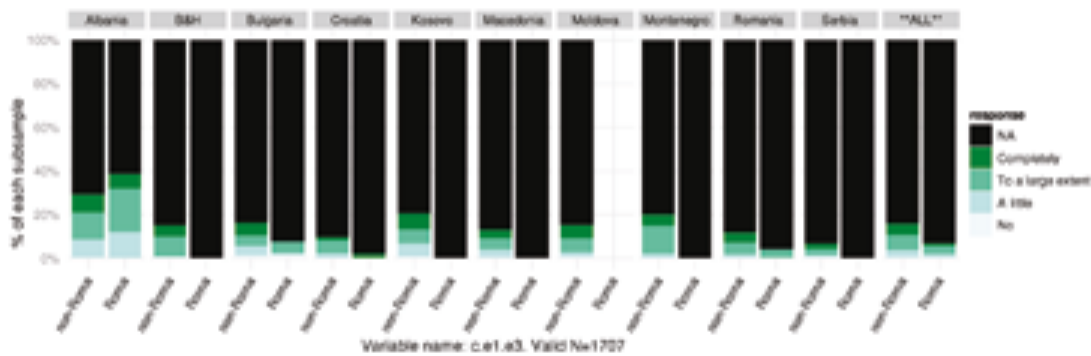

Figure 20.c. Did the school take it into account?
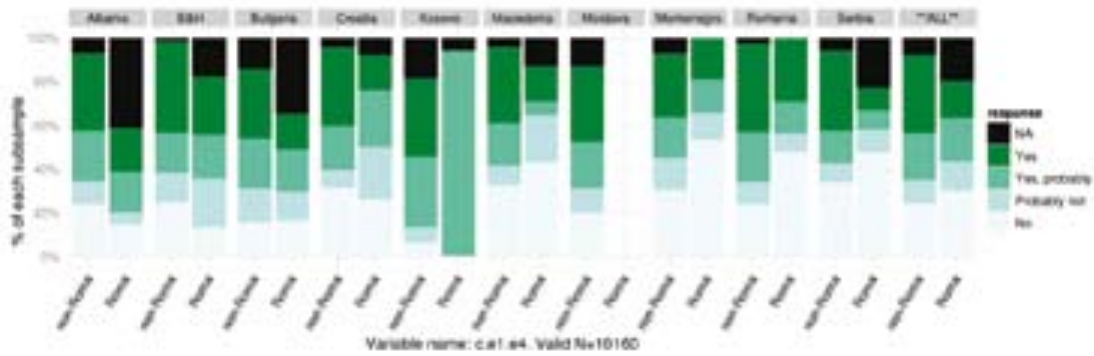
Figure 20.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

Parents are also rarely consulted regarding more pertinent **education issues**, such as the content of lessons, textbooks, teacher selection or assessment, pupil workload, homework (Figure 21.a) – overall, 75 percent of parents report that the school had never asked for their opinion on these matters during the last year. There are slight differences among the countries in this respect and, again, none of the surveyed Roma parents from Kosovo and Montenegro had ever been asked about their opinion on these education issues during the last year. When asked, parents give their opinion (Figure 21.b.) and report that the school took it into account at least somewhat (Figure 21.c.).

There is again a big discrepancy between the actual practice and the parents' appraisal of whether the school should seek their opinions. The majority of parents from all countries state that the school should consult them when decisions about major education issues are being made (Figure 21.d.).
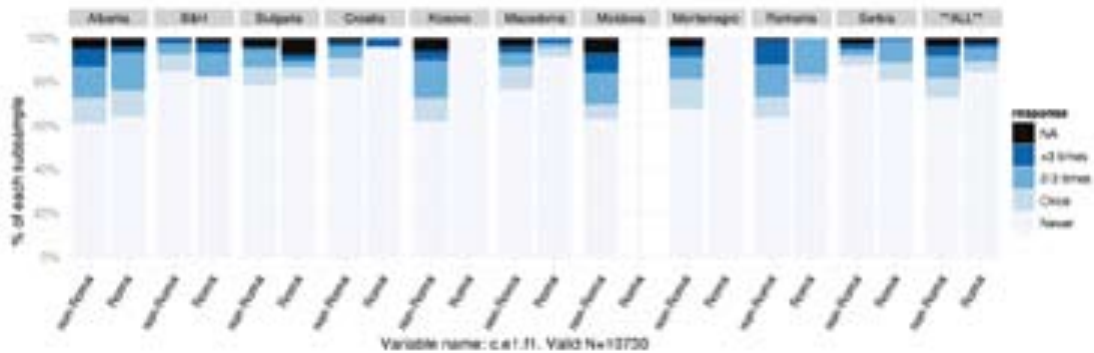
Figure 21.a. Were you asked for your opinion on educational matters – the content of lessons, textbooks, teacher selection or assessment, pupil workload, homework etc. – How often did the school ask for your opinion in the last year (personally or as a family)?
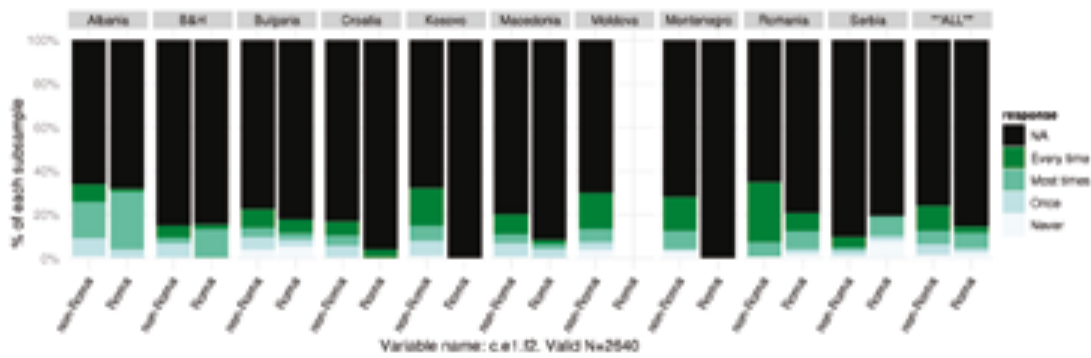
Figure 21.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?
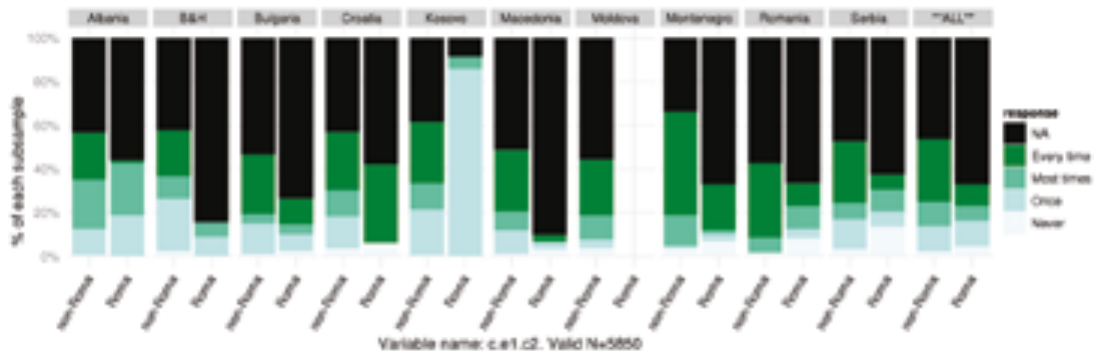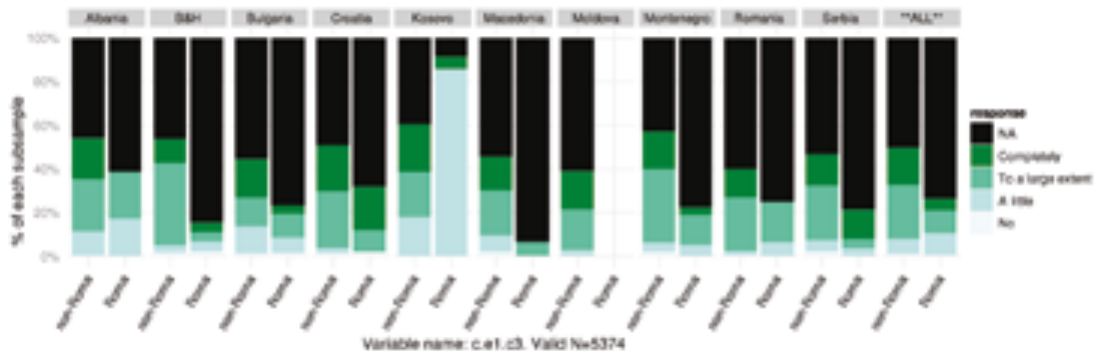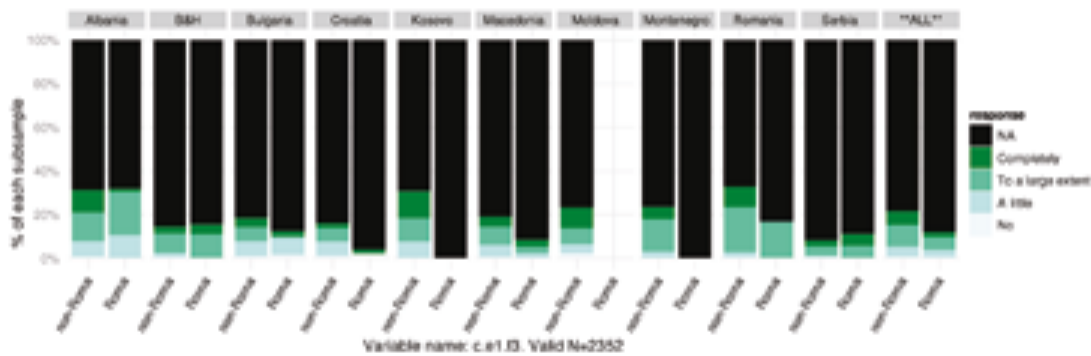

Figure 21.c. Did the school take it into account?
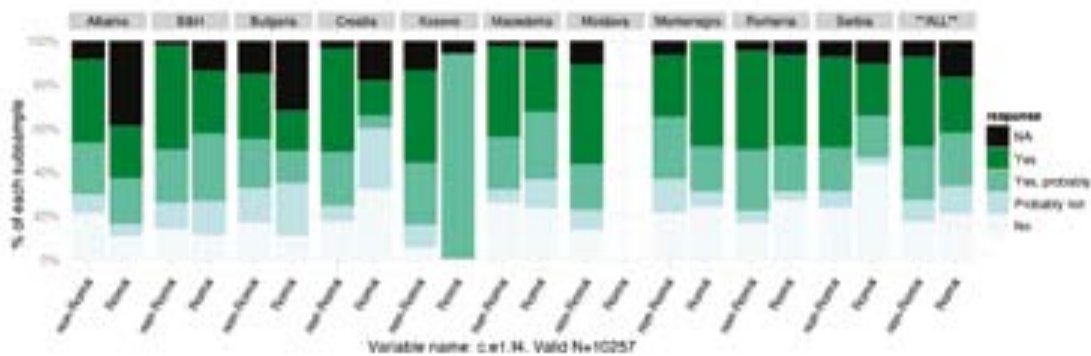
Figure 21.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

Asking for parents' opinions on **violence and disciplinary** issues is also not a common practice in SEE countries. Overall, about 65 percent of parents report having never been consulted in the last year in this respect, Roma parents even less (Figure 22.a.), although the vast majority of parents think that schools should consult parents regarding the prevention of violence and disciplinary decisions and procedures (Figure 22.d.). An exception from this pattern seems to be the sample from Kosovo, where about 60 percent of parents had been asked for their opinion. Parents report that, when asked, they give their opinion (Figure 22.b.) and that the school takes it into consideration at least a little (Figure 22.c.).
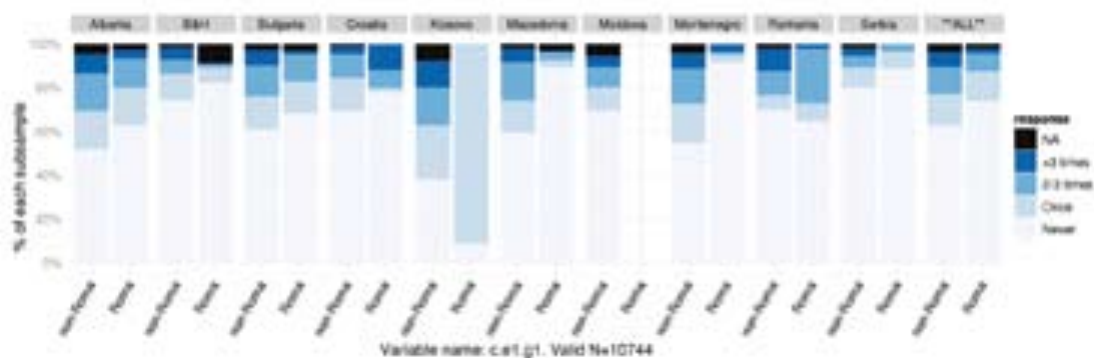
Figure 22.a. Were you asked for your opinion on pupil violence, expulsions and other pupil discipline issues and procedures etc. – How often did the school ask for your opinion in the last year (personally or as a family)?
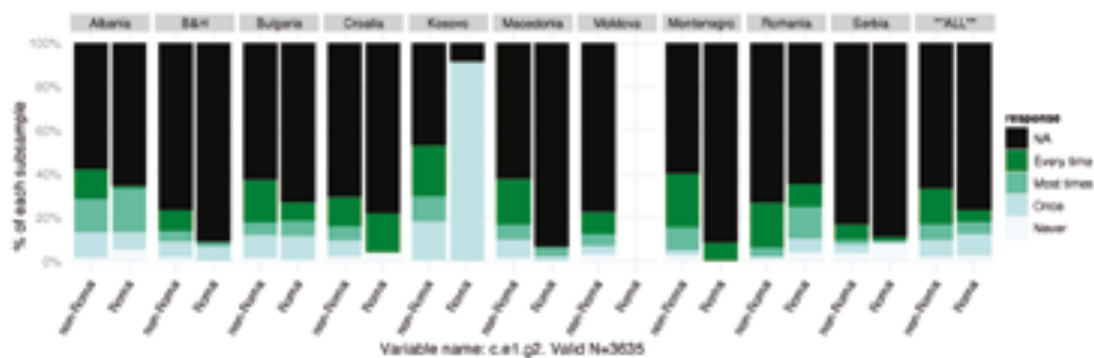
Figure 22.b. Did you give your opinion to the school (personally or as a family)?
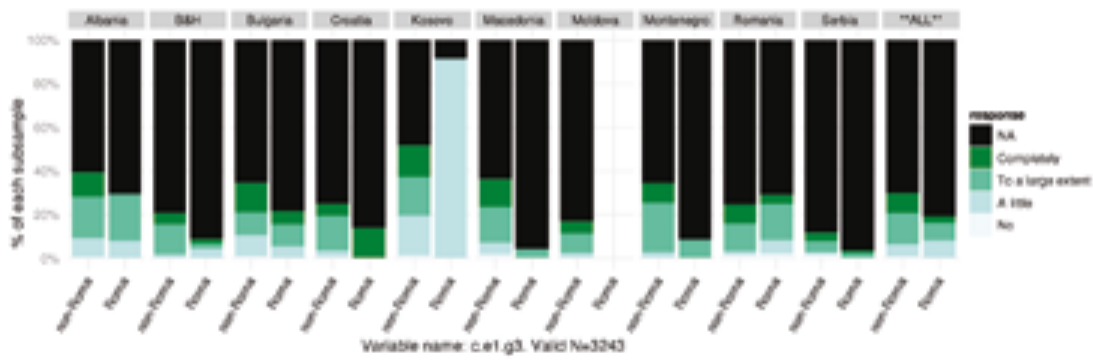
Figure 22.c. Did the school take it into account?
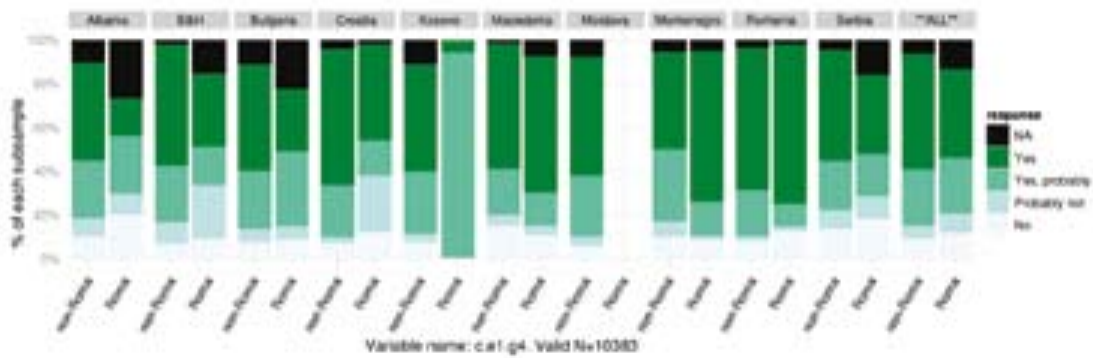
Figure 22.d. Is this something the school should be asking you (personally or as a family)?

A – 6 Community-school partnership actions

Initiating and maintaining school-community partnerships to help meet parents' needs and for the benefit of the education of children is yet another aspect of potential parent-school participation and yet another area which is not exploited in the SEE countries participating in the study. Altogether, around 90 percent of mainstream parents report they have never encountered a situation when the school of their child offered help with community health, housing, or social issues and only a marginal share of parents in only some of the countries mention this kind of offer of assistance happening on a more regular basis, three or more times during the last year (Figure 23.a.). Even for Roma parents the school only rarely offers community support – 80 percent of them report having never been offered any assistance through the school. Yet some exceptions exist – almost half of Roma parents from Montenegro and about one-third from Romania, as well as parents from Moldova, have encountered such offers from the school and they made use of them and found them helpful most of the time, or every time (Figures 23.b. and c.). These exceptions highlight the fact that such experiences of school-community partnership could also exist in SEE countries and many more parents could benefit from such arrangements if they were used more widely by the schools.
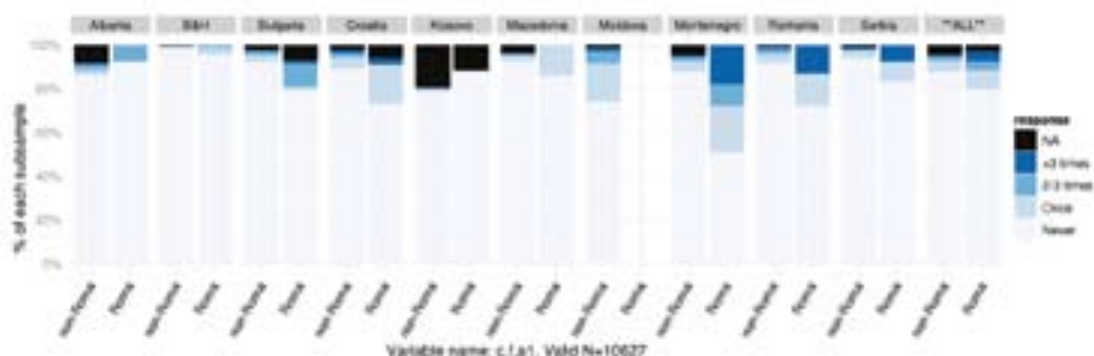
Figure 23.a. The school's offer of help with community health, housing, social issues – How often did the school offer this to you or your family last year?
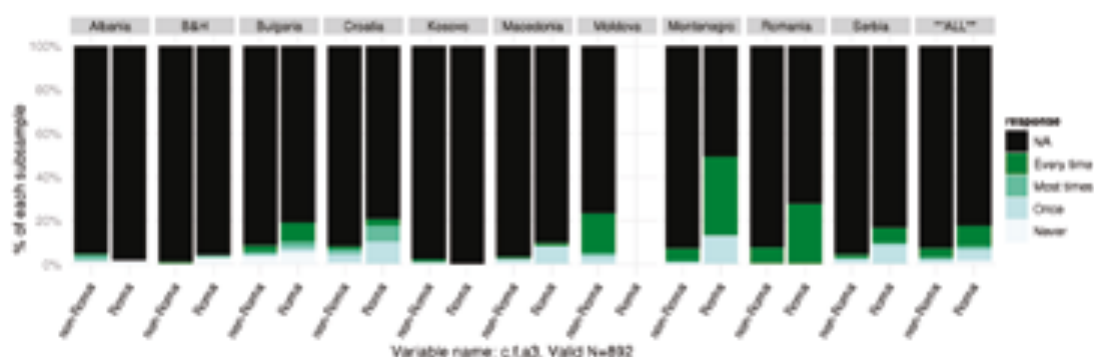
Figure 23.b. If offered, did you make use of it?
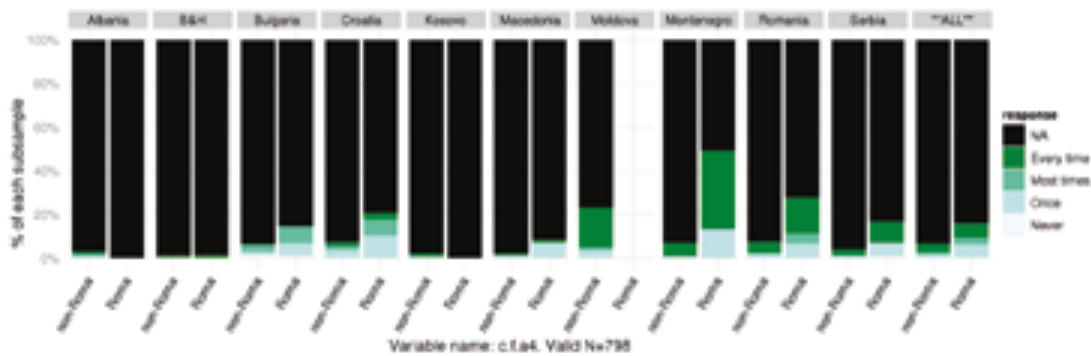
Figure 23.c. If you made use of it, was it helpful?

Summary of parent participation opportunities created by the school

Despite the multifaceted differences between countries and subsamples, the main picture emerging from the data described in this chapter so far is that schools in SEE countries do not take advantage of the different parent participation possibilities school life offers. Collating data across dimensions and across countries further emphasises this major finding.

When taking all dimensions of parent participation together (Figure 24.a.) the data show that the number of school invitations to parents to participate on average ranges between "never" and "once", with the highest mean seen in Albania and the lowest in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Even though, based on the parents' reports, schools substantially differ among themselves within the same countries, the majority of schools in the sample function in the low range of never or only once when it comes to utilising different possibilities for parent participation. Roma parents are even more excluded than the majority parents (except for the schools' offer of community assistance in some of the countries), scores describing the frequency of receiving an invitation to participate are somewhat lower for Roma parents and the range of differences is smaller. Including parents from marginalised groups in the life of the school is a widely recognised social practice which ensures higher motivation, better attainment and decreases dropout rates for children from marginalised groups, as well as indirectly providing education opportunities to their parents – in SEE countries this practice is not used, or used only negligibly. The lowest invitation to participate rates for Roma are found in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro.
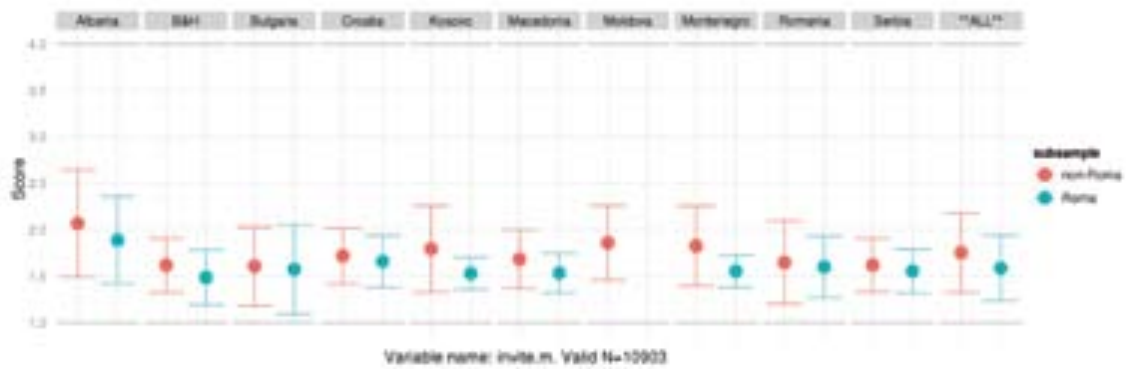
Figure 24.a. Invitations to participate – mean for all dimensions and +/- 1 SD by countries and subsamples
Score 1 – never, 2 – once, 3 – 2 to 3 times, 4 – more than 3 times

The breakdown of data for the different dimensions of participation taken all countries together (Figure 24.b.) shows that schools predominantly use the most traditional and legally binding form of an invitation to participate at class meetings and informing parents about the child's progress in written form a couple of times in the course of an academic year. In all other dimensions, the invitation rate is very low. Schools do not use the wide possibility of informing (and educating) parents about important school, educational and upbringing issues through various forms of written information, they do not capitalise upon the communicational and trust-building possibilities parent volunteering could bring about and they most often avoid involving parents in any kind of decision-making at the school level. The figure below also shows that invitations for parent participation decrease the closer a participation aspect comes to core educational issues.
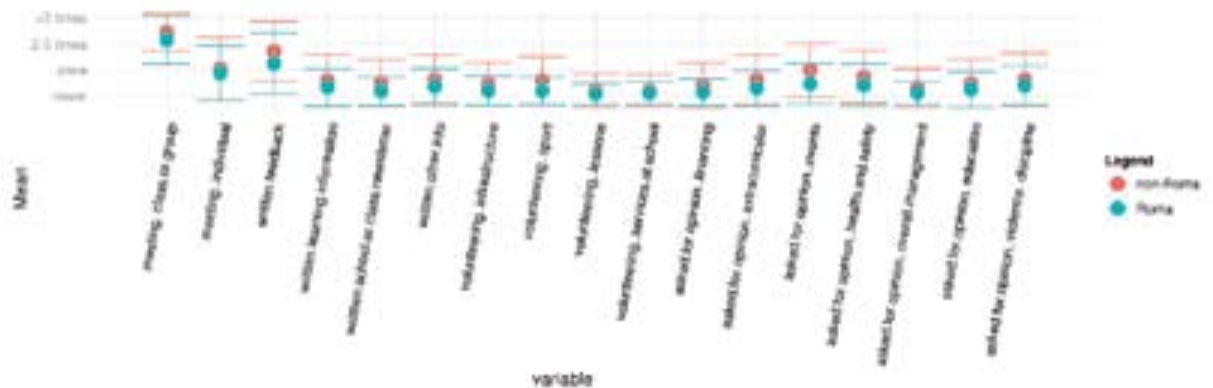
Figure 24.b. Invitation means by participation dimension

In contrast, the inclination of parents to participate in the different aspects of school life is strong

(Figures 24.c.-24.f.). They accept invitations from the school to a high extent, they see participation as a good practice, they feel capable to participate and, to a somewhat smaller degree, they also feel a duty to participate.

Overall, parents' responsiveness to participation opportunities (Figure 24.c.) is highest in Romania and Montenegro and Roma parents respond to invitations less frequently than majority parents in every country except Croatia, with their mean response rate most often being about 1 SD lower than the mean for the majority, but in all countries even the least active parents respond to participation opportunities at least once.

Parents also see participating in the different kinds of activities the school is inviting them to as highly beneficial, irrespective of country and subsample – a clear consensus exists around this view in all SEE countries (Figure 24.d). In all countries they also feel highly capable and competent to participate, with the Roma subsample at an equal level or even more than the majority parents in Montenegro and Serbia and somewhat less in the other countries (Figure 24.e.). Parents from all countries also perceive the benefit of participation to the well-being of their child to a high extent (Figure 24.g.), with the exception of Roma in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria, where their scores are about 1 SD lower than the majority parents' perception of benefit. Parents feel a duty to participate in school activities when invited (Figure 24.f.), although there is a large variation between countries, among individual parents and subsamples, with parents from Serbia least feeling a duty to participate among SEE countries. The biggest discrepancy between majority and Roma parents in this respect seems to be in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria.

However, it has to be noted that dispersion around the mean in every country is higher than the between-country differences, indicating high individual differences between parents regarding their response to school invitations and seeing participation as their important parental role.
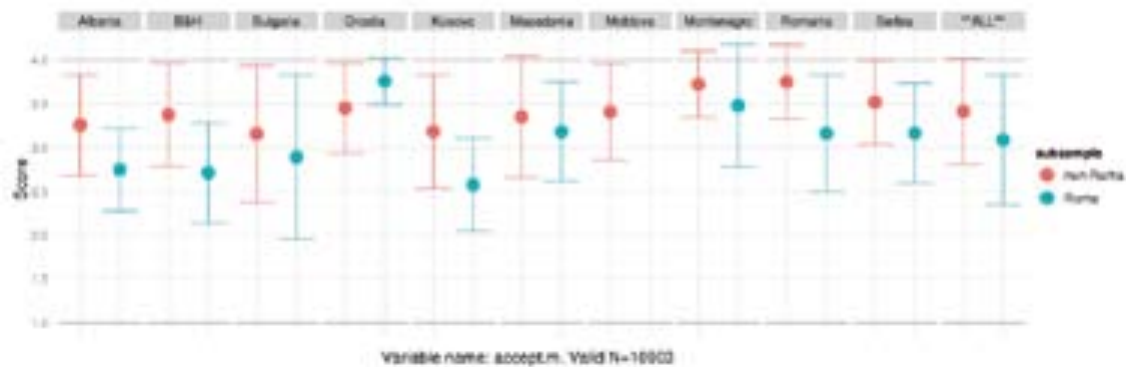
Figure 24.c. Accepting invitations to participate by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score 1 – never, 2 – once, 3 – most times, 4 – every time
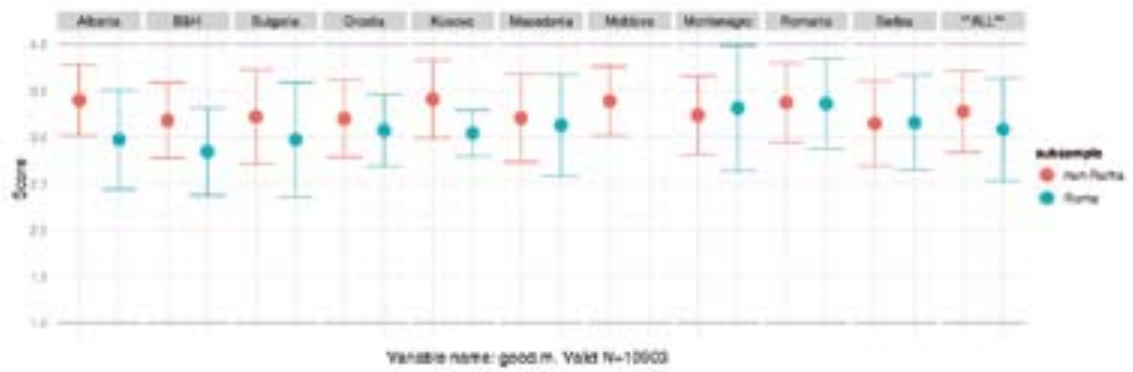
Figure 24.d: Seeing different forms of participation as good by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score 1 – no, 2 – probably no, 3 – probably yes, 4 – yes
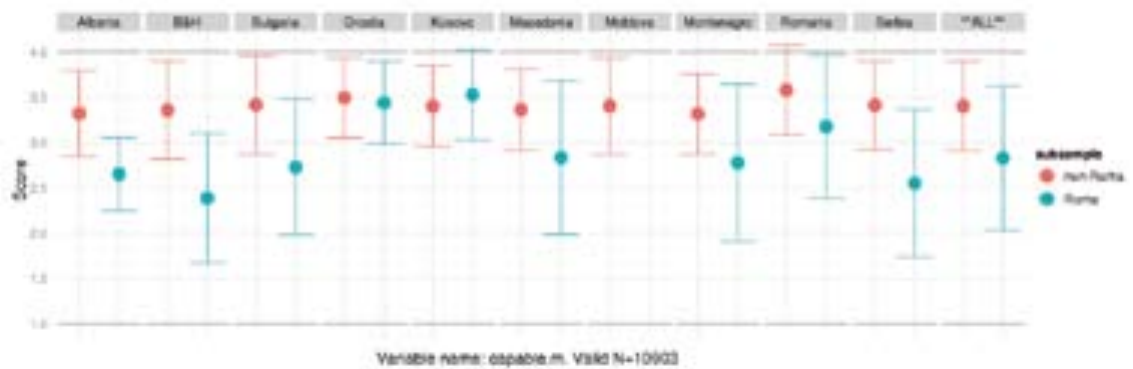
Figure 24.e. Family feels capable to participate by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
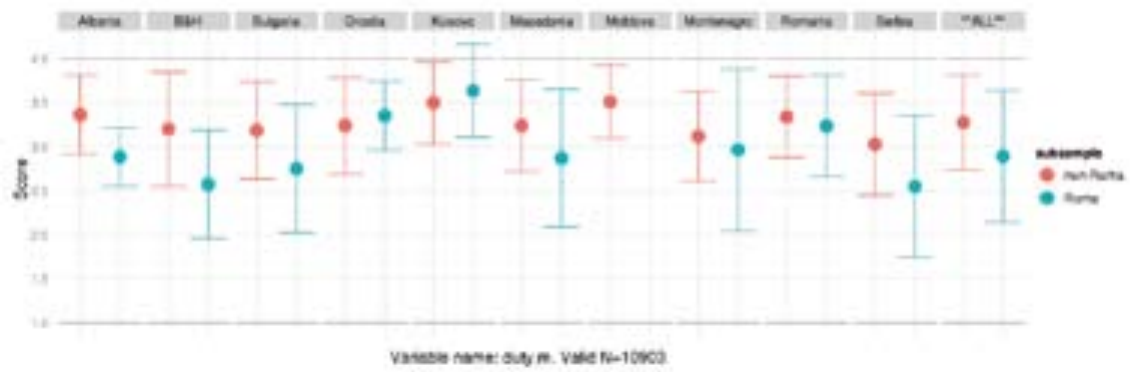
Figure 24.f. Family feels a duty to participate by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
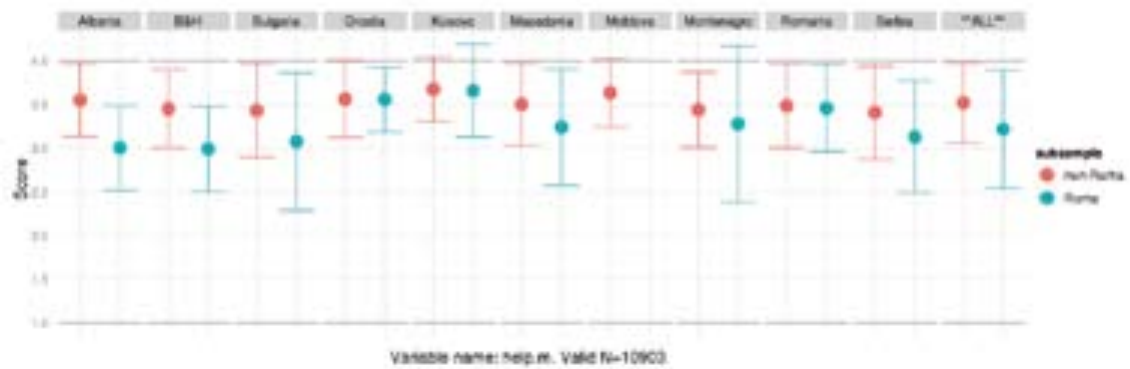
Figure 24.g. Family perceives benefits of participation by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD

B – Parent initiative and the role of parent representatives

Aside from the school-initiated participation of parents, parents can exert an influence on a variety of aspects of school life on a self-organised and self-initiated basis, especially in cases where invitations to participate are lacking from the school's side. However, the study showed that this is rarely the case in the countries under study. Only about 15% of parents in the SEE countries participating in the study reported they had initiated any kind of action vis-à-vis the school individually and, even less, together with other parents (Figures 25.a. and c.). It is noteworthy that Roma parents were somewhat more actively seeking what they needed/wanted than non-Roma in several countries individually (in Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Macedonia) or jointly with other parents (in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina). Nevertheless, according to the parents' reports, their initiatives were not followed up by the school in at least 50% of cases (Figures 25.b. and d.).
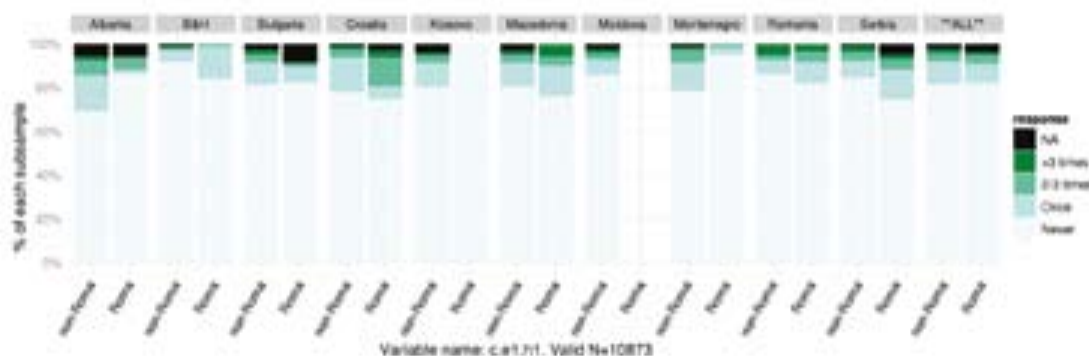
Figure 25.a. Did you try to influence something on your own, i.e. not together with other parents (without first being asked by the school) – e.g. complain about a grade, complain about another child etc.?
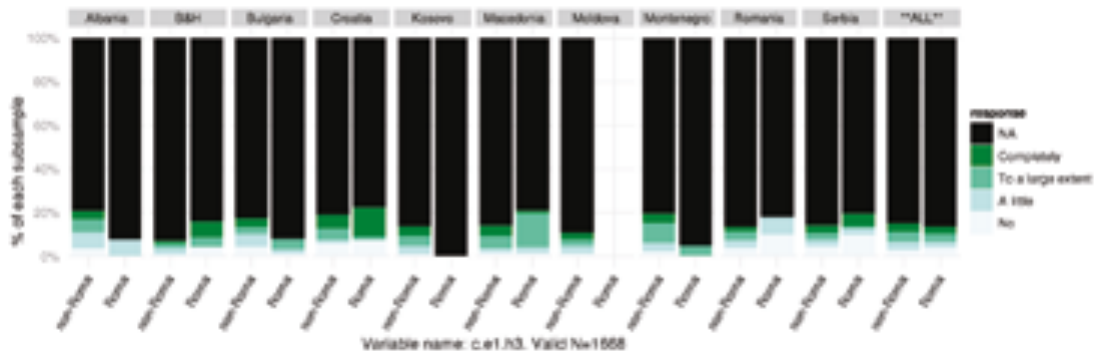
Figure 25.b. If YES, did you get what you wanted?
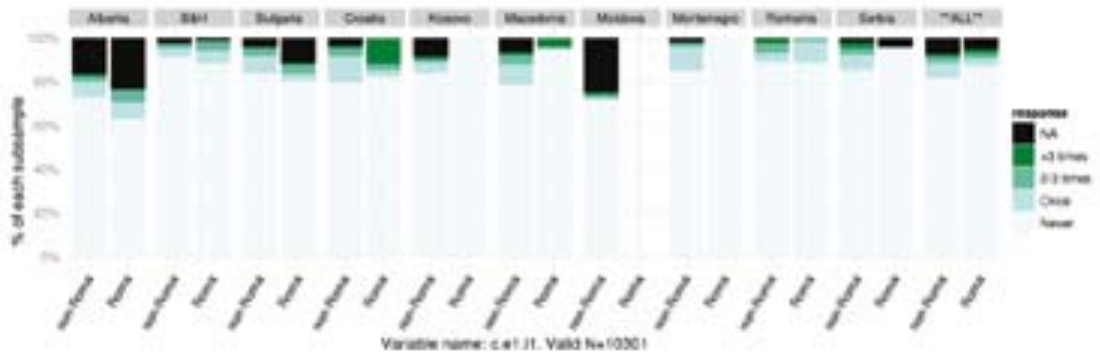
Figure 25.c. Did you try to influence something with other parents (without first being asked by the school)?
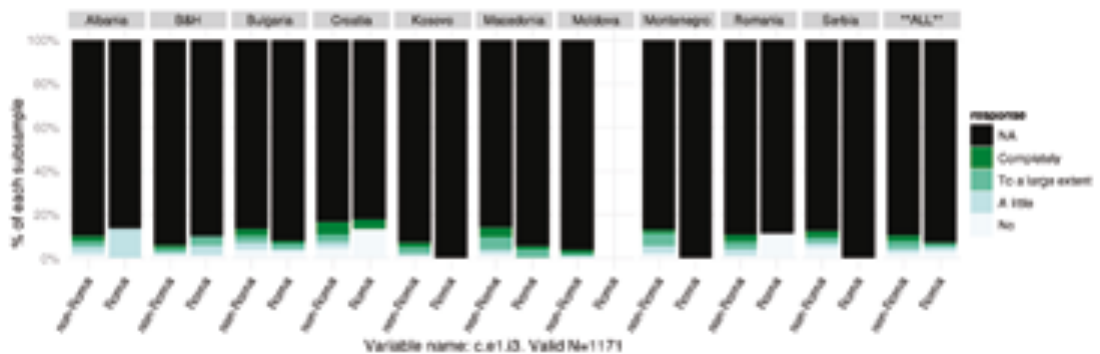
Figure 25.d. If YES, did you get what you wanted?

Becoming a **parent representative** is the way a parent can influence school-decision-making and participate most actively in the life of the school. Parent representation in school boards and parent councils is a common practice in all SEE countries.

Parents from the main sample of the study exceptionally rarely held the position of parent representative or in any other way actively influenced school activities or decision-making (Figure 26.a.). Roma parents were even more rarely involved in any kind of parent representation and, except in Albania and Romania, their reports reveal they never hold such a position.
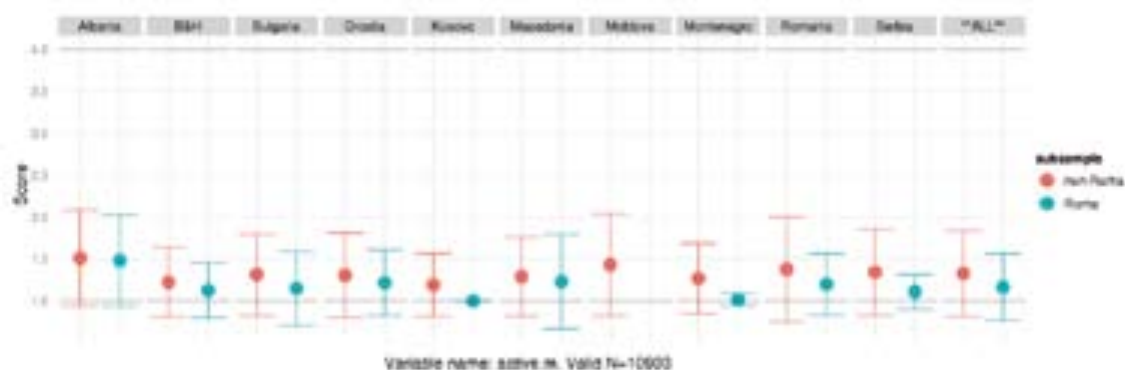
Figure 26.a: Active participation (holding the office of representative or trying to influence things) by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores 1 – never, 2 – once, 3 – twice, 4 – 3 times

Hence, to further explore the experiences of parents as representatives an additional sample of 1,439 parent representatives was recruited and surveyed with a set of additional questions focusing on the reasons for accepting the role of a representative, the level of perceived influence, trust and effectiveness. Data on the parent representatives' views are presented in Figures 26.b. to 26.h.

Parent representatives from all countries and both subsamples agree that a strong **reason for their engagement** is to work for the benefit of others (Figure 26.b.), i.e. they perceive their role as altruistic and as a public function. However, they also perceive their role of representative as potentially beneficial for their child to a varying extent (Figure 23.c.). There are big differences between countries in this respect (accepting that there is a benefit for one's own child being the highest in Albania and the lowest in Croatia and Serbia) and even greater individual differences among parents from the same country (especially pronounced among majority parents in Macedonia and Roma parents in Bosnia and Herzegovina). All of this indicates that parent representatives assume their roles in different ways and assimilate them into their own belief systems somewhat irrespective of the formal characteristics of the role itself.

Variable name: par.isrep.reasonsOther.m. Valid N=10903
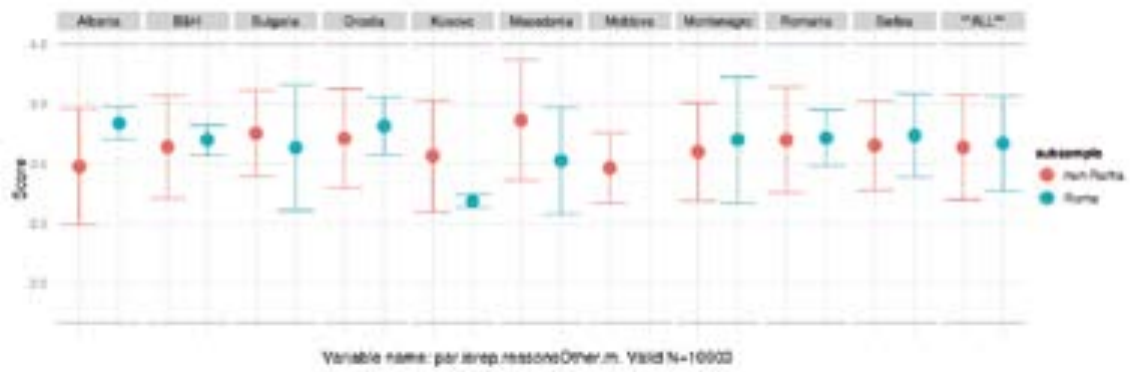
Figure 26.b: To benefit others as a reason for taking on the role of a representative by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD

Scores: 1– "not important at all", 2 – "somewhat important", 3 – "important", 4 – "very important"

Variable name: par.isrep.reasonsOwn.m. Valid N=10903
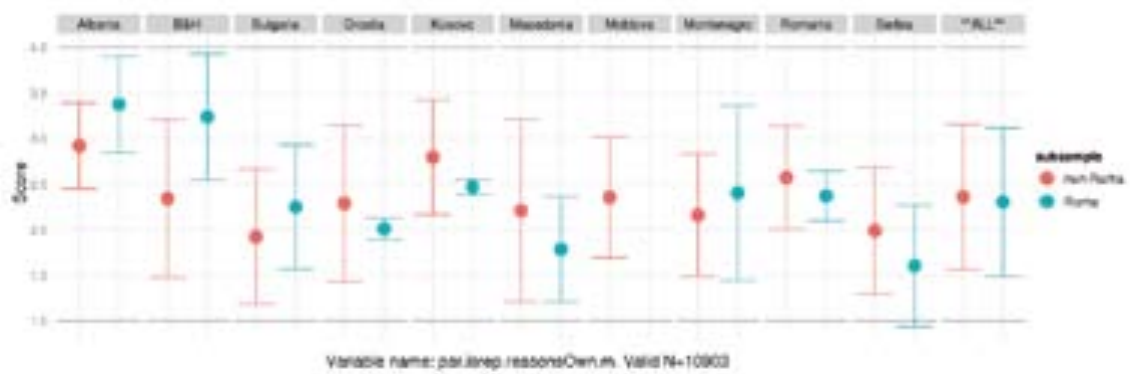
Figure 26.c. To benefit one's own child as a reason for taking on the role of a representative by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD

Scores: 1– "not important at all", 2 – "somewhat important", 3 – "important", 4 – "very important"

Variable name: par.isrep.Access.m. Valid N=10000
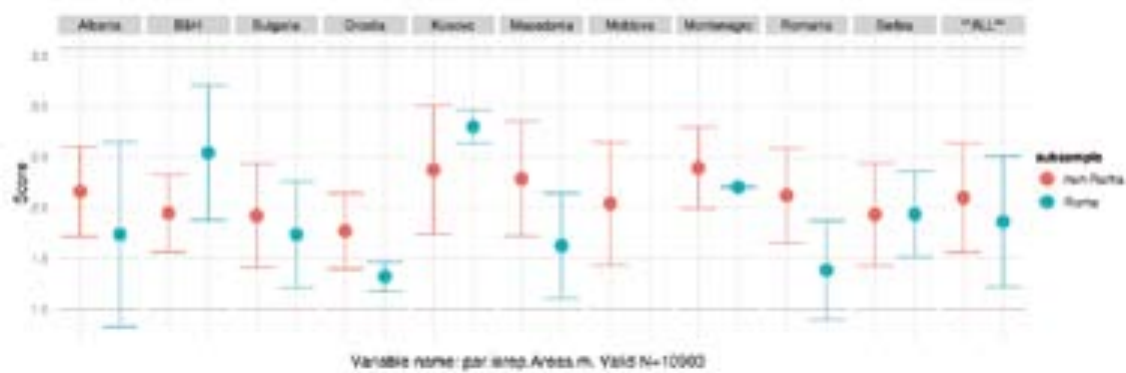
Figure 26.d. Representatives' views on the extent of the influence of representatives by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores: 1– "not important at all", 2 – "somewhat important", 3 – "important", 4 – "very important"

Variable name: par.isrep.Influence.m. Valid N=10000
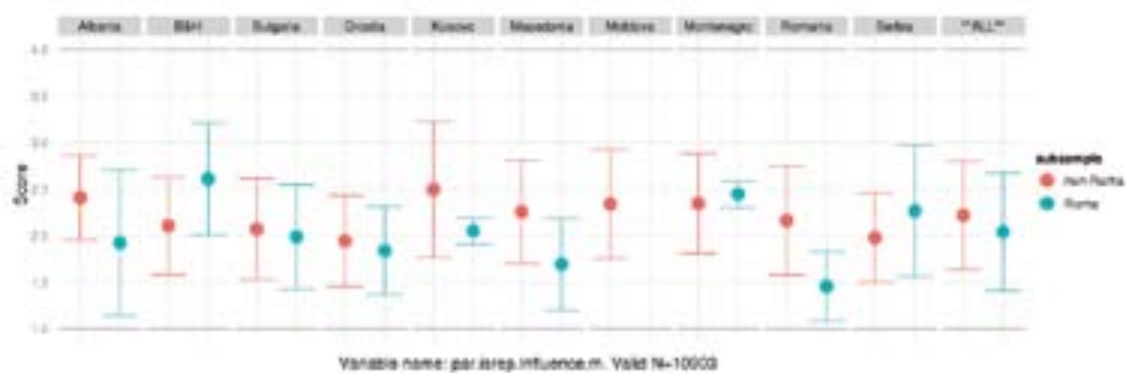
Figure 26.e. Representatives' views on the extent of parental influence by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores: 1– "not important at all", 2 – "somewhat important", 3 – "important", 4 – "very important"

Parent representatives overall feel that parents **trust** them to a substantial extent (Figure 26.f.). Representatives from Albania and Kosovo assess the trust they receive from other parents somewhat lower than representatives from other countries. In addition, in several countries Roma parent representatives' assessment of being trusted by parents is somewhat lower than the assessment of mainstream parents.
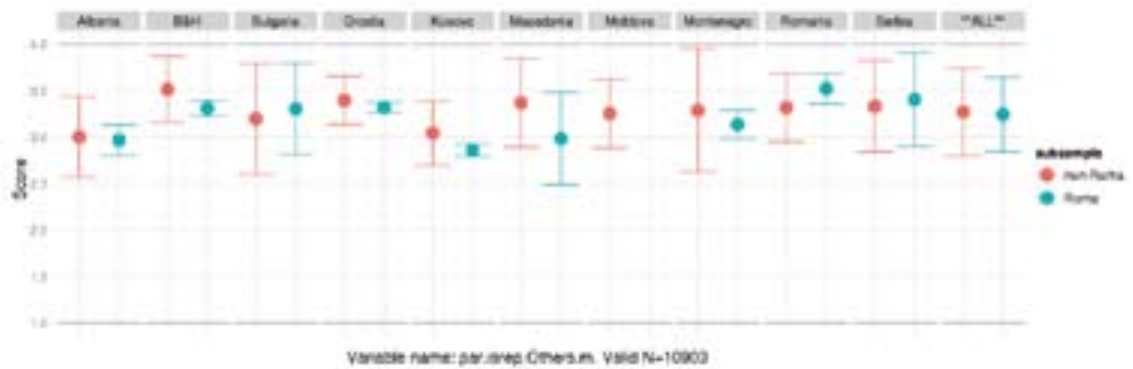
Figure 26.f. Representatives' assessment of trust from parents by country and subsample –
mean and +/- 1 SD

The parent representatives' **belief in their effectiveness**, based on their rating of how well they communicate with other parents, how active they are etc., is overall high (Figure 26.h.), but large variations between countries, as well as individual differences characterise the picture. Parent representatives in Moldova and Romania, as well as Roma parent representatives from Serbia see themselves as most effective, while Roma parent representatives from Kosovo and all parent representatives from Albania see themselves as the least effective.
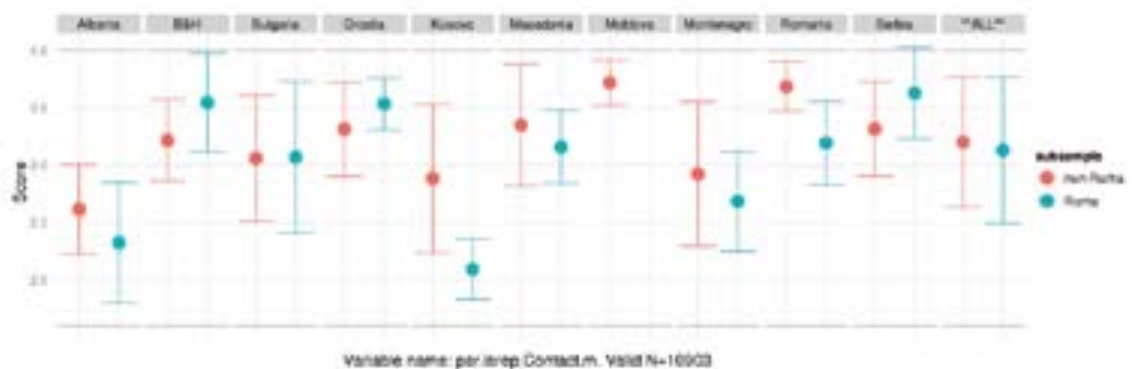
Figure 26.h: Representatives' beliefs in their effectiveness by country and subsample – mean
and +/- 1 SD
Scores: 1– "don't agree at all", 2 – "agree a little", 3 – "agree a lot", 4 – "agree totally"

The parent representatives are however quite pessimistic when assessing the extent of their **influence** on decision-making in the areas described in Section A (financial management etc.) (Figure 26.d.). Although some variations among countries exist, the overall rating is around "somewhat important" for both Roma and majority parents' representatives. More significant seem to be the individual variations among parents in the same subgroup (e.g. the Roma parent representatives in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia), again indicating the differences in contexts, experiences and

skills of individual parents which affect their assessment of their own influence. Parent representatives provide a somewhat more coherent and optimistic assessment of the parents' influence on school decision-making across different areas of potential decision-making processes of the school (Figure 26.e.). Roma parent representatives assess parental influence on school decision-making as being lower than majority parents do (see, for example, the discrepancy of the majority and Roma parent representatives' assessment in Macedonia), except in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, but overall the between-country differences are not big.

Parents' assessments of their representatives paint a somewhat different picture. It seems that not all parents know their representatives well, especially Roma parents are often not acquainted with the representative (Figure 27.a.) and more than half of the mainstream parents and two-thirds of Roma parents feel that the representative does not contact them frequently (Figure 27.e.). Not all parents feel they are treated with respect by the representative, in some cases a lack of respect is clearly indicated e.g. among Roma parents in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 27.b.); and not all parents can talk easily about a concern with their representative (Figure 27.c.). Parents assess their parent councils as being moderately active and effective (Figures 27. d. and f.).
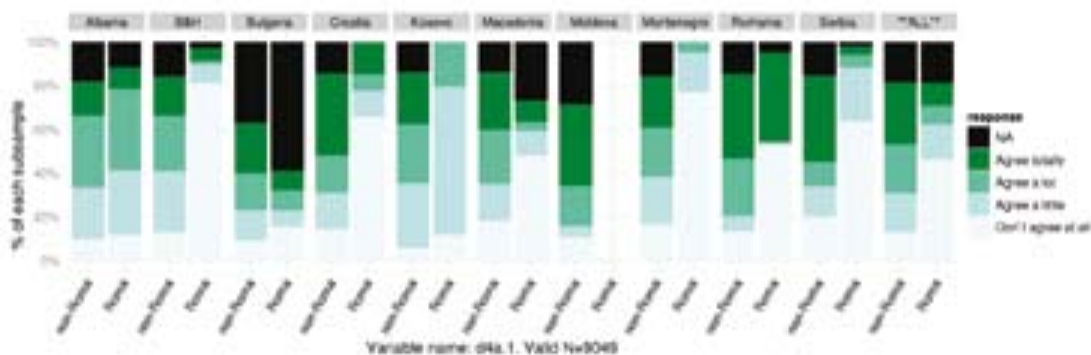
Figure 27.a. I/we know the parent representative for my child very well
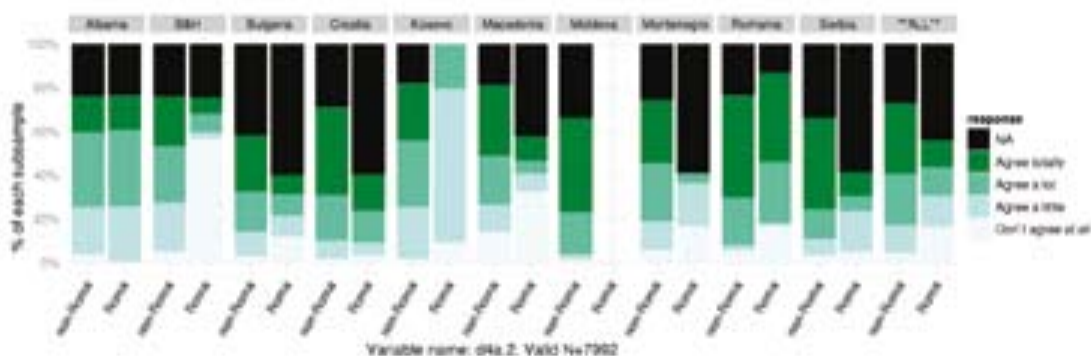
Figure 27.b. The parent representative treats me/us with respect
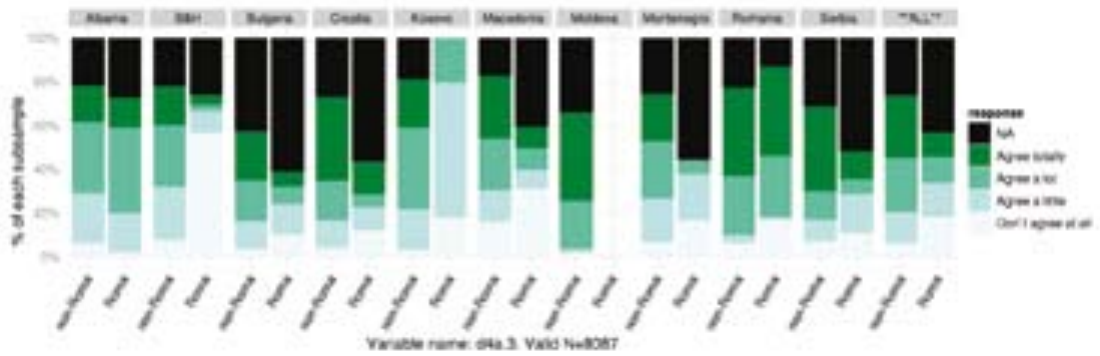
Figure 27.c. I/we can talk easily to the parent representative about any concern I have about my child or the class
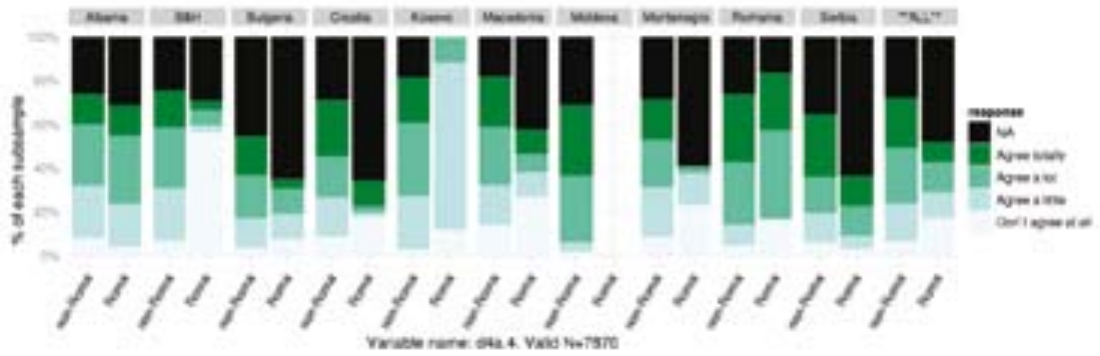
Figure 27.d. The parent representatives/parent council in our school are/is active
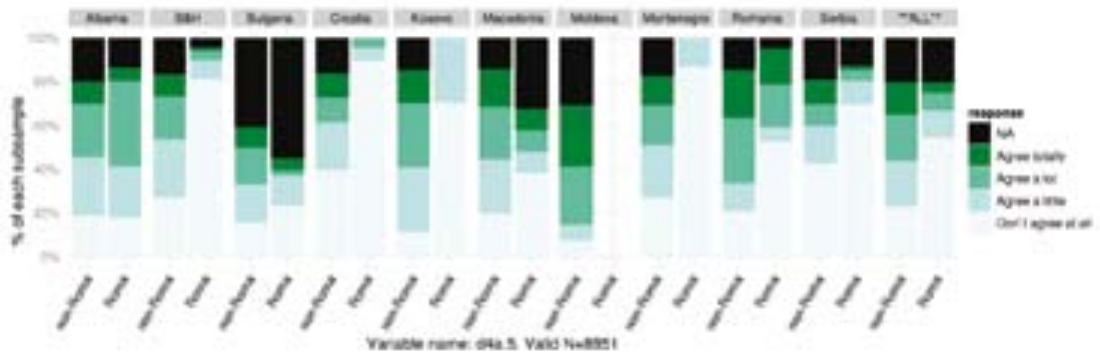
Figure 27.e. The parent representatives/parent council in our school contact/contacts me/us frequently
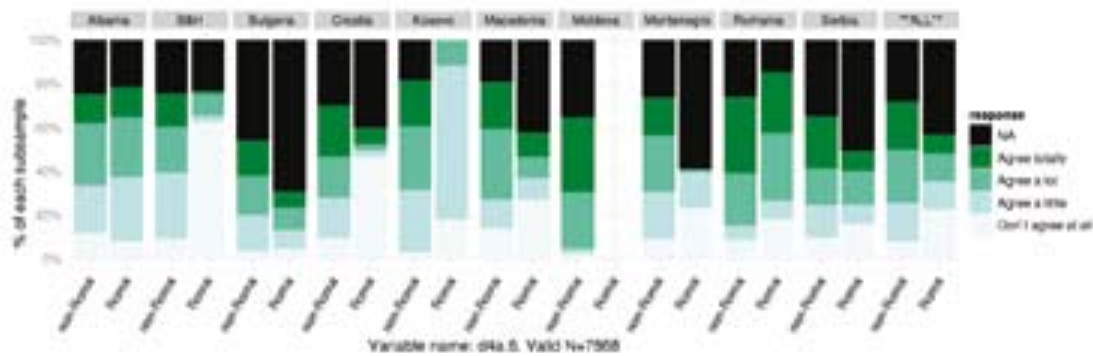
Figures 27.f. The parent representatives/parent council in our school are/is effective in looking after our interests

Summary of the parent representative's role

The survey results show that the role of a parent representative is not easy. They are caught between schools which only to a very small degree invite parents to participate according to most dimensions of parent participation and parents who have high expectations regarding participation – who assess participation as beneficial for their children, feel capable to participate and respond positively to the scarce invitations by schools, but rarely show any initiative on their own behalf. The bridging role of parents' representatives, their capacity to channel the expectations of both sides towards each other and to ensure or set up missing communication links between schools and parents seems to be critical in such a context. However, the relationship between parents and their representatives is not always smooth. Although parents perceive their representatives in general in a positive light, not all parents know their parent representative and they feel the representative does not communicate with them frequently enough. The parent representatives themselves perceive that they are working for the benefit of others, that other parents trust them, they feel reasonably efficient but, at the same time, assess their influence and the influence of other parents on school decision-making as quite low. This paradoxical result is further complicated by the high level of individual differences between parent representatives' perceptions and appraisals, which indicates that parent representatives are left on their own, without any systemic support and that their personal skills, capacities and engagement are the most important factors of their success and not the role they assume as such.

C – Parental beliefs about participation

Parents' beliefs about the nature of parent-school co-operation, about the division of roles between schools and parents and parental expectations can have a mediating role in the complex processes of co-operation between the schools and parents and affect parent participation possibilities and practices – hence data were gathered on these parental beliefs as well.

Three composite variables developed through factor analysis from the raw questionnaire data describe the **parents' beliefs about parent-school co-operation**: parents seen as obstacles to participation, schools seen as obstacles to participation and schools perceived as being open versus closed towards parents.

The data in Figures 28.a. and 28.b. show that parents attribute obstacles to co-operation between schools and parents to both schools and parents but, paradoxically, they more and more consistently see the parents as obstacles than the schools. They assess that parents are not interested, do not have the time, do not know how to communicate relatively high, while they assess the obstacles stemming from the schools' side – teachers not being interested, not having the time or not knowing how to communicate with parents – somewhat lower. However, individual differences are high between parents within the same country, while Roma parents in most countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia) are more critical of the schools than majority parents.

On average, regardless of countries and subsamples, parents do not see schools as closed vis-à-vis parents (except Roma parents from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia who are more critical in this respect as well) (Figure 28.c.). Individual differences are also large in this respect and indicate that parents within the same country might have quite different experiences of co-operation with the school of their child and form their opinions based on these experiences.
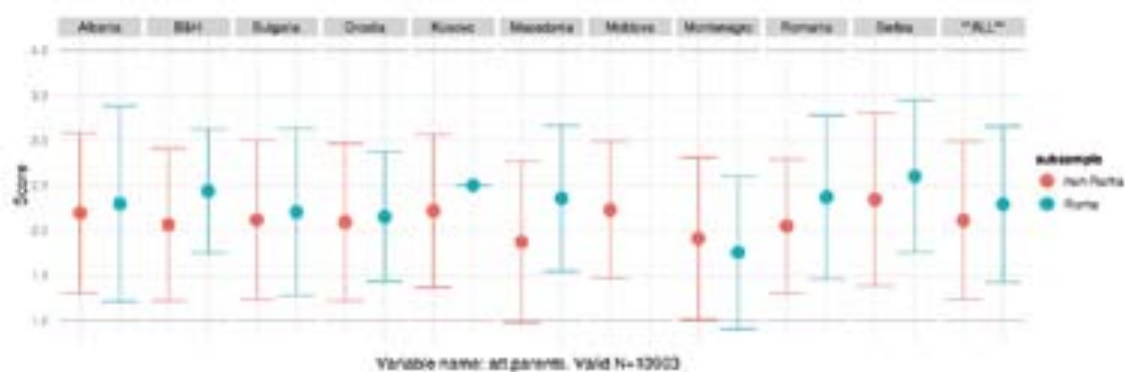
Figure 28.a: Parents seen as obstacles to participation by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score: 1– "not at all", 2–"to a limited extent", 3 – "to some extent", 4 – "to a large extent"

Variable name: att.school. Valid N=10903
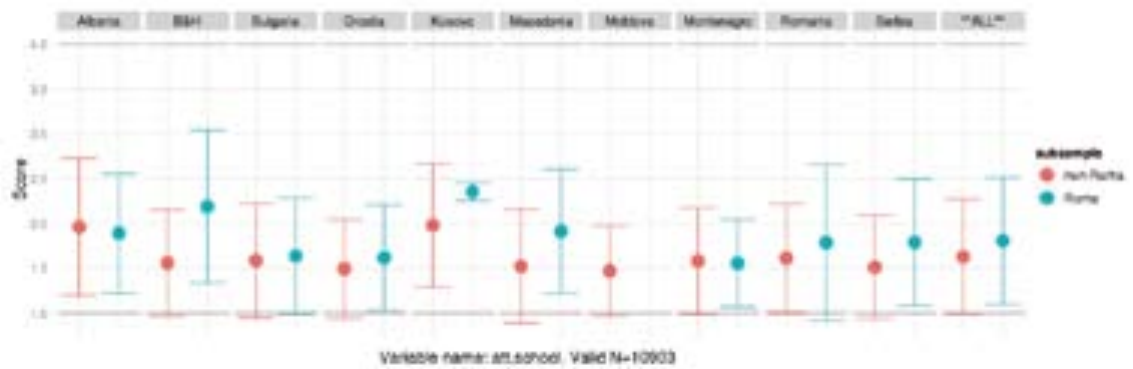
Figure 28.b: School seen as obstacle to participation by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score: 1 – "not at all", 2 – "to a limited extent", 3 – "to some extent", 4 – "to a large extent"

Variable name: open2. Valid N=10903
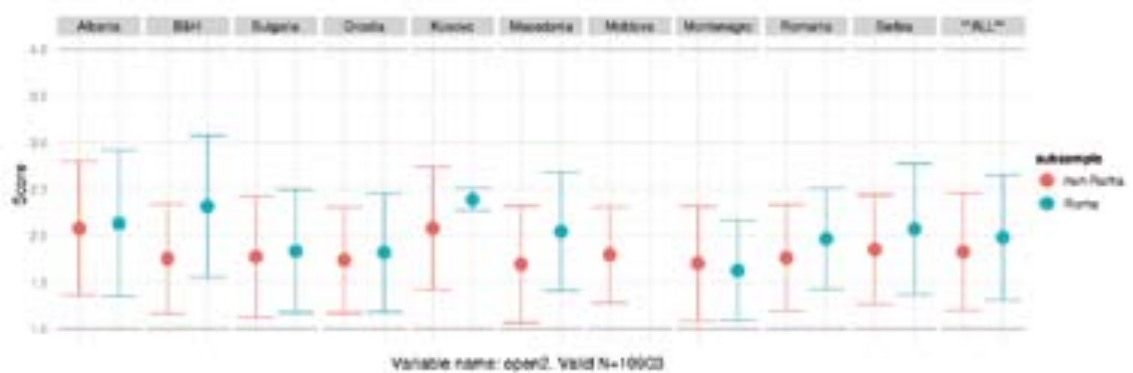
Figure 28.c: School perceived as closed by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score: 1 – "not at all", 2 – "to a limited extent", 3 – "to some extent", 4 – "to a large extent"

Parents' beliefs about the **division of roles** between schools and parents is captured by three composite variables derived from the parental responses to the survey questions: ensuring that the child is happy at school, that they are well educated and that they are well brought up as being the role of parents versus the role of the schools. Parents quite consistently, across countries and subsamples, agree that upbringing is more a parental than a school role (Figure 28.f.). In respect of ensuring good education, parents see their role to a lesser degree, except in Moldova (Figure 28.e.), while with regard to ensuring the child is satisfied at school they see both the parents' and the school's role as being equal (Figure 28.d.) without substantial variations between countries or subsamples.
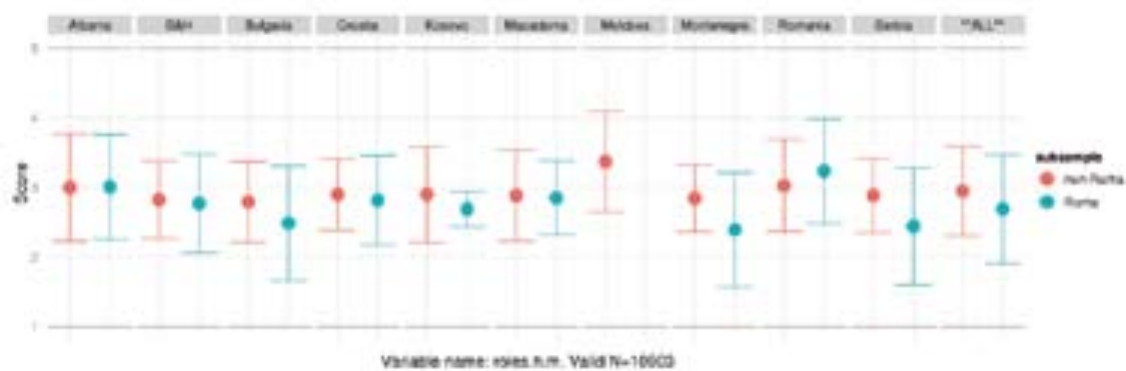
Figure 28.d: Ensuring the child is happy at school is the role of parents rather than the school by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score: 1 – "not at all", 2 – "to a limited extent", 3 – "to some extent", 4 – "to a large extent"
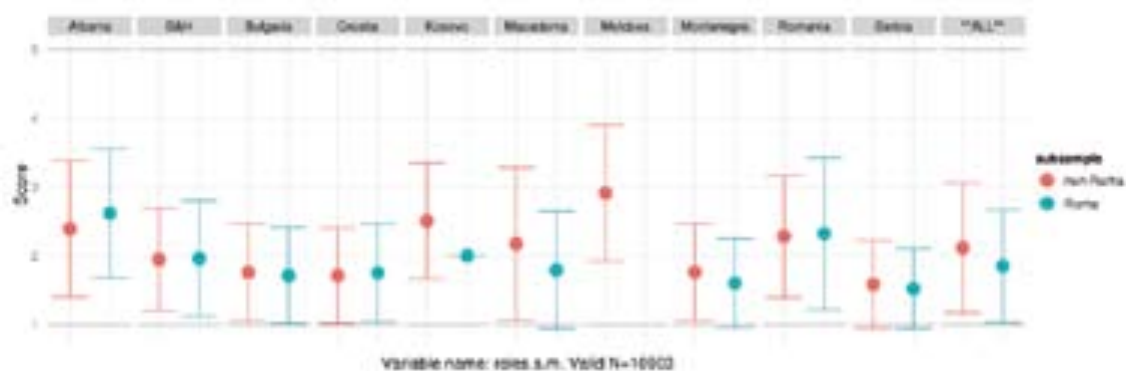
Figure 28.e. Ensuring good education is the role of parents rather than the school by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score: 1 – "not at all", 2 – "to a limited extent", 3 – "to some extent", 4 – "to a large extent"

Variable name: roles.u.m. Valid N=10603
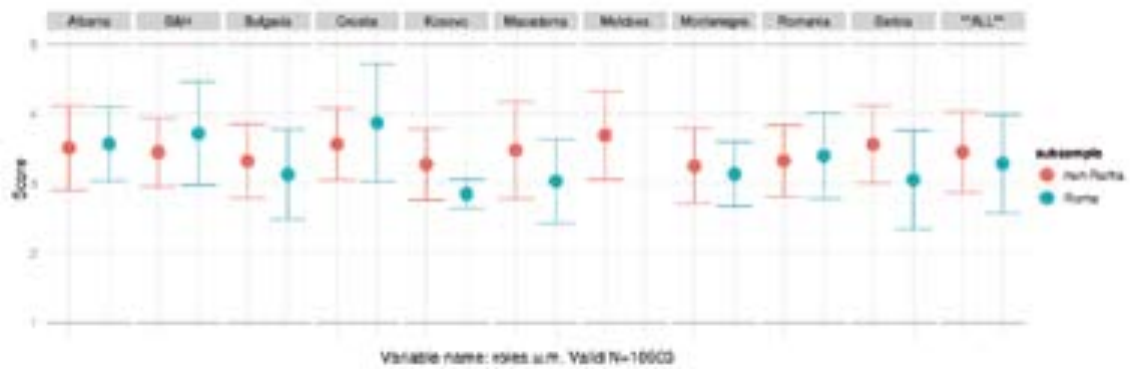
Figure 28.f. Bringing the child up well is the role of parents rather than the school by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Score: 1 – "not at all", 2 – "to a limited extent", 3 – "to some extent", 4 – "to a large extent"

Finally, parents' **satisfaction with the school** was assessed through three sets of questions pertaining to general satisfaction (e.g. "1. The child is happy at school" or "2. The child is doing well in his/her school work"), satisfaction with the communication with the school ("9. I am/we are happy with the quality and quantity of information from the school" and "10. I am/we are happy with the different ways I can get involved at school") and satisfaction with their influence on decision-making at the school level ("11. I am/we are happy with the ways of influencing how the child gets educated" and "12. I am/we are happy with the ways of influencing the school in general"). The distribution of the composite scores for these three scales is presented in Figures 30.a. to 30.c.

Variable name: outcomes.gen.m. Valid N=10603
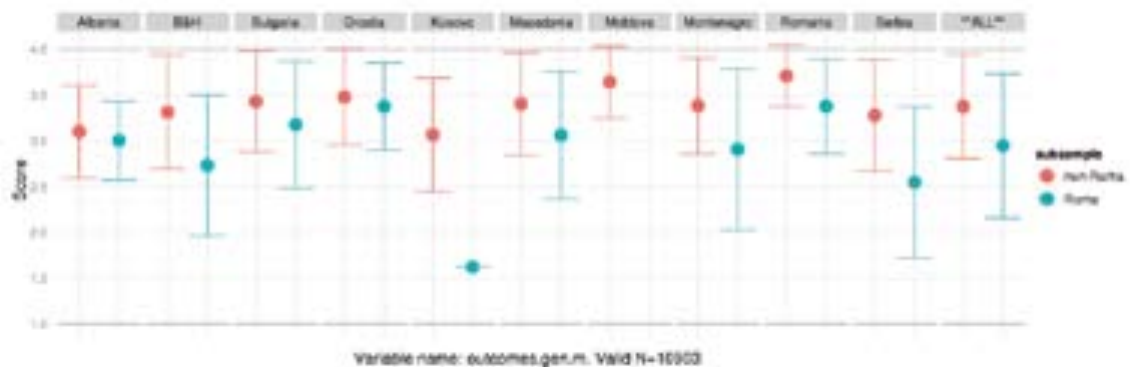
Figure 30.a. General satisfaction with the school by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD. A higher score reflects a higher level of satisfaction.

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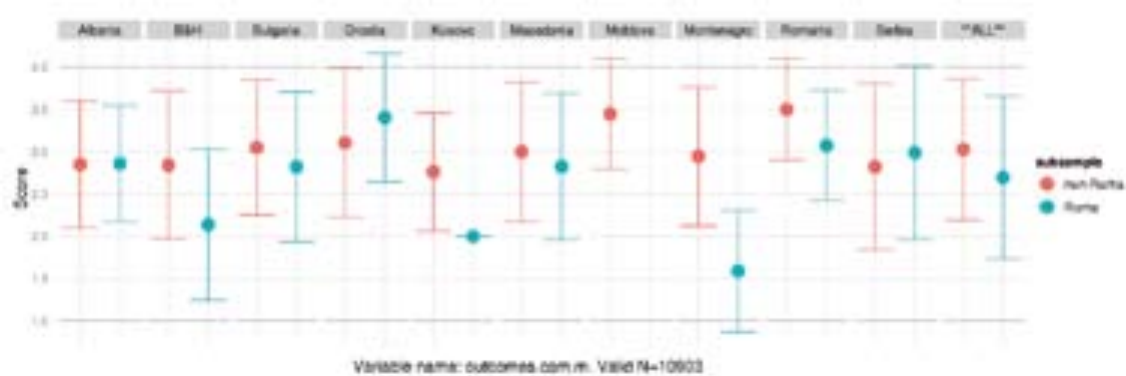
Figure 30.b. Satisfaction with communication with the school by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD. A higher score reflects a higher level of satisfaction.
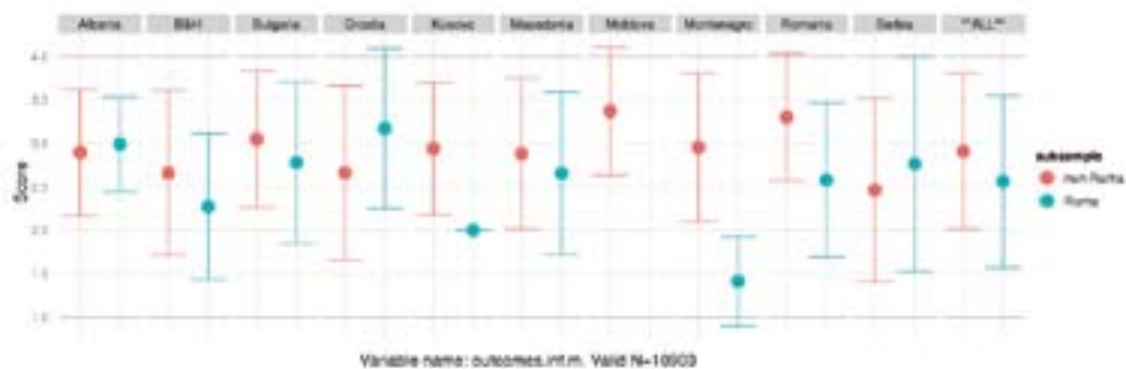
Figure 30.c. Satisfaction with the opportunity to influence decision-making in the school by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD. A higher score reflects a higher level of satisfaction.

Parents' satisfaction slightly but consistently decreases from general satisfaction, through satisfaction with communication with the school, to satisfaction with their influence on school decision-making. The same holds true for both subsamples, while the Roma parents' level of satisfaction is consistently somewhat lower than that of the parents from the majority sample. However, between-country differences are visible.

Parents from Moldova and Romania seem to be most satisfied according to all three dimensions, while general satisfaction is lowest among the parents from Albania and satisfaction with both communication and the influence on decision-making is lowest among the Serbian parents.

The data point to an additional salient pattern: while individual differences between parents within the same country are smallest regarding general satisfaction, they increase when it comes to parents' satisfaction with communication with the school and with their influence on decision-making, again indicating the wide range of different practices different schools adopt, thus creating the diversity of experiences parents have with their children's schools.

Summary of parental beliefs

The general picture gained from the data on parents' beliefs, role attribution and satisfaction regarding school life and influence seems to have three important aspects.

First, the parents' views indicate that their underlying conception of parent-school co-operation is more traditionally-oriented than partnership-oriented. They see parents as being more responsible for upbringing and schools as more responsible for education, they attribute obstacles less to schools than to themselves and their satisfaction with the school and with their own influence has a different pattern.

Second, substantial individual- (and/or school-) level differences are detected in several aspects of the parental views and beliefs, especially in respect of seeing parents as an obstacle, satisfaction with communication with the school and with their own influence. Although these variations could in principle be interpreted as reflecting the different personality traits of parents, the pattern of results instead suggests the variations result from differences in parental experiences with the specific schools and teachers they are communicating with.

Third, Roma parents voice a somewhat more critical view than the mainstream parents: they see the obstacles more clearly, attribute them more to themselves and to the schools, have higher expectations from the schools in respect of ensuring good education, upbringing and general satisfaction of the child and are less satisfied with the school in all aspects. Although the Roma parent sample in the study was much smaller than the mainstream parents sample, the consistency of the more critical views of Roma parents deserves serious attention.

D – Main factors contributing to parental satisfaction with their child's education and their influence on school life

For purposes of providing meaningful suggestions for education policy articulation in the SEE region, the study sought to identify some of the major factors which could contribute to higher parental satisfaction: a) with the education of their child; and b) with their influence on the school.

For each of these two measures of satisfaction, a series of multi-level regressions was carried out. Details of these analyses will be published separately, but a summary is provided here.

Both models are built first with "school-level" variables, i.e. those which are the same for every parent in any given school, such as area (urban-rural), the opinions of the director of the school and the mean scores of other variables for all the parents in each school, such as the mean household wealth index. It turns out that these variables play a very important role in the models, meaning that a big part of individual-level satisfaction is explained by factors which are the same for every parent in the school. Much of the variance in parental satisfaction is explained by the differences between schools[6]: there are schools in which most parents are dissatisfied and schools where most of them are satisfied and many gradations in between. In respect of general satisfaction, 38 percent of variance is at the school level and with regard to satisfaction with decision-making 35 percent of variance is at the school level.

As well as these school-level variables, individual-level variables are also included in the model such as individual family wealth and the characteristics of each child. Many of these variables are also very significant predictors in the models.

| | Parental satisfaction with education | | | |
| | Model 1: general satisfaction | | Model 2: satisfaction with decision-making | |
	t-value	p<	t-value	p<
intercept	-0.99	n.s.	0.09	n.s.
school-level variables				
area-rural	-0.03	n.s.	-0.33	n.s.
school mean: Household index: number of items owned, from a list of key items such as a washing machine	-3.50	0.00	-3.22	0.01
school mean: Roma or not	0.53	n.s.	-0.17	n.s.

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6 This means that to explain satisfaction it is inappropriate to use ordinary linear regressions as they would only focus on the relationship between individual factors and individual satisfaction. Instead, mixed-method multi-level regressions were used.

	Parental satisfaction with education			
	Model 1: general satisfaction		Model 2: satisfaction with decision-making	
	t-value	p<	t-value	p<
principals' opinion: ensuring the child is happy at school is the role of parents rather than the school – mean	2.13	0.05	0.70	n.s.
principals: frequency of invitations to participate – mean	1.83	0.1	3.28	0.01
school mean: the child's school achievement	1.39	n.s.	2.83	0.01
school mean: the child likes school	2.12	0.05	-1.25	n.s.
school mean: ensuring the child is happy at school is the role of parents rather than the school – mean	0.12	n.s.	0.71	n.s.
school mean: the family sees their parent representative as effective – mean	3.80	0.00	3.25	0.01
school mean: the family feels capable to participate – mean	2.58	0.05	-0.87	n.s.
school mean: seeing different forms of participation as good – mean	-0.09	n.s.	-1.02	n.s.
school mean: the family feels a duty to participate – mean	-1.23	n.s.	3.04	0.01
school mean: accepting invitations to participate – mean	0.91	n.s.	-1.53	n.s.
individual-level variables				
the child's school achievement	14.53	0.00	2.31	0.05
the child likes school	14.72	0.00	6.81	0.00
Household index: number of items owned, from a list of key items such as a washing machine	2.60	0.01	-1.23	n.s.
the family's belief that ensuring the child is happy at school is the role of parents rather than the school – mean	4.96	0.00	2.07	0.05
the family sees their parent representative as effective – mean	23.53	0.00	20.70	0.00
active participation – holding office of representative or trying to influence things	-8.54	0.00	-4.49	0.00
the family feels capable to participate – mean	4.04	0.00	-1.63	n.s.
seeing different forms of participation as good – mean	1.84	0.1	2.54	0.05
the family feels a duty to participate – mean	5.24	0.00	4.66	0.00
accepting invitations to participate – mean	5.76	0.00	4.04	0

Figure 31. Comparison of two models predicting general satisfaction with education

Looking at the specific results for individual variables, several conclusions seem to be important:

1. The largest contribution in the two models and at both school and individual levels comes from families seeing their parent representatives as effective. This is probably the most exciting result of the whole study: at schools where parents see their representatives as effective, they tend to be satisfied with education and their ability to influence decisions; and over and above this, individual parents who assess more strongly the effectiveness of their representatives than their peers do are much more likely to be satisfied with their child's education and their ability to influence decision-making. This suggests that parental participation does have a really substantial impact on satisfaction with education, but not on the level of individual parents' interaction with the school directly (which actually has a significant *negative* effect in these models), but as mediated through the representatives' effectiveness. Good schools are those which have effective parent *representatives.* Sometimes those representatives are effective for some but not all of the parents and vice versa, some parents establish a closer relationship with the representatives than others, most probably based on a variety of factors including personal initiative, connections and resources. However, it might be possible to substantially improve parental satisfaction with education in general and also satisfaction with one's own influence by helping to ensure that *all* parents are in a position to make use of their representatives and that *all* representatives become more effective.

2. The analysis also shows that families which accept invitations to participate at a higher rate feel a duty to participate and see that as beneficial for their child tend to be somewhat more satisfied with education generally and with their influence on the school as well. These factors are more salient at the individual family level, than if viewed as school means where only the mean for feeling the duty to participate contributes to a higher level of satisfaction with one's own influence. However, if we look at a more proactive role of parents the situation changes completely: the contribution of parental initiative to satisfaction in both models is negative – parents who take responsibility, try to initiate actions and influence school policies are much less satisfied with education and with their own influence at the school level than the more passive parents. It is important to note that the contribution of these factors to satisfaction, describing by and large what families can strive for and do by themselves, is far lower than the contribution of the parents' representatives' effectiveness.

3. Principals' assessment of the frequency of invitations also contributes somewhat to parental satisfaction – in schools where principals report more initiatives taken by the school, parents are somewhat more satisfied with education and, especially, their influence.

4. Significant contributions to satisfaction with the school in general are made by the characteristics of the child as well – those families where children like school and have high achievements tend to be more satisfied with the school. However, the contribution of these factors to the parents' satisfaction with their influence is much lower, indicating that it often might be the case that, while the parent is satisfied with the school in general, he/she still feels not included enough.

5. In respect of socio-economic characteristics, it is striking that the school mean of household wealth has a significant *negative* coefficient in both models, indicating that parents in schools with poorer families are on average more satisfied than parents in richer schools. One explanation might be that wealthier parents have higher standards and are less prone to be satisfied with the school in general and with their decision-making possibilities. However, at the same time, the coefficient for *individual* family wealth in the model for general satisfaction is positive, suggesting that while people are generally more content with education in schools in poorer areas, conversely being richer than one's peers at a school is to some degree still related to general satisfaction.

6. It is also important to note that while allowing for other socio-demographic variables, the school-level Roma variable, which can be understood as the proportion of Roma in the school, does not make a significant unique contribution to the prediction, suggesting that schools with more Roma parents have a similar level of satisfaction, both in general terms and in respect of decision-making as schools with fewer Roma parents but with an otherwise comparable socio-economic background.

In summary, these analyses highlight the need to focus on schools rather than on parents in order to achieve the greater satisfaction of parents with education and their influence and in particular they suggest an important role of parent representatives in creating a school atmosphere which embraces parents as genuine partners in the same endeavour of educating children and ensuring their well-being. Schools which initiate more participation activities and where parent representatives are more effective involve parents better and create greater satisfaction with children's education as well. Parents themselves, without these mediating factors, cannot influence much.

E – Parents' socio-economic characteristics and their perceptions of the child's adjustment to school requirements

Since the study utilises data from 10 SEE countries which were collected in a systematic and fairly uniform way from well-designed parent samples, it allows us to describe the living conditions, education-relevant household forms of support and educational status and aspirations of parents from the 10 countries, thus providing a valuable by-product of the study: a glimpse into the social context of parents and children from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

Regarding basic socio-economic characteristics, a **wealth index** was calculated based on the number of 16 typical items the household owns and the facilities available to the family, from running water, a toilet, heating, basic kitchen utilities, to a fixed and mobile phone, a writing table for each school aged child, a dishwasher, an air conditioner, a computer, an Internet connection and a car.

According to the wealth index, mainstream parent households show a positive picture with the mean being between 10 and 16 items, with the exception of Moldova and partially Romania where the mean is below 10. However, the disparity between the mainstream households and Roma parents' households is striking throughout all countries in the study: the wealth index mean of Roma households is 1, 2 or even 3 standard deviations below the mean for the mainstream parents. Thus, for example, only around 35 percent of Roma households have heating in each room, only 20 percent have a computer, a writing table for each school aged child and about 42 percent do not have a washing machine, 73 percent do not have a fixed phone. The biggest disparity between the subsamples in this respect seems to be in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, while the two subsamples seem to be closest regarding the wealth index in Macedonia and Romania. Comparing the Roma subsamples across countries, the Roma subsamples from Serbia and Macedonia had a somewhat higher wealth index than their counterparts from other countries (Figure 32.a.).

Looking specifically at the educationally most relevant aspects of household equipment, the number of computers, an Internet connection, and a writing table per child deserve further attention along with the number of books.

More than 60 percent of households in the surveyed SEE countries have a **computer** and around 50 percent also have an **Internet connection** (Figure 32.b.). As mentioned, the discrepancy between the mainstream and Roma households is substantial in this respect, with the biggest discrepancy being found in the surveyed households from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

A more concerning aspect of household equipment is, however, a working table for each child (Figure 32.c.) and the number of books in households (Figure 32.d.). A **working table** is available for each child in only around 60 percent of the surveyed households, while in the remaining 40 percent children have to share and manage their workspace in the given circumstances. Having in mind the need for homework and learning at home, a salient school request throughout SEE, this could be a serious educational obstacle across all countries in the SEE region. The discrepancy between the surveyed mainstream and Roma households is again striking.

In all countries, the mean **number of books** per household falls close to the category of 10-50 books, or between 50 and 100 books, except in Bulgaria where it is slightly higher. In the Roma subsample, the mean regarding the number of books is below 10, except for the Roma who were surveyed in Kosovo where the mean is much higher.
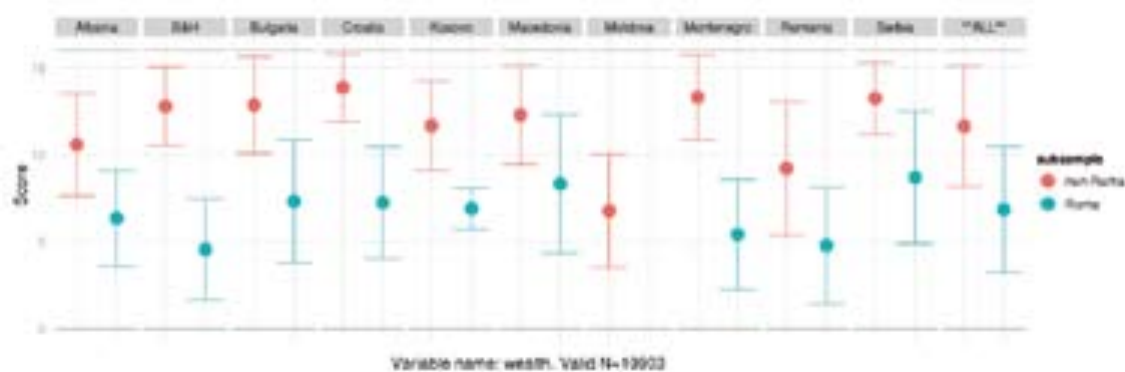
Figure 32.a. Household index: number of items owned, from a list of key items such as a washing machine by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores 1 –"none" to 16 – "all items on the list"
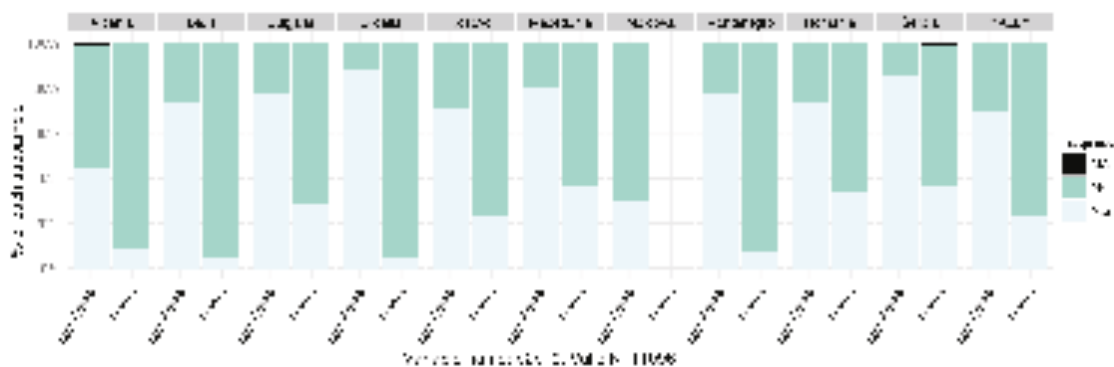
Figure 32.b. Number of households with a computer
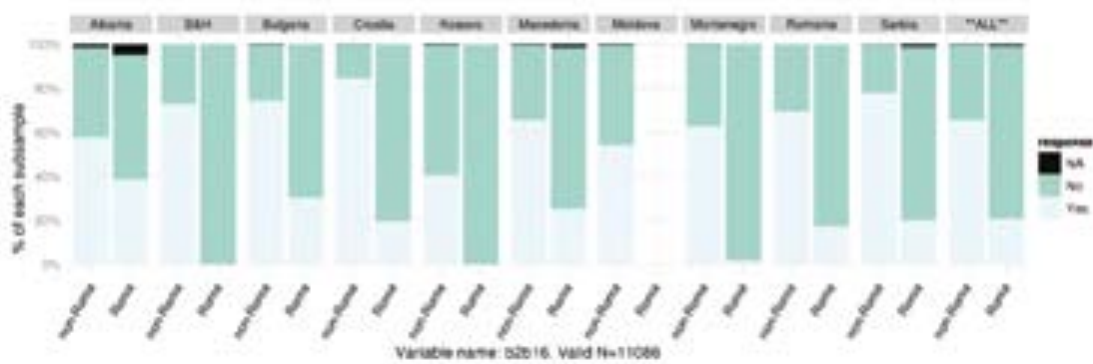
Figure 32.c. Do all the children in your household who are at the school each have their own writing table?
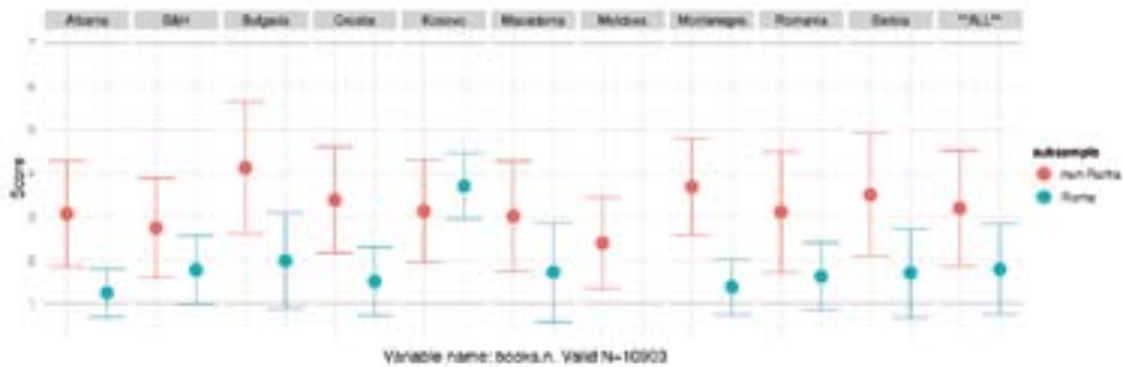
Figure 32.d. Number of books in the household by country and subsample – mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores: 1 – "none", 2 –"1-10", 3 – "11-50", 4 – "51-100", 5 – "101-250", 6 – "251-500", 7 – "more than 500"

The children from the surveyed families are mostly educated in medium-size schools with 500-1,000 children, except in Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania where the school sizes are smaller and cater for less than 500 students (Figure 33.a.). Roma children are educated in the same or similar **size schools**, except Kosovo and Macedonia where the Roma subsample was drawn from big schools, noting that some of the Roma children in Macedonia were enrolled in giant schools with over 2,000 students.

According to the parents' reports, children predominantly **like school** (Figure 33.b) and their achievements at the current education level (i.e. basic school) are mostly above-average (Figure 33.c). Overall, less than 10 percent of parents report that their children dislike or hate school. In the Roma subsample this percentage is somewhat higher, but does not exceed 25 percent. The **achievement** of children from the surveyed families is generally high, only less than 10 percent of parents report the below-average or poor achievement of their children, while 50 percent report an excellent achievement. The achievement structure in the Roma subsample is different. About 40 percent of parents report a below-average or poor achievement, while the percentage of excellent achievements is only around 10 percent.
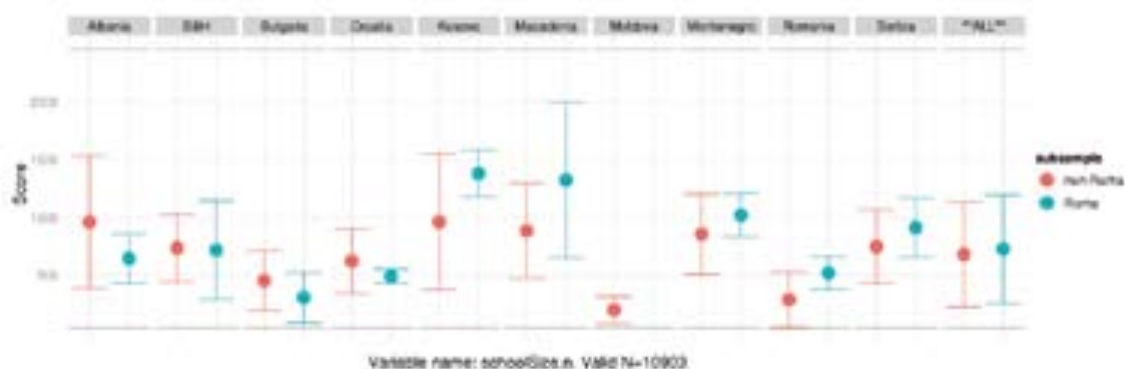
Figure 33.a. Size of the school
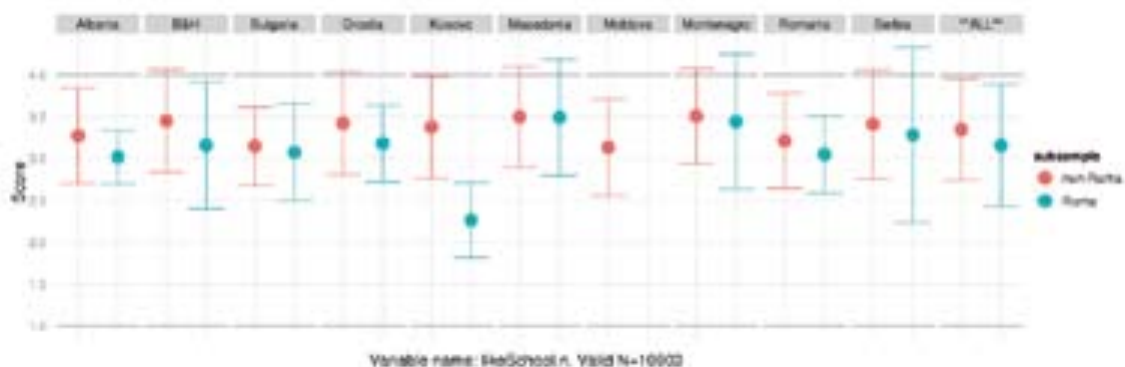
Figure 33.c. How much does the child like school?
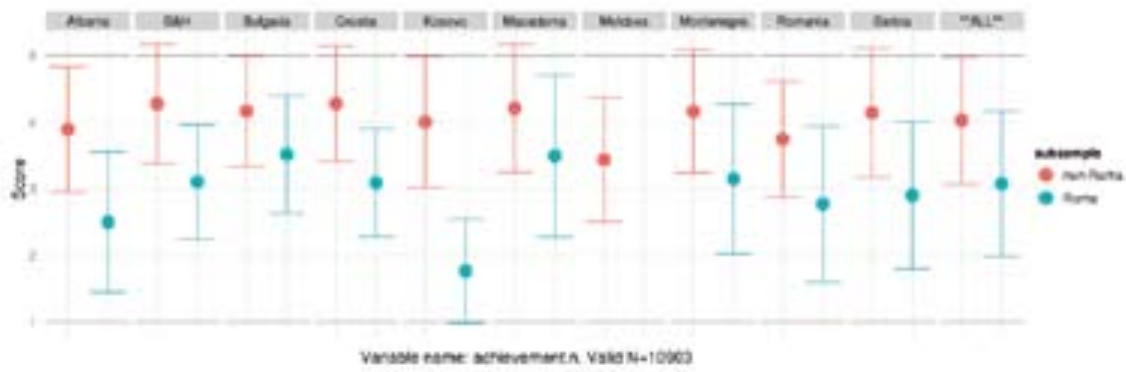
Figure 33.c. The child's achievement at school

The **education level of mothers** in the surveyed families reflects the education attainment structure of the general population in the respective age span in the SEE countries. The majority of mothers in the mainstream sample (about 60 percent) have completed secondary education, about 20 percent have completed tertiary education and about 20 percent have completed primary education (Figure 34.a.). Regarding the mothers' education levels, there are no major differences between the countries, rather the within-country variability is large, especially the difference between the mainstream and the Roma subsample. Only about 20 percent of the Roma mothers have completed secondary education in the entire Roma subsample and the disparity is striking in all countries, especially in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

The **education aspirations** of families for their children are higher than the education attainment of the mothers in both subsamples (Figure 34.b.), reflecting an understanding for the need for higher levels of education in order to gain fruitful employment and social status. More than 70 percent of the mainstream parents aspire for tertiary education for their child and virtually none for less than the secondary level, in the Roma subsample tertiary education attainment is the aspiration of about 20 percent of the families, secondary education for about 50 percent of the families and only 30 percent of the surveyed Roma families aspire for their children to finish elementary education.
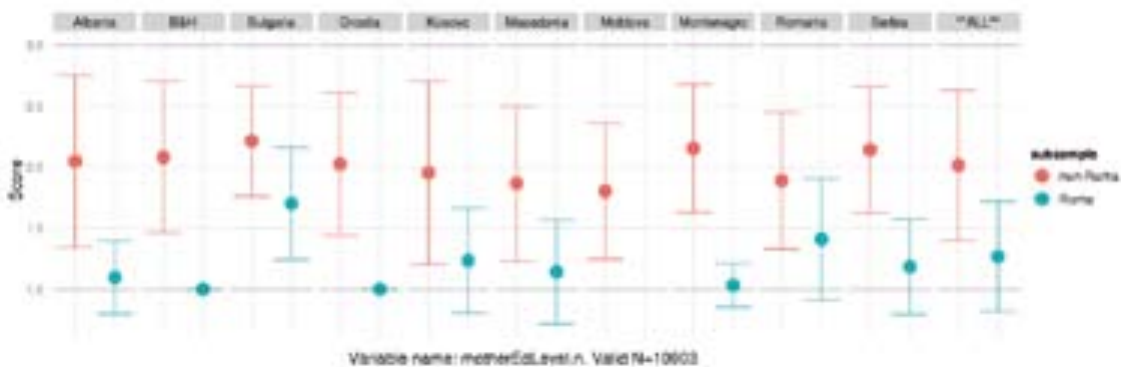
Figure 34.a. Education level of the mother by country and subsample mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores: 1 elementary education, 2 secondary education, 3 tertiary education
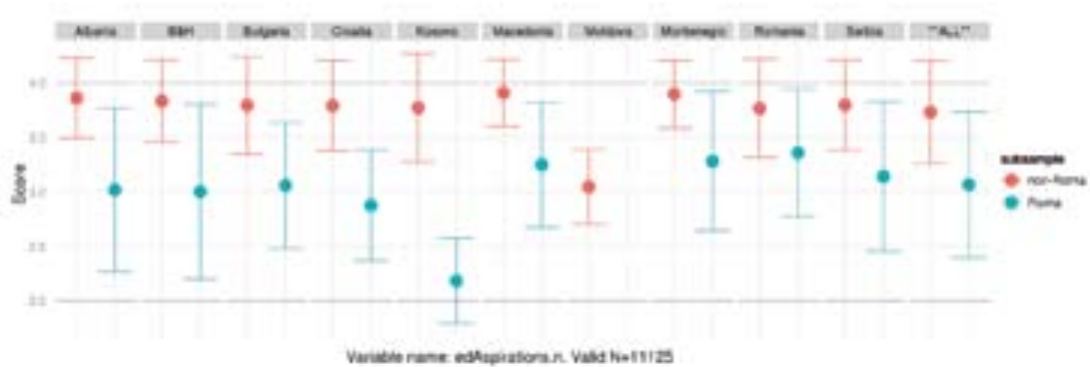
Figure 34.b. Education aspirations of the family by country and subsample mean and +/- 1 SD
Scores: 2 elementary education, 3 secondary education, 4 tertiary education

Summary of socio-economic and educational characteristics of the sample

The data collected through the survey corroborate the striking disparities between the mainstream and Roma subsamples in all aspects of demographic and educational characteristics of the household, clearly indicating the high risk of the conditions in which Roma families live for the education of Roma children. However, the data also indicate a certain disparity between the general well-being of the families and their stress on educationally relevant aspects of the family milieu. It seems that, despite the general well-being and the number of computers and an Internet connection in the households, books and working spaces are somewhat neglected, leaving children without sufficient support for their educational tasks. This neglect seems even more striking bearing in mind that, although the education attainment of mothers is not high, their aspirations for their children are much higher in both subsamples.

Most children are educated in schools which are bigger than what would be optimal for establishing close co-operation between families and schools, but most parents report that their children like their school and their school achievement is predominantly above-average or excellent.

Given the disparity of the high motivation of parents for the high attainment of their children and the insufficient support in both families and schools, it is expected that children will be under greater pressure than they can cope with, hence the demographic and educational characteristics of SEE households also suggest that education policies need to focus on overcoming and bridging the identified gaps and disparities. The most serious concern remains the support needed for the Roma households so as to be able to successfully educate their children.

Conclusions: From trends to recommendations

The study provides data on parents' experiences, assessments, views, beliefs, self-reflections, attitudes and practices connected to their children' s schooling across 10 SEE countries, with an added booster sample including Roma parents. All of the data are hard to access, subjective self-report data, reflecting the ways parents interpret their everyday encounters with their child' s school and tap into the very sensitive area of mutual relationships, burdened by power asymmetry, exclusion and high stakes related to the well-being of children.

The richness of the data country by country, subsample by subsample provide a valuable database already at the descriptive level and policymakers, professionals, educators can see and interpret the manifold differences and similarities based on their deep understanding of their own context.

However, despite the substantial between-country and in-country variations, several expected and not so expected overarching trends have been identified by the study.

First, three major results need to be highlighted. Although they were expected based on anecdotal and qualitative data, their pervasiveness is striking:

1. Schools in SEE countries do not take advantage of the different parent participation possibilities which school life offers the repertoire for initiating and practicing participation most often consists of the most traditional and legally binding form of an invitation to participate at class meetings and sending out report cards while the inclination of parents to participate in the different aspects of school life is high: they usually respond to invitations, assess all dimensions of participation as beneficial, also feel both capable and obliged to do so. Schools do not recognise parents as resources in many important areas of volunteering, extracurricular or curricular involvement where consulting with parents and involving them could also be in the self-interest of the schools and they usually cut them out of decision-making on any financial or management issues.

2. Parents themselves have adjusted their views, expectations and behavioural patterns to this, prevalently traditional, paradigm of parent-school relationships. They even view parents more and more consistently as being greater obstacles to parent school co-operation than the schools. They assess that parents are not interested, do not have the time, do not know how to communicate higher than they assess the obstacles stemming from the schools' side, teachers being not interested, not having the time, not knowing how to communicate, but still their satisfaction with the possibility of their influence is lower than their satisfaction with the school in general.

3. Roma parents are even more excluded than the majority parents schools are unaware of and not using one of the most effective mechanisms for overcoming marginalisation; hence, those who would need a strong partnership with schools the most are invited to participate the least often.

The study also revealed several less visible and less expected phenomena which can shed new light on parent-school participation mechanisms and lead towards ways of enhancing them.

1. In the context of the lack of invitations and initiative from the school's side and the prevalent traditional orientation, the individual strivings, beliefs, attitudes of parents do not seem to make a significant difference and do not seem to have the expected mediating role in enhancing parent-school partnerships. The difference only becomes visible when parental attitudes are recorded as school-level means, indicating the possibility of an emerging school atmosphere where co-operation and partnership might be nurtured, or neglected.

2. The mediating role seems to lie in the hands of the parent representatives. Parent representatives seem to be important bridges between the schools and the parents, with their effectiveness as perceived by other parents in the same school being an important predictor of parental satisfaction with the school generally and with parental influence in particular. The role of the parent representatives is legally established in all SEE countries and the prevalently more traditional orientation than partnership orientation of parent-school co-operation, as well as the social distance between schools and parents makes this role a central one.

3. However, parent representatives do not assume this role in a full-fledged way. They themselves do not rate their own influence in the school decision-making processes highly, many parents claim that they do not even know their representative and that the representative is not communicating with them often enough. The large individual differences between parent representatives' perceptions and appraisals, as well as parents' satisfaction with their influence, all indicate that parent representatives are left on their own without any systemic support and hence their personal skills, capacities and engagement are the most important factors of their success or failure and not the role they assume as such.

4. The need for school support in education is high in SEE countries. It seems that SEE families caught up in a rapid economic and social transition are on one hand somewhat neglecting both the material and the intellectual support for the education of their children but, on the other hand, they attach a high value and aspirations to their children' s education. Many currently neglected aspects of potential parent-school co-operation, especially providing relevant information and assistance with homework, involving parents in meaningful curricular and extracurricular activities could become highly important for overcoming these gaps at the family level and contribute to better national education outcomes.

The recommendations based on these results are clear and straightforward and fall into three categories:

1. National and local policymakers, school principals, advisors, teachers should do much more to attract, invite and include all parents as important resources and partners in the life of their children' s schools and in schools generally. Schools should invest time, energy and creativity to discover, set up and make use of the currently neglected dimensions of parent participation and develop partnership-oriented co-operation with parents. The study has proven that this will not happen easily since the parent-school relationship is predominantly traditional, one-dimensional and burdened with mistrust and mismatches. Hence, schools should use a variety of approaches to gain insights into parents' attitudes and opinions, such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, and based on these develop strategic approaches to strengthening the co-operation with parents.

It would be useful to incorporate these approaches into their school development plans in written form and to establish and formalise a Code of school-parent relations . It would also be important to set up clear co-ordinating and reporting roles for the advancement of parent participation for school staff (school councillors/advisors, assistant directors etc.) in order to ensure that real activities take place, mutual trust is built and progress is monitored. It would also be important to ensure that teachers both through initial and in-service education develop the interpersonal competencies needed for effective communication with parents as well as deeper knowledge concerning parent-child dynamics and child developmental needs. Attracting parents to schools to celebrate their children' s successes instead of only to discuss problems and challenges could also be a good idea.

2. Parents' representatives should be given a much better founded role. National policies should be developed to ensure better ways of selecting parent representatives and provide training opportunities to them. Parents should be empowered to take more initiative in building up their potential for involvement in school life here the role of NGOs in education and parents' associations and counselling services for parents should have a more prominent role. Associations of parent representative bodies at the municipal, regional or national level should be established to give a voice to parents and create forums to discuss education-related issues and support the school-level representatives with information and advice.

3. Special care must be taken to nurture the inclusion of parents from vulnerable groups, especially Roma. Schools should actively reach out to Roma parents and involve them substantially. Legal provisions should ensure that parents of Roma origin have a seat on school boards and parent councils. This would ensure that Roma parents' needs are addressed, that they are informed appropriately and that school policies take their views into account.

Finally, in order to support a developmental leap in parent-school co-operation new legislative solutions are certainly needed, but they will not be sufficient in themselves to bring about substantial and sustained change. School development support and guidance need to become functional, good examples and best practices need to be identified, rewarded and disseminated, schools should co-operate among themselves in exchanging examples of best school-parent partnership practices and, above all, a new information and resource-sharing mechanism which includes and empowers parents in a more direct way needs to be established.

Parents are too important resources and stakeholders to be left on the margins of education systems education is about the future of their children and the education of children is about our common future as societies. Co-operation and partnership must be established.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Description of the survey instruments

Vlasta Vizek Vidović

Introduction

Two survey instruments were developed, one for the parents of elementary school children and the other for school principals of the same schools. The former was planned as a means to explore parents' behaviors, perceptions and attitudes related to the different aspects of their involvement in the school life (*Parents' survey*). The latter was envisaged as a sort of a mirroring tool reflecting how principals perceive and value the school engagement and support displayed by their pupils' parents (*Principals' survey*). In particular principals' views were asked about how often various forms of participation were offered, and what the typical uptake rate was, in order to be able to compare their answers with the same questions put to the parents.

Both survey instruments were developed with the joint efforts of the members of the central research team supported by the insights from the members of the country research teams as well as by expert staff from IPSOS and other strategic country partners.

The main sources used to build the conceptual framework of the instruments were:

1. An extensive literature review including major concepts, models and findings related to the parent-school partnership, describing key moderating factors as well as perceived outcomes in terms of parents' satisfaction and children's attainments. As a result of this review, Epstein's six dimensions of parental involvement (1987) was chosen as the theoretical background, combined with the Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) model of the parental involvement process. The concept of social exclusion (e.g. Berryman, S. E., 2000) was used as the basis for a subsection of the parents' survey intended for those parents whose children were at risk of social exclusion.

2. These concepts and approaches were further adapted to the social context of the ten participating South Eastern Europe countries based on the country team reports on focus groups discussions. The focus groups were seen as an opportunity to identify the ways that parents perceive educational systems and its shortcomings, how they relate to school, as well as to reveal their problems

with and attitudes towards involvement in school within specific country contexts.

3. The third source was the report from the previous cross national study of school principals carried out in SEE countries in 2008 which gave extensive account on how principals perceived different aspects of parental participation in school life and what action they undertook in order to foster parental involvement.

General characteristics of the instruments

Both instruments were developed in English by the central research team. The expert translators engaged by IPSOS translated them into the standard languages of the respective countries in the project followed by back translations into English. The comprehensiveness and clarity of the instruments were examined by means of cognitive interviewing of a few representatives from each subsample carried out by the Bosnian country team.

The items in both questionnaires were formulated as closed type questions, either as Likert-type items with mostly 4-point rating scales ranging from 1 (*not at all/do not agree*) to 4 (*to large extent/totally agree*), or as multiple – choice items (e.g. the wealth index, which offered a list of possessions such as refrigerator and asked which were owned by the household). The answer *"I do not know/cannot estimate"* was also offered as an option in most of the items. A couple of open ended questions were added in each instrument in order to give possibility to the respondents to clarify some of their statements (e.g. for Roma parents: *Why do you think that it is harder for your child in the school?*) or to offer some general suggestions or comments related to the improvement of the school-parents .partnership.

The guidelines for the interviewer were incorporated into the instrument itself either as general introductory instructions or as special notes related to specific sections or items.

Parents survey

The parents survey covers different behavioral, cognitive and affective aspects of parental involvement in school life. The instrument is composed of three distinct parts aiming at three subsamples: regular or mainstream parents, parents holding office in school bodies, and parents from socially excluded groups (these were Roma parents in all countries except Moldova). These parts will be further referred to *as Mainstream parents survey, Roma parents survey, Parent Representatives survey* and each will be described separately. It should be noted that **all** parents were interviewed with the mainstream instrument. The respondents from Roma and representative parents subsamples also responded to the questions from the additional parts covering their specific perspectives on educational issues and school context. In addition, all parents except those in the Parent Representatives subsample answered a block about perceptions of parent representatives.

A. Mainstream parents part

This part of the instrument starts with the "Context information" filled in by the interviewer covering details of the sample respondents belongs to (regular parents, excluded parents, active regular parents, active excluded parents), language of the interviewing, notes on special difficulties concerning interviewing procedure, and information on eventual minority status of a respondent.

The section "Socio - demographic data" covers background variables such as: *child characteristics* and *school adjustment* (gender, age, school level, child feelings about school, child's attainment at school, special problems and needs), *family/caregiver context* (number of books at home, possession various household amenities and appliances indicating household wealth, employment status of family members), *mother characteristics* (mothers education level and her own educational aspirations as well as the aspiration for her child).

The central part of the mainstream survey is the "Dimensions of participation" section based on Epstein's model of parent involvement (Epstein, 1987). This part comprises of questions based on the six forms of parents involvement with school, each described by several facets:

1. *attending school meetings*: class and individual meetings

2. *getting written information from school*: feedback on child progress, information on how to support child learning, classroom or school newsletter, information on different aspects of child development/health issues

3. *supporting child learning at home*: amount of time spent daily doing homework, who helps the child doing homework, whether it is helpful to the child

4. *volunteering in school activities and events*: helping to maintain school infrastructure, helping with sport, social and cultural activities, assisting teachers in lessons, helping in school services such as library, playground.

5. *participating in school-decision making* regarding: school financial management, extracurricular activities, organization of school events, health and safety issues, overall school management (e.g. shifts, change of location, merging), educational issues (e.g. textbooks, lessons content, pupil workload, teacher assessment), pupil violence and discipline issues, other issues raised through parents' initiative

6. *school-community cooperation*: related to school efforts aimed at helping families in need of community support.

Each aspect within a specific dimension has been elaborated in terms of school invitation to participate, actual parental or family response to this invitation and opinion on desirability/usefulness of such kind of involvement. This means that as well as scores for each type of involvement, separate global scores can be constructed for parents' perception of frequency of invitations to participate in all the different activities, overall frequency with which they take up these offers, their overall ratings of how appropriate and useful these forms of participation are, and to what extent they feel capable and competent to make use of them.

At the end of each section covering these forms of involvement respondents were asked to give overall evaluation of their involvement in the respective category.

This section also comprises the predictor variable of parents *own role in school bodies* either as class representative or member of the school board.

In the section "Other predictors and moderators" several moderator variables were included in order to achieve deeper understanding of the dynamics of parental involvement in school life based on the Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2007) model of parental involvement process. These variables were operationalized as following subscales: "motivation for participation in school life" (8 items), "perception of school openness" (7 items), perception of parents' representatives (6 items), "beliefs about school-parents partnership" (10 items). The items describing each variable were formulated as Likert - type 4 point scales ranging from 1 - *not agree/not at all* to 4 - *totally agree/to a large extent*) with exception of the beliefs of school-parent partnership where 5 point scale was used (1 - *defintly school's job* to 5 - *definitely parents' job*)

Within this part of the survey the two specific sections were incorporated regarding Roma parents and parent representatives which will be described separately.

The fifth section of the instrument "Perceived outcomes of parents involvement" contains items describing perceived outcomes at three levels: satisfaction regarding child well-being, adjustment and progress in school, satisfaction regarding communication with school, satisfaction with the possibility to influence the child's education.

The final section contains two open-ended items inviting respondent to offer some more suggestions about the facilitation and improvement of the school-parent partnership and/or to give general comment on the whole topic or procedure.

B. Roma parents survey

In this part of the instrument the main focus was on different aspects related to the perception of social inclusion of excluded children in regular schools. The respondents had to answer to 14 questions regarding their and child's proficiency of the main language spoken in the school, the perceived level of difficulty of school work and homework for the child compared to other non Roma children, as well as with satisfaction with the some aspects of school support (e.g. teacher assistants, additional lessons).

C. Parents representative survey

This part of the questionnaire, administered only to parent representatives, comprises of 8 set of questions regarding following issues:

a) parents present or previous form of engagement in school bodies such as parents council, school board, duration of engagement and way of getting engaged

b) reasons for getting engaged as parent representative

c) areas at school or class level were the respondent could contribute most as a member of board / council

d) parents influence in general are in that same areas of school life as well as in which areas, if any, they should not be directly involved

e) other parents' attitudes toward parent representatives and their readiness for cooperation

f) relations with the school administration

g) factors/conditions that would make parents council more effective

h) relations to other parents in the classroom which their own child is attending

Principals survey

This instrument follows the logic of the parents survey in order to make responses from two surveys highly comparable. In the first section "The school background" basic information on school characteristics are collected such as school size and composition regarding socio-educational structure of the pupils. In the second section "Forms of formal parental participation in school decision making" the level of engagement with three main bodies (school board, parents council, parent's/students association) is examined.

The central part of the instrument is the section "Dimensions of parents participation" which covers six dimensions of parent-school relationship comparable to the Parent survey (school meetings, written information, support to school learning , volunteering and participation in decision making, school-community partnership). The principals are asked to estimate the level of school initiatives to offer or invite parents to get involved in different aspects of school life in the previous school year including also opportunities for parents to express their opinions/attitudes on different school matters.

In the section "The other predictors and variables" the following variables were included: perceived barriers to parent-school cooperation, perception of the quality of relationship with specific groups (Roma parents and parent representatives), perception of parent's role regarding school life: traditional vs. partnership.

The final section contains two open-ended questions asking for principal's suggestion and general comments regarding various issues covered in the survey.

Some questions from the previous year's survey of principals were included in order to also allow analysis of change over time.

Survey Instrument

<table>
<tr>
<td>Project:</td>
<td>Number of the school in the sample</td>
<td>Number of the starting point</td>
<td>Interviewer's ID:</td>
<td>Interview start time:</td>
<td>Questionnaire ID:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

General instructions

From the starting point, the interviewer will visit one after the other neighboring household until he/she finds the household which includes child:

- Attending one of the schools in the sample
- between the ages of 8 and 13, i.e. from 8th to 14th birthday.
- at least be in the second grade of elementary school.

In this household, the interviewer continues with the interview. If there is more than one such child, the one whose first name comes first in the alphabet will be identified.

Respondent will be mother of this child, except in the case that mother is not available at the time of the visit, when father will be the respondent. If none of the parents is available at the time of the visit, the interviewer will reschedule the time for the interview, trying to speak to mother, and scheduling the interview with the father only if mother is note available in the reasonable time. If neither mother or father currently care for the children the interviewer will ask to speak to whoever is caring for the child (e.g. grandparent). If not available at the moment, the interviewer will reschedule the time for the interview.

A   GENERAL CONTEXT INFORMATION (FILLED IN BY INTERVIEWER BEFORE INTERVIEW)

A1. Name of the interviewer:_____

<table>
<tr>
<td>A2. Sample</td>
<td>
1.   Sample A (mainstream – regular parents sample)
2.   Sample E (Roma parents from excluded parents sample)
3.   Sample B (parents representatives sample)
4.   Parent representatives from Sample E school
</td>
</tr>
</table>

A3. Language of interview
A4. Special difficulties
A5. Minority status

Hello, let me introduce myself, my name is ---------- and I am here on behalf of the -----------. which is conducting the survey on parents – school co-operation. Do you have a child in the XY school[1]. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences and opinions about the school that your child is attending and if you have any contact with the school about your child.. The interview will last about 25 minutes and it is completely voluntary..

The results of the survey will help us to understand the kinds of contact schools and parents have – what teachers and principals expect of parents and what parents expect of teachers and principals.

Your answers will be kept confidential and they will be used only for research purposes.

B   SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

B1 THE CHILD IN FOCUS			
B1A General			
B1A1	Child's gender:	1. Male 2. Female	B1A2
B1A2	Child's age in completed years:		B1A3
B1A3	School level (grade):		B1B1

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[1]   If there is more than one such child, the one whose first name comes first in the alphabet will be identified.

B1B	School		
B1B1	**How does your child feel overall about going to school?**	1. Hates it 2. Does not like it 3. Likes it 4. Loves it	B1B2
B1B2	**How would you rate the overall achievement of your child in school?**	1. poor 2. below average 3. average 4. better then average 5. excellent	B1B3
B1B3	**Does your child have any difficulties at school such as:** *[INT] Mark as many as apply*	1. learning difficulties 2. behaviour problems 3. communication with the teachers and staff 4. relationship with peers 5. something else , what? _____ 6. no difficulties	B1B4
B1B4	**Does your child require special attention in school due to some special need – health/disability, educational, something else?** *[INT] Special educational need: Child may have some physical, medical, psychological or learning problem or disability which makes it harder for it to learn or access education (e.g. getting to school) than most children of the same age*	1. No 2. Yes, if yes why?_____	B2A1

B2	**CAREGIVER AND THE FAMILY CONTEXT**		
B2A1	**How many books do you have at home? (for adults and for children, not including school books)**	1. None 2. 1-10 books 3. 11-50 books 4. 51-100 books 5. 101-250 books 6. 251-500 books 7. More than 500 books	B2B1
B2B	*Wealth index*		
B2B1	**Does your household have ... Running cold water**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B2
B2B2	**Running hot water,**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B3
B2B3	**Bath or shower**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B4
B2B4	**Internal WC**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B5
B2B5	**Stove for cooking**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B6
B2B6	**Refrigerator**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B7
B2B7	**Washing machine**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B8
B2B8	**Dishwashing machine**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B9
B2B9	**Air-conditioning**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B10
B2B10	**A computer**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B11
B2B11	**An internet connection**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B12
B2B12	**A mobile phone**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B13
B2B13	**A fixed phone**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B14
B2B14	**A car**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B15
B2B15	**Are all rooms in your dwelling heated during the winter season**	1. Yes 2. No	B2B16
B2B16	**Do all the children in your households who are in the school each have their own writing table**	1. Yes 2. No	B2C1

2

B2C	Respondent		
B2C1	The respondent is:	1. mother 2. father 3. foster-mother 4. foster-father 5. other caregiver, who? _____	B2C2
B2C2	**Breakdown of household according to current employment status (write number of household members in each category)**		Number	
		1. **Full-time employed:**	
		2. **Part-time employed:**	
		3. **Retired:**	
		4. **Housewife:**	
		5. **Unemployed:**	
		6. **school/training/college:**	
		7. **pre-school age:**	
		8. **other:**	
		9. **Total number of household members**		B2D

B2D	Education background and aspirations		
[INT] Next three questions refer to the mother of the child (even if someone else is answering). If the mother is deceased or completely absent from the family, then it refers to the care-giver who spends most time with the child. **B2D0** The answers refer to: 1. Mother 2. Care-giver			
B2D1	**MOTHER's educational level (last obtained certificate/diploma). (Give information about the mother even if someone else is answering). If the mother is deceased or completely absent from the family, answer for the care-giver who spends most time with the child.**	1. none – up to unfinished elementary school 2. elementary school 3. secondary school vocational 4. secondary school general 5. higher education: university 6. higher education: postgraduate	B2D2
B2D2	**During the last two years, about how much time has the child's mother spent attending adult education, i.e. training courses, seminars, summer school, etc? (do not include secondary or higher education)**	1. More than fifty hours 2. 10-50 hours 3. Up to 10 hours 4. None 99. *Don't know*	B2D3
B2D3	**Would the mother be interested in attending training courses, seminars, summer school, etc if the opportunity was available?**	1. Yes, definitely 2. Yes, probably 3. Maybe 4. Probably not 5. Definitely not 99. *Don't know*	B2D4
B2D4	**What are the family's plans regarding your child's schooling? What level of education you expect he/she will/should have:**	1. elementary school 2. secondary vocational 3. secondary-general 4. tertiary – bachelors level or beyond 99. *Don't know /Don't have plans yet*	C

3

C DIMENSIONS OF PARTICIPATION

All questions are asking about the relationship between the school and those family members involved in schooling the child, whether this is primarily the mother, or the mother and the father together, or the grandparents, or a guardian, etc. So questions about „you" should be understood to mean all those family members involved in schooling the child. For example in the first question below, if a different family member went to each meeting, but between them they went to every meeting as the child's carer, the answer is „4", i.e. every time.

Note for all the questions in this section: if the respondent says e.g. in question 1 below that they were invited to do something „once", and they did what they were asked to do that one time, then in the next question (e.g. question 2 below, did someone go ...") the answer should be „every time".
If the respondent says they were invited twice, and accepted the invitation once, the answer should be „once".

C_AB	**A&B MEETINGS AT SCHOOL**						
C_AB_A	**Class or group parents' meeting**						
C_AB_A1	**How often did the school invite someone from the family to this kind of meeting last year (including compulsory parents meetings)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_AB_A2	*[INT] If invited,* **did someone go from your family?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_AB_A3	**Is this something the school should be inviting parents to?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_AB_B
C_AB_B	**Individual meeting to talk about my child's education**						
C_AB_B1	**How often did the school invite someone from the family to this kind of meeting last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_AB_B2	*[INT] If invited,* **did someone go from your family?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_AB_B3	**Is this something the school should be inviting parents to?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_AB_C
C_AB_C	**Summary: Class, group or individual parents meetings:**						
C_AB_C1	**Does at least someone in your family feel capable and competent to make the best use of this kind of meeting?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
C_AB_C2	**Do you think that at least someone in your family has a duty to attend this kind of thing?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_AB_C3	**Do you think doing this kind of thing can help your child?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_BC_A
C_BC	**B&C WRITTEN INFORMATION**						
C_BC_A	**Written feedback on child's progress – written assessment, numerical grades, final reports, and/or similar, whether given at class meeting, sent via the child, sent to your house, or similar**						
C_BC_A1	**How often did the school send this kind of information last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_A2	*[INT] If sent,* **did someone in your family read it?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_A3	**Is this something the school should be sending families?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_BC_B
C_BC_B	**Written information on how to help your child learn, about the school, rules, content of lessons**						
C_BC_B1	**How often did the school send this kind of information last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_B2	*[INT] If sent,* **did someone in your family read it?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_B3	**Is this something the school should be sending families?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_BC_C

4

C_BC_C	**School or class newsletter**						
C_BC_C1	**How often did the school send this kind of information last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_C2	*[INT]* **If sent, did someone in your family read it?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_C3	**Is this something the school should be sending families?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_BC_D
C_BC_D	**Written information on other things (health, drugs, violence ...)**						
C_BC_D1	**How often did the school send this kind of information last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_D2	*[INT]* **If sent, did someone in your family read it?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_BC_D3	**Is this something the school should be sending families?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_BC_E
C_BC_E	**Summary: Any kind of written information from the school, including all the above examples**						
C_BC_E1	**Does at least someone in your family feel capable and competent to read this kind of thing?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
C_BC_E2	**Do you think that at least someone in your family has a duty to read this kind of thing?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_BC_E3	**Do you think that reading this kind of thing can help your child?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_B_A
C_B	**B SUPPORT TO LEARNING**						
C_B_A	**Helping with homework**						
C_B_A1	**Is this something the school should be asking families to do?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_B_A2	**Is there someone in your family capable and competent to do this kind of thing?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
C_B_A3	**Do you think it is your family's duty to do this kind of thing?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_B_A4	**Do you think doing this kind of thing can help your child?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_B_A5
C_B_A5	**How much time does your child spend each day doing homework?**	1. None 2. Less than 30 minutes 3. Between 30 minutes and 1 hour 4. Between 1 hour and 1 hour and 30 minutes 5. Between 1 hour and 30 minutes and 2 hours 6. More than 2 hours *99. Don't know*					C_B_A6
C_B_A6	**Who normally helps your child with homework?**	1. Nobody 2. Mother 3. Father 4. Someone else					C_D_A

C_D	**D VOLUNTEERING**						
C_D_A	**Helping with maintaining or improving school infrastructure – cleaning, painting, building etc**						
C_D_A 1	**How often did the school invite your family to do this last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_A 2	*[INT] If invited*, **did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_A 3	**Is this something the school should be asking families to do?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_D_B
C_D_B	**Helping with sport, social&cultural activities – plays, concerts , field trip, etc**						
C_D_B 1	**How often did the school invite your family to do this last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_B 2	*[INT] If invited*, **did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_B 3	**Is this something the school should be asking families to do?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_D_C
C_D_C	**Helping with lessons – telling a story, talking about job, playing an instrument, teaching assistance to teachers?**						
C_D_C 1	**How often did the school invite your family to do this last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_C 2	*[INT] If invited*, **did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_C 3	**Is this something the school should be asking families to do?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_D_D
C_D_D	**Helping in the school services such as library, playground, lunchroom**						
C_D_D 1	**How often did the school request / invite you to do this last year?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_D 2	*[INT] If invited*, **did someone in your family give this kind of help to the school?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_D_D 3	**Is this something the school should be asking families to do?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_D_E
C_D_E	**Summary: All kinds of volunteering**						
C_D_E 1	**Is there at least one person in your family who feels capable and competent to help in at least one of these ways?**	1. No	2. One	3. 2-3	4. >3	*99. Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
C_D_E 2	**Do you think there is at least someone in your family has a duty to help in this way?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_D_E 3	**Do you think that volunteering for the school can help your child?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_A
C_E1	**E PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**						
C_E1_A	**Were you (personally or as a family) asked your opinion on school financial management - how money is spent in the school – buildings, equipment, materials etc?**						
C_E1_A1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_E1_A2	*[INT] If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_E1_A3	*[INT] If invited, and gave an opinion*, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*	
C_E1_A4	*[INT] All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_B

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	FAMILY)?					
C_E1_B	**Were you asked your opinion on extra curricular activities (extra sports, foreign languages, arts, etc.)?**					
C_E1_B1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_B2	*[INT] If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_B3	*[INT] If invited, and gave an opinion*, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*
C_E1_B4	*[INT] All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_C
C_E1_C	**Were you asked your opinion on Organization of school events (celebrations, excursions, etc.) – (not just being asked to help)?**					
C_E1_C1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_C2	*[INT] If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_C3	*[INT] If invited, and gave an opinion*, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*
C_E1_C4	*[INT] All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_D
C_E1_D	**Were you asked your opinion on Health and safety issues (watchmen, road crossings, cameras, drugs, relationship with police, etc.)?**					
C_E1_D1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_D2	*[INT] If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_D3	*[INT] If invited, and gave an opinion*, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*
C_E1_D4	*[INT] All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_E
C_E1_E	**Were you asked your opinion on Overall school management – shifts, opening times, merging or closing classes or schools, changing location, changing the type of the school, etc.?**					
C_E1_E1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_E2	*[[INT] If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_E3	*[INT] If invited, and gave an opinion*, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*
C_E1_E4	*[INT] All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_F
C_E1_F	**Were you asked your opinion on Educational things – content of lessons, textbooks, teacher selection or assessment, pupil workload, homework, etc.**					
C_E1_F1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*
C_E1_F2	*[[INT] If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	C_E1_G

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C_E1_F3	[INT] If invited, and gave an opinion, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*	
C_E1_F4	[INT] *All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	

C_E1_G	**Were you asked your opinion on Pupil violence, expulsions and other pupil discipline issues and procedures, etc.**						
C_E1_G1	**How often did the school ask your opinion on this last year (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_E1_G2	[INT] *If invited*, **did you give your opinion to the school (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. Never	2. Once	3. Most times	4. Every time	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	
C_E1_G3	[INT] *If invited, and gave an opinion*, **did the school take it into account?**	1. No	2. A little	3. To a large extent	4. Completely	*99. Don't know*	
C_E1_G4	[INT] *All respondents answer* **Is this something the school should be asking you (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4. Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E1_H1

C_E1_H1	**Did you try to influence something on your own, i.e. not together with other parents (without first being asked by the school) – e.g. complain about a grade, complain about another child, etc**	1. Never	C_E1_I1
		2. Once 3. 2-3 times 4. >3 times	C_E1_H2
		99. Don't know /Don't remember	C_E1_I1
C_E1_H2	[INT] *If YES*, **what?**		C_E1_H3
C_E1_H3	[INT] *If YES*, **did you get what you wanted?**	1. No 2. A little 3. To a large extent 4. Completely *99 Don't know /Don't remember*	C_E1_I1

C_E1_I1	**Did you try to influence something with other parents (without first being asked by the school)**	1. Never	C_E1_J
		2. Once 3. 2-3 times 4. >3 times	C_E1_I2
		99. Don't know /Don't remember	C_E1_J
C_E1_I2	[INT] *If YES*, **what?**		C_E1_I3
C_E1_I3	[INT] *If YES*, **did you get what you wanted?**	1. No 2. A little 3. To a large extent 4. Completely 99 Don't know /Don't remember	C_E1_J

C_E1_J	**Summary: All kinds of participation in decision-making**						
C_E1_J1	**Do you feel you are capable and competent to contribute to decision-making in any of these ways (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
C_E1_J2	**Do you feel it is your duty to do at least one of these things (PERSONALLY OR AS A FAMILY)?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_E1_J3	**Do you think doing one of these things can/might help your child?**	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_E2_A

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C_E2	E OWN ROLE						
C_E2_A	**Class representative**						
C_E2_A1	Did you or someone in your family take this position in the last 3 years?	1. Never	2. Once	3. Twice	4. 3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	C_E2 _B
C_E2_B	**Member of the school board, PTA or other similar body**						
C_E2_B1	Did someone in your family take this position in the last 3 years?	1. Never	2. Once	3. Twice	4. 3 times	*99. Don't know /Don't remember*	C_E2 _C
C_E2_C	**Summary: Any kind of role**						
C_E2_C1	Do you feel someone in your family is capable and competent to take on any of these roles?	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
C_E2_C2	Do you feel it is the duty of someone in your family to take on at least one of these roles?	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	
C_E2_C3	Do you think taking on one of these things can help your child?	1. No	2. Probably not	3. Yes, probably	4.Yes	*99. Don't know /Don't have an attitude*	C_F_ A
C_F	**F SCHOOL – COMMUNITY COOPERATION**						
C_F_A	**The school offered help with community health, housing, social issues**						
C_F_A1	How often the school did offer this last year to you or your family?	1. Never					D
		2. Once 3. 2-3 times 4. >3 times					C_F_ A2
		99. Don't know /Don't remember					D
C_F_A2	*[INT] If offered,* **What did they offer?**_	_____ _____					C_F_ A3
C_F_A3	*[INT] If offered,* **did you make use of it?**	1. Never					D
		2. Once 3. Most times 4. Every time					C_F_ A4
		99. Don't know /Don't remember					D
C_F_A4	*[INT] If you made use of it,* **was it helpful?**	1. Never 2. Once 3. Most times 4. Every time					
		99. Don't know /Don't remember					D

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D OTHER PREDICTORS & MEDIATORS

Again, all questions are asking about the relationship between the school and those family members involved in schooling the child, whether this is primarily the mother, or the mother and the father together, or the grandparents, or a guardian, etc. So questions about „you" should be understood to mean all those family members involved in schooling the child.

D1A	**Looking back over the different forms of participation in school life we have just discussed, how much would you agree with the following statements ?** [INT] Show card D1A					
		Not at all	To a limited extent	To some extent	To a large extent	*Don't know /Don't have an attitude*
	1. parents aren't interested in participating in school activities	1	2	3	4	*99*
	2. parents don't have time to get informed about school issues.	1	2	3	4	*99*
	3. parents don't know how to communicate with teachers	1	2	3	4	*99*
	4. teachers aren't interested in communicating with parents.	1	2	3	4	*99*
	5. teachers have too much work to communicate with parents	1	2	3	4	*99*
	6. the school doesn't really have the capacity to communicate with all parents	1	2	3	4	*99*
	7. parents and the school are usually in conflict	1	2	3	4	*99*
	8. teachers don't really know how to communicate with parents	1	2	3	4	*99* **D1A9**

D1A9	**Other reason affecting how much parents get involved in school life (please, specify):**	1._____ *99. None* **D2A**

D2 PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL OPENNESS

D2A	**How much do you agree with the following statements?**					
		Don't agree	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree totally	*Don't know /Cannot estimate*
	1. The class teacher treats me/us with respect	1	2	3	4	*99*
	2. I/we can talk easily to the class teacher about my/our child	1	2	3	4	*99*
	3. I /we have met the school pedagog/psychologist ….	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. >3 times	*99*
	4. At least one family member is often in the school building (apart from just picking up our child) (as usual, do not include your other children or a family member who happens to work in the school)	1	2	3	4	*99*
	5. If I/we said something to my child's teacher(s) they would understand	1	2	3	4	*99*
	6. I/we would never talk to the principal because she/he is too busy	1	2	3	4	*99*
	7. The parents in our child's class would listen if I/we wanted to talk to them about a problem	1	2	3	4	*99* **D3**

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	D3 ROMA		
	D3A Questions for parents in the Roma sample only		
	[INT] If the parent IS included in the Roma sample, use this block. If the parent is NOT included (even if the parent happens to be Roma), jump to D4		
D3A1	Do you speak the main language spoken in the school well?	1. Yes 2. No	D3A2
D3A2	Does your child speak the main language spoken in the school well?	1. Yes 2. No	D3A3
D3A3	Is it harder for your child to be at school than for children who are not Roma?	1. Yes, it is harder for my child	D3A3a
		2. It is the same	D3A4
		3. No, it is easier for my child 4.	D3A3b
		99. Don't know /Cannot estimate	D3A4
D3A3a	*[INT] If the answer to the previous question was 1. then ask:* Why do you think it is harder for your child?		D3A4
D3A3b	*[INT] And if the answer was 3. then ask:* Why do you think it is easier for your child?		D3A4
D3A4	Is it harder for your child to learn at home than for children who are not Roma?	1. Yes, it is harder for my child	D3A4a
		2. It is the same	D3A5
		3. No, it is easier for my child	D3A4b
		99 Don't know /Cannot estimate	D3A5
D3A4a	*[INT] If the answer to the previous question was 1. then ask:* Why do you think it is harder for your child?		D3A5
D3A4b	*[INT] And if the answer was 3. then ask:* Why do you think it is easier for your child?		D3A5
D3A5	Has your child received useful extra help from the school as a Roma child	1. Yes	D3A5a
		2. No *99 Don't know*	D3A6
D3A5a	If yes, what?		D3A6
D3A6	Does the school do a lot to help Roma children?	1. Yes 2. No *99. Don't know*	D3A7
D3A7	Do you think that the school could do more to help Roma children?	1. Yes	D3A7a
		2. No *99. Don't know*	D3A8
D3A7a	If yes, what?		D3A8
D3A8	Are there any Roma staff or assistants at the school?	1. None 2. One 3. 2-3 4. >3 *99 Don't know*	D4

D4 PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

[INT] If the parent is NOT included in the parent representatives sample (even if the parent happens to be a representative), use this block. If the parent IS included, jump to D4B

D4A Perception of parent representatives

D4A	**We would like to ask you how you view the parent representatives, i.e. members of the parents' council or similar (we are not asking about parent members of the school board)** *[INT] Show card D4A*					
		Don't agree at all	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree totally	*Don't know /Cannot estimate*
	1. I/we know the parent representative for my child very well.	1	2	3	4	
	2. The parent representative treat me/us with respect	1	2	3	4	*99*
	3. I/we can talk easily to the parent representative about any concern I have about my child or the class	1	2	3	4	*99*
	4. The parent representatives / parents council in our school is active	1	2	3	4	*99*
	5. The parent representatives / parents council in our school contacts me/us frequently	1	2	3	4	
	6. The parent representatives / parents council in our school is effective in looking after our interests	1	2	3	4	*99*
						D4C

D4B Questions for parent representatives

[INT] If the parent IS included in the parent representatives sample, use this block. If the parent is NOT included, jump to D4C

D4B1	**Sampled as (filled in by interviewer, only one response possible)**	1. Member of school board 2. Member of parents' council or something else	D4B2
D4B2	**How long had /have you been held your position as a member of the Parents council, School board, PTA or similar… (see answer to question 1)?**	1. less than 6 months 2. between 6 to 12 months 3. more than 12 months	D4B3
D4B3	**What was /is your position?** *[INT] Answered by respondent, more than one answer possible*	1. Member of school board 2. Member of parents' council 3. Member of parent-teacher association 4. Something else, what?_____	D4B4
D4B4	**How did you get to be a member of the board/council?**	1. I was asked by the class teacher 2. I was asked by the Principal 3. I was elected by the other parents 4. other, what?_____	D4B5

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D4B5	Which of the following reasons were important for you when you decided to join the board/council? *[INT] Show card D4B5*				
		Not important at all	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
	1. To get to know the school better	1	2	3	4
	2. To represent parents and bring up issues which concern all of us	1	2	3	4
	3. To benefit my child in general	1	2	3	4
	4. Because I wanted to change a particular thing concerning my child	1	2	3	4
	5. Because I wanted to change a particular thing concerning all the children	1	2	3	4
	6. Because I like to get involved	1	2	3	4
	7. Because someone persuaded me to	1	2	3	4
	8. Because other parents wanted me to represent them	1	2	3	4
	9. Other (what?)_____		2	3	4
					D4B6

D4B6	In which areas at school or class level were you able to contribute as a member of board /council? *[INT] Show card D4B6*					D4B7
		Did not contribute at all	Contributed a little	Contributed moderately	Contributed a lot	
	1 Financial management of the school - How money is spent in the school – buildings, equipment, materials	1	2	3	4	
	2 Extra curricular activities (extra sports, foreign languages, arts, etc.)	1	2	3	4	
	3 Organization of school events (celebrations, excursions, etc.) –influence on decisions, not just being asked to help	1	2	3	4	
	4 Health and safety issues (watchmen, road crossings, cameras, drugs, relationship with police, etc.)	1	2	3	4	
	5 Educational things – content of lessons, textbooks, teacher selection or assessment, pupil workload, homework, etc.	1	2	3	4	
	6 Overall school management – shifts, opening times, merging or closing classes or schools, changing location, changing the type of the school, etc.	1	2	3	4	
	7 Pupil violence, expulsions and other pupil discipline issues and procedures, etc.	1	2	3	4	

D4B7	How much influence do you think parents in general (not just the parent representatives) have in these areas at your school? *[INT] Show card D4B7*					D4B8
		No influence at all	A little influence	Moderate influence	A lot of influence	*Don't know*
	1 Financial management of the school - How money is spent in the school – buildings, equipment, materials	1	2	3	4	*99*
	2 Extra curricular activities (extra sports, foreign languages, arts, etc.)	1	2	3	4	*99*
	3 Organization of school events (celebrations, excursions, etc.) – influence on decisions, not just being asked to help	1	2	3	4	*99*
	4 Health and safety issues (watchmen, road crossings, cameras, drugs, relationship with police, etc.)	1	2	3	4	*99*
	5 Educational things – content of lessons, textbooks, teacher selection or	1	2	3	4	*99*

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	assessment, pupil workload, homework, etc.					
	6 Overall school management – shifts, opening times, merging or closing classes or schools, changing location, changing the type of the school, etc.	1	2	3	4	*99*
	7 Pupil violence, expulsions and other pupil discipline issues and procedures, etc.	1	2	3	4	*99*

D4B8	**Do you think that in some of these areas parents should not be involved?** *[INT] Show card D4B8 with the list of areas* *[INT] If yes, which areas and why not?*	1a. (first area)_____ 1b. (first reason)_____ 2a. (second area)_____ 2b (second reason)_____ 3. No, I think that parents should be involved in all of these areas	D4B9

D4B9

What do you think is the attitude of the majority of parents towards you as a parent representative?

		Don't agree at all	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree totally	*Don't know /Cannot estimate*	
	1 they believe that I cannot do much	1	2	3	4	*99*	
	2 they think that I do it only for the sake of my child	1	2	3	4	*99*	
	3 they think that I do it only to show off	1	2	3	4	*99*	
	4 they think I might be useful only when they have concerns about their child	1	2	3	4	*99*	
	5 they believe that I can represent them effectively and support me in articulating common concerns	1	2	3	4	*99*	
	6 I am not sure how they perceive me	1	2	3	4	*99*	D4B10

D4B10

How do you perceive your relations to school administration?

		Don't agree at all	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree totally	Don't know /Cannot estimate	
	1 I think they are not very interested in my contribution	1	2	3	4	99	
	2 they want me just to support their ideas	1	2	3	4	99	
	3 they listen to my opinion but do not take it into account later on	1	2	3	4	99	
	4 they try to understand my view and mostly take it into account	1	2	3	4	99	D4B11

D4B11	**In your opinion what conditions/factors make parent's council effective?**	_____ _____ _____ _____ *99. Don't know*	D4B12

D4B12

Please say how much you agree with the following statements

		Don't agree at all	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree totally	
	1 I know all the parents in the class	1	2	3	4	
	2 I can talk easily to the parents about any concern they have about their child or the class	1	2	3	4	
	3 I am active as a parent representative	1	2	3	4	
	4 As a parent representative I contact the parents frequently	1	2	3	4	
	5 As a parent representative I am effective in looking after parents' interests	1	2	3	4	D4C

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School Governance and Social Inclusion • Involvement of Parents

D4C Traditional versus partnership

D4C Please answer how much is each of these things the school's job, and how much it is the job of the child's family. Here we are not asking how much you do or the school these things, rather, whose job it is.

[INT] Show card D4C

E1A

		Definitely the school's job	More school than parents' job,	Both school and parents' job	More parents' than school's job	Definitely parents' job.	Don't know /Don't have an attitude
1	make sure the child is happy at school	1	2	3	4	5	99
2	make sure the child is doing well at school	1	2	3	4	5	99
3	raise the child to be a good person	1	2	3	4	5	99
4	make sure the child does the homework	1	2	3	4	5	99
5	motivate the child to learn	1	2	3	4	5	99
6	make sure there is good teaching	1	2	3	4	5	99
7	make sure there is good extracurricular things at school like clubs	1	2	3	4	5	99
8	make sure the child is safe at school	1	2	3	4	5	99
9	know what is best for the child	1	2	3	4	5	99
10	intervene if something is going wrong at school	1	2	3	4	5	99

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E PERCEIVED OUTCOMES OF PARENTS INVOLVEMENT

E1A	How much do you agree with the following statements? *[INT] Show card E1A*					
		Don't agree at all	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree totally	*Don't know /Cannot estimate*
	Child - level					
	1 The child is happy at school	1	2	3	4	*99*
	2 The child is doing well in his/her school work	1	2	3	4	*99*
	3 The child enjoys the other aspects of school (apart from school work)	1	2	3	4	*99*
	4 The child is achieving to the best of his/her abilities	1	2	3	4	*99*
	5 I can get any help I need from my school if the child has a problem apart from academic learning	1	2	3	4	*99*
	6 My school is a safe place for the child	1	2	3	4	*99*
	7 The teaching is of high quality	1	2	3	4	*99*
	8 I am / we are treated with respect by the school	1	2	3	4	*99*
	Communication with school					
	9. I am /we are happy with the quality and quantity of information from school	1	2	3	4	*99*
	10. I am /we are happy with the different ways I can get involved at school	1	2	3	4	*99*
	Influence					
	11 I am /we are happy with the ways of influencing how the child gets educated	1	2	3	4	*99*
	12 I am /we are happy with the ways of influencing the school in general	1	2	3	4	*99*

F1

F   WRAP – UP

F1	**Could you give some suggestions about the facilitation and improvement of the school-parent partnership**	_____ _____ _____ *99. No suggestion*

F2

F2	**Is there anything else that you would like to comment or ask me about?**	_____ _____ _____ *99. No*

INT1

INT1	**Interviewers' comments:**	_____ _____

INT2

INT2	**Duration of the interview**	
INT3	**Date of the interview:**	
INT4	**Name of the respondent:**	
INT5	**Respondent's address:**	
INT6	**Name of the school:**	
INT7	**Signature of the interviewer:**	

INT2
INT3
INT4
INT5
INT6
INT7
The end

Thanks for your time and important contributions!

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Annex 2: Survey methodology and fieldwork report: short version

Steve Powell

with significant input from Ipsos Strategic Puls, IMAS, OSI-B and other partners.

A more detailed version of this document is available from the author for interested researchers.

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A Introduction

Parental engagement in the life of schools - in decision-making, in extracurricular activities, and in the education of one's own children - can have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of pupils and can be a bridge to allow excluded groups to have their say in education. The education policies of the countries of South Eastern Europe (those covered in this panel are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo as defined by UNSCR 1244, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia) make provisions for parental engagement in the school governance and administration. At the same time, the education in the region is affected by the increasing decentralization of the responsibilities related to school governance and the adaptation of innovative methods of management. The aim of this 10-country research project conducted by the Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute was to examine how these policies work in practice from the perspective of three key stakeholder groups: parents, principals and parent representatives. Face-to-face household surveys of representative samples of parents (target N=9600) in target N = 320 public schools covering grades one to eight, including booster samples of Roma parents, were combined with additional interviews with principals and parent representatives in the same schools.

Research questions to be addressed include:

- How do different cultural and socio-economic groups of parents participate?

- How does national and policy context relate to the nature and effectiveness of participation?

- Which constellations of school and parental attitudes to and practices of participation are associated with the best outcomes?

The surveys included an operationalisation of Epstein's six dimensions of parental involvement (1987) adapted to the realities of South Eastern Europe. They also draw on the concept of social exclusion (e.g. Berryman, S. E., 2000) as a set of explanations for education not being equally accessible to all.

B Methodology

B.1 Which agencies covered which countries

B.1.1 to be covered by Ipsos Strategic Puls:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia

B.1.2 to be covered by IMAS:

Romania, Moldova

B.1.3 to be covered by OSI-B:

Bulgaria

B.2 Target populations

A) Parents of elementary school children,

B) Parents members of the school boards and / or parent's council in the same school, or parents members of the PTA

P) School principals in each of the same schools,

E) Socially excluded parents

B.3 Overview of sampling procedure

B.3.1 Sample of schools

30 schools per country, selection algorithm explained below.

Type of sample: Stratified random sample. Stratification by relevant geographical regions as in the previous study[1] and by urban/rural (two dimensional stratified sample).

Sample allocation: The number of school in each cell for each of the country allocated so that 30/(2*number of geographical regions) is fulfilled

Method of selection

Random selection (proportional to size of the school, were size is defined by the number of students in the school). Lahirie's method (linear cumulative) of sample selection.

B.3.2 Sample A

Total of 900 parents per country – sample allocation as below (Sampling procedures, Sample A – Parents)

B.3.3 Sample B

in each school, one member of the school board and four members of parent's council selected for the interviews at random from a list of members of the board and the council at the end of the last academic year, i.e. May/June 2009.

These parent representatives also selected from the 2 schools per country in sample E.

B.3.4 Sample E

2 samples of 30 socially excluded parents per country from 2 additional schools (60 socially excluded parents per country in total)

B.3.5 Sample P

Each school principal from each of the 30 schools per country, plus 2 principals from the 2 schools with socially excluded parents (32 principals per country in total)

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1 Except for Croatia

B.4 Details of sampling procedure

B.4.1 Sample of schools

Universe: The universe of schools was the sample of the schools from the previous survey, which itself was a random sample of schools in each country, i.e. the list of the schools whose principals participated in the previous survey. Exceptions were Bulgaria and Croatia which did not participate in the previous survey, so lists of general elementary schools were used to form the sample frame.

So in each country in question a sample frame was available divided into R regions, and in each region there was an urban/rural split, i.e. a R*2 table. The population Ns in each of these R*2 cells are known. Then the number of schools S to be drawn from each cell in the R*2 table, in general different from cell to cell, was determined according to the Lahirie method, i.e with probability of being selected depending on school size. The actual calculation of S for each cell is not given here; the reader is referred to standard texts on the method. This number S per cell depends on R and is chosen so as to make the final sample around 900 per country, as follows.

Details of the Lahirie method

The schools in each cell were put into a list in order of ascending size according to student population per school and this list was divided into a number B of bands (B depends on R) containing fixed percentages of all the students in the cell, so for example for 3 bands, the limits were fixed at 25%, 35% and 40% respectively; and then a fixed number of schools (S/B) were chosen randomly from each size band.

So this resulted in a final sample of schools in each country, from which the actual respondent samples A, E, B and P were drawn.

B.4.2 Sample A- parents

The *number* of parents to be sampled in each school was defined according to the band from which the school was drawn in the Lahirie procedure (see above): more parents were chosen from the larger schools. In the example below, 20, 30 and 40 from each of the smaller, medium and large schools are selected. So in the example we have (20+30+40)*3 students per cell, for R*2 cells.

As all these parameters R, S etc are known, sampling weights can be calculated.

Selection of 2 schools per cell, i.e. S=2	Serial number of size cell	% of students in the cell	Number of parents in selected school in cell	% of parents in the sample
	1	42	25	42%
	2	58	35	58%
		100	60	
Selection of 3 schools per cell, i.e. S=3				
	1	25	20	22%
	2	35	30	33%
	3	40	40	44%
		100	90	

Selection of 2 schools per cell, i.e. S=2	Serial number of size cell	% of students in the cell	Number of parents in selected school in cell	% of parents in the sample
Selection of 4 schools per cell, i.e. S=4				
	1	17	20	17%
	2	21	25	21%
	3	29	35	29%
	4	33	40	33%
		100	120	
Selection of 5 schools per cell, i.e. S=5				
	1	13	20	13%
	2	17	25	17%
	3	20	30	20%
	4	23	35	23%
	5	27	40	27%
		100	150	

So for example, where three schools are to be chosen, the levels are as follows: small (up to 25% of the total number of students in the cell), medium (up to 60% of the total number of students in the cell) and large (more then 60% of the total number of students in the cell). The number of the parents in this case in the small schools would be 20, in the medium schools 30, and in the large schools 40.

This approach ensures there are at least 20 parents per school but simultaneously that there are more parents from the bigger schools in which a larger variance of attitudes among parents can be expected.

Identification of parents to be interviewed

Parents were identified either by randomly selecting students from lists provided by the school, or by a random-walk procedure in the school cachement area.

Inclusion criteria were as follows:

- child attending the school, or in the case of random-walk procedure, one of the schools in the sample
- between the ages of 8 and 13, i.e. from 8th to 14th birthday
- attending at least the second grade of elementary school.

In the case of random walk, in an identified household with more than one child meeting the inclusion criteria, one child was chosen at random to be focus for the interview.

Respondents were mother of this child, except in the case that the mother was not available at the

time of the visit, when father was chosen as respondent. If none of the parents were available at the time of the visit, the interviewer rescheduled the time for the interview, trying to speak to mother, and scheduling the interview with the father only if mother was not available at a reasonable time. If neither mother or father were currently caring for the children the interviewer asked to speak to whoever was caring for the child (e.g. grandparent). If not available at the moment, the interviewer rescheduled the time for the interview.

B.4.3 Sample B - Parents members of the school boards and / or parent's council in the same school

Method of selection: The school was contacted and the list of the parents who are members of the school boards and/or parent's councils was obtained. The name of the parents was listed in alphabetic order and a sample of these parent was selected randomly by linear method.

If parent's council was not available, then four parents from the PTA (parents and teachers association) could also be selected.

If in the school there was neither parent's council, nor PTA, then only one member of the parent's school board was selected for the interview.

If this procedure (selecting from lists at the end of the last academic year) meant that respondents cannot be located e.g. because they have left the area, substitutes were taken from this year's school board / parents' council.

If a person from the parent representative sample did not have a child fitting the inclusion criteria, see above, only section D4B was filled in.

B.4.4 Sample P- School principals

The principals of each selected school were contacted and interviews were scheduled for face-to-face interview.

In order to secure the availability of the principals in all schools, the availability of the principal was checked and approved before the collection of the other data (samples A, B, and E) for this school. So, if principal or, failing that, their deputy were not available, the school was replaced by another school from the cell (respecting all the criteria of selection) and for this school data was collected for all samples planed.

B.4.5 Sample E - Socially excluded parents

Two samples of 30 parents from exactly two catchment areas, 30 parents in each of two schools were drawn from neighborhoods where socially excluded households are more common.

The country teams identified Roma as the most common socially excluded group in all of the countries except Moldova.

Interpretation of the word "Roma"

Important: in this survey, the term "Roma" is used as a blanket term and may also include those either identifying themselves as Ashkali, Egyptians, (and possibly other similar groups as identified by the country teams), and/or those identified by experts as belonging to these groups. The word "Roma" in the questionnaire was in some cases replaced with e.g. "Egyptian" or "Roma or Egyptian" as appropriate, according to the judgment of the interviewer.

In each of the countries two schools in two areas were identified by the country teams in which

Roma children are present in substantial enough number, but no more than 35% of the total number of the children in the school. Two cachment areas were defined, one for each school. Schools with special Roma programs were NOT be included in the sample unless this is usual in this country, i.e. schools were not be atypical in respect of the amount of special programs or support for Roma pupils.

Method of selection was defined to assure the equal distribution in defined area according to the following instructions:

First select appropriate school (that fulfils requirements), and then find out if there is a Roma settlement nearby, such that Roma children from that settlement are attending selected school:

-if yes, then proceed to that settlement, defining random walk(s) in advance. If necessary just one part of the settlement may be selected in order to reduce the likelihood of coming to many households where non-Roma live.

Possibly a smaller number of random walks than 5 may be used if the settlement is small. Then, follow the same procedure as with mainstream parents, but there will be an additional inclusion criterion, namely, being Roma.

"Being Roma" is operationalised via 'implicit endorsement of identification' as follows:

Having identified the sample clusters and the households to be interviewed, the introductory sentence at the beginning of the interview is "Good morning/day, we are conducting a survey among the Roma (or Roma/Egyptian or Egyptian etc as appropriate) population. Would you like to be interviewed?" In case of explicit denial ("I am not Roma, why should you want to interview me?") the interview is cancelled. Willingness to participate in the interview is interpreted as the household member's implicit endorsement of belonging to the universe under study2.

Where procedure does not result in enough interviews, a snowball procedure was followed: after completing one interview successfully, the respondent is asked "do you know of someone else who lives nearby who could help us with our study of the Roma (etc) population?"

In the case of Moldova, two schools in socially excluded areas were selected and otherwise the procedure was exactly the same as for sample A.

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2   Adapted from Ivanov, A. (2006). At risk: Roma and the displaced in South-East Europe. UNDP

B.5 Interview procedure

The interview was a be face-to-face structured interview on the basis of the survey instrument translated in the local language.

In regions in which the inhabitants were likely to speak more than one mother tongue, the field team was prepared to carry out the interview in at least the two major languages spoken in that region. In areas with significant Roma population, and in particular for sample E, the interview team included a Roma person.

If a respondent in sample A turned out to fit the criteria for sample E or B, this fact was recorded in a box in the questionnaire, but the additional questionnaire sections for samples E or B were not applied.

B.6 Quality control procedures

a) Protocol for supervision of interviewers

Every interview conducted was recorded in the Interviewers' Diary which contains the following survey management information:

- A unique identification number for each respondents,
- Sampling point of the interview, date of interview,
- Time of the start and end of the interview,
- Catchments area where interview was realized, region, urban/rural code (village, town, city, school)
- Interviewer code (a unique number assigned to each individual interviewer),
- Number of visits required to complete interview
- Non-response (full description of the non-response occasion)

b) Agency checks to ensure quality control in the field

Fieldwork check on at least 10% of sample is realized in the field and an additional 10% by telephone

Fieldwork check verified the following aspects of interviewers' work:

- Fact that the interview has actually taken place;
- Proper application of the sampling plan in selecting the respondents;
- Approximate duration of the interview;
- Proper administration of the various sections of the questionnaire, and
- Interviewers' general adherence to professional standards.

Following data collection, 100% logic and consistency check are performed.

c) Additional checks carried out by the Central Research Team

A small number of interview protocolls were randomly selected from lists given by the agencies and independently checked by telephone.

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