

RESEARCH REPORT

PARENTS AND SCHOOL

2025

In-depth interviews

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Introduction

A child's success at school is not only based on grades. Equally important is whether the child feels safe and whether his family understands school expectations and knows who to turn to for help. This report focuses precisely on the everyday situations in which trust between families and schools arises or disappears. We are not looking for complex theoretical solutions; We examine what works in practice and what fails.

The research pursues the goal of strengthening actions that reduce segregation in education. For reasons of transparency, we would like to point out that the authors have long been involved in the preparation and promotion of European Union public subsidy programmes aimed at supporting Roma children and their families. The ambition of this report is to offer a practical basis for the effective use of funds and for targeted support for Roma and pro-Roma organizations in the field.

In September 2025, we interviewed parents and grandparents in six cities: Havířov, Chrudim, Louny, Ostrava, Prague and Slaný. A total of ten interviews (individual and group) were conducted with 33 participants. Their experience forms the basis of conclusions and recommendations. Data collection took place in a secure environment and all testimonies were anonymized to protect the privacy of participants.

This report does not offer a one-size-fits-all recipe. It brings verified, concrete suggestions for the daily work of schools, founders and non-profit organizations – especially in areas where the most common misunderstandings arise: absences, support measures and handling of suggestions and complaints. At the end of the report, we present a set of recommendations linked to the findings from individual sites.

The report is structured as follows: this Introduction is followed by a short summary of the methodology and then the analysis of individual sites. The final chapter summarizes common formulas and presents recommendations that can help set clear, fair and workable rules for all involved.

Research methodology

This chapter defines the methodology of the survey aimed at identifying and supporting measures against segregation in education in the Czech Republic. It describes the starting points and objective, the main research question, the chosen design, data collection methods, the analytical procedure, the ethical principles and limitations of the study.

Starting points and goal

The research responds to the PRO-ROMA program, which aims to reduce educational inequalities and prevent or eliminate segregation in education. We are based on the international consensus that the segregation of Roma children violates their rights and negatively affects educational outcomes and social cohesion. The aim of the survey is to identify, analyse and formulate specific, practical and locally feasible strategies for non-governmental non-profit organisations operating in the school environment during September 2025. We do not return to a general list of the causes of segregation; We translate existing knowledge and local experience into action recommendations and minimum standards. Theoretically, we are based on the framework of the Inclusion Index and the concept of "barriers to learning and participation", which structures the findings and proposals for measures.

Research questions and design

Main research question:

What specific, practical and locally feasible strategies can NGOs implement to increase the acceptance rate and educational success of Roma pupils in non-segregated primary schools in line with the PRO-ROMA programme?

Design: We chose a qualitative multi-case investigation in six cities (Havířov, Chrudim, Louny, Ostrava, Prague, Slaný). The design allows for understanding specific local contexts while performing cross-sectional synthesis and identifying transferable mechanisms.

Thematic areas (part of the research design):

A – The most effective support for non-governmental non-profit organizations for transfer and stay in non-segregated schools. B1 – Family-school-non-governmental non-profit cooperation (trust mechanisms, information sharing, roles of specific persons). B2 – Prevention of intra-school (secondary) segregation (division of classes, break regime and other school practices). C – Transferable elements from the practice of segregated schools (what can be used temporarily without reproducing segregation). D1 – Resilience and family strategy (procedures for overcoming obstacles, working with the child's motivation).

D2 – Pro-inclusive school setting (functional school counselling system, fair and predictable processes, work with the climate).

Data collection methods

The data collection combined semi-structured individual interviews and group interviews. A total of 10 sessions (of which 8 group and 2 individual) were carried out with $n = 33$ participants. The individual chapters dedicated to cities indicate the type of interview and the number of participants for each session.

Analytical procedure

The data were processed by thematic analysis with a focus on identifying mechanisms and critical moments that can be transferred between sites. The procedure included: (1) familiarization with the data and open coding, (2) grouping of codes into topics in relation to headings A, B1, B2, C, D1, D2, (3) cross-site comparison, and (4) triangulation and synthesis into recommendations. *(The software used and code tree samples will be added in the appendix if required.)*

Ethical principles

Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. All testimonies are anonymized (removal of identification data, coding of respondents). Recordings and transcripts are secure and accessible only to members of the research team. When publishing citations, we take care to exclude secondary identification.

Study Limitations and Citation Rules

This is a qualitative survey with a limited number of participants and locations; The findings are not statistically generalizable. They serve as analytical stimuli and transferable mechanisms for practice. In interpretations, we use cautious wording ("part of the cases", "respondents describe") and avoid unfounded generalizations. The quotes are presented with context in a unified form:

"... text quotation..." (*location, type of interview, Respondent R1*); We do not repeat the name of the locality in the body of the paragraph unnecessarily and we state it in brackets after the citation.

Sample and unit selection

In accordance with the objectives of the investigation, a deliberate selection of sites was used. It combines municipalities with documented segregation pressures and systemic barriers with a comparative group of municipalities where elements of successful inclusive practice appear. This contrasting design makes it possible not

only to describe problems, but above all to identify specific and transferable mechanisms of change that lead to positive results.

The following locations were selected for the initial phase of the investigation: Havířov, Chrudim, Louny, Ostrava, Prague and Slaný.

Locations with System Barrier Indicators

Havířov, Chrudim, Slaný and Louny were included on the basis of preliminary information and suggestions from local actors, which indicated the presence of significant obstacles. The interviews in these cities brought testimonies about the low expectations of some teachers, about individual experiences with direct and indirect discrimination, about communication frictions between school and family, and about situations where families felt insufficiently supported by institutions. These findings serve to provide an in-depth analysis of the persistent barriers in practice.

Comparative sites with elements of successful practice

Ostrava and Prague were chosen as contrasting cases. Although there are some problems, the testimonies of the participants contain significant elements of functional strategies: schools actively support slower pupils (e.g. through tutoring), show flexibility and cost-orientation, and systematically build a safe and inclusive climate for children and parents from the first grade. These cases are key to identifying models of good practice.

Note: The definition of groups is used exclusively for analytical comparison within this survey; it is not a normative evaluation of municipalities.

Recruitment of participants

Respondents were addressed by targeted selection and then by the "snowball" technique through cooperating non-governmental non-profit organizations and community networks. This ensured access to people with relevant and deep experience in the issue.

Analytical units

The analytical units are the class, the school and the school district. At these levels, we monitor disproportions in pupil representation and analyse the procedures and mechanisms that lead to them.

Quality assurance and ethical principles

Data quality is ensured by a set of systematic procedures. All recordings are converted to a verbatim transcript and anonymized within 72 hours. The accuracy of each

transcription is checked by a second team member. The project envisages flexible alternative procedures in the event of shortages of participants or unavailability of a place.

All research is governed by strict ethical principles. The basis is informed consent, which emphasizes the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time and the guarantee of anonymity. All data is stored in a secure repository and is used in the outputs in an aggregated and fully anonymized form to exclude any possibility of re-identification of participants.

In-depth analysis of interviews: Havířov

Date and method

The basis is two semi-structured group interviews with parents and grandparents of children attending kindergartens and primary schools in Havířov (session 1: n = 4; session 2: n = 4). The quotes are presented with a unified designation: "... text..." (*Havířov, group interview, R4*).

Findings and Interpretations

What exists

- A heterogeneous network of schools. Respondents distinguish between schools with different reputations: "... they take the ['prestigious'] school as the best, but the other 'sports' is more child-friendly..." (*Havířov, group interview, R3*).
- Strong internal family support. Older and more experienced family members often take on the role of advocates and guides in dealing with the school.
- Basic safety precautions. According to respondents, schools apply building locks and surveillance in corridors.
- Formal availability of financial aid. State aid instruments exist (e.g. emergency immediate aid, the so-called "crayons"), but their practical applicability is described as limited.

What doesn't work

- **Low expectations and stereotyping.** Part of the testimonies describes prejudiced treatment and pushing children "aside": "...They just put it aside and good. And you can see that he is a gypsy child..." (*Havířov, group interview, R4*); "So you're just waiting for benefits, so nothing will come of you." (*Havířov, group interview, R2*).

- **Unresolved bullying and management failure.** In one case, according to respondents, there was serious bullying at a school with a high reputation; the management's response was confrontational and escalated the situation: "... the complaint came up: 'Well, but you're a gypsy. What if you beat me?'" (*Havířov, group interview, R1*).
- **A repressive approach to financial difficulties.** Instead of support, in one case, the school responded to the delayed payment by stigmatizing the transplantation of the child: "They wean the child, they put him in the second grade..." (*Havířov, group interview, R3*).
- **Insufficient pedagogical support.** Respondents miss the proactive offer of tutoring and support measures: "... They don't give any assistant? "No." (*Havířov, group interview, R4*).
- **Bureaucratic barriers.** Getting help is confusing and the result often does not correspond to the effort expended. In one description, a one-off amount of CZK 560 was provided as financial assistance for aids, provided to the Labour Office; The respondent perceived the amount as insufficient. (*Havířov, group interview, R2*).
- **Absence of pro-inclusive activities.** "And what does the school do to ensure that Roma and non-Roma children get along? ... They do nothing." (*Havířov, group interview, R3*).

What has worked well

- **Changing the environment and escaping the bad climate.** The transfer from a "prestigious" school to a school with a better climate led to a rapid improvement: "The boy goes to the second school, he has straight A's, he is thriving, he is satisfied." (*Havířov, group interview, R2*).
- **Relational and individualized support.** Assigning an assistant with whom the child gets along has fundamentally changed the situation: "They gave an assistant with whom Zdenka gets along... Zdena is learning. He has twos, threes." (*Havířov, group interview, R4; name in quotation changed*).
- **Proactive parental advocacy.** Systematic and persistent action brings results: "Speak up. Do not let yourself. Get in touch. If they kick you out, it doesn't matter, I'll be back." (*Havířov, group interview, R1*).
- **Extrinsic and creative motivation.** Where intrinsic motivation fails, temporary external incentives (rewards, experiences) help.

- **Fixed home routines.** A regular regime (pre-school attendance, after-school assignments, preparation of aids) reduces the effects of weaker school support.

What is missing (needs)

- **A partnership and respectful approach of the school to parents.** Listening and cooperation are expected, not confrontation.
- **Functional and accessible pedagogical support.** A clear and quick way to tutoring and support measures if the child needs them.
- **A safe and fair environment.** Consistent and impartial handling of bullying regardless of family status.
- **External help available.** An understandable and easily accessible counselling centre or non-governmental non-profit organisation that will help parents navigate the system and accompany them in dealing with the school.

Synthesis of mechanisms

1. **Climate before prestige.** A good school climate has a greater impact on a child's success than reputation; "Prestige" without security and acceptance leads to failure.
2. **Prejudice → low expectations → escape.** The negative expectations of some teachers are reflected in support and motivation; families then often choose to transfer.
3. **Missing support intermediate steps.** Structured support steps (tutoring, assistance, mediation) are often missing between the first signals of trouble and the school's repressive response.
4. **Family resilience as compensation.** Strong family "lawyers" can turn the situation around, but the system should not rely on them. Instead, it is supposed to offer partnership and predictable support.

Draft of a coordinated strategy for Havířov

We present a set of interconnected recommendations that systematically connect the efforts of non-profit organizations, schools and the city of Havířov. The goal is to create an environment in which no family feels lost and every child gets a chance to succeed.

Each step is designed to have clearly defined roles, an understandable procedure and measurable results, with all recommendations based directly on what we have learned from the Havířov families themselves.

Phase 1: Prevention, Trust Building and Early Support

In the first phase, we will focus on creating a safe and understandable environment for families before more serious problems can arise.

Joint activity: Facilitating the transition from kindergarten to primary school

The transition to first grade is a turning point and stressful moment for many families. That is why we propose to create a solid "bridge" between kindergartens, primary schools and families. The non-profit organization will take on the role of coordinator and organize a meeting for parents of future first-graders. With their consent, it also sensitively passes on anonymized information to the primary school about what support has worked well for their children in kindergarten. The primary school will actively participate in these meetings, both representatives of the management and future class teachers. Before the start of the school year, he designates a contact person to whom parents can turn with confidence, and establishes the first individual contact with each family. The city's task will be to methodically anchor this procedure as a common standard for all schools it establishes and to ensure uniform dates and the form of invitations.

The whole process will take place in clearly defined steps from March to May, from planning the meeting through the collection of information to the actual meeting at the school, where key contacts and information about the operation of the first grade will be handed over. We will document the success of this activity with the program of meetings, attendance lists and a summary of the needs of children. We will measure it according to how many families will attend the meeting, how many of them will know who to contact at school, and also through a short satisfaction questionnaire. This approach directly responds to the findings from Havířov, where parents perceive the initial distrust on the part of institutions and appreciate good relations and the school's climate even more than its prestige. In addition, the activity is fully in line with the PRO-ROMA subsidy call (Template No. 6), as it is a community-oriented meeting without elements of social services or double funding.

Joint activity: Service center for parents directly at the school

In order to make it easier for parents to navigate the complex system and remove bureaucratic obstacles, we will set up a counselling window directly on the school premises. Once a week, an employee of the non-profit organization will be available to help with administration, applications for contributions for aids, explanation of recommendations from the pedagogical and psychological counseling center (PPP) or special education center (SPC) or just for advice. The school will provide facilities for

this service and will actively communicate it to all parents as a common and accessible form of support, not as something that is intended only for "problem" families. The city can participate in the financing of operating costs and officially include this service in its family support network.

It is important to clarify that the granting of support measures, such as teaching assistants, is always decided by the specialist workplace (PPP/SPC). The school has the task of fulfilling these recommendations and the municipality creates budgetary and personnel conditions for their implementation. The non-profit organization serves as a guide through the whole process. We will document our success with an anonymized overview of frequently asked questions and information materials. We will measure it by the number of consultations and, above all, by how many parents understood the next steps and successfully submitted applications for support thanks to this help. This activity is also based on specific needs in Havířov, where parents describe a feeling of helplessness when dealing with the authorities and lack a proactive offer of help. Like the previous activity, it is in line with the PRO-ROMA call (Template No. 6).

Phase 2: Building a friendly environment and problem solving

Once trust is set, it is necessary to build a safe environment and have a clear and fair plan for resolving any conflicts.

Joint activity: Welcome rituals and common rules

At the beginning of the school year, the school organizes a "welcome circle" for parents of first-grade pupils, led by the class teacher and a representative of the management. The goal is not just a formal welcome, but the joint creation of three to five key rules for fair cooperation between family and school. A non-profit organization whose staff is already familiar to parents from the previous phase will help moderate the discussion so that everyone feels safe and heard, and will bring an intercultural perspective to the debate. The city will then appreciate this practice and actively spread it as an example of good practice to other schools. The output will be not only an overview of the adopted rules, but above all a joint commitment of the school and parents. Success will be measured by parental participation, a decrease in complaints about communication and a positive assessment of the climate in a short survey. This step is a response to the testimonies of respondents from Havířov, who feel that school "does nothing" to build relationships and inclusion.

Joint Action: Three-Stage Plan for Complaints

To make it clear how to proceed with problems, the school publishes a simple and understandable procedure for dealing with complaints. This will contain clear deadlines (for example, 5, 10 and 20 working days for individual steps) and will guarantee parents the right to invite a representative of the non-profit organization to

the meeting as their confidant or mediator. In the first step, the school solves the problem. If there is no remedy, a non-profit organization enters the process to help with the formulation of the complaint, accompany the parents to the meeting and help mediate a solution. The third, highest instance is the founder, i.e. the city, which reviews the situation, issues a binding opinion and supervises its implementation. This system will be transparent and verifiable thanks to anonymised records of complaints and minutes of meetings. Its effectiveness can be recognized by the reduction in the time it takes to resolve complaints and how many problems can be solved at the first or second level. The need for such a mechanism clearly emerged from the descriptions of unresolved bullying and confrontational reactions on the part of the management of some schools in Havířov. Here, too, the activity is in line with the PRO-ROMA call (Template No. 6) as a form of professional counselling and mediation.

Phase 3: Long-term development and supervision of the system

Individual successes and findings need to be transferred to permanent changes and their impact must be systematically monitored.

Joint activity: City Council for Inclusive Education

The city will establish and lead a council that will meet quarterly. Its members will be representatives of the Department of Education, principals of all established schools and representatives of key non-profit organizations. At these meetings, non-profit organizations will present summary and anonymized overviews of the problems faced by families and propose systemic solutions. Schools will inform about the current situation, respond to suggestions and jointly adopt uniform procedures, for example on the issue of unpaid aids. The output will be minutes and specific measures with a timetable for their implementation. We will measure the long-term success of the entire strategy by monitoring key indicators: how many schools have introduced welcome rituals, how many have a functioning mechanism for resolving complaints, how many families have used the service center or how the number of transfers of pupils due to dissatisfaction with the school climate is developing. This body is essential because systemic problems, such as a culture of low expectations towards some pupils, require coordinated cooperation and supervision at the highest level. The participation of NGOs is again financable from the PRO-ROMA call (Templates No. 3, 4 or 6).

This proposal has been carefully compiled so that it is in accordance with the findings from Havířov, respects the competences of all interested parties, is understandable, demonstrable and in accordance with the subsidy possibilities.

In-depth analysis of interviews: Chrudim

Date and method

The basis is two interviews with parents and grandparents of children from kindergartens, primary and "special" schools in Chrudim: one individual ($n = 1$) and one group ($n = 4$). Transcripts capture spoken speech, including inaccuracies. We label the quotes uniformly: "... text..." (*Chrudim, [individual/group] interview, R5*).

Findings and Interpretations

What exists

- **Fragmented school system.** The primary school operates in several buildings with a different atmosphere and approach. In addition, there is a "special" school, perceived as calmer, but also as a dead end of the educational path.
- **Formal processes and tools.** The system uses e-mail, Bachelors, PPP recommendations and the role of teaching assistants.
- **External safety net.** In the event of problems with attendance, OSPOD/curator intervenes; non-profit organizations that help with negotiations with institutions also provide significant support.

What doesn't work

- **Communication and power asymmetry.** Parents describe the insensitive and power-driven actions of some of the school management, labeling children ("you don't belong here, you belong to the special one") and not responding to e-mails: "... the headmistress doesn't respond to me..." (*Chrudim, individual interview, R1*). A written summary of the meeting is missing: "There was no written record." (*Chrudim, individual interview, R1*)
- **Attendance solution without a supportive intermediate step.** In the case of increasing absences, instead of looking for causes and support, they soon reach for an escalation towards OSPOD.
- **Safety.** Parents mention the presence of extremist symbols in pupils' communication and describe the uncertainty whether the school is dealing with the situation systematically.
- **Support measures only on paper.** According to parents, PPP recommendations are not consistently implemented (e.g. non-allocation of AP, shared capacities: "... only one assistant for more children..." (*Chrudim, group interview, R2*)).

- **Non-transparent transfers.** Some transfers seem non-transparent; A "special" school is sometimes used as an administrative solution, not based on a clear diagnosis.
- **The capacity of NGOs.** Support is not always available "right now": "... You wait two, three days... It's too late." (*Chrudim, group interview, R3*)

What has worked well

- **The influence of a particular teacher.** Where the teacher actively defends prejudice and acts fairly, children thrive. Quick and personal response to bullying ("... She took it and said that it is not done... then it was better..." (*Chrudim, group interview, R1*)) calmed the situation.
- **Third-party impulse.** Sometimes the school begins to fulfil its obligations only after pressure from the outside (e.g. after the intervention of a social worker, the IEP is set).
- **Fully implemented support.** When PPP recommendations are actually put into practice (e.g. IEP, specific support), the child's situation improves.
- **A calmer environment for recovery.** For some children, a "special" school can temporarily offer safety and focus – the important thing is that it does not function as a dead end without a clear plan for the next return to the mainstream.

What's missing

- **Safety and predictability.** Parents and children need to be sure that the school will deal with bullying and threats **quickly and systematically**.
- **Partnership approach and transparent processes.** Respect, equal status and **written records of negotiations** are expected.
- **Fast and affordable support.** Families need immediate, locally available support to guide them through rights and procedures and accompany them to the hearings.
- **Support before sanctions.** Repression should be preceded by **an intermediate stage of support** (mapping the reasons for absence, offering help).
- **Guarantee of support measures.** PPP recommendations should not remain on paper; **sufficient AP capacity** and uniform implementation of support throughout the teaching team are needed.

Synthesis of mechanisms

1. **Climate and safety determine attendance.** If the child does not feel safe, he refuses to attend ("he does not want to go there" – a motif from conversations).
2. **Information asymmetries and weak processes increase conflicts.** When there are no written records and clear rules, tensions grow ("no written record").
3. **Support loses its effectiveness if it is not implemented.** Recommendations from PPP must be **put into practice**, otherwise they will not help ("they did not give an assistant").
4. **The capacity limits of NGOs reduce the timeliness of assistance.** A delay of "two, three days" is long in a crisis; the rapid availability of support is decisive for escalation or calming down.

Proposal of a coordinated and interconnected strategy for Chrudim

We present a proposal that systematically connects the work of non-profit organizations, schools and the city of Chrudim. Its goal is to break the described spiral of failure and replace it with an understandable system in which every family has enough information, every child has a sense of security and every school has support in clearly defined procedures. All the proposed steps directly respond to what emerged from the interviews and findings directly in Chrudim.

Phase 1: Leveling the playing field and early support

The first and absolutely fundamental pillar is the introduction of the so-called "school card". It is a simple, one-page document intended for parents, which clearly and concisely describes the key procedures: how the school handles reporting bullying, who is the contact person and when the situation will be resolved; how to apply for support measures and who to turn to for help; How to properly excuse absence. The non-profit organization will help formulate the texts in such a way that all parents can understand them, and will make sure that the "card" reaches every family and its content is clearly explained. The city's task will then be to ensure that this information standard becomes a common practice in all schools it establishes. With this step, we are directly reducing the information and power inequality that parents have complained about in interviews, and we are fulfilling the spirit of the Education Act, which guarantees the right to information and equal access to education.

The second step in this phase is to create a support plan for increasing absenteeism. We propose to change the current practice, where the problem often escalates quickly to the Authority for the Social and Legal Protection of Children (OSPOD). Instead, the school first convenes an educational committee, to which it invites parents and also a worker from a non-profit organization who is trusted by the family. The aim of this meeting is not repression, but to find out the real reasons for the absence – whether it is fear of bullying, misunderstanding of school duties or other obstacles. Based on this, specific steps of assistance will be agreed together. Only if this plan demonstrably fails, does OSPOD enter the process. In this way, we are inserting the missing "intermediate level of support" into the system and giving a chance to solve problems before they grow to unsolvable proportions, which is fully in line with the school's obligation to monitor attendance and choose appropriate support measures.

Phase 2: Ensuring safety and effective assistance on site

To ensure that support is not just a distant promise, it is crucial to have it available directly at the school. That is why we propose to set up regular consultation hours of the non-profit organization directly on the school premises, for example one afternoon a week. Parents will thus have a trusted partner at hand who will guide them through the process of applying for contributions, advise them on recommendations from the pedagogical and psychological counselling centre or, if necessary, accompany them to meetings at school. The school will provide facilities for this service and will actively communicate it to all parents as a common and welcome part of support. The city will help anchor this service and financially support it as a key element of prevention.

At the same time, it is essential to ensure that support measures are actually implemented on the ground. Recommendations issued by the school counselling facility (PPP/SPC) are binding on the school by law. Therefore, the school must actively prepare and, above all, use individual educational plans and ensure that the support is not just a formal document. A non-profit organization can act as a confidant of the family here – it will help parents to "translate" professional recommendations in a comprehensible way and at regular intervals sensitively verify with parents and teachers whether the agreed steps are being fulfilled. It is also essential that everyone understands their roles: the counselling centre decides on the scope of support, the school implements it and the city creates the conditions for it. This prevents situations where, for example, a teaching assistant is only "shared" and is actually unavailable to the child who needs it.

Phase 3: Long-term change and permeability of the system

In order for positive steps to become a permanent part of the education system in Chrudim, it is necessary to anchor them at the level of the entire city. We propose that Chrudim establish a commission for permeability and inclusion. It will regularly bring together principals of all primary schools, representatives of key non-profit

organizations and OSPOD. The main task of the commission will be to create transparent and fair rules for the transfer of pupils between schools in order to prevent arbitrariness and situations where some children are rejected without a clear reason. The Commission will also focus on auditing children who have been placed in special schools in the past for administrative rather than professional reasons, and will prepare a concrete plan for them to return safely to mainstream schools if it is in their best interests. Non-profit organizations will bring anonymized stories and experiences of families into this process, so that decision-making is not based only on formal documents, but on real life.

A cross-cutting theme that connects all phases is strengthening safety and effectively dealing with bullying. The school has a legal obligation to create a safe environment. Therefore, it is crucial that the already mentioned "school card" contains a clear and concise procedure for reporting bullying with specific deadlines and responsible persons. It is equally important that a brief written record of each meeting with parents on sensitive topics is made. This will ensure that parents have received their suggestion and will know exactly what steps the school is taking and what to expect. This builds trust and a culture of open and responsible communication.

In-depth analysis of interviews: Louny

Date and method

The basis is two semi-structured group interviews with parents from Louny and Postoloprty (session 1: n = 4; session 2: n = 4). Transcripts capture spoken speech, including inaccuracies; Our goal is not to verify individual disputes, but to recognize recurring patterns and their impacts on children's school careers. The quotes are unanimous: "... text..." (*Louny, group interview, R2*). The term "*special school*" is left in quotation marks when it refers to the authentic formulation of the respondents; in the analytical text we use the term special school.

Findings and Interpretations

What exists

- Diverse school environments.** Several types of schools intertwine in the locality: a regular primary school with a lower representation of Roma pupils, a school in a neighbouring village with a higher representation of Roma, and a

functional network of special education (kindergartens and primary schools) for children with diagnosed needs.

- **Engaged and informed parents.** Respondents have been monitoring the children's progress and behaviour for a long time and are ready to actively engage in negotiations with the school.
- **Support for individuals.** Trust is aroused by specific people (a helpful class teacher, a Roma governess, a respected NGO worker): "Listen, the class teacher is good." (R2).
- **Positive experience in a special school (with a relevant diagnosis).** Parents appreciate intensive communication and stable support: "I can't complain... Almost every day the class teacher calls." (R3).

What doesn't work

- **Extreme failure of both the individual and the institution (individual case).** The father describes a protracted conflict with a particular teacher (in his testimony "racist"/"fascist") and a series of incidents perceived as bullying or psychological pressure (including being threatened by the police and being sent out the door for unpaid photos): "... that's bullying..." (R1). The described behavior affected not only the child, but also the family's trust in the school.
- **Non-functional complaint handling mechanism.** According to the testimony, the attempt to solve the situation with the school management failed and seemed trivial: "... sit down and play to the music..." (R1). There was a lack of a transparent procedure, minutes and clear deadlines.
- **Pressure to move to a special school (without support in diagnostics).** In the context of the conflict, a suggestion was made to "put him in a special room", which the father perceived as stigmatizing and racially conditioned: "This does not mean that we are Roma, that we cannot be on the level." (R1).
- **Weak capacity of local NGOs.** Caritas is perceived more as a source of material help, rather than as a partner for educational and systemic support: "... They won't even help with anything." (R3). There is a lack of tutoring, advocacy and help with dealing with institutions.
- **A feeling of isolation in the majority class.** Being the only Roma in the class leads to loneliness and stress; both the child and the parent describe alienation and fatigue from proving that they "belong there" every day (the quotations preserve the unpolished language of the transcription).

What has worked well

- **Proactive parental advocacy.** Calm, matter-of-fact and assertive communication with the teacher helped to define expectations and prevent escalation: "I don't want that here..." (R2).
- **Belonging ("to be among one's own").** The transfer to Postoloprt, where there are more Roma children and well-known peers, brought an immediate improvement in the climate and motivation: "... there he was single... He wouldn't want to change schools anymore." (R1).
- **Trusted external partner.** A respected NGO worker ("Pet'a") works as a model of ideal support – available, competent, with an immediate response: "Pet'a knows that he can rely on us. Anytime." (R3).
- **Quality individual teachers.** Where communication is intense, predictable and fair, children thrive – the personality and attitude of a particular teacher/educator are key.

What's missing

- **Fair and predictable complaints mechanism.** Families need a clear procedure with deadlines, minutes of meetings and the possibility of inviting a confidant (NGO) – especially when school management fails.
- **Available professional NGOs "on site".** Material assistance is not enough; advice, tutoring and advocacy accompaniment are needed in dealing with institutions.
- **Promoting an inclusive climate in mainstream primary schools. Less repression, more partnerships; an environment where children feel safe and accepted without having to seek refuge elsewhere.**
- **Trust and partnership.** Changing communication from a tone of power to respect; recognizing parents as equal partners.

Synthesis of mechanisms

Three key mechanisms are manifested in Louny: (1) individualization of success and failure – a child's school career depends almost exclusively on the quality of the relationship with a particular teacher or principal, not on a functional system; (2) failure of institutional safeguards – in the event of a serious problem with the teacher, the formal mechanisms of the school fail and the family finds itself in a hopeless situation without the possibility of an effective appeal; (3) escape as the main strategy

of the solution – a successful strategy of parents is not an effort to correct the system, but an escape from it: transfer to another school, relying on personal acquaintances or on the help of an external NGO worker. The locality lacks functional and accessible local support to help families systematically solve problems and promote their children's rights to quality and safe education.

Proposal of a coordinated and interconnected strategy for Louny

This proposal is a direct response to what has been said in interviews with Louny families: the current formal procedures often do not work, parents do not have credible support in the area, and tensions in schools are resolved only when they grow into an open crisis. The goal is therefore to create a functioning partnership between the city, schools and non-profit organizations, thanks to which problems will be caught in time, solved transparently, and families will have professional help nearby that they can trust.

Phase 1: Mapping and strengthening real support on the ground

Before we start building new things, it is necessary to put in order what support opportunities actually exist in Louny and what is missing. The first step is therefore to commission **an independent analysis of educational and support services** in the entire region. This "map" will show everything from tutoring to professional counseling to accompanying parents to meetings with schools. Schools will be actively involved in this process and will provide their valuable experience with what their pupils and families need most.

The results of this analysis will not just lie in a drawer. It will serve as a solid foundation for the next step, which is **the targeted construction of missing services**. Local non-profit organizations in cooperation with the city will prepare a project, for example within the framework of subsidy programs such as PRO-ROMA, which will focus on the professionalization of existing support and the creation of the one that is still missing. In practice, this may mean the creation of regular tutoring clubs, the establishment of counselling "windows" directly in schools, or the creation of a team that can quickly and sensitively support the family during difficult negotiations. The purpose is to replace the current, often ineffective practice of "material assistance without professional support" with a system of available and competent support directly in the place where people need it.

Phase 2: Transparent processes that build trust

The second pillar is the introduction **of a clear and uniform procedure for resolving complaints and conflicts**. The city publishes a simple "city standard", which each

school incorporates into its internal rules and explains it clearly to parents. The procedure will be predictable: the first step is always to try to reach a solution with the class teacher and the school head, within clearly defined deadlines and with a written record of the meeting. If the parent is not satisfied with the solution, they have the right to contact the founder and the Czech School Inspectorate. It is essential that the parent has the right to invite a trusted representative from the non-profit organization to the meeting at all times. To avoid unnecessary escalation, school staff will undergo a short but practical crisis communication training. What parents now perceive as trivializing problems and "closing the door" will thus turn into a predictable and controllable process.

At the same time, we will introduce **the "Trust at School" programme**, which will act as an accessible mediation service to resolve everyday disputes before they escalate into a formal complaint. The non-profit organization will offer schools the opportunity to use a mediator who can help clarify misunderstandings between the family and the school. Schools will make it clear to parents that they welcome the presence of such an intermediary. The goal is simple: to help both parties reach an agreement quickly, safely and respectfully before a small problem becomes a big injustice.

Phase 3: Long-term supervision and promotion of a fair environment

In order for positive changes to become a permanent part of school life, it is necessary to regularly find out how pupils and parents feel in them. That is why we propose that every school **conduct an anonymous questionnaire survey once every two years**, which will measure the school climate. The questionnaire will focus on key areas: a sense of security, a sense of justice, the quality of relationships with teachers, and experience in conflict resolution. Non-profit organizations will help explain the meaning of this survey in the community and thus encourage as much participation as possible.

The school then presents the results to its founder and the school board and together they prepare **a short and specific action plan for remediation**. This plan will include clear steps and deadlines. Regular school evaluation will thus receive practical content and the city will have valuable data in its hands, thanks to which it can support schools that are struggling with tension or a sense of injustice in a timely manner. This will ensure that nurturing good relationships and a safe environment is not just a one-time activity, but an ongoing process.



In-depth analysis of interviews: Ostrava

Date and method

The basis is a group interview with parents from Ostrava (especially Poruba, also mentioned Přívoz), n = 4. Transcripts capture spoken speech, including inaccuracies; The aim is not to verify individual disputes, but to identify recurring patterns in the functioning of the school, communication and support. We label the quotes uniformly: "... text..." (*Ostrava, group interview, R1*).

Findings and Interpretations

What exists

- **Visible inclusive rituals and clear rules.** In Poruba, class teachers at the beginning of the 1st grade organize a "parental circle" and set the norm of respect: "... He doesn't want them to guide their children... We are all the same here." (R2)
- **Differentiation and superstructure support.** Schools divide hours in key subjects, the possibility of tutoring outside the schedule is common: "... the hours are divided in half... after tutoring." (R3); „... he can keep it after school and explain it." (R1)
- **Frequent, direct communication.** "Almost every day the class teacher calls." (R3)
- **Financial sensitivity without stigmatization.** "When you have it, bring it."; in case of need, even personal help from the management: "The director paid from his wallet." (R2)
- **Involvement of NGOs at sensitive moments.** In the minutes, NGOs sometimes act as an observer, which increases trust: "Romana from the association was there to monitor..." (R4)
- **The importance of preschool.** Children after kindergarten are more independent and transition to primary school more smoothly: "... she becomes fine, washes herself and goes... is more independent." (R1)

What doesn't work

- **A one-off episode of a prejudiced statement.** "... How a gypsy owns a shovel... Gadjo counts, you kick." (R2) – in this case, the management reacted quickly with a reproach, but such excesses show the need for continuous work with the climate.

- **Uneven process discipline.** In addition to schools that act quickly, there is experience with "postponement": "They talk about it... put it down." (R1)
- **Digital barrier.** Some families do not know Bachelors/e-mail, and schools somewhere insist on online apologies: "They can't even open it... they don't even have a mobile phone... Only via e-mail." (R3)
- **Perceived "hard" catchment area.** Parents talk about an informal agreement between the principals to keep a strict momentum: "... That is the agreement with the city... they will take only according to the catchment area." (R4)
- **Low motivation and irregular attendance of some children.** "It takes two, three days... Sometimes the moon doesn't work." (R1)

What has worked well

- **Quick and factual remedy.** "She got a reprimand from the principal." (R2)
- **Above-standard availability of teachers.** "She called to see if she could keep it after school to explain." (R1)
- **Introductory "parenting circle".** It sets standards of respect and reduces friction.
- **Flexible payment mode and discreet assistance.** It prevents the stigmatization of the child.
- **Early preschool socialization.** It makes it easier to start in elementary school.

What's missing

- **Practical support for low digital literacy.** Simple manual + alternative channels next to the Bachelor, e-mail, (phone, paper forms, contact hours).
- **Predictable "intermediate steps" in absence.** A clear support plan before the matter escalates – and at the same time not to leave the trouble to "rot".
- **More transparent transfers within capacity.** Fair and understandable mechanics without the impression of "informal barriers".
- **Targeted work with attendance and motivation.** Practical support for daily habits in families where threats do not work on their own.

Synthesis

The Ostrava painting shows strengths and weaknesses. Specific elements of good practice are proving to be successful in Poruba – clear rules from the 1st grade, differentiation of teaching, available teachers and a sensitive approach to finances. At

the same time, process weaknesses remain: the digital barrier, incomplete incident handling and the perceived "hard" catchment area. Children's trajectory is influenced by four interrelated mechanisms: (1) climate and relationship with the class teacher, (2) the school's procedural discipline in dealing with incidents and absences, (3) the ability to overcome communication and digital barriers in the family, and (4) permeability between schools without hidden agreements. Where the school combines clear rules, quick correction and practical support, the situation stabilizes; where trivialization or prejudice prevails, parents' trust and children's attendance are eroded.

Proposal of a coordinated and interconnected strategy for Ostrava

The aim of this strategy for Ostrava is not to create complex new concepts, but on the contrary to anchor and systematize what has already proven itself in practice. We want great initiatives not to depend on the enthusiasm of individuals, but to become a reliable part of school life. All proposed steps are based on the findings of the interviews and fill in the missing links in the support chain so that no additional barriers are created.

Phase 1: Prevention based on clarity and best practices

The first step is to transform the best practices that already work, for example, in Poruba, into a short and understandable school standard. This document will clearly describe the key elements of a friendly environment: how the welcome circle with parents of first grades takes place, what the principle of "we are all the same" means in practice, why there is a division of hours in key subjects, what are the possibilities of after-school tutoring and what are the rules for discreet payment for school activities. In order for this practice to become a guaranteed part of school life, this standard will be enshrined directly in the school regulations and in the annual plan.

At the same time, the school publishes a simple "communication card". On a single page, parents will find an overview of all the communication channels used by the school, what are the guaranteed response times and what are the alternative ways of excusing absences for those who are not in the digital world – whether by phone, in writing, or through the contact window at the school. As a practical help, the non-profit organization will offer parents short "digital bridges", i.e. mini-courses that will help them better navigate online communication.

Phase 2: Troubleshooting without delay and with clear support

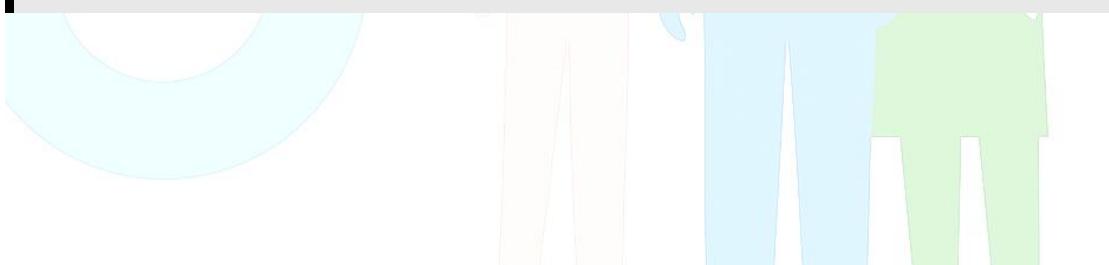
When a problem arises, it must be clear to all parties what is going to happen. Therefore, the school will make its procedure for dealing with complaints and incidents more transparent and simple. The process will have clear rules: a simple submission, a written acknowledgment of receipt, a specific deadline for replying, a thorough investigation with the participation of all relevant staff, and finally a written communication of the result, which will also include the proposed steps to remedy it. At all times, the parent has the right to be accompanied by a non-profit organization that can help with mediation or with drafting a submission.

In the case of chronic absenteeism, the school will move from administrative steps to active support. He will convene a support team, consisting of a class teacher, representatives of the school counselling centre and a prevention methodologist, and together with the family will set up a practical plan for the child's return to school. This plan may include adjusting your daily routine or gradually increasing your attendance. Here, a non-profit organization can take on the role of a case manager who will be in close contact with the family and help them fulfill the individual steps. The Authority for the Social and Legal Protection of Children (OSPOD) enters the process as a partner and support, not as the first step towards repression.

Phase 3: A fair system built on data and transparency

In order to make the care of the school environment a permanent process, the school will conduct an anonymous climate survey among pupils and parents every two years. It will focus on a sense of security, perception of justice, quality of relationships and experience in conflict resolution. The school will transform the results into a brief action plan, which will be discussed in the school board. The city can set a uniform methodology for these surveys, which will make it possible to compare results between schools and target support where it is most needed.

At the same time, it is necessary to shed light on the catchment area system of school districts. The city will publish a clear map of districts and clear rules for accepting children outside the catchment area. The schools themselves will then openly communicate their capacities and criteria for admission when enrolling. The non-profit organization will be ready to explain and accompany families who need it. The aim is not to abolish the catchment area, but to remove the feeling that there are hidden barriers and unwritten rules that prevent some children from accessing education.



In-depth analysis of interviews: Prague

Date and method

The basis is one semi-structured group interview with parents of children from primary and secondary schools in Prague (n = 11). Transcripts capture spoken speech, including inaccuracies; The aim is not to verify individual disputes, but to identify recurring patterns in the functioning of the school, communication and support. The quotes are unanimous: "... text..." (*Prague, group interview*. The term "special school" is left in quotation marks if it is an authentic statement of the respondent; in the analytical text we use special school.

Findings and Interpretations

What exists

- **High educational aspirations.** Children have a strong orientation towards education and are encouraged by their parents; talents in languages, music and social sciences are emerging.
- **Positive school climate (in many schools).** "Mine doesn't even want to go home." (R3) – some parents describe schools where children like to go and where they feel good.
- **Supportive individuals in school.** Not only teachers and principals gain trust, but also non-teaching staff: "I liked the janitor... He knew how to talk to those gypsy boys." (R5)
- **Functional network of NGOs.** Parents use tutoring and preparation for entrance exams: "For example, me too, with tutoring, People in Need." (R2)
- **Elements of flexibility in teaching.** Teachers sometimes allow you to choose a place according to the difficulty of the subject: "I will sit in the front for subjects I don't know." (R4)

What doesn't work

- **Microaggressions and prejudices at first contact.** "When we came to enroll, the teacher made a strange face at us." (R6); "The teacher says to me: 'what are you doing here?' ..." (R7) – small disparaging gestures undermine trust.
- **Humiliating behavior of individual teachers.** "She ridiculed him in class... the teacher was fired." (R1) – even an otherwise functional environment can harm an individual's actions.
- **Unauthorized directing to special education.** "The teacher didn't want to pay attention to him, so she put him in a 'special' school." (R8) – a parent's testimony about a child with a physical handicap, not an intellectual disability.

- **Unclear role and capacity of assistants.** Confusion about when and how the entitlement arises, frequent sharing of one assistant "for the whole school", fear of inappropriate pairing ("can cause even more trauma").
- **Personnel instability.** "The director fired ten and now he's looking for... Toník has not had a teacher since September. They are substituting." (R9)

What has worked well

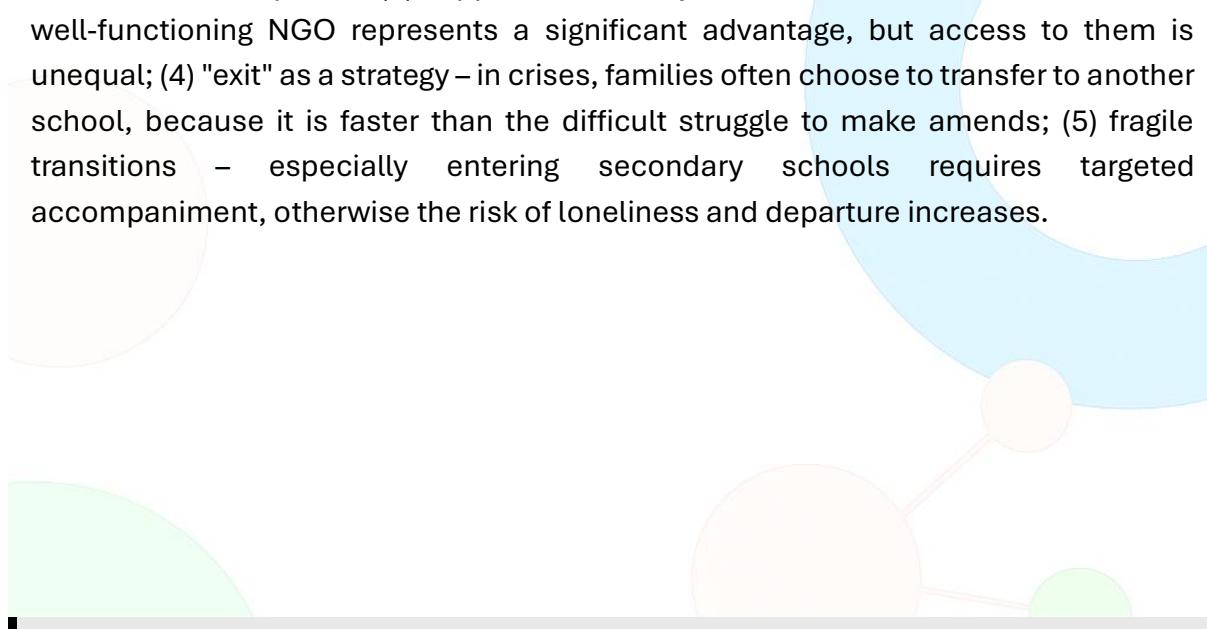
- **Assertive parental advocacy.** "I talked to the teacher... The next day, a boy came and said: Mom, he behaved completely differently." (R2)
- **Quick intervention of the management.** In serious cases (humiliation, bullying), **immediate** intervention helps – in extreme cases, even the teacher's departure.
- **Change of environment (transfer).** "She put him in another school. All A's, awards, not a single note." (R1) – transfer as an effective rescue strategy.
- **Didactic sensitivity.** Teachers who reflect stereotypes in the materials and explain them strengthen safety and trust: "The teacher explained to them that this is not the case." (R5)

What's missing

- **A clearly defined "safe person" at school.** A mentor/mediator to whom both the child and the parent can turn at any time and know what will happen next.
- **Cultural competence of teachers.** Systematic work with prejudices in adults and support in recognizing and developing talent in all children.
- **Clear rules for support measures.** Who makes the decisions (PPP/SPC), what exactly the school does, what is the role of the assistant – briefly and comprehensibly.
- **Targeted support during transitions.** In particular, the transition to secondary school is fragile (often "the only Roma in the class"); social and academic support is needed.

Synthesis of mechanisms

In Prague, five interconnected mechanisms are manifested: (1) the adult effect is stronger than the system effect – individual teachers, principals or parents of classmates can fundamentally improve and devalue the climate, while systemic safeguards are variable; (2) microaggressions erode trust and weaken families'



motivation to cooperate; (3) support is unevenly available – an effective director or a well-functioning NGO represents a significant advantage, but access to them is unequal; (4) "exit" as a strategy – in crises, families often choose to transfer to another school, because it is faster than the difficult struggle to make amends; (5) fragile transitions – especially entering secondary schools requires targeted accompaniment, otherwise the risk of loneliness and departure increases.

Proposal of a coordinated and interconnected strategy for Prague

This proposal translates the key findings of the Prague talks into a set of coherent and understandable steps. The aim is to create an environment in which the first contact with the school takes place in a partnership spirit and without prejudice, parents know exactly what support they are entitled to and how to apply for it, and children receive quick and sensitive help even in difficult moments. Each step clearly describes what schools should do, what value nonprofits can bring, and what role the city plays in setting up a reliable framework.

Phase 1: Prevention and Partner Building

The first task is to unify and cultivate the way schools communicate. We will introduce a simple "communication standard" that will include practical checklists and clear procedures for enrollment, class meetings and normal daily contact. A visible part of it will be the "Charter of Respect", a concise and clear statement posted in the school that shows zero tolerance for humiliating remarks and microaggressions. Non-profit organizations will help schools prepare this standard and train teachers on specific anonymized examples. They can offer discreet support for enrolments and then provide valuable feedback to the school management. The city can recommend this procedure to all its schools as an effective part of professional development.

At the same time, it is necessary to actively reduce the digital barrier. Schools will clearly announce at the beginning of the year what communication channels they use and what alternatives there are for parents without the necessary technology, such as the possibility of a telephone excuse, paper forms in the lobby or fixed contact hours in the office. Short sample "mini-lessons for parents" will help you learn the basics of

working with Bachelors or other systems. Non-profit organizations will prepare practical workshops and picture tutorials, and the city can support families who cannot afford data packages or devices through small grants. The point is simple: no one should be excluded from communication with the school just because they do not have the right application.

Phase 2: Targeted support and clear troubleshooting

Each school will visibly mark its "safe person" – a specific contact that children and parents can turn to at any time with confidence. This can be an educational counselor, a school psychologist or another trained worker. It is important that he has dedicated time for this role, basic mediation skills and regular consultation hours. Non-profit organizations can provide the necessary training, supervision and, if necessary, accompany parents to sensitive meetings. The city can then help where it is necessary to strengthen the work of such a worker or share an expert between several schools.

The confusion surrounding support measures needs to be unraveled and clearly summarized on one page. Therefore, the school prepares a "support card" that explains to parents in a clear way: what types of measures exist, what is the procedure through the pedagogical and psychological counselling centre (PPP/SPC), what the individual educational plan (IEP) means in practice and how it is checked that it is actually being fulfilled. A non-profit organization can help families make an appointment for counseling, collect documents and then sensitively and factually verify whether the agreed support in the classroom really works.

To prevent conflicts from becoming endless stories, schools publish a simple and predictable complaint protocol. It clearly states how to file a complaint, when the confirmation of its receipt will arrive (for example, within two working days), by what time it will be substantively settled (for example, within 30 days) and that a short written record of each hearing will be created. At all times, the parent has the right to invite a trustee from a non-profit organization as support.

Phase 3: Long-term strategy and certainty in transitions

Critical moments in the educational career are transitions between schools and returns after a long absence. Primary and secondary schools will therefore introduce the "Smooth Transitions" programme. At high school, there will be a "buddy" – an older classmate who will guide the newcomer through the first weeks. For children who are returning after illness or other prolonged absences, the primary school will prepare a short reintegration plan, including, for example, staggered test dates, tutoring or arranged consultations. Non-profit organizations will complement this system with mentoring focused on study skills and help harmonize communication between doctors, family and school in long-term ill children.

At the same time, it is necessary to work critically with teaching materials that may contain stereotypes. Schools will go through the textbooks used (especially reading books) as part of their subject committees and add short methodological notes on how to explain any obsolete passages and place them in the right context. In order to ensure that the care of the school climate is based on data, and not only on impressions, an anonymous questionnaire survey among pupils and parents is carried out once every two years. The school will present its results in a comprehensible way and prepare a short action plan based on them – what exactly will improve, who will do it and by when. The city can provide a common tool and methodology so that the results can be compared and help can be targeted where it is most needed.

In-depth analysis of interviews: Slaný

Date and method

The basis is two semi-structured group interviews with parents of children from primary schools in Slaný (session 1: n = 3; session 2: n = 3). Transcripts capture spoken speech; The aim is to name recurring patterns and their effects on children, not to verify individual disputes.

Findings and Interpretations

What exists

- **The formal framework works, but trust is lacking.** Enrolment in schools is underway, the school and the "office" have their roles. In practice, however, parents describe that the rules often do not seem fair and relationships are tense.
- **Exceptional helpfulness in crises.** In individual cases, the school has shown flexibility (e.g. temporary presence of the mother in the classroom with a child with anxiety), but this is not a fixed procedure.

What doesn't work

- **An uneven start already at the enrollment.** Parents perceive that not everyone is judged the same when enrolling. Distrust arises right at the beginning of the school career.
- **Unpleasant climate and fear of children.** Teachers are "measured" in their parents' descriptions, children talk about their fears of going to school.
- **No learning support.** When a child does not understand something, he does not receive systematic explanations or offers of tutoring; parents feel that they are being "referred home".
- **An impartial higher instance is missing.** When conflicts escalate, parents do not see a neutral arbiter — they feel that the "authority" is more on the side of the school.
- **Breakdown of trust.** When asked who they trust at school or in NGOs, they say "no one". Families thus start solving problems late or not at all.

What has worked well

- **Short-term stabilization by the presence of a parent.** For the child's severe anxiety, it was helpful when the school temporarily allowed the presence of the mother in the classroom. Other stable supporting elements are not described by respondents — this is also an important finding.

What's missing

- **Independent and trustworthy support outside of school.** A clearly marked "third party" (NGO worker/mediator) to whom children and parents can turn and who will advise and accompany them to the meeting.
- **Culturally sensitive contact.** Ideally, a person who can quickly gain the trust of Roma families and translate "school language" into understandable steps.
- **Fair and understandable procedures.** Simple rules for registrations, complaints and requests for support — in writing, with clear deadlines and a contact person.
- **Basic material stability.** When families name food and clothing as "first aid," it is obvious that material pressure weakens their capacity to deal with school matters.

Synthesis of mechanisms

There are four interconnected mechanisms **operating in Slaný**:

1. **Distrust trumps the rules.** Historical experience ("the office is more on the side of the school") and cold communication lead to the fact that families turn to the school only in extreme need.
2. **An uneven input sets the trajectory.** The experience of injustice in enrollment + negative reactions to a request for help with learning reduces the motivation of both the child and the parent.
3. **There is no bridge between school and family.** Without an independent, culturally competent mediator, petty disagreements quickly accumulate and end up with school rejection.
4. **Material stress blocks the solution.** When the priority is to manage basic needs, there is no energy left for negotiation and keeping track of school steps; even good plans then collide with reality.

Proposal of a coordinated strategy for Slaný

The goal of this strategy is clear: to break the circle of mistrust that has arisen in Slaný, to set up fair and understandable procedures and to provide children and parents with accessible help, which is noticeably lacking today. The proposed steps are based on what was said in interviews with families and connect the role of the school, the city and the non-profit organization so that everyone knows exactly what to do.

Phase 1 – Prevention and safe start

In order for trust to begin to build, there must be a "place to go" in school. Therefore, each school will officially designate an available "safe person". He will be a confidant with regular consultation hours, easily accessible to parents and children, who knows how to have sensitive conversations. This can be an educational counsellor, a school psychologist or a worker from a non-profit organisation who will attend school regularly. The city will help financially provide this service where it is needed. The point is simple: to give families a clear contact with someone who is on their side, but at the same time knows how to look for a solution together with the school.

Fair entry to school is equally important. The enrolment procedure must be described clearly and in advance – what happens when and what the criteria are. For the first grades and during the transition to the second grade, a short adaptation plan is introduced, which includes a welcome meeting with the parents, a "buddy" in the class for the new children and a short follow-up phone call from the class teacher after a few weeks. The city will see to it that these minimum standards apply in all schools it establishes. The goal is to send a clear signal from the beginning: enrollment is the same for everyone, and when a child looks around at school, he has support.

The third pillar of prevention is everyday communication without unnecessary tension. Schools will set a simple communication standard, which will include a visibly displayed "charter of respect". All teachers will undergo short and practical training on how to work with prejudice and how to calm conflict situations. The result will be fewer misunderstandings, fewer harsh words, and more constructive meetings.

Phase 2 – Targeted support instead of rapid repression

When a child starts to miss school, support must be paramount, not immediately sanctions. Therefore, the school first convenes a short meeting with the family and the "safe person" to find out the reasons for the absence and offer specific help – for example, a gradual return to school or an agreement to supplement the curriculum. Only when such a plan demonstrably fails, does it make sense to involve OSPOD, which should also come primarily with an offer of help. This will introduce the missing "intermediate level of support" to prevent the situation from escalating unnecessarily.

At the same time, it is necessary to make the system of support measures more transparent and to alleviate the material pressure on families. The school prepares a simple one-page "support card" that explains what the types of help are and how to apply for them. At the same time, he will clearly describe discreet ways of dealing with payments (deferral, installments) and make it clear that the financial distress of the family must not fall on the child. The non-profit organization will help the family go through the whole process and can provide quick help with the purchase of aids in crisis situations.

Phase 3 – Rules that apply and can be checked

To prevent "fairness" from becoming just an empty word, Slaný will introduce a clear and equal procedure for resolving complaints for everyone. The school will clearly describe how to file a complaint and by when it will be settled. A parent will always have the right to invite their guardian and a brief record will be created from each meeting. The city will check that schools comply with this procedure. This will replace today's feeling of "the authority is on the side of the school" with a transparent process that can be verified retrospectively.

The last element is the regular "climate survey" in schools. Once every two years, an anonymous questionnaire for pupils and parents will take place in all schools. The school then presents the results and publishes a specific plan for what to improve and by when. This way, the city will see where help is needed and will not remain dependent only on individual complaints.

This strategy thus responds directly to the problems identified: it introduces credible support for families, provides clear and predictable rules, and brings support and clarity to problem-solving.

Recommendations for non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs)

The following recommendations represent a set of practical and validated interventions that directly respond to the failure and success mechanisms identified in the six sites studied.

Building presence, trust and transparency

- Regular presence of NGOs "at school"

Justification: The research in Slaný showed a total collapse of trust, where families did not have a single safe contact in the system. The visible and predictable presence of an NGO worker directly in the school breaks this barrier, shortens the path to help and allows problems to be caught before they escalate into a crisis, as was observed in Chrudim and Louny.

- Introduction of the "fair record" standard

Justification: The findings from Slaný clearly proved that unequal treatment in enrolment sets a negative trajectory and destroys trust for years to come. A standardized, transparent and dignified enrolment process, supervised by NGOs, is a key prevention that builds a partnership relationship with parents from the beginning.

- Co-creation of a "communication card" for parents

Justification: Across localities, it has been shown that conflicts often arise from lack of information and misunderstanding. A one-page overview with guaranteed response times and clear communication channels, as designed for Ostrava, reduces information asymmetry and prevents unnecessary disputes.

Strengthening families and ensuring the availability of support

- Create and distribute a "Support Card"

Justification: Research in Prague and Chrudim revealed confusion and uncertainty among families about support measures. A simple one-page guide (PPP/SPC, IVP,

contacts) helps families to make real use of legal support. In the role of a guide, NGOs "translate" recommendations into practice and monitor their implementation.

- Building "digital bridges" and providing offline alternatives

Rationale: The analysis confirmed that the digital and language barrier excludes some families from communication, leading to their labelling as 'non-cooperative'. Short practical workshops for parents and the provision of paper or telephone channels, as designed for Prague, will keep all parents in touch with the school.

- Setting up a discreet rapid aid fund

Justification: The finding from Slaný explicitly showed that material stress ("clothing, food") completely blocks the capacity of families to deal with school matters. Small, quick and non-public financial support prevents stigmatization of the child and allows him or her to participate fully in school, thus addressing the primary barrier.

Professionalization of problem solving

- Standardisation of the complaints procedure

Justification: The experience from Slaný, where families perceive the authorities as automatically siding with the school, proves the need for transparency. The predictable procedure (steps, deadlines, written records) that NGOs help families use replaces chaos and a sense of helplessness with a verifiable process.

- Enforcement of the principle of "support before sanctions" for attendance

Justification: In Chrudim, it was found that the system lacks an intermediate level of support and problems with absenteeism quickly escalate to repression. The proposed three-stage procedure (quick contact → joint meeting → return plan) works with the real causes of absence (fear, chaos in the regime) and is demonstrably more effective.

- Methodological assistance to schools in dealing with incidents and bullying

Justification: Research in Louny and Chrudim has shown that unresolved or downplayed conflicts lead to the resignation of families. A clear procedure, impartial facilitation by NGOs and timely communication with parents restore safety and trust instead of increasing problems.

Systematic change and development of competencies

- Presentation of quarterly anonymized data to the founder

Justification: The experience from Havířov has shown that individual parental advocacy often replaces the system. Regular submission of aggregated data converts individual cases into systemic recommendations (trends, missing capacities), thus accelerating changes at the city level and shifting NGOs into the role of an expert partner.

- Offering practical training and supervision for teachers

Justification: Research in Prague has confirmed that prejudice and inappropriate behavior of adults weaken children's aspirations. Targeted 90-minute modules (working with prejudices, de-escalation) and subsequent supervision increase the competences of teachers and directly prevent microaggressions and negative climate.

- Support for school climate measurement and the creation of action plans

Justification: The contrast between the positive climate in Ostrava and the negative climate in other locations shows that the quality of the environment is not a coincidence. A credible survey (where NGOs will help increase participation) and a clear remedial plan make climate care a climate-driven process and provide objective data for improvement.

Conclusion

The research question was: What specific, practical, and locally feasible strategies can nonprofits use to increase the acceptance rate and educational success of Roma pupils in mainstream primary schools? The response, based on semi-structured interviews with parents and grandparents in six cities, shows the need to move from crisis, one-off interventions to proactive and systemically anchored support that balances information inequalities, stabilizes the school climate and makes school processes predictable.

What our data and literature say

Across localities, it is repeated that the quality and predictability of school processes, more than the "set of resources" itself, determines the trajectory of pupils. In Ostrava-Poruba, welcome rituals in the 1st grade, differentiation in teaching, accessible tutoring and sensitive work with socio-economic barriers work; moreover, these elements are described and shared as a standard (PAQ Research, 2024). Such "good practice protocols" build trust and social capital between schools and families and correlate with lower "educational failure" after taking into account the social situation of the region. Similar findings are provided by analytical overviews for Orlová and Opava. Systematic social support, timely care and joint education are among the

success factors, along with stable staffing and a counselling team (PAQ Research, 2024).

A contrasting picture arises where the first contact and the first complaint go "wrong": microaggressions during enrollment, downplaying the problem or the absence of a written record erode trust and start a "spiral of failure". At the same time, local data for Slaný show high demands on personnel stability (the share of unqualified teaching, unavailability of school psychologists) and lower availability of SEN support, which increases the risk that common difficulties will turn into long-term problems (PAQ Research, 2024). These local patterns are consistent with broader findings on unequal distribution of support and accumulation of disadvantages in some districts (PAQ Research, 2022).

Empirical patterns from interviews fit well into the evidence from professional studies. Experiments and quasi-experiments show that structured "reimagining" of early school environments and supportive practices yields measurable performance gains (Cascio & Schanzenbach, 2019), while the quality of peer environments (including children with challenging behaviors) has significant spillover effects that need to be managed through support teams and differentiation (Goble et al., 2016). In transition periods, typically at the end of primary and early secondary school, transition support programs (mentoring, buddy, career guidance) that improve academic and early work outcomes (Kautz & Zanoni, 2019) and, figuratively, civic engagement (Svensson & Öhberg, 2019) prove to be effective. In addition, it turns out that job and educational aspirations are sensitive to the quality of information about occupations and educational paths. Better "professional literacy" among young people leads to more stable educational choices (Abbott et al., 2019).

It follows from the Czech normative framework that the recommended steps are supported by the law: the provision of support measures and the binding nature of the recommendations of counselling facilities are stipulated in Section 16 of the Education Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll.) and the implementing decrees; In more detail, Decree No. 72/2005 Coll. on Counselling Services (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2005 b) and Decree No. 48/2005 Coll. on Basic Education (MEYS, 2005 a) regulate processes in schools. The role and qualifications of teaching staff and the possibility of sharing counselling capacities are defined by the Act on Pedagogical Staff (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 2004), while the financing and framework limits of support hours (e.g. teaching assistant) are also related to Government Regulation No. 123/2018 Coll. and the financing methodology (Government of the Czech Republic, 2018).

Government strategic documents also contribute to the broader context. Long-term monitoring of inequalities and recommendations for inclusion (including situation reports on the Roma minority) confirm persistent structural inequalities and the need

to combine educational and social measures (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, 2023). This picture is compatible with reports on poverty, foreclosures and housing need, which vary significantly from one ORP to another and are reflected in educational outcomes (PAQ Research, 2022; PAQ Research, 2024).

Five mechanisms that decide

Five interconnected mechanisms emerge from the triangulation of interviews, local data and literature. (1) Micropolitics of trust: trust arises in everyday interactions; The fast, correct and written response of the school to the first incident sets a precedent for cooperation. Distrust, on the other hand, often stems from historical experiences with institutions and is reinforced by current negative experiences (OSF, 2019). (2) Uneven availability of support: quality of leadership, counselling team and "available NGOs" are not evenly distributed, and the differences between ORPs are palpable (personnel stability, psychologist/SpecPed, ratio of pupils to 1 AP), which is also confirmed by data from the Education Map (PAQ Research, 2022). (3) Information and digital barriers: some families are de facto excluded from formal channels (Bachelors, e-mail), which deepens misunderstandings and conflicts; Schools often misinterpret their passivity as a lack of interest. (4) Fragile transitions: without pre-arranged support (buddy, tutoring, test layout, career guidance), the risk of a drop in motivation in the 9th grade and at the start of secondary school increases sharply, also due to growing selection pressures and inequalities in access to preparation for entrance exams (see also current estimates and data on transitions). Here, integrated programs combining multiple types of support are shown to be the most effective (Kautz & Zanoni, 2019). (5) Limited permeability of the system: perceived "hard" catchment areas and informal agreements between schools reduce choice and weaken the motivation of families to stay in the system (PAQ Research, 2023).

What does this mean for NGOs

The highest added value is provided by small, predictable and repeatable steps that reduce uncertainty and bridge systemic gaps, while being in line with Czech law.

Firstly, NGOs should institutionalise trust and communication: be present "inside the school" (counselling hours), facilitate first contacts (fair enrolment, welcome meetings), help schools set up clear communication cards and complaint protocols with clear deadlines and written outputs. This minimizes the risk of escalation, which has repeatedly arisen in conversations precisely from uncertainty, silence or rejection. These procedures are fully in line with the Decree on Basic Education and Counselling Services (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2005a; Ministry of Education, Youth

and Sports, 2005b) and the Act on Pedagogical Staff (Parliament of the Czech Republic, 2004).

Secondly, NGOs should introduce a supportive intermediate step in the case of absences: a short, joint diagnostic meeting with the family, a return action plan and regular progress checks (case-management). Evidence from studies of transition programs shows that structured accompaniment at critical moments improves outcomes and reduces churn (Kautz & Zanoni, 2019). At the classroom level, differentiated learning and enhanced counselling capacities mitigate negative peer effects (Goble et al., 2016) and yield net performance gains (Cascio & Schanzenbach, 2019).

Thirdly, NGOs can reduce the digital and information barrier: "digital bridges" (practical workshops on Bachelors, mini-tutorials), but also negotiated offline alternatives (paper excuses, a telephone line with a guaranteed response). Such steps directly fulfil the right of legal guardians to information and participation in the education of children, which are framed by Czech regulations and methodologies (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2005a; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2005b).

Fourthly, NGOs should act as a "translator of the support system": a clear one-page support card (types of measures, the path to PPP/SPC, the role of IEPs), accompaniment in applications and monthly verification of the implementation of IEP for teachers and families. Based on Section 16 of the Education Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll.) and the implementation framework, with an emphasis on the availability of qualified staff and a reasonable workload of assistants (Government of the Czech Republic, 2018).

Fifth, NGOs should collect and share data for systemic change: quarterly, anonymized summaries of problem types and trends for founders, modeled on local analytical reports, so that support is planned at the level of the entire ORP, not school after school (PAQ Research, 2024).

Summary

The most effective strategy for non-governmental non-profit organizations is not ad-hoc help that solves an already burning problem, but patient and methodical work on procedural justice. The point is to make things happen in a predictable, understandable and dignified way, and in the same way for all families. Where NGOs focus on making a safe person visible, fair first contact between the school and the family, translating counselling recommendations into everyday practice and setting up understandable communication for parents outside the digital world, they cease to be "islands of good practice" by chance. They are becoming a standard that can be transferred between schools and kept for a long time.

The cornerstone of such an approach is a safe person, i.e. a specific, named person to whom both the child and the parent can come when they do not know what to do. It is not enough for "there to be a school psychologist" somewhere. It is important that this role is visible (name, telephone, consultation hours on the door and in the student book), available (without complicated orders) and trustworthy (confidentiality, neutral position between the school and the family). NGOs can help to build and maintain this role: they train the person in mediation, regularly supervise them and make sure that they do not disappear into organizational duties. In practice, a safe person acts as the "first brake" of escalation: it stops misunderstandings, translates professional language into everyday language, and helps everyone communicate at the same table.

The second pillar is fair first contact. Enrollment in the first grade or the first class meeting often determines whether the family believes in the school. NGOs can play the role of a guide and guardian of quality: parents prepare in advance what awaits them; quietly monitors the progress on the spot, according to the agreement with the school; After completion, the management will give factual feedback. Equally important is a short "adaptation start": a simple plan for a few weeks after the start (a welcome meeting, clear rules of communication, a follow-up call from the class teacher). When these small measures are described, implemented and repeated, randomness and space for unwanted microaggressions disappear. Families get the feeling that the system can be found and that the rules apply to everyone.

The third area where NGOs make a difference is the translation of counseling recommendations into practice. For many parents, the path to PPP/SPC is also the subsequent work with an individual educational plan of a jungle of abbreviated documents, deadlines and responsibilities (Němec, 2020). NGOs can "uncork" the whole thing by creating a clear "support card" together with the school on a single page: how to apply for an examination, what the IEP looks like, who is responsible for what and how to know that the support is really running. The follow-up, monthly "micromonitoring" is deliberately simple: a short phone call or visit, a few questions for parents and teachers. It is not about control, but about catching in time when the agreed steps in the operation of the classroom begin to fall apart. The child will not be left "supported on paper" and in fact without help.

The fourth, often underestimated pillar is understandable communication even for families outside the digital world. Some parents simply can't reach the Bachelor's e-mails, and that doesn't mean they don't want to make an appointment. NGOs will help schools set up a "communication card": which channels we use, how quickly we respond and what is the working offline alternative (telephone line with a guaranteed callback time, paper excuses in the lobby, short "instructions with pictures"). To this can be added "digital bridges", practical, twenty-minute mini-courses for parents over coffee, where they open an application together and write the first excuse note.

Miracles don't happen overnight, but even a small shift in the approach to school dramatically reduces the number of unnecessary conflicts.

To maintain these elements, they need measurement and repetition. An NGO is not an "external control", but a partner who helps to do small things just as well. This means agreeing with the school on simple indicators: how many parents know the name and phone number of a safe person, how many enrolments took place as planned, how many IEPs have a regular record of continuous evaluation, how many families use the agreed communication channels. No need for complicated tables; All it takes is a few fixed points, which we think about together quarterly and fine-tune what is working.

Methodical work on procedural justice has another important effect: it reduces the pressure on the "heroism of individuals". When good things depend only on a particular teacher, they disappear with her. When they become an understandable procedure, they stay, even when people change. This is how islands of good practice become the mainland: a standard that can be relied on in every class and in every year. And it is the standard, not a one-off rescue, that increases the predictability, dignity and effectiveness of support in the long term. Children are less afraid of school, parents are less afraid of school, and school is less afraid of their parents.

It's nothing spectacular. It is a set of small, repeatable steps: give a face to a safe person, make a fair first contact, translate recommendations into live teaching, and speak clearly even outside the Internet. When NGOs do this with the school permanently, the result is not only fewer conflicts and fewer transfers "for peace". As a result, more Roma children remain in mainstream school, enjoy attending it, make real progress, and gradually build an educational path that is not driven by fear and chance, but by support and meaningful rules. And that's what procedural justice is all about: that everyone knows what to expect and has a fair chance of succeeding.

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