

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ROMA STUDENTS IN ALBANIA: A PUBLIC POLICY MATTER

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Public Policy

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Public Policy

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Budapest, Hungary
2013

Abstract

Education, as the key point for the development of any society in general, involves and obligates all states to promote reforms for social inclusiveness. Roma and Egyptians minorities in Albania taken together are one of the largest minority segments of the population, which face, besides other problems, handicaps in terms of access to education. These minorities face problems in education which directly affects their life.

This thesis is a reflection on the current situation of the young Roma in Albanian tertiary education. The thesis focuses on the possibilities of this underprivileged group, the Roma minority, to access higher education, analyzing the policy instruments designed for and/or used to increase Roma participation in higher education. More precisely, the thesis analysis and evaluates the scholarship policy for Roma students; it tries to provide an answer to the question regarding the impact of the Albanian financial aid policies for Roma students enrolled at universities.

The findings of this research show that assisting Roma students in Albania through certain quotas at bachelor, master and PhD level, it is only the top of the iceberg. The real problem is due to the lack of strong policies in dealing with the school drop outs in the fifth grade of the elementary school. Based on the result of survey of Roma from high school, gymnasium, vocational schools and university conducted in Tirana, Durres, Fier, Vlore, Elbasan, Delvine and Korca, the research shows that the majority of Roma in these age groups had no information about the possibility of receiving the Albanian state scholarships, and they were mostly supported by a foreign organization, the Roma Education Fund. The thesis concludes that Albanian state should provide more opportunities such as scholarship opportunities and financial aid for the Roma youth to study at university.

Key words: equal opportunity, preferential treatment, positive actions, scholarship for Roma students, Quota, field of study, humanities, scientific science, labor market, secondary education, tertiary education.

Acknowledgments

My sincere gratitude goes to the following individuals for their contribution in supporting me during the research: Roma Education Fund; Institute of Romani Culture in Albania; students from Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Elbasan, Vlorë, Korce, Delvine who are an essential part of my research, to achieve my personal and academic satisfaction. Today I have my thesis in hand and it is the most beautiful sensation ever felt.

The completion of my master studies I cordially dedicate to the unconditioned love and support of my parents; without them I could not have reached what I have already done. Big thank goes to my friends, teachers and relatives for being with me during my academic journey.

I am highly grateful to my professor and supervisor, Liviu Matei, for his advice, suggestions and support during my studies.

I would also like to express my thanks to George Soros, who made possible my coming and being part of the great student community at Central European University.

I made it because you were with me!

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction of the thesis

Background

“Education is a fundamental human right. It provides children, youth and adults with the power to reflect make choices and enjoy a better life. It breaks the cycle of poverty and is a key ingredient in economic and social development.” (UNESCO, 2003)

Education is certainly the foundation of a lifetime to have more opportunities to be successful. Education is an investment in human capital which means a higher income for the individual in question at the time of entry into the labor market. This constitutes the microeconomic theory focusing on the individual benefits as a human capital for all the society in general (Dahlin: 2002, 8). According to macroeconomic theory education has an impact on economic growth, associated with investment in human capital where the income of the educated persons is higher, increasing in this way their productivity (Dahlin: 2002, 17).

Roma population is one of the largest and most vulnerable groups in Europe which continues to experience discrimination and exclusion. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights the rate of discriminated Roma individuals is high, “every second a Roma individual is discriminated’ (Amnesty International). There is a lack of quality of education among Roma children “taught in segregated classes or schools where curriculum is set for pupils with mental disabilities” (Amnesty International).

The Roma has the origin from the north India. In Albania, they are organized in groups such as Meckar, Karbuxhinj, Cergare and Bamille, which differ from one another by occupation, socio-economic status, customs and traditions. According to the UNDP report of 2006, literacy rate in Albania is around 62% compared with non-Roma population 97% in general. This indicator shows that more should be done to increase the number of educated Roma. In Albania Roma minority is recognized as an ethno-linguistic minority (UNDP: 2006, 5) which constitutes according to the

unofficial data up to 3% of the total population (UNDP: 2006, 5). The last Census 2011 conducted by INSTAT relieved a relatively low number, 8300, but many NGOs and researches complain about it showing a higher number, approximately 80000-150000 Roma people (UNDP: 2006, 5).

For years, not only European Union member states but also countries such as Albania, Serbia and Macedonia are part of EU policies which address many important issues of the Roma community. Numerous policies have been endorsed by every state as well as from Albania. Although these states are fighting against poverty through education of young Roma, the number is still small. In order to help in increasing this number positive actions are taken of a great importance. Preferential treatment, outreach programs such as quotas for students coming from the Roma background, inclusive policies that give special assistance (scholarships) and many others are designed to assist these young people to overcome their problems (McCrudden, 1986).

Different factors as economic crises, technologies, globalization, high number of job seekers have negatively affect the demand for knowledge and skills, resulting in high unemployment for both young people with too little experience in the job market and adults with too much – leaving education systems to catch up.

When it comes to underprivileged groups and minorities, such as Roma, undoubtedly that youth face the worst side of it, low employment rate and opportunities as the most serious problem after graduation.

Purpose of the study

The low number of Roma students in Albania has been a reason that has pushed me to conduct a study and dedicate this thesis with an important topic from the financial and academic respect in helping Roma youth. Discrimination and prejudice towards members of the Roma community in Albania continues, despite efforts to improve this situation. The only way to come out is the education of young people who will become tomorrow essential agent of change in society and mainly in their community.

The aim of this thesis is to understand from closer point of view scholarship opportunities for Roma youth in Albania. Also it will assist in providing information in helping institutions to develop better policies for Roma inclusion through education. A special focus will be paid to the quota system as an essential impact on the education and employment. A questionnaire-based survey with Roma from high school, gymnasium, vocational schools and university was conducted in Tirana, Durres, Fier, Vlore, Delvina and Korca. The results show that the majority of Roma indicated that they had no information about the possibility of receiving the Albanian state scholarship and they mostly were supported by a foreign provider, the Roma Education Fund.

The study tries to analyze nominal and real opportunities that are designed to promote the access to higher education of Roma students in Albania. Furthermore, special attention will be paid to the extent to which the real situation of the Roma population is taken into account as part of these policies. If the state and educational institutions design properly policies and facilities for the Roma community, in particular through scholarships and quota for Roma students, then how come the low number of students? I see a lack of Albanian government in assisting Roma youth in achieving their academic goals.

Statement of the Problem

Roma families face the most severe form of economic and financial problems compared to the rest of Albanian society. The average monthly income of a Roma family is 68 EUR (UNDP, 2006). According to the REF assessment report for Albania in 2011, the average per capita income of the Roma are approximately 3.3 times lower than the non-Roma population, and almost 80% of Roma live below the poverty line (World Bank , 2005). The Albanian state assists disadvantaged groups, especially pupils and students if they meet the economic criteria, which will be explain in the fourth chapter. Roma pupils and students do not directly benefit by the scheme provided by the government. The economic criterion is one of the most relevant for this scheme; many Roma families meet this criterion but they cannot prove it due to problems with documents.

The role of Albanian state in alleviating discrimination and social exclusion, in the field of higher education seems that leaves much to be desired. According to the decision of the Council of Ministers for marginalized groups including the Roma, there are 20 quotas in each study cycle, i.e. a total 60 quotas (bachelor, master, and doctorate). The problem remains on the financial conditions that constitute the grounds and a school dropout at a young age. A quota gives only the right to study in one university but according to the survey the majority needs to be supported by a scholarship in the early stages of their education (in secondary school, in their 5th grade).

Research question

The research question is:

What is the impact of the Albanian financial aid policies on Roma students enrolled at universities?

H1: Financial aid increases the number of Roma students enrolled at universities.

The study seeks:

- To identify and evaluate if the supply for higher education meets the demand for higher education from Roma students
- To identify and evaluate the state scholarships available for Roma students
- To see if these scholarships provide enough for living adequately during the studies based on the Roma and non Roma students' opinion
- To re-identify the direction of Roma students towards the natural sciences and humanities
- To identify the obstacles and reasons in choosing the field of study

Limitations

Although the research and thesis have achieved their purpose, there are some inevitable limitations such as time constraint, distance between major research cites, tools used for the questionnaire and the election happened at that time in Albania.

The study on which this thesis refers is made under a short period of time with a significant coverage in Albania, engaging under study seven cities: Tirana, Durres, Fier, Elbasan, Vlora, Delvina and Korca. Students in the area of Vlora, Delvina and Korca because of the distance compared to other cities, the questionnaire was given through social networks (Facebook and Skype) and many cases contacted by phone.

The electoral campaign happening in Albania during research period brought some obstacles such as minister and deputy minister of education could not be interviewed, as an important link of this study. There were interviewed people responsible for the education of Roma youth in organizations and representatives who work against illiteracy and their voice is important to any "injustice"¹

The data was collected through questionnaires, close-ended (forced-choice) questions which lead to bias since respondents are offered limited alternative replies.

Guidelines

The thesis gives a broad overview of the opportunities to access higher education for Roma students in Albania. As such besides the theoretical framework and methodology used it comprises three important sections: - (1) situation of Roma in higher education and scholarships available, (2) situation of fields of study chosen by Roma students and (3) the situation regarding Roma graduates' employment. In this thesis the focus is on the secondary and tertiary education students because this is the reference group whereby the identification and analyzing of data. The combination of these three sections will give incentives to understanding the circumstances of Roma youth education (the lack of state scholarships) in Albania.

The first section describes the position of Roma students in higher education, looking at positive actions, equal opportunities and other policy instrument designed for the only purpose to reduce inequity and to increase the number of Roma students into higher education. Particular attention it is

¹ This is the word said by one of the interviewers, from a Roma NGO

referred to the situation of secondary- tertiary education of Roma minority, scholarships and quotas available for them.

The second section focuses on the field directions of the students for humanities or scientist science in order to understand whether the student's field of study is influenced by other factors. Here particular attention it is paid to the family influence, student "willingness" and labor market influence in choosing a certain field of study.

The third section of the thesis is concentrated to the employment opportunities of the Roma graduates, their chances to find employment in short and long term, and barriers of labor market, importance of proper education and guidance of graduates to certain works

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical framework

Disadvantaged groups such as women, ethnic minorities, immigrants, disabled persons and others have been for long discriminated, prejudiced and excluded from many aspects of social life. In this long history of discrimination and exclusion, they have faced severe obstacles such as inability to be employed, to have an adequate health care and education (O`Cinneide: 2006, 4). Recently, institutions in Europe and in other parts of the world are increasing their efforts to find ways of combating social exclusion (Collins: 2003²), and helping the “excluded people” in breaking the cycle where they are sheltered for years. This chapter will not only give an overview of the terms “social inclusion” and “social exclusion” under different opinion of the authors but also will help as a guideline in subsequent chapters when will be talking about concrete things such as final findings.

2.1. Social exclusion and social inclusion

“Social exclusion” is a concept emerged as a derivative of poverty, deprivation, injustice, inequality, social, political and cultural disadvantage with an important dimension on discrimination and prejudices of certain groups “set apart” (Kabeer:2000, 3) from social life. The term of “Social exclusion” has many meanings used to describe the phenomena of being excluded from the society as an individual, a citizen and as a member with rights and duties of society.

It is more than 40 years since the term “social exclusion” originated in France where exclusion referred to 10% of the French population (Pardhan: 2006, 3; Rawal: 2008, 161). First this term was used to describe people mentally and physically disabled, children abused, single parents with children, categories of people that faced mostly the discrimination and prejudice by the rest of the society. These people were excluded from the employment and from the rest of the social, cultural, and political life. After years the term was gradually adopted by many European countries and included a broad category of people, such as immigrants, minority’s members, school dropouts

² Collins, H. (2003) “Discrimination, equality and social inclusion”, 16-43 quoted at: O`Cinneide, C. (2006), 4

and other groups because of their social and economic status, which addressed the issue of institutions failure (Rawal: 2008, 162; Loury: 2000, 226). As de Haan (1998: 12-13; quoted at Pardhan: 2006, 5) summarizes, social exclusion not only refers to the situation and position of the individuals, but also to the mechanisms by which they are excluded by institutions and society in a broad meaning as community members with citizenship and social rights. In this context the term “social exclusion” will be used referring to Roma minority as excluded by many life aspects such as rights of citizens, labor market, public arenas and participation in civil society (Aasland and Flotten, 2000:1028; quoted at Rawal: 2008, 165). Therefore, according to Aasland and Flotten, social exclusion is a very vague concept, that being spread over Europe has taken other interpretation, but in general is charged with social, economic and political connotation (Rawal: 2008, 165). Silver speaks about other paradigms in which social exclusion takes form: solidarity, specialization and monopoly (Silver: 1994, 539; also quoted at Rawal: 2008, 167; O`Reilly; 2005, 81-82). Solidarity links exclusion to the gap between society and individual, where the society is something external and cannot be mixed with individual’s values and norms. Thus, those individual and group values and norms that differ from the general values, norms and priorities of society are seen as excluded by the same society. The specialization paradigm sees exclusion as discrimination, where the individual cannot move freely from one social sphere to another one, because of the rules and norms defined in each of these spheres (Rawal: 2008, 168). The third paradigm attributes exclusion to the hierarchy of a certain people because of their social and economic status and because of the control of the resources needed (Rawal: 2008, 168). The third paradigm, monopoly is used in all the research as a key element for the exclusion of Roma minority. This minority because of not having the necessary resources to live and enjoy an adequate life face exclusion in many ways.

With the adoption of the “social exclusion” term by the European Commission, it replaced term “poverty” and got a dominant position in the social policy discourse in all Europe (Pardhan: 2006, 3; Peace: 2001, 19-20). After the replacement, the problem was to include and integrate the excluded into the vortex of the social life in which they were part.

Social inclusion is the opposite concept of the social exclusion, which in fact is the most desirable thing to include those who are excluded (Pradhan: 2006, 2; see also Loury 1999). Pradhan makes the point quoting de Han (n.d: 28) that these two terms are just “theoretical concepts of looking at society “and the way how to understand these depends on the “theoretical and ideological baggage” (Pardhan: 2006, 2) of our knowledge. To include someone who was excluded before means to provide all the necessary mechanisms to integrate him/her into the institutions in terms of social cohesion. Also it is important to reflect on the effect of inclusion, as Jackson says “inclusions can produce exclusions” (Jackson: 1999, 135; quoted at Pardhan: 2006, 11; Rawal: 2008, 174). This phrase “inclusion can produce exclusion” can be translated in another different way: inclusion can be an obstacle for self autonomy of a group of keeping the language, the tradition, culture and exercising their beliefs, and defining their values and norms. Thus, trying to include them into the majority- dominant norms emerge exclusion of a small group of people, members of the same group. (E.g. The Roma community in Hungary, which because of laws and fear to show their Roma pride and belonging to the Roma community have assimilated their language and tradition- in contrast with other countries where many Roma have kept them).

Kabeer and Jackson refer to the self exclusion as an important part of integration, underlying the choice of some groups, in this case ethnic groups, choosing to exclude themselves of accepting dominant norms which are controversial to their own values and priorities. In this case whether the inclusion is good and exclusion is bad, depends on understanding the values, norms and priorities of the group. In terms of excluding members of a certain group from water supply, electricity, right to vote, to get married, to get pregnant, to move, according to international declarations and covenants³ is bad; and when many policies, programs, mechanisms want to promote social cohesion, they always paid attention to the autonomy of a certain group which tries to define its own values and social position. According to my opinion this is the case of Roma minority in

³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1976 Article 26
<http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/pdf/resources/legal-documents/international-refugee-law/international-covenant-on-civil-and-political-rights-1966.html>

Albania, which in order to integrate their self with the norms and values of society refuse to pay the high price of losing their language and tradition.

Second, included (in to the society) can be certain groups that really might not need too many efforts in that, excluding the group that needs it most. Thus, “excluded groups successfully achieve inclusion on the basis of excluding groups even weaker than themselves” (Rawal: 2008, 174). Rawal drawing on the words of Pradhan (2006) mentions the inclusion of the upper caste women, the Dalits (ethnic group) into the “state structures” by excluding and discriminating the lower caste women, the Madhesis (Rawal: 2008, 174; Pradhan: 2006, 11).

Another very relevant point of view for the dualism exclusion/inclusion is the economic approach on how discrimination and prejudices try “to focus on different treatment of individuals based on their ethnicity, race and gender in labor, credit and consumer good markets” (Loury; 2000, 232). Here Loury brings the case of “patronize” where the employers create their stereotypes against one group, based on their own beliefs and behave with the members of this group differently. They choose their “favored works” only because they belong to a particular group, attributing them necessary skills and high wages (Coate and Loury: 1993, 1239). This differentiates individuals where those jobs with a high wage exclude indirectly individuals with low skills.

Roma minority in Albania is the “excluded” minority which faces severe forms of discrimination, prejudices, unequal treatment and lack of rights. Therefore, including Roma minority and its people especially youth, is not only the duty of the Albanian state but also the duty and obligation of the all society. Inclusion in the terms used above from other authors for “social inclusion” and in the Roma minority case mean to accept the values of this linguistic minority like it is respecting its values and norms, which make up this particular minority in Albania.

2.2. Equality

Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights assures that

“All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”⁴.

Equality is a broad concept, but in this chapter equality will be conceptualized as “mainstreaming” although other two concept of equality will be described below (‘equal treatment’ and “equal opportunity”). The opposite of equality is inequality that is an integral part accompanying of each other, the same as inclusion and exclusion. Inequality is a problem everywhere; as long as the concept of equality will exist in our society, inequalities as well. To mitigate these inequalities and reduce their number, at national, international level, different programs, special institutions have been upgraded; conventions, different laws and policies are drafted.

2.2.1. Equal treatment

Equality takes different names such as “equal opportunities”, “formal” and “moral” equality. “Formal” equality is seen when two people are compared with one quality in a certain respect (Aristotele, 1280)⁵. For example, under the quality of being a student, person A and person B should be treated equally, respecting their right to education and regularly frequenting school. Equal treatment of human beings looks by supporters as Hobbs, Kant, Aristotle, Plato and others, as a moral right that must be respected for everybody in connection with a certain aspect.

⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1996) Article 26 <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/pdf/resources/legal-documents/international-refugee-law/international-covenant-on-civil-and-political-rights-1966.html>

⁵ Quoted at Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

The European Union, member states and non member states of EU, international organizations and other institutions and states around the world have put equality as a general aim to ensure “an equal treatment of individuals regardless of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, as regards access to employment or occupation and membership of certain organizations” (EC Directive; 2000/78, art 2.2a). According to this standard people should be treated equally and not be differentiated on the grounds of sex and race (Collins: 2003, 16). But sometimes different treatment is required e.g. the case of pregnant women, disabled people, in order to enable them to gain access to work and many other opportunities. Any indirect discrimination through laws or even practices is unlawful and according to legal frameworks has to be punished.

2.2.2. Equal opportunities

"Equal opportunities" as term is used for efforts to achieve the equalization of opportunities respecting gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political aspects, disability etc.

The concept of equal opportunities is too rigid with a content problem which in most cases leads to not effectiveness in implementing policies because of deepening of inequalities in treatment. According to equality concept no individual should have fewer rights and less likely rights than any other. However, in reality this is difficult to support. In the case of women or minorities their position in society between majority in the minority case and the position of women among men, is determined by the majority that tells what women do or how much a minority should be integrated into the society and to benefit from this society. With the attempt to reposition these groups within a given hierarchy the problem of ineffectiveness appears to the equal treatment (Rees: 2001, 29). Here Rees gives two ineffective cases of unequal treatment; one of them is the difference between private and public spheres. Rees takes male-female relationship, referring to Humm (1989, 63) under his argument that somehow women gain equal treatment in public sphere, the problem lies in

the private sphere, because they will be domestically disproportionately by men e.g. , that equal treatment is not an effective approach within the patriarchal hierarchy at home (Rees: 2001, 29).

Rees also talks about “gender contracts” as important to understand the distinction between genders in terms of duties, skills and opportunities. This means that a man knows that what he ought to do and how to act like a woman knows her place, duties, obligations and her skills (Rees: 2001, 194). At this point of reasoning given by Rees are found stereotypes against Roma woman, who are always thinking in the service of the family, illiterate and with little aspiration for their life.

Equal opportunities measures refer to the legal framework establishment rather than the outcome (Rees: 2001; Fredman: 2002). Public and private institutions, national and international organizations become part of various programs by ratifying laws for equal treatment in education, in training and employment of Roma and other vulnerable groups. The creation or adoption of the laws on equal treatment does not affect “either the rigidities of segregation nor has it eliminated” (Rees: 2001, 33) as the cause of segregation is still present, it just is not treated with the appropriate medication (Cockburn: 1991; quoted at Rees: 2001, 34). According to Fredman, access to certain goods and services and achievement of these goods and services are different things in terms of equal opportunity (Fredman: 2002, 14). Given that this right might be given but the outcome is difficult to be achieved, equal treatment can led to inequalities for the current disadvantaged individuals, assuring them positive action to improve their situation.

2.2.3. Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming addresses inequalities with respecting diversity on focus and improving or changing a given policy. If equal opportunities seemed inefficient mainstreaming aims to achieve outcomes and therefore tries to find the root of the problems and then addresses the proper solution under the characteristics of the group discriminated and disadvantaged (Rees, 2001; Fredman: 2002).

2.3. Policy instruments to promote equity and social inclusion

As Rees underlines there are three important tools in promoting equality. First, tinkering focuses on the provision of the law and enforcement of equal treatment. Legal framework is one of the first tools that should be provided for an equal treatment. Second, Rees speaks about positive action measures, called tailoring. This stage aims to revoke obstacles for an equal access to certain goods and services for disadvantaged groups in the society. Some of the main mechanisms are trainings, courses and preparatory courses, grant programs and others. Finally, all the problems found should be addressed in order to reach the mainstream society for the disadvantaged group. This third tool is called transforming (Rees: 2001). Particular focus in this thesis will be paid to two policy instruments, tailoring and transforming as very important measures that should be taken to improve the situation of Roma youth in education.

To understand positive action it is necessary to understand the two types of discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when gender, race, and social status become severe and open obstacles for employment, education, health care and housing. Indirect discrimination exists when members of a certain disadvantaged group face a negative impact of an application, program, and law apparently neutral. Besides these tools described above, a special focus will be paid to the positive actions or “Tailoring”. Positive action is a concept used mostly to mitigate discrimination, prejudices and unequal treatment through anti-discrimination laws. Therefore anti-discrimination laws prohibit direct and indirect discrimination and with the support of many other special measures with primary focus on securing equal treatment.

In order to assure and achieve equality, to end being excluded, all individuals should start from the same starting point which gives them opportunity to participate equally in the four essential areas for a good life such as education, health, housing and employment (Fredman: 2002). Thereby providing equal opportunities to those persons, who for various reasons are not in the same starting point, might eliminate obstacles to have access to certain goods and services. As mentioned

earlier, the granting of these possibilities does not mean that they will be absorbed by all equally, these opportunities do not always bring the required results by people (Fredman: 2002, Rees: 2001).

In the context of the right to education, for ethnic minority members, for example Roma students, providing different strategies and forms of positive actions means to provide to them a place in society. Often this do qualifies as Preferential Treatment. According to McCrudden (McCrudden, 1986), positive action is classified into 5 categories, that in general take different forms and can be effective only if they are applied in a proportionate manner. This categorization can be divided into two other subcategories: 'strong' measures and 'soft' measures. The first one, "soft" measures includes "Eradicated prohibited discrimination" which consists of positive measures under the help and involvement of civil society organizations in the fight against discrimination; "Purposefully inclusive policies" do not give any preferential treatment but provides certain facilities and assistance to vulnerable groups. Finally, "Redefining merit", certain criteria cannot always be accessed by all, someone always remains outside (McCrudden, 1986). To reduce the number of those who remain outside because they do not meet the criteria for admission to a certain employment or to a certain university, institutions and organization need to redefine these criteria, making them more inclusive for a large number of people. The second group, "strong" measures, includes 'outreach' programs, which attract and reserve a place for members of disadvantaged groups through training programs or preparatory courses, for example for young Roma, helping them to reach their academic goals. 'Preferential treatment' gives members of a group priority over other persons in the majority, for example in employment and university selection. "Preferential treatment" has been repeatedly criticized for emerging in itself discrimination (Wydict: 166), people who are not "preferred" discriminate those who receive a preferential treatment (McCrudden, 1986) deepening more discrimination and prejudices.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology and research design

3.1. Introduction

Scholarships are seen as very “good” opportunity and a helpful way in assisting students from disadvantaged groups. In this case a study was conducted on Roma high school students and Roma university students. Also a targeted group of this study was Roma who already graduated from both types of universities in Albania, public and private. Unfortunately, many educational institutions have not provided scholarships assistance for this category of disadvantaged students. In this area the Albanian state is very limited. The data obtained from the study will be analyzed based on the literature mentioned in the second chapter.

The methodology applied by the study has been chosen in order to acquire information and deduce conclusions about the scholarships and the role of government in promoting higher education for Roma students in many cities in Albania.

3.2. Collecting data

This study looks on students’ opinion of scholarship assistance, their field of study and their being influenced in choosing the educational institution and the field of their study. Opinions and students’ responses were collected through a direct survey face- to- face and an online survey. The online survey was conducted via Skype and Facebook because of the time constraint and the distance from the student settlements.

For the purpose of this study and in order to achieve the objectives, both primary and secondary data were collected and used. The secondary data contributes toward the formation of background information, through written documents, policies, laws, decisions of Ministry of Education and regulations for financing in the all universities in Tirana, Durres, Fier, Elbasan, Vlora, Delvina and Korca and other resources. Primary data was collected in two ways: through

questionnaires with Roma students in high schools and universities from Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Elbasan, Vlora, Delvina and Korça, and through interviews with local authorities, directors of NGOs and the REF country facilitator.

a) Questionnaires

As questionnaires are useful instrument used for gathering information about variables of interest, 34 questions were conducted with short alternative. Questions were developed in a way that any student (responder) should respond all the sections⁶. For this study closed-ended questions were designed which gave to the responder the option to chose among fixed responses only one alternative. They also help to analyze easier the data since the responses can be directly compared and many questions can be answered in a short time. For a more detailed overview of the questionnaires see the appendix.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first designed to gather personal information about the place of birth, place of studying, education level of parents and the family welfare. There were questions to know the demand and supply of higher education especially from high school students. The second part includes scholarship gained and university choice if the students chose their university because of the scholarships provided or because of their preferences; questions about their choices to natural or scientific sciences and if the scholarships are allocated in one direction and in which according to their opinion. Also the second part is designed to see the level of satisfaction and their evaluation of the criteria, facilities and services offer for having access to the scholarship. The last but not the least, the third part, focuses on the field of study and the impact of it in the labor market. In this part 2 or 3 questions are directed to the option of changing the field of study and being influenced by any other factor.

⁶ See the research questions and the study points

b) Semi-structured interviews

For the purpose of this study semi-structured face to face interviews were conducted involving two interest groups: local authorities and student`s civil society representatives.

3.3. Purpose of the study

The main purposes of this study is to obtain an insight into the current situation of financial aid for Roma students in general and particular in these cities, in order to propose further recommendations for improving students performance, welfare and increasing their number into universities.

For the above reasons, this research takes an exploratory approach, where not much is known about the situation and there is a lack of relevant information and research. It involves the analysis of framework policies and collecting data from actual practices regarding to the scholarships providing by the Albanian government for the equal access to higher education of the Roma students in Albania.

This study aims to be a potential study for further research in the area of higher education due to the need to interview students who are assisted with the scholarship, students who have or will apply for scholarships as well as those who have been helped by any scholarships. In addition, it is deemed necessary to ask whether financial assistance through scholarships is necessary for the fulfillment of the students needs or not.

3.4. Sample and population

There are not an exact number of Roma students and pupils enrolled respectively at university and high school level, in all educational institutions. According to the Roma Education Fund the number of students enrolled in Albanian universities who are supported by REF with a scholarship grant for the academic year 2012-2013 is 37 beneficiaries, 25 at bachelor level, 11 at

master level and 1 at doctorate level (REF: 2012, 49). The number obviously can be higher as a consider number of applicants are denied each year and many others choose to not apply.

With the time constraints and the distance of the cities from each other a sample $n = 66$ was used. The sample used in the study meet the following criteria: a) they are Roma students enrolled in private and public educational institutions, such as high school and universities and b) Roma graduates from high school⁷ and Roma graduates from university.

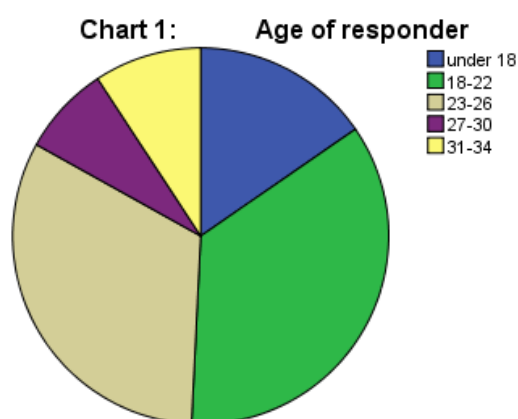
3.5. Research findings

A total of 66 responders participated in the study. The evaluation process took place in Budapest after the research in Albanian. All the data collected through questionnaires and interviews, firstly were stored in word document and later imported into SPSS statistical database system.

In particular data was collected on current educational level of the student responder, the number of family members, number of siblings on the age of school and those already frequenting school, the place of residence of the student during the studies, scholarship availability or any financial aid or affirmative action, years of beneficiary and monthly aid, field of study, factors of being influenced in choosing the field of study and educational institution.

The gender reported by each responder, kept the balance that means that 32 man and 34 women respectively 48.5% and

51.5%. The group age referring to the study include the high school students, university students at bachelor or master level and PhD students. Anonymity for responders under age is respected. Students under the age 18, only 10 of the responders (15.2%) were asked after the permission of



⁷ Roma students who have finished high school and have not continued to university

one of the parents or legal custodian. Only one of the responder did not declare his/her self age. The group age from 18-22 consists the larger group of responders mostly in high school and bachelor level. The group age 31-34 consists only 9.1% of the total number of responders who are at master and PhD level. The Chart 1 shows the age groups of responders.

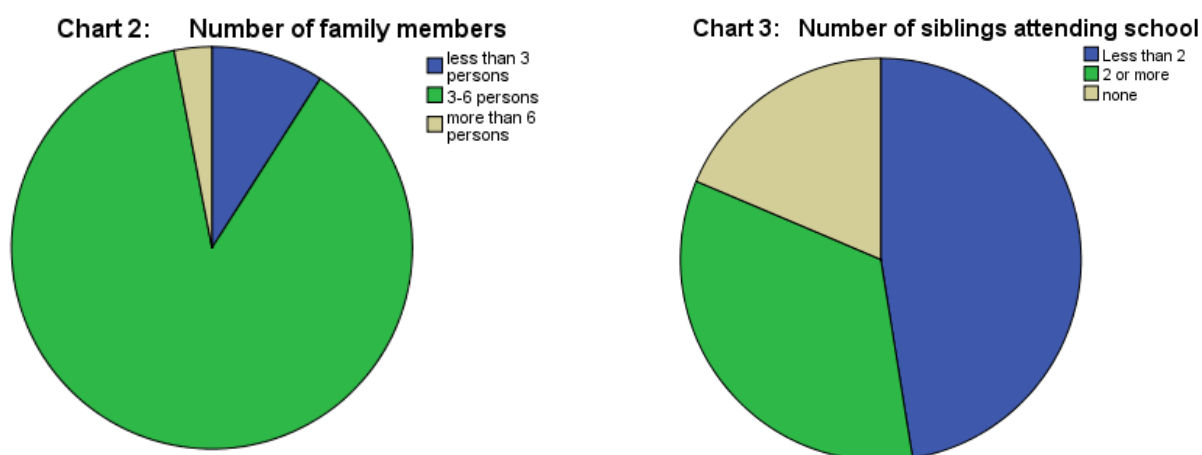
Of 66 responders in total, 30 (45.4%) were high school students, 20 (30.3%) bachelor students and 12 (18.2%) university graduated, 3 (4.5%) master students and 1 (1.5%) PhD. For more see Table 1 in the Annex 1 which shows the number of responders by the education level.

One important point of the survey was to know the place of residence of the student in the moment of the studies. For this there were directed two questions, whether the responder studied in his home city or in another one and for how long, with the option to choose among some alternative reasons. From the data we see that 40 (60.6%) study or studied in their home city and 26 (39.4%) are studying or studied in another city. Reasons given by responders were mainly because of their studies but among them 3 (4.5%) declared that the reason was their family settled before in that place. Table 2 and 3 illustrates the number of students leaving in another city different from the home city and the reasons of choosing it. Duration of residence in another city different from the home city is associated with the years of the study. Here 22.7% have been leaving from 0-3 years and 7 (10, 6%) 8-11 years. This means that many of them after finishing their studies have chosen to live there and finding more job opportunities.

Other questions were related to the number of family members and especially to the number of siblings. As it can be seen from the Chart 2, mostly the Roma family responders (87.9 %) are coming from the group category 3-6 persons in family. The reason why these categories are structured like this is to get more detailed information about the family, which means that in “less than 3 persons” what I try to look for is whether the responder lives only with one parent and another sibling. Families with more than 6 persons are only 3% of the total responder’s families. The table 5 in Annex 1 shows in percentages the division of these categories.

A particular attention is paid to the questions: “*Do you have any siblings? How many of siblings are regularly attending school?*” According to the Chart 3 above and the Table 6 in the Appendix, around 89.4% responded to have other siblings, and only 10.6% declared to not have. From them who responded yes to the question “*Do you have any siblings?*” 28 (47.5%) responders had less than 2 siblings attending school regularly, which means another one, 20(33.9%) had 2 or more siblings attending school and 11 (18.6%) of them did not have any of the siblings at school. It is important to highlight that the question “*How many of siblings are regularly attending school?*” refers to the siblings not only on the age of school starting from 6 year, but also siblings who live in the same family and siblings who are married but still continue their studies.

As can be seen from the table 7 and 8 in the Annex 1 which illustrates parent’s education level, shows that most of the responds 51.5% of cases for the mother education level and 47% of



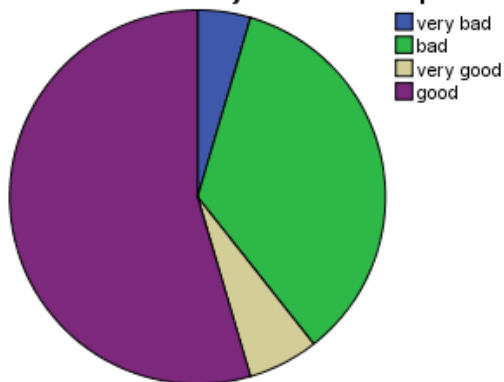
the cases for the father education level corresponded to primary education that means from the 4th grade to the 8th grade⁸, 18.2% and 37.9% respectively mother and father education level with a secondary education, especially in vocational schools such as Technical and mechanic schools. 13.6% and 6.1% of parent had elementary education, 1.5 % of mothers did not have any education.

⁸ Law nr.69/2012 on pre-education system in the Republic of Albania available at <http://www.mash.gov.al/File/arsimi-parauniversitar/legjislacioni/LAPU-NR.69-2012-english.pdf>

No father figured without any class: this again shows that male is more favorable in continuing studies because of any circumstance and mentality.

The family welfare is one of the questions very important and with a significant impact on the need for a financial aid or any other support for continuing the studies. According to UNICEF

Chart 4: Family welfare of responder



and IKU (Urban Research Institute) about the reforming welfare, bad family welfare it is understood to be a family who has only one parent alive or only one or none of the parents employed, or with a monthly income per capita equal or below the minimum of absolute poverty, 4891 Lek (34.77 Eur) (UNICEF: 2011, 51). Families with monthly income per capita

under 3347 Lek (21.66 Eur) belong to the very bad welfare (UNICEF: 2011, 51).

The Chart 4 shows that 4.5% of the responders lives in the absolute poverty, 34.8% lives in bad economic conditions with a monthly income per capita equal or below the minimum of absolute poverty, 4891 Lek (34.77 Eur) and 54.5% lives in good economic conditions with a monthly income per capita equal or above the minimum of absolute poverty, 4891 Lek (34.77 Eur). 6.1% lives in very good welfare having both of parents employed or even running their own business. For the details in percentage is the Table 9 in Annex 1.

Data about the positive actions was collected through the interview which refers to the topic and objective of this thesis. As it was mentioned above, in order to assure and achieve equality, to end being excluded, all individuals should start from the same starting point. Roma are one of the most marginalized and discriminated in Albania and for giving them a chance to be competitive in the social life and to combat with the same tools in the labor market different programs and opportunities are granted to them. One of this affirmative action which is a particular focus of the thesis is affirmative action, such as quota for the Roma students and financial aid through scholarship.

Mentioned above the study shows a high number of Roma youth frequenting regularly high school (45.4%) and university (30.3%) at bachelor level and 3 (4.5%) at master level. There is only (1.5%) at PhD level. With a simple calculation on the number of students assisted by a scholarship or quota, the result is as below: the major number 39 (59.1%) of students is not assisted by any type of positive action. They are affording alone all the expenses and tuition fees. 22 students are supported with scholarship but only three of them are supported by the Albanian municipalities. The rest of the students of the study are being supported by the main scholarship supporter for the Roma students it is not the Albanian state but it is a foreign organization, the Roma Education Fund, which operates in different Decade countries⁹. Every year Roma studying at universities can apply for REF Scholarship Program. As part of its mission to close the gap in educational achievements between Roma and non-Roma, and by default enlarge the pool of Roma university students enrolled in university at home and abroad, the Roma Education Fund also offers scholarships, mentoring, and tutoring for secondary students in some Decade countries. Over the years REF supports and contributes hundreds of students from different Decade countries in an intensive 9 -month's program that prepares promising Roma youth to compete for places of study programs at Central European University and other recognized universities within and outside Europe.

Referring to the hypothesis that financial aid increases the Roma students enrolled at universities, in the responders answers was seen a strong motivation to continue studies if they are supported by any scholarship. This financial aid will be for the Roma youth a help in supporting their families without giving up from their desires of studying.

Chapter 4 of this thesis will be dedicated particularly to the research question and findings on field of study and employment situation.

⁹ Decade of Roma Inclusion – aims to eliminate discrimination and exclusion of the Roma people in Europe operating in 12 European countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain. Available online at: <http://www.romadecade.org/about-the-decade-decade-in-brief>

CHAPTER 4:

4.1. The situation of Roma students into higher education and scholarships available in Albania

Albania has developed a good legal framework to promote equality regarding to education. The Albanian Constitution provides respect of human rights and equality before the law among citizens. Also the Albanian law on education confirms and assures equal access to education. Public education is a civil right and an obligation of the state to ensure it for all its citizens. This right might be violated or even in other countries is not provided. Youth from the Roma community mostly faces this problem. Even in those cases where the right to education provided as a fundamental right in the country where they are located, for the community in question the total involvement depends on social, cultural, political but also economic factors.

Referring to the European Higher Education Area, social dimension includes all provisions needed for having equal access, progress and completion of Higher Education such as: “*access, participation, and competition of studies, studying and living conditions, financial support, and student’s participation in higher education governance*”¹⁰. Higher Education in Albanian is considered a public good and a public responsibility to reduce social gaps, to strength social cohesion, to ensure equal and fair access into the higher education, to foster free education especially to underprivileged groups and to provide social supports schemes for students during their studies.

On behalf of equal and fair access, the Albanian government for years has undertaken initiatives such as funding programs with scholarships and study quotas for all categories in need. Through many other categories in the decision of Council of Ministers no. 420, date. 06.27.2012 for

¹⁰ Towards the European higher education area, The official Bologna Process website July 2007 - June 2010, <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/actionlines/socialdimension.htm>

the academic year 2012-2013 20 study quotas were given for the Roma students to continue their studies at any public higher education institution, full time and part time, respectively for each study cycle 20 quota (60 quota in total including 20 quota for the third cycle of doctoral studies). One thing apparently is not clear on this because the number of 20 shares for every cycle does not only refer to Roma but also to Balkan-Egyptians. From the research 7, 6% of the responders declared benefiting from quota. Also according to the decision of Council of Ministers no. 526, date 20.7.2011, pupils who attend public educational institutions and students who attend a study program first cycle, full-time, in public educational institutions, can receive scholarships from the budget allocated to the Ministry of Education and Science.

4.1.1. The situation of positive actions on the secondary - tertiary education of Roma minority

As is seen in the table 1 the two major groups of responders' education level are secondary (45.4%) and tertiary (30.3%) students. The rest are university graduated students (18.2%), 3 (4.5%) master students and 1 (1.5%) PhD student. Many of them 33, 3% are or have been supported during their studies with a scholarship. Albania provides scholarships for pupils (youth from the first grade to the end of secondary education) and students in their studies if they meet the economic criteria and the academic performance underlined by the Ministry of Education.

Public universities but also private ones and municipalities provide scholarship schemes such as social and institutional scholarship given to families in need that meet the economic criteria.

These students do not benefit if they are separated from their families, if their families have private business, if they continue a second study program and if they failed and lose academic year for reasons of not passing results.

According to the same decision of Council of Ministers no. 526, date 20.7.2011 the economic criterion is the main criteria awarding a pupil or a student with a scholarship. Referring to

it, full or partial scholarship is depending on the family composition, the monthly income per capita and type of current education level of the students, whether the beneficiary is a student or a pupil.

Students coming from families with the monthly income per capita under 3347 Lek (21.66 Eur) consists to the very bad welfare (UNICEF: 2011, 51), receiving full scholarship while a student or students from such families with monthly income per capita over 333447 receive partial scholarship. Families in good economic conditions are called according to UNICEF, those families with a monthly income per capita equal or above the minimum of absolute poverty, 4891 Lek (34.77 Eur). Students coming from these families are not supported by any state Albanian scholarship scheme.

As can be seen from the scholarship schemes provided by the Albanian authority according to the decision of Council of Ministers no. 526, date 20.7.2011, Roma pupils and students do not directly benefit by the scheme. The economic criterion is one of the most relevant for this scheme; many Roma families meet this criterion but they cannot prove it due to problems with documents to prove their income and social aid.

Another reason that prevents access to the scheme is the lack of information but also beneficiaries not always are coming from a poor family. Roma students have the opportunity to benefit from the scheme if they meet the economic criteria, if they are studying in another city over 5 km distance, if they are orphaned or have lost parental custody, if are spouses with children and if have on average 8 of their grades for the natural sciences and 10 for the social sciences¹¹.

Let's extract from the findings of the research a simple example in one family:

- 5 members: 2 parent + 3 children (2 pupils, 1 students)
- Family is monthly assisted by the financial aid= 800 Lek/capita (5.7 Eur/capita)
- Family does not have any private activity or property on their behalf except their house
- Only the student benefit scholarship based on the economic criteria
- Scholarship amount= 8,900 Lek/month (63.40 Eur /month)

¹¹ Decision of Council of Ministers no. 526, date 20.7.2011

- He studies in another city (Tirana) where he pays for 9 months the dormitory 35000 Lek= = 249.39 Eur

Amount of the stipend for 9 months in Eur	$9 \times 63.40 = 570.6$
Amount of the dormitory rent for 9 months in Eur	249.39
Amount after the rent in Eur	321.21

The Council of Ministers in the decision no. 526, date 20.7.2011 calculates an amount of 230 Lek = 1.63 Eur/day per student for food spending per month around 48.9 Eur, while the total amount of the stipend is 63.40 Eur

$$63.40 \text{ Eur} - 48.9 \text{ Eur} = 14.5 \text{ Eur}$$

In a simple calculation the student has to pass the month with 14.5 Eur and seeing the life standard in

Chart 5: Scholarship amount of responder

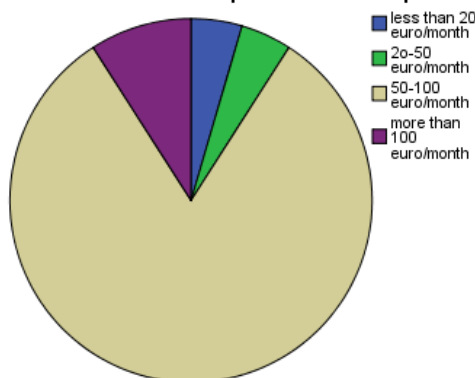
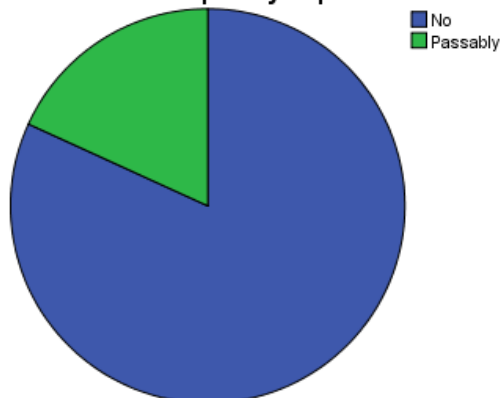


Chart 6: Adequacy of personal needs



Tirana, this amount does not cover the necessary other expenditures for clothing, transportation and personal needs.

Also, the above Charts shows the main provider, Ref which offers a stipend for all the beneficiaries from 50 to 100 € per month. According to the responders this amount was not enough, approximately is somehow the same like the stipend that Albanian Ministry of Education gives. They say that REF should contribute on bringing more attention to it and especially when the student is out of the place of his/her family residence.

“800 € per year from REF (80 € per month) is a standard money given for everyone, whether a student studying in his place of residence or outside it.” Another interviewer said that *“these are only scholarships given to students while the youngsters in secondary education are covered neither by the state nor by REF”*.

As stated the executive director of Institute of Romani Culture in Albania:

“Youngsters are the ones who need help the most; they are on the verge of dropping out studies for helping economically their family”.

Roma students may also be beneficial from other private higher education institutions. Many private universities have set specific quotas for access of Roma students by offering them financial aid or covering tuition fees.

4.2. The situation of fields of study chosen by Roma students

“Soft fields” (Cole; 1983) such as the humanities, social sciences, and arts clearly are **disadvantaged** at labor market entry. In comparison to “hard fields” (Cole: 1983) like science and engineering, those graduating from “soft fields” take longer to find their first good job, are more often overeducated, and have a higher risk of being mismatched in their first job.

According to the research 52 (78. 8%) of responders frequent “soft fields” and 14 (21. 2%) “Hard fields”. The reason of choosing the field was influenced by the economic conditions 4. 5%, their parents 6.1%, scholarship availability 9.1%, their own desire 36.4% and labor market demand 40.9%. On the research it appears that the labor market is crucial factor in the choice of field of study, and according to the study own desire comes second. The economic situation seems no convincing influence on the choice of the individual in the study. With the economic situation is understood the current economic situation of the family when the student has chosen his/her field of study.

Students were asked whether they wanted to change their field of study for another field which bring them more economic benefits or prestige benefits. The responses were surprising, 53% did not want to change it, and 25.8% was not sure how to behave because most of them were secondary students dealing choice of field of study. 16.7% said “Yes” they will change it with another course but within the same field, and 1.5% said “Yes” changing drastically from humanities to natural sciences and 3% “Yes, within natural sciences’. For more see the Table 11 “Influencing field of study” and Table 12 “Changing field of study’ in the appendix.

4.3. Situation and employment opportunities of Roma graduates

"We want to tackle this poverty of ambition. We want to work with parents to involve them in their children's education. We need to challenge the assumption that schools in deprived areas cannot make a difference. And we need to ensure that all children aspire to their full potential."

David Blunkett, UK Secretary of State for Education and Employment, 1997-2001

A new generation of European students has had to adapt to the labor market by marketing themselves, and those who stayed in school and complete a degree are more likely to be integrated into the labor market. But a degree does not guarantee employment; rather it enables the required knowledge and skills for competing equally.

The NEUJOBS report comes to a conclusion that there is a slight correlation between education level and employment, while other factors might be considered as obstacles in hiring an individual in the labor market such as informal employment and discrimination (NEUJOBS: 2012). Although it is obvious that educational qualification has an important impact on employability, the strength of this correlation might differ significantly across countries. In contrast to simple logic, employment rates are the lowest in countries where the level of education of Roma is relatively high (Hungary and Slovakia) and the ethnic gap in educational qualification is lowest in European

comparison. In Spain (before the crisis), Bulgaria, and Romania, there was relatively high employment rates registered while the educational level of Roma is extremely poor in these countries. The differences can only be explained by the differences in the patterns of Roma employment and the structure of the economy. In Romania and Spain some of the traditional Roma communities survived till today, and certain groups of Roma were able to maintain traditional crafts and occupations.

a) Labor market barriers

It is assumed that people with higher education are more likely to be accepted by the community and the labor market, because of the knowledge and skills gained during their education, but that isn't always so. The issue is complicated not only because of the sheer numbers of new graduates and other individuals seeking employment: previous work experience is a major factor in determining the eligibility of applicants, and become a serious obstacle for people fresh to the labor market. As a result, many "new job seekers" feel obliged to enjoy any kind of low-paid job without health, pension, and social protection during the first years of their careers.

Over- education also may factor in as a primary cause for a lower wage than working in an occupation that fits the educational level (Daly: 2000; Dolton and Vignoles: 2000). Job mismatches occur when employers do not have much information about the productivity level of applicants, and job seekers may misinterpret job requirements and lack the necessary knowledge about job characteristics (Wolbers: 2003). Being employed in a job that does not match the specific qualification of the studied field lowers the realized wages in comparison to a matched job.

From a human capital perspective, the productivity of an employee is measured by his or her individual skills (Becker: 1993); increasing the level of this productivity is made by **investing** in general education or specialized education such as vocational trainings. Certain fields may develop more productive skills than others which are required by employer. Accordingly, employers are more likely to hire someone who has an occupation-specific degree for the job than someone who

has a general education and needs trainings (Glebbeeck et al.: 1989; van der Velden and Wolbers: 2007). However, job-competition theory (Thurow: 1979) focuses on the characteristics of the job rather than of the employee, who does not compete for wages but competes for jobs that indirectly determine the wages (Klein, 2010).

Discrimination also hampers employment, both for new graduates and also those who have been seeking employment over many years. Discrimination in this case is difficult to prove, but it appears that there are stereotypes and prejudices both on the part of employers and statutory agencies. One of the main conclusions of a 2008 OECD analysis states that labor market discrimination is still one of the largest problems facing its member countries – and that they should do more to stop it. When speaking about the participation of Roma in the labor market, an overwhelming number have informal, unregistered, or irregular jobs.

b) Importance of proper education and guidance of graduates to certain works

Higher education is considered to contribute significantly to economic growth and the reduction of social inequalities. Generally speaking, university graduates have an advantage in the labor market, but entering the labor market can be frustrating. Considering their human capital accumulation, Albania has formulated some special employment policies to support them. These policies aim at stimulating entrepreneurship, creating more employment posts, encouraging graduates to take jobs in poor areas or to work in those industries with bad working condition, promoting graduates' employment ability, and enhancing their employment adaptability and flexibility. These policies have also considered that the job should match with what they have learnt in order to improve the efficiency of graduates' employment.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

As the conclusion from the research and thesis, the Albanian government is currently promoting higher education in order to sustain local economic development, to enhance employment and growth. The thesis tried to reflect the current situation of the young Roma in Albanian tertiary education analyzing the policy instruments designed for and/or used to increase Roma participation in higher education. Albanian state has a long way in order to increase the number of Roma students in higher education. Because of the economic situation, poverty, discrimination and many other personal things such as mentality, this category of young people need a hand to be helped. Through the research it was provided an answer to the question regarding the impact of the Albanian financial aid policies for Roma students enrolled at universities. Financial aid during the university studies certainly is a help in supporting directly student's studies and indirectly student's family. Therefore, without aggravating the economic situation of their families, these Roma youth beneficiaries from scholarships are motivated to continue their university studies as long as they wish and have good academic results. Providing scholarships by the government for Roma students, it is not the only solution, but as was seen from the search the amount given should fulfill all the personal needs of students especially if they are coming from other cities.

From the findings can be concluded the following:

1. Policies designed to alleviate the situation of Roma minority are vague and do not precisely target the Roma youth in education. The findings of this research showed that assisting Roma students in Albania through certain quotas at bachelor, master and PhD level, it is only the top of the iceberg. The real problem is due to the lack of strong policies in dealing with the school drop outs in the fifth grade of the elementary school. Access of young Roma to university is otherwise highly important for the Roma

communities themselves and the entire Albanian society, as it would help preparing agents of change in the respective communities.

2. A very small number of Roma students are helped with scholarships and quotas mainly by external providers, while the Albanian state has yet to work hard in this direction.
3. On behalf of equal and fair access, the Albanian government for years has undertaken initiatives such as funding programs with scholarships and study quotas for all categories in need. The research and analysis of the decision of Ministers above showed that Roma youth can benefit from the Albanian scholarship scheme only because they meet the economic criterion. However for many of them it is difficult because of the way how scholarship schemes are drafted and the general criteria which cannot be fulfilled by the Roma youth coming from poor families.
4. The research conducted in Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Vlorë, Elbasan, Delvinë and Korçë showed that the majority of Roma youth had no information about the possibility of receiving the Albanian state scholarships, and they were mostly supported by a foreign organization, the Roma Education Fund. Roma Education Fund also offers scholarships, mentoring, and tutoring for secondary students.
5. Besides the number of students in higher education is increasing year after year, they still face obstacles in continuing their studies. Coming from a poor family and having other siblings frequenting school is one of the main factors that reduce their chances to continue university.
6. Lack of financial aid since in the first steps of education increases chances of drop outs.
7. Research showed that 34.8% live in bad economic conditions with a monthly income per capita equal or below the minimum of absolute poverty, 4891 Lek (34.77 Eur).
8. Looking at the amount of money given to a student by Roma Education Fund and Albanian municipalities and universities is not enough, which does not fulfil the personal needs of beneficiaries.

9. The choice of field of study is connected with employment opportunities after studies.

Direction into humanities is a result of a long-term observation of these young people and is associated with many of their own desire and labor market demand rather than lack of skills. It is known that fields such as mathematics, physics and other scientific science in Albania are not searchable because of the lack of labor market for these jobs.

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ANNEX 1 - TABLES

TABLE 1

Responder's education level				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	General gymnasium	22	33.3	33.3
	Vocational school	8	12.1	12.1
	University	20	30.3	30.3
	Graduate	12	18.2	18.2
	Master	3	4.5	4.5
	PhD	1	1.5	1.5
	Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 2

Do you study in your home city?				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	40	60.6	60.6
	No	26	39.4	39.4
	Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 3

Responder reasons to the choice of living in another place different from the place of birth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	study purposes	22	33.3	84.6
	more employment opportunities	1	1.5	3.8
	family reasons	3	4.5	11.5
	Total	26	39.4	100.0
Missing	88	40	60.6	
Total		66	100.0	

TABLE 4**Do you have siblings?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	59	89.4	89.4
Valid No	7	10.6	10.6
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 5**Number of family members**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
less than 3 persons	6	9.1	9.1
Valid 3-6 persons	58	87.9	87.9
more than 6 persons	2	3.0	3.0
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 6**Number of siblings attending school**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 2	28	42.4	47.5
Valid 2 or more	20	30.3	33.9
none	11	16.7	18.6
Total	59	89.4	100.0
Missing 77	7	10.6	
Total	66	100.0	

TABLE 7**Mother's education level of responder**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Tertiary education	5	7.6	7.6
Secondary education	12	18.2	18.2
Primary education	34	51.5	51.5
Valid Elementary education	9	13.6	13.6
only few classes	5	7.6	7.6
None classes	1	1.5	1.5
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 8**Father's education level of responder**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Tertiary education	4	6.1	6.1
Secondary education	25	37.9	37.9
Primary education	31	47.0	47.0
Elementary education	4	6.1	6.1
Only few classes	2	3.0	3.0
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 9**Family welfare of responder**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
very bad	3	4.5	4.5
bad	23	34.8	34.8
very good	4	6.1	6.1
good	36	54.5	54.5
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 10**Field of study of responder**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Humanities	52	78.8	78.8
Natural sciences	14	21.2	21.2
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 11

Influencing field of study			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid My parents	4	6.1	6.1
Economic conditions	3	4.5	4.5
labor market	27	40.9	40.9
Scholarship	6	9.1	9.1
My own talent(desire)	24	36.4	36.4
all	1	1.5	1.5
Something else	1	1.5	1.5
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 12

Changing field of study			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Yes, from humanities to natural sciences	1	1.5	1.5
Yes, again within humanities	11	16.7	16.7
Yes, within natural sciences	2	3.0	3.0
No, I will not	35	53.0	53.0
I do not Know	17	25.8	25.8
Total	66	100.0	100.0

TABLE 13

Types of positive actions			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Scholarship	22	33.3	33.3
Quota	5	7.6	7.6
None of the positive actions	39	59.1	59.1
Total	66	100.0	100.0

ANNEX 2 - Questionnaire with high school Roma students, university Roma students and former Roma university students

What is your name?

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 19-22
- 23-26
- 27-30
- 31-34
- Over 35

3. Do you study in your home city?

- Yes
- No

4. If you live in another city that is not your home city, please indicate:

For how long are you living there?

- 0-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-11 years
- Over 12 years

5. Responder reasons to the choice of living in another place different from the place of birth

- Study purposes
- More employment opportunities
- Family reasons

6. How many members are you in your family?

- Less than 4
- 4-6 members
- More than 6 members

7. Do you have siblings?

- Yes
- No

8. How many of them are attend regularly school?

- Less than 2
- 2 or more
- None

9. Which is your mother's education level?

- Post university
- Tertiary
- Secondary
- Primary
- Elementary

- Only some classes
 - None
10. Which is your father's education level?
- Post university
 - Tertiary
 - Secondary
 - Primary
 - Elementary
 - Only some classes
 - None
11. Indicate your mother's occupation
- Unemployed
 - Cleaning woman
 - Worker
 - Works in the family business
 - House wife
 - Deceased
 - Something else
12. Indicate your father occupation
- Unemployed
 - Worker
 - Works in the family business
 - Deceased
 - Technician
 - Something else
13. How will you determine the welfare of your family?
- Very bad
 - Bad
 - Very good
 - Good
14. Which is your education level?
- General gymnasium
 - Vocational school
 - University
 - Graduate
 - Master
15. Your school is:
- Private
 - Public
16. Year of study
- 1st high school
 - 2nd high school
 - 3rd high school
 - 1st bachelor

- 2nd bachelor
 - 1st master
 - 2nd master
 - Graduate
 - PhD
17. Why have you chosen this institution?
- It is near the place where I live
 - It is one of the most noted school/university in the city
 - Something else
18. Which are your plans after graduation?
- Continuing further studies
 - Finding a suitable job
 - Something else
19. How satisfied are you with your academic outcomes?
- Very satisfied
 - More or less
 - I am still not satisfied
20. Which types of positive actions are/did you benefiting/benefited from?
- Scholarship
 - Quota
 - None of them
21. Who is your scholarship/quota provider?
- Albanian universities, NGOs, foundations, and Albanian public and private businesses
 - Foreign provider (university, foundation etc.)
22. For how long have you benefited from scholarship/quota?
- 1 year or less
 - 2-4 years
 - More than 4 years
23. Through whom the application was made possible to get the scholarship/quota?
- University
 - NGO
 - Direct application
 - Municipality officer
24. Are you aware of the criteria for granting the scholarship/quota?
- Yes
 - No
25. How much is the monthly benefit amount of the scholarship?
- Less than 20 €
 - 20 € -50 €
 - 50 € -100 €
 - Over 100 €
26. Does it meet your personal needs?
- Yes
 - No

- Passably
27. Which is the reason for applying for scholarship quota?
- Continuing my studies
 - Economic reasons, I did not afford the studies
 - It was given to the Roma students
 - Something else
28. Why you have not applied for scholarship or study quota/
- Lack of information
 - Very good economic situation of my family and I can reach by myself the university
 - Difficulties in the procedures
 - Something else
29. Which is the field of your studies chosen or you would like to choose?
- Humanities
 - Natural sciences
30. Do you think that your choice of study field has been influenced?
- Yes
 - No
 - It might be
31. What might influence your choice?
- My parents
 - Economic conditions
 - Labor market
 - Scholarship
 - Quota
 - My own talent(desire)
 - Something else
32. If you have the opportunity to change the field of study, will you do it?
- Yes, I will change from humanities to natural sciences
 - Yes, from natural sciences to humanities
 - No, I will not
 - I do not know
33. The importance of your university finalization
- It gives to me general knowledge
 - It gives tools to compete in the labor market
 - More chances to be employed
 - Professional realization
 - Something else
34. Why should the Albanian government support you with scholarship?
- Family social and economic conditions
 - I have another/others sibling frequenting regularly school/university
 - I am living far from my home city
 - It is a state obligation to help young Roma in achieving their academic goals
 - It might reduce drop outs
 - Something else

ANNEX 3- Interview guide

1. Are you interested on issues regarding the education of Roma students?
2. What is your experience in such matters?
3. How many Roma youth are in your organization? How many of them have your support? For what and how you help them?
4. What is your opinion regarding access to secondary and higher education of the Roma youth?
6. Has the Roma youth any opportunity to be educated? Is the choice of study fields influenced? If it so, what can be some potential factors?
7. What are the most accessible scholarships for Roma students? Are the state scholarship schemes accessible for the Roma students?
8. How much is important university for a Roma student?
9. What are the obstacles faced by Roma youth in their education? Do you think that these obstacles affect their participation in university?
10. Do you consider that family plays an important role in the continuation of the university?
11. Do you consider that the Albanian government has achieved the goals set out in the Roma Strategy 2010-2015?
12. How to increase the participation of Roma students in higher education?
13. What are the things that need to be improved in higher education and what are those things that must be eliminated in the current system of higher education, referring to policies for Roma youth education?