



AT SCHOOL TOGETHER
NEXT STEPS FOR ROMA EDUCATION
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

IMPACTS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION REFORMS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

IN SEPTEMBER 2016 CZECH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS began implementing new support measures for children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream classes, as required by the reform of the Education Act introduced the previous year (82/2015). The reform allows for a two-year transition period to introduce the new measures, which include the provision of additional teaching assistants to support children with special needs.

In order to assess the impact of these reforms after their first year, the Open Society Fund Prague joined the Czech Society for Inclusive Education and the Czech and Moravian Trade Union of Workers in Education in commissioning a survey of the views of a representative sample of elementary school teachers and head-teachers.

The research, carried out by Nielsen Admosphere, asked respondents about the changes that they had seen in their schools and classes as a result of the reform; about the barriers they perceived to the education of children with special needs; about the level of support their schools had received; and about the effectiveness of cooperation with various institutions in the education system.

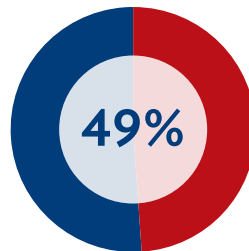
The research was conducted on a representative sample of elementary schools based on different regions, size of a municipality and a number of pupils at school. 507 teachers and 126 head-teachers of mainstream elementary schools participated in the survey.

MAIN FINDINGS

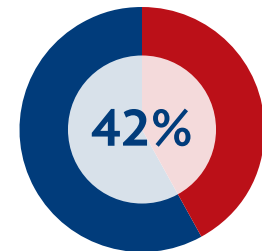
Head-teachers highlighted the provision of **additional teaching assistants and aids** as one of the most significant support measures provided under the reforms.

As far the ongoing barriers to educating children with special educational needs in mainstream elementary schools are concerned, the **head-teachers repeatedly cited shortages of teaching assistants or special pedagogues.**

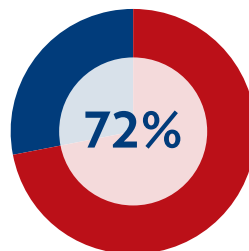
Two thirds of the teachers who participated in the survey cited **class size** as “a barrier” or “a serious barrier” in teaching special needs children. Half of the teachers said they found additional administrative work related the new system to be overly burdensome.



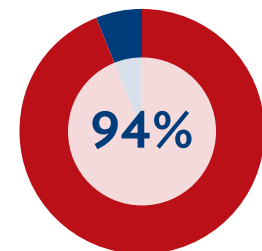
49 percent of the head-teachers who participated in the survey and 38 percent of the teachers said that the inclusive education reforms had “helped” or “partially helped” provide better support to children with special educational needs.



42 percent of the head-teachers said they had been “successful” or “rather successful” in recruiting teaching assistants, while 21 percent said they had experienced difficulties. Five percent said they had faced “serious difficulty” in finding suitable staff.



72 percent of the head-teachers said they did not consider inadequate funding to be a serious obstacle in educating special needs children in their schools.



94 percent of head teachers said they had substantial previous experience with education of children with special needs.

