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Home-school Relationship in Primary Schools in Hungary and Russia

Following major political changes in Eastern Europe in the early nineties, many new developments can be detected also in the educational system of these countries. Both parents' legal rights and responsibilities and the related practices have changed. These developments present many new challenges for schools and parents.

A two-year investigation focused on home-school relationships in primary schools in Hungary and Russia. The project concentrated on the examination of parental perspectives on home-school relationships, the views, experiences and expectations of parents, and their perception of their own role. Special attention was given to two areas within this topic: school choice and communication between the class teacher and the parent. The extent to which parents exercised their rights, how the choice of school operates from the parents' perspective, and what issues parents considered while choosing a particular school were investigated in detail. It was examined why parents find it important to build up good relationships with the class teacher, how they see communication between themselves and the class teacher, and in what ways and about what topics they are willing to communicate.

The investigation was conducted as a qualitative study. Three case study schools were chosen both in Hungary and in Russia. In the selected schools parents, teachers and other school staff were interviewed. Other data sources, e.g. school documents, observation and fieldnotes served for triangulation purposes, as well as provided contextual information.

An analysis of school choice and parent-teacher communication will be presented, and examples from the collected data will demonstrate and underpin the findings. In the discussion special attention will also be given to the cultural context, both in terms of the individual schools, and by considering the particular characteristics of these countries. It is hoped that this project will inform, prompt and help further research.