



Roma Education Fund



ANNUAL REPORT 2012



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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Readers,

This is the seventh year that I have the pleasure of writing the annual Chairman's message. When rereading my previous messages to you, I realized that 2012 is a chance for me to report on REF's cumulative developments over the last seven years.

In 2005–2006 we stressed the core activity of REF as a grant-giving foundation. By 2007 a number of pivotal events occurred: REF hosted the largest conference at that time on the education of Roma in Europe, which coincided with the landmark decision of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights to rule that the placement of Romani children in special schools for the mentally disabled was an act of discrimination. In 2008 many important developments happened that have come to shape REF today: in September the European Commission held the first High Level EU Roma Summit in Brussels; in December the European Council committed the Commission to prepare an EU Roma Platform. As the economic crisis worsened that year, many Europeans were deeply affected; among the hardest hit were many exceedingly poor Romani communities.

In 2009 it became clear that REF must capture its prior experience and success, scale up education interventions, expand the number of Roma beneficiaries, and take structural reforms to the next level in a bid to prove beyond a doubt that Romani communities were not beyond help if given the right resources, models and expertise. By 2010 it was apparent that the legitimacy of REF's interventions over the preceding five years was key to changes in the discourse and overall political environment regarding Roma education in Europe. In 2011, the hardship brought by the economic crisis pushed us to be increasingly proactive regarding policy advocacy and bring national governments onboard; REF saw its contributions integrated into education reforms in Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia.

Today, I am struck by how much REF has achieved for the education of Roma in the past seven years. The foundation remains committed to accountability and transparency in the work that we are doing in the best interests of Romani children and youth in 2012. For example, in Romania, we are fighting to ensure the successful delivery of programs for Roma while facing severe bureaucratic difficulties in the management of European Social Funds. Inside you will find many stories generated from our grant projects

in all Decade countries and we are pleased to add them to our institutional memory. You also will find many accounts of the progress REF has made within this year's report as well as in the concluding note from the Executive Director, Judit Szira.

This year, I would like to convey my gratitude to Ambassador Yvana Enzler with whom the REF Board has enjoyed working. Ambassador Enzler served as the Swiss Government representative on the REF Board from 2008 to 2012. Having worked with Ambassador Enzler, I would like to express my special thanks for her active involvement and support in the work of the foundation. Her diplomatic knowledge as well as institutional management has helped REF to develop its operational and policy tools and has contributed significantly to the Board's decision-making. I would also like to warmly welcome our newest Board member, Mr. Alexander Wittwer, who joined us in late 2012. Mr. Wittwer is the Swiss Ambassador to Albania and serves as the REF Board's representative of the Swiss Government. We look forward to working with Mr. Wittwer in the coming years.

In closing my remarks, I will not say more than I said before – Romani children and youth are the primary beneficiaries of our work and all of us should do everything it takes to ensure that all children are in school and have access to the same quality of education, no matter their ethnic or religious affiliation. 2012 brought the Roma Education Fund one step further in achieving this and together we must ensure – in 2013 and beyond – that children are not denied access to education so that we may witness all of them growing up to realize their greatest potential.



Costel Bercus
Chairman of the Board



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Roma Education Fund Supporters and Beneficiaries,

We leave a busy twelve months behind us. 2012 was yet another year of both great efforts, important accomplishments, and, as usual, immense difficulties, especially in some countries where the situation of Romani children, and also the general political and social environment gives us reason for very serious concerns. I would like to summarize some of our most important achievements and challenges in our work towards Roma educational integration.

Our first Brussels-supported project, A Good Start, was successfully completed and reported to the European Commission. In April it was summarized and celebrated in Brussels with an international conference and photo exhibition where most of our local partners together with two members of the European Parliament, one commissioner and high level experts and administrators from the European Commission participated. Most importantly we managed to ensure funds for AGS, and the REF Board accepted AGS Phase II. We will continue the intense dissemination of the AGS model and its good results.

REF hosted its co-founder George Soros in the Budapest headquarters office and this event was a useful and memorable experience for all of REF staff.

The Scholarship Program is now fully online and, thanks to this development, we are able to generate much needed data on our student body. For the first time we had personal interviews with all incoming students and all staff members and National Selection Board members reported the usefulness of these meetings. REF organized four Scholarship Galas for beneficiary students and, although this demanded a substantial effort, we managed to raise the attention of the mainstream media with the good news that we succeeded in having a strong student body. We had the chance to meet our scholars and most importantly they had the chance to meet each other and start building up personal and professional relationships. One result of these meetings is the most encouraging news about the REF Romania Alumni group. As part of the REF Alumni and Beneficiary Network, the development of which started in 2012, an initiative by REF beneficiaries in Romania has emerged with the aim of gathering small personal donations to provide scholarship support to other Romani students. A number of alumni members have already expressed interest in participating in this initiative.

In the Grant Program, REF colleagues developed and described new models and new application formats. We are near the launch of the online system for grant applications and tracking as well. The themes of our successfully piloted and evaluated new models are early childhood development, how to remedy early school leaving in primary school, scholarships combined with mentorship in secondary education and tertiary education. We would like to find partners in the countries to scale up and disseminate these models with our financial and professional support. We managed to build up a strong and profitable professional relationship with MIT's Poverty Action Lab, the best professionals in the field of impact evaluation. During the spring of 2012 at our retreat we had the chance to learn from their and World Bank experts about the details of measuring the real impact of some of our programs.

In 2012, REF worked diligently in fundraising; we submitted applications and we communicated substantively with our existing donors, reporting and answering all questions. In the middle of the economic crises, REF has managed to preserve our financial status and we consider this a great result. Unfortunately, the crises are still here and REF will continue to keep our office and donation costs under control, finding ways to accomplish more while spending less. For that we will continue to build stronger partnerships with municipalities, Ministries, and other stakeholders at our project sites.

We faced huge challenges with our Romanian programs. The ineffective and over-bureaucratic administration of the Structural Fund projects resulted delays in finances; we had to be efficient and flexible, restructuring the program in 2013 to achieve program indicators with a smaller budget and an accelerated time frame. The finances were coming with significant delay and all over in Romania those implementing EU funds are suffering from it.

We continue to work very hard and effectively; this is what REF's External Evaluation clearly reported, and we are proud that REF has been found to be a leading organization that has positively impacted Roma education. "In general, REF has made sustainable impacts in education system through its policy work and projects, producing new models to support access and better educational outcomes for Roma students, as well as desegregation. Impacts at individual level are obvious. Impacts are also made at mezzo-level, many organizations and communities have changed their way of work and included new activities as a result of projects financed by REF. There is clear evidence that impacts are made at macro level in promoting policies within the education system." as evaluators stated. We need to be proud of our helpful and supporting Board, our young and committed staff, and our enthusiastic partners. We introduced a new staff position in 2012, the Studies Officer for the better connection between grant programs, field work, studies and research, and policy work. We welcomed a young Roma from Slovakia, Stanislaw Daniel to do

this job. We have another new Roma professional, Dan Doghi from Romania, who is the new manager of our tertiary education scholarship program. We have a new colleague Azam Bayburdi in administration. The composition of REF staff is 78% Roma, and we would like to keep promoting our priority of Roma participation at all levels in Roma-related programs. REF also would like to extend its special thanks to Elise Delinger and Mark Gomez for offering their help as volunteers to the REF Networks. In addition, REF was very pleased to host the interns Christina Marian, Jana Grajcarova, Jelena Jovanovic, Marko Pecak, Orsolya Botos, and Victorina Luca.

2012 was a challenging year, financially and otherwise. In many Decade countries fears are rising; we are witnessing how fragile democratic institutions are and we still see growing discrimination of the Roma. The equal educational opportunities of Romani children are still at unacceptable levels in the countries where REF works. Even in countries with longstanding commitments to human rights, under times of strain, rapid retreat from those principles can be seen. In many parts of Europe, we can feel the paralyzing effects of the discouraging situation.

But we will not accept retreat from progress made. We are together in a very unique organization and our collective weight gives us the opportunity and the responsibility to reverse these trends, to support those who are claiming their rights in every region, to dismantle repression, to turn the tide.



Judit Szira
Executive Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Roma Education Fund (REF) was created in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (hereafter, Decade) in 2005. REF's mission and ultimate goal is to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. In order to achieve this goal, the organization supports policies and programs that contribute to quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems. Through its activities, REF promotes Roma inclusion in all aspects of the national education systems of countries participating in the Decade as well as other countries that wish to join this effort. Following are a selection of highlights from REF's 2012 Annual Report.

GRANTS PROGRAM

In 2012, the REF Board approved 50 new grants of 80 submitted grant applications in a total amount of EUR 2,573,810. The level of leveraged funding raised by REF partners reached EUR 1,964,511. Seventy percent of grants were awarded to former REF partners and approximately 30 percent was awarded to new partners. Overall, the average approval rate was 41 percent for 2005–2012. There were 116 active projects in 2012; the average project length was about 12 months and the average project cost was EUR 53,500. Eighty five percent of active projects were rated satisfactory and fifteen percent as unsatisfactory and less than one percent with suspended implementation. A full list of grants awarded can be found on REF's website.

In 2012, REF projects reached about 169,286 beneficiaries. The largest number of beneficiaries was in REF-granted projects aimed at decreasing early school leaving. A total of 26,298 Romani children in this category benefited from various incentives within REF programs in 2012. The second largest group of beneficiaries supported by REF projects were children enrolled in preschool education. For more details please review Tables 7 and 8 in REF's Grants chapter on pages 26–27.

According to an independent external evaluation of REF activities conducted in 2012, "Successful models have been developed for preschool education and for primary and secondary Education." The Grants Program has also contributed to the capacity development of civil society organizations. A significant number of NGOs (most of them Roma NGOs) have benefited from the capacity development efforts and project planning support provided by REF Country Facilitators and other REF staff.

In 2012, the Grants Program prepared a new programming approach in grant distribution to be launched in the upcoming year. With the support of World Bank specialists, REF staff developed a scheme for a new model-based grant application structure. New grant guidelines have been developed and a new results-based logic will replace the existing project implementation plans in the upcoming years. A new approach also will be introduced, wherein multi-year programming will include a needs assessment and more baseline data collection. REF staff was trained by the World Bank and MIT's Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) on monitoring and evaluation instruments and on the fundamentals of results-based management and impact evaluations. More on REF's Grants Program in 2012 can be found on pages 18–41.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2012, REF's Scholarship Program continued to support Romani students in their higher academic ventures both through financial and academic (tutoring and mentoring) support. Through its four scholarship schemes, REF awarded 1,504 scholarships for a total of EUR 2,110,338 for the 2012–2013 academic year. Also in 2012, the Scholarship Program conducted personal interviews with more students, allowing REF's National Selection Boards and staff to meet face-to-face with aspiring Romani scholars. REF's new online application system was further expanded to enhance its survey functions; this, plus extended network-building efforts, are enabling REF to understand and serve its student constituency better than ever. Scholarships Galas were held in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia to publicly recognize and celebrate REF Scholarship recipients. For more on REF's Scholarships activities in 2012 and to read three first-hand accounts from REF Scholarship recipients, see pages 42–63.

A GOOD START

In 2012, A Good Start (AGS) saw the completion of Phase I (2010–2012) and approval to proceed with Phase II. To date, nearly 4,000 children have been supported by AGS and REF's partners have matched the European Commission's EUR 1,909,994 contribution with EUR 437,712. Enrollment has increased, parental skills and awareness has improved, and NGOs and education students are more prepared to deliver quality Early Childhood Education and Care to both Romani and non-Romani pupils. Furthermore, a rich body of knowledge and information has been produced and published through a Household Survey and a number of other papers, guides, and reports on the program in FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. More on REF's AGS accomplishments in 2012 can be found on pages 64–77.

REF ROMANIA

Despite larger political and financial challenges, REF Romania continued to manage and support four European Structural Funds projects throughout Romania. Fifty School After School Centers are functioning and serving over 2,000 pupils through the School After School project. As of the 2012–2013 academic year, the Equal Opportunities in Education project is providing over 1,000 students with tutoring, mentoring, and scholarships. Vocational and lifestyle counseling was delivered to over 700 students through the Roma Youth Competitive on the Labor Market Project, and scholarships, mentoring, and tutoring were provided by REF within the Roma Health Scholarships Project.

REF Romania also continues to develop as an organization itself, enhancing its website, media outreach, and publicity efforts. These efforts have paid off, resulting in more efficient communication of REF Romania's accomplishments via a mix of social media outlets. More on REF Romania's efforts in 2012 can be found on pages 78–85.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

Research and policy activities continued to be robust in 2012. From reports on the A Good Start (AGS) household survey, to findings on the overrepresentation of Romani children in special education, to empirical analyses on the distribution of EU funds on Roma education projects and the effects of teacher absenteeism on Roma education, REF has continued to share its in-depth understanding of the causes and consequences of Roma exclusion in education both within and outside the foundation and among its network. REF saw its contributions integrated into education reforms in Czech Republic, Macedonia, and Slovakia. More on REF's Policy Development and Advocacy work in 2012 can be found on pages 86–99.

COMMUNICATIONS

REF's Communications Department enhanced communication and documentation of REF's work both in quantity and diversity of media. This included the support of more Scholarships Galas through media coverage and fully utilizing Facebook and Twitter to spread the word about important REF activities. Furthermore, REF has supported the creation of new documentaries, utilizing their creation to inspire REF scholarship beneficiaries from Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. REF has also invited and hosted journalists

and key stakeholders in order to share knowledge about REF's mission, accomplishments, and experience. More on REF's Communications activities in 2012 can be found on pages 100–109.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

REF's income for 2012 was EUR 9,593,587, allowing it to realize all its programs, despite the many challenges created by the extremely slow expense reimbursement of the European Structural Funds managed by the Romanian government. The operational administration expenses were EUR 698,855 (3.3 percent less compared to 2011). This decrease was due to the active tendering of REF's main service providers, which resulted in smaller expenses for REF administration. Owing to continual follow-up, control of the 2012 budget, and reallocations based on the savings from administration, studies, and research, REF was able to dedicate more funds to the Grants Program, which amounts EUR 2,690,585 (16.8 percent more for grants and as compared to the previous year).

REF has successfully closed A Good Start, financed by the European Commission – DG Regio, and was granted the entire contracted donor income of EUR 1,909,994, without non-eligible costs. The Hungarian Microregion Development Program also has finished, which supported Roma in Nyírbátor and Encs microregions of Hungary with tutoring, language courses, and health and housing programs up to EUR 250,000. REF has launched several new programs in 2012, including a project with Fundación Secretariado Gitano's (FSG) that involved all three REF foundations, and AGS Phase II that started in September 2012 with the involvement of new private donors. In addition, REF successfully tendered in several consortiums, for example, with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities in the Progress call, where the total budget reached EUR 933,645, and in a consortium in Montenegro with Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V. with a budget of EUR 1,475,142.

In 2012, as in the previous year, all REF entities were audited based on international standards of auditing (ISA) and on local financial requirements by PricewaterhouseCoopers AG in Switzerland and Moore Stephens Hezicomp, Ltd., in Hungary. In Romania, REF started to cooperate with PricewaterhouseCoopers Romania in order to provide the most qualitative audit review on its financial operation. More on REF's Administration and Finance in 2012 can be found on pages 110–123.

PART I
GRANTS
PROGRAM



GRANTS PROGRAM

Over the last seven years (2005–2012), REF has allocated grant funding for a total of 327 projects, including small technical assistance (TA) and capacity-building grants to support the implementation of ongoing projects. These projects equate to EUR 27,088,201 invested in 13 countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, REF has approved a total 38 Reimbursable Grants to boost the implementation of European Structural Funds projects facing cash-flow delays.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS IN 2012

In 2012, the REF Board approved 50 new grants (of 80 submitted grant applications) in support of the implementation of projects in 13 countries for a total amount of EUR 2,573,810. Table 1 shows the total number of project proposals received and processed in 2012 and Table 2 illustrates trends in grant processing over the life of the grant program. There were 116 active projects in 2012; average project length was about 12 months and average project cost was EUR 53,500. The level of co-funding raised by REF partners in the 50 projects in 2012 reached EUR 1,964,511.¹ Seventy percent of grants were awarded to former REF partners and approximately 30 percent was awarded to new partners. Overall, the average approval rate was 41 percent for 2005–2012. A full list of grants awarded can be found in the Grants Table on pages 146–169, and REF's website.²

TABLE 1. Project application requests by country, 2012

Project country	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Croatia	Czech Republic	Hungary	Kosovo	Macedonia	Moldova	Montenegro	Romania	Serbia	Slovakia	Total
Received	7	3	20	2	5	11	2	9	1	2	11	4	3	80
Rejected	3	0	6	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	4	0	3	23
Approved	2	1	7	2	3	7	1	6	1	2	9	4	5	50
Contracted	4	1	7	2	3	6	2	5	1	2	9	2	5	49

¹ A decrease from 2011 due to the completion of DILS financing in Serbia but partially replaced with IPA Funds raised in a consortium in Montenegro with Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V.

² The full list of REF grants is available online: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/ref-approved-projects>

TABLE 2. Project proposals received and processed, 2005–2012

Trends	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total 2005–2012
Incoming project proposals	67	130	107	105	86	118	98	80	791
Change from previous year	n/a	48%	-18%	-2%	-18%	27%	-17%	-22%	n/a
Approved	12	49	34	54	41	36	51	50	327
Change from previous year	n/a	75%	-31%	59%	-24%	-12%	38%	-1%	n/a

Tables 3–6 below shows the total project financing for 2012 as well as for the life of the grant program (2005–2012).

TABLE 3. Leveraged funds, 2005–2012

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Funds leveraged	1,764,584	2,060,144	1,023,197	2,235,695	841,858	3,210,141	3,212,151	1,964,511
REF funds committed (EUR)	3,352,595	5,592,141	4,616,061	3,229,615	2,539,692	2,085,069	3,013,443	2,723,810
Total	5,117,179	7,652,285	5,639,258	5,465,310	3,381,550	5,295,210	6,225,594	4,688,321

TABLE 4. Project financing by country, 2012 (EUR)*

	Albania	Bulgaria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Czech Rep.	Hungary	Kosovo	
Committed	63,860	175,547	65,847	70,168	264,060	477,773	71,001	
Contracted	141,233	182,147	65,847	72,097	56,017	401,239	300,007	
Disbursed	151,843	273,109	50,307	67,097	53,531	320,616	226,673	
	Macedonia	Moldova	Montenegro	Romania	Serbia	Slovakia	Internat.	Total
Committed	214,706	39,000	14,567	514,674	307,345	295,262	n.a.	2,573,810
Contracted	505,427	39,000	14,567	209,369	346,726	356,909	n.a.	2,690,585
Disbursed	308,422	80,880	48,270	431,352	168,339	347,984	n.a.	2,528,422

* The numbers do not contain accrual reversals and repayments.

TABLE 5. Project financing by country, 2005–2012 (EUR)*

	Albania	Bulgaria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Czech Rep.	Hungary	Kosovo	
Committed	676,144	5,849,865	449,888	772,955	879,704	2,487,961	311,057	
Contracted	676,144	5,849,865	449,888	712,787	665,967	2,298,273	311,057	
Disbursed	651,786	5,781,415	377,756	615,037	563,133	2,161,705	237,723	
	Macedonia	Moldova	Montenegro	Romania	Serbia	Slovakia	Internat.	Total
Committed	3,550,676	538,870	508,204	5,177,952	3,351,751	2,011,634	521,541	27,088,201
Contracted	3,538,605	538,870	492,004	4,475,797	3,341,011	1,982,667	521,541	25,854,475
Disbursed	3,151,994	496,750	492,004	4,267,678	3,060,284	1,825,434	343,958	24,026,656

* The numbers do not contain accrual reversals and repayments.

TABLE 6. Project financing, 2005–2012 (EUR)*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Committed	3,352,595	5,592,141	4,616,061	3,229,615	2,539,692
Contracted	2,208,856	6,190,978	4,437,800	3,453,046	2,402,296
Disbursed	1,048,245	3,852,621	4,797,243	4,429,848	2,701,429
		2010	2011	2012	Total
Committed		2,085,069	3,099,218	2,573,810	27,088,201
Contracted		1,945,612	2,525,302	2,690,585	25,854,475
Disbursed		2,467,656	2,201,192	2,528,422	24,026,656

* The numbers do not contain accrual reversals and repayments.

Beyond the grants awarded by the REF Board to support projects, REF has been partnering in projects such as DILS (Delivery of Improved Local Services Project)³ in Serbia and the Demján project in Hungary.⁴ In addition, REF's support of A Good Start (AGS) was ongoing.

In 2012, REF's Grant Program prepared a new programming approach in grant distribution. Under technical assistance led by a World Bank anchor team,⁵ REF staff developed a scheme for a new model-based grant application structure. New grant guidelines have been developed and a new results-based logic will replace the existing project implementation plans in the upcoming years. A new approach also will be introduced, wherein multi-year programming will include a needs assessment and more baseline data collection. REF staff were trained by the World Bank and MIT's Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)⁶ on monitoring and evaluation instruments and on the fundamentals of results-based management and impact evaluations. The development of REF's monitoring and evaluation is further detailed in the following pages.

³ DILS is a project implemented by Ministry of Education Serbia, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Social Welfare in cooperation with REF in 56 municipalities in Serbia with large Romani populations.

⁴ The pilot project support by the Demján Foundation was started in January 2011 with the aim of providing support for Romani students and their families in the two most disadvantaged sub-regions of Hungary, Encs and Nyírbátor. The main goals of the project were to ensure the regular attendance of Romani children in integrated preschools, increase academic performance at the primary and secondary levels, combat early school leaving, provide training for parents and assist them in job seeking, and involve families in a health screening system. The project was completed in summer 2012; however, REF continued the educational tutoring of 130 secondary students who are at risk of early school leaving.

⁵ Special thanks to the WB Anchor team members: Bojana Naceva and Plamen Danchev.

Following seven years of grants programming, REF has learned what works and is shifting from a focus on piloting small-scale projects to larger-scale multi-year projects that serve as best practice "showcases" on Roma integration in mainstream education systems. REF's programming and implementation is driven by results-based management; progress and achievements are measured by objectively verifiable indicators.

REF involves Roma in all aspects of its operations and management; thus, Roma participation is a key criterion in the evaluation of grant project proposals. REF will continue to support activities that are respectful and inclusive of Roma and the demands and needs of the Romani community, taking particular account of issues faced by Romani women.

GRANTS BY COUNTRY AND INDICATOR

In 2012, REF projects reached about 102,271 beneficiaries.⁷ The largest number of beneficiaries was in REF-granted projects aimed at decreasing early school leaving. A total of 26,298 Romani children in 2012 benefited from various incentives in this category within REF programs.⁸ Table 7 shows the total number of beneficiaries (both children and adults) of REF-funded projects by indicator and year.

⁶ The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)'s mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence from randomized evaluations. J-PAL's headquarters is a center within the Economics Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), with independent regional offices in Africa, Europe, Latin America, and South Asia that are hosted by a local university. More information is available online: <http://www.povertyactionlab.org>

⁷ Includes DILS in Serbia.

⁸ Includes DILS in Serbia.

TABLE 7. Beneficiaries of REF-funded projects, by indicator and year

Indicator	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Number of beneficiaries									
Participation in preschool education	600	2,966	4,497	10,441	3,418	8,034	11,309	8,178	49,443
Prevention of early school leaving	269	2,765	5,339	7,256	10,938	15,522	18,902	17,205	78,196
Completion of upper secondary education	1,278	2,687	4,797	5,060	6,282	5,303	6,122	4,119	35,648
Participation in tertiary education*	207	319	795	636	475	482	566	566	4,046
Parental participation in children's education	2,050	17,561	29,780	29,674	42,685	50,136	70,139	67,219	309,244
Desegregation	0	1,734	3,553	5,673	6,534	9,331	7,283	1,301	35,409
Prevention/reversal of enrollment in special education	0	353	525	172	125	435	503	528	2,641
In-service teacher training	551	2,977	4,018	4,488	2,945	3,125	3,512	3,085	24,701
Roma employed by REF-funded projects	123	589	802	733	638	553	765	598	4,801
	5,078	31,951	54,106	64,133	74,040	92,921	119,101	102,799	544,129

* Includes EU Pilot Project, REF Romania, and Demján Project, but excludes the Scholarship Program.

Due to the breadth of its scope and inclusion within a larger project, indicators for the DILS project are collected separately by the World Bank and the Serbian government. Table 8 shows the impact of the DILS project in terms of REF indicators for the duration of the project.

TABLE 8. DILS impact in terms of REF indicators in Serbia, 2010–2012

DILS	Cumulative
Participation in preschool education	13,157
Prevention of early school leaving	9,093
Completion of upper secondary education	5,046
Participation in tertiary education	–
Parental participation in children's education	39,191
Total	66,487

REF's Impact to Date

Through its programs, REF has trained more than 24,000 teachers in making school environments less hostile to Romani children. Early School Leaving (ESL) programs reached 78,196 Romani children in 13 countries of Central and South Eastern Europe in the period 2005–2012.⁹ Through their activities, REF partners have reached out to over 309,000 Romani parents. More than 49,000 children have been supported with direct enrollment in early childhood development programs, which significantly contributes to prevention of early school leaving at later stages of education. Over 35,000 scholarships were granted to Romani students to complete their upper secondary education through the provision of school-based mentoring and tutoring. In just one example of the positive impact that this can have, 90 percent of students supported with scholarships completed the school year with a grade point average (GPA) over 3.05 in Macedonia.

REF has contributed to positive trends in the education of Romani children. According to an independent external evaluation of REF activities conducted in 2012:

The Project Support [Grants] Program has initiated and contributed to significant policy inputs. Successful models have been developed for preschool education and for primary and secondary education. A good example is the student-mentor program, where Teacher Training Faculty students were engaged to support Roma children. This program benefited both the Roma students and the teachers-to-be. The Grant[s] Program has also contributed to the capacity development of civil society organizations. A significant number of NGOs (most of them Roma NGOs) have benefited from the capacity development efforts and project planning support provided by REF Country Facilitators and other REF staff.¹⁰

⁹ Please note these figures exclude the DILS Program. Available online: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/ref_annual2011_singlepages.pdf

Reimbursable Grants

REF's Reimbursable Grants Program provides support to Roma NGOs in accessing EU Structural Funds and other associated funds. A monetary advance is provided to organizations that have been awarded grants from EU sources, allowing them to start activities before actual financing from the respective government agencies or the EU is disbursed. As these disbursements are frequently delayed, without REF's assistance, these projects would not be able to start on time or would face cash shortages, and it would be unlikely that the project objectives would be achieved.

Table 9 provides the status of REF's Reimbursable Grants in 2012. Leveraging ratio refers to how much support can be mobilized with the reimbursable grant from the main donor. In comparison to 2011, our leveraging ratio (that is, how much support can be mobilized from the main donor with the reimbursable grant) has increased significantly (35:1 in 2011 and 45:1 in 2012) as we continued to support large-scale projects mainly in Romania and Hungary. Up to now, over two-thirds of the expired loans have been fully repaid and the rest are in process.

Since 2006, REF has helped 38 NGOs in three countries, that is, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia, to mobilize EUR 29,298,130 of EU support with EUR 657,146 of REF contribution. The Reimbursable Grant Program has been set up as a pilot facility available for EU member states and for non-EU members, principally in the Western Balkans. REF is also lobbying the EU and the respective government agencies managing EU funds for procedures that allow NGOs easier access to these funds.

TABLE 9. Reimbursable Grants in 2012*

Organization	Contract date	REF grant amount (EUR)	Amount mobilized (EUR)	Status	Leveraging ratio
Kállai Mária Association	2006	14,607	73,350	fully reimbursed	5
Belső Tűz Association	2006	12,708	63,510	fully reimbursed	5
Job Orientation Foundation of Ózd	2006	13,837	69,187	waiting for reimbursement	5
Association in Szabadszállás for Helping Underprivileged People	2006	14,393	71,972	waiting for reimbursement	5
Roma Civil Rights Foundation	2007	30,000	814,727	fully reimbursed	27

* Available online: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/documents/ref_2012_impact_evaluation_report_final_version.pdf

Organization	Contract date	REF grant amount (EUR)	Amount mobilized (EUR)	Status	Leveraging ratio
Hungarian Roma Parliament	2007	20,000	109,099	fully reimbursed	5
Khetanipe for Roma Unity	2007	10,000	69,579	fully reimbursed	7
Borsod County Organization of the Roma Civil Rights Movement	2007	13,600	68,080	partially reimbursed	5
Pro-Ma Future Association	2007	10,000	74,600	waiting for reimbursement	7
Bhim Rao Association	2007	10,000	74,000	fully reimbursed	7
Sani Luludyi Association	2007	12,000	72,000	fully reimbursed	6
Amrita Association	2007	10,000	60,000	fully reimbursed	6
National Association of Former Children in State Care	2007	10,000	64,596	fully reimbursed	6
Romedia Foundation	2008	8,000	50,000	partially reimbursed	5
Romero B-A-Z County Roma Intellectual Youth Association	2008	10,800	81,544	waiting for reimbursement	8
Association for European Roma Youth	2008	6,400	70,000	waiting for reimbursement	11
Rom Som Foundation	2008	18,792	241,000	waiting for reimbursement	13
Tankuckó Educational and Cultural Association	2011	7,000	77,782	fully reimbursed	11
Romany Society for General and Cultural Education	2011	10,000	115,000	under implementation	12
Belső Tűz Egyesület	2011	10,000	110,000	fully reimbursed	11
Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network Foundation	2011	20,000	745,195	fully reimbursed	37
Kalyi Jag Roma Arts Association	2011	10,000	696,519	under implementation	70
Independent Roma Association of Bonyhád	2011	14,724	76,620	under implementation	5
Bhim Rao Association	2012	24,960	518,278	under implementation	21
Secondary School Galakticka – Košice	2006	8,000	40,131	fully reimbursed	5
Secondary School Galakticka – Košice	2006	23,920	119,600	fully reimbursed	5
Secondary School of Music Arts and Design in Košice	2007	9,000	42,000	waiting for reimbursement	5
Roma Civil Association Karlovy Vary	2007	18,785	93,926	waiting for reimbursement	5
Ruhama Foundation	2009	35,000	5,000,000	under implementation	143
Resource Center for Roma Communities	2009	35,000	734,160	fully reimbursed	21

Organization	Contract date	REF grant amount (EUR)	Amount mobilized (EUR)	Status	Leveraging ratio
Roma Centre "Amare Rromentza"	2009	35,000	3,252,753	under implementation	93
Romani CRISS	2010	35,000	4,000,000	under implementation	114
Resource Center for Roma Communities	2010	30,000	1,137,400	fully reimbursed	38
Roma Civic Alliance of Romania	2011	20,000	500,000	under implementation	25
Association of Resident Physicians	2012	10,000	715,609	under implementation	72
Center for Education and Social Development – CEDS	2012	30,000	486,027	under implementation	16
Resource Center for Roma Communities	2012	20,399	4,307,136	under implementation	211
Resource Center for Roma Communities	2012	25,221	4,402,750	under implementation	175
Total		657,146	29,298,130		45

* More detailed information is available online: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/list-of-REF-reimbursable-grants.pdf>

PROGRAMMATIC DEVELOPMENTS AND PLANS

Beyond the aforementioned programmatic changes, REF also began preparations for the launch of an online system for grant application in the coming year (2013). This will enable a better use of accumulated project data and will serve as a database for REF grant activities and indicators.

In the future, REF will direct its funding to projects (models) in the following five main categories:

1. **Early childhood development**
2. Prevention of **early school leaving**
3. Completion of upper secondary education with school-based **tutoring and mentoring**
4. Supporting students in **tertiary education** through the Romaversitas model
5. Increasing **adult literacy**

REF will continue to leave a window open to innovative ideas generated by applicants that fall outside these five categories; applicants are still welcome to propose pilot projects on a smaller scale to be considered for REF funding.

Spotlight: Tackling Early School Leaving

Since its establishment in 2005, REF has identified ESL as one of the major obstacles for Romani children's progression in education systems. For example, in Serbia over 66 percent of the general population had completed primary education. By comparison, only 36.1 percent of Serbia's Roma have done so. In Bulgaria, only an estimated 12 percent of the country's Roma between 16 and 19 years of age is enrolled in secondary education.¹¹

The participation rate, attainment, and educational outcomes of Romani children are significantly lower than those of non-Roma in the same countries.¹² In Slovakia, Romani children are 18 times more likely than non-Roma not to finish eighth grade in eight years, and in Hungary, four-fifths take longer than eight years to complete primary education. Of those with less than eight grade levels of education, nearly all are entirely or functionally illiterate.¹³ Roma enrollment rates across Central and South Eastern Europe drop substantially for secondary education: Hungary has a 46 percent enrollment rate for Romani children, with a 12.9 percent completion rate. In Montenegro, 1.5–11.7 percent of Romani children enter secondary school. Montenegro's completion rate of 3.7 percent is second lowest only to the Czech Republic, where Romani children have a completion rate of just 1.2 percent. In addition to problems of access, the quality of Roma education is poor. Despite the efforts to expand and improve education for Romani children, as much as half of all Romani children in Europe fail to complete primary education.¹⁴

According to REF education indicators, the number of REF-funded projects for preventing ESL has been steadily increasing over the last five years. Starting with 270 students supported in 2005, the total number of Romani children benefiting from ESL-focused programs reached 90,756 in 2012.¹⁵ REF's grant portfolio has funded a considerable number of projects and has, based on lessons learned, established the ten most frequent project scopes that effectively prevent early school leaving:

1. Supporting Romani children by special instruments (community facilitators, teacher assistants, free textbooks, free transportation, hot meals, after-school tutoring/mentoring support)
2. Facilitating Roma's registration requirements for residency and school
3. Reaching out to parents (explaining the benefits of education, ensuring parent participation in the education of their children)
4. Facilitating access of Romani children to preschool, primary, and post-primary education, prevention of enrollment in special schools and desegregation
5. Training teachers (multicultural education, child-centered pedagogy)
6. Providing scholarships and mentorship for Romani students attending upper secondary and tertiary education
7. Building and strengthening Roma identity
8. Providing second-chance type education for those who leave school early
9. Influencing the policy development process (awareness raising, networking, lobbying, advocacy, setting pilots, and good practices)
10. Increasing mothers' literacy, facilitating community reading sessions

Only by significantly scaling up these proven activities, will governments reach the European Union's early school leaving benchmarks by 2020 as well as the benchmarks established by the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies to 2020¹⁶ in various member states.

¹¹ Available online: <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/monitoring-education-roma>

¹² Fundamental Rights Agency (2012) *The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States – Survey Results at a Glance*. Available online: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2012/situation-roma-11-eu-member-states-survey-results-glance-o>

¹³ Available online: http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/ROMA_PAPER_FINAL_LAST.pdf

¹⁴ Available online: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001611/161164e.pdf>

¹⁵ Available online: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/ref_annual2011_singlepages.pdf

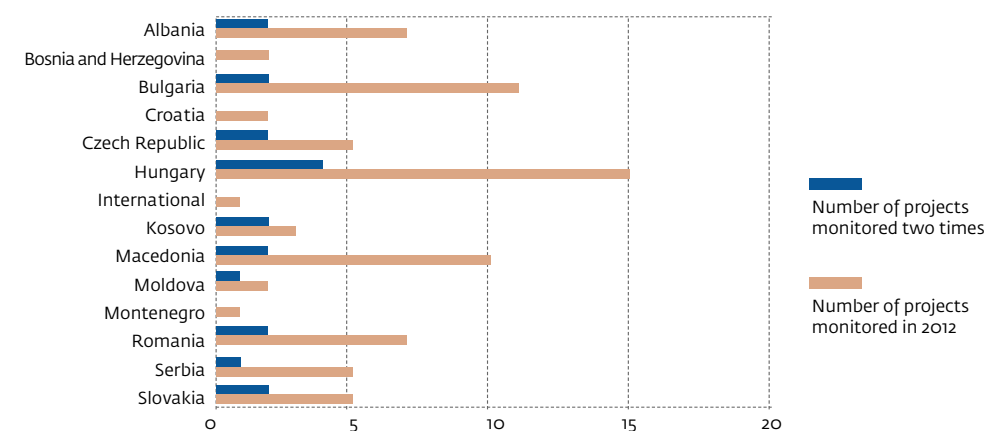
¹⁶ Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in 2012

Incorporated within REF's grant program is a monitoring framework that relies strongly on maintaining an active awareness of project activities. Grantees must submit quarterly reports and on-site monitoring visits are organized for most projects every six months (financial monitoring visits are conducted once per year). REF's policy on the frequency of monitoring visits was revised in 2012 and frequency now depends on project length, the previous rating of the project, and the amount of technical assistance needed by the implementer. Monitoring visits are attended not only by REF officers and Country Facilitators but also by Board members and donors. One of the main purposes of the monitoring visits is to review the status of the project's implementation as well as offer assistance to the implementing organizations as they work through the project cycle. If needed, corrective measures with very precise guidelines are set up during the monitoring missions.

In 2012, REF staff conducted 39 monitoring visits to 76 projects of which 20 projects were visited twice. Of the 76 project monitoring visits, 65 projects were rated satisfactory and 11 unsatisfactory in parts, of which three were deemed to not measure up to REF's indicators at all. For those project rated unsatisfactory, a number of corrective measures were agreed upon with the implementing agency. As is with regular REF practice, detailed timetables for resolving major issues were designed and the implementing agencies were provided with technical assistance to support their compliance. If corrective measures are not taken, the project management committee may decide to suspend project implementation. This action was taken for three projects in 2012, one each in Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. Figure 1 shows the ratio of total projects and projects monitored in 2012 by country. Active projects that received more than one visit were new or projects that required more intensive technical assistance from REF staff.

FIGURE 1. Projects monitored in 2012, by country



In 2012, REF continued its partnership with the World Bank through which program staff worked intensively on improving the Grant Program's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) instruments. To this end:

- an improved monitoring results framework for REF grants is in place and is scheduled to be in use after mid-2013;
- improved online grant/project application and reporting formats are partially launched (full implementation is anticipated by mid-2013); and
- a set of policy indicators measuring REF's progress in achieving its strategic policy objectives and a results framework will be developed, discussed, and adopted in 2013.

In 2012, the Grant Program Manager and the M&E Officer worked directly with REF's Country Facilitators and Country Officers in selected countries to ensure the smooth introduction of the new application and reporting formats.

REF has started building a broad partnership around implementing and rigorously evaluating the impacts of scalable models for Roma inclusion in education in the region. Consequently, the World Bank, academics affiliated with J-PAL, and the Central European University highly value REF's eight years of experience implementing programs for Roma inclusion in education. This partnership will be further developed within three early childhood education and care (ECEC) projects in close cooperation with the governments of Romania and Slovakia. The momentum began in Slovakia, where the Plenipotentiary of Slovak Government for Roma Communities successfully applied together with REF and the Slovak Governance Institute (SGI) for the support of the European Commission's Progress call. Similar cooperation resulted in another proposal together with the Romanian government, likewise to also incorporate M&E more deeply in the education system. REF is seeking additional support to implement these initiatives and to in turn make them part of a programmatic approach to implementing and rigorously evaluating innovative scalable education projects for promoting Roma inclusion.

External Evaluation of REF and REF-funded Projects

Based on requests and a grant from the Swiss Agency for Development, a tender was announced for an External Evaluation this year. REF ultimately selected Project Cycle Support GmbH and AppRaisal Consulting RV Helsinki and a team of five visited a number of REF-funded projects in Albania, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia as well as thoroughly investigated the daily work of the Budapest and Bucharest offices and their management. This work included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with REF coordinators, project implementers, beneficiaries, Roma associations, and other stakeholders. The team also collected data on REF indicators.

A sample of projects in the four countries was selected for participation using the criteria in Table 10. For a more general impression of the evaluation see Administration and Finance, page 113.

TABLE 10. Criteria for selection of REF sample projects

Time	Ongoing projects during the evaluation period of January 1, 2008–June 1, 2012.
Education level	Projects addressing preschool education, primary education, secondary, tertiary, adult education were included in the sample.
Objectives	Projects which have an implicit objective to improve access to education, desegregation, and education quality improvement.
Implementing partner	Projects that were implemented by civil society organization by public institution (government institution, education institution, etc.), international NGO, and joint initiatives.
Grant amount	Projects of different size: less than EUR 50,000; EUR 50,000–100,000; more than EUR 100,000.
Geographical coverage	Urban and rural (underdeveloped) and wider range of municipalities

Twenty-three focus group discussions were held with beneficiaries (children, parents, and students) during the field research. These discussions allowed a broader and more open-ended discussion and insight into: (a) the problems of Roma education and the support provided by REF projects in overcoming them, (b) assessment of the impacts of REF projects at the individual level, and (c) the sustainability of the project outcomes.

All projects, parents and students confirmed that REF has provided a valuable input to their learning and reported several factors, which have contributed to the success of the projects. The reasons for non-achievement were mainly due to external factors like lack of political will and support.

The informants identified the following factors behind the achievements:

- Dedicated and motivated staff,
- Well designed projects that target real needs,
- REF know-how and constant presence in the field during the project implementation, – not only through monitoring visits but on regular weekly or monthly basis and constant consultations,
- Support provided by REF in the designing phase of the project and availability of international best practices,
- Close coordination with other donor or national initiatives in the same field,
- Roma participation in project implementation (Roma NGOs, Roma beneficiaries, Roma local and international experts) which gave the inside perspective to solving the problems and approaching beneficiary communities,

- Selection of projects that were clearly within national priorities and therefore ensured support and 'push' from national and/or local authorities,
- Visible results and benefits for the beneficiaries as well as duty bearers,
- High level of involvement of NGO sector and good cooperation with the public sector in many cases, possibility to compare and have benchmarks in similar projects in other countries.

All the informants confirmed that REF has produced viable results. Most studied projects show improvements in numbers of enrollments. The parents confirmed that without REF support some of their children would not have continued school, and that without afternoon activities the children would spend most of their time on the streets. The evaluators unanimously share the observation that going to school has improved the self-esteem of the children and also promoted their Roma identity.

The full evaluation is available online:

http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/documents/ref_2012__impact_evaluation_report_final_version_o.pdf

In addition to this unique sampling of REF-funded projects, a total of four more routine external project evaluations¹⁷ were conducted in 2012. Table 11 provides a list of these.

TABLE 11. External evaluations of REF-funded projects, 2012

Project code	Project title	Author/s
BU 0135	Supporting the institutionalization of the process of desegregation in Bulgaria	Alexandar Nikolov and Alexei Kalionski
HU 069	Hungarian study centers/extracurricular afternoon schools	Tárki-Tudok, Inc.: Szilvia Németh, Judit Lannert, Edit Sinka
MAC 060/72	A step for better education of Roma pupils in primary education	Srdzan Amet and Jashar Kasami
SLO 045	Roma secondary scholarship program in Slovakia	Institute of Ethnology, SAS, Bratislava

¹⁷ Available online: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications/external-project-evaluation>

Spotlight: Evaluating Slovakia

The pilot project “Roma secondary scholarship program in Slovakia” (SLO 45) aimed through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of the targeted Romani students enrolled in the secondary education on a country level in Slovakia. The project participants were 126 selected Roma students from more than 46 different secondary schools who benefited from scholarships support; mentoring and tutoring for duration of one year.

Based on the findings of the external evaluation the most important factor for the students to join the project was the financial support. The reason for this motivation can be explained by the fact that the project was focused on Roma students from poor families, where financial situation and lack of money is always among the most important priorities. Nevertheless, mentoring and tutoring were also highly appreciated by the students.

The evaluation research also revealed that mentoring is very effective part of the project helping significantly to improve mentored students self-esteem and confidence. The most of the scholarship recipients were naturally motivated to improve their academic results because the Grade Point Average (GPA) is one of more criteria assessed at the application process for universities. According to mentors and teachers involved in the project, absenteeism rate has direct impact on GPA of the students. Intervention of mentoring played an important role in decreasing absenteeism rate, including decreasing of excused absences. Despite the general opinion of high dropout rate and low retention rate of Romani students, the evaluation did not revealed any case of dropout from schools.

The pilot project has been evaluated as satisfactory and a second phase was supported by REF Board under project SLO (51) with increased target group.

The full text of public REF evaluations is available online:

<http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications/external-project-evaluation>

CONNECTING GRANTS AND POLICY

Bosnia and Herzegovina

REF’s work in Bosnia last year concentrated on the Tuzla Canton. Currently, there are some attempts and momentum in local government to improve the living standards of Roma. An allocation of BAM 50,000 (EUR 25,000) has been created in the Tuzla municipality’s budget for 15 housing units for Roma. Another BAM 15,000 has been provided for one-time payments to Romani children in education, as well as BAM 12,000 for health insurance of Romani minors. REF funded a project in which some of the activities should bring some changes regarding the participation of local government in education funding. Advocacy directed at the municipality government aims to change the budget procedures when it comes to Romani children education funding. In partnership with the Pedagogical Institute, REF’s partner Sa E Roma will organize four roundtables with local representatives to raise public awareness on the importance of Romani children’s education and strengthening cooperation with the local community.

Bulgaria

REF’s policy work in Bulgaria has focused on improving local desegregation policies for school enrollment of Romani pupils from Sofia’s Fakulteta neighborhood to mixed mainstream primary schools in the city. In a partnership with the Sofia municipality, REF has co-financed the project which expanded the school network and developed a local municipal program for further desegregation of Romani children from other localities in Sofia. Within the new municipal program for desegregation more than 548 Roma children received assistance with their studies in mainstream schools outside of segregated Romani communities. The commitment of Sofia municipality will continue and more than 120 children enrolled in first grade in integrated settings from September 2012. In addition, REF has also co-funded number of local NGO initiatives to prompt compulsory preschool enrollment in Bulgaria. The interest from the side of Romani parents for preschool enrollment has been significant; the project partners assisted the enrollment process of more than 600 Roma children into preschools from September 2012.

REF’s local partner in Bulgaria, Amalipe, has made a contribution to so called “Programs for NRIS implementation” in Bulgaria. The new programming period (2014–2020) will contain 45 proposals for programs that will be funded by EU funds (Operational Programs on Human Resources Development, Regional Development, Science and Education, Good Governance, and the Program for Rural Areas Development), the state budget, the EEA Financial Mechanism, and the Bulgarian-Swiss program. Via these programs the activities will be implemented under the Action Plan for implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Integration. The approved plan will provide the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the National Strategy that was approved by Bulgaria’s National Assembly; as well it will introduce additional mechanisms for its implementation. For instance, during the new programming period the plan focuses on integrated interventions that include education, employment, healthcare, and improving housing conditions. It requires the municipalities to develop integrated projects to meet their Municipal Plans for Roma Integration, which have to be financed through EU funds and the state budget. A targeted investment to activate local Romani communities will also be provided through the establishment of municipal community centers that will be implemented by NGOs in partnership with the municipalities.

Croatia

“Through preschool to full integration” is a Croatian project that REF has been supporting for the past two school years at seven locations in Međimurje County. The project aims to improve the access of Roma children to quality preschool education and to help the transition of the children into integrated primary education. Therefore the program provides the entire cohort of Roma children aged 5.5–6 with preschool preparatory programs for a duration of nine months. The Ministry of Education is a stakeholder

in this project as well, since it is covering part of the costs (teachers' fees, didactics, and so forth). Based on the project proposal, the ministry's contribution is EUR 223,800 and the county's contribution is EUR 65,750. The project is implemented as redress for the case *Oršuš and Others v. Croatia*, according to which the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg ruled that Croatian schools were guilty of segregation and discrimination. The project also works to raise the awareness of local municipalities in the region about their Romani populations and their responsibility to fulfil children's right to a quality, inclusive education, while also developing national policies in terms of preschool education and inclusion of Roma. Due to this long-term collaboration, last year the Croatian government has already established a separate budget line in the state budget which is governing the parental share of cost of preschool education in mainstream preschool education. In addition, the full integration of Romani children in mainstream kindergartens is continuously promoted at the local level.

Czech Republic

REF has signed a partnership agreement with the Ostrava municipality to jointly implement a comprehensive early childhood development project for Romani children under the support of local NGOs Bili Nosorozec and Beleza. The project brings together various municipal stakeholders under the umbrella of the town of Ostrava. The project is aimed to be implemented over two and a half years.

Kosovo

REF, in partnership with local NGO Shpresa e Jetes and the Directorates of Education in Municipalities of Gjakova and Peja, began activities aimed at increasing ECEC enrollment of 300 RAE (Roma, Egyptian, and Ashkali) children in Kosovo as well as to decrease early school leaving from compulsory education. The municipalities have played an important role and ensure that all activities are in line with local policies.

Macedonia

The Roma Education Fund, in cooperation with the Human Rights Institute in Macedonia, started to work together in 2012 on a project to increase awareness among local stakeholders about the right to education and the prohibition of segregation on the basis of ethnic belonging. A series of roundtable discussions were planned to take place in the Skopje area (Cair, Gazi Baba, Suto Orizari, Gjorce Petrov), Bitola, Kumanovo, Kicevo, Strumica, and/or Stip. with active participation of Romani communities in the selected municipalities.

One concrete output will be an analytical report, its purpose being the production relevant data and conclusions presenting educational segregation; the report will be discussed with local and regional authorities as well as representatives from the Ministry of Education in Macedonia. In late 2012, REF staff discussed the topic with

the Minister of Labor and Social Policy in Macedonia, Mr. Spiro Ristovski, and a follow-up initiative was proposed by REF to mainstream good examples from neighboring countries.

Montenegro

REF implemented a project called "Student volunteerism from desegregation to integration of Romani pupils." which aims to contribute to quality improvement of the educational process in segregated school in Podgorica, and in parallel to encourage the start of the desegregation process. Within this program REF invested in building the professional capacity of teachers and future professionals to work in intercultural school communities. REF facilitated networking, inclusion, and encouraging all partners and institutions to initiate a process that will lead to the final closing of segregated school. REF's efforts in Montenegro were recognized by European funding structures (IPA funds) and they supported REF at the end of 2012 to fully implement the desegregation process in Podgorica through the "Assistance program for integration and return of RAE and other I/DPs residing in the Konik area." The desegregation process will be implemented in partnership with the Montenegrin Ministry of Education.

Romania

REF, in collaboration with local partner APIS Neamt, has helped to implement the governmental policy of School After School programs for reducing dropout rates from compulsory education in Romania. At the local school level the project has organized and provided certified training to teachers on new methodologies for evaluating the progress of Romani children's school performance. The project also advised on the preparation of professional school programs for classrooms that focus on activities aiming to decrease the numbers of dropouts.

Serbia

The Ministry of Education and Science, Serbia (MoES) in partnership with the DILS Project (Delivery of Improved Local Services), REF, SDC and the EU's Delegation to Serbia organized a large conference to discuss "Best practices and partnerships: Key to quality, efficiency and equity in education" on March 2, 2012 in Belgrade. Several of these best practices were integrated as subsequent policies and initiatives that created different proactive measures and programs to address the challenges Roma face. The MoES and international donor organizations are implementing several projects that represent models of successful practices and partnerships for Roma inclusion in education. For example:

- "Education for All (IPA) – Increasing the availability and quality of education for children from marginalised groups" – introduction of pedagogical assistants in the education system as help and support to children, parents, and employees in educational institutions

- “Delivery of Improved Local Services” (REF) – educational inclusion of Roma based on intersectoral collaboration at the level of local communities and on the mentoring support system
- “Second Chance” (IPA) – education of adult Roma in the frame of the reform of Serbia’s adult education system, the introduction of andragogical assistants as a support in the process of becoming qualified
- Scholarship and mentoring program in secondary education in the autonomous region of Vojvodina (REF)
- “Kindergartens without Frontiers” (UNICEF and CIP) – improving learning opportunities for young children from vulnerable social groups
- “Equal opportunities in secondary education” (Fund for an Open Society) – participation of Romani pupils and impact on the quality of education.

Nearly 600 participants came together to share good practices and to listen to the results of the projects financed by international funds that contributed to increased involvement of the Romani population in the education system, to continuity in education, and improving the quality of education for children/pupils from vulnerable groups. Also, the conference debuted Serbia’s Educational Strategy 2020 and was an opportunity to influence the shape and implementation of Serbia’s education system.

The REF Board approved continuing to support the implementation of the governmental policy to increase Romani children’s access to preparatory preschool programs (PPP) in Serbia. In a bid to increase the coordination among strategic partners (governmental organizations, NGOs, and international organizations), the project pulls together those partners trying to put in place the models of education and appropriate institutional frameworks that will effectively and sustainably include marginalized Romani children in the mainstream education system. The joint project is focused on improving the access of Romani children to PPP regarding its impact on their developmental readiness and school retention and on-time enrollment in first grade of primary school. The overall program objective is to contribute to the social inclusion and poverty reduction of Roma in Serbia by reducing the gap in early childhood development outcomes between Roma and non-Roma with special regard to the most disadvantaged.

In the framework of donor harmonization process in Serbia, and in cooperation and partnership with UNICEF, FOS, and the Ministry of Education’s DILS program, REF implemented information campaigns for on-time school enrollment. REF also took an active role in designing on a new amendment and policy paper on antidiscrimination measures in education and new standards and methods to apply affirmative action measures in Serbia. Thanks to REF sharing its know-how through IPAs in 2012 and 2013 and the Social Inclusion in Education Project, financed by the Council of Europe Development Bank, the Ministry

of Education decided to scale up REF regional projects countrywide; REF successfully lobbied for its scholarship/mentoring scheme to be applied across Serbia as a set of measures to prevent ESL and to increase the enrollment of Romani children (designed and implemented within the Roma inclusion components of the DILS program).

Slovakia

REF has funded a policy publication on the effectiveness of “zero grades” with a particular focus on Romani children, prepared by Vladimir Klein, PhD. The study reviews the practice of zero grades in 38 selected elementary schools in Slovakia, and had made number of recommendations for policy makers and school practitioners. The publication is being widely distributed in academic fields and to pedagogic school preparing young professionals in education system.

Available online in Slovak:

http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/nultu_rocnik_a_educacia_romskych_ziakov.pdf

PART II

SCHOLARSHIPS

Be part of the
movement

and let's be the next

Roma generation

together



SCHOLARSHIPS

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL STATISTICS

The main goal of REF's Scholarship Program is to contribute to the emergence of a critical mass of intellectual Roma with higher education degrees who are then prepared to become agents for change in their respective communities and countries. To achieve this goal, the Scholarship Program provides support to Romani students to facilitate their access to higher education inside and outside their countries of residence as well as to assist Romani students advancing through all stages of higher education to successfully graduate. For this, the Scholarship Program offers four academic merit-based scholarship schemes in 12 countries of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (all Decade countries except Spain) as well as in Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The four scholarship schemes are:

- Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP)
- Roma International Scholar Program (RISP)
- Law and Humanities Program (LHP)
- Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)

These scholarship schemes support Romani students pursuing Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate degree programs. In addition, students pursuing vocational level education are eligible for scholarships under the Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP). Scholarships are provided for one academic year and students can renew their application provided they have successfully completed the prior academic year. For the 2012–2013 academic year, REF granted 1,505 scholarships out of 2,591 total submitted applications. Table 11 provides a summary of the number and amount of scholarships awarded between 2008 and 2012 within each scheme.

TABLE 12. REF Scholarship Program since 2008

Scholarship scheme	2008–2009		2009–2010	
	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)
RMUSP	674	585,528	916	854,451
RISP	19	80,757	26	106,347
LHP	84	125,450	109	139,555
RHSP	36	123,747	86	243,290
Total	813	915,482	1,137	1,343,643

Scholarship scheme	2010–2011		2011–2012		2012–2013	
	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)
RMUSP	1,029	1,001,254	1,081	1,116,277	1,076	1,143,409
RISP	20	104,370	36	195,897	42	217,632
LHP	145	169,835	157	276,272	160	303,534
RHSP	249	318,950	223	260,965	227	445,595
Total	1,443	1,594,409	1,497	1,849,411	1,505	2,110,170

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE 2012–2013 ACADEMIC YEAR

Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP)

The thirteenth cycle of the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) was conducted in 2012. RMUSP aims at facilitating the access for Romani students to tertiary education at state-accredited universities in their countries of residence. The RMUSP scheme is implemented in 13 countries within Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe.

For the 2012–2013 academic year, RMUSP granted support to 1,076 students out of the 1,903 submitted applications, representing an acceptance rate of 56.54 percent (compared to 60 percent the previous year). 642 (or 59.67 percent) of the scholarships awarded were requests for renewal while 434 (or 40.33 percent) were new beneficiaries. Among the scholarship recipients, 72 percent are pursuing their Bachelor studies, 25 percent Master, and three percent enrolled in Doctorate programs. The total amount of RMUSP scholarships disbursed in 2012–2013 was EUR 1,143,409. RMUSP scholarship awards are composed

of a base amount of EUR 800 and an additional amount of up to EUR 1,200 to cover tuition fee costs (if required). Thus, the minimum RMUSP scholarship was EUR 800 and the maximum was EUR 2,000, with an average amount in 2012–2013 of EUR 1,062. Continuing the trend observed in the past, the majority of scholarship recipients study in social sciences and humanities.

For each academic year, the total number of RMUSP scholarships allocated to and available in each program country is decided based on the following factors:

- the demand for scholarships as expressed in the past years measured by number of applications;
- the existence of alternative scholarship programs in a given country as well as the existence of student loan schemes; and
- the estimated Romani population size in each country relative to the total Romani population in the 13 RMUSP countries.

827 applications (43.46 percent of total applications) were not supported and rejected, either because they did not meet eligibility criteria or due to the competitive nature of the program. More specific, 145 applicants (18 percent) were rejected in the first phase of the eligibility check and therefore disqualified from the competition at the first stage of evaluation; 437 applicants (53 percent) were rejected because of the competition; 204 applicants (25 percent) were rejected because of not submitting documentation proving enrollment in university; and 41 applicants (5 percent) were rejected in the last phase of selection because the submitted enrollment documentation proved non-eligibility to the Program.

Similar to the previous academic year, in 2012–2013 the countries with the highest demand for scholarships were Bulgaria and Romania. Together, these two countries received nearly half of the total number of RMUSP grants. Table 12 summarizes the number of applications and awards by country, including the ratio out of the total number of applicants. Table 13 provides data on the number of awards by country for the last eight academic years and reveals that in most countries the number of awards increased annually. Table 14 provides the distribution of scholarships in 2012–2013 by academic level in each country.

TABLE 13. Submitted applications versus granted scholarships in RMUSP, academic year 2012–2013

	Number of submitted applications	Scholarships granted	
		Number	Percentage of the total number of applicants
Romania	536	322	60%
Bulgaria	403	204	50%
Hungary	243	170	70%
Macedonia	165	80	48%
Serbia	257	90	35%
Slovakia	79	69	87%
Turkey	48	30	63%
Czech Republic	60	43	72%
Kosovo	41	23	56%
Albania	62	37	60%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7	6	86%
Montenegro ¹⁸	0	0	n/a
Croatia	2	2	100%
Total	1,903	1,076	56%

TABLE 14. RMUSP awards by country, 2005–2012

	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	Total
Romania	228	243	160	125	221	268	320	322	1,887
Bulgaria	151	140	172	178	203	254	219	204	1,521
Hungary	90	96	114	107	147	140	166	170	1,030
Macedonia	55	70	113	111	123	106	106	80	764
Serbia	51	48	55	65	76	71	97	90	553

¹⁸ In Montenegro the government offers scholarships for Romani students; therefore even if it is a Decade country we do not have applicants.

	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	Total
Slovakia	36	25	26	28	35	30	45	69	294
Turkey	n/a	4	6	44	67	80	36	30	267
Czech Republic	16	15	12	3	13	35	30	43	167
Kosovo	0	0	12	2	17	21	17	23	92
Albania	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	11	17	36	37	105
Bosnia and Herzegovina	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	4	7	6	6	27
Croatia	0	2	2	2	1	0	3	2	12
Montenegro	See Serbia	0	6	1	1	0	0	0	8
Total	627	643	678	674	919	1,029	1,081	1,076	6,727

TABLE 15. RMUSP awards by country and academic level, academic year 2012–2013

	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	Total
Romania	215 (67%)	101 (31%)	6 (2%)	322
Bulgaria	156 (76%)	45 (22%)	3 (2%)	204
Hungary	106 (62%)	49 (29%)	15 (9%)	170
Macedonia	61 (76%)	19 (24%)	0	80
Serbia	83 (92%)	7 (8%)	0	90
Slovakia	54 (78%)	13 (19%)	2 (3%)	69
Turkey	26 (87%)	4 (14%)	0	30
Czech Republic	28 (65%)	12 (28%)	3 (7%)	43
Kosovo	14 (61%)	9 (39%)	0	23
Albania	25 (68%)	11 (30%)	1 (2%)	37
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6	0	0	6
Croatia	1	1	0	2
Montenegro	0	0	0	0
Total	775 (72%)	271 (25%)	30 (3%)	1,076



Spotlight: Alexandru Zamfir, Romania

My name is Alexandru Zamfir. I'm currently studying as a first year PhD student in Philology at "Ovidius" University in Constanta. I'm from a Romani family from Romania. After I finished nine years of school, I wanted to continue my high school education. I took the national exam but unfortunately I was assigned a vocational school. I was to be taught to be a professional auto mechanic. But something was troubling me, advising me to surpass that condition, a condition that I neither despised nor disdained. In fact, any profession is honorable. My parents, especially my father, practiced a profession; he was a stonemason. He was renowned for his skill and craftsmanship. But I felt something else was waiting for me. The following year I again attempted to obtain a high school placement and I succeeded in enrolling in a high school evening class. It was probably the first time I really felt a sense of satisfaction about my education. The years that followed brought significant development from an intellectual and personal point of view. The hunger to know myself and the world around me increased and I felt there was no other option than enrolling in university. The second major satisfaction followed: passing the Matura exam and being admitted to university.

I felt the need to study something that would bring me closer to the answers to the questions within myself, something that would help me to discover the world and then to return into the world and tell others all I had learnt. So I decided to become a professor and I enrolled in Philology. The support I received from the university professors has motivated me since then. I keep close to my heart the advice of one professor: "Do not lose the rhythm!" Next to all the things I learnt in faculty I found out another important thing: I am not alone! I found other Roma youth who wanted to learn and wished to reach high levels of performance. This chapter of my life is called RMUSP, a scholarship program for Roma students run by the Roma Education Fund. The support offered by this program weighed in not only from a financial point of view but morally as well. I am now enrolled in a PhD program and my topic is *The Anthroponymy of Roma People from Romania*.

The major accomplishments from my personal, academic, and professional field are many: I am personally fulfilled, and with what I have discovered up to now regarding what I am and what I intend to become. I was and am appreciated by professors and by those involved in the movement of developing Roma culture and language. If I were to dedicate all these accomplishments to someone, then that would be to my father who taught me what it means to be accomplished.



Spotlight: Erika Rozália Kovács, Hungary

As a child I lived in a small village, called Egerlövő, which is located in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. My mother is a Roma, Romungro, and my father is non-Roma, therefore I'm a half-Roma girl. My brother was born with Type-A Hemophilia, so much of my childhood was spent visiting him in hospital. My love of learning appeared before elementary school thanks to my grandmother, who was able to teach me how to read and write. She attended only six grades out of eight. She felt that education was really important for her grandchildren, so that later we would live in better conditions than her. For me this was the biggest motivation.

During my college studies I applied to Romaversitas because I wanted to know more about my origins. I had two opportunities to take part in a camp aimed at directly helping other Roma communities. Also during this period I took part in a workshop in Poland organized by TernYpe Roma Youth Network where I met other young Romani people and I learnt a lot from their experiences. I often take part in volunteer work to get a better understanding of other Romani communities, where I can be a positive example to children.

At age 14 I moved away from home to attend Szilágyi Erzsébet High School where I was in a special class called the *Arany János Tehetség-gondozó* Program. Due to my brother's illness, I decided very early on that I want to deal with this disease to find a cure. Therefore, in high school I learnt biology and chemistry and I continued in biology at the advanced level. During my college years I worked during

summer vacations and sometimes after school, too. It was exhausting to get top grades in every field, but my motivation is so strong because I will be the first person in our family to obtain a degree and I may be able to help my brother.

In 2011, through Romaversitas, I was able to study in Denmark at the Krogerup Folk High School. During the 2010–2011 academic year, I won the Distinguished Scholarship of the Hungarian Republic. And I am proud that in 2012 I was awarded with my Bachelor degree in Biology. RMUSP has contributed greatly to my studies, enabling me to get all the tools I needed, and allowing me to study while not having to work.

In February, I will start at the Clinical Research Center of Debrecen and my work will be on the topic of molecular genetics and proteomics of rare bleeding disorders. My brother's disease is not a rare coagulation disorder, but this area could lead to many new discoveries that I might link to my brother's illness. In the near future I am planning to take part in professional conferences and right after my Master's I would like to continue as a PhD. My final goal is to work in a research center where I will use all my time to find a cure to my brother's disease, and hopefully I might contribute to discover a more effective treatment of this genetic disorder. I think I am on the right path.

Roma International Scholar Program (RISP)

RISP supports students from all 16 countries eligible for REF Scholarships¹⁹ who study internationally in tertiary-level academic programs. The aim of RISP is to support the academic mobility of Romani students by providing partial financial support for full-time Bachelor, Master, Doctorate, or post-doctoral studies outside of the recipient's home country or country of residence. International study offers exceptional Romani students educational opportunities not available in their countries of origin. Because international study is more expensive, the size of RISP awards is higher than those in other REF scholarship programs.

A total of 42 students received RISP scholarships out of 68 applications in 2012. Among the 26 rejected applicants, nine did not manage to enroll in the academic programs for which they applied, 10 were rejected on eligibility grounds, and seven were rejected because of the competition. Sixteen are pursuing Bachelor studies, 21 Master, and five are pursuing Doctorate studies. Among the 42 RISP beneficiaries, 23 students received RISP support in the previous academic year, while 19 students applied for RISP support for the first time. 17 of the 42 RISP beneficiaries have received RMUSP scholarships in the past. RISP grants for 2012–2013 totaled EUR 217,632 with scholarships awarded in amounts between EUR 1,000 and EUR 9,050 and with the average amount being EUR 5,180. Tables 15 and 16 and Figure 2 provide detailed statistics on RISP beneficiaries in 2012–2013.

¹⁹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

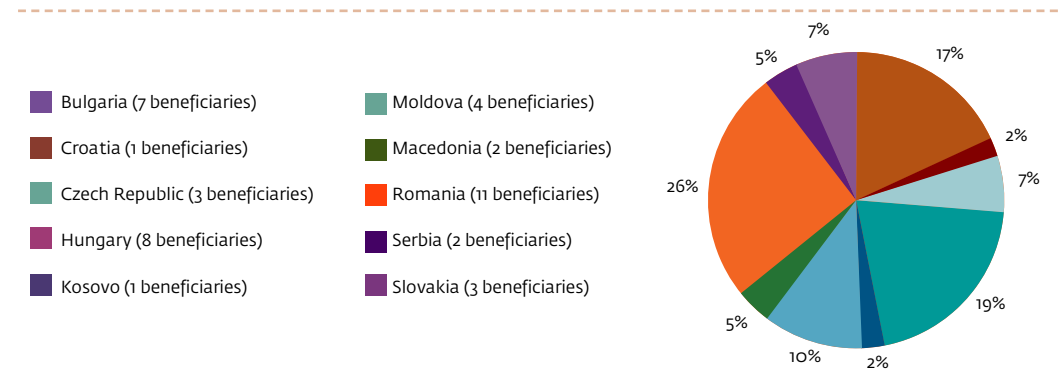
TABLE 16. RISP awards in five academic years, 2008–2012

	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
Number of applicants	26	36	36	59	68
Number of grantees	19	26	20	36	42

TABLE 17. RISP awards by academic level, 2012–2013

	Number	Percent
Bachelor	16	38%
Master	21	50%
Doctorate	5	12%
Total	42	100%

FIGURE 2. RISP Beneficiaries by Country of Origin



Law and Humanities Program (LHP)

For the 2012–2013 academic year, the ninth cycle of LHP, there were 196 potential beneficiaries who submitted applications. Of the total applications received, 160 (82 percent) were awarded scholarships, with 45 beneficiaries in Moldova, 35 in Russia, and 80 in Ukraine. Among the 160 beneficiaries, 107 (67 percent) will study at Bachelor degree level, 44 (27 percent) at Master level, and nine (6 percent) at Doctoral level. Compared to the previous academic year, the ratio of Master and Doctoral students increased. Among all the accepted applicants, 122 (or 76 percent) were in the program before while 38 (or 24 percent)

joined the program for the first time. Similarly, with RMUSP, the majority of the beneficiaries study in the humanities and social sciences.

Out of the 36 rejected applicants, 16 (44 percent) were rejected in the first phase of eligibility check and therefore disqualified from the competition at the first stage of evaluation; three (8 percent) were rejected because of the poor quality of applications; and 17 (48 percent) were rejected in the last phase of applications' evaluation either because of not submitting the documentation proving enrollment in university, or because the submitted enrollment documentation proved non-eligibility to the Program.

The scholarships awarded through LHP for the 2012–2013 academic year totaled EUR 303,534, of which EUR 208,000 was funded by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (*Die Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft*, EVZ). An LHP scholarship consists of the base amount of EUR 1,300 and an amount for tuition fee coverage up to 1,000 EUR. Hence, the minimum LHP scholarship was 1,300 EUR and the maximum was EUR 2,300. On average, in the 2012–2013 academic year, LHP beneficiaries received EUR 1,897 as amount of scholarship. Tables 17–19 present detailed statistics for LHP scholarships.

TABLE 18. Submitted applications versus granted scholarships under LHP, academic year 2012–2013

	Number of submitted applications	Number of granted scholarships	Ratio out of the granted scholarships, out of total number of applications
Moldova	55	45	82%
Russia	45	35	78%
Ukraine	95	80	84%
Total	196	160	82%

TABLE 19. LHP in three program countries, academic years 2008–2011

Beneficiaries in	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
Moldova	35	35	39	33	45
Russia	21	28	30	33	35
Ukraine	32	46	76	91	80
Total	88	109	145	157	160

TABLE 20. LHP awards by academic level, academic year 2012–2013

Academic level				Total
	Bachelor	Master	Doctorate	
Moldova	29 (65%)	10 (22%)	6 (13%)	45
Russia	21 (60%)	13 (37%)	1 (3%)	35
Ukraine	57 (71%)	21 (26%)	2 (3%)	80
Total	107 (67%)	44 (27%)	9 (6%)	160

In the last three years, LHP has incorporated a range of additional components meant to encourage students' participation in extra-curricular activities. More details and figures on these components are presented in the section "Additional Support Components."

Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)

The main goal of RHSP is to provide support to Romani students for medical studies, support that also includes mentorship, tutorship, and advocacy training. RHSP has been designed and implemented in cooperation with Open Society Foundations' Roma Health Project.

RHSP provides scholarships for Romani students pursuing degrees as medical nurses or medical doctors at state-accredited medical and medical-vocational schools in the countries of their residence. In 2012, the program operated in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia. The program received 424 applications in 2012, and accepted 77 applicants in Bulgaria, 72 in Macedonia, and 78 in Serbia. As illustrated in Table 20, the overall acceptance rate in all three countries for the 2012–2013 academic year was 54 percent.

Out of the 197 rejected applicants, 43 (22 percent) were rejected at the first phase of selection because of non-compliance with eligibility criteria; 125 (63 percent) were rejected because of the competition; and 29 (15 percent) were rejected in the last phase of applications' evaluation either because of not submitting the documentation proving enrollment in university, or because the submitted enrollment documentation proved non-eligibility to the Program.

TABLE 21. Submitted applications versus granted scholarships in RHSP, academic year 2012–2013

	Number of submitted applications	Number of granted scholarships	Ratio out of the granted scholarships, out of total number of applications
Bulgaria	106	77	73%
Macedonia	144	72	50%
Serbia	174	78	44%
Total	424	227	54%

Overall, these 424 RHSP scholarships totaled EUR 455,595. The scholarship amount per student depended on the country, their academic year, and on the degree pursued (medical assistant or doctor). The minimum amount of RHSP scholarship was EUR 335 and the maximum was EUR 3,335.

In 2012–2013, RHSP was implemented for the third academic year in Serbia and Macedonia and for the fourth in Bulgaria. Overall, of the 227 applicants accepted for scholarship, 61 (27 percent) were first-time beneficiaries and 166 (73 percent) were renewal beneficiaries. Due to RHSP budget limitations, only renewal applicants were accepted in Bulgaria.

Table 21 provides the percentages of RHSP beneficiaries enrolled in vocational education and in tertiary education programs for the last three academic years by country. Vocational education prepares future medical assistants, laboratory assistants, and nurses, while tertiary education prepares future doctors. The figures reveal that the majority of beneficiaries in RHSP pursue vocational studies; however, the ratio of tertiary-level students has increased with every academic cycle. Because the main goal of the RHSP project is to facilitate the professional formation of Roma doctors, REF interprets the increase of scholarships for doctors-to-be (as compared to the scholarships for nurses-to-be) as a positive development. This increase in the ratio of doctors-to-be over time can be explained by several factors: first, the knowledge about the Program and its benefits reaches out to more and more potential tertiary-level applicants every year; second, part of the beneficiaries who graduate vocational-level studies at the end of each academic year apply for and continue with tertiary education; third, the RHSP Preparatory Courses component (see below) prepares more and more students for successfully enrolling in tertiary-level medical education. In addition, in the selection process the Program gives priority to tertiary-level applicants.

TABLE 22. Vocational education versus tertiary education (percent) in RHSP, academic years 2009–2013

	2009–2010		2010–2011		2011–2012		2012–2013	
	Vocational	Tertiary	Voc.	Tert.	Voc.	Tert.	Voc.	Tert.
Bulgaria ²⁰	71%	29%	63%	37%	52%	48%	49%	51%
Macedonia	n/a	n/a	61%	39%	48%	52%	43%	47%
Serbia	n/a	n/a	74%	26%	68%	32%	56%	44%
Total	n/a	n/a	65%	35%	55%	45%	53%	47%

In 2012, REF’s Scholarship Program also supported and oversaw the organization and implementation of preparatory courses for prospective medical students in the three program countries. These preparatory courses were carried out under the overall RHSP program through contracted entities in each country. RHSP’s ongoing beneficiaries could also apply for additional funds available to support their participation in extra-curricular activities. More details and figures on these components are presented in the section “Additional Support Components.”

Spotlight: Miroslav Angelov, Bulgaria

My name is Miroslav Angelov and I’m currently studying as a second-year student in Medicine at the Medical University of Sofia. I grew up in Sofia’s Romani neighborhood “Hristo Botev” where I’ve lived for 27 years. This is the place where my childhood passed, where my parents raised and educated me. Thanks to my parents, I have realized that education is very important and is the right road for achieving my goals. When I was eight, I realized that I wanted to become a physician. Neither of my parents were physicians, nor were any of my relatives. I was feeling that this is my vocation, this is my world! The fact that I’m Roma does not make me special, because one can achieve a lot if s/he puts forth enough effort.

When I was 11, my father passed away suddenly at a time he was most needed in the family. Until I was 16 years old I was studying in the local school, which was known as a Roma school, because almost all of us were Roma. My teachers were very good, I never felt discriminated against. Today, I still maintain contact with some of them and they tell me that they are very proud. When I was 16, I moved to a high school where I finished my secondary education. These years were among the most dynamic for me. I was preparing to enter in the medical university and was striving to acquire and develop skills necessary to become doctor. After finishing twelfth grade my mother passed away. This was a big shock and a very big challenge – I was one step from giving up on all my dreams, but with the psychological support of my relatives I managed to find the strength to go on. I enrolled in a medical college and I graduated as a medical lab worker. But my dream was still unfulfilled. I started to attend the preparatory courses organized by RHSP. After I applied I was accepted at three Bulgarian medical universities. I enrolled in the medical university in Sofia with the support of the RHSP scholarship.

Everything that I have achieved so far makes me very proud because I invested in a lot of hard work and endured many hardships. It is a great honor to be a part of RHSP because the program provides the necessary funds, tools, and mentors who help students adapt to a new academic environment. It is well known that medical students cannot afford to work part-time to support themselves and here the Roma Education Fund is very helpful. Being a REF beneficiary makes me feel more motivated and responsible in giving my best efforts to become a good physician. My plans are to graduate with a specialization in cardiology, to work in Bulgaria, and to be close to my family, friends, and the Romani community. I hope to be part of a generation that, with its knowledge and efforts, will work for the moral and sustainable development of a better world.

²⁰ In Bulgaria, all RHSP students are enrolled in tertiary-level programs, including those who study in specializations typically taught in vocational-level studies such as medical assistants, technicians, and so on. However, the program treats them as a separate group.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT COMPONENTS

In addition to the regular scholarships, beneficiaries have the opportunity to apply for additional funds to support their participation in extra-curricular activities. These additional support components help Romani students enhance their professional development, acquire new skills and abilities, and expand their professional networks.

Complementary to regular academic scholarships, selected beneficiaries have access to additional support for participating in extracurricular activities. In 2012, RHSP offered additional funds to its ongoing scholarship beneficiaries for participation in academic conferences and for attending foreign language courses; LHP offered separate funds for supporting beneficiaries’ participation in international internship programs, foreign language courses, and in the implementation of small-scale community projects. In addition, RMUSP and LHP beneficiaries could apply for Professional Development Fund grants (PDF) aimed at encouraging students’ participation in various extracurricular events inside or outside their country of residence.

Table 22 presents numbers and amounts for this additional support through these programs for the last five academic years.

TABLE 23. REF Scholarship Programs’ additional support since 2008²¹

Additional support	2008–2009		2009–2010	
	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)
RMUSP Professional Development Fund	2	2,930	2	2,425
RHSP Language courses support	10	2,960	11	2,424
Conference participation grants	3	700	3	1,835
LHP Professional Development Fund	2	3,250	2	2,920
Language courses support	17	7,303	19	6,693
International internships	3	1,649	3	3,158
Small-scale projects	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	37	18,792	40	19,455

²¹ Note: the selection of beneficiaries for the additional support components in 2012/2013 academic year is still ongoing, thus the figures provided are accurate as of the date of publication but are subject to change.

Additional support	2010–2011		2011–2012	
	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)	Grants awarded	Funding granted (EUR)
RMUSP Professional Development Fund	2	2,430	35	13,293
RHSP Language courses support	45	7,537	59	13,691
Conference participation grants	8	3,722	3	435
LHP Professional Development Fund	2	1,300	5	3,450
Language courses support	33	12,766	30	8,438
International internships	3	3,537	5	4,650
Small-scale projects	n/a	n/a	4	9,515
Total	93	31,292	141	53,472

The availability of additional support for financing extra-curricular activities generally depends on the design and resources of each scholarship scheme. RMUSP and LHP beneficiaries may apply for a Professional Development Fund grant, which supports participation in research projects, fellowship programs, summer schools, internships, or professional development activities within recognized universities, language schools, and other organizations and institutions. RHSP beneficiaries may apply for support to participate in international and national academic conferences on medical subjects and to attend foreign language courses in an accredited language school in their country. Finally, LHP beneficiaries may apply for support to attend foreign-language courses, to participate in international internships, and to implement small-scale community projects in their own countries. Tables 23–25 provide country and program level data on extra-curricular activities financed by REF's Scholarship Program during the 2012 calendar year.

TABLE 24. Professional Development Fund grants, 2012

		Total grants	Total amount (EUR)
RMUSP	Albania	4	542
	Bulgaria	10	2,970
	Hungary	10	4,738
	Macedonia	5	3,169
	Romania	5	1,609
	Serbia	1	265
	Total in RMUSP	35	13,293

		Total grants	Total amount (EUR)
LHP	Moldova	3	2,250
	Russia	1	800
	Ukraine	1	400
	Total in LHP	5	3,450
Total additional support		16,743	

TABLE 25. Additional support in RHSP, 2012

	Language courses		Conference participation	
	Grants	Amount (EUR)	Grants	Amount (EUR)
Bulgaria	22	6,638	0	0
Macedonia	28	4,790	3	435
Serbia	9	2,263	0	0
Total per category	59	13,691	3	435
Total additional support	14,126			

TABLE 26. Additional support in LHP, 2012

Country	Language courses		International internships		Small-scale projects	
	Grants	Amount (EUR)	Grants	Amount (EUR)	Grants	Amount (EUR)
Moldova	13	1,913	3	2,750	0	0
Russia	6	1,428	0	0	2	5,000
Ukraine	11	5,097	2	1,900	2	4,515
Total per category	30	8,438	5	4,650	4	9,515
Total additional support	22,603					

NEW ACTIVITIES

Following the positive previous experience of conducting personal interviews with scholarship applicants as part of the selection process for LHP and in three RMUSP countries, in the summer of 2012 the Scholarship Program expanded the personal interview component of the evaluation process to the entire RMUSP and RHSP programs. Freshmen-to-be and first-time applicants at each academic degree level were invited to have a short discussion with National Selection Board members. This not only contributed to the improvement of the evaluation process of scholarship applications, but also allowed the National Selection Board members and the Scholarship Program staff to meet the applicants in person and learn firsthand about their professional aspirations and personal challenges. Furthermore, this offered an excellent experience for the scholars themselves, providing motivation and opportunities to meet REF contacts in person and ask academic questions.

In 2012, the Scholarship Program also took additional steps toward creating a network of REF scholarship beneficiaries and alumni by launching several e-mail groups for information sharing and discussion. In 2013, e-mail Yahoo groups will be created for LHP students as well as for RMUSP students in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Also in 2013, the Scholarship Program will continue launching in-country e-groups to cover all program countries and will explore whether there is a need for a regional e-group. The Scholarship Program will regularly provide relevant information through the e-groups and will stimulate communication and discussions among group members on various thematic issues.

In 2011, the first Scholarships Gala event was held in Hungary and in 2012 REF organized Gala events in four RMUSP countries, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. All applicants selected for a scholarship were invited to be publicly congratulated for their scholarship awards. The Galas were also attended and reported on by in-country mass media.

Spotlight: Socio-economic Background of REF Scholarship Program Beneficiaries

In 2012 the Scholarship Program continued to collect data on applicants' socio-economic background in a more systematic way via the consolidation of the online application and evaluation system. The collected data are valuable both for understanding student needs and challenges and for making informed decisions regarding program design and policy developments. The findings of this information collection and analysis process is envisaged to help REF better tailor the Scholarship Program in order to respond in a more efficient way to the actual needs of Romani students. Some of the collected data are presented below in aggregated form.

It is important to emphasize the similarities rather than differences between the Romani and non-Romani student populations that the resulting data uncovered. The median age of REF scholarship beneficiaries in the 2012–2013 academic year was 21 years, which is in line with the median age of the mainstream student population. Overall, 82 percent of beneficiaries were between 18 and 27 years old by the time they applied for REF scholarships, which constitutes the usual age range for tertiary education (that is, starting a Bachelor degree at 18 or 19 and continuing with three years of Bachelor, two years of Master, and three years of Doctoral studies). The youngest beneficiaries were found to be in the RHSP program, where the median age is 19 years old, as RHSP also accepts applicants at the vocational level. The oldest beneficiaries were in RISP (with a median age of 25) as RISP is an international student mobility scheme mostly attractive to students who already have a degree in their home country.

All four scholarship schemes had more female than male beneficiaries in the 2012–2013 academic year. In RMUSP the ratio was 61 percent female to 39 percent male; in RISP and LHP these ratio was 54 percent to 46 percent, and 68 percent to 32 percent in RHSP. The particularly high predominance of females among RHSP beneficiaries can be explained by the fact that RHSP also supports vocational medical studies that are generally more attractive to female candidates. At the country level, in Kosovo and Turkey the ratio of males was higher than the ratio of females, with 41 percent and 45 percent female, respectively. The highest ratio of female beneficiaries was in Albania (with 75 percent).

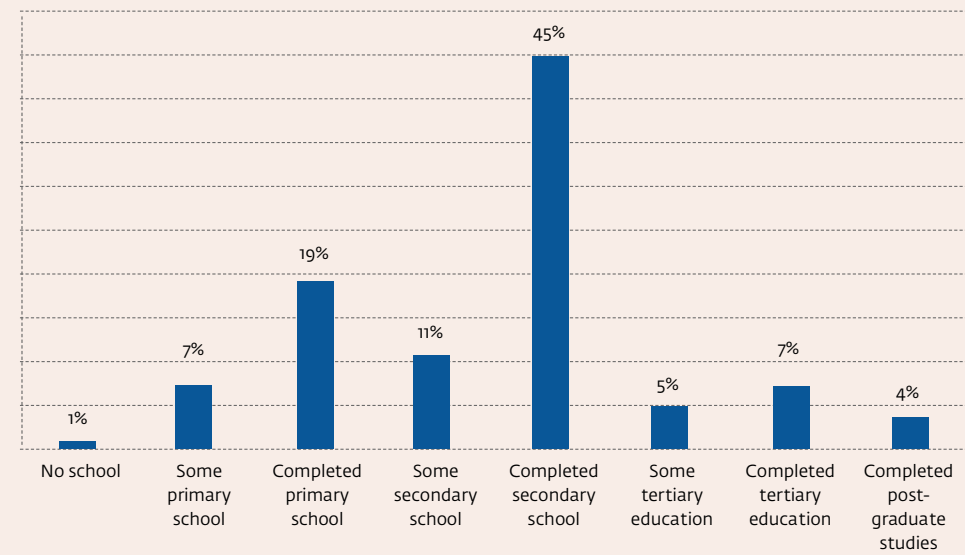
Among all scholarship beneficiaries, 70 percent came from urban areas and 30 percent from rural areas; however, the rural/urban distribution varies significantly from program to program and from country to country. LHP had the highest ratio of beneficiaries coming from rural areas (50 percent), followed by RISP (24 percent), RMUSP (31 percent), and RHSP (15 percent). The highest ratio of beneficiaries coming from rural areas was in Ukraine (39 percent) and the smallest in Macedonia/RHSP (six percent). Among all scholarship beneficiaries coming from urban areas, 75 percent indicated that their household is located within the urban locality, 22 percent indicated that it is located in the locality outskirts, while three percent indicated that their household was located at some distance from the locality. The highest ratio of beneficiaries coming from urban areas whose households are located in the outskirts or situated at a certain distance from the respective locality is in RHSP (35 percent), followed by LHP (29 percent), RISP (24 percent), and RMUSP (22 percent).

Overall, 81 percent of beneficiaries were raised by both their parents. Twelve percent were raised by only one parent and seven percent were not raised by their parents. LHP has the highest ratio of beneficiaries who indicated having been raised by only one parent (18 percent) or not having been raised by their parents (nine percent). Furthermore, 56 percent of scholarship beneficiaries come from families with one or two children, 24 percent come from families with three children, while 20 percent were from families with four or more children.

Most beneficiaries (87 percent) were single at the time of submitting the application for a scholarship and only some were married (11 percent), divorced, separated, or widowed (one percent each). Regardless of marital status, 89 percent of beneficiaries have no children, six percent (88 students) have one child, and five percent (69 students) have two children or more. Three percent of all beneficiaries declared they have children and at the same time are single, separated, divorced, or widowed. The majority of beneficiaries in the category of non-married parents are female (63 percent or 27 students).

Similar to the previous year, the Scholarship Program collected information on the level of education of applicants' parents. Figure 3 presents data on scholarship beneficiaries' parental level of education, for which the highest level of education between mother and father was considered. As illustrated in the figure, an absolute majority of parents reported secondary education or below as the highest level of educational attainment, while 11 percent have completed tertiary education.

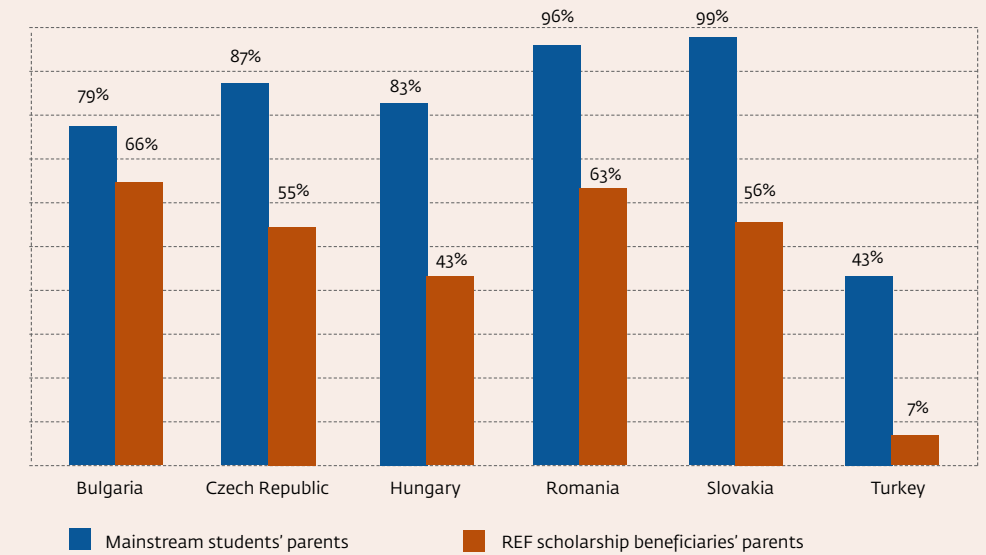
FIGURE 3. Scholarship beneficiaries' parental level of education, academic year 2012–2013



Similar data exists for the mainstream body of tertiary-level students in six of the Program countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey.²² This makes it possible to compare REF scholarship beneficiaries' parental level of education with that of mainstream students. Based on these data, Figure 4 illustrates the differences between the ratio of REF scholarship beneficiaries who have at least one parent with completed secondary education, and the ratio of mainstream students who have at least one parent with completed secondary education, in each of these countries. The comparison reveals that REF scholarship beneficiaries' parental level of education is lower than that of mainstream students in all of the countries for which data on mainstream students is available.

²² Data sources: for Bulgaria – Adult Education and Training Survey, National Statistical Institute of Republic of Bulgaria 2009 (data collected in 2007); for Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Turkey – Education at a Glance, Highlights: Does Parental Education Affect Students' Chances?, OECD 2012 (data collected in 2009); for Romania – EUROSTUDENT IV (2008–2011).

FIGURE 4. Ratio of parents with at least secondary education completed: REF beneficiaries and mainstream tertiary-level students compared



Furthermore, the ratio of REF scholarship beneficiaries' mothers who completed higher education is similar to that of fathers. However, the ratio of parents that have completed primary school as the highest education degree obtained is higher among mothers than among fathers (35 percent versus 26 percent).

PART III

A GOOD START



A GOOD START

A Good Start: Scaling-Up Access to Quality Services for Young Roma Children (AGS) proposes that it is possible to provide quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) activities to disadvantaged communities through well-designed community-, center-, home-, and school-based services. AGS was designed to adapt to the specific needs of each community and to the particular barriers to ECEC activities each community faces. The project was implemented by REF in cooperation with three international partners, the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), the Fundacion Secretariado Gitano, and the Slovak Governance Institute (SGI) as well as 12 local partners in 16 localities in four countries – FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia.

AGS has demonstrated that current limited access to ECEC services for young Romani children can be effectively targeted. However, the project has also demonstrated that the sustainability of services can only be ensured if the structural and systematic problems of mainstream public services are also addressed and if additional services such as fieldwork with families is more efficiently implemented by the civil sector.

AGS Phase I started in June 2010 and ended in the middle of 2012 with the objective of starting long-term support for Romani children across a range of their developmental needs, a key element to breaking the cycle of poverty. The project was financed by the European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy (EUR 2,046,104). To supplement this grant budget, REF involved a number of other donors who financed complementary activities to the AGS project, totaling EUR 437,712 as follows: Bernard van Leer Foundation (EUR 260,918), LEGO Foundation (EUR 107,660), and the Network of European Foundations (EUR 69,134).

The project targeted nearly 4,000 disadvantaged Romani and non-Romani children from birth to six/ seven-years-old and their parents or caregivers by offering a variety of services. Out of this number nearly 1,772 children were recurrent beneficiaries who have taken part in repeated AGS activities or who have taken part in several separate AGS activities. The wide range of activities was tailored to the local situation and needs of each participating Romani community. Project activities were designed on the basis of baseline surveys carried out by REF, conducted to get an overall picture of the coverage and the quality of ECEC services and schooling in each target locality. The core components of AGS were: improving access to institutionalized ECEC programs, ensuring the quality of services, and strengthening the parental skills and practices of Romani parents.

AGS activities targeted children, parents, local preschools, local government bodies, Roma communities in general, and – to a lesser extent – national governments. The different types of activities facilitated through AGS included community motivation events on education and health issues for parents, parenting education, home visits, and assistance to families in enrolling their children in preschools. Also included were various forms of support for the preschool attendance of children: material support such as clothes, shoes, school supplies, and hygiene packages; the facilitation of transport to and from preschool; accompaniment of children to and from schools; and tutoring for pupils attending the first grade of primary schools. As such, AGS activities were targeted at a wide range of actors, with local partner NGOs having considerable flexibility in their local approach. As the most important result after the project, positive tendencies in the enrollment of children and regular attendance of preschools were indicated in the results of a subsequent Household Survey: non-enrollment rates (the share of children staying at home) were shown to be decreasing continuously with the rising age of children in all countries, with different breakpoints where enrollment rates increased substantially.

AGS STATISTICS

Table 26 provides data on the total number of AGS beneficiaries including children who received AGS services (enrollment support, transportation, accompaniment, material support, assistance to receive birth certificate or vaccination, and so forth), parents involved, and others involved including teacher trainees.

TABLE 27. Total AGS beneficiaries, 2010–2012

	Children	Parents	Others (university students, ECEC staff, paraprofessionals)
FYR Macedonia	2,461	3,445	24
Hungary	853	1,194	130
Romania	254	356	58
Slovakia	350	490	39
Totals	3,918	5,485	251
Grand total	9,654		

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

AGS has achieved better levels of enrollment and attendance compared to baseline data as well as detected shifting attitudes among the main stakeholders involved in early childhood education and care, mainly parents and preschool practitioners. However, AGS activities were different country by country and the implemented activities were interdependent in every case.

For example, consider the interplay of the empowering agenda of the story reading sessions for mothers, the parents' experience with the participation at kindergarten classes during Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) sessions, and the outreach work of the Roma community mediators, who by conducting home visits, helped to build relationships among Roma and non-Roma. As a result, better relations emerged and fewer conflicts were reported than prior to the AGS project. Another important feature of AGS is that it enabled space for systematic knowledge sharing, conflict management, and capacity building under the guidance of professional facilitators/trainers, who worked with almost all project beneficiaries.

The following statistics illustrate that AGS made a considerable impact on project beneficiaries in regard to access and attendance as well as parenting practices:

- Non-enrollment decreased from 89 percent to 83 percent in the 0–3 age group and from 33 percent to 25 percent for ages 3–6.
- The average kindergarten attendance improved from 4 to 4.2 days/week, or in terms of non-attendance rate from 19.6 to 15.8 percent of absent days (as reported by parents for the whole AGS project).
- The share of parents seeing preschool education as very important rose to above 85 percent from 60 percent.
- Your Story results reached beyond a simple provision of skills and information. Mothers were satisfied with Your Story sessions, their parental skills and reading literacy improved, and Early Childhood Development (ECD) professionals and teachers confirmed that children gained as well.

AGS's Impact on Enrollment

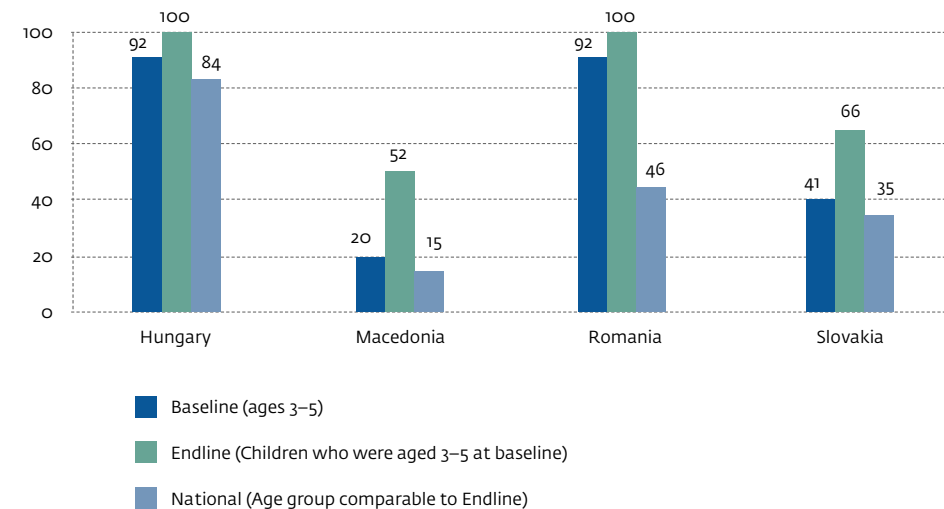
AGS had a direct impact on the enrollment of beneficiary children and helped to improve the regularity of attendance. Based on the available quantitative data, there is a very strong indication that AGS has effectively increased enrollment rates in all four countries. The project provided necessary resources through a family-tailored support scheme for families in need to promote enrollment. Enrollment fees were provided for 260 children, and approximately 1,000 children were vaccinated. Lunch was provided for 296 children attending kindergartens and preschools in FYR Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia. Material support was

offered for 1,054 children, transportation was provided for 89 beneficiary children, and 88 children were accompanied to and from kindergartens and preschools.

In FYR Macedonia, given the lack of facilities, small adaptations were made to preschool classrooms in Shuto Orizari and Delchevo and new facilities were built in Vinica and Crnik, creating opportunities for almost 150 children to access kindergarten education. In the Hungarian urban locality Nyíregyháza, AGS provided support to the all-Roma kindergarten in the segregated Guszev community to develop the educational environment and equipment for 210 children.

In most countries, enrollment rates found in nationally representative data are similar to those found in the AGS localities' baseline data. Romania is the one exception, as enrollment rates in AGS communities are much higher than the national average in this country. Figure 5 provides a visual illustration of changes in enrollment rates during AGS.

FIGURE 5. Changes in enrollment during AGS²³

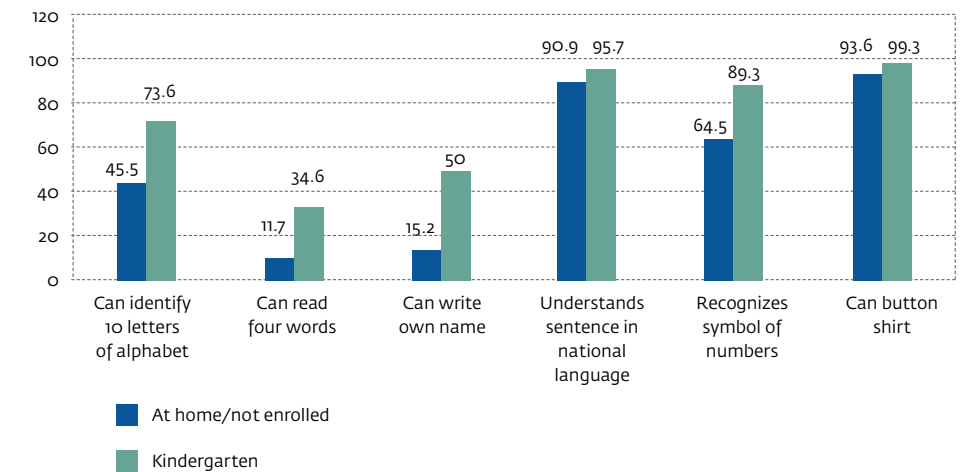


²³ Source: AGS data; UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey (2011) (National). A Sample restricted to ages 3–5 at baseline; the same age cohort at endline (now aged 4–7); and ages 4–7 for nationally representative data (comparable to the age group captured in the endline survey). Source: AGS data; A Good Start: Survey Findings After the Project (Elena Gallová Kriglerová and Martina Kubánová)

Alternative community-based ECEC services in community centers were developed in isolated communities in Romania involving 190 children during the two years of AGS. Home-based services were provided for 45 children in Slovakia where existing facilities were insufficient to accommodate all children.

An important finding of the project was that children attending kindergarten show the best results in all measured skills, most significantly in skills related to counting, reading, and the recognition of letters. However, the effect of the selection of children into kindergartens also plays a role, as children from poorer backgrounds or those having less educated parents are also less likely to be enrolled (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. Comparing skills of children aged six and attending kindergarten versus children staying at home non-enrolled (in percent at the end of the project)²⁴



Different activities have been tested to facilitate the successful transition to primary school for Romani children. Twenty-six open house events were organized in Slovakian preschools and primary schools for more than 100 participants, 38 children benefited from expert services of speech therapists, psychologists, and learning specialists provided by AGS in Romania and in FYR Macedonia, and 139 children received after-school tutoring in the first year of primary school in Slovakia.

²⁴ Source: AGS data; A Good Start: Survey Findings After the Project (Elena Gallová Kriglerová and Martina Kubánová)



Impact on Parental Skills and Awareness Raising

Parental education programs such as parenting schools, literacy classes, the Mothers' Reading Program,²⁵ and the Your Story Program achieved their intended outcomes of better parenting skills, an increased need and demand for further education, community building, and – to a limited extent – improved interethnic and inter-community relations. Community events were held aimed at awareness raising related to ECEC and health issues. Parents attended different kinds of community events in the four countries; many of them were more interactive, others were more direct. These occasions had a positive effect on inter-community relations and they also supported the improvement of relations among the Romani community and the representatives of the local governments, kindergartens, and other ECEC-related services.

AGS created spaces for intensive knowledge sharing, which indeed triggered shifting attitudes and improved practice (via community events, multi-stakeholder workshops, HSCL trainings, and mayors' forums). AGS community motivation events covered the responsibilities of a parent, health prevention, the educational development of small children, and enrollment issues. During the two-year project cycle, AGS partners held a total of 191 community motivation events – 105 events in FYR Macedonia, 25 events in Hungary, 34 events in Romania, and 27 events in Slovakia. 11,828 family visits took place for AGS beneficiary families in their homes in the four target countries by community mediators in order to assess the needs of families, to provide enrollment assistance tailored to these needs, and to support the regular attendance of children.

Parental empowerment subprograms such as Your Story and Home School Community Liaisons (HSCL) in Hungary as well as the Telling Stories program in Romania facilitated the active involvement of parents (especially mothers) in various educational activities. In the case of the Your Story subprogram, 240 mothers were involved in 12 groups in the six Hungarian localities, reaching a total of 537 children. During the two-year timeframe of the project, 72 parents led 40 HSCL sessions in the Hungarian localities. In Romania, 140 different parenting sessions were held with the participation of 430 Romani parents. Of these, 183 parents took part in story telling sessions in the community centers of Telechiu and Mofleni and 24 parents attended the literacy classes in Telechiu.

Impact on Additional Stakeholders

AGS provided professional training to ECEC staff and teacher trainee students, delivered by the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and tailored to local needs. Various trainings on diversity, inclusive pedagogy,

²⁵ Altogether 5.200 books were given to the families.

and social justice topics have been provided for 186 preschool and primary school teachers, 36 mediators, two social workers, and several local authority representatives.

The mediators of the AGS project became an essential bridging point between the community and service providers. All mediators were provided with on-going training; altogether 38 community mediators/facilitators received training on numerous themes connected to ECEC, parenting skills, and mediation in the four target countries. During the two years of the project, a total of 111 students from the College of Nyíregyháza (50 majoring in andragogy [pedagogy of adult learning], 61 majoring in pedagogy) participated in various activities of the AGS project as part of their formal training. Shifting attitudes of the newly sensitized students were identified by the lecturers and by other project implementers, which is considered as a main success, as usually this is missing from the education of the teacher trainees. The following quote from the Bernard van Leer Foundation, an AGS funder, further emphasizes the value of this secondary impact of AGS:

In addition to the direct individual contact of pedagogues, AGS allows a good model for practice- and evidence-based institutional collaboration with universities and teacher-training institutes. One direct outcome REF is making progress at is the sensitization of pedagogical curricula and students in the target countries to address the problems of Roma discrimination and exclusion.

Impact on Dissemination, Policy, and Development

Numerous workshops and conferences were organized in the four AGS target countries covering diverse topics in connection to the AGS approach. 127 professionals and para-professionals participated in four transnational workshops. AGS partners have involved 124 participants in the conferences held in the four countries and 121 in the final dissemination conference of the project. The number of visitors to the AGS website reached 7,597.

In close cooperation with its consortium partners, REF prepared several publications in order to disseminate the intermediate and final results. Every publication is or will be available online²⁶ and the main pieces will be designed and printed in order to serve a broader dissemination campaign. These publications include:

- **Research Report I:** Survey Spotlight on its Localities and Households
(analysis of the data collected when the project started)
- **Research Report II:** A Good Start: Survey Findings After the Project
(numerical results presented in graphs and charts at the end of the project)

²⁶ Available online: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications/good-start-support-european-union>

- **Policy Paper I:** The Implementation Model of A Good Start
(detailed description of the model, lessons learnt, the essence of the project)
- **Policy Paper II:** EU Structural Funds and Early Childhood Education and Care for Marginalized Roma Communities 2014–2020 *(policy recommendations about planning Structural Funds in order to support ECEC for disadvantaged children)*
- **Good Practice Guide I:** Building Opportunities in Early Childhood from the Start *(practical advice for teachers, professionals, and para-professionals working in ECEC)*
- **Good Practice Guide II:** Practical Guide on Data Collection
(project experiences, advice on data collection)
- **Good Practice Guide III:** Partnership Guide for the Promotion of Early Childhood Education for the Roma *(how to sustain good partnerships)*

Project Sustainability

In addition to project-based sustainability, there is an inherent, natural sustainability within AGS due to its design and the nature of project activities. On the level of a beneficiary family, the improved parenting practices (particularly regarding the preparation of children for entering educational institutions), good attendance of children in kindergarten, increased parental participation in the daily life of kindergartens and preschools, and the increased educational ambitions of mothers will positively affect the whole family far beyond the life of AGS. The project empowered families, especially mothers, to support more effectively their children's access to early childhood education and care. Some mothers have gone back to school to improve their own formal education after seeing their children's positive experiences. The gains made by children and their families will maintain a demand for early childhood services in the short and medium term.

Participating kindergartens showed interest in incorporating AGS activities (such as HSCL) in their curricula and, with this, modifying their Local Pedagogical Programs to incorporate their new awareness resulting from participation in the program. In this way, newly learned activities about how to cooperate with and create real partnership with Romani mothers will be part of the system, shaping the values of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers, and positive outcomes will be sustained.

A few AGS mayors were willing to hire Roma mediators who helped in managing conflicts, accompanied children, regularly visited families, and checked the attendance rates in the kindergartens, and the value of their work was clearly visible. In the cases of available financial resources, these mediators will be hired as was intended in the project's plans for long-term sustainability. AGS brought an additional dimension

into the educational practice of the participating higher education institution (College of Nyíregyháza). The optional credit offered for learning about ECD and Roma inclusion as part of the obligatory theory module and participation in home visits, Your Story, or HSCL sessions as part of the practical module was a successful and enriching practice for these students. The college wants to maintain its cooperation with REF, while institutionalizing the new content and practical training and providing an opportunity for students to start to communicate with and develop a positive attitude towards Roma.

FUTURE PLANS FOR AGS

REF successfully raised financial resources in order to implement AGS's second phase with a focus on institutionalizing the project's achievements and continuing our strategic partnerships with local and national decision-makers. AGS Phase II will stress the local-level Sustainability Plans that were prepared and signed by the local partners and other local stakeholders. Although AGS's complex interventions and implementations were delivered by REF and a team of local and international partners, the project could not have been possible without the participation and support of many other local stakeholders including: kindergartens, health authorities, registration offices, municipalities, and so forth. These Sustainability Plans detail potential providers of resources (hiring mediators, providing transport because of the distance, and so forth) as well as how results from AGS can be institutionalized.

AGS's Phase II budget of EUR 467,465 will allow REF to continue its work at the AGS sites and add new ones, and based on experience gained during Phase I, improve the effectiveness of the implemented interventions. REF's smaller contribution to Phase II of AGS has been offset by larger commitments from municipalities and other partners to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Phase II of AGS will be based on the ECD model of REF. This model has three interconnected obligatory components:

1. Parenting practices

- Your Story, non-formal adult education for improving parenting practices (working on literacy skills, while adapting the Your Story subprogram in center- or home-based settings)
- Community Motivation Events (with the active participation of head teachers, nurses, mayors, and so forth)

2. Quality ECD programs for Romani children

- Improving the quality of teaching and learning (with ECD experts working in kindergartens, preschools, and community centers)
- Improving quality by empowering Romani mothers on the basis of HSCL (adapting the Home School Community Liaison subprogram wherein Romani mothers are trained to prepare and deliver preschool classes)

3. Access to ECD programs for Romani children

- Addressing financial and transportation barriers for Romani children ages 3–6
- Providing home visits in case of need

The target group of children in AGS Phase II will be larger than that of AGS Phase I, and Phase II will expand to more localities. Activities are to be implemented through August 2013. As an important aspect, monitoring and evaluation will be a prominent part of AGS Phase II with an emphasis on measuring the learning outcomes of participating children.

PART IV
REF ROMANIA



REF ROMANIA

In 2012, Roma Education Fund Romania took its partnerships with Roma and non-Roma NGOs to the next level and consolidated a series of strategic partnerships with international agencies (such as the World Bank Office in Romania and the UNICEF Office in Romania), bilateral donors and policy advocates (such as the U.S. Embassy in Romania and U.S. Peace Corps; the Visegrad Group; and the Czech, French, Norwegian, and Swiss Embassies in Romania), the Ministry of Education, the National Agency for Roma, and the Office of the Prime Minister. Thematic partnerships were consolidated with Save the Children Romania (the Global Campaign on Education or the Manifesto for the Child Rights), World Vision Romania, and others.

REF Romania has also continued its policy advocacy efforts targeting the crucial elements related to Roma inclusion in the education system (following the key advocacy priorities in Romania such as the new Law on Education and the new National Strategy for the Roma Inclusion) alongside its advocacy partners.

In 2012, REF Romania completed one of four European Structural Fund projects within its mandate: Roma Youth Competitive on the Labour Market. The implementation of the other three ESF Strategic Projects (School after School, Equal Opportunities in Education, and Roma Health Scholarships Projects) continued in 2012 according to original planning. Yet, towards the end of 2012, the crisis of the ESF in Romania also had its effect on REF Romania: the failure to receive timely reimbursement of expenses coincided with the beginning of the school year and had a substantial effect on project operations.

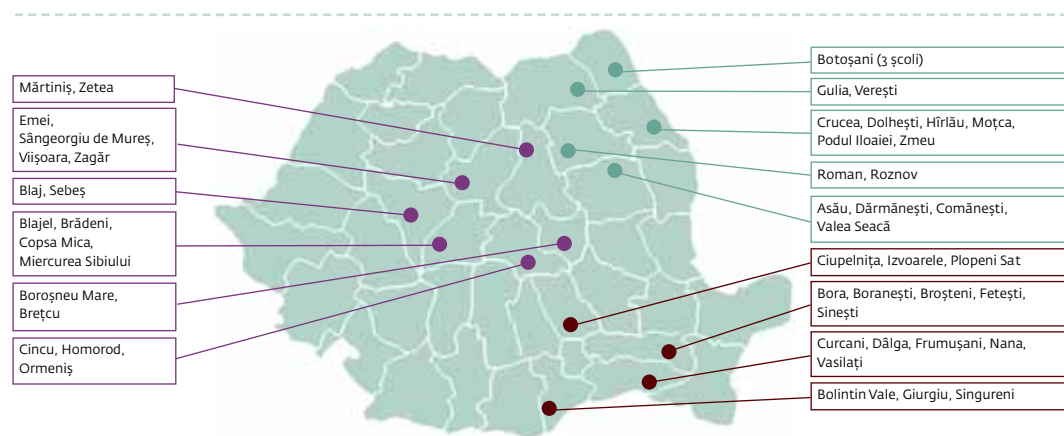
In 2012 within the School After School Project, all 50 After School Centers (see Figure 7 for center locations) were functional and serving 2,179 Romani and non-Romani pupils in primary education (grades one to four). Teachers were trained in the new methodology developed and contracts with different suppliers servicing the centers were launched. The After School program consists of five modules: (a) homework supervision and guidance, (b) recovery and remediation for children with difficulties in learning, (c) self-knowledge and personal development activities, (d) thematic and leisure activities, and (e) skills development activities and social skills. The activities with children and parents started contributing to increasing enrollment in primary education as well as to school success in primary education for more than 2,000 children at risk of early school leaving. During the first year of field intervention, the average number of absences from school dropped from 32.48 absences/school the previous year to 10.66 absences/school. Also, in the 2011–2012 school year, 77 percent of the pupils in the After School Centers

recorded progress in the competences of literacy and numeracy testing. Eighty-eight percent of the pupils in the After School Centers recorded an improvement in their personal development skills.

In 2012, a systemic blockage of ESF funds occurred in Romania. The low level of advance payments, slow reimbursement, and the frequently changing rules substantially hindered programs supported by ESF throughout Romania.²⁷ This was especially the case for financially less viable organizations, such as many local governments and NGOs working in the field of Roma inclusion. The situation is not unique to the Romanian context as similar situations have been documented by REF in Slovakia²⁸ and other countries.

In response, REF received a bridging loan to keep its operations running; after more delays in reimbursements, REF had to revise some of the activities, reduce expenses in the field and downsize its administration, thus allowing the programs to continue running.

FIGURE 7. Map of School After School Centers set up within the ESF-funded project School After School



In 2012, the Equal Opportunities in Education Project entered its first year of intervention in the field and 1,027 Romani children in urban and rural areas in lower secondary education (grades five to eight) from 57

²⁷ In 2012, the absorption rate was at around 7.4 percent according to *The Economist*. Available online: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2012/06/eu-funds-absorption-romania>

²⁸ Elena Gallová Kríglarová, Tina Gažovičová, Ingrid Kosová (2011) Disbursement of EU Funds for Projects Increasing the Educational Level of Members of Marginalized Romani Communities from the Standpoint of (De-) Segregation of Romani Children in Education (Qualitative Research Analysis). Available online: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/esf_slovakia_report_en.pdf

schools were served. The intervention package consisted of three key components: (a) tutoring in the subjects that will be part of national evaluations (mathematics and Romanian language), (b) mentoring, and (c) scholarships to cover, at least partially, the hidden costs of education for vulnerable families.

The intervention package will be provided over a period of two school years. Based on the tutoring and mentoring methodologies developed in 2011, children were provided with educational support throughout 2012. Of the 1,027 students, 234 students were in grade eight and 92 percent of these eighth graders continued their studies in upper secondary education. The total number of the target group to be served at the end of two years of intervention in the field is 1,250 students.

REF is partner in two other ESF projects – the Roma Youth Competitive on the Labor Market Project and the Roma Health Scholarship Project.

In the Roma Youth Competitive on the Labor Market Project (main applicant: Resource Centre for Roma Communities), REF Romania served more than the planned 700 students in vocational education. In total, 727 students in upper secondary education benefited from the intervention package consisting of vocational and healthy lifestyle counseling. A total of 707 students benefited from the scholarship that was added to support their retention in vocational education and their graduation. At the end of November 2012, REF Romania completed its work for this ESF project.

In 2012 within the Roma Health Scholarships Project (main applicant Media Monitoring Agency), REF Romania implemented the scholarships component which was part of the intervention package for the Personal Development Program. This support package includes an advocacy camp, mentoring support, and the scholarship program. In 2012, 79 Romani students in high school education benefited from tutoring for the admission exam in faculties of medicine and 81 Romani students benefitted from mentoring and Scholarship Programs. Following the implementation of the first year of intervention, all 81 Romani students in tertiary education or post-secondary non-tertiary medical schools had a GPA of over 7 (on a scale of 10). Seventy percent of the students had a GPA between 7 and 8.99 and 30 percent of these students had a GPA above 9 (out of 10). None of the students have dropped out of their study program.

In 2012 in addition to the European Structural Fund projects, REF Romania also continued its policy advocacy partnership with the UNICEF Office in Romania. Advocacy workshops gathered together key decision-makers from the Ministry of Education, National Agency for Roma, the Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education, Ministry of Labour, as well as academia and both Romani and non-Romani activists. Four workshops were organized by REF Romania in 2012; policy briefs have been being prepared

and debated in an additional workshop organized in partnership with UNICEF Romania and subsequently circulated among the key decision makers in the education system in Romania.

Table 27 provides a summary of total funds disbursed by REF Romania in 2012 for the four ESF projects as well as policy advocacy workshops (see below for more on the workshops).

TABLE 28. Funds disbursed by REF Romania as of the end of 2012

Project Name	Funds disbursed by REF Romania so far (EUR*)
School After School	2,327,087
Equal Opportunities in Education	2,087,602
Roma Health Scholarships	283,744
Roma Youth Competitive on Labor Market	235,061
Advocacy Workshops (UNICEF)	22,500
TOTAL	4,955,994

* Average exchange rate of RON 4.4 / EUR 1

SPECIAL EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS AT REF ROMANIA IN 2012

Press and Publicity

On September 18, 2012, the Roma Inclusion Awards Ceremony was hosted by School No. 10 in Giurgiu. The event showcased one of REF Romania’s main ESF projects (School After School) in an after-school center with teachers and Romani students present. Dignitaries from the Ministry of Education, the municipal government of Giurgiu, the U.S. Embassy, and others were able to meet the pupils of the Equal Opportunities project along with their parents. At the Awards Ceremony, seven schools received recognition for outstanding Roma inclusion at their respective schools in the three regions of Northwest, Central, and South Muntenia. About 200 people attended the event with three television stations, numerous national and local newspapers, radio news stations, and press agencies also in attendance. REF Romania partnered with the U.S. Embassy by having the Deputy Chief of Mission Duane Butcher hand out the certificates with photo opportunities for the mass media.

REF Romania also organized a Press Conference to announce the REF publication “Teacher Absenteeism, Romani Pupils, and Primary Schools in Romania” on October 2, 2012. The report was a collaboration among REF Romania, Center for Urban and Regional Sociology (CURS), and the Center for Social Intervention and Studies – Romani CRISS. Two national television news stations, two newspapers, and three press agencies attended the

press conference. Earlier in the year, A Good Start held a press conference on May 30, 2012. The event took place at the People’s Palace with mass coverage by six newspapers, radio stations, and press agencies.

Roma Advocacy

In collaboration with UNICEF, REF Romania engaged in an advocacy campaign around key issues affecting the access to quality education of Romani children, in the context of the new Law on Education via a series of workshops throughout 2012. Three of the workshop themes – Quality Education in Schools with Roma Children, After School Programs, and EU Structural Funds – were directly related to REF Romania’s projects, thereby integrating the advocacy campaign within REF Romania’s major projects. The joint collaboration between UNICEF and REF Romania is important to note given that project advocacy stems from effective project implementation, thereby enhancing the project’s sustainability.

REF Romania’s Evolving Online Communications

REF Romania significantly upgraded its website, launched in October 2012, making it more user-friendly with more information and transparency of project results to date. The new website also launched a blog platform called “Closing the Educational Gap” which has been regularly used since its creation. The average number of visits per month is over 1,000.

In addition to the new website and blog, REF Romania launched a new eNewsletter which is integrated into the new website. The eNewsletter is distributed to 670 stakeholder and media contacts. Furthermore, REF Romania’s social media mix was extended to include Twitter with ten micro-blogs written and three YouTube videos uploaded for viewing in 2012. The Facebook page of the organization which was founded in 2011 grew from 113 “likes” to over 300 by the end of 2012, growing by over 200 percent. “Policy Pills” – bite-size postings of REF Romania’s opinion on a particular policy – were especially popular among the followers of the Facebook page. These postings covered data collection, the definition of school dropout, and desegregation of Romani children. REF Romania’s social media infrastructure was well-established in 2012 and the respective communities are ready to be developed and grown in 2013. As an illustration of the value of social media in Roma inclusion efforts, REF Romania received accolades by the Romanian Management Authority at the end of 2012. REF was able to post the press release on the website and create a related blog, which is conveniently archived by month. Then, a hyperlink of the blog was posted to the Facebook page and on Twitter. Identical media buzz was easily generated for the launching of REF Romania’s newest project called “Educational Support Services for Roma High School Students” on December 5, 2012. The internal capacity of the country director or project managers has been both improved and expedited for seamless external communications.

PART V
POLICY
DEVELOPMENT
AND ADVOCACY



POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY

Following REF's history in supporting research in education of Roma and its use for evidence-based policy making, the organization continued and enhanced its research and policy activities in 2012. The complete versions of publications, including the key findings, can be found at:

<http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications>

NEW PUBLICATIONS IN 2012

A GOOD START: Survey Spotlight on its Localities and Households

Phase I of the A Good Start project (see Section III for more on AGS), implemented in partnership between REF, three international partners, and twelve local partner NGOs active in social inclusion and education of Romani children, started in June 2010 and ended in June 2012. One of the monitoring and evaluation tools within the project was a household survey. This survey was applied for the first time a few months after the launch of the project and for the second time just before the end of the project in 2012, with the focus of assessing the different approaches applied in project localities.

The first survey, the findings of which were published in 2012, was administered to 1,028 families in 16 localities in Hungary, FYR Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia participating in AGS. A total of 1,781 children ages zero to seven were represented within the surveyed families. The figures relate directly to the recurrent beneficiaries of this project (parents or children who have participated in more than one activity or a recurring/ongoing activity). The findings are only indicative and are not representative at the country level and point out some characteristics of Roma preschool education. For example, among a number of conclusions, the study revealed that 92 percent of children below three years of age participating in the project were not enrolled anywhere. Furthermore, 59 percent of all parents with non-enrolled children ages three to seven indicated that it was too expensive for them to send a child to kindergarten and 40 percent reported having no money for clothes for their children to attend.

REF is continuing development of early childhood education and care activities based on the results of the survey. The full report can be accessed at:
http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/ref-ags-household-survey-screen_o.pdf

PITFALLS AND BIAS: Entry Testing and the Overrepresentation of Romani Children in Special Education

This policy paper examines many of the ways in which Romani children from Central and South Eastern Europe are segregated from their non-Romani peers and placed in special education. The focus of this paper is on school readiness assessments (school entry testing) in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovakia, by which children's entry into school is delayed, they are streamed into preparatory or transition classes in special schools, or they are placed in special education classrooms or schools. This paper examines the link between such testing and the overrepresentation of Romani children in special education. The document also presents international good practices in the use of assessments for integrating rather than segregating children in order to address the individual educational needs of different pupils while mapping some potential directions for change in Central and South Eastern Europe.

Results of this study lead to the formulation of specific recommendations to stakeholders, including universal access to preschool education, teacher training, parental involvement, changes in approaches to testing and approaches to the results of testing and their use in further education. The full report can be accessed at:
http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/ref-ags-household-survey-screen_o.pdf

This publication has since been submitted as background material by the Chance for Children Foundation at the European Court of Human Rights in relation to the *Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary* decision of 2013.²⁹ Organizations representing the applicants relied heavily on the report when making the final observations before the ECtHR.³⁰ The two organizations asked Julia M. White (author of the publication) to sign the report and submit it as an *amicus curiae* brief in the so-called Heves misdiagnosis case, which is an action *popularis action* brought by the NGOs against – among others – the Ministry of National Resources.

²⁹ European Court of Human Rights, *Case of Horvath and Kiss v. Hungary* (Application no. 11146/11). Available online: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-116124>

³⁰ In 2013, the court found that Hungary violated the rights of Romani children misdiagnosed as having disabilities.

ROMA EARLY CHILDHOOD INCLUSION: The RECI Overview Report

With the view of better coordination of early childhood development activities, REF, OSF, and UNICEF joined in the Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) network. One of the specific outputs of cooperation was the mapping of access to quality preschool services for Romani children in the region. In 2012, the network developed a series of Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) Reports. This was a first attempt in the Central and Eastern European region systematically to capture and present the situation of young Romani children. Four such reports have been prepared, one for each of the following countries: the Czech Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Romania. Through examining available data, each RECI Report identifies priority early childhood policy issues and concerns in respect to Romani families and children. The views of Roma communities and families, and Romani women and men, gathered through focus group discussions and interviews, have been incorporated in the country reports.

The findings and recommendations of the Overview Report are particularly relevant at this point in time as the European Union 2020 Strategy requires member states and those seeking accession to the European Union to develop national strategies for Roma inclusion. Moreover, two years of preschool education for all Romani children has been one of the targets of the Decade of Roma Inclusion since its inception. The full RECI Reports can be accessed at:
<http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/reci-overview-final-web.pdf>

DISBURSEMENT OF EU FUNDS FOR PROJECTS: Increasing the Educational Level of Members of Marginalized Romani Communities from the Standpoint of (De-)Segregation of Romani Children in Education

This qualitative analysis deals with the impact of projects implemented under the program of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic aimed at addressing needs of pupils from marginalized Romani communities. The program was initiated in February 2009 and supported 50 school-based projects with an average budget of approximately EUR 168,000. In particular, this analysis aimed to assess how the implementation of these projects influenced the practice of transferring Romani children to special schools.

This research found that the activities focusing on Romani children often concentrate mainly on their practical skills, but to a lesser extent on the improvement of the formal education process. Currents trends of pedagogy emphasize the role of skill-development in combination with academic subjects and this has been to some extent reflected as a principle in the present study. On the other hand, research revealed that in many cases the emphasis is put on skill-development subjects without adequate support to academic subjects. The report also criticized the program for over-reliance on EU funding sources (for

example, for out-of-school activities such as field trips). The research also found that EU funds are used for basic in-service teacher trainings and the creation of various educational materials, core activities that should be supported from the State budget. Within their projects, the schools rarely use verified and already piloted alternative educational methods and tend to create new experiments. Various ethnic and gender stereotypes are often reproduced in project activities. Parents were typically only the passive 'spectators' of the implemented activities and are not practically involved in their preparation and implementation. The full analysis can be found at:

http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/esf_slovakia_report_en.pdf

ROMA INCLUSION IN ITALY: National Education and Employment Strategies and Actions

This OSF-funded research and report offers a background exploration and a critical overview of the legislative acts in Italy directed towards the Roma and their educational inclusion, using data gathered via a desk review and fieldwork. A supplemental section to this report presents the results of a short survey and gives a general vision of the initiatives undertaken by Italian institutions concerning the social and working inclusion of Roma.

Regardless of the many efforts undertaken by national and international agencies, the problem of the right to study and work for the Roma and Sinti minorities still lingers in Italy. In particular, concerning school success, a vertical fall in upper secondary school enrollment and, consequently, a high concentration of school drop-outs within the Roma population has been registered (not only in Italy). Moreover, there is now a clear awareness that inclusion cannot be attainable if we do not achieve similar and contemporaneous results in quality of housing, work, and right to education, goals which demand clear and decisive political will and commitment. The full report can be found at:

http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/report_ref_english.pdf

INEQUITY AND INEQUALITY: Teacher Absenteeism, Romani Pupils and Primary Schools in Romania

In this study, REF examined the habits of teachers in 220 primary schools across the breadth of Romania's school system while simultaneously cataloguing each school's work environment. The study sought to examine the degree to which teacher absenteeism was a contributing factor to Romani pupils' poor school attendance and performance.

Few links were found between teacher absenteeism and that of their students. Nonetheless, this report subtly points to the learning environment in each school, in particular those poorer schools with insufficient infrastructure, resources, and funds, and the distinct correlation that can be made to their often substantial

Romani student bodies. This suggests that equality and equity in the classroom – and by default the attendance and performance of Romani pupils – has yet to be guaranteed in an inequitable and unequal national school system. Until Romania's national and county-level educational authorities make sure all schools have a fair share of resources, Romani pupils will continue to struggle to compete for their future social and economic success in classrooms emptied of play, games, teachers, and even learning itself. The full report can be accessed at:

http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/publications/ref_ta_screen_doublepages.pdf

TEN YEARS AFTER: History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe

The book, published with REF support, represents a comprehensive assessment of the progress of the decade-long Roma school desegregation processes in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. The book approaches Roma inclusion in education through school desegregation as an interdisciplinary issue, thus analyzing desegregation efforts from a variety of perspectives, combining policy analysis, legal analysis, comparative politics, and sociological approaches to education.

The contributors launched the book at several high-level roundtables in Bucharest and Prague, hosted an international book launch and symposium at the 2012 European Conference on Educational Research in Cadiz, Spain, and completed a book tour of Boston College and the Open Society Justice Initiative in the United States.

Edited by Iulius Rostas with contributions from REF staff, the book is divided into three parts. The first part analyzes public policies and legal documents, existing empirical data and studies, and data collected through individual interviews with human rights activists and lawyers. It also identifies trends of legal argumentation used by courts and specialized anti-discrimination bodies throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The second part consists of in-depth interviews with Roma activists that cover topics such as the ways segregation became a public interest issue, strategies employed to place it on the political agenda, desegregation programs and policies, and assessment of the current situation. The third part attempts to unify the wide range of factors influencing school desegregation processes under one analytical framework by identifying gaps, specific differences, and contradictions or paradoxes in the five countries researched. This section raises challenging questions and proposes several possible scenarios for the future of the school desegregation process. The full text can be accessed at:

<http://www.romaeducationfund.org/news/ref/news-and-events/ten-years-after-history-roma-school-desegregation-central-and-eastern-europ>



COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS: Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia

REF Country Assessments seek to provide an analysis of education and ongoing education reforms from the perspective of the inclusion of Romani children in the countries taking part in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The documents also review the different programs and activities REF has carried out since its establishment in 2005 and highlight the thematic and program areas on which REF plans to focus during the coming years.

The information presented in the Country Assessments has been discussed with representatives of governments and civil society in the countries concerned in order to ensure that it realistically reflects the situation and that the recommendations made are viable. Each document reflects the situation at the time when the document was produced and many Decade countries experience relatively rapid changes; thus, REF plans to update these Country Assessments on a regular basis.

In 2012, Country Assessments on Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia were published, helping to define REF priorities in these target countries. All REF Country Assessments can be found at: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications/country-assessments-and-country-priorities>

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In 2012, REF played a strong role in transferring knowledge about positive models of inclusive education. In April, a study trip for representatives of the European Commission to Hungary was organized, during which the representatives from DG Education and Culture, DG Regio, and DG Justice visited successful projects supported by REF. Similarly, REF staff cooperated with the Council of Europe's Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion during their study visit to Hungary and presented REF-supported projects in Budapest.

Apart from this, REF continues intensive discussions with partners in public administration throughout the target countries. REF's lasting efforts to build communication channels with representatives of governments met with only limited success through the regular exchange of information with public administration in Macedonia and Slovakia. Cooperation with governments in project implementation has proven to be a successful model for communication with central governments, regional administration and local authorities.

Transferring of REF's knowledge and piloted experience was reflected into reality by joint efforts with public administration bodies. At the level of municipalities number of projects have been started, primarily

focusing on early childhood education and care, where municipal authorities can play the most significant role by providing Romani children with access to formal preschool education. (See the information about REF activities in Ostrava, origin of the famous D.H. case below).³¹

At the level of regional administration REF is cooperating mostly with bodies overseeing the quality of education, namely the school inspectorates, university faculties and pedagogical institutions. Focus on this type of cooperation is based mainly on REF's principle of using the existing structures of the system.

REF has a good track record of cooperation with central governments and will continue attempts to approach government representatives and provide them with information on successful models of Roma inclusion in education. In 2012 a two-year cooperation with the government of Slovakia has been initiated to promote a REF-piloted model of early childhood education and care services for the Romani children. A group of high-profile academics³² joined the team to contribute with a thorough impact assessment on the basis of the randomized control trials. This methodology of evaluation will provide the government with clear answers on effectiveness of measures adopted and can serve as a foundations for further cooperation.

In order to provide assistance to the people living in desperate conditions in the Konik camp in Montenegro, REF started cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science in order to assist the country in implementing their commitments in the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

REF continues to promote Roma inclusion on all Decade countries and conducts activities with the ultimate goal of introducing systemic changes which will help to fulfill the REF's mission of closing the gaps between Roma and non-Roma in education. In 2012 the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation initiated shadow reporting efforts with civil society coalitions in several Decade countries. The coalitions are expected to report on implementation of the Decade National Action Plans as well as the National Strategies of Roma Integration. Reports will be finalized in 2013 and the Roma Education Fund is supervising coalitions' reporting on education.

³¹ In 2012, REF had official relationship with more than one hundred municipalities in all target countries.

³² Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), available online: <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/about-j-pal>

Apart from knowledge-transfer activities targeting public administration bodies REF is also focusing on sharing of experience within civil society and among REF's beneficiaries. In one such activity starting in 2012 and continuing in 2013, REF joined a transnational EU-supported network of partners to promote Roma parents' involvement in education of their children. Partners include: Fundacion Secretariado Gitano (Spain), Roma Education Fund (Hungary, Romania, Switzerland), Fundatia Secretariatul Romilor (Romania), Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (Romania), Local government of Acs (Hungary), Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (Bulgaria). Tools used in the project include transnational knowledge transfer as well as exchange of experience at the national level, primarily in identification of successful practices and analysis of relevant elements of success. (www.romafamiliesgetinvolved.org)

For additional efforts made by REF in 2012 to facilitate and encourage Cross-Country Learning including CEDEFOP visits, see the Communications section on pages 103–109.

REF PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY FOR ROMA

European Roma Platform

The European Roma Platform brings together national governments, the European Union, international organizations, and Roma civil society representatives. The platform meetings represent an arena where stakeholders can discuss Roma inclusion strategies in the frame of the European Parliament Resolution adopted on March 9, 2011 and the Communication adopted by the European Commission on April 5, 2011. This process aims at stimulating cooperation and exchanges of experience among all stakeholders on successful Roma inclusion and integration policies and practices. This continues to be a great opportunity for REF to put Roma education at the top of the agenda and to persuade governments to make investments in early childhood education the utmost priority. In 2012 REF attended and commented at the Extraordinary European Platform on Roma Inclusion held on March 22 in Brussels.

REF's Chairman also attended the Council of Europe's Charom meeting as an observer and contributed his comments on the progress of REF's work in Central and South Eastern Europe; he also attended the Roma Inclusion Forum hosted by the European Foundation Center.

D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic

The year 2012 marked the fifth anniversary of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgment in the case of *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*. The court decision from November 13, 2007 confirmed indirect discrimination of Romani children in education, resulting in their overrepresentation in special forms of education with reduced curriculum.

REF participated in the Open Society Foundations' efforts and at the same time was building a relationship with the Czech Ministry of Education. In the autumn of 2012, REF provided comments to the government's action plan on the ECtHR judgment's implementation. Even though the government has certain limitations in their approach, REF appreciates agreement on the importance of specific topics, in particular the support of preschool education. In cooperation with local non-governmental organizations and local administration, REF has signed a memorandum of understanding to implement a project in support of preschool education in Ostrava, the town in which the *D.H.* case originated. REF believes that with necessary changes in the system, preschool education can help to address the problem of the exclusion of Roma from mainstream education and the organization would like to illustrate this on the particular case of Ostrava.

Croatian Presidency of the Decade

REF has been closely cooperating with the Decade Office and the Government Office for Human Rights and National Minorities in the area of planning and drafting the Decade priorities for the segment of education. The cooperation continued by providing participation of REF high representatives as chairs of panels and close cooperation with the Ministry of Education on the organization of the Conference "Quality education for Roma: sustainability of educational policy developed within the Decade at European level." REF has also provided support for the Roma Youth Program in the form of consultative meetings regarding the planning and organization of this part of the Decade activities. In addition to that REF commented the National Roma Strategy of the Croatian government developed during the presidency. Apart from the cooperation with key stakeholders, during 2013 REF will issue the updated Country Assessment document for Croatia and hold a public roundtable and launch of the publication.

Advocacy Campaigns

In 2012, the communication team worked to tie together REF's advocacy role with its media and publishing products. All of REF's newest research and policy reports were also publicized with "smart" or QR cards, enabling managers to distribute them in an attractive and less cumbersome format with links that can be downloaded by any smartphone.

In order to strategically join advocacy with creative projects, the communications team attended several events including Seeking Roma Filmmakers in Berlin in February and A Good Pitch in The Hague in April. The Communications Department also offered two small grants to two documentary films: *Besence Open*, (directed by Kristof Kovacs, produced by Judit Stalter) and *The Trial* (directed by Eszter Hajdu, produced by Sandor Mester). The makers of *The Trial* joined LHP's annual orientation to motivate scholarship students in Moldova. The completion of these documentaries is expected in 2013, with REF helping to coordinate their advocacy and outreach upon release. Both films make important contributions to the public discussion about Romani rights and indirectly education.

The Communications Department also commissioned local journalists to write about Roma education issues, including a mini-campaign about integrating Romani children from the Makis settlement in mainstream Belgrade schools appearing across Serbia in late October and an upcoming photography feature on Konik Camp in Podgorica. REF's projects, experts, and partners were featured or cited in approximately 140 national and international media outlets, ranging from the largest of national dailies and national television to regional and local print and broadcast media.

PART VI COMMUNICATIONS

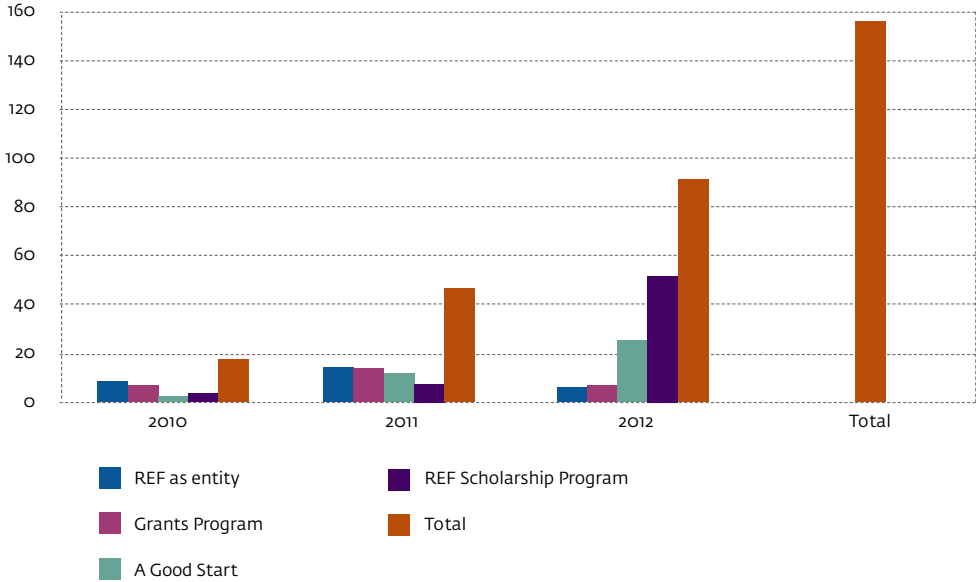


COMMUNICATIONS

OVERVIEW

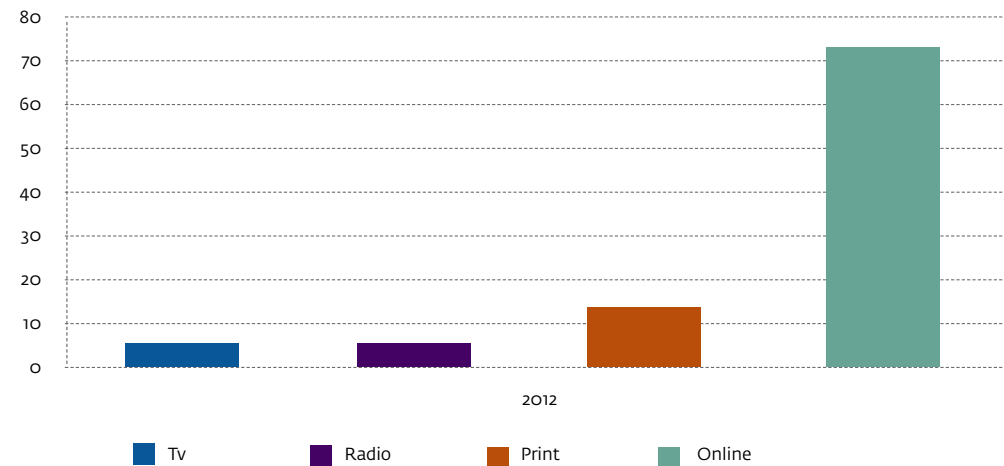
REF's media coverage increased by 90 percent in 2012 as compared to 2011.

FIGURE 8. REF in the media, 2010–2012 (by year and program)



2012 coverage included a lot of attention to the AGS and Scholarship Programs, the majority of which appeared on the web.

FIGURE 9. Media appearance by type, 2012



The bulk of the Communication Department’s activities in 2012 were divided into two main activities (1) supporting A Good Start (AGS) communications and public relations that resulted in nearly 26 citations in national and international media and (2) designing and implementing four Scholarship Galas that resulted in over 56 citations in national media. Further activities were conducted by REF Romania’s Communication Department that coalesced around the launch of the School After School program and the Roma Inclusion Awards, together accounting for over 50 citations in the Romanian press.

Communication Strategy

REF’s Communications Department works in close coordination with the REF Chairman, Director, and staff to advance REF’s mission in the public sphere; its aims are to strengthen REF’s reputation among its key stakeholders, achieve change in the educational sphere for Romani children and youth, capture and share REF’s experience and knowledge, and empower REF staff through engagement. REF seeks to create not only recognition of but also support for its goals and values among its stakeholders. The department divides its work into two broad divisions – institutional and program communication – to deliver clear, compelling and consistent stories about its work. In addition, REF supports independent products and events that can “reach across the aisle” to non-Roma audiences and advance REF’s priorities for the support for Roma achievements and progress in education across Europe.

An online survey as part of REF’s external evaluation in 2012 reported good results about the impact of REF programs in a variety of categories, suggesting that REF has managed to match its profile and reputation with its mission. However, outside the realm of education and even more so outside of minority and Roma education, private actors and policymakers have not heard about REF. In the upcoming years REF must re-emphasize its core qualities and impacts if it is to succeed in its mission to close the gap between the educational outcomes for Roma and non-Roma.

REF’s comprehensive focus on Romani children, parents, and their larger communities make REF unique, consonant with REF’s professional staff, its work in all levels of formal education and its knowledge of Romani communities. Without REF’s expertise and cooperation, it is much more difficult for integration to succeed and much more challenging for agencies to improve the opportunities for Romani children growing up in underprivileged and poor socio-economic circumstances.

Cross-country Learning

As part of its cross-country learning component, REF hosted several delegations of academic and policymaking professionals ranging from a group of CEDEFOP catalogue professionals to American academics from Boston College and Columbia University, as well as numerous state officials. REF’s most high profile visit to date, a delegation of the European Commission represented by Mr. Jan Truszczyński, Director General for Education, brought more than 20 visitors to REF in 2012. REF also hosted a small group of Roma journalists attending courses at the Center for Independent Journalism and a group of American students from Boston College.

On September 13, 2012, REF received a visit from the French Minister of the Interior, the Delegate Ministers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a Member of French Parliament and advisor in Nantes Metropole for migrants in Romania in order to discuss the situation of the Roma population in France with the Romanian government, including the decision of the French government to send the Roma population living in France back to Romania. Among their meetings, they visited a REF project in Campia Turzii called “Closer to School” implemented by the Association for Promoting Social Inclusion (APIS). The overall project goal is to address Romani and non-Romani pupils from first to eighth grade and facilitate their integration into a quality education process and transition to high school education.

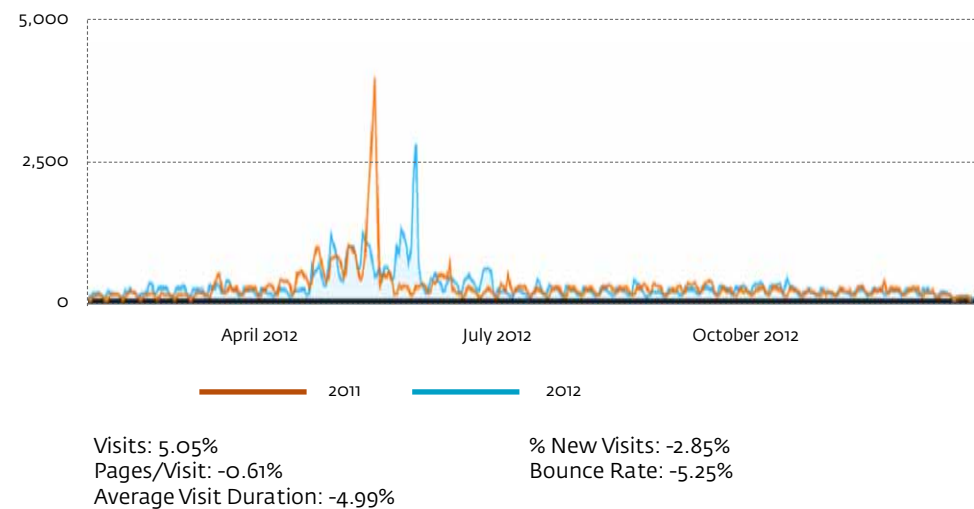
Finally, together with Finnagora, REF co-organized a media seminar (entitled “The Role of Media in Promoting Equality”) in Budapest on March 27, 2012, attended by an international group of 20 young media professionals.

More on REF's Cross-country Learning efforts can be found in the Policy Development and Advocacy section (see pages 89–90).

Online and Social Media

REF Headquarters joined REF Romania in opening its own Twitter account and continues its social media activities with Facebook, with its page now having a membership in excess of 3,000 people and organizations. Website traffic is up just over 5 percent for 2012 as shown in Figure 10. The spike in early May is due to scholarship applications. It received an average of 293 visitors a day, with each visit averaging 3.5 page views, but with falling figures for pages per visit, average visit duration and percentage of new visits. Forty-seven percent of visitors were new to the site in 2012.

FIGURE 10. REF website traffic, 2012 and 2011



The following two lists provide the top sources (countries) of the website's traffic and the top five downloads from the site.

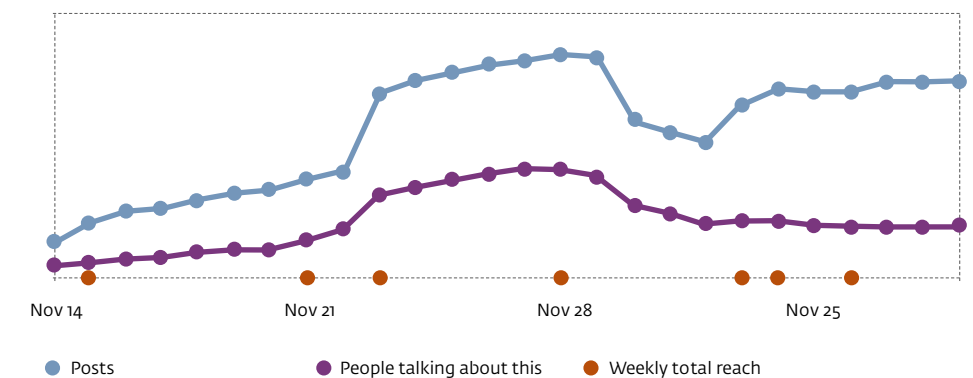
Top ten countries accounting for the most visits (comparison to 2011 traffic in percent)

1. United States	47,042	(-1.15%)
2. Hungary (English)	9,381	(-19.4%)
3. Bulgaria	8,327	(5.6%)
4. Hungary (Hungarian)	5,098	(293.4%)
5. Romania	4,480	(21.8%)
6. Russia	4,278	(-7.8%)
7. Serbia	3,911	(191.43%)
8. English	3,183	(20.4%)
9. Slovakia	2,986	(34.5%)
10. Czech	2,731	(3.21%)

Top five downloads

1. From Segregation to Inclusion in the UK	709
2. REF Annual Report 2011	238
3. REF Country Assessment Romania	238
4. REF Newsletter	234
5. RECI	231

FIGURE 11. Facebook activity, 2012



Public Relations Events

REF's communication strategy in 2012 included an intensive focus on presenting the effective implementation of A Good Start and publicly recognizing Roma Memorial University Scholarship beneficiaries. The strategy sought to respond to new priorities within the European Commission regarding early childhood education and care – and more broadly Roma inclusion – and also to celebrate REF's growing cohort of Romani university students, for which the Communications Department designed a series of public relations events in four select countries.

AGS International Dissemination Conference

The AGS International Dissemination conference, "Lessons from the EU Parliament-DG Regional Policy Pilot Project and Policy Implications for EU Structural Funds Use," was organized jointly by the Roma Education Fund and the World Bank. The one-day event in Brussels brought together over 120 participants on June 4, 2012 to disseminate AGS's results and outcomes. The conference was also the launch event for the World Bank report, *Toward An Equal Start: Closing The Early Learning Gap For Roma Children In Eastern Europe*, based on the 2011 UNDP/WB/EC regional Roma survey of Romani households in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. A joint news release, *Access to Early Childhood Education and Care Key to Equal Start of Roma Children*, was announced simultaneously by the European Commission, the World Bank, Open Society Foundations, and UNICEF.³³

The day opened with welcoming remarks moderated by Mr. Rudolf Niessler, Director of DG Regional Policy (European Commission), and the list of high-level speakers included Mr. László Andor, European Commissioner; Ms. Danuta Hübner, Member of European Parliament; Ms. Lívia Járóka, Member of European Parliament, Mr. Pierre Mairesse, Director of DG Education and Culture (European Commission), and Mr. Costel Bercus, Chair of the Roma Education Fund. The conference brought together policymakers, academics, Roma and non-Roma civil society organizations, governments, and European Commission and European Parliament representatives interested in developing a more inclusive system of early childhood education and care for Roma disadvantaged children. Throughout the day, AGS's preliminary results and lessons learned were discussed³⁴; the delegations had many opportunities to informally meet in the foyer among an installation of photography³⁵ and videos³⁶ featuring some of AGS's beneficiaries. REF commissioned the Serbian Roma

³³ <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/news/ref/news-and-events/news-release-access-early-childhood-education-and-care-key-equal-start-roma>

³⁴ Speeches and presentations are available online: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/dissemination-conference-good-start-project-agenda-and-power-point-presentation>

³⁵ Available online: <http://www.romaeducationfund.org/dissemination-conference-good-start-project-photo-exhibition>

³⁶ Available online: <http://romaeducationfund.org/videos>

director Milutin Jovanovic to produce a series of three videos, co-funded by the World Bank, on implementing the AGS portfolio of early childhood education and care interventions, and the Hungarian photographer Robert Miskovic spent several months in AGS localities documenting the project. This exhibition has since traveled to Nyiregyhaza and recently back to Brussels.

Scholarship Galas

After much planning with the Scholarship Department and national media agencies, the Communications Department organized Scholarship Galas for RMUSP beneficiaries in four locations: Kosice, Slovakia (November 15); Budapest, Hungary (November 22); Prague, the Czech Republic (November 27); and Sofia, Bulgaria (December 4). Designed to publicly recognize publicly REF scholars and their achievements, bring them together to network and share experiences, and also to attract the attention of the mainstream national media, each event utilized a mixture of motivational speakers, student voices, and music. Each event generated many articles in print, radio, and television at the national level in each respective country, not to mention Facebook and other social media.

PART VII ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE



ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

REF's External Evaluation

In 2012, REF underwent an organization-wide external evaluation. Here, we would like to share some of the key observations, findings, and conclusions. Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders (including 16 REF grant recipients and over 370 individuals including REF staff and donors) to determine REF's impact on reducing educational gaps of Roma, policy and capacity development, service delivery, knowledge sharing, and areas for potential improvement.

Overall conclusions were favorable and demonstrated that REF is making an impact in promoting access to education. For example, the study found that:

The general findings of this evaluation combined with the independent ratings by the evaluators according to the OECD/DAC³⁷ criteria show that the Project Grant Programme, Scholarship Programme and Policy Development and Capacity Building are the most relevant programs of REF and have significant impact in reducing the education gaps between Roma and non-Roma. These programs form the core of the REF activities.

Based on the evaluation results REF should continue and even further enhance its attempts to close the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma, as this shows very good results and contributes significant to REF's reputation. Further, REF should continue supporting development of models and good practices in partnership with educational institutions, Roma representatives and NGOs, and disseminate the good examples within the country and in the region.

Further, the evaluation made correlations between intervention success and types of interventions and intervention implementers in order to ascertain what conditions and types of projects produce the best results. This provided valuable recommendations and guidance on future intervention efforts. Furthermore, the assessment identified important models that REF has developed regarding preschool, primary, and secondary education, such as student mentoring, teacher training, and parent advocacy.

³⁷ The DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance, OECD (1991); Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986); Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms, OECD (2000). These criteria are relevance, effectiveness (or efficacy), efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

The full evaluation is available online:

http://www.romaeducationfund.org/sites/default/files/documents/ref_2012__impact_evaluation_report_final_version_o.pdf

REF FINANCES IN 2012

REF's previous annual report expected an income of EUR 9,522,193 from donors in 2012. The actual income figure for 2012 was EUR 9,593,587, hence the planned activities could be realized within all its programs. This year REF faced many challenges due to extremely slow expense reimbursement (more than 12-month delays) by the European Structural Funds managed by the Romanian government.

The operational administration expenses were EUR 698,855 (3.3 percent less compared to 2011). This decrease was due to the active tendering of REF's main service providers, which resulted in smaller expenses for REF administration.

Owing to continual follow-up, control of the 2012 budget, and reallocations based on the savings from administration, studies, and research, REF was able to dedicate more funds to the Grants Program, which amounts EUR 2,690,585 (16.8 percent more for grants and as compared to the previous year).

REF has successfully closed A Good Start, financed by the European Commission - DG Regio and was granted the entire contracted donor income of EUR 1,909,994, without non-eligible costs. The Hungarian Microregion Development Program also has finished, which supported Roma in Nyírbátor and Encs microregions of Hungary with tutoring, language courses, and health and housing programs up to EUR 250,000.

REF has launched several new programs in 2012, including a project with Fundación Secretariado Gitano's (FSG) that involved all three REF foundations, and AGS Phase II that started in September 2012 with the involvement of new private donors.

In addition, REF successfully tendered in several consortiums, for example, with the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities in the Progress call, where the total budget reached EUR 933,645, and in a consortium with Help - Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V in Montenegro with a budget of EUR 1,475,142.

Ongoing Fundraising 2012

Due to the current financial environment, REF had to shift its fundraising strategy, focusing on the following main directions:

- Work with past donors and encourage an extension of their contributions
- Engage donors in new EU member countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia)
- Mobilize more private sector resources, especially from private foundations and private companies
- Participate in a selection of tenders and calls where the REF Network can contribute its professional knowledge, but for which REF currently does not have dedicated financial resources

In 2012 this includes:

- Tendering on wide range of calls as Progress, Visegrad Fund, Lifelong Learning Program-KA1 calls, FP7 calls, and private foundations
- In addition REF involved two new private donors (a private donor in Norway and the American House Foundation) who will support the second phase of AGS up to the amount of EUR 85,000
- REF signed a multiyear contract from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for EUR 1,802,618
- The Bernard Van Leer Foundation supported REF on ECEC with additional EUR 134,000 for the period of 2013-2014

Financial organization

Roma Education Fund Switzerland was established in 2005. Roma Education Fund Hungary was established in 2006. Roma Education Fund Romania was established in 2009. The Roma Education Fund entities are established as legally separate foundations in Switzerland, Hungary, and Romania, respectively. The three Roma Education Fund entities work together based on a memorandum of understanding signed by each entity. Each Foundation has its separate board with independent members for their decisions. The Swiss and Hungarian boards engage AdminGroup, Ltd., as their independent bookkeepers. AdminGroup, Ltd., has established an expense coding system to ensure cost analysis among the programs of the Roma Education Fund and supports the Foundations with several consultations in their financial operations.

Accounting and Valuation Principles

General Terms

The books of the REF Foundations are maintained in local currency as per the respective legal requirements, with the exception of REF Switzerland where the books are maintained in EUR since the majority of

its transactions are in this currency. Many of the financial transactions are denominated in Euro (EUR) and these financial statements are presented in EUR.

Currency Translation

All resulting unrealized and realized gains and losses from currency transactions are recorded in a separate position in the statement of income and expenditure.

Swiss Franc (CHF)

Transactions in currencies other than EUR are translated at the daily rate. All balance sheet positions at the year-end are translated at the year end rate of 1.20733 CHF/EUR. All exchange rates are based on a publication of OANDA.

Hungarian Forint (HUF)

All local currency positions in the profit and loss statement of REF Hungary were translated from HUF into EUR at the yearly average exchange rate of 289.42 HUF/EUR. All balance sheet positions at year end are translated at the year-end rate of 291.29 HUF/EUR. All exchange rates are based on a publication of the Hungarian National Bank.

Romanian Lei (RON)

All local currency positions in the profit and loss statement of REF Romania were translated from RON into EUR at the yearly average exchange rate of 4.456 RON/EUR. All balance sheet positions at year end are translated at the year-end rate of 4.4287 RON/EUR. All exchange rates are based on a publication of the Romanian National Bank.

Reporting Period

The business and reporting period is defined on a yearly basis, starting at January 1 and ending at December 31.

Comparability with prior year

The presentation and disclosure of the financial statement for 2012 is much more detailed as in the past. By this occasion some quality improvements were also made. Therefore the financial statements 2012 cannot be clearly compared with the prior year. As there is no legal or regulatory need to present the prior year, these financial statements only presents the actual reporting period from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012.

Donations Received

Donation income is recognized at the nominal value when received. The promised donation income is not recorded in the interest of prudence.

Programs and Grants

The program and grant expenses paid are recognized at nominal value. Already known costs are accrued. The grants are presented in the actual year based on the paid expenses.

Administrative expenses

This includes administrative expenses of the operation, capital and equipment, contractors, HR-related expenses of the administrative staff and their travel expenditures which do not directly belongs to the projects. The administrative expenses are recognized at nominal value. Already known costs are accrued.



TABLE 29. Statement of Income and Expenditure 2012

		National bank yearly average exchange rates:		289.42	4.456
Statement of Income and Expenditure 2012					
	Notes	REF Switzerland EUR	REF Hungary EUR	REF Romania EUR	
INCOME					
Donations received from third parties	1	8,432,502	438,060	723,026	
Donations received from REF Switzerland		–	1,034,832	510,016	
Project Support Program Refund	2	180,898	9,523	–	
Other income		–	7,456	–	
Interest Income		782	1,026	286	
Gain on Foreign Exchange		–	1,911	8,368	
Total Income		8,614,182	1,492,808	1,241,695	
EXPENDITURE					
Project Support Program	3	2,690,585	–	–	
Tertiary Scholarships	4	2,582,697	67,219	18,909	
EU Roma Pilot – A Good Start and complimentary projects	5	63,808	665,344	–	
Hungarian Microregion Development Program	6	528	126,771	–	
Communications	7	113,362	38,563	125,680	
Policy development and capacity building	8	449,453	255,307	–	
International family project – FSG	9	4,474	10,746	924	
REF Romania – Equal opportunities	10	–	71,214	801,317	
REF Romania – School after School	11	–	–	1,048,423	
REF Romania – Health Program	12	–	–	222,409	
REF Romania – Youth on Labor Market	13	–	–	119,861	
REF Romania and its partners capacity building	14	13,007	–	229,086	
UNICEF	15	–	–	13,342	
Grants to Roma Education Fund, Hungary		1,036,000	–	–	
Grants to Roma Education Fund, Romania		514,478	–	–	
Total Programs and Grants		7,468,392	1,235,164	2,579,951	
Administrative expenses		167,517	531,338	–	
Value Adjustment on long-term loan	16	1,000,000	–	–	
Losses on foreign exchange		95,083	20,317	24,808	
Total Expenditure		8,730,992	1,786,819	2,604,760	
Excess of expenditure over income		(116,810)	(294,011)	(1,363,065)	

REF Switzerland and Hungary: the shortfall of REF foundations in the Statement of Income and Expenditure 2012 are covered from the reserves and accruals from the previous years, hence the financial stability is ensured.
REF Romania: the shortfall is due to the reimbursement mechanism of European Social Fund (ESF) project.

Notes to the Statement of Income and Expenditure 2012

1 – Details on Donations received from third parties 2008–2012

Donors	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Received by REF Switzerland						
AOSI			20,084			20,084
Austrian Government		1,000,000				1,000,000
DFID United Kingdom	423,888		1,233,907			1,657,795
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	88,367					88,367
EVZ – Stiftung "Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft"	112,430	153,580	95,000	296,580	179,400	836,990
Finnish Government				100,000		100,000
Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG)					5,965	5,965
German Government		1,550,000				1,550,000
Government of Spain	80,000		11,670			91,670
Individuals				4,285		4,285
LEGO Foundation				7,660		7,660
Network of European Foundation	200,000	400,000	200,000		120,000	920,000
Norwegian Family					28,135	28,135
Parishioners of St Thomas	254					254
Putumayo World Music, Inc.	422					422
Raiffeisenbank Hungary	4,226					4,226
Salzburg Global Seminar					1,026	1,026
SIDA Sweden	551,454	572,658		1,051,983		2,176,095
Slovenian Ministry for Foreign	10,000					10,000
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	182,050	368,353	247,382	420,000	800,000	2,017,785
Open Society Institute	3,786,508	2,760,840	3,944,829	5,195,047	6,584,344	22,271,568
World Bank Community Fund	3,753	14,577	31,069	12,915	9,717	72,030
World Bank IBRD	798,901		365,049	363,891	703,915	2,231,756
Yehudi Menuhin Foundation	1,797					1,797
Total donations received by REF Switzerland	6,244,048	5,820,008	7,148,989	7,452,361	8,432,502	35,097,908

Donors	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Received by REF Hungary						
American House Foundation					4,902	4,902
Bernard Van Leer Foundation				260,918	68,448	329,366
European Commission – DG REGIO			956,555	717,244	236,195	1,909,994
Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG)					6,006	6,006
HUN Gov't: Norwegian Fund	5,049					5,049
Sándor Demján Foundation				250,000		250,000
Tempus Foundation		1,067	2,025	1,001	788	4,881
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)				1,732		1,732
World Bank IBRD			6,385		8,184	14,569
Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V.					113,537	113,537
Total donations received by REF Hungary	5,049	1,067	964,965	1,230,895	438,060	2,640,036
Received by REF Romania						
Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG)					3,811	3,811
Romanian Management Authority-as partner				180,128	149,155	329,283
Romanian Management Authority-as lead entity				2,144,240	556,629	2,700,869
UNICEF				6,534	13,330	19,864
Individuals					100	100
Total donations received by REF Romania	-	-	-	2,330,902	723,026	3,053,828
Grand Total	6,249,097	5,821,075	8,113,954	11,014,158	9,593,587	40,791,772

2 – Project Support Program Refund

When projects conclude, they are reviewed, mostly by external parties with documentation in a compulsory report. If not all the funds were used they will be refunded to the Roma Education Fund. The refund means accrual reversal of that amount of the grant that was contracted but not paid and/or actual refund of the grant, which already transferred to the grantee.

3 – Project Support Program

The target of this project is to provide grants for initiatives by governmental and non-governmental agencies in the Decade of Roma Inclusion countries at all education levels. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

4 – Tertiary Scholarships

The target of this project is to provide scholarship for tertiary level Roma students.

The Program consists of five components:

- Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP).
- Law and Humanities Program (LHP)
- Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)
- Interregional Scholarship Scheme (RISP)
- Professional Development Fund (PDF)

This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

5 – EU Roma Pilot – A Good Start and complimentary projects

The target of this project is to ensure that all Romani and other poor and excluded children have access to quality ECEC services in 16 localities in rural and urban localities of the most deprived settlements in FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia will run until approximately the end of 2012. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

6 – Hungarian Microregion Development Program

The target of this project is to support Roma in Nyírbátor and Encs microregions of Hungary with tutorship, language courses, health and housing programs and will run until approximately the end of 2012. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

7 – Communication

REF's Communications promotes the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and communicating information on policies and programs that support Roma inclusion in education systems and represents one of the major pillars of REF's activities through conferences, workshops, and publications. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

8 – Policy Development and Capacity Building

The target of this project is to support studies, technical assistance, strategy development, and learning activities to strengthen dialogue with governments and civil society on education reform and Roma inclusion. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

9 – International Family Project

The target of this project is to support networking and knowledge sharing on education issues that arise in family environments in Roma Decade and other European countries and will run until approximately the end of 2013. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

10 – REF Romania-- Equal Opportunities

The target of this project is to increase school success rates for 1,250 Romani children in urban and rural areas and, children and their families have benefitted from the complex intervention package aimed to support school retention and to improve learning outcomes. The project will run until approximately the end of 2013. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

11 – REF Romania-- School After School

The target of this project is to increase the enrollment and academic success in primary education for 2,000 children at risk from early school leaving. The project is implemented in three development regions in Romania and will service 50 schools over two school years and will run until approximately the end of 2013. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

12 – REF Romania – Health Program

The target of this project is to enable access to education and young Roma's integration in the labor market, specifically in professions with high social prestige as well as those in the medical field and will run until approximately the end of 2013. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

13 – REF Romania – Youth on the Labor Market

The target of this project is to facilitate the access of the Roma youth in the labor market in order to reduce their social exclusion, discrimination, and risk of poverty and will run until approximately the end of 2012. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

14 – REF Romania and its partners capacity building

The target of this project is to provide capacity building and financial support for REF Romania and its partners for those activities which are necessary for project implementation but not covered by ESF. The program will run until approximately the end of 2012. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

15 – UNICEF

Through advocacy workshops, key decision-makers from the Ministry of Education, National Agency for Roma, the Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, Ministry of Labor, as well as academics and both Romani and non-Romani activists were gathered together. The project ended in 2012.

16 – Value Adjustments on long-term loans

Based on the risk analysis of long-term loans, a value adjustment had to be booked to cover the risk of non-recovering.

Network Audit Report

In 2012 as in the previous year, all REF entities were audited based on international standards of auditing (ISA) and on local financial requirements by PriceWaterhouseCoopers AG in Switzerland and Moore Stephens Hezicomp, Ltd., in Hungary. In Romania, REF started to cooperate with PriceWaterhouseCoopers Romania in order to provide the most qualitative audit review on its financial operation.

These audits ensure the transparency of the financial operations and enable the production of a consistent and high-quality annual report. The audit reports shows that in total the REF network closed 2012 with a negative balance, but still has enough foundation capital for its stated activities.

Outlook

As the Decade for Roma Inclusion is approaching its end in 2015, REF's main priority is to further strengthen its funding base to secure resources for its uninterrupted operation for 2014 and beyond. The most important instrument of this work to negotiate the renewal of the multiyear donor contracts with the founders – Open Society Foundations, the World Bank, and other main donors like Sida, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Austrian government.

In addition, REF will continue the active tendering in order to receive more EU funds for Roma educational projects as a main applicant and partner as well. In this respect, REF Romania will apply for local European Structural Funds in order to implement large-scale projects on local level.

Finally, since REF began to involve more private donors in 2012, this strategy continue and includes foundation from the private sector as well.

ANNEXES



REF BOARDS AND STAFF

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors, REF Switzerland



Costel Bercus
Chair of REF Board

Costel Bercus is a Romanian Roma and graduated with a degree in International Relations and European Studies from the Spiru Haret University in Bucharest. Since 1997, he has been working as a human rights activist with Romani CRISS (Roma Center for Social Interventions and Studies), which is a well-known human rights organization in Romania. In 2000, he was appointed Executive Director of Romani CRISS, which exposed him to extensive international activities and ultimately led to his appointment in 2005 as Board Member of the Roma Education Fund (REF). The same year, he was asked to take the Chairmanship of the REF Board, which he continues to carry today. Between 2006 and 2008, he led the Roma Civic Alliance of Romania, a network organization linking over twenty Roma NGOs in Romania. He has also worked as an international consultant providing technical assistance in policy development on Roma inclusion for several countries in the Western Balkans and Romania, commissioned by different international development agencies.



Yvana Enzler

In 2012, Yvana Enzler was the Swiss Ambassador to Albania and representative of the Swiss government on the REF Board until her posting in Sweden at the end of the year. She joined the Swiss diplomatic service in 1979 and was posted in Berne (1979–80), Brussels (1980–81), Berne (1981–88), Rome (1988–91), Washington (1991–95), and again Berne (1995–98). From 1998 to 2002 she was Deputy Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassy in Sarajevo and, from 2002 to 2007, Head of the Swiss Liaison Office in Pristina (Kosovo). She holds an MA in Political Science from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and a M.A.L.S. from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



Pierre Gassmann
Vice-Chair

Pierre Gassmann is a Swiss national. He holds an MBA (INSEAD) and an MA from the Graduate Institute for International Relations in Geneva. He worked for ten years in the private sector and then for 25 years in senior management positions at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), namely as Head of Operations for Eastern Europe. He has served as program advisor and lecturer at the Program for Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR) at Harvard University and at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). He has been a consultant to the International Labour Office (ILO), the Swiss MFA, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), and the United Nations Works and Reconstruction Agency (UNWRA). He is an associate at Wolf Group Consultants.



Henna Hutu

Henna Huttu is a Finnish Romani activist, President of the Fintiko Romano Forum (Finnish National Roma Forum), and NGO Roma of Northern Finland. She studied in the International Master of Education Program at the University of Oulu and specialized in intercultural education and special education. She worked at the Finnish National Board of Education, Roma Education Unit from 2000–2002 and from 2006 onwards as a permanent Romani specialist at the Advisory Board of Roma Matters in the Provincial State Office of Northern Finland. She has published articles on a variety of matters concerning the education of Roma, including teaching materials for the Romani language.



Lívia Járóka

Lívia Járóka is a social anthropologist and elected Member of the European Parliament since 2004 in the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats). Ms. Járóka was the first Romani woman to be elected as a Member of the European Parliament. On behalf of the European People's Party (EPP), she drafted the resolution on "The Situation of Roma in the EU" and the resolution "A European Strategy on the Roma." She also served as rapporteur for the European Parliament's resolution on "The Situation of Roma Women in the EU" and initiated the EPP report "Educational and Employment Situation of the Roma in the European Union." In 2011 she was the rapporteur for the EP's report on the "EU Strategy on Roma inclusion," which served as a basis for the "EU Framework on National Roma Inclusion Strategies" adopted during the Hungarian Presidency of the EU in June 2011.



Lisa Jordan

Lisa Jordan is Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. In this position she oversees programs and operations that impact over a million disadvantaged young children every year. Ms. Jordan is a well-known speaker, author, and applied specialist in the fields of democracy, civil society, good governance, NGO accountability, and globalization. She is co-editor of the recently published book *NGO Accountability: Politics, Principles and Innovations*. Ms. Jordan has worked on strengthening democracy and civil society through positions with NGOs, governments, and private philanthropic foundations for twenty years. Ms. Jordan previously served for nine years with the Ford Foundation as Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Governance and Civil Society Unit. In this position she was responsible for overseeing USD 120 million in grants. Other positions included directing the U.S. component of the Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE), an environmental exchange program for parliamentarians from Russia, Europe, Asia, and the United States; acting as a legislative assistant to Congressman Jim Scheuer (8th NY); directing the multilateral development bank program of BothEnds, a non-profit in the Netherlands; and directing the Bank Information Center, a non-profit in Washington, D.C. She has acted as a consultant for numerous foundations in the fields of development and environment and has published peer reviewed articles in Dutch, English, and Spanish on changes in the fields of development, globalization, NGO accountability, and on the multilateral development banks. Ms. Jordan graduated *cum laude* in 1992 with a Master's Degree in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. An American national, she is married with two children.



Robert Kushen

Vice-Chair

As a Senior Advisor at the Open Society Foundations (OSF), Robert Kushen provides assistance to a number of Roma-related organizations in addition to REF. Presently, he is the Director of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, which provides support to the Decade of Roma Inclusion. From 2008-2011 he served as the Executive Director of the European Roma Rights Center, a public interest legal advocacy organization dedicated to challenging discrimination and promoting equality of Roma throughout Europe; presently he serves as Chair of the Board. He has served as a member of OSF's Roma Advisory Board since 2004, which is responsible for oversight of all of OSF's Roma programming, and is presently the Chair of that Board. From 1996-1999 and from 2003-2007, he served in a number of positions at the Open Society Institute, including Director of International

Operations from 2004-2007. From 1999-2002, he served as Executive Director of Doctors of the World (DOW), a non-governmental organization committed to addressing healthcare problems caused by human rights abuses in the U.S. and around the world. From 1991-1996, he served in the Office of the Legal Adviser of the U.S. Department of State, where he worked as counsel to the bureau on counterterrorism, liaison to the International Criminal Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and negotiated a number of international agreements in the areas of scientific and environmental cooperation.



Katarina Mathernova

Senior Adviser, Europe and Central Asia Region, Roma Issues, The World Bank. Katarina Mathernova, Slovak national, was appointed as Senior Adviser for Europe and Central Asia Region, and Roma Issues at the World Bank in 2010. Prior to that, between 2007 and 2010, she served as Deputy Director General for Policy Development, Communication and Coordination in Directorate General for Regional Policy in the European Commission, overseeing all policy issues related to the Structural Funds, the largest economic development program of the European Union. In this position, Katarina spearheaded Roma-related initiatives, such as the EP Pilot on Roma inclusion and the amendment of Article 7 of ERDF regulation, allowing the use of Structural Funds for housing for marginalized communities. From 2005 to 2007, as a Director in the same Directorate General, Katarina was responsible for regional policy programming and implementation in eight EU countries. Ms. Mathernova holds a Juris Doctor degree from Comenius University and a Master of Law degree from the University of Michigan. She is a member of the New York Bar; she speaks six languages. She started out her career in private law practice in New York and Washington, D.C. Thereafter, she joined the World Bank in Washington in 1993. Katarina took time off from the Bank to return to her native Slovakia to join the first reform Dzurinda government, between 1999 and 2002, to work on economic policy and institutional reforms and preparation for EU membership, as Special Adviser to Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. The Slovak English-language weekly, *The Slovak Spectator*, in 2000, named her Slovak Woman of the Year.



Nadir Redzeqi

Nadir Redzeqi is Macedonian Roma and has been an NGO activist since 1998. With his 12 years of experience working on the Roma issues at local, national, and international level, he contributes to Roma integration and the institutional set-up of Roma issues. He has held various positions in managing and coordinating Roma-related actions and has been member of a number of policy and decision-making bodies related to the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Macedonia and is an active international actor on Roma issues. At present, he holds the position of Project Manager at Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma, Open Society Institute-Budapest.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, REF HUNGARY

Costel Bercus

Chairman



Katalin E. Koncz

Katalin E. Koncz has been the Executive Director of the Open Society Institute-Budapest since 1993. Before that, she served as the Executive Director of a Hungarian non-profit organization devoted to the educational and professional training needs of young Central and Eastern Europeans. Ms. Koncz is a member of the informal Roma Advisory Committee of the Open Society Institute.



Gyula Várallyay

Gyula Várallyay is a former senior staff member of the World Bank, where he worked on projects and country programs in the regions of Latin America, Europe and Central Asia. Mr. Várallyay served as Interim Director of REF on two occasions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, REF ROMANIA

Costel Bercus, *Chair of REF Board*; Pierre Gassmann; Rob Kushen; Judit Szira

REF HEADQUARTERS IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Judit Szira

Executive Director



Judit Szira, a Hungarian national, holds a teachers degree in Mathematics and Chemistry and a degree in Public Education. Between 1998 and 2006, she was a member of the School Board of the city of Budapest City Council. Between 1994 and 1997, she was Program Director of the Public Education Development Program at the Soros Foundation, Budapest. Previously, she was Chief Advisor to the Roma Commissioner in the Ministry of Education of Hungary. She is a member of the Board of the National Tempus Foundation. Judit has been working from the beginning of her career on Roma inclusion issues in the field of public education. She has been published in professional journals and newspapers on equity issues, active citizenship, and social cohesion.

Erzsébet Báder

Communications Assistant



Erzsébet Bader is a Hungarian Roma and holds a BA degree in English Studies.

She worked as International Coordinator at the Roma Press Center in Budapest; prior to that she participated in a project of the European Roma Rights Centre as a researcher, focusing on Roma education in Hungary. Erzsébet also took part in a Media and Marketing training program at the Centre for Independent Journalism, Budapest, held for local TV stations in Hungary. In 2007, Erzsébet was a Press Coordinator for the Chachipe photo contest, organized by the Open Society Archives and Open Society Institute, Hungary.

Tom Bass

Communication Officer



Tom Bass was born in London, grew up in the United States, and has been based in Central Europe for almost 20 years. He has a BA from the University of Texas-Austin, an MA in Political Science from the Central European University, an MA in Creative Writing from Bath Spa University, and a certificate in literary translation from the Balassi Institute in Budapest. He has formerly worked as an editorial consultant for the Open Society Foundations and other prominent international organizations on issues of public policy, governance, and minority affairs.

Azam Bayburdi

Administrative Assistant



Azam Bayburdi is a Russian national and holds an MBA in Finance, Statistics, and Management from the Greenwich University of London, UK. Azam also holds a degree in Hindi Philology from the department of Philology, Leningrad State University and participated in the Hindi Philology Fellowship program of the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. She was also a legal administrator at the European Roma Rights Center and Assistant to the Academic Pro-Rector at Central European University. Before joining REF as Administrative Assistant, Azam worked for the Ministry of Education, Office of the Minister's Commissioner for Integration of Roma and Disadvantaged Children as a Consultant. Azam joined REF in November 2012.

Stanislav Daniel

Studies Officer



Stanislav is the Studies Officer at the Roma Education Fund. Before his previous assignment at the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights as an Officer on Roma and Sinti Issues, he worked for the European Roma Rights Centre as a research officer with geographic focus on the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Russia. In his professional career he has conducted several studies, managed teams of researchers, and otherwise contributed to research projects aimed primarily at education, free movement, state response to anti-Roma violence, implementation and impact of activities, as well as policies and measures aimed at Roma inclusion in the EU. Stanislav also has experience in community development and the capacity building of municipal Roma politicians and Romani youth. He holds a degree in Social Work in Roma Communities from the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia.

Dan Pavel Doghi

Scholarship Program Higher Education Program Manager



Dan Pavel Doghi (Romania) worked for seven years as Officer on Roma and Sinti Issues at the OSCE ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues. Since 1996 Mr. Doghi has been helping the development of Roma organizations. Between 2000–2004 he was Program Coordinator at the Open Society Foundation's spin-off Resource Center for Roma Communities in Cluj. He also worked as an advocacy fellow on Roma educational matters for Columbia University's Public Interest Law Initiative in Budapest. He studied social work at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and completed a postgraduate course in International Diplomacy at Malta University.

Andrea Dörömböző

Financial Officer



Andrea Dörömböző is a Hungarian Roma and holds an MA degree in English Studies, obtained ELTE University, Faculty of Elementary and Nursery School Teachers. Prior to joining the REF team in Budapest, Andrea spent eight years as an Assistant Casino Manager, leading and controlling casino activities and was responsible for all financial activities, working with various international organizations and financial teams. Now, as a REF employee, Andrea works as a Financial Officer.

Éva Földesi

Country Facilitator until September 2012



Éva Földesi, a Hungarian national, holds a BA in Economics and an MA in Sociology and Anthropology from Central European University (CEU). Before joining the Roma Education Fund, Éva was working as a project assistant on a Roma labor market project and was an educator at the Holocaust Museum in Budapest. After graduating from CEU, Éva joined REF first as an Administrative Assistant then took the position of Country Facilitator for Hungary from September 2010. This position included the duties of supporting grant management programs, coordinating A Good Start (the European early childhood education project of REF), and facilitating the implementation of these programs among partner organization, local stakeholders, and donors.

Eben Friedman

Advisor on Policy Development until July 2012



Eben Friedman holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of California, San Diego. His dissertation, "Explaining the Political Integration of Minorities: Roms as a Hard Case," drew on two years of field research in Macedonia and Slovakia. Based in Skopje since 2005, Eben joined REF in 2007 after several years with the European Centre for Minority Issues.



Stela Garaz

Scholarship Program Officer

Stela Garaz is a Moldovan national. She holds a BA degree in Political Science from Moldova State University and an MA degree in Comparative Politics from Central European University. She was recently awarded a PhD in Political Science at Central European University, working on a research project about the link between the concentration of political power and ethnic minorities' mobilization in post-Soviet Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Before joining REF, Stela worked for CEU Asia Research Initiatives in Budapest, and for the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg, Germany.



Attila Geröcs

Financial and Administrative Coordinator until July 2012

Attila Geröcs graduated with an MA degree in Economics from the University of Pécs with the qualification of Master in Finance. He was a member of Romaversitas Hungary between 2006 and 2010. Attila worked as an intern for the Hungarian National Bank, U.S. Embassy in Budapest, and for the British American Tobacco Company in Budaörs.



Merziha Idrizi

Scholarship Program Alumni and Program Officer

Merziha Idrizi is a Roma from Macedonia. She has a BS degree in Economics and Financial Management from the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje and joined the REF Scholarship Program in September 2007. Merziha previously worked as a Program Coordinator on the project Alliance for Inclusion of Roma in Education within the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia, as a part of the Roma Education Program. Merziha has experience, on a voluntary basis, with Romani and non-Romani NGOs from Macedonia related to Romani language and culture. She was a member of the Center for Economic Analysis (CEA) – Macedonia until 2007.



Viktória Kőszegi

Scholarship Program Program Officer until September 2012

Viktória Kőszegi holds a BA from the Teacher Training Faculty of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest and a postgraduate degree from the Personnel Administration Faculty of Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration. She comes from the governmental sector where she worked in administration at the municipal level and was responsible for coordination tasks for the Community Development and Cultural Committee. She joined the REF Scholarship Program in September 2008 as Administrative Assistant and Country Coordinator for the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program in Hungary and is currently working as Program Officer in the Scholarship Program team.



Radoslav Kuzmanov

Scholarship Program Program Officer

Radoslav Kuzmanov is a Bulgarian national. Radoslav worked for more than six years for the Roma NGO Drom in Vidin, Bulgaria where he was involved in the implementation of projects dealing with Roma education, desegregation, public awareness, and advocacy campaigns. He holds a MA in Psychology from South West University in Bulgaria. In 2012 Radoslav graduated from the Roma Access Program at Central European University.



Milen Milanov

Program Officer until April 2012 / Country Facilitator from May 2012

Milen Milanov is a Bulgarian Roma and holds a BA in International Business Relations. Milen has been working in the Roma field since 2001. He started his career as an English-language teacher. Milen worked at the Sofia Municipality as a Deputy Mayor responsible for the implementation of the local Municipal Strategy for Roma. In September 2009, Milen was appointed for one year as a National Coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in the government of Bulgaria. In September 2011, Milen joined the Roma Education Fund as a Country Officer responsible for the Bulgarian and Serbian portfolios.



Anasztazia Nagy – on maternity leave until September 2012

Program Officer

Anasztazia is a Roma from Hungary working as program officer at the REF. Currently, she is coordinating and managing the Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian project portfolios. She graduated from Budapest Corvinus University – Faculty of Public Administration in 2002 and holds a MA in Public Policy from the Central European University, Budapest. She is very committed to improve the educational situation of Roma since she believes that this is the only field that can significantly change the future of the Romani pupils. She was also active member of the Roma community during her studies.



Beata Bislim Olahova

Grant Program Manager

Beata Bislim Olahova has worked at the Roma Education Fund in Budapest as a Project Grant Program Manager since 2006. Beata holds BS/BA honors degree in Business Management and an MBA from the Central European University Business School, Budapest. Since 2007, Beata has been a Member of the Management Board of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), having been nominated by the Slovak Republic. Before joining REF, Beata was involved in many human rights actions; among others, she worked with the European Roma Rights Center as a legal monitor for Slovakia where she was involved in human rights monitoring and worked to investigate potential cases of discrimination and human rights abuse. As a student of the post-graduate Roma Diplomacy Program of the Diplo Foundation, she participated and contributed to the international events on Roma Diplomacy, as a Challenge for European Institutions.



Szilvia Pallaghy

Program Manager of the EU-funded A Good Start project

Szilvia Pallaghy is a Hungarian national, holds an MBA, having graduated from the Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio and the CEU Business School, Budapest. She holds an MA in Literature and in Psychology pursued in Hungary. After working in the private sector as Human Resources Specialist for General Electric, she began to work in the Ministry of Education, Hungary, in various positions. Between 2003 and 2006, Szilvia was the Head of Secretariat at the Office of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Roma and Disadvantaged Children. From 2006 onward, she worked as the Head of Unit for Education and Equal Opportunity in the Directorate General for Equal Opportunity. She joined the Roma Education Fund as Manager of the EU-funded A Good Start project on Early Childhood Education and Care in 2010.

**Beata Prokaj***Finance and Administrative Coordinator*

Beata Prokaj, a Hungarian national, holds an MA degree in Economics. Beata's career started in the private sector, from which she moved to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as a Staff Development Clerk. She joined REF in June 2010 as a Finance and Administrative Coordinator working on the EU Roma Pilot A Good Start project. Beata has strong sense of social responsibility.

**Shemsi Shainov***Senior Program Officer*

Shemsi Shainov is a Roma from Macedonia and holds a BA in Economics. He was appointed as Senior Program Officer from his previous assignment as Country Facilitator for Macedonia. Before joining REF, he worked as a freelance consultant, mainly on small and medium-scale enterprise development, training programs, land tenure issues, and environmental protection projects. In 1995, the government of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany appointed him as a local partner consultant for a project on Economic Reintegration of Rejected Asylum Seekers, and one year later he was appointed as a Director of the Department of Entrepreneurship Development. In 2001, he became National Program Officer at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within the Swiss Embassy in Macedonia. For more than three and a half years he had various assignments, working in the Czech Republic and occasionally in Poland, for The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, a UK charity, in the development of the Romany Youth Entrepreneurship Program. Shemsi also worked for three years as a journalist for the Macedonian Television Corporation.

**Mihai Surdu***Research and Policy Development Manager until May 2012*

Starting in 1995, Mihai Surdu worked with the Research Institute of Quality of Life in Bucharest, Romania. In 2007, he joined REF as Capacity Building and Policy Development Manager. Mihai Surdu has a doctorate of Sociology from the University of Bucharest. He has written extensively on issues related to Roma education and has published extensively on segregation as well.

**Marius Taba***Monitoring and Evaluation Officer*

Marius Taba is the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the Roma Education Fund. Marius is a Roma from Romania and has been working with REF since its establishment. He graduated with an MA in Public Administration, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest. In 2011, he obtained a PhD in Sociology from the University of Bucharest. He has been very active in civil society activities in Romania since 1999. Prior to coming to REF, Marius worked for more than five years for Romani CRISS – Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies where he was implementing projects dealing with education and public awareness campaigns. Marius is founder and Board member of the Romanian Students Organization from Hungary.

**Barbara Tonté***Administrative Assistant until November 2012*

Barbara Tonté is a Hungarian Roma and has been working for the Roma Education Fund as Administrative Assistant since September 2010. Previously, Barbara worked for Kai Consulting as well as in implementing a community development program in five disadvantaged settlements of Hungary. Barbara has also worked for the Hungarian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, the European Parliament, and the Romaversitas Foundation. She graduated from the University of Szeged with a BA in 2005 (where she was also a human resources manager) and from Central European University with an MA in 2008 (where she was also an expert on European Studies).

**Dennis Omondi Yonga***IT Specialist*

Dennis is a Kenyan national and formerly of KEMRI/CDC – Kenya, where Dennis worked as data analyst/IT specialist for four and a half years prior to joining REF. Among other responsibilities, Dennis' current role includes providing leading support in REF's Grant Management System and online scholarship development and in-house support for the development and continuous maintenance of the organization's IT systems. Additionally, he ensures that REF HQ's (Budapest, Hungary) IT infrastructure runs smoothly, and arranges purchases with suppliers. Dennis holds a diploma in IT from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Nairobi, Kenya.

**Jenő Zsiga***Finance and Administration Manager*

Jenő Zsiga, a Hungarian national, came to REF from the private sector. He managed an international advertising agency as Deputy Director from 2001 to 2006. He holds a BA from the Budapest Business College and holds an MA from the University of Pécs in Economics. As a young Roma activist he was one of the founders of one of the first Hungarian young Roma associations, the Bronz Klub.

REF ROMANIA, BUCHAREST

**Eugen Crai***Country Manager*

Eugen Crai was the Country Manager of Roma Education Fund, Bucharest until January 2013. He holds a Master's degree in Law of McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and has completed several post-graduate studies in management and training in The Netherlands, UK, Denmark and Romania. Specialized in Human Rights Law and Anti-discrimination legislation (he also graduated several summer courses at Central European University Budapest), Eugen was the Program Manager of the first EU Phare Project for the Improvement of Roma Situation in Romania and worked for 9 years with UNICEF Office in Romania as Education Officer and later as Social Policy Specialist. He is currently a Management Consultant at REF Romania.

**Ana Maria Cojocaru***Financial Manager*

Ana-Maria Cojocaru graduated the Faculty of Automatics within the Polytechnic Institute of Bucharest, holds a diploma of HR Analyst and also an MBA with the Romanian – Canadian MBA Program. She has worked as a Senior Consultant and HR Manager for LARIVE Romania IBD, performing market research studies, business development plans, providing consultancy for M&A projects and headhunting. Starting with 1996 she was involved in PHARE Projects either as an expert or performing program management on behalf of LARIVE. From 2002 until 2009 she worked as a long term expert in all PHARE Projects "Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups" (PHARE 2001, 2003 and 2005) – Lot 2 Grant Scheme Management and also provided support for the PHARE 2004 Project. She was Procedures, Procurement and HRD Expert, Local Coordinator and in the PHARE 2005 she was Team Leader for both components of the Project, i.e. Institutional Building and Grant Scheme Management.

**Florin Nasture***Program Manager through 2012*

Florin Nasture is a Romanian Roma. He graduated from the faculty of Theology and Philology, Bucharest University and has an MA in Strategic Management and Social Development. Since 1997 he has been actively involved with Roma Civil Society, working

as a Program Coordinator for Romani CRISS and later as a Country Coordinator for the Pakiv European Roma Fund. He managed programs dealing with education, culture, and income-generating activities. He has an extended training and practice of community development.

Cristi Mihalache

Program Manager until August 2012

Cristi Mihalache is Project Manager of the Roma Education Fund Romania Foundation. He graduated the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest, Romania with a BA in Public Administration, and holds an MA degree in Human Rights from the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary. Cristi has been involved in activities related to public relations, international advocacy, and grant administration, capacity-building and training with organizations such as Romani CRISS, ERRC, and Open Society Institute. He acted as a consultant for the Management Authority, the institution managing the European Social Fund in Romania, as well as for other Technical Assistance projects on issues related to social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups. Beginning 2007, Cristi has acted as a consultant on EU structural funding for the Roma Education Fund.

Cristina Jitariu

Project Coordinator

Cristina holds a BA from the Faculty of Medicine, Iasi and a Masters Degree in Social and Health Services Management from the University of Bucharest. She has worked since 2004 in implementing social projects addressed to disadvantaged groups. Her experience is multiple (monitoring & evaluation, project management, training, evaluator, consultant in public health research, contribution to publications) in projects such as the National Tuberculosis Program (Project Management Unit World Bank and Global Fund), increase of access to health services for Roma Communities (JSI / USAID), S.P.E.R. (PHARE), Study on access to health care of Roma population (Romani CRISS).

Georgiana Barbulescu

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

Georgiana holds an MA in Human Rights at University College London and her previous work included implementing projects at PACT Foundation on integration of Roma on the labor market, on intercultural dialogue and on the EU Open Method of Coordination process on social inclusion. Among others, she worked at Save the Children Romania, Minority Rights Group International, and Children's Society in London, UK. She has a previous background in the private sector, working in PR agencies for multi-national companies.

Catalin Mocanu

Database Expert

Catalin Mocanu is the database expert for the School After School Project. He graduated with a degree in Computer Science for Economics from the Faculty of "Computer Science for Business Management" at the Romanian – American University from Bucharest. He is nearly finished with his MA with a specialization in Economics/IT at the same university. He has several certificates in the IT area (administration, networking) with a few years of experience at REF Romania, his first job after completing his undergraduate degree.

Georgian Lunca

Logistics Coordinator through 2012

Georgian made his first step in the human rights activism as a reporter of Roma News, the first press agency of Roma minority in Romania. After almost one year since graduating the Sociology and Social Work Faculty, University of Bucharest, he joined the

Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) Regional Center for Central, East and Southeast Europe, where he brought his contribution to the good implementation of initiatives aiming to improve the interethnic climate and situation of ethnic groups from Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Former Yugoslavia. During the last three years he has been actively involved in the media development activity of Medienhilfe, oriented to increasing the capacity of Roma media outlets to bring their contribution to the successful integration of Roma minority in Europe.

Andreea Constandache

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

Andreea is the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator in the School after School project. She has a BA and a MA from the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences. She is an Expert in Business Assistance and POSDRU Training Implementation.

Ionela Cristea

Project Coordinator

Ionela holds a BA from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest and an MA in Human Resources Management at the same faculty. Since 2003 she has been actively involved with Roma civil society, working for "Impreuna" Agency. She has specific experience in implementing projects in the area of Youth, Volunteering and Education. She was also active member of the Roma community during her job as a consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers Romania.

Mihai Tudora

Teachers Responsible Reporting

Mihai holds a BA in Economics from University Dimitrie Cantemir and a MA in Organizational management and human resources from University Spiru Haret, also graduated courses of Project Manager and Procurement expert and SEAP. Since 2003 he was an accountant but from 2006 he was involved in projects with European funding (Phare 2004, Phare 2005 and two projects funded by European Social Fund POSDRU) as financial, HR, technical expert, and Financial Manager.

Laura Greta Marin

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator through 2012

Native Romany speaker from Romania, Laura studied Law, Psychology and Community Development. She is involved in the NGO sector since 1999, working in projects addressed to Roma communities and other disadvantaged groups. Her fields of expertise are: training, community facilitation/development, strategic planning, project and organizational management, public policies, monitoring and evaluation (of projects and programs, public policies, etc). As expert in monitoring and evaluation she trained over 1000 public servants and NGO staff and took part in a number of technical assistance teams for implementing PHARE Projects in Romania. Laura is co-author of the "Monitoring and Evaluation System for Intervention Focused on Roma in Romania" - National Agency for Roma and General Secretariat of the Government, 2008.

Monica Florina Calin

Project Assistant

Monica is a Roma from Romania graduated in Social Assistance, now enrolled in a Master Course on Public Policies in Social Assistance. Monica is active in the NGO sector since 2006, coordinating projects and programs regarding the improvement of the Roma children access in education, raising the access of the Roma communities members to social services, capacity building for Roma in relation with the public authorities, civic education for young Roma, etc. In her activity she worked with a number of NGO, the most relevant: Ruhama Foundation, Impreuna Agency, FCSD, RSDF.



Adina Ursulean

PR and Logistics Coordinator

Adina Ursulean graduated from the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Studies, University of Bucharest. In present she is enrolled into a Masters Course on Communication Campaigns, Advertising, and Public Relations. From October 2010 she held the position of PR and Logistics Coordinator at Roma Education Fund, Romania, prior to what she worked at a PR agency for various multinational companies.



Roxana Gheorghe

Project Assistant

Roxana is a Romanian Roma. She graduated from Law and Administration and she is a student at the Faculty of Foreign Languages.



Marius Savu

Database Expert

Marius Savu is a young Roma activist who graduated the Sociology and Social Work Faculty, at the University of Bucharest. He started working for the Roma communities as a reporter of the first Roma press agency, Roma News. During the following years, Marius' involvement within the Roma and non-Roma civil society continued and diversified, by harmonizing practical community development work ("Together" Agency for Community Development) with the journalist activities that he was carrying out during his internship at the Center for Independent Journalism-Bucharest. Since December 2010, Marius joined Roma Education Fund Romania as a database expert.



Claudia Bercus-Kovacs

Project Coordinator

Claudia Kovacs was the Project Coordinator on behalf of REF Romania for "Competitive Roma Young, with equal opportunities on the labor market" project. She graduated the Babes Bolyai University Cluj and now she is a PhD candidate at Faculty of Political Science, Bucharest. Since 1999, Claudia mixed experience in non-governmental with governmental sector (public policies for Roma), but also worked in technical assistance for various projects. Now she is focus on social inclusion through active tools.



Alina Monica Ionescu

Consultant for educational and social problems

Alina graduated the Faculty of Psychology at Bucharest University in 1997 and the Romanian School of Classical Psychodrama in 2005. Now she is group psychotherapist and trainer. Her background in NGOs and public institutions (and her expertise) is in clinical psychology and personal development. From 2007 she coordinated grant projects related to addiction and personal development. Now she is consultant for educational and social problems in "Competitive Roma Youth, with equal chances on the labor market". She has elaborated and now she's monitoring the implementation of a complex program of prevention of social dysfunctions for 700 Roma youth.



Claudia Cerasela Banica

Project Coordinator

She has 10 years' experience at European and national level in coordinating projects on Roma issues and also a valuable expertise in advocacy and human rights training and research on Roma, trafficking, and child protection issues. She graduated in 2000 Public Administration and Law School in 2004 and acquired in 2006 LLM in Human Rights from Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.



Georgiana Sumanaru

Project Assistant

Georgiana Sumanaru graduated from the Faculty of Public and Business Administration, University of Bucharest, with a BA in Public Administration. Starting with January 2011, she holds the position of assistant coordinator in the project A Generation of Roma Specialists in the health field – ID 62047. She has previously worked as assistant manager on a PHARE project and also as billing analyst in the private field – legal domain.



Adriana Sumanaru

Project Assistant

Adriana is a Project Assistant for REF Romania since December 2010 (*Competitive Roma Youth with Equal Chances on Labor Market and A Generation of Roma Specialists in the Medical Field*). Graduated from Faculty of Physics, MSc in Biophysics and Medical Physics she started to work as a teacher. Switching for the private sector she gathered experience in working with and managing people. After a M Sc. degree in Managerial Communication and Human Resources, Adriana counted two years' experience in training and HR development (working with volunteers). She also has over five years' experience in project implementation (PHARE and European Social Funds - SOPHRD), from which three years on projects concerning Roma ethnicity.



Nicoleta Bosnigeanu

Country Coordinator for Romania

Nicoleta holds a BA degree in Philology from the University of Bucharest and a MA in Communication and Public Relations from the National School of Political and Administrative Studies. Since 2004 she has been working for NGOs and CSR departments as coordinator of educational and social programmes, addressed mainly to the disadvantaged groups and as developer of communication and PR campaigns. She started working with REF in April 2011 as Country Coordinator for the RMUSP scholarship program in Romania.



Mihaela Juncu

Head Accountant

Mihaela graduated the University of Economic Studies in Bucharest, holding a BA in Economics. She worked both in the public and the private sectors. She has been the accountant in the Financial-Administrative Department of the organization since 2011.



Dana Vlasceanu

Financial Expert

Finance Manager since 1997; graduated the University Politechnics Bucharest and the EMBA – finance degree with University of Sheffield, UK. She joined REF in January 2012. Previously she worked with other US-based organizations: three years with International Orthodox Christian Charities, which implemented two ESF projects in assisting the organizational development of 3 dioceses in 9 counties to support the Romanian Orthodox Church to become a strategic partner in social inclusion area; 8 years with JSI Research & Training Institute, which implemented various projects dedicated to improving health services in Romania, fight against domestic violence and HIV/AIDS discrimination or disaster relief; 2 years with Citizens Democracy Corps, which offered consultancy to small and medium size enterprises.



Octavian Rusu

Legal Advisor

Octavian is legal adviser, working with REF since the beginning of its activity in Romania. He graduated Faculty of Law in 2000 and obtained a Master degree in Organizational Management and Social Development in 2009. Octavian has more than 10

years' experience in legal support for various NGOs in Romania in day- to-day activities and in advocacy activities for improving the legal and fiscal framework for nongovernmental organizations. He is legal associate for International Center for Non- for-Profit Law, providing each year a country report about the legislation that rules the NGOs activity in Romania. In the last 10 years Octavian was involved in technical assistance projects for Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Interior, and consultant for international companies like Ramboll Management, Human Dynamics, Archidata or LDK Consultants, for projects that are in relation with legal or NGO issues.

Valentina Diana Gheoca

Procurement Expert

Valentina is the Procurement Expert in the Bucharest Roma Education Fund office and is involved in two of the ESF financed projects currently under implementation by the Romanian branch. Valentina has studied Juridical and Administrative Law within the "Spiru Haret" University of Bucharest and has been working as a Procurement Expert and Bid Coordinator since 2006 for various multinational companies such as Poyry, Deloitte and Louis Berger. She has also been involved in several PHARE and ISPA projects as Project Manager or Procurement Expert.

Mark Gomez

Communications Officer through 2012

Mark Gomez is the Communications Officer of Roma Education Fund Romania. He holds an MBA specializing in Marketing Communications from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. His career has focused on marketing communications and public relations in industries that he finds "cause-based," such as in education and cultural non-profits. Highlights of his career include procuring USD 2.5 million in grants from six different U.S. federal government agencies via effective proposal writing. Mark joined the Peace Corps once again in March 2012 and was assigned to REF Romania to help the cause of Roma inclusion in Romania, given his experience as a minority American in the U.S.

Cristina Rotaru

Executive Assistant

Cristina is a graduate of Social Communication and Public Relations at the University of Bucharest. She is currently enrolled in a Master Program of Image Theory and Practice at the CESI Consortium. She has an extensive experience in administrative activities, working as a PHARE procedures and irregularities responsible for the PHARE Program Access to education for the disadvantaged groups, implemented by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. Her experience has enriched by holding the position of technical coordinator in two ESF projects implemented by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, having as main objectives the development of the reading- writing key competences, the Second Chance and School after School programs.

Vergiliu Busuioac

Driver

Vergiliu Busuioac is the driver for REF Romania.

COUNTRY FACILITATORS

Dimitar Dimitrov

Country Facilitator for Bulgaria until summer 2012

Dimitar Dimitrov graduated with a BA in Tourism in 2004. In 2009, he finished his postgraduate degree in Social Development Practice at London Metropolitan University, UK. He has professional qualifications in political management and management of European programs and projects. In 2005, he completed a traineeship at the European Commission at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. In 2006, he was a trainee at the National Parliament of Bulgaria. He is also a graduate of the Bulgarian School of Politics. He has extensive experience in community development. For a limited period of time he was a senior expert in the State Agency for Youth and Sports in Bulgaria. As a consultant he was involved in the elaboration and development of different social, educational, and socio-economic studies and analyses.

Danut Dumitru

Country Facilitator for Romania

Danut Dumitru is a Romanian Roma and has been working as a Country Facilitator for Romania since September 2010. For four years he has worked with the Roma Initiatives as a Program Coordinator at the Open Society Institute where, amongst other tasks, he was monitoring and evaluating projects. In doing so, he monitored many NGOs from all parts of Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2000, Danut has been involved in defending Roma rights with Romani CRISS (Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies) in Romania. Danut holds a BA in Sociology and Social Work from the University of Bucharest, Romania and an MA in Community Administration of Justice. He graduated from the Roma Access Program at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary in 2005.

Natasha Kocic-Rakocevic

Country Facilitator for Serbia and Montenegro

Natasha Kocic-Rakocevic is a Roma from Serbia. Since 1999, she has been actively involved in Roma civil society, working as a program manager for the Romani Children's Center. She has managed numerous programs dealing with education, health, civil participation, and gender issues. Natasha took part in the Serbian Roma rights movement. As a Roma National Consultant, engaged by UNICEF, she participated in the development of the Subregional Study on Exclusion of Roma in South-East European Countries, with a particular focus on Romani children and women. She has had training in project and financial management, project development, monitoring, fundraising, and strategy planning.

Aida Mihajlovic

Country Facilitator for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aida Mihajlovic is a Bosnian national. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Science, English Department, Sarajevo University, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She started working in different schools in 1987 and in the last 15 years she focused her work in the NGO sector. During this period she has held various positions in managing and coordinating for different NGOs and diplomatic missions. While working with Save the Children UK, she provided valuable support and input as a member of the project coordinators team for the publication *A Guide for Models of Good Practice in Regional Project-based Work with Romani Children* as an output of the Inclusive Education and Anti-Discrimination in the Western Balkans – Equal Opportunities for Romani Children project.



Senad Mustafiov

Country Facilitator for Macedonia

Senad Mustafiov is a Roma from Macedonia. He graduated from the Faculty of Law – Justinian I at University St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, Macedonia. From 1999–2002, he was been actively involved with Roma civil society, working as a volunteer, an assistant in Roma programs at Foundation Open Society Institute–Macedonia (FOSIM) and later as a program coordinator at Romaversitas/FOSIM. Senad was a member of the Romany expert group at the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and is a trainer for Democracy, Advocacy, and Lobbying.



Nikoletta Olah

Country Facilitator for Hungary

Nikoletta Olah graduated with BA degrees in Social Work (University of Pécs) and Social Management (Corvinus University) and an MA degree in Social Politics (ELTE University). Nikoletta worked as a Project Coordinator and Analyst for EU projects before joining REF. She has also worked with NGOs and the private sector. Nikoletta's current position as Country Facilitator for Hungary includes supporting REF's grant management program, coordinating the European early childhood education project of REF (A Good Start), and generally facilitating the implementation of these programs among partner organizations, local stakeholders, and donors.



Jan Stejskal

Country Facilitator for the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Jan Stejskal holds a PhD in Law and Legal Science, and a BA degree in Sociology and Media Studies, both from the Masaryk University, Brno. Previously, he worked as an educator in law and political science at Masaryk University, an election campaign manager, and coordinator of the Together to School (*Jekhetane andre škola*) coalition composed of 15 NGOs pursuing equal access to education for Romani children. Jan has conducted several studies on housing, anti-debt programs, and education and has also published in newspapers on human rights and Roma-related issues. He joined the Roma Education Fund as a Country Facilitator for the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 2011.



Marsela Taho

Country Facilitator for Albania and Kosovo

Marsela Taho is Albanian and started working for the Roma Education Fund in June 2010 as a Country Facilitator for Albania and Kosovo. She received her degree in Social Work from the University of Tirana in 2001 and also completed the Roma Participation Program at the Central European University in Budapest in December 2005. Marsela has worked with children and their families as a social worker for various organizations such as Terres Des Homes, UNDP Local Governance Program, and AiBi (Amici dei Bambini) Roma Women of the Future. She is involved in Roma women's issues and is part of the International Network of Roma Women. She recently worked in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in Tirana, in the Secretariat of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.



Biserka Tomljenović

Country Facilitator for Croatia

Biserka Tomljenović is a Croatian citizen with a multicultural family background. She holds an MA degree in social work from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law. Her graduation thesis was entitled "Educational Segregation of Roma in Croatia." She started working on projects regarding Roma education in 1998. She has cooperated with various NGOs, international organizations, and government bodies. From 2006–2009, she was engaged as an external associate of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports in the position of Project Coordinator for the project Improvement of Access and Quality of Roma Education in Croatia, supported by REF. She has experience working as a project manager, trainer, research associate, leader of support groups for underage mothers, and in advocacy and activism, organization of parent groups, children with behavioral problems, and individual counseling.

NATIONAL SELECTION BOARD OF REF SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP)

Country	Name	Institution	Institution /Organization
Albania, Kosovo	Raimonda Duka	lecturer	Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana
Albania, Kosovo	Sofokli Garo	lecturer	Faculty of Education, University of Durres
Albania, Kosovo	Adriatik Hasantari	executive director	Roma Active Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia	Maja Petrusheva	president	Education Advising Center Skopje
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia	Maria Metodieva	director	Open Society Institute-Sofia, Roma Program
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia	Svenka Savic	professor	University of Novi Sad
Bulgaria	Anna Rizova	chief European project management officer for the European Integration Fund in Bulgaria	National Employment Agency
Bulgaria	Deyan Kolev	president	Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance
Bulgaria	Galina Marinova	consultant	Trust for Social Achievement
Bulgaria	Liliya Makaveeva	executive director	Integro Association
Bulgaria	Lyubomir Lazarov	consultant on Roma education projects	Caritas Sofia
Czech Republic	Lucie Horvathova	officer	Cabinet of Minister of Human Rights and Minorities
Czech Republic	Michaela Stejskalova	sociologist, project coordinator	Masaryk University, Youth Included
Czech Republic	Zdenek Rysavy	executive director	ROMEA
Hungary	Csilla M. Farkas	independent consultant, advocacy, communications and Roma rights issues	
Hungary	Ivan Soros	head of department	Ministry of Human Resources
Hungary	Lidia Balogh	program manager	MONA Foundation for the Women of Hungary
Macedonia	Alma Mustafovska – Salimovska	independent lawyer	
Macedonia	Maria Donevska	professor	Institute of Social Work and Social Policy – Faculty of Philosophy, University of "Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje"
Romania	Elena Motas	consultant	Prefect's Institution, Iasi
Romania	Iulian Stoian	expert	Soros Foundation Romania
Romania	Lucian Gaman	president	Apollo Resources Centre

Country	Name	Institution	Institution /Organization
Serbia	Dragana Jovanovic	coordinator	Center for Integration of Youth
Serbia	Tatjana Peric	consultant and trainer	OSCE; Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation
Slovakia	Agnes Horvathova	chair person	Romano Kher, NGO
Slovakia	Alica Petrasova	teacher	Pedagogical Faculty, Prešov University
Slovakia	Lucia Faltinova	director	Donors Forum
Turkey	Basak Ekim Akkan	affiliated researcher for SPF, PhD scholar and lecturer	Social Policies Forum (SPF); Bogazici University-Istanbul
Turkey	Emine Onaran Incirlioglu	associate professor	Faculty of Arts and Sciences Sociology Department Maltepe University-Istanbul
Turkey	Hacer Foggo	Roma rights activist	Sulukule Platform

Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)

Country	Name	Institution	Institution /Organization
Bulgaria	Yana Yotova	expert	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Science
Bulgaria	Milena Grigorova	state expert	Ministry of Health
Bulgaria	Stefan Panayotov	general practitioner, president	"The Health of Romany People" Foundation in Sliven
Macedonia	Alma Mustafaovska – Salimovska	independent lawyer	
Macedonia	Senad Memedi	adviser	Department for European Integration, Ministry of Health
Macedonia	Redzep Ali Chupi	director	Department for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of Members of Ethnic Communities, Ministry of Education and Science
Serbia	Angelina Skarep	adviser	Ministry of Education
Serbia	Vladimir Cakarevic	adviser	Ministry of Health
Serbia	Marija Aleksandrovic	member	Roma National Council, Board for Education

Law and Humanities Scholarship Program (LHP)

Country	Name	Institution	Institution /Organization
Moldova	Dorina Ardeleanu	program coordinator	Terre des Hommes Foundation/Moldova office
Moldova	Ruslan Stanga	director	NGO "Ograda Noastra"
Moldova	Silvia Bicenco	program coordinator	IREX/Moldova
Russia	Victor Shepoval	assistant professor	Moscow City Pedagogical University
Russia	Kirill Kozhanov	postgraduate researcher	Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Russia	Stanislava Kuchepatova	scientific expert	St. Petersburg Institute of Art History
Ukraine	Ihor Krykunov	chairman	Roma NGO "Amala"
Ukraine	Rostyslav Semkiv	professor	National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy
Ukraine	Taras Lyuty	professor	National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy

Roma International Scholar Program (RISP)

Country	Name	Institution	Institution /Organization
RISP/all	Csilla M. Farkas	independent consultant, advocacy, communications, and Roma rights issues	
RISP/all	Nena Grceva	international higher education programs expert, formerly program manager at IIE	Institute of International Education (IIE)

GRANTS TABLE 2012

LIST OF ACTIVE GRANTS PER COUNTRY

Country	Project Code	Organization	Project's Name	Contracted On	Completed On	Granted Amount (EUR)	Project Objectives
Albania	ALB 015	Union for Development and Integration of the Romani Minority in Albania "Amaro-Drom"	Preschool Education in Kuçova and Grabian	01.06.2011	31.05.2012	36,475	The main objectives of this project are: (1) Increasing preschool learning opportunities for 150 Roma and non-Roma children aged 3–6 in Kuçova and Grabian/Lushnje, (2) Enabling children of different ethnic groups to interact and socialize with each other through improvement of multiethnic relationship in kindergarten, school, and community, (3) Increasing parental and community awareness about the importance of registration in civil state offices, ECEC in two Romani communities, (4) Continuing support (material and sensitize) for kindergarten children who will pass to the first grade, and for their families.
Albania	ALB 019	Rromani Baxt Albania	Improving and Promoting Education and Training for Roma Children at National Level	01.09.2011	31.08.2012	65,867	The proposed project aims to continue the activities of ALB 012, preparing Romani children aged 3–5 for registration in public kindergartens through a preschool program licensed by the Ministry of Education, promoting registration of school-age children in public primary schools, and offering after-school support for children enrolled in public primary schools administered by teachers from those schools (but not the same teachers who provide the children with instruction during school hours).
Albania	ALB 022	Save the Children Switzerland, Save the Children ALB	Inclusive Quality Pre-Primary, Primary and High Education for Roma/Egyptian	01.12.2011	31.12.2012	77,373	This project seeks to continue and build on ALB 008, which the applicants implemented with REF support from January 2009 to December 2011 in two preschool institutions and two primary schools each in the municipalities of Gjirokastra and Korça. The main target group of ALB 008 consisted of 723 preschool-age and school-age Romani and Egyptian children.
Albania	ALB 023	Romani Baxt Albania	Care and Education for displaced Roma children	01.02.2012	30.06.2012	6,870	This project aims to provide children from displaced Romani families in Tirana with preschool education and to build support for education within the families by preparing children for enrollment in RBA's kindergarten in Tirana, enrolling children in public kindergartens
Albania	ALB 030	Amaro Drom	Educational support in Kucova, Grabian, Elbasan and Levan	01.09.2012	31.08.2013	56,990	The aim of the project was to provide preschool education and assistance with enrollment in primary education for 150 Romani and non-Romani children aged 3–6 and their parents. To this end, the project focused its activities on two public preschools and organized an ethnically mixed summer school for children aged 5–15, also providing referral services and training for Romani parents.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	B&H 011	Novi Most International	Novi Most Roma Education Project	01.03.2011	31.01.2014	62,132	The main objectives of the project are to increase the number of children who are enrolled in mainstream school, to decrease the number of children enrolled in special school, and to increase the number of youth who finish their elementary education (grades 1–8) through an accelerated learning program to pass special exams in a local school.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	B&H 018	New Roma Hope	Let's Educate All Roma children	01.10.2011	Suspended Fe. 2012	41,552	The main goal of this project is to ensure Romani children inclusion in the system of regular, compulsory primary education, inclusion of Romani children in preschool program and to enable Romani children who dropped out to continue their primary education through catch-up classes and extraordinary exams.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	B&H 021	SAE Roma	Development of the Roma Community in Tuzla Canton 2012–2014	01.09.2012	31.08.2014	65,847	The project is a scaling up of previous projects with REF and intends to improve and expand the level of participation of Romani children in the field of preschool, primary, and secondary education in four project municipalities (11 Romani communities). The aim of the project is to ensure that Romani children are included in the system for compulsory primary education and to encourage Romani population to continue to secondary education.

Bulgaria	BU 135	Centre for educational integration of children and students from ethnic minorities	Support to the Institutionalization of Desegregation Process in Bulgaria	01.08.2010	30.06.2012	300,000	The main aim of the project is to support municipalities to lead the process of reorganizing their school network by transferring Romani children to mainstream schools and closing the Roma-only schools and to facilitate partnership between the municipalities and Roma NGOs which have accumulated valuable experience in implementing school desegregation projects, especially the ones who were supported by the Open Society Institute and the Roma Education Fund.
Bulgaria	BU 153	Department of Education, Sofia Municipality	Schools of Inclusion	01.03.2011	30.04.2012	69,280	The main objective of the project is to develop and implement an effective and sustainable municipal model for social integration of Romani children in educational institutions through capacity building, scaling up activities, in order to achieve high preschool enrollment for Romani children developing at the same time conditions for adaptation and skills for living and studying in multicultural environment, field work/community involvement, and institutional support in order to create conditions for social inclusion.
Bulgaria	BU 156	New Horizons Association	Step by Step Together for Better Education of Romani Children	01.07.2011	31.05.2012	50,820	The purpose of the project is to provide Romani children living in rural areas in Panagyurishte municipality with equal preparation and access to school. The project objectives are: (1) to raise the motivation and understanding of Romani children, parents and the community as a whole for the importance of the education and the need to get well prepared before going (enrolling) children to preschool groups and first grade classes; (2) to develop the capacity, competencies and skills of 35 teachers working in preschool groups and first grade classes in the municipality; (3) to create a school environment that respect Romani children's culture, traditions and habits; and (4) to assist Romani families in the process of enrolling and further educational development of their children in preschool groups and first grade classes.
Bulgaria	BU 159	Romany Bacht	Education for All	01.07.2011	30.06.2012	48,130	The objectives of this project proposal are: provide conditions for quality early childhood education for the Romani children in Samokov by enrolling them in mainstream kindergartens, provide conditions for educational integration into the Bulgarian society by provision of quality early childhood education, increase the level of motivation for attending kindergarten and preschool groups of the children, increase the motivation of the parents to send their children to kindergarten, increase the level of family involvement, assist children in kindergarten with after class activities to increase their performance, build positive interethnic environment, improve the communication climate between Romani and non-Romani parents
Bulgaria	BU 161	Association Integro Bulgaria	Making High School Accessible and Attractive for Roma Youths from Rural Areas	15.08.2011	15.08.2012	50,000	The main objectives are to diversify the school life and study curriculum; to attract, retain and integrate young Roma in the secondary education system; to decrease the drop out rate of young Roma from secondary schools; and to provide additional support to students with after school activities. Main Outcomes: 200 students with enhanced performance at school, thanks to the textbooks revolving fund; facilitate access to modern technology to 1,000 students in 10 secondary schools; 80 students with increased level of participation in the public school life; teachers and other pedagogy staff with increased knowledge and skills for development of project proposals under the various Operational Programs and other EU programs.
Bulgaria	BU 162	Parental board at Kindergarten Bulgarche Vratsa 1949	Kindergarten Program in Bulgarche Vratsa	01.07.2011	30.06.2012	50,000	The objectives of the project are to provide quality services in educational, safety and health environment for the children at kindergarten age in the villages of Kulata nad Nefela and thus providing opportunities for equal access to quality education in the compulsory school system. Main outcomes: all Romani children at kindergarten age enrolled in the kindergarten (70 children); increase of the educational achievements of the Roma children in kindergarten (level of performance, compared to the level of performance of the non-Romani children; level of enrollment in first grade); increased Romani parental motivation (140 parents) (number of Roma parents, involved in the activities of the project); developed program for work with parents; developed publication for lessons learnt in Bulgarian and English language.

Bulgaria	BU 160	Amalipe Association	Advocacy for Roma Educational Integration	1.10.2011	28.02.2012	6,600	Advocacy for Roma educational integration: the purpose and objectives will be achieved through expert work at district and regional level for preparing Roma Education Regional Maps (district workshops, regional conferences, and so forth), expert work at national level for participating in the working groups that prepare the National Roma Strategy and the National Reform Program, two national advocacy forums and public-awareness campaign.
Bulgaria	BU 167	Independent life Roma society	Equal Opportunities for Roma Children	1.09.2011	31.08.2012	11,803	The project is targeted at development of a model for creation of proper conditions for out of class preparation for school for 40 Romani children in grades 1–7, and preservation of the teaching capacity of the local Romani community through employment of three Romani teachers, graduates from the now closed university specialty pedagogy with Romani language.
Bulgaria	BU 168	Center for Regional Development Roma	Second Chance	1.10.2011	30.7.2013	59,276	The main objective of the project is the reintegration of Romani adults who have not completed their primary and secondary education. The project will assist the members of Roma community to enroll to a "Second Chance" program, based on adult education curricular in Bulgaria, and through the work of professional teachers, the students will acquire secondary school knowledge and certificate.
Bulgaria	BU 171	Kyustendil Municipality	For Better Education	1.09.2011	31.08.2012	15,500	The main project aims are: to create conditions for equal integration of the Romani children from Kyustendil in the social, economic, and political life of the country in the future by creation of equal opportunities and equal access to education and improvement of the quality of life while respecting the principles of equality and non-discrimination.
Bulgaria	BU 184	Sofia Municipality	Sofia Municipality and Public Council for Realization of Municipal Strategy for Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, in collaboration with districts Krasna Poliana, Slatina and Lulin	01.05.2012	30.08.2012	17,872	The project is an extension of the BU 153 project and expands on (1) organizing school network and develop a local program for further desegregation of Roma children from other localities in Sofia and (2) organizing and implementing campaign for enrollment of Roma children in first grade who have not been attended preschool groups. Its main goal is to assure equal access to school for Roma children and augment the number of educational institutions situated close or bordering areas with concentration of Roma population which welcome and integrate Roma children.
Bulgaria	BU 177	Equal opportunities	Sofia Preschool Access	01.09.2012	30.06.2013	19,750	The main objective of the project is to increase the enrollment and the attendance rates of Romani children in Sofia in the preschool education and facilitating their smooth transition from the Romani neighborhood to the mainstream kindergartens and primary schools. The project aims at enrolling approximately 500 Roma children in the mainstream educational facilities.
Bulgaria	BU 179	Diverse and Equal Association Sofia	Together in Learning and Playing	01.11.2012	01.07.2013	61,818	The project steps on the results of the desegregation project "Roma children want to study" (covering only children in preschool education), implemented in the town of Botevgrad (11.2010–10.2011). It aims to achieve social inclusion of Romani children and their parents living in the Botunetz and Kremikovtzi quarters and the town of Buhovo through provision of equal opportunities for education.
Bulgaria	BU 182	Roma Academy for culture and development	Preschool in Nazdeda	01.09.2012	30.06.2013	19,876	The project aims at increasing a number of children in preschool age (aged 5–6) and increasing the capacity of parents and community to be involved in the educational process of Roma children from the quarter of "Nadezhda" in Sliven.
Bulgaria	BU 188	Center for Local and Regional Policies	Let's Make Kindergarten Our Home Too	01.11.2012	01.08.2013	34,737	General goal of the project is to decrease the percentage of 5–6-year-old Romani children not attending preschool groups in the municipality of Nikola Kozlevo for the current school year. Currently non-attendance rate of Roma preschool children is 90 percent. The project plans to decrease this to a minimum of 10 percent non-attendance. Objectives are: to raise the motivation of almost 100 parents to enroll and send their children (54 children) regularly to preschool groups in the municipality for the current school year (2012/13); to provide 54 Romani preschool children with sufficient knowledge of the official language and make them more confident for their school participation and performance after enrollment in elementary level of education for the new school year (2013/14); to motivate at least 80 Romani mothers from eight localities to communicate with their children on the official language in their home environment.

Bulgaria	BU 192	Kustendil municipality	For Better Education 2	01.10.2012	30.06.2013	16,610	The project is a follow up of BU 171, The main project's aims are: to create conditions for equal integration of the Romani children from Kustendil in the social, economic and political life of the country in the future by creation of equal opportunities and equal access to education and improvement of the quality of life while respecting the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and desegregation.
Bulgaria	BU 195	Amala R	Good Start Good Finish	01.10.2012	30.06.2013	4,884	The project is targeted at parents and children of the marginalized Roma families. It will cover 31 Romani children and their parents, the teachers who teach them. Children are divided as follows: 16 – preschool group, 8 – first grade, 7 – second grade. With different methods and techniques they will be stimulated, encouraged, and urged to actively participate in the educational process. We will work with teachers who have experience in teaching Romani children.
Croatia	CRO 015	Medjmurje County	With Preschool Education to Complete Integration	15.09.2011	30.06.2012	62,097	The project is the continuation of the CRO0013 project which was implemented in the Medimurje County during 2010/2011. It presents and upgrades all activities: number of children increased, number of groups increased, monitoring is strengthened as well as management and the steering committee with representatives of all relevant stakeholders is introduced. CRO015 is designed based on lessons learned from the implementation of CRO0013.
Croatia	CRO 016	Merlin association for promotion of creativity	After-school Support and Parent's Involvement	01.10.2012	30.06.2013	10,000	The main goal of the project is to create equal opportunities for all Roma children between ages 7–15, by providing quality after-school support so that they are motivated to continue their formal education in the Croatian educational system. Main expected result in the next 5–6 years if the project continues is increased enrollment of Roma from Vodnjan in secondary and further education.
Croatia	CRO 017	Medjmurje County	With Preschool Education to Complete Integration	01.10.2012	01.08.2013	60,168	The project is continuation of CRO 015 project which was implemented in Medjmurje County during 2011/2012. The aim of the project is to create sustainable conditions for full integration into mainstream preschool and primary education throughout Medjmurje County for all Romani children from the age of 6 through long-term and systematic approach to preschool education and upbringing, to prepare the sources, and to come out with the long-term solution to provide quality, integrated preschool education.
Czech Republic	CZ 015	Jekhetane	Equal Start	01.01.2010	30.06.2012	27,454	This project aims to integrate at least 25 Romani children aged 6-7 from two segregated localities in the city of Ostrava in primary schools in which Roma constitute no more than 25 percent of all pupils. Children from these locations tend otherwise to attend practical schools (i.e., former special schools) or standard primary schools in which the majority of pupils are Roma.
Czech Republic	CZ 017	Člověk v tísni, o.p.s. / People in Need	Hin tut pro da	01.09.2010	31.08.2012	50,000	The main goal of the project is to develop the cognitive qualities of and overcome educational barriers faced by Romani children in Czech Republic through development and piloting of a new methodology for work with educationally disadvantaged children in the sphere of formal education in four ethnically mixed primary schools in Prague.
Czech Republic	CZ 026	Museum of Romani Culture	Complex Work with Socially Disadvantaged Roma Children in Preschools and in Primary Education	1.09.2011	31.08.2012	25,321	The main goal of the project is to support preschool and primary education desegregation of 33 Roma children from socially disadvantaged localities Brno-střed (center) and Brno-sever (north) Czech Republic, the South Moravia region, through enrollment to state kindergartens and good quality mainstream schools, and to support their sustainable educational outcomes within this more inclusive (and desegregated) environment.
Czech Republic	CZ 029	Romodrom	Family Center for Education Prostejov	01.10.2012	01.09.2013	56,017	The aim of the project is to support the integration of Roma and non-Roma children (at least 80 percent Romani and 20 percent non-Romani children) from the rural areas of Olomoucian region in Czech Republic into preschool and school educational system by helping them to develop the necessary knowledge and skills usual for children entering nursery school or basic school.
Czech Republic	CZ 033	Bily Nosorozec & Beleza	Together to Preschool OSTRAVA	01.11.2012	01.10.2015	191,847	Main project objectives are: to increase Romani children aged 5-6 enrollment to kindergartens and provide for their regular attendance; to provide Romani families with material support necessary for a regular attendance; to change the attitudes of preschool facilities management towards Roma; to address low expectation some teachers have about Romani children; to reduce prejudice of non-Romani parents

						towards Roma; to provide a regular semi-formal education for Romani children aged 3-5 in a Mothers club (one in each of the two localities), and hence develop their skills and prepare them for later enrollment into kindergarten; to provide homework support for selected children in order to motivate them for regular attendance at club; to empower Romani mothers (and families in general) when participating in the Mothers club activities under the guidance of experienced teacher; to ensure Romani children will be enrolled to mainstream elementary schools providing quality education (and hence avoid streaming Romani children into both practical and de facto segregated elementary schools).
Czech Republic	CZ 034	Slovo 21	Send to a Friend	01.12.2012	01.05.2013	16,196 The main goal of the project is to maintain Romani students attendance in the primary and secondary school through improvement of their education performances and support their transition and achievements to the tertiary education.
Hungary	HU 052	Eötvös Loránd University	Practice and Fieldwork of Students of Intercultural Studies in the Tanodas	01.09.2010	30.08.2012	108,590 The aim of the project is to establish a relationship and initiate cooperation between the Center for Intercultural Psychology and Education of ELTE University, Budapest (main applicant) and four "Tanodás" (organizations for extracurricular project activities) in the city of Budapest.
Hungary	HU 054	DARTKE Association	Student Mentoring Program in Support of the Szeged and Hódmezővásárhely Desegregation Measures 2010/2012	01.09.2010	30.08.2012	85,000 The main objective of the project is to support desegregation started in a number of towns in Hungary in September 2007.
Hungary	HU 059	Roma Civil Rights Organization	"Láss, ne csak nézz" Tanoda	01.09.2011	30.08.2012	24,490 The objective of the project is (1) to improve the academic success of 30-35 pupils with low academic achievements from grades 5-8 and (2) to empower Romani youth from the Romani settlements. Main Outcomes: Regarding our experiences in the study hall program the applicant expectations are 50 percent decrease in unjustified absence, 20 percent increase in high school completion, 20 percent increase in applying to high school after finishing primary school, 40 percent reduction in failure rate.
Hungary	HU 063	Chance for Renewal Social, Educational and Cultural Association	Csepel Tanoda – Career Guidance Club	01.08.2011	31.07.2012	34,494 The main objective of the project is the increase the number of Roma students attending secondary education and to decrease the drop out and grade repetition of 50 Romani children by establishing a Career Guidance Club and providing after school educational support (Tanoda). Main Outcomes: improvement of the participants' school achievements; a significant decrease in the number of dropouts among participating pupils – indicator; high proportion of children continuing their studies on the secondary level.
Hungary	HU 060	Romaversitas Foundation	Romaversitas	01.09.2011	31.08.2012	44,682 The main goal of the programme is to increase the number of Roma students graduating university, through financial and academic support.
Hungary	HU 065	Szama Dã Noj	Study Hall against Dropping out	01.12.2011	30.04.2013	16,460 The main goal of the applicant organization is to support Romani eighth-graders in advancing their educational performance in order to successfully continue their education on secondary level. The other target group is the secondary school students who are benefiting from tutoring services for preventing dropping out and enhancing schooling results.
Hungary	HU 067	Waldorf Pedagogical Institute	The Link between Waldorf Pedagogy and Improving the Situation of Disadvantaged Romani Children	01.04.2012	30.06.2013	12,935 The Waldorf Pedagogical Institute's project would like to contribute to the in-service teacher training by piloting a Waldorf-methodology-based 90-hour training for 70 elementary school pedagogues teaching in two Romani majority schools. Waldorf alternative pedagogy would be piloted in the schools with the final aim to (a) provide alternative methodological tools for dealing with disadvantaged children, and to handle language and cultural barriers and (b) to develop teacher competences by introducing new teaching concepts and practices for their professional renewal.
Hungary	Emergency Fund 2012	Tanoda programs in Hungary	Tanoda	01.02.2012	31.12.2012	250,000 The Open Society Foundation (Budapest) – Making the Most of EU Funds Program, together with REF, supported an emergency fund for 25 Hungarian Tanoda programs in 2012; tanodas play a key role mainly in the rural areas in community development and sustainment. Importantly, they proved to be good tools for enhancing school performance of Romani and disadvantaged children in order to prevent early school leaving (ESL) and to promote the continuation of studies in secondary schools.

Hungary	HU 068	Unity in Diversity	Your Story/Meséd	01.05.2012	30.04.2013	27,789	The proposal intends to extend the Your Tale component of the A Good Start Project, which was implemented with promising results in Hungary in 2011. The Meséd project uses mothers as agents of change to improve the quality of life for their families. This is done by equipping them with better reading and writing skills, encouragement of self-expression, improving of life skills, and creating community empowerment.
Hungary	HU 073	Romnibus	School Network against Dropping out	01.09.2012	30.06.2013	51,160	The main goal of the project is to improve the school results of 131 primary and secondary school Romani students and to combat early school leaving through tutoring and mentoring support and extracurricular activities.
Hungary	HU 074	Add a kezed az esélyegyenlőség megteremtésének	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	48,720	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. Main objectives of the project are: providing access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children, including ensuring the quality of ECEC in former AGS project sites; raising early childhood development outcomes for Roma children so as to enhance their school readiness; developing strategic partnerships to increase and sustain the attention of local and national governments (cooperation with higher education institutions); contributing to dissemination and continuation of AGS project in Hungary.
Hungary	HU 077	Romaversitas	Romaversitas	01.10.2012	01.07.2013	85,669	The aim of the project is beneficiaries successfully accomplish their studies and enter the labor market with broadened opportunities to start a career. Furthermore, to contribute to developing and executing programs aiming at the improvement the situation of the Roma, as young intellectuals responsible for the common good of their community. Project objectives are: to increase the percentage of Romani students graduating at university or college through academic and financial support; to contribute to the professional development of the students beyond tertiary education; to help the employment of graduates into professional fields.
Hungary	HU 078	Mrs. Erika Ivancsik Dancsné	Christmas Event for Roma Children	01.11.2012	01.12.2012	1,500	The aim of the project is to support 600 disadvantaged Romani school children and their parents for Christmas educational event.
International	INT 019	Central European University	Roma Access Program	01.06.2010	31.12.2013	330,000	(1) Increase in group numbers (with the understanding that not every student may then move on to an international MA, but may simply extend their skills significantly - we realize that this may require a change in our targets, but certainly at the beginning we wish to try and take more students and still attempt a significant group entering the MA – in other words maintaining the MA as a clear goal, we believe that closer ties with the Roma Scholarship Fund, for instance, would help us reach more effectively the type of students who would benefit from RAP; (2) Diversification of subjects – moving beyond the small cluster we have developed and as a consequence also providing more individualized pathways for students rather than moving them towards such clusters, and ensuring compatibility of experiences/standards between pathways; (3) Linking our alumni both to our present students, and also to our key stakeholders such as the REF (we have already had some success here, but it has been rather informal than strategic); (4) The promotion of the RAP model to other institutions. This is a task which also will provide co-operation opportunities with REF.
Kosovo	KO 005	Balkan Sunflowers Kosova	Learning Centers Network	01.09.2011	31.08.2012	135,910	The aim of this project is to enable Romani, Ashkali, and Egyptian children and youth participation in school with their Serbian and Albanian counterparts by means of a preschool program and extracurricular support for pupils and students in primary and secondary education, all provided in four Learning Centers run by the applicant in four localities in southeastern Kosovo (Fushë Kosova, Graçanica, Plemetina, and Shtime) since early 2008 plus an additional three Satellite Centers to be opened in extremely underserved localities.
Kosovo	KO 009	Save the Children Switzerland, Save the Children KO	Promoting Inclusive Education in Kosovo	01.01.2012	31.12.2014	39,266	This project aims to improve access to education and to improve the quality of education by promoting inclusive and participatory approaches focusing on children from marginalized groups. To this end, the project seeks to support a total of 400 marginalized preschool- and school-aged children in eight municipalities located throughout Kosovo (Gjakova/?akovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovica North, Mitrovica South, Peja/Pe?, Prishtina, and Prizren)

Kosovo	KO 010	Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians	Rural After School Centers	01.01.2012	31.12.2013	51,130	This project aims to reduce dropout among Romani and Ashkali children from primary schools in Kosovo and to increase the quality of education received by Romani and Ashkali children. To this end, the project seeks to support a total of 625 preschool- and school-aged Romani and Ashkali children (as well as several ethnic Albanian children) through activities organized in nine rural After-school Centers.
Kosovo	KO 013	Shpresa e jetes	Reducing the Drop-out among RAE Children	01.09.2012	30.08.2013	71,001	The project aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to raise attendance rate and early childhood development outcomes for about 300 RAE children in order to increase later school success, – to ensure primary school age children an inclusive, quality education and a smooth transition from primary to secondary – to increase awareness of families regards to the importance of education and to involve them into this process.
Macedonia	MAC 057	CCCER - "Svetla Idnina" Kochani	Integrated Education in Kochani	01.01.2011	31.12.2012	29,840	General objective of this project is an qualitative increase of the general education condition of the Roma in the municipality, aimed at reducing the illiteracy rate as well as an affirmation of applied policies for solving Roma education problems in the municipality of Kochani up to the end of 2012.
Macedonia	MAC 064	National Roma Centrum – Kumanovo	Enrollment and Continuity in the Education Process	01.01.2011	01.01.2012	80,670	The main aim of the project is the full inclusion of Romani children in regular primary education through (a) better access to quality education for Romani pupils and (b) to minimize or eliminate the drop-out level of Romani pupils.
Macedonia	MAC 065	Ministry of Education and Science of RM/ Department for Promotion and Development, of Education in the Languages of Minorities	Secondary Scholarship III	01.09.2011	30.06.2013	334,864	The goal of this project proposal is through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of all Roma students enrolled in the first through fourth grades in the school years 2011–2015. This project has the following objectives: (1) to provide 600 Romani secondary school students per year enrolled in the first through fourth grades with GPA 3.00 and above in the school years 2011–2015; (2) to provide all Romani secondary school students enrolled in the first through fourth grades in the school year 2011–2015 with school-based tutorship support according to their needs and interest (envisaged 1,600 Roma students per year – total 6,400 Roma students for 4 years); (3) to provide support to the Roma 4th year students on time to registered and successfully to pass the State Matura exam (envisaged 200 Romani students per year – total 800 Romani students for 4 years).
Macedonia	MAC 066	Ternipe MK	Roma Graduate and Enhance their Lives (3)	01.09.2011	31.10.2013	70,000	To improve education level and achievements 75 adult Roma from Delchevo, Pehchevo, Berovo, and Vinica through the educational program for adult students aged 19-40 and reception of a diploma for secondary education for the purpose of increasing their employment possibilities on the labor market.
Macedonia	MAC 067	Ministry of labor and Social policy, Republic of Macedonia	Inclusion of Roma Children in Public Preschools IV	01.09.2011	31.08.2012	50,000	The project is designed based on the positive experiences and needs identified in cooperation with the implementing partner organizations, both on institutional and community level during the implementation of MAC 012, MAC 046 and MAC 051 projects in regard to the inclusion of Romani children in preschool education. The project envisages including 425 Romani children into preschools in 19 municipalities.
Macedonia	MAC 072	Roma Democratic Development Association SONCE	Follow up of One Step for Better Education of Romani Pupils in Primary Education	01.04.2012	30.06.2012	13,751	This project is continuation of MAC 060. The project will present itself as a model for addressing the poor quality of education and the high drop-out rate among Romani primary school students. The project involves university student mentors who tutor Romani children during after-school activities.
Macedonia	MAC 069	Svetla Idnina	Integrated Education in Kochani	01.06.2012	30.05.2014	54,155	Increasing quality of the general education condition of Roma in the municipality of Kochani, by reducing illiteracy rate, and concretely by increasing the literacy rate of at least 50 Romani adults with assistance in second-chance programs for secondary education.
Macedonia	MAC 071	Institute for Human Rights	Desegregation Research	01.06.2012	30.05.2013	13,390	Increase awareness among the local stakeholders in regard with right of education and prohibition of segregation to the target group through six roundtables which will take place in Romani communities in Skopje (Cair, Gazi Baba, Suto Orizari, Gjorce Petrov), Bitola, Kumanovo, Kicevo, Strumica, and/or Stip. Develop and publish one Analytical Report with conclusions and recommendations with the purpose of producing relevant data presenting the current situation in terms of the education.

Macedonia	MAC 073	Romaversitas Foundation	Romani Youth	07.07.2012	30.06.2013	35,000	The overall project goal is to empower about 80 Romani university and 40 Romani high school students socially and academically so they will be better prepared not only for their future life and careers, but also to become socially responsible and active citizens. By doing so, the project will contribute for creation of critical mass of well-educated and active young Romani citizens (current and prospective Romani university students and graduates) who will in the long run stand up for themselves and for the Romani community.
Macedonia	MAC 076	Ambrela	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	49,205	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. Its main objectives of the project are: providing access to access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Romani children, including ensuring the quality of ECEC in former AGS project sites; raising early childhood development outcomes for Romani children so as to enhance their school readiness; contributing to systematic changes at the national level in the design and delivery of ECEC and basic education services (REF's role); developing strategic partnerships to increase and sustain the attention of local and national governments (cooperation with higher education institutions).
Macedonia	MAC 077	NGO Kham – Delchevo	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	49,205	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. Main objectives of the project are: providing access to access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Romani children, including ensuring the quality of ECEC in former AGS project sites; raising early childhood development outcomes for Romani children so as to enhance their school readiness; contributing to systematic changes at the national level in the design and delivery of ECEC and basic education services (REF's role); developing strategic partnerships to increase and sustain the attention of local and national governments (cooperation with higher education institutions).
Moldova	MD 005	Uniunea Tinerilor Romi din	Step by Step Roma	01.02.2011	31.07.2012	109,620	The project has the following specific objective: integration of Romani children (aged 6–15) from the segregated school and their equal distribution in mixed schools as a result of school rationalization reform in Moldova; improve the quality of education of Romani children (aged 6–15) by providing additional support to Romani children in the mixed schools and increasing the retention rate; to reduce the number of Romani children who drop out from school in Parcani, Ursari, Schinoasa; strengthen the capacity of National Authorities and LPA in understanding the problems of Roma children.
Moldova	MD 006	Ograda Noastra NGO	Facilitating and Assisting Quality Educational Processes in a School from Zirnesti Attended by Romani Children	01.03.2011	31.05.2012	49,885	The aim of the project is to facilitate and assist quality education processes in one particular school attended by Romani children in southern Moldova (Zirnesti School) while building domestic capacity of the project actors to plan, implement, communicate, and monitor the different processes of intervention favoring Roma education in Moldova
Moldova	MD 008	Roma National Center From Republic of Moldova	Qualitative Education for Romani Kids	01.09.2012	31.08.2013	39,000	This project has an aim to improve access to preschool and school studies for Romani children through diversification and adjustment of local educational programs and frameworks and through consolidation of educational staff capacities to work with Romani children from several Romani communities such as: Bursuc, Ciocilteni, Micleuseni, Vulcanesti, and Stejareni communities, with a special focus on quality education for Romani children and improved attendance in the school.
Montenegro	MN 008	Pedagogical Center Of Montenegro	Studentski volonterizam – od desegregacije do kvalitetne integracije romskih učenika (Student's Volunteerism – from Desegregation into Quality Integration of RAE pupils)	01.04.2011	31.12.2012	98,703	The main objective of the project is to start social and academic integration of 250 Romani pupils from the segregated branch school Bozidar Vukovic Podgoricanin through the volunteer work of Teachers' Faculty students by supporting Romani pupils in strengthening and stimulating their overall psychological and pedagogical capacities for current education and to continue further education, working with Romani parents motivation to take more active role in education of their children.
Montenegro	MN 008	Pedagogical Center Of Montenegro	Studentski volonterizam – od desegregacije do kvalitetne integracije romskih učenika (Student's Volunteerism – from Desegregation into Quality Integration of RAE pupils)	01.01.2012	31.12.2012	16,200	The current proposal aims to extend the activities in two new integrated schools, which has shown interest to participate in the project. With the support of Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) 39 first-graders are transported to these two integrated schools, namely to "21 Maj" and "Savo Pejanovic."

Montenegro	MN 009	JUOS Bozidar Vukovic Podgoricanin	Emergency Summer School for Romani Children in Konik Camp	01.08.2012	30.10.2012	7,076	The project has the following specific objectives: (1) children from Konik Camp 1 who survived the trauma of displacement and face difficult living conditions after a fire that recently broke out in the camp should spend some quality time in a healthy environment since they need support to prepare for the beginning of new school year, (2) to support teachers who work with RE (Romani and Egyptian) children to gain more experience and knowledge in order to be able to run community-based education projects, (3) to motivate RE children and their parents for the process of education and schooling.
Montenegro	MN 010	JPU Djina Vrbica	Emergency Summer School for Romani Children in Konik Camp	01.08.2012	30.10.2012	7,491	The project has the following specific objectives: (1) to provide conditions in order to help RE children in early age and protect them from current extremely poor living conditions they have in tents, (2) To offer a daily care program for children in aged 3–5 by delivering activities for children (activities delivered by the professionals/kindergarten staff) and providing snacks and refreshments, (3) to ensure good communication between the teachers and parents and children during the implementation of the program (responsibility of the RE teaching assistant).
Romania	RO 028	The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research	Closing the Gap between Romani and non-Romani Pupils into the Romanian Educational System	05.12.2006			The project focused on how much and how well the Ministerial Order on Desegregation has been implemented. The project will help improving the legislation (possibly a law against segregation) and improving the implementation of existing legislation. In the same context, the project will help define the status of the school mediators and the employment conditions. A topic widely discussed but with no result to date. Also, the project intends to promote a Ministerial Order to encourage the Teacher Training Facilities to offer attractive and accredited courses on intercultural education. CANCELED AMOUNT: 300000
Romania	RO 086	Policy Center for Roma and Minorities	The Alternative Education Club	01.04.2011	31.03.2012	53,892	The aim of the project is to develop innovative education approaches combined with teachers training, mentorship and after-school classes, thus contributing to the desegregation process and improved education performances by Romani children targeted in school number 136.
Romania	RO 087	Ruhama Foundation	Reaching the 6TH Generation, Systemic Implementation of Integrated Good Practices in Education for Roma Children in 2010–2012	01.12.2010	31.08.2012	162,774	The main objectives are to increase the enrollment rate of Romani children in grades one to five as compared to previous years; to reduce the school drop-out rate of Romani pupils with focus on grades one to five, closest to the school drop-out rate of non-Romani pupils; to increase the school attendance rate of Romani pupils closest to the school attendance rate of non-Romani pupils; to improve the school performances of Romani children towards a General Annual Mean of 3 (good); to consolidate the school desegregation process with focus on first grade; to increase the involvement of Romani parents, children, youth, leaders, and activists in the education process and school life.
Romania	RO 090	Impreuna	Making Desegregation a Reality	01.10.2010	30.09.2012	96,850	The goal of the project is to support the implementation, by the Ministry of Education, of measures towards improving the quality of education in schools with a significant percentage of Romani pupils, including measures towards effective school desegregation and education for cultural diversity.
Romania	RO 092	Association for Promoting the Social Inclusion	Closer to School	01.07.2011	10.08.2013	251,180	The project objectives are: increase the existing GPA of Romani children project beneficiaries from grades one to four by 0.8 to 1 point; increase the GPA of Romani children project beneficiaries from grades five and six by 0.5 point; support the transition in high school education of 40 students from grades seven to eight; support opening of school kitchen as a sustainable way of provision hot meals for all students attending the elementary school; improved quality of teaching methods within the target schools personnel, in order to increase children's educational performance and to decrease absenteeism rate among Romani children; counseling pupils and parents by qualified personnel in psycho-pedagogy.
Romania	RO 093	Center for Education and Social Development Asociation	Roma Access Program to Higher Education	01.06.2011	30.11.2013	171,400	The goal of the project is to multiply the number of Romani youth coming from Calarasi rural area to universities.
Romania	RO 094	Asidera	Learn in Order to Grow	01.08.2012	30.06.2013	23,000	The project aim is to increase high school enrollment of 60 children aged 10-15 through provision of intervention measures that will prevent the absenteeism and school dropout rate of these children coming from economical and educational disadvantaged families from Roma community in Gura Pravat and from Namaiesti, Valea Mare village, Arges County.

Romania	RO 097	O DROM O LACHO Association	Together for Children's Sake	01.09.2012	30.06.2013	15,655	The project encourages Romani children's education as the only way to escape the vicious circle of social exclusion and poverty. The general objective of this project is the access to education of all the Romani children in Dracea village, Teleorman County.
Romania	RO 099	Matias Organization	This is the Begging of a Better Education (second phase)	01.04.2012	30.06.2013	59,600	This project seeks to continue and build on RO 074 implemented from 2010 to 2011. The main aim of RO 099 is to ensure the enrollment and the improved performance of Romani children in preschool preparation programs and later in primary education through provision of a comprehensive system of support to the Romani community and education institutions.
Romania	RO 102	Impreuna- Agency for Community Development	Youth Debates 3	01.03.2012	31.10.2012	10,000	Youth Debates presents a continuation of a good practice of RO 096 project as an opportunity for open debate within the schools related to different topics affecting all issues that may constitute communication barriers in educational, social, ethnical, economical, health, or gender differences, to practice the ways in which these can be surpassed and also to promote tolerance.
Romania	RO 103	APIS NEAMT	Center for Remedial Education	01.09.2012	30.08.2013	32,104	The main project goal is to improve the educational performances and school results of Romani and non-Romani children enrolled in school number 1 from Dodeni in Neamt that are facing with high dropout rate and low graduation rate thus supporting the implementation of the existent policy on school-after-school program.
Romania	RO 105	Asociatia Inima reginei	Essential Elementary Education	01.09.2012	30.08.2014	19,800	The goal is to support preschool education and enrollment in the elementary school of the children living in Roma ghetto on the outskirts of Barlad town, Vaslui County from Romania. (220 Roma, out of them 91 children are under age 16 are living in this ghetto.)
Romania	RO 109	Roma Education Fund: Romania	Secondary Scholarship Programme	01.09.2012	30.06.2013	249,305	The project establishes already tested support packages services in retention of Romani students at secondary level through mentorship and tutorship, being a model that could be replicated for other regions in Romania, particularly by involving the Ministry of Education Research Youth and Sports (MECTS).
Romania	RO 111	Ruhama	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	49,210	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. Main objectives of the project are: increased number and share of Romani children in project communities aged 0–3 who are enrolled by their parents in preschools towards the end of the project (compared to levels assessed by the second round of the Household Survey) and who are enrolled in creche; improved parenting practices among the targeted Romani parents/caregivers as evidenced by: increased number and share of Romani children in project communities with preschool programs participation, good nutrition, immunizations and vaccinations; increased preference for standard, non-segregated preschools; improved teaching quality and sensitivity to diversity among the targeted preschool teachers stakeholders; improved kindergarten services because of better relationship between parents and teaching staff and through good policies in ECD programs; improved the sensitivity to diversity among the non Roma parents and children; 90 percent of Romani children aged 0–3 and 3–6 in project locality Telechiu attending ECD programs.
Romania	RO 112	Romani CRISS	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	56,000	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. The main objectives of the project are to increase attendance of the preschool-aged Romani children from the community of Mofleni to kindergarten and to ensure quality early childhood services, in order to ensure their equal opportunities in the educational system and developing life abilities.
Serbia	SER 064	Vojvodinian Roma Centre for Democracy	Romaversitas	01.05.2011	31.07.2012	80,823	(1) to create equal opportunities for Romani students while they are studying at the university, (2) to contribute to the strengthening and visibility of the Romani students in Serbian society, (3) to encourage students to embrace their Romani identity and to feel responsible for the future of Roma in general.
Serbia	SER 065	Consortium of Roma NGOs	Mother-Child Education Program	01.07.2011	30.09.2012	101,308	The overall objective of the proposed Mother-Child Education Program is to contribute to the social inclusion and poverty reduction of the Roma in Serbia by improving access to Early Childhood Education for Roma children with special regard to the most disadvantaged. The program objective is to increase the access to ECEC for Romani children by developing the capacity of Roma NGOs to run community-based education projects for mothers and children including a toy library project and to establish networks between

							stakeholders; empowering Romani mothers of preschool aged children both as mothers and as women through informal education projects to support their children in the process of education and schooling; drawing the attention of the public authorities to the importance of early childhood education and to their responsibilities.
Serbia	SER 070	Ministry of Education and Science Serbia	Best practices and partnerships: Key to quality, efficiency and equity in education, to be held in Belgrade on 1–2 March, 2012	01.03.2012	01.04.2012	10,000	REF co-financed the conference organized by the Ministry of Education and Science in Serbia on "Best practices and partnerships: Key to quality, efficiency, and equity in education held in Belgrade in early March 2012.
Serbia	SER 071	Mali princ	Gazella settlement	01.07.2012	30.09.2013	64,820	The aim of the project is to prevent the segregation and dropping out of targeted Romani children, increase the number of Romani children enrolled on time in compulsory education, and promote the enrollment of every school-age child into integrated primary school classes and importance of education.
Serbia	SER 072	Vojvodinian Roma Centre for Democracy (VRCD)	Roma Versitas Serbia	01.10.2012	01.12.2014	163,925	Objectives of this project are increased rate of the Romani university graduates and improved professional and personal capacities of Romani tertiary students from University of Novi Sad and other higher educational institutions in Vojvodina.
Serbia	SER 073	PPP & REF	PPP continuation	01.11.2012	01.10.2014	68,600	The project is continuation of the last REF intervention to increase Romani children's access to preparatory preschool programs (PPP) that were designed as a joint program aiming to increase coordination among strategic partners in Serbia (GOs, NGOs and international organizations). Partners agreed to work together trying to put in place the models of education and appropriate institutional frameworks, which will effectively and sustainably include marginalized Romani children into mainstream education system. The joint project was focused on improving access of Roma children to PPP with the view of its impact on their developmental readiness and school retention and on time enrollment in first grade of primary school. The overall program objective is to contribute to the social inclusion and poverty reduction of the Roma in Serbia by reducing the gap in early childhood development outcomes between Roma and non-Roma with special regard to the most disadvantaged.
Slovakia	SK 040	Association of Young Roma	Help and Support in Education in the Form of Additional Education and Mentoring	01.05.2011	31.08.2012	55,930	The aim of this project is to provide help and support in education in the form of additional education and mentoring.
Slovakia	SK 041	Civic Association ETP Slovakia – Centre for Sustainable Development	Chance for Roma	01.05.2011	30.04.2013	86,808	The objective of this two-year project is to improve educational level of Roma children, young people and adults experiencing poverty in Košice-Šaca thus creating Romani role models and to integrate them to mainstream society. In cooperation with Košice-Šaca local government a new community center ("CC") will be established, where long-term, comprehensive services will be provided to Roma by professionally trained ETP staff. The local Council has made a commitment to provide space in the municipal building in the center of Košice-Šaca for the CC, which will be open every weekday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (and on weekends according to the interest and needs of the community). The CC will offer services and activities for the whole population in Košice-Šaca but focusing on children and young people. The emphasis will be on creating bridges between Roma and the majority, encouraging communication and long-term contacts between Roma and non-Roma with a view to achieving integration of the socially excluded Roma.
Slovakia	SK 042	Civil Association SPECTRUM-EAST	School for Everybody	01.09.2011	31.08.2013	69,643	The main objective of this project is to contribute to prevention of wrongful enrollment of socially disadvantaged children in special education system in the region of Spišska Nova Ves. By realization of the planned activities, we plan to achieve these specific objectives: (1) to assess the effectiveness of zero grade classes in local circumstances in the district of Spišska Nova Ves (covering 38 elementary schools) – through comprehensive Research Study on Effectiveness of Zero Grade Classes; (2) to provide parents with comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for children's further education and employment, integrated preschool education and after-school support in the early years of primary education – through information campaign; (3) to prevent enrollment of children to special education system (either special class or special school) through the accelerator program.

Slovakia	SK 043	Pro Donum	The Jarovnice Project	1.12.2011	31.12.2012	52,800	The objective of the project is to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged Romani children from Jarovnice primary schools and to increase their transition to secondary schools.
Slovakia	SK 045	Open Society Foundation Slovakia	Secondary Scholarship Programme for Roma Students	01.09.2011	31.08.2012	132,388	The goal of the project is through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of targeted Romani students enrolled in secondary education on a country level and motivate them to continue their studies. This will result in strengthening those future Roma intellectuals who will take responsibility and participate in solving problems in society in future.
Slovakia	SK 048	Ternipe	Afterschool Model in Rimavska Sec (Phase4)	01.12.2011	31.12.2012	34,796	The objectives of the project are to improve, through after-school activities based on the Hungarian Tanoda model, Romani children's success in education, and subsequently their competitiveness on the labor market and their social integration. Both SLO 019 and SLO 022 were consistently rated satisfactory.
Slovakia	SK 051	Open Society Foundation Slovakia	Secondary Scholarship Programme for Romani Students II	01.10.2012	30.09.2013	193,000	The project is a second phase of the pilot project SK 045, targeting to improve the retention and achievements of Roma students in secondary schools at national level. The project will provide secondary scholarships, tutoring and mentoring activities.
Slovakia	SLO 042	Civil Association SPECTRUM-EAST	Effectiveness of Zero Grade Classes in Slovakia Publication	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	1,800	The aim of the project is to assess the effectiveness of zero grade classes in local circumstances in the district of Spisska Nova Ves (covering 38 elementary schools) through comprehensive Research Study on Effectiveness of Zero Grade Classes. Objectives are to realize and promote the comprehensive research study and disseminate the findings.
Slovakia	SLO 049	ECH	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	24,149	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. The main objectives of the project are reducing the gap in early childhood development outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. Through the measures of the project to improve the parental abilities and increase the share of the Romani parents involved in the activities, to improve the preschool participation rate among the targeted Romani children, and enhance the teaching quality and sensitivity of the teaching staff in preschool facilities.
Slovakia	SLO 050	KARI	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	30,192	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. Main goals of the project are: to provide access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children, including ensuring the quality of ECEC in former AGS project sites; to raise early childhood development outcomes for Romani children so as to enhance their school readiness; to contribute to systematic changes at the national level in the design and delivery of ECEC and basic education services; to develop strategic partnerships to increase and sustain the attention of local and national governments (cooperation with higher education institutions).
Slovakia	SLO 151	CARIS (Cultural Association of Roma in Slovakia)	AGS 2	01.12.2012	01.08.2013	46,121	The project is continuation of A Good Start project. Aims of the project are: improving parenting skills and practices; providing quality ECD program for Roma children; ensuring access to ECD programs for Roma children.

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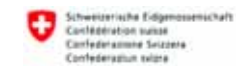
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGS	A Good Start
APIS	Association for Promoting Social Inclusion
CURS	Center for Urban and Regional Sociology
DILS	Delivery of Improved Local Services
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
ESF	European Structural Funds
ESL	Early School Leaving
EU	European Union
GPA	Grade Point Average
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
ISSA	International Step by Step Association
J-PAL	Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
LHP	Law and Humanities Program
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PDF	Professional Development Fund
RECI	Roma Early Childhood Inclusion
REF	Roma Education Fund
RMUSP	Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program
RHSP	Roma Health Scholarship Program
RISP	Roma International Scholar Program
SGI	Slovak Governance Institute
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



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THE ROMA EDUCATION FUND (REF) WAS CREATED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION IN 2005. ITS MISSION AND ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO CLOSE THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BETWEEN ROMA AND NON-ROMA. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, THE ORGANIZATION SUPPORTS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ROMA, INCLUDING THE DESEGREGATION OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS. THROUGH ITS ACTIVITIES, THE ROMA EDUCATION FUND PROMOTES ROMA INCLUSION IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE DECADE, AS WELL AS OTHER COUNTRIES THAT WISH TO JOIN THIS EFFORT. HEREIN REF PRESENTS ITS 2012 ANNUAL REPORT, WHICH FULLY ARTICULATES REF'S PROGRESS TOWARDS THIS MISSION AND GOAL.

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