 According to official data from the 2011 Census, there are 147,604 Roma in Serbia (while unofficial estimates range from 300,000 to 600,000). Data from the UNICEF survey of multiple indicators on the status of women and children indicate that Serbia still faces challenges for securing access to equal and quality education for all. For example, only 64% of Roma children graduate from primary school (compared to 93% of the general population), while only 22% of Roma children continue to high school (compared to 89% in the general population). As a consequence, the share of Roma with a high school diploma is only around 11.5%, greatly affecting employability of young Roma and fuels their need to leave the country.

A special group of young Roma with this problem comes from returnee families who are returned to Serbia, mainly from countries in Western Europe, based on agreements for readmission. While many of these children do not speak Serbian and need additional classes to attend school programs, they also face problems because of differences between school programs in Serbia and the countries where they studied previously. For such reasons, Roma children from returnee families are often wrongly assessed and enrolled in lower grades, which often results in dropping out of school. In many cases, the parents do not have the necessary documentation from their children’s previous schooling, thus increasing their likelihood of dropping out. Exclusion from education impacts the competitiveness of Roma in the labor market, with few opportunities and high rates of employer discrimination.

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# Roma Education Fund in Serbia

## Projects Supported and Financed in 2017–2018

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<th>Project</th>
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<td>Toy libraries - Our space for growth</td>
<td>Consortium: Romanipen, Romani Cikna, Hands of Friendship, Humanitarian Center Rom, Small Happy Colony, Indigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Introduction of the Roma language with elements of national culture in primary schools in Serbia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary education</td>
<td>RomaVersitas</td>
<td>RomaVersitas Vojvodina, Vojvodinian Roma Center for Democracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Projects Implemented in 2017–2018

- Secondary school scholarships and mentorship
- Improved Education and Integration Opportunities for Roma in Serbia, Employment Empowerment of Young Roma and Reintegration of Returnees

**Financed by**

- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany, administered by KfW Development Bank

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## Since 2005 Roma Education Fund has supported

### Early childhood education and care

- **Novi Sad**
- **Nis**
- **Obrenovac**
- **Krusevac**
- **Kraljevo**
- **Kragujevac**

- 10,613 children in ECEC programs
- 2,008 Toy Library members
- 309 mothers and caregivers in Your Story sessions

### Secondary education

- More than 1,700 scholarships
- More than 450 mentors and teachers

### Primary education

- 4,800 Roma children reached in early school leaving prevention programs

### Tertiary education

- 1,095 scholarships have been awarded to 596 students