Father and child participants in REF’s A Good Start program in western Macedonia. Photo: Srdjan Ilic
Teenage girls study during a summer literacy program at Nonk Camp in Podgorica, Montenegro. Photo: Kieran Kesner
RMUSP finalist at the REF Scholarship Gala in Skopje, Macedonia in November 2013. Photo: Robert Atanasovski
Dear Readers,

Nine years have passed since I first joined the Roma Education Fund in 2005. Since my mandate will soon come to an end, this will be my last message as Chairman of the Board. After the extraordinary privilege of working for the REF, I would like to use this opportunity to review some of REF’s great achievements since its establishment in 2005. I also would like to share some of the lessons that I have learnt while working with REF to build a stable institution capable of standing up for Romani children’s right to education.

Working in 16 countries, REF has developed a model project intervention that enables us to reduce the education gaps among Roma and non-Roma. This intervention includes educational tools and methods to increase the participation of Romani children in preschool and primary education; working with Romani families and non-Romani community members; facilitating the transition from primary to secondary education by reducing dropout rates and providing additional educational support, which proves to be one of the best areas for investing in Romani education; and improving methods and building skills among teaching professionals as well as motivating them to support Roma education – and which taken together represent some of the greatest achievements of our Fund. Last but not least, by promoting the transition from secondary to tertiary education education through its Scholarship Program. None of this could have been achieved without the work of REF’s dedicated staff and the active participation of Board members. In this way, REF should aim to reach larger funding opportunities due to the experiences gained until today, for I believe that no one else can do it better than REF.

In future, I would be very pleased to know that REF has managed to support more and more Romani children to access quality education, to hear about its ongoing professional development, and last but not least, to see REF focus more upon the transition from school to labor market.

I cannot write this message without using the opportunity to welcome Judit Tóth, who recently joined our Foundation as Treasurer of the Board, and who brings some 25 years of experience from the Institute for Training and Consulting in Banking.

I also wish to thank Pierre Gassmann whose membership mandate of the Board also is close to ending. Pierre stood by REF since its establishment and was among the most active Board members. Over the years, Pierre proved his support for the Roma community through his active role in the decision-making of the Board and offered his support when REF needed interim management. Pierre has been a resourceful senior mentor from whom I have gained a great amount of experience, and I wish here to express my profound gratitude for his outstanding contribution to the development of the Foundation.

Finally, I would like to thank all our executive directors, past and present, for their cooperation and our work together over the past eight years, their commitment and support and their professional achievements in their capacity as managers who have made REF the leading international NGO in the field of Roma education that it is today. Hereby, I extend my thanks and appreciation to all of our staff members for their commitment and dedication to the Roma issue.

I will close my message for 2013 Annual Report by expressing once again my full commitment to the Roma issue and assure you that I will continue to do my work in Romania, taking with me the great experience I had with REF and sharing it with other stakeholders in civil society and state institutions, and among Romani community members.

In my capacity as a Romani leader, I will continue in future to bring my contribution to improving the situation of Roma in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Costel Bercus, Chairman of the Board
When the Decade started nearly ten years ago, almost no one could have predicted the current economic crisis. Drastic cuts in public expenditure gravely affected the education sector, with the poorest and most disadvantaged communities being hardest hit. The deterioration was greatest in Romania and Bulgaria, which have some of the largest Roma communities. Between 2008 and 2010 public expenditure in real terms was cut by 40 percent in Romania and 21.6 percent in Bulgaria. While educational expenditure relative to gross domestic product (GDP) was greater than six percent in nearly half of OECD and G20 countries in 2013, five countries spent less than five percent on education. Among this five are the Czech Republic (4.7 percent), Hungary (4.6 percent) and Slovakia (4.6 percent).

After eight years of REF’s policy advocacy, project implementation and cooperation, there has been a discernible and positive shift in attitudes towards Roma education and many concrete achievements. A large number of organizations have joined in REF’s mission to close the gap in educational outcomes, and are actively engaged working in the field with Roma communities and schools. More and more governments have developed inclusive strategies for Roma education in national policies.

At the European Union level Roma advocates are increasingly visible and across the continent there is a growing number of well-educated Roma professionals and active citizens. The Decade of Roma Inclusion and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies provided two of the most important political frameworks for a comprehensive approach to inclusive education for Roma. These were important steps forward, because prior to the launch of the Decade in 2005, Roma education rarely surfaced as a pressing priority in EU or national policy agendas. Since then the policy debate has been utterly transformed, and from the highest levels – at least in policy documents – there is a firm consensus and commitment around closing the gap in terms of educational outcomes for Roma. However, in too many countries this has yet to translate into effective implementation.

In the strongest political signal yet to come from Brussels, the Council of the European Union recommendations adopted on December 10, 2013 called on member states “to ensure equal treatment and full access for Roma boys and girls to quality and mainstream education and to ensure that all Roma pupils complete at least compulsory education.” The measures recommended included: eliminating any school segregation; ending inappropriate placement of Roma pupils in special needs schools; reducing early school leaving; increasing access and quality of early childhood education and care; and encouraging greater parental involvement and improving teacher training – all approaches REF has provided in its activities and programs.

In its assessment of the national integration strategies, the Commission called on specific member states to develop “concrete targets and corresponding measures” to address segregation (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia); to pay more attention to higher education (Bulgaria); to ensure that mainstream policies respond to the specific needs of Roma (Hungary, Slovakia); to ensure that all children finish primary school and facilitate completion of secondary education (Romania); to promote second-chance education (Slovakia). The Council recommendations reaffirmed the importance of widening access to second-chance education and adult learning, and urged member states to provide support for the acquisition of skills that are adapted to the needs of the labor market. The Commission urged states to develop robust monitoring mechanisms; to devise concrete measures; allocate proportionate financial resources; set clear targets for measurable deliverables; and to “convincing” in fighting discrimination. The Commission Communication of June 2013 followed by the Council Recommendations in December was the strongest expression of political will from the EU, but the task ahead remains to make a tangible difference to the lives of millions of Roma across Europe.

Affirmative policies still face challenges from many quarters. However, our experience in the Visegrad countries and Montenegro, Romania and Serbia and FYR Macedonia is encouraging. While the impact is difficult to measure, in terms of outcomes we see a growing number of young Roma in secondary and tertiary education. When REF started its secondary scholarship program in 2007, the dropout rate of Roma students in countries where REF intervened was as much as 26 percent. After four years of implementation, REF has reduced dropout rates to less than six percent in its beneficiary locality. Over the last three academic years, among graduate students the dropout rate is zero percent.

Across the continent many millions of Roma subsist in conditions of desperate poverty and exclusion. Bearing in mind that so many live in such dire and inhumane circumstances, I find it difficult to report about our achievements to date, as we are acutely aware of how much more needs to be done. However, in terms of progress made, allow me to share some independent research findings with you. According to World Bank research, kindergarten enrollment is increasing and this outcome concurs with REF activities. REF runs kindergarten enrollment projects in all of its focus countries. The number of Roma completing secondary education increased over the last eight years. Significant progress can be observed, for example, in FYR Macedonia that has been quantified by a recent UNDP study. In 2004 about 10 percent of Roma completed upper secondary education. By comparison in 2011, the completion rate in FYR Macedonia had risen to 17 percent. REF played a decisive role in this achievement: since 2007 REF has operated a secondary scholarship program tied to a mentoring and tutoring scheme that supported 60 percent of the Roma students in secondary education in FYR Macedonia. In neighboring Bulgaria, primary school dropout rates declined and completion rates at at least lower secondary education improved by 16 percent compared to 2004. REF invested significant efforts and funds into its Bulgarian portfolio, and supported around 4,000 Roma children to complete quality education in integrated schools.

We still have a relatively long way to go before anyone could say that the gap has closed between Roma and non-Roma students but we believe it is visibly decreasing. Data from the Regional Roma Survey conducted by UNDP and World Bank shows that, of the four Decade priority areas, it is only in education that clear advances are being made.

For these achievements we must thank our donors and partners in the field.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Roma Education Fund (REF) has been working since 2005 to promote equal access to quality education for Roma in all countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Its mission is to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. To achieve this mission, REF uses four major tools: (1) the provision of grants to consortia of civil society and public institutions implementing education reform projects; (2) the provision of scholarships to Romani students at tertiary education level; and (3) initiating research and policy dialogues on issues affecting the education of Roma such as the prevalence of Roma in special education, segregation and education financing.

After eight years of operation, the Roma Education Fund believes that it is on the tipping point of changing attitudes and commitments towards Roma education. More governments, more mayors, a broad range of European Union (EU) actors and other donors, and the civil sector are working together to invest in Roma education, with more and more quality projects in the field, and by now even state scholarship support is being provided in the region. The sum of these achievements shows that, even if the gap could not be closed in just eight years, it was possible to narrow it during REF’s eight years of operations. Only a decade ago, the idea of Romani children regularly attending school seemed impossible. Our programs and policies have demonstrated that, given the proper investment and intervention, even the most disadvantaged can succeed in their early years, go on to succeed in primary school, transit to quality vocational education or secondary schools, graduate with academic results close to or equal to their mainstream peers, qualify for a place in university and even move on to advanced graduate study.

REF PROGRAMS

Grant Program

In 2013, the REF Board approved 39 new grant requests out of 57 incoming project applications for a contractual commitment of EUR 1.9 million. REF mobilized an additional EUR 2.3 million for Roma education from national and local governments and other funds due to the consortium partners in these projects.

In 2013 REF grants supported a significant number of beneficiaries, some 100,900 Romani children, parents and others under nine project indicators: the largest number of beneficiaries were supported in programs preventing early school leaving (15,892 Romani students across 13 countries), the second largest intervention focused on early childhood education and care (7,252 young Romani children) and the third largest was the secondary scholarship program (3,447 Romani students). Every successfully completed school year is an individual success of the students and an important achievement, which leads them to the next level in their educational career. The average retention rate of students in REF-supported programs is more than 98 percent, which shows that students participating in REF-supported activities are performing better than the European statistics on early school leaving.5

In 2013, REF managed altogether 80 projects; the vast majority were implemented satisfactorily. In 2013 the Grant Program piloted a new application process that required an in-depth needs assessment and data collection about targeted communities; this new approach has been found to help both applicants and REF staff to best identify the most significant education gaps that they intend to address. This will continue in REF’s upcoming programming.

REF has been able to document successful policies and programs for the inclusive education of Roma, through activities funded by REF, governments and other donors. We already know well that some policies have long-lasting positive impacts, and understanding why and how this is so can provide clear directions on what to do. The benefits of good policies are also confirmed by the first feedback from REF-financed projects, and in order to multiply good results, REF is shifting from supporting pilot project ideas to model-based project support.6

The methodology of the model-based grant applications allows the applicant to select an implementation model that will trigger the appearance of a set of ready-made component entries and indicators, developed by REF together with an anchor team from the World Bank, in the areas of early childhood education and care, primary education with a focus on preventing early school leaving, secondary school scholarships with mentoring and tutoring, adult education programs and Romaversitas (centers) for Romani university students. (For more details, see pages 16 and 17 of this report.)

REF staff conducted 35 comprehensive country visits where they provided technical assistance to the grantees and partners at multiple project sites, with on-site monitoring to control the respective projects’ content, quality and operations, engaging local stakeholders and building policy dialogues with strategic decision-makers in each country. In the grant cycle in 2013, as a result of REF’s monitoring and evaluation missions to multiple projects, 79 projects were rated as satisfactory and one as unsatisfactory. Several REF-supported projects have been included into the European Union’s Cedefop best practice projects catalog6, which helps REF to share its experience with professionals involved in education across Europe. REF’s intent is to scale up its successful interventions through policy or government measures in order to create a critical mass of reforms in the region that would encourage Romani children and youth to fulfill their right to an inclusive and quality education.

5 In 2013 the dropout rate on average was 2.7 percent according to findings of the European Commission.

In 2015, REF’s model on secondary education was scaled up by governments of Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; they have pledged a significant proportion of co-funding, matching REF’s efforts and resources to provide merit-based secondary school scholarships, together with tutoring and mentoring activities for a total of 5,247 Romani students. For example, REF’s secondary scholarship support, matching funds with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, supported 75 percent of the Romani students enrolled in secondary schools in the country. 2015 external evaluation of REF’s secondary school scholarship program in these Romanian regions reveals how powerful educational support services can be, boosting disadvantaged students’ attendance, achievement and graduation rates. Among the program’s student beneficiaries, half live in poverty or severe poverty, a quarter of them travel more than 20 kilometers from home each day to attend vocational and upper secondary schools in the region. Data shows that 70 percent of all recipients increased their grade point average (GPA) under the program; 99 percent of twelfth-graders finished their studies. Forty-four percent who took the baccalaureate exam passed, bettering the national average of 56 percent. Forty-three percent of twelfth-graders continued their education, from whom 37 percent enrolled in college. This program data shows that it is possible to narrow the gap with conditional cash transfers coupled with careful and efficient program implementation.

REF has aspired to create a substantial increase in the percentage of Romani students enrolling in vocational and secondary schools and decrease the dropout rate by implementing secondary school scholarships in the region; these programs have since become examples for national governments as REF’s scholarship programming has been proven to inspire students to enroll in vocational and secondary schools, to complete their studies and to join the labor market or study at the university level. REF believes this to be a great result and an example to be replicated by other governments as REF’s scholarship programming has been widely implemented in Romani students educational careers, the governments in Romani students’ home countries have scaled up the original pilot program from four localities to 21, and more and more countries are allocating resources for scholarships to disadvantaged students. In Hungary the government started to take important steps and began giving significant amounts of scholarships to disadvantaged students. Following REF’s example, as well as a global trend to support disadvantaged students with conditional cash transfers, more and more countries are allocating resources for scholarships for disadvantaged students.

Policy and Research

REF made a huge step forward in 2013 by gaining the support of the European Commission’s PROGRESS program in a partnership with the Slovak government’s Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities to undertake an impact evaluation of its early childhood education and care activity, Your Story.9 Years of REF experience in Slovakia resulted in scaling up the original pilot program from four localities to 21, and from a civil society initiative to a government-led program in the most disadvantaged areas of Slovakia. This is an important milestone in promoting early childhood activities and bringing government commitments forward, especially where preschool is not compulsory yet. This is the first time when a Decade country evaluates a Roma education activity by involving randomized control groups. The methodology of this impact evaluation has been designed by the World Bank and J-PAL experts in randomized controlled trials and impact evaluations.

In a detailed study published by REF in 2013, professors Kékesi and Kurtês9 aimed to examine the degree to which residential segregation, inter-school mobility, local educational policies and the share of a town’s Romani population influence school segregation in Hungarian primary schools. In order to determine the impact of various factors on school segregation, a sample was conducted in 100 towns and cities in Hungary with the largest Romani populations outside of Budapest. It was found that the inter-distict mobility of

NGOs for Roma education. This program has been implemented in Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The Council of Europe Development Bank broke important new ground by making its first loan directed toward Roma inclusion, providing REF with additional resources that REF can put into this revolving loan program in the upcoming years.

Tertiary Scholarship Program

Under the tertiary scholarship program in 2013, REF awarded 1,453 scholarships to individual Romani students in 15 countries for an overall expenditure of EUR 2,975,354, which also includes all administrative costs of the program. Among the scholarship recipients in 2013-2014, 888 students were enrolled in Bachelor degree programs, 336 in Master degree programs, 105 in undivided tertiary education programs and 42 in doctoral programs.

In the 2012-2013 academic year, out of 1,501 scholarship beneficiaries, 512 (34 percent) were students planning to graduate in 2013, of whom 512 (66 percent) graduated successfully. 77 (5 percent) postponed their studies, 45 (9 percent) dropped out and 39 did not yet be reached. From the cohort of 512 students who graduated successfully, 58 percent graduated in Social Sciences, 18 percent in Health and Medicine, 11 percent in Legal Studies, 11 percent in the Humanities, nine percent in Education, nine percent in Natural Sciences and Engineering, and four percent in the Arts.

When compared to data about mainstream students, a study published by the European Commission in 2012, “The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report,” shows that the completion rate from higher education by 2008 was on average 72 percent in European countries (including non-EU countries such as Armenia and Russia). REF data for 2013 show a completion rate of 69 percent, a difference of less than five percent – reflecting the enormous progress in Roma tertiary education completion rates that REF has enabled with its Scholarship Program.

Revolving Loan Program

Under the Revolving Loan Program, REF’s reimbursable grants have mobilized European Structural Funds worth up to EUR 34.3 million in the past five years by providing financial support of EUR 680,000 in reimbursable grants to a total of 39 NGOs for Roma education. This program has been implemented in Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The Council of Europe Development Bank broke important new ground by making its first loan directed toward Roma inclusion, providing REF with additional resources that REF can put into this revolving loan program in the upcoming years.

In 2013, the Scholarship Program held six national RUMISP galas and invited the national press in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, FYR Macedonia and Slovakia to meet nearly 600 scholarship finalists, providing the mass media with positive examples of Roma academic achievement and diversity. REF’s Scholarship Program was cited over 40 times in national print, radio and television alongside a sharp increase in traffic on REF’s Facebook page.

Following REF’s example, as well as a global trend to support disadvantaged students with conditional cash transfers, more and more countries are allocating resources for scholarships to disadvantaged students. In Hungary the government adopted the Romanewitas program and opened nine religious colleges for Romani university students. In Slovakia, the government started to take important steps and began giving significant amounts of scholarships to disadvantaged students. Echoing REF’s approach of providing quality secondary school scholarship programs that make a substantial difference in Romani students educational careers, the governments of Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania and Serbia have scaled up their scholarship programs to varying degrees – upping the amount of financial support available per month and the overall ability of such scholarships to anchor children in the school system and allow them to complete their studies.

Notes:
1 Eighty-four students were also included in vocational studies within RHSP and LHP, seven in Business, nine percent in Economics, nine percent in Medicine, 11 percent in Legal Studies, 11 percent in Business Administration, 10 percent in Journalism, 10 percent in Social Sciences, 10 percent in the Humanities, 10 percent in the Arts.
2 When compared to data about mainstream students, a study published by the European Commission in 2012, “The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report,” shows that the completion rate from higher education by 2008 was on average 72 percent in European countries (including non-EU countries such as Armenia and Russia). REF data for 2013 show a completion rate of 69 percent, a difference of less than five percent – reflecting the enormous progress in Roma tertiary education completion rates that REF has enabled with its Scholarship Program.
3 Eighty-four students were also included in vocational studies within RHSP and LHP, seven in Business, nine percent in Economics, nine percent in Medicine, 11 percent in Legal Studies, 11 percent in Business Administration, 10 percent in Journalism, 10 percent in Social Sciences, 10 percent in the Humanities, 10 percent in the Arts.
higher status students (white flight), local educational policies and the share of the Romani population in a town were found to have the largest degree of influence on school segregation while residential segregation plays a negligible role. Such starting results provide evidence for continuing REF advocacy that inclusive educational outcomes are not determined by residential segregation; indeed, this evidence challenges common misconceptions that school segregation mainly is the result of residential segregation.

To encourage states to rid their school systems of segregation, REF has engaged in action research to collect information and carry out cost-benefit analyses that should lead to efficient policymaking towards integration benefits (including economic benefits and increase in social capital). In 2013, REF documented its experience in school desegregation by developing a toolkit, “Making Desegregation Work!” The toolkit provides an overview on the types of school segregation, offers solutions and demonstrate good practices that have worked to make education systems more inclusive for Romani students.11

In Romania, home to one of Europe’s largest and most diverse Romani populations, REF aspired to demonstrate to the Romanian government how substantial funding available from the European Union could be used to develop supplemental programs to ensure high-quality, inclusive education for Roma. Among four projects awarded to REF three years ago, 50 School After School study halls were created across Romania to prevent the early school leaving of over 2,200 at-risk Romani primary school students, whereby over 85 percent improved their academic results in language and math. In parallel, REF reached another 1,500 lower secondary school students at risk of early school leaving with mentoring and tutoring at 50 more sites in Romania through its Equal Opportunities Program. This project effectively reduced early school leaving to 6.5 percent of those enrolled in the program, compared to 26.4 percent of those students who were not enrolled.

In 2013 REF also began to survey the educational and employment outcomes of its Scholarship Program with a Tracer Study, piloting it in Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.12 REF’s Scholarship Program aims to allow more and more Romani students to enroll in and graduate from tertiary education with a professional qualification, and this study points to how Romani students are decreasing the gap in educational expectations and outcomes. The Tracer data reveals that having a scholarship for the majority of Romani students was a substantive help to enroll, progress and graduate successfully from tertiary education, without making sacrifices about the desired major or compromising one’s full-time studies. While the program contributed to reducing the gap in education outcomes, the gap in employment after graduating is still substantial; the study revealed that the unemployment rate is higher among Romani higher education graduates than among non-Romani peers of comparable age.

As an educational foundation, REF aspires to influence future generations of teachers, involving them in REF’s fieldwork and advocating for inclusive teaching methods to be included in the academic curricula of pedagogical faculties. Such a revised university curriculum has two components: students receive credits for attending lectures combined with compulsory practical training held in REF project sites. REF hosted a policy exchange with representatives of universities providing pre-service teacher training from Hungary, FYR Macedonia and Romania in mid-December, including Coço Delcev University - Ship and the University of Skopje from FYR Macedonia, the Emanuel University of Oradea from Romania and the University of Miskolc and the Teacher College from Nıyırghyzhka from Hungary. As a result, new approaches to learning have begun for a new cohort of student-teachers in these universities, and the curriculum has been reformed to reflect this change.

### Table 1: REF Program expenditures, 2013

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<th></th>
<th>REF Switzerland</th>
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<th>REF Hungary</th>
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<td>Tertiary Scholarships</td>
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<td>EU Roma Pilot – A Good Start and complementary projects</td>
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<td>Communications</td>
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<td>Policy development and capacity building</td>
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<td>International family project – Fundación Secretario Gitano</td>
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<td>REF – Youth in Labor Market</td>
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12 Available online: http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/a_tracer_study___ref__2014.pdf

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Inclusive Educational Outcomes: A Closer Look at the Impact of School Desegregation Programs

**Executive Summary**

Inclusion is a core value of education and essential for promoting social cohesion and breaking down barriers of inequality. However, despite progress, school segregation remains a significant issue, particularly for Romani students in Eastern Europe. To address this challenge, the Roma Education Fund (REF) has been actively working to promote inclusive education through various programs and initiatives.

REF’s efforts have focused on several areas:

1. **Scholarship Programs**: The Scholarship Program aims to provide Romani students with financial support to enroll in tertiary education. In 2013, REF began to survey the educational and employment outcomes of its scholarship program, piloting it in Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. The results showed that students with a scholarship had a higher likelihood of enrolling in and graduating from tertiary education.

2. **School After School Programs**: To prevent early school leaving among Romani students, REF established study halls in Romania, reducing the gap in educational outcomes and providing opportunities for Romani students to complete their education.

3. **Action Research and Fieldwork**: REF has engaged in action research to collect information and carry out cost-benefit analyses that should lead to efficient policymaking towards integration benefits. This includes collecting data on the impact of their programs and using this evidence to influence future generations of teachers.

REF’s work has had a significant impact, as evidenced by the Tracer study on the Scholarship Program. This study revealed that having a scholarship was a substantive help to enroll, progress, and graduate successfully from tertiary education. However, the gap in employment outcomes persists, highlighting the need for ongoing efforts.

In addition, REF has been involved in policy exchange with universities in Hungary, FYR Macedonia, Romania, and Oradea, aiming to improve the academic curricula of pedagogical faculties.

REF’s work, which includes the desegregation toolkit and action research, provides valuable insights into effective strategies for promoting inclusive education. These programs and initiatives not only benefit Romani students but also contribute to broader social and economic objectives.

### Table 1: REF Program Expenditures, 2013

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2012 EUR</th>
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<td>279,524</td>
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<td>Tertiary Scholarships</td>
<td>2,549,097</td>
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<td>REF – and its partners’ capacity Building</td>
<td>51,800</td>
<td>220,152</td>
<td>1,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRESS project in Slovakia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant to Roma Education Fund, Hungary</td>
<td>910,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant to Roma Education Fund, Romania</td>
<td>208,650</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Programs and Grants</td>
<td>2,310,097</td>
<td>1,943,781</td>
<td>297,992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financing and Leveraging Funds for Roma Education

In managing its programs, REF is among the most efficient and effective organizations operating in the field of education. REF spends 92 percent of its operating budget on programs, ensuring that donations have a maximum impact in 16 countries.

From a total budget of approximately EUR 11 million in 2013, REF contracted EUR 1.9 million on new grants and spent another EUR 2.9 million on tertiary scholarships for over 1,450 Romani students. REF also spent EUR 3.6 million to pre-finance and implement European Structural Fund projects in Romania, EUR 1.0 million on capacity building, communication, data collection, policy development and training, EUR 0.8 million on administration,14 with an additional EUR 0.9 million being accounted for by ongoing partnerships in Konik Camp, the follow-up phase of the previously EU-funded early childhood education and care project A Good Start, and a Fundación Secretariado Gitano previously EU-funded early childhood education and care partnerships in Konik Camp, the follow-up phase of the great results, allowing REF to mobilize a much larger pool of funds for Roma education in three different ways with projects, including international foundations, national ministries and agencies, local municipalities, international organizations and private funds. This is a growing tendency and REF intends to leverage funds year by year in the grant program.

REF also started to leverage funds for Roma education directly from EU sources in the last four years, which had a positive result of increasing REF’s direct income and also the diverse sources of these funds. In 2015 REF has received income directly from the European Commission in Brussels, European Structural Funds in Romania, Instruments for Pre-Accession in Montenegro and Serbia, and European Structural Funds in Slovakia. Compared to 2010, REF recorded almost a five-fold increase in its funding coming from European sources.15

Given the scarcity of funds available to Roma NGOs implementing European Structural Funds and other projects in the region, the third way REF leverages funding for Roma education is through a system of revolving loans and reimbursable grants. With REF funding used as bridge finance, REF mobilized money for European Structural Funds worth up to EUR 34.3 million in the period 2005–2013 by providing EUR 680,000 in reimbursable grants. This program has been implemented in Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. The current leveraging ratio is 31 to 1.

In 2013 the REF donor family has expanded to welcome new members such as Velux Foundation, the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic and the Municipality of Ostrava, Czech Republic. REF has been supported by the Council of Europe Serbian office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2014, and which was agreed at the time of writing this report.

REF would like to express its gratitude to its donor family, to new and old, for their contributions that have allowed us to pursue our mission as a foundation. REF also would like to acknowledge the special role of 29 private individuals who supported the Fund in 2013 with their personal donations.

Summary

In using its available resources and networks, REF promotes equal chances for enrollment and the provision of quality services by public institutions that would culminate in the school success of Romani children in all levels of education. Its strategic vision gives REF the flexibility to quickly target opportunities as they become available. Through partnership with local, regional and national governments, REF can scale up its education models. REF has acquired the resources, experience and knows how for a flexible approach that allows it to choose among advocacy, cooperation or implementation when designing Roma education programs for respective countries in which it operates.

As a result of REF’s interventions, reading comprehension and math scores are up among participants at project sites and across programs, reflecting an overall improvement in literacy and numeracy in some of the most disadvantaged Romani communities where improvement was once thought unachievable. No better acknowledgment of REF’s beliefs is when a government steps in to act, taking ownership of educational policy and using REF’s experience as a guide to Roma education programs as we report in the following pages of REF’s 2013 Annual Report.
The Roma Education Fund has begun a shift from its current proposal-based grant design to a model-based grant design. The purpose of the model framework is to better assess REF’s actual progress compared to its targets. The methodology of the model-based applications will allow the applicant to select an implementation model which will trigger the appearance of a set of ready-made component entries and indicators. Developed by REF staff, together with Plamen Danchev and Zsolt Fekete from the World Bank’s advisory team, the five models will apply to the following areas: (1) early childhood education and care, (2) primary education with focus on preventing early school leaving, (3) secondary school scholarships with mentoring and tutoring, (4) adult education programs and (5) Romaversitas (centers) for Romani university education and care, (2) primary education with focus on five models will apply to the following areas: (1) early childhood education and care, (2) primary education with focus on preventing early school leaving, (3) secondary school scholarships with mentoring and tutoring, (4) adult education programs and (5) Romaversitas (centers) for Romani university education and care. These models are anticipated to help implement national Roma social inclusion policies. Project proposals will have well-defined project development objectives, results frameworks, outcome and output indicators, risk assessment combined with risk mitigation measures, project management and implementation requirements, monitoring and evaluation tools; the value of these models is that they will be adopted and implemented on an achievable scale, while good practice and good policy can be scaled up on EU and national levels. REF has gained extensive experience and knowledge surrounding the types of interventions in and approaches to Roma education that produce results on the ground. A comprehensive evaluation of effective solutions has generated a good practice model for achieving results in different country and policy settings. It is REF’s intention to replace a need-based approach of sponsoring NGO proposals with a more targeted use of resources to fund the models REF believes will generate effective results. REF does not rule out the possibility of accommodating innovative and promising solutions that are produced by civil society organizations, but REF will streamline supported interventions under the broadly defined models that have proven to be effective. The five models described below serve as a structure to help applicant organizations adopt a well-defined methodology, with an option to adopt those components that are applicable in the context of the localities where they plan to implement a program. It is important to note that applicants can supplement the models by adding additional components and indicators if they are justifiable under a concrete problem-solving framework. All the models include a cross-sectorial component on promoting desegregation and integration of Roma in education. The early childhood education and care (ECCE) model aims to improve the school readiness and early childhood development outcomes of Romani children aged between zero to six by improving the enrollment and attendance in the mainstream preschool services; enhancing the parenting skills and improving the practices of Romani parents; strengthening the link between parents and preschool facilities; and raising the quality of ECCE services, such as teaching and learning methods. The primary education model intends to improve the primary education outcomes of Romani children aged between six and fourteen by supporting primary education enrollment and school after-school programs (tutoring and mentoring) with improved access (enrollment) to primary education, preventing early school leaving, enhancing the parental skills, strengthening the link between parents and schools, providing remedial classes to children and offering professional support and guidance to school staff and authorities. The secondary education model aims to improve the academic performance of students and to maintain the retention and graduation rate of Romani secondary school students through better outreach, provision of scholarships, school-based mentorship support and tutorship support. The adult education and training model aims to improve the academic and vocational education level and employment prospects for young Romani adults. It provides those with incomplete primary and/or secondary education with tutoring and financial support for completing formal primary and/or secondary education. This model also aims to improve the literacy and social communication skills of illiterate and semi-literate Romani parents (mainly mothers) of preschool- and school-age children and enhance their involvement in their children’s education through provision of non-formal literacy and social communication skills trainings.

Summary

Embedding effective models for Roma education requires strong partnerships with national and sub-national education authorities and implies intense communication with them throughout the process of adjusting best practice models to national and local contexts. The move from proposal-based to model-based program design suggests REF’s increased accountability and ownership over the implemented projects and their results, as well as the ability to multiply and enhance these models. REF is currently creating an online application platform that will enable the applicants to choose the type of intervention they aim to implement. The system will offer them the tools necessary to create a successful intervention.

FIVE MODELS SHAPING REF GRANTS AND POLICY

MODEL 1
EXPANDING ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The early childhood education and care (ECCE) model aims to improve the school readiness and early childhood development outcomes of Romani children aged between zero to six by improving the enrollment and attendance in the mainstream preschool services; enhancing the parenting skills and improving the practices of Romani parents; strengthening the link between parents and preschool facilities; and raising the quality of ECCE services, such as teaching and learning methods.

MODEL 2
AVOIDING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

The primary education model intends to improve the primary education outcomes of Romani children aged between six and fourteen by supporting primary education enrollment and school after-school programs (tutoring and mentoring) with improved access (enrollment) to primary education, preventing early school leaving, enhancing the parental skills, strengthening the link between parents and schools, providing remedial classes to children and offering professional support and guidance to school staff and authorities.

MODEL 3
EXPANDING ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

The secondary education model aims to improve the academic performance of students and to maintain the retention and graduation rate of Romani secondary school students through better outreach, provision of scholarships, school-based mentorship support and tutorship support.

MODEL 4
EXPANDING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: ROMAVERSITAS

The Romaversitas model intends to improve the retention, performance and graduation levels of Romani full-time tertiary education students by providing them with academic tutoring and mentoring and to help strengthen their Romani identity and community participation. This model consists of compulsory and optional components. It serves as a bridge for young Romani scholars and includes scholarships, mentoring, tutoring and additional training in professional development and foreign language competences.

MODEL 5
SECOND CHANCE PROGRAMS FOR ADULT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND FORMAL SCHOOL COMPLETION

The adult education and training model aims to improve the education level and employment prospects for young Romani adults. It provides those with incomplete primary and/or secondary education with tutoring and financial support for completing formal primary and/or secondary education. This model also aims to improve the literacy and social communication skills of illiterate and semi-literate Romani parents (mainly mothers) of preschool- and school-age children and enhance their involvement in their children’s education through provision of non-formal literacy and social communication skills trainings.
account lessons learned through REF-supported experiences and best practices. These include early childhood education and care (ECEC), primary education (early school leaving - ESL), secondary education, adult education and higher education (Romeraversitas centers).

In 2013, REF project partners implemented 80 projects across various educational fields. The figure below describes the distribution of REF-supported projects with the elements listed in the program priorities.

In 2013, REF continued to reduce the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma through a variety of programs that reached approximately 47,136 Romani children, along with 53,768 parents. The REF Board approved 59 new grant requests out of 57 incoming project applications. There was a slight decrease in the number of applications received in 2013, compared to previous years, notably due to piloting a new more demanding application form, which requires an in-depth needs assessment and data collection from the targeted communities. This new application format enables REF management and the Board to better understand the scope of the problems at the level of specific Romani communities, and at the same time the collected data supports applicants to better identify the most significant education gaps within the targeted communities.

Overall, two-thirds (66 percent) of the REF-supported interventions covered compulsory education and one-third (34 percent) covered preschool. Approximately five percent of the projects covered higher education, whereas two percent covered teacher training programs. Teacher training activities took place in Bulgaria (nine percent of all activities in the country) and Hungary (two percent of all activities in the country). The retention rate is significantly better with REF beneficiaries in secondary education and tertiary education, i.e., for those who have already reached the second milestone of an education cycle, 98 percent of REF secondary school scholars complete school and successfully graduate. It is very important that REF keeps supporting and cultivating this target group in order to maintain their chances for graduation and better educational results. These groups also serve as role models for their local communities, families and siblings.

In Albania, Hungary, Moldova and Romania there were more activities covering primary education than covering early childhood or secondary education. In Croatia and Kosovo, about half of the interventions covered primary education and the other half covered early childhood education.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, FYR Macedonia and Serbia there were more activities covering early childhood education than primary and secondary education. In the Czech Republic there was an equal proportion of interventions implemented at the primary, secondary and tertiary level of education.

2013 was successful for the mainstreaming of REF’s model on secondary education, which was scaled up by the governments of Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, within the partnership, the governments have pledged a significant proportion of co-funding, matching REF’s efforts and resources to provide merit-based secondary school scholarships, together with tutoring and mentoring for Romani students. REF’s efforts in supporting secondary school Romani students have been realized in half of the Decade countries.

REF continued to oversee the quality of REF-supported projects through monitoring and evaluation visits. REF staff conducted 35 comprehensive country visits, where they provided technical assistance to the grantees and partners at multiple project sites, with on-site monitoring to control the respective projects’ content, quality and operations, engaging local stakeholders and building policy dialogues with strategic decision-makers in each country. As a result of REF’s monitoring and evaluation missions to multiple projects, 79 projects were rated as satisfactory and only one as unsatisfactory.

### 2013 IN NUMBERS

**GRANT PROGRAM**

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In Albania, Hungary, Moldova and Romania there were more activities covering primary education than covering early childhood or secondary education. In Croatia and Kosovo, about half of the interventions covered primary education and the other half covered early childhood education.

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| TABLE 4. NEW PROJECTS RECEIVED AND APPROVED, 2006–2013 |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| YEAR       | 2006        | 2007        | 2008        | 2009        | 2010        | 2011        | 2012        | 2013        |
| Received   | 150         | 186         | 158         | 163         | 189         | 158         | 158         | 138         |
| Approved   | 49          | 54          | 54          | 61          | 51          | 59          | 59          | 59          |
| Change from previous year | 50% | -18% | -2% | -18% | 37% | -17% | -22% | -18% |

REF’s Board continued to support projects of sufficient quality but also considered the strategic narrowing of projects to those identified by the Grant Program priorities developed at each level of the education cycle, taking into account lessons learned through REF-supported experiences and best practices. These include early childhood education and care (ECEC), primary education (early school leaving - ESL), secondary education, adult education and higher education (Romeraversitas centers).

In 2013, REF project partners implemented 80 projects across various educational fields. The figure below describes the distribution of REF-supported projects with the elements listed in the program priorities.

**TABLE 5. GRANT PROGRAM INDICATORS 2005–2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT. Number of beneficiaries</td>
<td>5,078</td>
<td>31,951</td>
<td>54,106</td>
<td>64,133</td>
<td>74,040</td>
<td>92,921</td>
<td>119,101</td>
<td>102,799</td>
<td>100,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention/reversal of enrollment in special education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>7,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desegregation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,734</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>5,673</td>
<td>6,534</td>
<td>9331</td>
<td>7,283</td>
<td>1,301</td>
<td>7,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental participation in children’s education</td>
<td>2,05 0</td>
<td>17,561</td>
<td>29,780</td>
<td>29,674</td>
<td>42,685</td>
<td>50,136</td>
<td>70,139</td>
<td>67,219</td>
<td>52,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in preschool education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,655</td>
<td>4,497</td>
<td>15,441</td>
<td>5,419</td>
<td>8,194</td>
<td>11,399</td>
<td>8,208</td>
<td>7,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of early school leaving</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>5,312</td>
<td>7,955</td>
<td>16,138</td>
<td>15,524</td>
<td>28,652</td>
<td>13,505</td>
<td>15,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of upper secondary education</td>
<td>2,128</td>
<td>2,687</td>
<td>4,797</td>
<td>5,050</td>
<td>4,382</td>
<td>5,505</td>
<td>5,182</td>
<td>4,099</td>
<td>5,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in tertiary education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>1,175</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental participation in children’s education</td>
<td>6,955</td>
<td>13,211</td>
<td>29,780</td>
<td>49,574</td>
<td>40,658</td>
<td>59,125</td>
<td>70,219</td>
<td>67,219</td>
<td>52,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in preschool education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desegregation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,734</td>
<td>3,553</td>
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<td>9331</td>
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<td>1,301</td>
<td>7,815</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>7,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service teacher training</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>2,417</td>
<td>4,068</td>
<td>4,248</td>
<td>4,236</td>
<td>5,145</td>
<td>5,812</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>3,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,078</td>
<td>31,951</td>
<td>54,106</td>
<td>64,133</td>
<td>74,040</td>
<td>92,921</td>
<td>119,101</td>
<td>102,799</td>
<td>100,904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes EU Pilot Project, REF Romania, Demjan Project and IPA KONIK.
From 2014, in anticipation of enhancing its partnerships under its grants, REF will require grantees to implement new good governance measures alongside the existing regulations on Financing and Procurement already required by REF. This will enhance the operations of partners, with the aim to improve their existing activities.

In 2013, REF has supported a chain of Toy Libraries that help to develop the cognitive and motor skills of young children at a community level; it has proved to be an efficient and effective tool in attracting a large number of families and promoting play between children and their parents, about 498 children and 1,541 parents benefited from 12 library projects, including two parent employees at each site. (For more on Toy Libraries, see page 45 of this report.)

In the upcoming period REF activities will widen the focus on the youngest children from ages zero to three in its early childhood development priorities; REF will focus heavily on increasing parenting skills, and supporting healthy childhood development and nurturing; introducing a mother tongue support program for young children whose native language is different from the language of instruction where applicable. REF will continue to expand its program priorities in all areas in its focus countries in the upcoming years; this will allow a solid baseline for improving the education trends across the region.

Based on the results of the Regional Roma Survey conducted by UNDP and World Bank\(^1\) the data shows that, from the Decade of Roma Inclusion’s four milestones that have yielded improvements, the best has been the field of education. REF will work to support the trends towards the further improvement of education for Roma.

Table 5 shows the number of participants in REF-supported projects from 2005–2013.

Tables 6, 7 and 8 present REF’s spending in its Grant Program broken down by country in 2013, cumulative spending for the 2005–2013 period by country and REF’s cumulative grant spending by year, respectively.

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**TABLE 6. PROJECT FINANCING BY COUNTRY, 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Committed</th>
<th>Contracted</th>
<th>Disbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>139,718</td>
<td>217,628</td>
<td>145,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>210,799</td>
<td>211,020</td>
<td>76,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>71,602</td>
<td>238,043</td>
<td>120,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>90,266</td>
<td>183,937</td>
<td>81,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>62,229</td>
<td>212,995</td>
<td>104,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>480,769</td>
<td>212,831</td>
<td>104,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>103,954</td>
<td>153,262</td>
<td>55,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>193,075</td>
<td>193,075</td>
<td>193,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>77,900</td>
<td>77,900</td>
<td>193,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>1,876,071</td>
<td>1,968,612</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 7. PROJECT FINANCING BY COUNTRY, 2005–2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Committed</th>
<th>Contracted</th>
<th>Disbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>806,902</td>
<td>6,067,493</td>
<td>595,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>806,863</td>
<td>6,060,885</td>
<td>526,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>844,557</td>
<td>833,426</td>
<td>680,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>969,970</td>
<td>904,010</td>
<td>695,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>2,550,190</td>
<td>2,482,209</td>
<td>2,374,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYR Macedonia</td>
<td>791,540</td>
<td>610,660</td>
<td>433,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>595,319</td>
<td>555,512</td>
<td>499,404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29,463,968</td>
<td>27,730,546</td>
<td>25,995,268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 8. PROJECT FINANCING, 2005–2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Committed</th>
<th>Contracted</th>
<th>Disbursed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,352,595</td>
<td>5,592,141</td>
<td>4,616,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3,229,615</td>
<td>3,229,615</td>
<td>3,229,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,539,692</td>
<td>2,539,692</td>
<td>2,539,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,085,069</td>
<td>2,085,069</td>
<td>2,085,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3,099,218</td>
<td>3,099,218</td>
<td>3,099,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2,573,810</td>
<td>2,573,810</td>
<td>2,573,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
<td>2,375,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29,463,968</td>
<td>27,730,546</td>
<td>25,995,268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{2}\) The numbers do not contain accrual reversals and repayments.
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2013 REF’s Scholarship Program continued to support Romani students in higher education through financial as well as through academic and professional development support through its three in-country scholarship schemes — Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP), Law and Humanities Program (LHP), the Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) — plus one international scholarship scheme, the Roma International Scholar Program (RISP). For the academic year of 2013-2014 REF awarded a total of 1,453 scholarships to students in 15 countries across all four of the scholarship schemes accumulating an overall budget of EUR 2,975,364, including all administrative expenses related to the program.

In 2013 the Scholarship Program continued the practice of conducting personal interviews with first-time applicants. This strengthened the selection process by helping students to learn more about REF and its goals and gave REF a better understanding of the program’s applicants. REF also introduced a system of two separate scholarship installments, with the second installment being conditional upon the successful submission of an interim report containing proof of satisfactory academic results from the first semester as well as proof of enrollment for the second semester by each scholarship beneficiary. This system was introduced to increase the overall accountability of the students benefiting from the program as well as to motivate the students to perform to the best of their academic abilities. In a continuation of the Scholarship Program’s network and efforts to increase visibility, REF organized Scholarship Galas in Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, FYR Macedonia and Slovakia. During these galas students could meet Romani intellectuals, and most importantly meet one another to form the basis of an alumni network.

New Findings on Graduation Rates

The positive impact of REF’s tertiary scholarship program can be proven by the data presented below.

In the 2012–2013 academic year, out of 1,505 scholarship beneficiaries, 513 (34 percent) of the students were planning to graduate, 352 (69 percent) graduated successfully; 77 (5 percent) postponed their studies, 45 (nine percent) dropped out and another 39 (nine percent) could not be reached at this time.

When compared to data about mainstream student bodies, a study published by the European Commission in 2012, “The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report,” shows that the completion rate from higher education by 2008 was on average 72 percent in European countries (including non-EU countries such as Armenia and Russia). REF data so far show a completion rate of 69 percent, a difference of less than five percent reflecting the enormous progress in the tertiary education completion rates of Roma.

Making this comparison at the country level in the countries where mainstream data is available, Hungary has a completion rate of 51 percent for RMUSP compared to the mainstream graduation rate of 43 percent. The Czech Republic completion rate for RMUSP is 49 percent and 70 percent for mainstream students. In Slovakia, 95 percent of RMUSP beneficiaries graduated, compared to the mainstream rate of 63 percent. No further data on mainstream graduate rates are available from REF’s portfolio, but countries with the lowest completion rates in the program are FYR Macedonia (49 percent), Serbia (52 percent), Kosovo (50 percent) Hungary (51 percent) and Czech Republic (40 percent). At the same time, the basket of three LHP countries of Moldova, Russia and Ukraine (92–100 percent), Slovakia (95 percent) and Romania (70 percent) have the highest completion rates.

The graphics on pages 23–24 contain the total numbers of scholarships, as well as the numbers of scholarships given in each scheme, for each academic year between 2008 and 2013.

* Spending reflects Scholarship Program stipend costs for beneficiaries and does not include administrative or other program expenses.

LEVERAGING FUNDS FOR ROMA EDUCATION

REF, together with a broad consortium of educational, governmental and nongovernmental partners, has achieved a positive change, whereby the majority of participating Decade countries are matching REF funding on Roma education with additional financial resources.

Funds leveraged by the Grant Program

In 2013 the Grant Program leveraged funds from its implementing partners in REF grant projects, including national ministries and agencies, local municipalities and international organizations. This is a growing tendency and REF intends to absorb more leveraged funds year by year in the Grant Program, which raised EUR 4,209,279 in 2013. (See Table 2.)

Funds leveraged from EU Calls

REF also started to leverage its funding from European sources in the last four years, which had a positive result of increasing REF’s direct income, from institutions like the European Commission in Brussels, European Structural Funds from Romania, Instruments for Pre-Accession in Montenegro and Serbia, and European Structural Funds in Slovakia. Compared to 2010, REF recorded almost a five-fold increase in its European funding, leveraging EUR 3,752,609 in 2013. (See Table 3.)

Funds leveraged from the Revolving Loan Program

Given the scarcity of funds available to Roma NGOs implementing European Structural Funds and other projects in the region, REF has also made available its financial resources through a system of revolving loans and reimbursable grants. As a result, REF mobilized money for European Structural Funds worth up to EUR 34.3 million in the period 2005-2013 through providing EUR 680,000 in reimbursable grants. In order to further develop this resource for Roma NGOs, the Council of Europe Development Bank provided an additional EUR 1.5 million in financial resources in the form of reimbursable grants in all Decade countries.
REF and its partners are pursuing a new financial and professional partnership in the Czech Republic with the Municipality of Ostrava, including a small top-up of additional governmental funding, to invest in and provide access to early childhood educational services for disadvantaged Romani children. REF considers this an encouraging signal after the path-breaking D.H. and Others decision of the European Court of Human Rights in 2006 that Romani children were systematically assigned to segregated schools based on their racial or ethnic identity rather than intellectual capacities.

The Hungarian government has recently strengthened its requirements regarding compulsory hours of schooling, in effect supporting after-school tutoring and mentoring as tools to address early school leaving in primary and secondary schools. Afternoon schooling is an increasing trend, slowly being absorbed as an accepted state policy as part of measures to alleviate early school leaving. REF has supported 19 after-school study halls to remain in operation, providing mentoring, tutoring and educational support services in Hungary.

In Slovakia, REF has been among the first in Roma-related projects to use randomised control trials (RCT) to analyze the effectiveness of a Roma-targeted intervention, in this case, A Good Start’s Your Story project in 21 locations.

In 2012–2013 academic year, REF started to implement its secondary school scholarship model. Without such scholarship support, many Romani students would be unable to finish their studies as their parents simply cannot provide them with the necessary financial support. As a result of tutorship and mentorship, participating children have improved their overall GPAs in most instances.
TABLE 9. SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS VS SCHOLARSHIPS GRANTED
FOR THE 2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the scholarship support, scholarship beneficiaries from the region received additional grants for their academic and professional development. Among these applications, 235 successfully passed the selection process. Table 9 presents the respective figures for each program country in the region, while Table 10 presents the distribution of accepted applicants per level of studies.

TABLE 10. SCHOLARSHIP BENEFICIARIES’ LEVEL OF STUDIES.
2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013 in Central Europe, REF received 396 applications for the tertiary level in-country Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RUMUSP) and 38 applications for the study-abroad Roma International Scholar Program (RISP). Among these applications, 235 successfully passed the selection process. Each country profiled in this report is preceded by a concise list of important data designed to orient readers in the respective educational landscape of each country. What follows as a short commentary on the significance of this data and its interpretation.

TABLE 1. SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS VS SCHOLARSHIPS GRANTED FOR THE 2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the scholarship support, scholarship beneficiaries from the region received additional grants for their academic and professional development. Among these applications, 235 successfully passed the selection process. Table 9 presents the respective figures for each program country in the region, while Table 10 presents the distribution of accepted applicants per level of studies.
Seven years after the European Court of Human Rights judgment regarding D. H. and Others vs. the Czech Republic, REF was invited to launch a project to ameliorate persistent segregation in Ostrava in cooperation with a number of other partners.

With support from REF and the financial contribution of the municipal government of Ostrava, a systematic preschool education and early elementary school registration project has been established in order to prevent Romani pupils from enrolling in so-called “practical” schools that typically offer a sub-standard educational curriculum. REF brought together two nongovernmental organizations, Beleza and Mlyu Nosaoros (White Rhinoceros), to implement this first important step toward ending the persisting barriers between the Roma and the majority.

One preschool teacher in Ostrava-Poruba said, “Looking at the children, it is obvious that they have made great progress since the beginning of the project. The parents are very pleased and are waiting for the next three-year project. From approximately 60 children of preschool age who have already attended Mothers’ Clubs, this preschool education and early elementary school registration project has increased the attendance to over 100 children local kindergartens has increased during the first year of the three-year project. From approximately 60 children of preschool age who have already attended Mothers’ Clubs, 20 have continued to attend the local kindergartens. “Our children have a chance for a better future,” remarked two young boys make friends in an integrated classroom in eastern Hungary.

Despite the apparent availability of European Union funding for extracurricular study groups since 2004, the European Roma Education Fund, together with the Open Society Foundation’s program, Making the Most of EU Funds, supported those tanodas experiencing financial difficulties. The Roma Education Fund, together with the Open Society Foundation’s program, Making the Most of EU Funds, supported those tanodas experiencing financial difficulties. Despite the apparent availability of European Union funding for extracurricular study groups since 2004, the European Structural Funds were unable to ensure their continuity because of funding delays. The aim of this timely funding has been to give bridging resources and know how to those tanodas that want to apply to the Structural Funds but could not have survived in the interim.

In the last decade tanodas have played a crucial role in local community development and the improvement of children’s skills and academic achievements. This joint endeavor by the Roma Education Fund and Making the Most of EU Funds has ensured the continuous operation of tanodas and the academic achievements of those children who were involved in these institutions. The maximum grant was EUR 10,000 per tanoda for eight months, which could be spent on maintenance and educational activities. REF commissioned TÁRKI-TUDOK Zrt., to prepare an assessment regarding all tanodas, the basis for an upcoming study.

Nineteen tanodas have received grants from the emergency fund, reaching 665 children at risk of dropping out across Hungary, for a total of just over EUR 60,000. Almost half of the tanodas have since requested an extension of funding due to the unpredictability of the Structural Funds in Hungary.

TOGETHER TO PREESCHOOL EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN OSTRAVA

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

**CENTRAL EUROPE**

**HUNGARY**

**SAVING STUDY HALLS IN HUNGARY**

Operating for almost a decade in Hungary, tanodas are community-based extracurricular facilities. They run after school and support disadvantaged Romani students with mentoring and tutoring. Tanodas aim to foster their success at school and improve their future chances in the labor market and social integration. One effect among others has been strengthening the relationship between schools and parents.

According to Hungary’s earlier Public Education Act, the tasks of the Hungarian Ministry of Education shall include the “designing and dissemination of extracurricular methods” (‘Tanoda’) in order to support the educational success of disadvantaged pupils.” However, the Public Education Act was modified in 2012 and tanodas are no longer included or specified in the new law. Scores of tanodas, particularly in remote villages, would have faced certain closure.

The Roma Education Fund, together with the Open Society Foundation’s program, Making the Most of EU Funds, supported those tanodas experiencing financial difficulties. Despite the apparent availability of European Union funding for extracurricular study groups since 2004, the European Structural Funds were unable to ensure their continuity because of funding delays. The aim of this timely funding has been to give bridging resources and know how to those tanodas that want to apply to the Structural Funds but could not have survived in the interim.

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Nineteen tanodas have received grants from the emergency fund, reaching 665 children at risk of dropping out across Hungary, for a total of just over EUR 60,000. Almost half of the tanodas have since requested an extension of funding due to the unpredictability of the Structural Funds in Hungary.

**BENEFICIARY SPOTLIGHT:**

**MONIKA CHEN – RISP**

My name is Monika Chen and I was born in 1991 in Budapest, Hungary. I’m an only child and my family comes from traditional Romani roots with a focus on respecting our family values that have accumulated through generations and generations. Even though my family is not the typical Romani musician family, my mother is a singer who started singing at a young age in a Romani folk band. Her unique voice was quickly discovered by others but it has been very hard for her to keep up with her passion. What I really admire about her is her strong will. Everyone knows how challenging being a singer can be but she always holds her head high and gives her all to every situation. My father, who is of Chinese origin, left home when I was eight years old, so I spent most of my life with my mother. I’m so blessed to have the support of my mother’s family who has taught me so many lessons. One that will always stick with me is that we alone have the power to decide our destiny and we must follow our dreams. The youngest of my four aunts was the first in the family to attend university; and she set an example for my cousins and me to follow in her footsteps and pursue higher education.

I spent many of my holidays at Roma summer camps. Besides being able to bond with other kids my own age, I had the opportunity to find my hidden creative talents in painting, writing and singing. My mother had high hopes that introducing me to this world would turn into a future for me but I steered towards a more predictable and safe route.

**This article was written by Roland Ferkovics and Nikoletta Olah and originally appeared inTransitions Online’s education supplement:**

http://chalkboard.tol.org/rescuing-afterschool-tanodas-in-hungary/

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http://chalkboard.tol.org/rescuing-afterschool-tanodas-in-hungary/
I intend to combine my Management degree with a Psychology degree in Psychology with a focus on Neuroscience. My future studies to the next level I've decided to also pursue a degree in Management which I found a passion for over the past year. But in order to take this transition into being a part of a more culturally diverse society.

When I finished primary school at the age of 14, I knew that education would be a crucial part of my life. I was accepted to a competitive bilingual secondary school where I studied most subjects in English. After secondary school I took a gap year to work in Germany as well as at home completing various jobs to collect money to further my education since I knew that my family, despite all efforts, would be unable to support me financially.

I always keep my future in mind and I feel like there are so many opportunities abroad that will help me reach both my professional and personal goals. After my gap year, I applied to and was accepted by the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. I yearned to be part of something important and meaningful while I attended school. In 2012 I started my first year at St. Andrews with the help of the RISP scholarship. I still cannot begin to express enough gratitude for this financial support.

My first year in Scotland has lived up to all of my expectations. I have met some of the most wonderful people from around the world and learned so much about myself. My first semester I took three courses: Management, Psychology and Film.

My first year in Scotland has lived up to all of my expectations. It was the perfect opportunity to learn how to adjust and transition into being a part of a more culturally diverse society. I'm currently pursuing a degree in Management which I found a passion for over the past year. But in order to take my future studies to the next level I've decided to also pursue a degree in Psychology with a focus on Neuroscience. I intend to combine my Management degree with a Psychology degree because in my opinion these two subjects are the best combination to have. A good manager or CEO of any organization can only enhance their skills by having background knowledge of the basic psychological processes.

I'm only 21 but I feel I've come a very long way. I grew up in a healthy, loving family but going through the hardships as well as the bright moments in life teaches you to never take anything for granted.
The project seeks to empower families, especially women, through a program called Your Story. Your Story is a program that uses literacy as a tool for empowerment through the reading of children’s books. This process engages women in the context of the stories as well as simultaneously emulating the reading of children’s books. This process helps to verify or reject the presumed causal connection between the intervention and results.

The project seeks to identify net effects or impacts. Ultimately it seeks to compare the results of the intervention participants to the results of a group not involved in the intervention. The “treated” or “treatment” groups were distinguished from the “control” groups.

The selected localities are as follows: Plavecký Štvrtok, Zlaté Klasy, Žehňa, Sabinov; Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Šimonovce, Širkovce, Rapovce; Ľubovňa, Žehňa, Sabinov; Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Šimonovce, Širkovce, Rapovce; Prakovce, Ružňany, Krompachy, Výborna, Rakúsky, Lubica; Šariš Lubovnica, Žehňa, Šabivno, Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Medzov, Bratislava.

The project has a diverse target group that includes Slovak-, Romanes- and Hungarian-speaking mothers. Activities are always tailored and carried out in the language that is spoken by the majority of the mothers in a given group. Based on the evaluation method, only the mothers in the “treatment” group are involved in project activities, not mothers in the “control” group. The implementation of the project is still ongoing.

The evaluation component of the project has been carefully built into the overall process allowing for a rigorous evaluation of the outcomes for the beneficiary children. Seeing as the project aims to ultimately address policymakers, it is essential to draw evidence-based conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the interventions being made. The counterfactual impact evaluation is important in this case, as it helps to verify or reject the presumed causal connection between the intervention and results.

The scholarship program engaged 42 mentors (four of them from Zilina, 11 from Nitra, three from Trnava, one from Ľubovňa, one from Nitra, three from Trnava, one from Bratislava.

The project is working with approximately 525 children from the southern part of Slovakia. It will measure the impacts and progress against a predetermined set of indicators in order to analyze if the methodology being used is effective in raising the competencies of the children as well as their primary caregivers.

Besides the Slovak government as the main implementing entity alongside REF, other international and national partners are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the project, such as the World Bank, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and the Slovak Governance Institute. PROGRESS also contains an evaluation aspect designed to measure the results of the various activities and REF’s main role in the project is to provide technical assistance and support surrounding the content and quality of the early childhood education and care interventions.

The project is working with approximately 255 children from ages zero to six and 315 mothers in accessing early childhood education and care services in 21 different locations in the southern part of Slovakia. It will measure the impacts and progress against a predetermined set of indicators in order to analyze if the methodology being used is effective in raising the competencies of the children as well as their primary caregivers.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities in Slovakia, is implementing an early childhood education and care program called Your Story. Your Story is a program that uses literacy as a tool for empowerment through the reading of children’s books. This process engages women in the context of the stories as well as simultaneously simulating a teaching method that they can replicate later in their own homes.

The selected localities are as follows: Plavecký Štvrtok, Zlaté Klasy, Žehňa, Sabinov; Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Šimonovce, Širkovce, Rapovce; Ľubovňa, Žehňa, Sabinovno, Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Medzov, Bratislava.

The project has a diverse target group that includes Slovak-, Romanes- and Hungarian-speaking mothers. Activities are always tailored and carried out in the language that is spoken by the majority of the mothers in a given group. Based on the evaluation method, only the mothers in the “treatment” group are involved in project activities, not mothers in the “control” group. The implementation of the project is still ongoing.

**TABLE 11. GPA COMPARISONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE DIFF.</th>
<th>FEMALE DIFF.</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
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<td>II</td>
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<td>1.53</td>
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<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 12. GPA UP TO 2.5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE DIFF.</th>
<th>FEMALE DIFF.</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 16. GPA comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE DIFF.</th>
<th>FEMALE DIFF.</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The selected localities are as follows: Plavecký Štvrtok, Zlaté Klasy, Žehňa, Sabinov; Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Šimonovce, Širkovce, Rapovce; Ľubovňa, Žehňa, Sabinov; Čaňa, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Medzov, Bratislava.

The project has a diverse target group that includes Slovak-, Romanes- and Hungarian-speaking mothers. Activities are always tailored and carried out in the language that is spoken by the majority of the mothers in a given group. Based on the evaluation method, only the mothers in the “treatment” group are involved in project activities, not mothers in the “control” group. The implementation of the project is still ongoing.

**TABLE 11. GPA COMPARISONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE DIFF.</th>
<th>FEMALE DIFF.</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.61</td>
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<td>-0.46</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 12. GPA UP TO 2.5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE DIFF.</th>
<th>FEMALE DIFF.</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
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<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 16. GPA comparisons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE DIFF.</th>
<th>FEMALE DIFF.</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the boundaries of REF’s portfolio, and lying outside the scope of the Roma Decade, the cluster of Moldova, Russia and Ukraine account for the smallest amount of REF expenditures.

While REF has been active in Moldova with some small-scale primary and secondary school interventions, with approximately one project per year, the bulk of its activity is represented by the Law and Humanities Program, which has created a new generation of Romani professionals, of whom 200 graduated successfully up until 2013. The majority received BA degrees and one-third graduated with MA degrees.

The respective scholarship program in these countries have more components in comparison with other scholarship schemes, whereby language training, professional development workshops and conferences are part of this scheme.

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**EASTERN EUROPE**

Moldova / Russia / Ukraine

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A Moldovan LHP beneficiary observes the final result of the work of volunteer community workers to put up water filter in a Roma village in Moldova.

Photo: Law and Humanities Program

A group of LHP finalists react at the first of three annual professional capacity building workshops in Kiev, Ukraine.

Photo: Sergey Melnik
EASTERN EUROPE

TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM RECRUITS BRIGHT YOUNG MINDS

In 2013 REF received 228 applications for the in-country Law and Humanities Program (LHP) which is supported by Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” – EVZ, and four applications for the study-abroad Roma International Scholar Program (RISP). Among these applications, 177 complied with all eligibility criteria and successfully passed the selection process. Table 12 presents the respective figures per each program country in the region, while Table 13 presents the distribution of accepted applicants per level of studies.

TABLE 12. SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS VS. SCHOLARSHIPS GRANTED FOR THE 2013–2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LHP</th>
<th>RISP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPLICANTS</td>
<td>BENEFICIARIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(77%) (50%)

TABLE 13. SCHOLARSHIP BENEFICIARIES’ LEVEL OF STUDIES. 2013–2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VOCATIONAL</th>
<th>BACHELOR</th>
<th>MASTER</th>
<th>DOCTORATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(10%) (56%) (30%) (4%)

Besides the scholarship support, LHP enhanced beneficiaries’ academic and professional development by implementing a range of additional program components. Through these components, 21 scholarship recipients from the region received support to attend foreign language courses in accredited language schools in their localities, seven received grants to attend international academic conferences and symposia, summer schools, computer courses and in-country internship programs. Two received financial support for internships in organizations or companies outside their home countries and three groups of students received grants to implement small-scale Romani community development projects. In addition, in 2013 LHP beneficiaries from each of these three countries participated in in-country professional development trainings and in an annual LHP student conference held in St. Petersburg, Russia.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TRACER STUDY

After 10 years of implementing LHP and following the request of one of the program’s donors, REF began to investigate the degree in which the program contributed to the academic trajectory of its beneficiaries, as well as whether the beneficiaries managed to enter the job market on positions relevant for their studies after obtaining higher education degrees. The main reason was to identify the ways in which the REF Scholarship Program could be better tailored to respond to the needs of its beneficiaries and to help them become successful in their initial career stages. The results of this investigation are summarized below.

Graduation Status

From the 413 individuals who participated in LHP so far, 200 (48 percent) obtained at least one tertiary level degree with complete or partial LHP support, while 144 did not graduate yet but are still in the program. Also, 35 beneficiaries (eight percent) dropped out of their university studies before graduation or postponed graduation for later. The graphic below presents further details on LHP participants’ graduation status until now.

Among the 35 who dropped out or postponed their studies, an absolute majority (25) are from Moldova. The main reason for abandoning or postponing studies stated by the respective Moldovan students was migration abroad, either together
with his/her entire family or alone to find better employment opportunities. Some of these former students stated that although they consider the LHP support as being significant for pursuing higher education, it is not enough for supporting a family. Most of them migrated to Russia. Other reasons stated by those who dropped out from university were marriage and/or childcare. It is also worth mentioning that the dropout rate generally decreased over time in the program, since majority of participants who dropped out were those in the first years of the program.

The dropout rate in LHP could be compared to that in the mainstream population. A recent European Commission study based on 2008 data reveals that the university completion rate in Russia is 80 percent (i.e., dropout/postponement rate is 20 percent). Similar data for Moldova and Ukraine are unfortunately unavailable, but one could make a judgment based on the average university completion rate for Europe in general, which is 72 percent (therefore, dropout/postponement rate is 28 percent). The countries which according to the figures, the eight percent dropout rate in the LHP program is not high.

**LHP Professional Development Training in Moldova**

During the first of three LHP professional capacity building events in the academic year, the Scholarship Program organized a two-day professional development training in Chisinau, Moldova on March 16–17, 2013. The training was entitled “Nuts and Bolts of Project Development and Implementation for Community Development Small Scale Projects,” for 32 Law and Humanities Program (LHP) beneficiaries and alumni. The training sessions were organized through practical exercises around the topics of small-scale community development project designing, management practicalities, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, or any challenges in project implementation. The event was also envisaged to further the development of the REF Alumni and Beneficiary network by bringing LHP beneficiaries together to discuss and work together as a group during the training.

**SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS BY LHP BENEFICIARIES**

LHP Small-Scale Projects were introduced as new program component in summer 2012. The experience in implementing the component during the first year has been overall positive. At the end of April 2013 the program launched a new call for proposals for the respective component and selected three project proposals for support. One such project was led by Grigore Zapescu, a BA student in the third year in Legal Studies and LHP beneficiary since 2011, leading an implementation team of three current and one former LHP students of Moldova.

The goal of the project was to build a water well in a Roma village in Moldova where there was no potable water, with the collaboration with local authorities and under the guidance of a Moldovan Roma NGO. Despite several challenges that the implementation team faced on the way, the water well was eventually built and now the villagers have a source of potable fresh water.

The program team considered this project a good practice of Romani students’ activism and involvement in Romani community development, and Aluna Lepadatu, another LHP beneficiary, wrote an article to share this experience with the readers of Soptominis, a national newspaper in Moldova.  

**SHORT-SCALE PROJECTS BY LHP BENEFICIARIES**

LHP Small-Scale Projects were introduced as new program component in summer 2012. The experience in implementing the component during the first year has been overall positive. At the end of April 2013 the program launched a new call for proposals for the respective component and selected three project proposals for support. One such project was led by Grigore Zapescu, a BA student in the third year in Legal Studies and LHP beneficiary since 2011, leading an implementation team of three current and one former LHP students of Moldova.

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**GRANT PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

Between 2007 and 2014, REF committed EUR 610,660 and disbursed EUR 496,750 (about two percent of REF commitments and disbursements) for nine projects taking place in Moldova, one of which is ongoing (see Table 14). The projects aimed at increasing participation of Romani children in quality preschool and compulsory education, involving developing partnerships with local and central authorities and Romani and non-Romani parents as well as teachers and educators. Desegregation of Romani schools by transferring Romani pupils to nearby mixed schools and raising awareness among Romani parents of the importance of education as well as encouraging dialogue between Roma and non-Roma at the local level were among the objectives of REF-funded projects. Additionally, in 2008 an educational needs assessment was carried out in 38 localities populated by Roma and again between 2008 and 2010 REF contributed to the consolidation of the Romani (school) mediators network by piloting the initiative in four localities. The ongoing project focuses on increasing the retention rate, performance and graduation of Romani students in post-secondary vocational education and higher education by providing them with tutoring and other academic support.

**TABLE 14: GRANT COMMITMENTS IN MOLDOVA, 2007–2014 (EUR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>55,770</td>
<td>8,370</td>
<td>28,005</td>
<td>193,015</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>21,770</td>
<td>410,460</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three main REF partners implementing projects in Moldova are the NGOs Ograda Noastra, the Union of Young Roma Tarna Rom and the Roma National Center from the Republic of Moldova.
After intense policy dialogues and exchange, the secondary scholarship services developed by REF have been taken up by four national governments in Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, resulting in financial investments and in increased incentives targeted at Roma to access and complete secondary education. It is soon expected to result in increased graduation rates among Roma comparable to national averages. For example, in FYR Macedonia, when REF started its secondary scholarship program in 2007, the dropout rate for Romani students was up to 26 percent. After four years of implementation REF records levels of less than six percent, and among graduate students the dropout rate is almost zero percent for the last three school years. The number of Roma finishing secondary education at national level, has also increased markedly in the last eight years; for example, in FYR Macedonia, where in 2004 only about ten percent of Roma completed upper secondary education, now at least 17 percent do. These data are positive indicators for the national governments about where REF was successful, and now they all recognize the value of these schemes in retaining and educating Romani children in school and contribute to REF secondary school scholarship schemes.

The European Instruments for Pre-Accession in Serbia have recognized REF’s secondary scholarship program as worthy of scaling up nationally, and an external evaluation proved that this powerful tool is having a strong impact on the performance of Romani students in secondary and upper secondary school. This is why the Ministry of Education and OSCE in cooperation with REF started a national secondary scholarship scheme for Romani students using IPA funding in Serbia. In Montenegro, the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Education invited REF to supplement their own secondary and tertiary scholarship funds with REF’s mentoring and tutoring components in a nationwide project financed by the government of Montenegro for Romani and Egyptian students. Montenegro is also the site of a major policy achievement, whereby children from Konik Camp in Podgorica are being bussed from the camp to mainstream schools with financial support from the state, which is a landmark desegregation effort begun by REF.

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SCALING UP TOY LIBRARIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN FYR MACEDONIA AND SERBIA

Play has long been acknowledged as a crucial factor in children’s development, linked to intellectual, motor and personal and social development. Children growing up in poverty are more likely to suffer poor health and developmental problems, which in turn may influence parenting responses.

The Roma Education Fund has grouped its early childhood education and care model interventions around parenting skills and ensuring access to and providing quality services in the Western Balkans. On-site activities have included a matrix of enrollment support, accompaniment and transport to preschool, home visits, meetings on education and health, Your Story reading sessions, Home Preschool Community Liaison sessions – where parents are assisted and work with teachers on delivering preschool sessions – and the Mothers’ Club program.

An innovation that REF learned about in Turkey and in the United Kingdom, a Toy Library is a community venue where children, their families and caregivers can go to borrow toys, puzzles, games and books that are designed to support children’s development and learning through play. The items from the library may be borrowed and enjoyed at home. Toy libraries exist in both rich and poor nations around the world, and also enable children living in the most marginalized and poor homes to access educational toys.

After piloting Toy Libraries as part of REF’s early childhood education and care initiative, A Good Start, REF has scaled them up and started five new Toy Libraries in Serbia and one in Kosovo. Podgorica, Montenegro. They provide carefully selected educational toys for borrowing and some toy libraries also offer information and advice about play and learning, and provide an opportunity for parents to borrow books related to parenting. Children and families have access to quality toys that have an educational and stimulating value to develop important milestones like fine motor skills and provide opportunity for the whole family to spend quality time together and have meaningful interactions.

Believe you can succeed

In the Balkans, the Roma Education Fund has grouped its interventions around developing good parenting skills in the parents of disadvantaged Romani children. The Roma Education Fund has grouped its early childhood education and care model interventions around parenting skills and ensuring access to and providing quality services in the Western Balkans. On-site activities have included a matrix of enrollment support, accompaniment and transport to preschool, home visits, meetings on education and health, Your Story reading sessions, Home Preschool Community Liaison sessions – where parents are assisted and work with teachers on delivering preschool sessions – and the Mothers’ Club program.

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Believe you can succeed

In a series of one-day scholarship events hosted between October 30 and November 18, 2013, the Roma Education Fund and its representatives met over 600 young Romani scholars and Roma activists, intellectuals and professionals to inspire and motivate a new cohort of Romani university students studying in the sciences and humanities.

BALKANS

TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.recruits young Balkan scholars

In 2013 REF received 650 applications for the in-country Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) and Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP), as well as 16 applications for the study-abroad Roma International Scholar Program (RISP). Among these applications, 372 complied with all eligibility criteria and successfully passed the selection process. Table 15 presents the respective figures per program and per country in the region, while Table 16 presents the distribution of accepted applicants per level of studies.
In a tightly orchestrated campaign to support Romani children in accessing quality education, the Roma Education Fund, provided its local partners, the National Center for Community Services and Romani Kham, with last-minute support.

REF’s resources enabled the daily bussing of children from 38 Romani families to schools in downtown Tirana after they had been evicted to a new site 11 kilometers outside the Center. At the new site, they received assistance from the city, which provided rudimentary public services including a vaccination program for young children. REF’s partners provided hot meals and educational support for 69 Romani children from the youngest of age till age 15, as well as 56 mothers who received parenting and counseling support. Five additional partners joined this common effort.

The former mayor of Tirana, now prime minister, Edi Rama, has spoken widely about his party’s platform to provide access to quality inclusive education to all children in Albania. REF is encouraged by the government’s intervention to help this disadvantaged community with its resources. As part of its advocacy to promote Romani children’s access to quality education, articles in Shqip and Telegrafi and an Albanian public television broadcast covered the intervention and urged the government to intervene with its resources, quoting fully from REF’s press release.

“Poor, homeless children are far less likely to prepare for and attend school and they are prone irreversible emotional and physical damage by living a meager existence with their families on the streets. In order to fill this gap in services and physical damage by living a meager existence with their families on the streets. In order to fill this gap in services...”

“...Poor, homeless children are far less likely to prepare for and fully from REF’s press release covered the intervention and urged the government to intervene with its resources, quoting...”

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

REF KEEPS ROMANI CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL

Novi Most International, an NGO from Mostar, has been working with Romani communities in Bisce Polje and Jinzi Legor in association with the “Mustafa Ejubovic - Sejh Juro” primary school. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Herzegovina-Neretva County-Canton, and the OSIET office in Mostar all consider this project to be very important in taking steps to increase Romani children’s access to mainstream education.

Ending in February 2014, the Novi Most Roma Education project achieved a number of very significant results including decreasing the number of Romani students enrolled in the special school “Los Rosales,” successfully transferring five Romani students from “Los Rosales” to the primary school and the remaining 60 children were not registered in the school system at all. However, with the help of the project, there are currently 77 Romani children living in Bisce Polje from the ages of six to sixteen. Before the project started only four of these children were attending a mainstream primary school, eight of these children were attending a special school, five of these children were attending an accelerated learning program and the remaining 60 children were not registered in the school system at all. However, with the help of the project, there are currently 25 Romani pupils attending primary school, seven Romani primary school graduates and one Romani secondary school graduate. It is also important to mention that no Romani pupil whose family remained in the area for the duration of the project dropped out of school.
amount of Roma in all of Croatia. Operating in four localities, in a mixture of sites that incorporate community centers, preschool facilities and kindergartens, this intervention in partnership with the local authorities supports REF’s belief that everyone has a role to play in investing in children’s cognitive, motor, physical and psychological development. REF’s flexibility has allowed it to adopt a different approach at each category of site, whether a community center hosting early childhood education and care, a standalone kindergarten with several shifts of children a day or a primary school in a town center.

Despite some mainstream parental resistance, REF’s constant work with both Romani and non-Romani communities, as well as its strong partnership with the regional authorities and national stakeholders, has settled the unease. The Roma Education Fund’s regular monitoring missions have clearly established that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students, four high schools, and no more than 70 students attending university.” - Kosovopress, May 9, 2013

The efforts of the Kosovar government to improve educational outcomes for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) pupils have seen a number of positive results in recent years, including accepting and inclusion strategy for the RAE community with special measures on education. Other more concrete efforts have included the provision of over 5,400 textbooks in the 2009–2010 academic year and 200 scholarships to RAE pupils in the 2012-2013 academic year; pool of how governments are adopting scholarship programs similar to REF’s models for secondary and tertiary levels of education.

These are important steps in improving access to education for disadvantaged students from RAE communities. REF has facilitated two policy dialogue roundtables in 2013 with high level officials representing the Minister of Education Science and Technology, the Minister of EU Integration and the Embassy of Switzerland to the Republic of Kosovo.

REF’s strategic flexibility enabling it to know when and how to advocate, cooperate and/or implement projects is apparent in REF’s targeted grants in Kosovo. Through its models REF aspires to address many of the systemic problems identified in a recent United Nations Development Programme report.

REF’s early childhood education and care and preliminary interventions in more than ten localities with different implementing partners – including Save the Children, Shqepresa e Jetës (Hope of Life) and Balkan Sunflowers – has reached 250 preschool-aged children and their families.

With the same partners, REF’s primary and secondary program helped 175 pupils in the compulsory age cohort and 15 street children who are among the most at-risk and disadvantaged children in Kosovo.

Another proven model to reduce early school leaving and better educational outcomes was prepared for implementation in 2013 when REF negotiated a new secondary scholarship program with the Kosovar government and Voice of RAE NGO; targeting over 500 secondary school age children beginning in 2014.

Romaversitas, a supplementary activity to the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program, is a RAE-led study hall that serves as an incubator for 40 RAE university students, plus 15 talented RAE high school graduates who anticipate being enrolled as freshmen. It provides extra resources, tutoring, IT and language learning opportunities open to students not only studying in Pristina but also at a few rural universities. The Pristina venue offers a home away from home for students, where they can study, socialize, exchange information, use computers and internet, and also have book and library services; it is maintained and co-funded by the Kosovo Agency for Advocacy and Development. Data collection began in 2013 regarding the students’ academic results under the program.

This model has been scaled up from its original location in Budapest, Hungary that has been operating since 2006.

REF in SELECT KOSOVO MEDIA

http://www.kosovapress.com/?id=1&14024
http://www.kosovo.net/art/arkiv/nacional/zbor-xhozhit-xhozhit-xhozhit-2013
http://www.pravda.info/kosovo.php?id=1590999&U=1
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88RPNGwDZQA&list=PLRrFsdYF5HhJpjsE_
http://www.koha.net/arkiva/?page=1,13,145640
http://www.kosovapress.com/?cid=1,84,165048

EUROPEAN SCALE OF ACCESS TO SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

Average PISA Math Performance (2012) n/a
Average PISA Reading Performance (2012) n/a
PIRLS 2011 Reading –
TIMSS 2011 Math –
Roma Population – Wikipedia 260,000
Roma Population – Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division Estimate –
Roma Population – Official Census 53,879
GDP (EUR) 14.11 Billion

AT A GLANCE

FYR MACEDONIA

For REF this has meant access to political channels, engagement with strategic decision-makers, building relationships on trust and social cohesion, and legislative changes that have gone out of their way to attain FYR Macedonia’s commitment to quality inclusive education among other fundamental human rights. FYR Macedonia is one of the exemplary countries where REF implements its programs at each education level in active partnership with the national and local governments including Roma civil society organizations.

One of the largest partnerships has been FYR Macedonia’s National Roma Secondary School Scholarship program, and 2013 marked the third phase of collaboration between REF and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Science in offering this nationwide scholarship program. The Ministry is supporting the project activities with half of the costs and there are signals it may contribute further in the next programming phase.

This program provided 1,169 beneficiaries with support that enabled them to complete their secondary education and transition to university in FYR Macedonia, which represents some 73 percent of Roma officially registered in secondary education. The rate of secondary school completion among enrolled girls is equal to that of the boys (97 percent) and so

SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIPS GO NATIONAL
is the rate of transition to university (approximately eight percent for both girls and boys).

The average grade point average (GPA) of the graduate scholarship recipients for the school year 2012-13 is 4.023, which is a very good GPA. For beneficiaries enrolled in the four-year program the average graduate GPA is 4.50 (excellent), meaning that most of the scholars that graduate had very good if not excellent grades; the average graduate GPA for beneficiaries enrolled in the three-year program is 3.55 (very good). 112 students successfully passed the state Matura exam.

The project activities have contributed towards increased students’ motivation, improved attendance, and improved graduation rates. The improved attendance is so far the biggest benefit of the project activities. While there are still some Romani students who are lagging behind in achievements, most of the majority Romani students who are lagging behind in achievements Matura exam.

High hopes for their future, which can be considered as indicators of students. Moreover, the vast majority of students expressed prospects to access the labor market than those without qualifications.

Students completing secondary education have much better prospects to access the labor market than those without qualifications.

They indicate that the most preferred vocations are: medicine and information on the chosen vocations of some of the students.

In a consortium with [Hilf zu Selbsthilfe e.V.]33 and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, REF started to implement a project to increase the complex integration process of Konik Camps’ inhabitants within the framework of the Assistance Program for Integration and Return of RAE and other I/DPs residing in the Konik Area. The project is financed by the European Commission’s Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and Montenegro government funds till 2016. In this complex partnership REF designed and implemented the educational integration of Romani and Egyptian children living in Konik Camp.

Konik Camp houses more than 2,000 people, most of whom live in extreme poverty. They moved to Montenegro during the Kosovo conflict and have remained in the camp's difficult living conditions for the last thirteen years. Residents live in metal containers or barracks built from wood, plastic and other gathered materials. Konik's inhabitants suffer from high levels of unemployment and discrimination by the majority population and other gathered materials. Konik's inhabitants suffer from high levels of unemployment and discrimination by the majority population.

Romani and Egyptian children attend a provisional segregated school in metal containers established near Konik Camp 2. However, the children can gain very little as the quality of education and attendance rates are extremely low. The “school” covers children from first to fourth grades, after which they are supposed to join and extended building of the school, which is outside of the camp. However, at this point many of the children stop attending school and only a small percent of them pass to the next grade. Data shows that the dropout rate for Romani and Egyptian children who were enrolled in the first grade fell to 35 percent by the end of second grade, to less than half that amount by the end of fourth grade with only 15 percent of children transferring to fifth grade, according to an evaluation of Roma education in Montenegro by Johanna Crighton, a UNICEF Consultant in 2012.

When REF started to implement the educational activities, the initiative has garnered much support from Romani parents and local schools, and since September 2013 the first grade of the Konik School has been closed and the Romani children are attending integrated schools outside of the camp. Six primary schools were selected by the Ministry of Education and Roma Education Fund based on the closest distance from the camp, considering the percent of Romani children attending the school and available places for newcomers.

It is envisaged that the segregated branch school will be gradually closed within the next four years and all children from the Konik camp will gradually attend integrated classes outside of the camp by 2017. The basic conditions of the desegregation model are based on the REF’s experiences and lessons learned during the organization’s eight years of developing and evaluating local level desegregation models in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.

‘Hana, aged six, was born and currently lives in the Konik camp. She lives in the Camp 1 where most of refugees and internally displaced persons from Kosovo live. Her parents as well as other camp residents live in this refugee camp since 2000. She has three siblings, two girls and family live in squat without water, electricity or a regular diet. She is a first grade pupil of a ‘Vuk Karadžić’ school and receives much positive feedback from her teachers. Hana is a role model to other children and her teachers recognize her as a leader in the classroom. She is very communicative, cheerful, and above all, very smart. Despite the fact that she lives in the camp in poor living conditions, Hana regularly attends school and is very motivated to study. I am sure that she is going to be one of the best in her school.” – Srdjan Baftijari, Roma and Egyptian Assistant

In the long term, REF intends to improve the learning outcomes of Romani and Egyptian children in Montenegro and plans to further extend its work to the secondary and university level due to the low transition rate of Romani and Egyptian students. The Roma Education Fund has

**BENEFICIARY SPOTLIGHT:**

ADEM CINDAROVSKI – RMUSP

Adem Cindarovski is 47 years old, studying Philology at “Goce Delchev” University – Stip.

‘Nothing has changed since last year. I live alone, my parents are deceased, and it’s taken me two years to get myself out of my current situation. I receive no additional revenues other than the scholarship. I live alone in Stip and pay MKD 2,500 for rent, common costs and electricity. By studying and pursuing a career, I want to prove to all Roma that age is not a criterion.

‘I joined the National Roma Centre - Kumanovo to volunteer and have participated in seminars on ‘No Roma in special schools’. After a training seminar, I participated in a fieldwork survey of families with children in special schools in Stip; the main purpose of the survey was to discover the ways and techniques such as schools and staff separate Romani children into special classes and exclude them from mainstream classrooms.

According to the available records, almost 40 percent of the total or 75 percent of the ones which passed the Matura exam have enrolled in university. The project records offer information on the choice vocations of some of the students. They indicate that the most preferred vocations are: medicine (three students enrolled), management (two enrolled), philology (three enrolled) and law (two enrolled) and philosophy (two enrolled) followed by: engineering, insurance, pedagogy, literature, technical sciences, gender studies and finance with only one student enrolled in each.34

**DESEGREGATING EDUCATION AT KONIK CAMP**

In a consortium with Help (Hilf zur Selbsthilfe e.V.)33 and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, REF started to implement a project to increase the complex integration process of Konik Camps’ inhabitants within the framework of the Assistance Program for Integration and Return of RAE and other I/DPs residing in the Konik Area. The project is financed by the European Commission’s Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and Montenegro government funds till 2016. In this complex partnership REF designed and implemented the educational integration of Romani and Egyptian children living in Konik Camp.

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A young girl from Konik Camp waits to enter a mainstream recently opened a new branch office in Podgorica in order to support its work and has reached a partnership agreement with the Montenegrin government to operate a nationwide secondary and tertiary school scholarships fund.

REF has opened its national representation office in Serbia to participate more actively in national policy dialogues, initiatives and programs related to Roma. With the support of the European Commission’s Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the Serbian branch office of the Roma Education Fund, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Ministry of Education, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Ministry of Education, and the Regional Office for Education and Development, the Decade of Roma Inclusion funds, (Serbia is in the process of applying to become an E.U. member.)

The program offers scholarships from the primary to university levels and falls under the umbrella of the Decade of Roma Inclusion project, started by a dozen European countries in 2005.

“Education is just one part of the problem,” said Marius Taba, an officer with the R.E.F. in Budapest. This nationwide project is built on the experiences and results from Vojvodina, where since 2007, REF and the Provincial Secretariat for Education and Culture of Vojvodina, implemented a secondary scholarship and mentorship program for Roma high school students in all of Serbia, aiming to decrease the dropout rate among the most vulnerable Romani students and to support them through a set of different institutional and program support tools.

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The full article can be accessed here.
BRINGING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO SERBIA’S SCHOOL SYSTEM

Serbia has been breaking ground with constitutional and legislative changes that officially recognize Roma as a national minority with all the subsequent privileges, rights and protections thereof. In particular, Serbia’s Law on the Foundation of Education has recognized inclusive education as a priority. Implemented together with the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) and a consortium of partners including the World Bank and the Roma Education Fund, the DILS project has acted to support the recognition of inclusive education as interpreted through the new law.

Part of a project funded by the World Bank, Delivery of Local Implementation Services (DILS) addresses how to improve access to and the efficiency, equity and quality of local delivery of health, education and social protection services in a decentralized public system, from which social inclusion forms a significant portion, including both children with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged children like Roma.38 Covering 298 schools across Serbia, this sequence of trainings and grants was designed to instill the values of inclusive education in the Serbian education system.

The “Educational Inclusion of Roma” component aimed to ensure that a policy of Roma integration at the municipal level was achieved. Fifty-six different municipalities with a high number of Roma individuals were selected to receive grants to aid in this goal. Two million euros were awarded on average EUR 35,000 per municipality, leading to 192 local education institutions and 56 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) being affected.

Municipalities that received grants created local development teams consisting of individual representatives from the local government, education institutions and at least one NGO. The local development teams worked to provide full coverage of enrollment in preschool for Roma children, improving the quality of services provided at the local level and to create a local action plan to ensure the sustainability of the implementation of the inclusion of Roma students.

An evaluation of the educational program was completed, measuring the dropout rates, absentee rates, academic achievement, repetition rates and segregation rates of Roma students, parental satisfaction rates and motivation to access higher education.

Overall the DILS program has shown that external support to schools and teachers through a variety of programs is essential to increase the schools self-efficiency.

REF funded over 20 afterschool study halls in many Bulgarian municipalities for a number of years in order to prevent early school leaving. By 2013, the governmental bodies responsible for programs on national minorities including Roma have continued to pledge financial support to sustain these activities based on REF’s experience.

Furthermore, positive changes are expected to result from an ongoing reform of Bulgaria’s early childhood education and care system informed by some of REF’s experience with Roma education.

In Romania, REF has successfully worked together with European Structural Funds to prevent nearly 4,000 at-risk Romani primary and secondary school students from dropping out through study halls, tutoring and mentoring.

Having received a bridging loan to ensure the operation of its three European Structural Fund projects, REF Romania completed their implementation: School After School for Romani pupils at risk of dropping out, Equal Opportunities in Education providing tutoring and mentoring to encourage young Roma to finish their studies, and Roma Health Scholarships in order to develop a new cadre of Romani health professionals. The Roma Education Fund Romania also strived to consolidate its partnerships with a broad range of Roma and non-Roma NGOs in 2013, working together to target crucial elements of Romanian educational policy that would allow Romani children to fulfill their right to quality inclusive education.
In the region in 2013 REF received 1,068 applications for the in-country Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) and Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP), as well as 50 applications for the study-abroad Roma International Scholar Program (RISP), which makes South Eastern Europe the region with the highest number of applications for REF scholarships. Among these applications, 595 successfully passed the selection process. Table 17 presents the respective figures per program and per each country in the region, while Table 18 presents the distribution of accepted applicants per level of studies.

In addition to the scholarship support, scholarship beneficiaries from the region received additional grants for their academic and professional development. Hence, within the RMUSP’s Professional Development Fund three students from Romania received additional financial support for attending academic conferences and symposiums and one received support for conducting a research project, while another 11 (seven from Bulgaria and four from Romania) received additional support for attending foreign language courses in accredited language schools in their localities of residence. Within the RHSP’s foreign language component 20 medical students benefited from additional financial support for attending foreign language courses.

**UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS GENERATE NEW LAYERS OF ROMANI ELITES**

**South Eastern Europe**

**New Layers of Romani Elites**

**Implementing European Structural Funds**

Even with recent progress in narrowing differences between Roma and non-Roma in education – progress due in no small part to initiatives like REF – the continuing gaps are telling. According to EU statistics, less than half of Romani youth complete primary education in Europe compared to 97 percent of non-Roma.14 Non-completion of formal schooling leads to automatic exclusion from secondary and tertiary education. Since demand for unskilled labor is low in general, failure in school has long term consequences for employability and social inclusion.

As these numbers suggest, national and local governments in countries with significant Romani populations have failed to address the challenges that impede progress for Roma in school. The reasons are many, but include a lack of political will, lack of knowledge of what works and inadequate resources from state budgets.

In 2004, before REF was launched, the World Bank conducted a needs assessment40 where they estimated that closing the gap between Roma and non-Roma in education in the eight initial Decade countries would require investments of about EUR 120–200 million annually in the early stages and between EUR 390–650 million annually by the end of the Decade. The expectation was that by 2015 national governments would be absorbing at least 90 percent of the costs of educating Roma and external financing requirements would be reduced to about EUR 40–65 million annually. While detailed funding data is lacking in most countries, it is clear that no country with a significant Romani population has invested this level of resources in order to bridge the gap between Roma and non-Roma in education.41

Because of this failure, EU funding for Roma education remains a resource of disproportionate importance. In the last few years, EU funding has been married to a stronger political commitment by the EU to focus attention on the need for Roma integration. Almost 10 years ago, OSF and the World Bank persuaded key national players to launch the Decade of Roma Inclusion and two years ago the EU elaborated a Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, both of which highlight the importance of Roma education. The EU began to provide the possibility to make use of Structural Funds specifically for improvements to Roma education (as well as initiatives targeting Roma public health and employment) and tried – mostly unsuccessfully – to persuade national governments with large Roma populations to make specific commitments in this regard.

A critical part of EU funding is spent in the form of grants to local nonprofit organizations working on Roma education issues, which are frequently much more experienced working in Romani communities than is local government. However, for many NGOs, these relatively large grants, complex reporting requirements and delays in disbursement can overwhelm their capacities. One of REF’s key aims has been to support NGOs in developing the capacity to absorb these funds and in dealing with the difficulties caused by donor requirements and delays in funds disbursement. By establishing local offices, REF can help build consortia of local NGOs to implement programs, act as the back office to administer EU funds and provide partners with a source of cash flow when needed. REF uses these local offices to maximize the amount of EU funding utilized for Roma education and to ensure its effective use.

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**Table 17: Submitted Applications vs Scholarships Granted for the 2013-2014 Academic Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMUSP</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHSP</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISP</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 18: Scholarship Beneficiaries’ Level of Studies for the 2013-2014 Academic Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 18. SCHOLARSHIP BENEFICIARIES’ LEVEL OF STUDIES FOR THE 2013–2014 ACADEMIC YEAR**

**TABLE 17. SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS VS SCHOLARSHIPS GRANTED**
DESEGREGATING FAKULTETA

Home to the largest Romani settlement in Sofia, the Fakulteta area is estimated to house some 40,000 Romas. Educational opportunities in the area are limited, and only one municipal school exists in Fakulteta, where children from first to eighth grade are educated. In terms of the number of registered students, this school has the largest student body in Sofia, having somewhere between 1,200 and 1,300 students. Although the school has the largest student population, it has the lowest attendance rate and student performance is far below average. Preschool facilities are not available in Fakulteta or in the other large Romani settlements in Sofia.

Unequal access to education is a particularly striking problem in both early childhood development and education in kindergartens and preschool, both of which are presently compulsory according to Bulgarian law, and elementary school education (first to fourth grade). Presently preschool education may be achieved by attending either a kindergarten or primary school. The problem with the preschool education is particularly pertinent in Sofia, where the facilities of kindergartens do not provide enough places for the children in the growing city. The registration process is completed by using an electronic system that was established by the Sofia municipality. This electronic system has the largest effect on Romani families and creates many different obstacles. Most Romani families do not have internet access or home computers and there is often lower literacy rates among Romani parents.

The Equal Opportunities Association (EOA) has been working on these problems surrounding early childhood education for the past few years through the framework of REF-funded program in Bulgaria.

The results of the pilot year were very positive with the creation of a working relationship and partnership with educational authorities and teachers in Sofia. The project was also able to successfully enroll 211 children into kindergarten and assisted 56 children from the preschool group to enroll in mainstream elementary schools. The pilot project was also successful in creating a list of eight mainstream schools all bordering the Roma districts and prepared a group to be registered into preschool in the next academic year.

Table 19 shows the number of Romani children in three of the largest Roma settlements in the framework of a previously supported REF program in Bulgaria.

### BETTER EDUCATION IN KYUSTENDIL

At the foot of the mountains along the Sofia to Kumanovo road lies Kyustendil, an important regional trading hub and home to a substantial population of Roma, few of whom are enjoying prosperity brought about by Bulgaria’s EU membership.

The integration of Romani children into mainstream education is directly dependent on the desegregation of Romani-only schools that are widespread throughout Bulgaria. Desegregation efforts in Bulgaria over the past decade have managed to produce a number of positive effects that have been achieved mainly by Romani grassroots organizations working alongside local government entities. The Bulgarian government has adopted a number of initiatives that set the ultimate goal of gradually eliminating Romani-only schools and furthering the integration of Romani children into mainstream education.

Starting in 2011, the Kyustendil municipality applied to REF and was granted funds for two separate project proposals. REF began the “For a Good Education” project in 2012 and continued the project in 2013. The project aims to provide Romani children from the Iztok Romani settlement the opportunity to study in a mixed or integrated schools within the Municipality of Kyustendil. This is in opposition of attending the segregated school located within Iztok where the quality of education is significantly lower as well as the rate of completion at secondary school. Beyond the secondary school, Romani students, who are educated in Romani-only schools, are not provided for enough places for the children in the growing city. The accepting schools actively encourage the transition of Romani students to the premises of Sofia’s Modern Theater on Friday, November 8, 2013, to celebrate and publicly recognize their educational achievements and success. Hailing from across Bulgaria and studying across a wide range of disciplines, they all were finalists to receive the 2013–2014 Roma Memorial University Scholarship.

The result of the Scholarship Programs has been a new wave of Romani students applying to, enrolling in and graduating from state-accredited universities in Bulgaria and this year’s REF scholars are studying in fields across the academic spectrum. Competition for the award has steadily increased over the years, and from an eligible pool of 352 students, 209 were chosen as finalists, indicating how much higher education is increasingly in demand among Romani who have successfully completed secondary education.

Hosted by Bulgarian National Radio’s Valeri Lekov, the two-hour event featured remarks and inspiration from a selection of the brightest of Bulgaria’s burgeoning Romani professional cohort. Kalinka Vassilova from Bulgaria’s Trust for Social Achievement, Krasimir Kraimirov, PR expert at Bulgaria’s National Assembly; Denitsa Mihaylova from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Nikolay Urumov, one of Bulgaria’s most respected actors; and Tsvetelina Kostadinova from Sofia’s Modern Theater all were finalists to receive the 2013–2014 Roma Memorial University Scholarship.

The Regional Educational Inspectorate is involved in the monitoring of the projects progress every six months and reports on the results of the children. So far 70 percent of students who are involved in the desegregation project have experienced a positive increase in their school performance. There is also a positive decrease in the absenteeism of over 60 percent of the students. Finally there was an increase in the number of parents who were involved in their children’s education, and the transition to secondary school has increased 95 percent.

Believe You Can Succeed in Sofia

The Roma Education Fund invited nearly 200 Romani university students to the premises of Sofia’s Modern Theater on Friday, November 15, 2013, to celebrate and publicly recognize their educational achievements and success. Hailing from across Bulgaria and studying across a wide range of disciplines, they all were finalists to receive the 2013–2014 Roma Memorial University Scholarship.

The result of the Scholarship Programs has been a new wave of Romani students applying to, enrolling in and graduating from state-accredited universities in Bulgaria and this year’s REF scholars are studying in fields across the academic spectrum. Competition for the award has steadily increased over the years, and from an eligible pool of 352 students, 209 were chosen as finalists, indicating how much higher education is increasingly in demand among Romani who have successfully completed secondary education.

Hosted by Bulgarian National Radio’s Valeri Lekov, the two-hour event featured remarks and inspiration from a selection of the brightest of Bulgaria’s burgeoning Romani professional cohort. Kalinka Vassilova from Bulgaria’s Trust for Social Achievement, Krasimir Kraimirov, PR expert at Bulgaria’s National Assembly; Denitsa Mihaylova from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Nikolay Urumov, one of Bulgaria’s most respected actors; and Tsvetelina Kostadinova from Sofia’s Modern Theater all were finalists to receive the 2013–2014 Roma Memorial University Scholarship.

The Regional Educational Inspectorate is involved in the monitoring of the projects progress every six months and reports on the results of the children. So far 70 percent of students who are involved in the desegregation project have experienced a positive increase in their school performance. There is also a positive decrease in the absenteeism of over 60 percent of the students. Finally there was an increase in the number of parents who were involved in their children’s education, and the transition to secondary school has increased 95 percent.

**Table 19: Number of Romani Children in Three of the Largest Bulgarian Settlements**

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<tr>
<th>Year of Birth</th>
<th>Fakulteta</th>
<th>Phil. D.</th>
<th>Christo Botev</th>
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<td>2012</td>
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**Better Education in Kyustendil**

At the foot of the mountains along the Sofia to Kumanovo road lies Kyustendil, an important regional trading hub and home to a substantial population of Roma, few of whom are enjoying prosperity brought about by Bulgaria’s EU membership.

The integration of Romani children into mainstream education is directly dependent on the desegregation of Romani-only schools that are widespread throughout Bulgaria. Desegregation efforts in Bulgaria over the past decade have managed to produce a number of positive effects that have been achieved mainly by Romani grassroots organizations working alongside local government entities. The Bulgarian government has adopted a number of initiatives that set the ultimate goal of gradually eliminating Romani-only schools and furthering the integration of Romani children into mainstream education.

Starting in 2011, the Kyustendil municipality applied to REF and was granted funds for two separate project proposals. REF began the “For a Good Education” project in 2012 and continued the project in 2013. The project aims to provide Romani children from the Iztok Romani settlement the opportunity to study in a mixed or integrated schools within the Municipality of Kyustendil. This is in opposition of attending the segregated school located within Iztok where the quality of education is significantly lower as well as the rate of completion at secondary school. Beyond the secondary school, Romani students, who are educated in Romani-only schools, are not provided for enough places for the children in the growing city. The accepting schools actively encourage the transition to secondary school. The problem with the preschool education is particularly pertinent in Sofia, where the facilities of kindergartens do not provide enough places for the children in the growing city. The registration process is completed by using an electronic system that was established by the Sofia municipality. This electronic system has the largest effect on Romani families and creates many different obstacles. Most Romani families do not have internet access or home computers and there is often lower literacy rates among Romani parents.

The Equal Opportunities Association (EOA) has been working on these problems surrounding early childhood education for the past few years through the framework of REF-funded projects. In 2010 the EOA implemented a pilot project that was supported by REF with the aim to assist Romani families in enrolling their children into mainstream preschool facilities.

The results of the pilot year were very positive with the creation of a working relationship and partnership with educational authorities and teachers in Sofia. The project was also able to successfully enroll 211 children into kindergarten and assisted 56 children from the preschool group to enroll in mainstream elementary schools. The pilot project was also successful in creating a list of eight mainstream schools all bordering the Roma districts and prepared a group to be registered into preschool in the next academic year.

Table 19 shows the number of Romani children in three of the largest Roma settlements in the framework of a previously supported REF program in Bulgaria.

**Table 19: Number of Romani Children in Three Bulgarian Settlements**

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REF Romania is a separate legal entity and sister foundation created in 2009 in order for REF to be eligible to apply for and implement European Structural Fund projects for Roma social inclusion. Since such funds have begun to be available to recent EU member states like Romania, REF has aspired to be able to leverage the vast resources of these mechanisms to improve the opportunities for Romani children to access inclusive and quality education in Romania.

REF Romania recovered in 2013 from a systemic blockage of European Structural Funds once the European Commission identified solutions to the problems recorded in 2011 and 2012; thereafter a better functioning of this bureaucratic mechanism was recorded and reimbursements to the ESF-funded implementing entities were accelerated, especially in the second part of 2013.

In 2013 REF Romania completed all its remaining three ESF projects – School after School Project, Equal Opportunities in Education Project and Roma Health funded Strategic Projects – School after School Project, Equal Opportunities in Education Project and Roma Health funded Strategic Projects – School after School Project, Equal Opportunities in Education Project and Roma Health – and submitted applications to implement European Structural Funds once the European Commission decided to continue payments to Romania within the Sectoral Operational Program for the Development of Human Resources (the audit missions of the European Commission identified solutions to the problems recorded in 2011 and 2012); thereafter a better functioning of this bureaucratic mechanism was recorded and reimbursements to the ESF-funded implementing entities were accelerated, especially in the second part of 2013.

Severe cash shortages in 2013 had the effect of forcing REF’s Scholarships Project – and submitted applications to implement European Structural Funds once the European Commission decided to continue payments to Romania within the Sectoral Operational Program for the Development of Human Resources (the audit missions of the European Commission identified solutions to the problems recorded in 2011 and 2012); thereafter a better functioning of this bureaucratic mechanism was recorded and reimbursements to the ESF-funded implementing entities were accelerated, especially in the second part of 2013.

REF commissioned an independent study by Claudiu Ivan and Iulius Rosati on the academic achievements and obstacles of Romani students within its School After School project.

A sample of Romani and non-Romani students were randomly selected using multiple stages of selection and were selected based on a predetermined selection algorithm. A second sample of students who left school early was not randomly selected. Classroom teachers were responsible for selecting the Roma in the sample. All research included in the study from the sample of Romani students was identified by their teachers and kept absolutely confidential.

The data collected shows that the proportion of students who dropped out during the two years of the study (2011-2013) was 197 percent (percentage applies to students randomly selected in the sample). In basic terms, one out of five students who were interviewed in 2011 left school by 2013. Among non-Romani students interviewed about one in fourteen, or seven percent, dropped out of school over the course of the two-year study. On the other hand, nearly one in three Romani children, or 31 percent, dropped out of school over the course of the two-year study. Overall, 80 percent of the students who dropped out of school over the course of the two-year study were Romani students. From the data we can conclude that a Romani student is six times more likely to drop out of school than a non-Romani student. The study concludes that the perception that the school environment is hostile and unfamiliar is the strongest indicator of dropout rates. The data show that 64.1 percent of students said that the school is a place where they love to go, while among dropouts only 12.3 percent perceived the school as a friendly environment where they enjoyed learning.

Because of these barriers, REF established and supported 50 School After School Study Centers in Romani with the financial support of European Structural Funds. REF’s previous success with study halls includes two in southwestern Slovakia, later were recognized as best practices and included in the prestigious CEDEFOP catalogue of the European Commission.

Moreover, since most public schools are of moderate quality in Eastern Europe, many parents pay out of their own pockets for tutoring and extracurricular activities for their children. Since most Romi do not have this option, and many Romani parents had negative experiences with the education system, REF takes over this role.

The village of Jilava has been synonymous with incarceration and punishment for the last century in Romania but a local NGO is working to change Jilava’s reputation to that of innovation and inclusion.

Jilava has recently had few opportunities to learn. Because of these barriers, REF established and supported 50 School After School Study Centers in Romani with the financial support of European Structural Funds. REF’s previous success with study halls includes two in southwestern Slovakia, later were recognized as best practices and included in the prestigious CEDEFOP catalogue of the European Commission.

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Severe cash shortages in 2013 had the effect of forcing REF’s Grant Program to announce a moratorium on all its Romanian grants and this remains in place at the time of writing this report.

To address the early school leaving of Romani students in primary and secondary school, REF has supported after-school study halls as a proven method to improve the learning outcomes of disadvantaged Romani students. They often do not have access to an environment conducive to studying at home, including a desk, good light, computer, home library or parental academic support.
The project also realized that not only parents have an important role in their children’s education and set up local support groups in order to involve the respective communities in the education process. Each group had a mixture of members from among the beneficiaries and participants, including parents, teachers, local authorities’ representatives, school mediators and police. Each local support group was enabled toward increasing community participation in education and finding solutions for project sustainability.

An awareness-raising campaign targeting parents also was carried out. The campaign highlighted the importance of education for Roma. Local conferences were held in each region of the project, with the participation of school directors, county inspectors and public local authorities.

Fifty centers worked four hours per day in the afternoon; each center hosts about 30 students that work with three teachers. Due to the extended program, children were provided with food. Most of the selected children have difficult educational backgrounds and poor socio-economic status, and are at risk of early school leaving. Thus, in order to prevent the abandonment, the School After School contains five main activities (modules), of which three are highlighted next.

I can do better! - Recovery and remediation for children with learning difficulties - Romani children often have a low level of reading and writing competencies, problems that have their roots in the period of acquiring language during the kindergarten and preschool period (which they do not attend). Delays in language acquisition may be attributed to:

- A large number of children in a family reduces the amount of available cognitive stimuli for each child.
- Lack of toys, games, books, photos, media, etc.
- The parents do not have conversations with their children or read to them.
- Sharing a room with several people, whereby noise affects their comprehension.
- Parents often incorrectly use Romanian grammar.
- Many traditional Romani communities speak Romanes, a distinct language from Romanian.

We play, we learn! We learn by playing! - Thematic activities and leisure activities - Traditional school methods do not allow learning through play. The SAS program compensates through a variety of activities that gap within the public education system.

We are different! - Self-knowledge and personal development activities - Romani students experience an acute self-doubt because they are Roma. It is very important for them to speak about Romani culture and history of Roma, to discuss with them issues about individual and ethnic self-esteem, to play games and do exercises aimed at combating stereotypes and prejudices about the Romani ethnic identity, trying to build an ethnic positive self-image.

Using specific learning activities, more time is given to children for self-knowledge and knowledge of others. By building a positive self-image, children will be more emotionally stable, will relate better with others, will have a greater resistance to criticism and failures and will be more motivated to complete the activities in which there are involved. In other words, they are likely to decrease early school leaving.

Other modules include homework supervision and guidance - Homework for a 10 (10 is the best grade in Romania) - and skills development activities - Healthy lifestyle!

Results
SAS connects three pillars: family, school and community. The SAS program is not just about school (although the name is misleading!), but a tripartite partnership with well-defined responsibilities:

- Parents understood the importance of education and sent their children to school, supporting and continuously pursuing their educational trajectory.
- Schools and teachers created a suitable environment for learning (learning methods adapted to cultural variety, but focused on educational outcomes without ignoring the emotional and cognitive development of students); providing quality educational services.
- The community carried out specific measures for both family and school: infrastructure and various resources that exceed the school and family resources (food, teachers’ pay, children transport to school, involvement in extracurricular and informal learning, etc.).

Final numbers
2,246 primary students attended the SAS program each year:
- 91.8 percent of them have shown real progress in terms of personal development and social skills;
- In terms of academic progress, over 85 percent of students proved progress at main disciplines: Romanian/Hungarian (85.6 percent) and math (88.2 percent).
- 2,836 parents (or tutors) participated to counselling sessions regarding education (and additional themes).
- Over 20,000 people from all 50 communities understood the impact of education on their life and especially for their children’s future.
- The rate of school enrollment increased from 85 percent to 94.4 percent.
REF has aspired to address the near complete absence of Romani health professionals from Romani communities by supporting scholarships for doctors, nurses and technicians in the health sector. Partnering together with the Media Monitoring Agency, the Sastipen Association, Association of Resident Doctors in Romania and Open Society Foundations, the Roma Education Fund implemented a European Structural Fund project to address this problem. The project incorporated tertiary scholarship, mentorship and tutorship support, as well as combating the stereotypes related to the access of Romani students to highly-qualified professions.

Out of 167 Romani students candidates to enroll in medical studies at the universities in Romania, 153 successfully began their studies at the Faculty of Medicine and medical vocational schools by the time the project closed in late 2013. 147 Romani students were provided with mentorship support, that added to the successful increase in their Grade Point Average (GPA), i.e., ten percent of these students maintained GPA over 9.00 out of maximum 10.00, whereas 100 percent of these students maintained a GPA over 7.00 out of maximum of 10 and minimum of 6. Some 26 beneficiaries also took part in various national and international Congresses and Conferences on Health.

Final achievements

147 Romani students in the faculties of medicine completed the mentorship program
100 percent of these students had a GPA over 7.00 points (on a scale up to 10.00 points)
70 percent of these students had a GPA over 9.00 points
Twenty-six participations to various national and international health congresses and conferences
167 Romani potential candidates for the admission exams to the Faculties of Medicine of which 133 Romani students moved to the next educational cycle (are either now students in the Faculties of Medicine or students in health sector vocational schools.

"We are one of the richest regions in the area and yet until recently no one knew how the budget was divided," says Cristian Buceanu, a local Roma councilor elected in 2012. The lack of opportunity permeates every part of Frumusani.

During a visit by George Soros and Jim Yong Kim to one house, a local man, Gheorghe Mircea explains: "The Roma are different. If we try to get a job, they won’t hire us.” Asked by George Soros how life now compares to life under Ceausescu – Romania’s former communist leader who oversaw a brutal and repressive regime until 1989 - Gheorghe Mircea replies, "Life was better, at least then we had jobs." To make ends meet, Gheorghe Mircea and his family collect worms, which they sell as fishing bait. Some years back, his house burnt down after faulty electrical wiring, used to a siphon electricity from his mother’s house next door, started a fire. Of his nine children, only three go to school. All participate in the Roma Education Fund School After School Program; his daughter is top of her class.

Last year Cristian Buceanu, the only Roma representative on the council, introduced a proposal to allocate approximately 10,000 euros to expand the electricity network to houses in Frumusani. The other councilors voted against the proposal, alleging that the Roma townpeople do not contribute to the local budget and therefore should not benefit from public funds.

Many countries often think of education as an expense. We want to say these are the most strategic investments you can make in a country.

-Jim Yong Kim, World Bank President

To break the negative stereotypes Roma children must be educated to celebrate and take pride in their Roma heritage. That is what the REF has done. -George Soros, Chair of the Open Society

The government, however, almost entirely ignores the town’s inhabitants. Officially, most of the homes in Frumusani do not exist. A recent land registry exercise from the mayor’s office recorded the area as largely empty. The asphalt road that joins the village to the main road stops on the town’s border - another sign that officially, the real Frumusani is off the map. But the sprawling lanes of Frumusani tell a different story.

Filled with rudimentary lean-to mud buildings as well as sturdier and older brick houses that predate the Ceausescu era, Frumusani is far from empty. Children peck in backyards, horses gallop past the town’s blacksmiths where local men congregate, and children on their way back from school mill past small vegetable gardens, dry and sparse due to the lack of water.

Children like 14-year-old Simona Nedelcu attend the local school where 700 students are split evenly between Roma and non-Roma. Here, Roma children participate in School after School Program that offer mentoring, homework and-world-bank-get-behind-education-roma.jpg

Available online: http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/open-society-foundations-world-bank-get-behind-education-roma
clubs, and overall extra support in Math and Romanian - core subjects for national entry test for high school.

For two years, the programs have provided mentors to Roma students, offering guidance and building relationships between parents, schools, and students; stipends to cover school books and uniforms; homework clubs where students can complete their lessons undisturbed; and training so that teachers can play a positive role in Roma education. “With the School After School project, I have the sense that someone cares about us,” comments one Roma student during a visit by George Soros and Jim Yong Kim to the local school. “Working with parents is as important as working with children,” explains Mihaela Gheorghe from the Romanian NGO, the Center for Education and Social Development, which works with children in Frumusani. “Most parents do not know how to read or write so even if help exists for their children’s education, it is nearly impossible for them to find out about it.” Better access to schools and improving educational outcomes are key, explains Costel Bercus, of the Roma Education Fund.

From house to house in Frumusani, parents all agreed on one thing - education is the key to change for their children’s future. Jim Yong Kim agrees. “Many countries often think of education as an expense,” he comments. “We want to say these are the most strategic investments you can make in a country.” Still growing up in Frumusani is not easy. For Simona Nedelcu, everyday tasks can be a struggle. In a two-room house, surrounded by siblings and family, finding somewhere quiet to do her homework is a challenge. Uniforms and books present more obstacles and often, children will stay home from school if they don’t have a clean uniform—not uncommon when washing materials, water, and electricity are scarce. Cristian Buceanu is determined, despite the lack of support from his fellow councilors. He was elected last year with the support of local Roma townpeople who were familiar with him from the many years he spent working in the community. “We need to raise awareness with Roma in Frumusani that they must ask for their rights,” says Cristian Buceanu, who explains that going door to door, talking with the local Roma is the best way to mobilize people behind change. Pushing change with his fellow councilors is an uphill struggle. They do not see assisting local Roma as a priority. “For twenty years, no one asked about Roma. If Roma start to have their own representatives, this can change.”

It’s not difficult to see the changes education is bringing - and can bring - to Frumusani and other Roma villages like it in Romania. Of Romania’s 21 million inhabitants, the Roma at nearly two million is a young population. Education offers a path for Roma to claim their own rights: the right to employment, the right to political participation and representation, the right to safe and adequate housing. All of this - all inalienable rights in an open society - begins with education and ideas as simple as a quiet place for Simona and her classmates to do their homework, and a mentor to encourage them to keep coming back to the classroom, despite the overwhelming challenges Roma children face at home.

SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

FOR PHOTOS

http://romaissues.wordpress.com/tag/george-soros/

REF SO IN SELECT ROMANIAN MEDIA

http://www.adevarul.ro/educatie/scoala/de-tiganii-altfel-1_5241380bc7b855ff56bbae71/index.html
http://www.ziarulprofit.ro/index.php/se-incheie-proiectul-servicii-de-sprijin-educational-pentru-elevii-de-etnie-roma/
http://www.radiogrado.ro/index.php/2013/10/05/99-din-elevii-romi-de-clasa-a-xii-a-au-absolvit-liceul/
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

REF FINANCE

REF is among the most efficient and effective organizations operating in the field of education. REF spends 92 percent of its operating budget on programs, ensuring that donations have a maximum impact in 16 countries.

From a total budget of approximately EUR 11 million in 2013, REF spent EUR 10.3 million on 37 new grants and spent another EUR 2.9 million on tertiary scholarships for over 1,450 Romani students. REF also spent EUR 3.6 million to pre-finance and implement European Structural Fund projects in Romania, EUR 1.0 million on capacity building, communication, data collection, policy development and training, EUR 0.8 million on administration, with an additional EUR 0.9 million being accounted for by ongoing partnerships in Konik Camp, the follow-up phase of the previously EU-funded early childhood education and care project A Good Start, and a Fundación Secretariado Gitano project.

General Overview of REF Financials

Owing to continuous cost control, proper donor reporting and fundraising, REF financials were stable in 2013, ensuring an income for smooth operation. REF’s income increased significantly comparing to 2012’s figure of EUR 8,573,587 and in 2013 it reached EUR 9,745,875 due to the fact that Romania’s European Structural Funds reimbursed all of those expenses which were pending for more than 12 months.

Owing to REF’s effective and regular monitoring, EUR 285,652 were refunded or recovered from project beneficiaries of the grant and other programs as these funds were not needed to reach the project objectives. This leftover has been reallocated to other programs where REF faced higher demand.

REF has finished the International Family project in 2013 with Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) where all three REF foundations participated. REF has successfully implemented the second phase of A Good Start (AGS) project financed by the Network of European Foundation and other individual donors up to EUR 166,732.

In addition, REF has been supported by a large number of individual donors in 2013, up to EUR 45,066.

REF Switzerland (REF CH)

REF CH provided EUR 1,869,971 for grants and more than EUR 2.7 million for tertiary scholarships. As a result of the continuous donor support and leading out the EUR 1 million value adjustments on long term loans from last year, REF CH reached 1,168,098 EUR excess of income over expenditure and more than EUR 2 million foundation capital in 2013.

Owing to continual follow-up and control of the 2013 budget, and reallocations based on the savings from studies and research, REF was able to dedicate more funds to the Roma International Scholarship Program, capacity building in Romania and software development for the grant program which amounts EUR 85,415.

REF Hungary (REF HU)

REF Hungary opened fully operational branch office in Montenegro in order to implement the Konik Camp project in a consortium with Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V. as a winner of local IPA call with the total budget of EUR 1,475,142 out of which our Montenegro branch office manages EUR 386,943.

Owing to the active fundraising in 2013 REF HU has been granted by Velux Foundations to implement nine-year long Pedagogy Scholarship Program in three countries for EUR 1,129,000 and by OSCE Serbia to participate in a secondary scholarship program in three locations of Serbia. Out of the total budget of EUR 893,310 REF (financed by IPA funds) share is EUR 179,625. Both program implementations started in 2014.

REF Romania (REF RO)

In Romania REF RO has successfully closed its two main projects which resulted the reimbursement of its project expenses from the previous year hence REF RO had positive result of EUR 138,364. Its negative foundation capital which is acceptable by the local statutory requirements improved almost by EUR 1 million in 2013.

At the time of completing this report, REF RO has been awarded three European Social Fund (ESF) calls and is going to implement three new projects for the duration of 18 months with a budget of EUR 4.165 million in total.

Fundraising

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

- Open local branch offices so as to run on local ESF and IPA calls in consortium in order to mobilize bigger funds for Roma education;
- Joint reporting 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, as well as individual donors;
- 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.
Organization of the Roma Education Fund (REF)

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

Roma Education Fund Hungary opened branch offices in Serbia and in Montenegro in 2013. The figures of the new branch offices in Serbia and Montenegro are fully presented in Roma Education Fund Hungary’s books. At the time of writing this report in early 2014, REF was in the process of finalizing the establishment of its Slovak office.

All financial statements (statement of income and expenditure, balance sheet and notes) are presented in EUR (where necessary additionally in local currency) and are issued in English (including the audit reports). The annual and audit reports will be published on the REF website.

REF has been monitoring regularly all projects in order to reduce risks and to have a proper financial and quality control of these grants (more details can be found in the country sections).

To improve this monitoring and controlling system REF has invested in developing an online application platform which will help the grantees and the management to gain better project indicators and have more automated controls in all cycle of the projects.

ISO 9001:2008

In 2012 REF was awarded with ISO 9001:2008 certification, in 2013 the second surveillance audit extended the validity of the certification for another year.

Network audit, monitoring and controlling

The audit was made by PWC Switzerland for REF Switzerland, by Moore Stephens Hezicomp Kft. for REF Hungary and Diascom Srl for REF Romania.

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### BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2013 AND 2012

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at banks</td>
<td>3,683,455</td>
<td>1,058,422</td>
<td>235,083</td>
<td>131,754</td>
<td>27,759</td>
<td>301,640</td>
</tr>
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<td>Receivables</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,489,502</td>
<td>2,062,833</td>
<td>43,590</td>
<td>43,590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loan to REF Romania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92,489</td>
<td>84,913</td>
<td>4,358</td>
<td>17,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current assets</td>
<td>419,300</td>
<td>14,643</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50,365</td>
<td>49,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total current assets</td>
<td>5,708,456</td>
<td>1,273,434</td>
<td>2,954,017</td>
<td>2,282,180</td>
<td>463,490</td>
<td>590,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursable grants</td>
<td>393,380</td>
<td>447,402</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term loan to REF Romania</td>
<td>579,800</td>
<td>2,019,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss value adjustment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-9,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility assets</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>32,076</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangible assets</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28,514</td>
<td>70,961</td>
<td>16,662</td>
<td>22,735</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total long term assets</td>
<td>946,382</td>
<td>1,273,708</td>
<td>29,489</td>
<td>71,012</td>
<td>38,241</td>
<td>46,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>4,674,630</td>
<td>3,351,347</td>
<td>3,252,194</td>
<td>2,282,180</td>
<td>463,490</td>
<td>590,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>16,543</td>
<td>107,790</td>
<td>69,507</td>
<td>73,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td>187,537</td>
<td>20,707</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7,478</td>
<td>13,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for property granted</td>
<td>2,534,444</td>
<td>3,587,955</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable to partners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,660,186</td>
<td>264,419</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan from Council of Europe Development Bank</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term loan from REF Switzerland</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>572,800</td>
<td>2,103,164</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term loan from REF Hungary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>549,009</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term loan from Agentia de Monitorizare o Presei</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>384,816</td>
<td>139,123</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raised</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15,914</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities and provisions</td>
<td>4,665,033</td>
<td>3,408,418</td>
<td>2,794,490</td>
<td>2,664,416</td>
<td>394,384</td>
<td>391,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation capital &amp; reserves</td>
<td>849,199</td>
<td>919,739</td>
<td>529,352</td>
<td>1,098,014</td>
<td>449,485</td>
<td>725,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement of foundation capital</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,235</td>
<td>24,917</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and dividends (net)</td>
<td>1,149,998</td>
<td>56,860</td>
<td>1,283,144</td>
<td>1,351,093</td>
<td>535,483</td>
<td>499,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-end translation difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,668</td>
<td>9,919</td>
<td>8,364</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation capital as of December 31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5,589,380</td>
<td>2,153,250</td>
<td>56,794</td>
<td>467,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities and foundation capital</td>
<td>4,674,630</td>
<td>3,351,347</td>
<td>5,289,370</td>
<td>3,532,194</td>
<td>471,280</td>
<td>527,481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

#### GENERAL TERMS

The books of the REF Foundations are basically maintained in local currency as of legal requirement with the exception of REF Switzerland where the books are maintained in EUR since the majority of the transactions is in this currency. Many of the financial transactions are denominated in Euro (EUR). To compare and for a better understanding these financial statements are presented in EUR.

**Currency Translation**

All resulting unrealized and realized gains and losses from currency translations 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 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 shall be translated from HUF into EUR at the yearly average exchange rate of HUF/EUR. All balance sheet positions at year end are translated at the year-end rate of 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 shall be translated from RON into EUR at the yearly average exchange rate of RON/EUR. All balance sheet positions at year end are translated at the year-end rate of 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 on January 1 and ending on December 31.

#### Comparability with prior year

Financial statements are presenting the prior year and the actual reporting period from January 1 to December 31. Major errors from previous years have to be restated and presented. Errors shall be construed as major in our cases, if in the year when discovered by the audit the aggregate amounts of all error (either negative or positive) for the same year and after effect thereof “increasing or decreasing the equity” exceed two percent of the balance sheet total of the financial year audited.

#### Accounting principles

**INCOME**

**Donations Received**

The donation income is recognized at nominal value when received. The promised donation income is not allowed to be recorded for prudence reasons, which means, that the donation income is presented on a cash basis.

**Interest Income**

The interest income is recorded and timely appointed by using the effective received interest rates by banks.

**EXPENSES**

**Programs and Grants**

The program and grant expenses paid are recognized at nominal value. Already known costs have to be accrued. The grants of project support program are presented at the actual year on total contractual value while other program related expenses on the value are paid.

**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 belong to the projects. The administrative expenses have to be recognized at nominal value. Already known costs have to be accrued.
Partner expenses
If REF is a main project leader (direct contract with the donor) and channels funds to Partners, all expenses related to Partners have to be presented as REF expenditure in the financial statement due to the fact that REF is in charge of reporting the entire project cost.

**BALANCE SHEET**
- Intangible and tangible asset valuation, depreciation accounting principles.
  - Tangible and intangible assets are carried at their costs less depreciation and any accumulated impairment loss.
  - The useful life of tangible and intangible assets is determined in accordance with the national rules of each foundation.
  - The useful life of an intellectual product has to be determined according to the applicable national rule of each foundation.
  - The depreciable amount of a depreciable asset is allocated on a systematic basis using straight line method to each accounting period during the useful life of the asset.
  - The fixed assets above a certain value – defined by the applicable national rules of each foundation – are accounted as depreciation in lump sum when it started to use.
  - The foundations applied extraordinary depreciation by devaluation when the asset is permanently reduced because it has become redundant and/or damaged.

Receivables valuation
Receivables are recorded at nominal value less any accumulated impairment loss.

Deferred costs
Costs are accrued actively which have emerged until the balance sheet date but not relates the activities of the year.

**Deferred costs**
- The depreciable amount of a depreciable asset is be allocated according to the applicable national rules of each foundation.
- The qualification and classification of fixed assets have to be determined according to the applicable national rule of each foundation.
- The depreciable amount of a depreciable asset is allocated on a systematic basis using straight line method to each accounting period during the useful life of the asset.
- The fixed assets above a certain value – defined by the applicable national rules of each foundation – are accounted as depreciation in lump sum when it started to use.
- The foundations applied extraordinary depreciation by devaluation when the asset is permanently reduced because it has become redundant and/or damaged.

**Accrued costs**
Costs are accrued which are recognized until the balance sheet preparation and relates the activities of the year.

**5. EU Roma Pilot – A Good Start and complementary projects**
The target of this project is to provide grants for initiatives by governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the Decade of Roma Inclusion countries at all education levels. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

**6. Konik Camp Project in Montenegro**
This is an Assistance Program for integration and return of I/DPs and residents of Konik camp in which REF implements the educational component through early childhood development programs.

DETAILED NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2013 AND 2012

1. Donation table (See next page)

2. Project Support Program and Other Program Refunds
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 (Grants)
The target of this project is to provide grants for initiatives by governmental and nongovernmental 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 Romani students. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year. 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)

5. EU Roma Pilot – A Good Start and complementary projects
The target of this project is to ensure that all Romani and other poor and excluded children have access to quality EEC services in 16 locations in rural and urban localities of the most deprived settlements in FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia will run until approximately the end of 2014. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

6. Konik Camp Project in Montenegro
This is an Assistance Program for integration and return of UDPs and residents of Konik camp in which REF implements the educational component through early childhood development programs.

**DONATION TABLE**
INCOME RECEIVED BY ROMA EDUCATION FUND NETWORK 2009–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DONORS</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECEIVED BY REF SWITZERLAND</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGH</td>
<td>318,094</td>
<td>251,094</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian Government</td>
<td>1,240,000</td>
<td>1,240,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>7,786</td>
<td>7,786</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFD United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,255,907</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>3,608</td>
<td>3,608</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU AGI project</td>
<td>16,535</td>
<td>16,535</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EYF – Foundation “Resonances, Responsibility and Future”</td>
<td>155,080</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>206,280</td>
<td>170,400</td>
<td></td>
<td>754,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Government</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundación Secretariado Gitano</td>
<td>5,995</td>
<td>3,132</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Government</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Spain</td>
<td>11,570</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>4,095</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Popper Foundation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGOS Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,660</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network of European Foundation</td>
<td>419,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>870,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwegian Family</td>
<td>28,015</td>
<td>24,842</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salling Group Sweden</td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA Denmark</td>
<td>576,568</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,042,560</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,619,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soros-Bolton wedding</td>
<td></td>
<td>33,419</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation</td>
<td>368,553</td>
<td>243,582</td>
<td>420,000</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,531,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute</td>
<td>2,761,845</td>
<td>1,646,849</td>
<td>2,195,647</td>
<td>4,524,744</td>
<td>4,352,125</td>
<td>22,848,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman Municipality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB Community Fund</td>
<td>14,077</td>
<td>31,059</td>
<td>12,091</td>
<td>9,377</td>
<td></td>
<td>55,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank IBRD</td>
<td>354,000</td>
<td>363,500</td>
<td>703,952</td>
<td>293,354</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,723,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total donations received by REF Switzerland</td>
<td>3,820,008</td>
<td>3,148,189</td>
<td>3,434,451</td>
<td>5,434,165</td>
<td>5,542,405</td>
<td>27,850,335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **RECEIVED BY REF HUNGARY** | | | | | | |
| American House Family | 4,992 | 5,144 | 10,134 | | | |
| Bernard Van Leer Foundation | 205,801 | 56,645 | 259,561 | | | |
| European Commission – DG REGIO | 939,595 | 717,844 | 235,895 | 1,999,394 | | |
| Fundación Secretariado Gitano | 6,006 | | | | | 6,006 |
| Funder Demany Foundation | 292,000 | | | | | 292,000 |
| Tempus Foundation | 1,269 | 1,063 | 1,309 | 788 | 194 | 5,075 |
| UNESCO | | | | | | |
| World Bank IBRD | 5,580 | 8,484 | 14,950 | | | |
| HELF – ELF | 38,427 | 24,365 | 62,827 | 48,354 | | 204,570 |
| Other donors, individuals | 51,724 | 11,142 | 55,864 | | | |
| Total donations received by REF Hungary | 3,047 | 764,690 | 1,250,519 | 645,008 | 872,255 | 2,922,842 |

| **RECEIVED BY REF ROMANIA** | | | | | | |
| Fundación Secretariado Gitano | 3,861 | 1,400 | 5,261 | | | |
| Romanian Management Authority – as partner | 180,288 | 149,155 | 404,745 | 735,079 | | |
| Romanian Management Authority – as lead entity | 1,444,249 | 1,034,599 | 3,834,395 | 5,784,125 | | |
| UNICEF | 6,034 | 13,510 | 19,544 | | | |
| Individuals | 621 | | | | | 621 |
| Total donations received by REF Romania | - | 2,530,490 | 735,088 | 5,641,516 | 6,995,442 | |
| **Grand Total** | 5,841,075 | 7,115,194 | 11,014,428 | 9,593,587 | 10,474,975 | 45,018,018 |
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 was closed by 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 benefited from the complex intervention package aimed to support school retention and to improve learning outcomes. The project was closed by 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 was closed by 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 beginning of 2014. 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 Romani youth in the labor market in order to reduce their social exclusion, discrimination, and risk of poverty and was closed in 2013. 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 2014. This position contains the accumulated costs of this year.

15. PROGRESS Project in Slovakia
The project aims Investing in early childhood – promoting innovation and social integration of Roma in Slovakia. REF has an advocacy role in order to share its experience and knowledge on early childhood development. The program will run until approximately the end of 2014.

16. Value Adjustments on long-term loans
Based on the risk analysis of long-term loans, a value adjustment had to be booked in 2012 to cover the risk of non-recovering and could be released in 2013 due to significant governmental payment for prior years.

Other Information
Guarantors: Roma Education Fund Hungary (REF Hungary) as a borrower entered into a framework loan agreement of EUR 1,500,000 with Council of Europe Development Bank. The specific objective of the loan is to bridge cash flow gaps of Roma Education Fund Hungary’s partners caused by significant delays in payments made from European Structural Funds. REF Hungary received an undertaking of EUR 1,500,000 from Foundation Open Society Institute for the purpose of financing the loan repayment if any partner fails repaying bridge financing received from REF Hungary.
Judith Tóth is a Macedonian Roma and has been working for seven years at the Open Society Foundations (OSF); presently, she is a Senior Advisor at OSF Hungary. She previously worked as a project coordinator and an evaluator at OSF’s Decade of Tolerance Scholarship Program-Albania and Kosovo and as a coordinator of the “Together to School” (andre škola) Program in Montenegro and obtained a graduate diploma on youth work from Jonkoping University in Sweden.

Croatia

Sandra Trbojević holds a MA in social work from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Law and has extensive experience in the social and civil sector.

HUNGARY

Máté Vámos is a Hungarian Roma who graduated with a BA from the University of Vienna in Social Work. He has also completed a Master’s degree in Social Management and is an MA in Social Politics from ELTE Faculty. He worked as a project coordinator and analyst to EU projects before joining OSF.

FYROM

Kemal Shashaké is a Macedonian Roma who graduated from the Faculty of Law of “Justinian I” at “St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Since 2014, he has been actively involved with Roma Civil Society, working as a scholar. He previously worked at Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia, among others.

ROMANIA

Gheorghe Konici is a Romanian Roma who holds a MA in Sociology and has been working at the University of Bucharest and at the Open Society Foundations Romania in Bucharest, among others.

SERBIA

Katarina Kost-Bubalo is a Serbian Roma who has been actively involved with Roma civil society since 2010. She has managed numerous projects dealing with education, health, civil participation and gender issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Activities/Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Cultural Association of Roma in Slovakia</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>Improve educational performance and increase integration in selected primary schools for Romani children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian region</td>
<td>onions region</td>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>Provide equal opportunities for Romani pupils and support their integration into society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Thanh Binh National University</td>
<td>Hanoi</td>
<td>Establish a community center where long-term services will be provided to the whole Romani community including ECEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Waldorf Pedagogical Institute</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>Provide teacher trainings following the Waldorf methodology in order to break down cultural and language barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Zagreb</td>
<td>Provide access to quality ECEC services and increase the school readiness of Romani children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>NGO Sfera</td>
<td>Sarajevo</td>
<td>Support Romani students in the 8th grade of primary school to advance to secondary education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>Skopje</td>
<td>Establish a Roma mediator in elementary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>Save the Children Kosovo</td>
<td>Pristina</td>
<td>Advocate for the implementation of policy documentation and institutionalization of the Romani education in elementary schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRANT TABLE 2013**

**CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

- **Czech Republic**: Improve and prepare Romani and non-Romani children to maintain education through various support services.

- **Romanian region**: Improve educational performance, attendance rates and support Romani students’ transition to secondary education after the state Matura exam.

- **Hungary**: Improve educational performance and increase integration in selected primary schools for Romani children.

- **Croatia**: Improve the school readiness of Romani primary and secondary school students.

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**: Provide access to quality ECEC services and increase the school readiness of Romani children.

- **Serbia**: Improve the retention and achievement of Romani primary and secondary school students.

- **Kosovo**: Establish a community center where long-term services will be provided to the whole Romani community including ECEC.

**BALKANS**

- **Albania**: Support Romani students in the 8th grade of primary school to advance to secondary education. |

- **Bulgaria**: Provide equal opportunities for Romani pupils and support their integration into society. |

- **Macedonia**: Support Romani students in the 8th grade of primary school to advance to secondary education. |

- **Montenegro**: Improve the retention and achievement of Romani primary and secondary school students.

- **Serbia**: Support Romani students in the eighth grade of primary school to advance to secondary education. |

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<tr>
<td>Central Europe</td>
<td>Hungarian Educational Institute</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>Provide quality ECEC services and increase the school readiness of Romani children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>Brussel</td>
<td>Establish a Romani mediator in elementary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>BIS-RIA</td>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>Establish a Romani mediator in elementary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Svetla idinina</td>
<td>Bratislava</td>
<td>Enhance their school readiness through A Good Start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>National Roma Centrum</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>Manage a nationwide secondary scholarship fund aimed at improving the school readiness of Romani students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Zagreb</td>
<td>Provide equal opportunities for Romani pupils and support their integration into society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Save the Children Serbia</td>
<td>Belgrade</td>
<td>Establish a community center where long-term services will be provided to the whole Romani community including ECEC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mediterranean**

- **Egypt**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

- **Israel**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

- **Morocco**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

**Ibero America**

- **Mexico**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

- **Brazil**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

- **Ecuador**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

**Global**

- **Global**: Improve young Romani students’ academic performance and attendance rates.

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<td>Europe</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>Establish a Romani mediator in elementary schools.</td>
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<td>Save the Children Kosovo</td>
<td>Pristina</td>
<td>Support Romani students in the eighth grade of primary school to advance to secondary education.</td>
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</table>
Florida aims to guide young Roma students through supervised social workers to enhance their school readiness and improve their academic achievement. 

Support the development of 200 children from low-income families through a program of after-school services.

Provide access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children and to enhance their school readiness through provision of a Toy Library.

Increase the graduation rate of prospective Romani university students and improve the professional and academic achievements of tertiary students in a Roma Versitas center.

Provide access to quality ECEC services and enrollment in elementary school for Romani children in the town of Jilava.

Increase the existing GPA of Romani students who are project beneficiaries and support them access to mainstream education.

Increase the number of Romani students from the Calafat area who seek to obtain a higher education degree.

Support the development of 10 children, ages 4-5, in high school by targeting active intervention measures.

Increase the access to education of all Roma children living in Calafat village in Calafat County.

Increase the number of Roma students from the Calafat area who seek to obtain a higher education degree.

Support the implementation of state policy regarding the ESF WO school after school program.

Support ECEC services and accommodation of school-aged children in schools in Voinovce County.

Support secondary scholarship programs with a focus to improve the academic and professional achievements of tertiary students in a Roma Versitas center.

Increase the enrollment of 60 children, ages 10-15, into high school by utilizing active intervention measures.

Support the integration of 150 Romani and Egyptian children into preschool and primary education facilities.

Increase the existing GPA of Romani students who are project beneficiaries and support them access to mainstream Education schools.

Increase the number of Roma students from the Calafat area who seek to obtain a higher education degree.

Support the implementation of state policy regarding the ESF WO school after school program.

Increase the number of Roma students from the Calafat area who seek to obtain a higher education degree.
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
ECHHR  European Court of Human Rights
ECEC  Early Childhood Education and Care
ERRC  European Roma Rights Centre
ESF  European Social Funds
ESL  Early School Leaving
EU  European Union
GPA  Grade Point Average
HSCL  Home School Community Liaison
IPA  Instruments for Pre-Accession
ISSA  International Step by Step Association
J-PAL  Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab
M&E  Monitoring and Evaluation
LHP  Law and Humanities Program
OSCE  Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSF  Open Society Foundations
PDF  Professional Development Fund
RCT  Randomized Control Trials
RECI  Roma Early Childhood Inclusion
REF  Roma Education Fund
RMISP  Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program
RHSP  Roma Health Scholarship Program
RISP  Roma International Scholar Program
SGI  Slovak Governance Institute
TA  Technical Assistance
TVET  Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
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