ANNUAL REPORT
2011
Dear Readers,

More than halfway through the Decade of Roma Inclusion, it is clear that there is still much to be done. Over the last five years, the increased migration of Roma from new to old European Union (EU) member states has resulted in governmental reactions that are controversial and highly politicized. There has also been an alarming rise in far-right extremist groups and parties with clear anti-Roma agendas; various forms of anti-Roma violence are reported regularly across Central and South Eastern Europe. The majority of Roma have not seen visible changes in their everyday lives, despite the cumulative progress made thus far.

In the last few years, Roma issues have indeed become more visible at the European level. Within the context of the current momentum surrounding Roma inclusion, the European Parliament, as well as the European Commission, must implicitly identify how EU institutions can best address the specificity and complexity of problems that Roma face. National strategies designed by governments are expected to give a new impetus for the genuine inclusion of Roma. The European Roma Platform seems to be the driving force of the EU for ensuring coordination and knowledge-sharing among different stakeholders, including Roma civic organizations. The Roma Education Fund (REF) strongly encourages the EU and national governments to make education the top priority in Roma inclusion. An early investment in education for Romani children is a wise investment and brings huge economic benefits – not only for Roma communities, but for the majority as well.

The hardship brought by the economic crisis in the countries where REF operates has pushed us to be even more proactive regarding policy advocacy. Governments have been faced with difficult choices; REF has been active in underlining the importance of education for the most vulnerable children as a solution and key strategic investment. REF acted both independently as an expert network in matters related to education policies for Romani children and in partnership with governments, international agencies (such as the European Commission, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank), and other key partners in civil society (including Open Society Foundations, European Roma Rights Centre, the Decade of Roma Inclusion, coalitions of NGOs, and think tanks). Illustrating the importance of these efforts, REF saw its contributions integrated into education reforms in Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia.
In June 2011, the European Council endorsed a call of the European Commission for member and enlargement states to develop National Roma Integration Strategies. One of the four priorities of these strategies was defined as education. The REF Network contributed to the development of these strategies and submitted position papers analyzing them to national governments and the European Commission. Positioning Roma inclusion within the EU context is anticipated to boost it on national agendas; the REF Network is committed to monitoring the subsequent implementation of education strategies in its target countries. On the whole, REF’s policy advocacy dimension has been admirably re-energized in 2011 and will continue to be one of the REF Network’s priorities in the next eighteen months as the EU prepares its budget for 2014–2020.

REF stresses good governance in education systems, and good governance requires that policies and programs conform to a country’s legislation, which in turn should conform to European standards. One of the issues here is that, once a country joins the EU, the key incentive for policymakers and officials to take action on human rights loses its force as the EU has little influence on how existing member states deal with their minority populations. This is particularly true in education, as education remains primarily the responsibility of individual member states.

Moreover, government policies and local programs must be coordinated and should work coherently with one another. They also need to take into account the challenge of institutional changes. For this reason, it is essential that governments are engaged in the dialogue about national education reforms. Other key stakeholders in this dialogue should be those who are implementing specific programs at the local level and others with experience in how institutions operate locally. 2011 saw the need to support the assessment of policies and their implementation and disseminate this experience among countries and various groups of stakeholders. REF has been and continues to be well-positioned to help convene stakeholders around common objectives, to provide constructive advice on the design of policies with a specific focus on institutional changes, and to finance programs at the local level.

Before ending my message, I would like to highlight one change in the institutional leadership of the organization in 2011. Judit Szira, a senior expert on education issues who has worked with REF since its establishment in 2005, was appointed by the REF Board in January to serve as Executive Director. A committed advocate for desegregation and early childhood education, Judit has played an important role advising on policy development. I would like to personally thank her for her work to make REF a successful foundation in 2011. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all REF staff members for their effort and dedication to the Roma cause, for the work that has been done over 2011, and for addressing the challenges that lie ahead.

In closing, Romani children are the primary beneficiaries of our work, and I strongly believe that REF has done a fantastic job in achieving its targets and indicators. Together, Board members, staff, volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries of REF programs and projects concentrate their effort on one goal: closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.

This is the mission and the mandate given to REF from its very beginning, and I am fully confident that all of us will do our best to accomplish our goals in future. 2011 brought the Roma Education Fund one step closer to ensuring that even more Romani children have access to quality education.

Best wishes for 2012,

Costel Bercus
Chairman of the Board
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The Roma Education Fund (REF) was created in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005 (hereafter, Decade). Its mission and ultimate goal is to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. In order to achieve this goal, the organization supports policies and programs that contribute to quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems.

Through its activities, the Roma Education Fund promotes Roma inclusion in all aspects of the national education systems of countries participating in the Decade, as well as other countries that wish to join this effort. What follows is a snapshot of the main chapters of REF’s 2011 Annual Report, which fully articulates our progress towards this mission and goal.

GRANTS

In 2011, REF focused its grant-making activities on the countries participating in the Decade, while also supporting project applications from Kosovo and Moldova. Ninety-eight new project application requests were received, out of which the REF Board approved 51. Of those 51 approved projects, 24 were new project partners and 27 were former grantees. REF’s portfolio in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Slovakia has increased significantly and Bulgaria continued to be the country with the largest demand. The REF Board has, to date, approved 277 grant requests for a total commitment of EUR 24,428,616.

The number of active projects in 2011 was 89 and the average project size in terms of funding was EUR 58,000. The total number of REF beneficiaries increased to 119,101 for 2011. The largest distribution of direct beneficiaries of REF-funded projects can be observed in those projects that support the prevention of early school leaving, followed by secondary education and preschool education. In 2011, REF staff conducted 63 monitoring visits. Of these, 50 projects were rated as satisfactory, 12 unsatisfactory, and one was highlighted as a best practice. In addition, seven external project evaluations where conducted last year.
In 2011, and in partnership with the World Bank, REF worked intensively on enhancing its Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) instruments. Towards the end of 2011, a two-day workshop was organized to improve the staff’s M&E procedures, focusing on capturing results; this included an overview of key M&E methods, results chain components, and results frameworks with a focus on opportunities for the practical application of these instruments during grant project life cycles.

With a total contribution by REF of EUR 546,566, our Reimbursable Grant program has helped 33 NGOs in four countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) to mobilize EUR 18,868,330 of EU support. To date, over two-thirds of these loans have been fully repaid and the remainder is in the process of repayment.

More on REF’s Grants Program can be found on pages 19–43.

SCHOLARSHIPS

For the 2011–2012 academic year, REF granted scholarships to 1,497 of the 2,451 total applications to our four different scholarship schemes. The Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) granted support to 1,081 students out of 1,797 applications. Of the total number of accepted applicants, just under 60 percent were renewals, while the rest were invited into the program for the first time. A total of EUR 1,116,277 was allocated for RMUSP scholarship support in 2011–2012.

Through the Roma International Scholar Program (RISP), a total of 36 students from 59 applicants were awarded scholarships to study outside their countries of origin. RISP grants for 2011–2012 totaled EUR 195,897, with scholarships awarded in amounts up to EUR 9,050 each. For the 2011–2012 academic year, the Law and Humanities Program (LHP) received 169 applications of which 53 were new and 116 were renewal applicants. The scholarships awarded through LHP (for its eighth cycle totaled EUR 276,727. For the Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP), 223 scholarships were awarded (from 368 applications); 100 were brand new beneficiaries and 122 were renewal beneficiaries. A total of 93 students received PDF scholarships for the academic year 2010–2011. The total amount provided under PDF in 2011 was EUR 3,730.

In 2011, the Scholarships Program introduced a new multi-language online application system, personal interviews during the application process, and personalized rejection letters for unsuccessful applications – coupled with a new mechanism conducted by an independent ombudsman for investigation and resolution of declined applications. Each of these new features has collectively enhanced the efficiency and transparency of REF’s scholarship accessibility for interested Romani scholars.

More on REF’s Scholarships Program can be found on pages 45–63.

A GOOD START (AGS)

AGS is a REF program funded by a consortium of donors, including the European Union, and operating under a mandate that runs until June 2012. In 2011, the pilot program operated in 16 locations in Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia. AGS is coordinated by REF from Budapest with three international partners (International Step by Step Foundation, Fundacion Secretariado Gitano, and the Slovak Governance Institute) and 12 local implementing partners. By supporting early childhood development and increasing their access to preschool education, AGS has continued to give young Romani and other disadvantaged children a good basis to start their educational careers. According to REF’s research findings, Romani parents participating in AGS are strongly in favor of their children having a preschool education.

In 2011, AGS continued to see progress and encounter unique challenges in each country and locality. The target number of children (4,000) is the total number of Romani children served in the 16 localities; 2,000 of these are recurring beneficiary children. In all of the four AGS countries, kindergarten facilities often do not have sufficient capacity. In these instances, community and home-based AGS interventions gained higher importance in 2011. Working with parents on parental skills, involving and motivating them and providing the necessary information through home visits, community events, early literacy programs, or in open house events is crucial; thus, these activities have become a top priority in the project.

After one year of implementation, REF decided to invest additional funds to ensure a more complex and quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) project for Romani communities. The Bernard van Leer Foundation, accepting a joint proposal from REF and the International Step by Step Association, has made a significant contribution to strengthening the program, with additional resources invested in one locality per AGS country. This has included helping Romani children access kindergarten, providing training to mediators and to parents, and setting up toy libraries. The LEGO Foundation made a substantial in-kind contribution of toys and training for almost thirty kindergartens and eight toy libraries.
Ultimately, AGS is successfully enrolling children in kindergartens. This is considerable progress as it is the first step in ensuring the Romani children have decent educational opportunities.

More on A Good Start, including detailed country updates, can be found on pages 65–83.

REF ROMANIA

REF Romania continued its work in the implementation of four projects funded by European Structural Funds (ESF) while engaging in policy advocacy. The latter included secondary legislation related to the Law on Education adopted in January 2011, the new Government Strategy for Roma, and an advocacy partnership with UNICEF Romania.

Of the four ESF-funded projects, the School after School program saw the establishment of 50 after school centers and the selection of the participating children and teachers for the Equal Opportunities in Education project. Seven hundred vocational education students were selected for participation in the Roma Youth Competitive on the Labor Market project and the selection methodology was developed for the Personal Development Program of the Roma Health Scholarships project. For the latter, 80 Romani medical students have benefited from mentoring and scholarships and 105 high school students received admissions tutoring.

In 2011, REF Romania submitted ten Reimbursement Requests to the Romanian ESF Management Authority; six of the ten Reimbursement Requests had been approved by the close of the year. For the two projects where REF Romania is the main applicant, the minimum risk grade (risk grade A) for all the Reimbursement Requests was obtained. This is a clear indicator of the successful establishment of REF's office in Romania and its capacity as an effective agent in achieving Roma educational integration in Romania.

More on REF Romania can be found on pages 85–93.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

REF continued to produce and support publications on research related to Roma education at all levels. In 2011, REF's Country Assessments for Albania, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia were updated. Also, external evaluations were completed on a selection of REF-supported and REF-funded projects, including the EU pilot project, A Good Start.

REF was engaged in important policy work in 2011 regarding the revision or rewriting of EU member states' National Roma Integration Strategies. REF staff participated in a number of local, national, and international events, sharing experiences and exchanging knowledge with partners, practitioners, students, and others. Throughout the last year, REF took advantage of a number of opportunities to bring our partners and grantees together to ensure that best practices and lessons learned are being transferred between countries.

More on REF's Policy Development and Capacity Building work can be found on pages 95–113.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Due to ongoing and new support from core and project donors, REF closed 2011 with a positive financial balance. REF was happy to welcome the Finnish government as a returning donor and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) committed to continuing its support for an additional four years. Private donors made up the bulk of the increase in REF's income in 2011, with the Open Society Foundations as our most significant donor. Despite the growth in revenue and programmatic activity, operational expenses at REF remained modest, with just a decrease over last year. Overall, program administration expenses stood at EUR 960,205 (a 10 percent decrease compared to 2010), while operational administration expenses were EUR 791,488 (20 percent less compared to 2010). This was due to restructuring of the administrative set up of the REF Network.

In order to further improve performance and increase the satisfaction of its donors and beneficiaries, the REF Board agreed to develop, implement, and maintain a quality assurance management system at REF Switzerland, REF Hungary, and REF Romania, modelled on and conforming to the requirements specified in ISO 9001:2008. REF Hungary was notified following their ISO audit that began in late 2011 that it was successful in this regard and will be awarded its certification. Meanwhile, the quality management system of REF Romania has been developed and currently is being implemented; it is scheduled for certification in the second half of 2012.

More on REF's Finance and Administration operations can be found on pages 115–125.
PART I: PROJECT SUPPORT / GRANTS
In 2011, REF continued to support grant applications in line with its organizational mission and initiatives aimed at the provision of quality education for Roma in educational systems. Project applications were received from both public and private entities. REF focused its grant-making activities on the countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion, while also supporting project applications from Kosovo and Moldova.

Detailed criteria for assessing project eligibility and performance are contained in REF’s Operational Guidelines. Country strategies also guide project selection. While the general aim of the grant program is to support projects and programs that improve educational access and outcomes for Roma, the specific emphasis has been on supporting policy reforms, changes in education systems, and the expansion of existing programs that have been successful.

REF interprets “education” broadly to include formal and non-formal education and training for both children and adults. REF operates in a balanced manner with respect to different beneficiary countries and Romani communities. REF finances projects at all education levels and for policy development. The available funds per country are defined on the basis of the number of Roma in the country and the gross national income per capita, as measured by purchasing-power-parity, so that poorer countries with larger number of Roma are given priority. Specific country priorities for grant-giving are also established in the REF Country Assessments for all 14 countries.

The principles upon which REF operates involve Roma in all aspects of our operations and management; thus, Roma participation is a key criterion in the evaluation of grant project proposals. REF supports activities that are respectful and inclusive of Roma and the wishes of Romani communities, while also increasingly taking into account issues faced by Romani women.

1 Available online: http://www.romaeducationfund.org
REF operates a simple and rapid grant-making process that is transparent and accountable and evaluates the outcomes of REF projects and the progress in education reforms in order to inform and improve existing and future activities.

TRENDS OBSERVED

From 2005 to 2011, REF’s grant program supported 277 grant requests out of 711 submitted, which constitutes a 39 percent approval rate. In 2011, REF received 98 new project application requests out of which the REF Board approved 51 which, at 52 percent is slightly higher than last year. Of those 51 projects approved, 24 were new project partners and 27 were former grantees.

In 2011, REF’s portfolio in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Slovakia has significantly increased as compared to 2010. Bulgaria continued to be the country with the largest demand and number of projects approved by the REF Board. Approved projects predominately focused on increasing access to preschool education and institutional desegregation.

The figures presented in Table 1 illustrate the annual demand for grants over the life of the program. This demonstrates, in part, how much REF’s Grant Program has grown in the Decade countries and beyond.

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<tr>
<th>Table 1. Project proposals received and approved, 2005–2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change from previous year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
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<td>Change from previous year</td>
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In 2011, REF increasingly supported exchanges of experience and know-how within its projects in the Decade countries. Such exchanges included:

- A study visit organized in fall of 2011 for a delegation from Montenegro, which included educational specialists, members of the Ministry of Education and Sport, civil society representatives, school directors, and a Romani activist. The delegation visited successful REF school integration programs in Hungary to learn about the school desegregation model in primary education and the elements of good practice in the hosting schools. A similar study visit is expected to be developed for Konik camp, the largest Roma camp in Podgorica, Montenegro (see page 110 for more on projects in Montenegro).

- REF hosted two rounds of study visits by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). Twenty educational specialists from nine countries participated in order to learn about successful school integration models at local levels and marketable professions for young Roma for re-integration into the labor market in Hungary (see page 109 for more on CEDEFOP study visits).

- A secondary scholarship program with mentoring and tutoring component for young Roma was launched in Slovakia in the summer of 2011; this occasion was utilized for knowledge exchange with a delegation of Slovak and Serbian representatives, who visited the conference and evaluation of the successful Romanian secondary scholarship program organized in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The aim of the exchange was to learn about the elements of the secondary scholarship programs and the external evaluation which summarized the learning and areas for improvement (see pages 23–24 for more on projects in Romania).

- A Romaversitas program was established in the Vojvodina region, Serbia in 2011. This is the third Romaversitas initiative modeled after the existing programs in Hungary and Macedonia. The programs in Hungary and Macedonia were externally evaluated in 2011 and the learning was shared with the new program in Serbia (see pages 127–133 for more on Romaversitas).

A NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IN SLOVAKIA

Based on its experience and know-how gained in several Decade countries such as Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia, REF supported the founding of a secondary school scholarship program in Slovakia in 2011. In collaboration with the implementing agency and a key partner, Open Society Foundation (OSF) Slovakia, a nationwide program aiming at the improvement of the retention and achievement rates of targeted Romani students was developed and subsequently co-financed by the Plenipotentiary Office, Slovakia.
As a result of this cooperation and REF's experience and comprehensive needs assessment, financial support remains the essential element of the program, supplemented by mentoring and tutoring for the students that have met the demanding eligibility criteria.

As OSF Slovakia has been successfully implementing a scholarship program supporting Roma secondary school students studying since 2005, the program has the benefit of existing baseline data for measuring the impact of the program. In comparison with the previous application cycles with an average of 183 applicants, the implementing organization received more than 400 applications in 2011. In accordance with the announced eligibility criteria, 179 students from eight Slovak regions were selected as project participants. The involvement of the Slovak Plenipotentiary Office and the University of Presov, which is responsible for training of the mentors, alongside with a highly developed tracking system to monitor the efficiency of the support, suggests the potential scaling-up of the program and may serve to inform relevant state policies.

The success of the program depends to a large extent on how the project beneficiaries respond to the challenge of pursuing higher education and whether they use this opportunity to become future leaders and active members of the Romani intelligentsia. For this reason, REF's monitoring team visited many of the selected students and discussed their plans and expectations with them directly. It was clear from the talks that the students are doing their best and are highly motivated to continue their studies at the university level. For instance, one scholar is among the best students within the prestigious grammar school he attends and has already published several articles on different issues in newspapers.

**GRANTS BY COUNTRY**

In 2011, REF supported 51 grant requests in the Decade countries. Tables 2 and 3 show grant processing data by country in 2011 and throughout the life of the grant program (since 2005). The number of active projects in 2011 was 89 while in 2010 it was 73. The average project size in terms of funding in 2011 was EUR 58,000 with the average project length being one year. The total number of REF beneficiaries increased from 92,921 in 2010 to 119,101 in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New project proposals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Received</td>
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<td>Rejected</td>
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<td>Approved</td>
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<td>Contracted</td>
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Table 2 indicates that the largest demand for grant funding in 2011 came from Bulgaria with total of 89 project applications. As previously mentioned, REF’s portfolio in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Slovakia has significantly increased in 2011 compared to 2010. The Grant Board approved the remaining projects in 2011, but the contracting process did not occur until 2012.

1. **Project application requests by country, 2011**

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<th>Project application requests</th>
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<tr>
<td>Received</td>
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<td>Rejected</td>
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<td>Approved</td>
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<td>Contracted</td>
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</table>

Table 2 indicates that the largest demand for grant funding in 2011 came from Bulgaria with total of 22 grant application requests. As previously mentioned, REF’s portfolio in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Slovakia has significantly increased in 2011 compared to 2010.1

2. **Includes Moldova and Kosovo.**

3. **Includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, and International.**

4. **Includes Fushë Kosova, Gracanica, Plemetina, and Shlime; Abdul Presheva (mahalla), Gjilan/Gnjilane, Berivojce (village), Kamenica, Gadime (village), Lipjan/Lipljan, Gjyrkovc (village), Shlime/Shlime, Medvei (village), Lipjan/Lipljan, Preoce (village), Gracanica/Gracanica, Priluzhë (village), Vushtrri/Vulitn, RAE (mahalla), Podujevo/Podujevo, Salajana (mahalla), and Ferizaj/Uroševac (towns).**
For the compulsory preparatory preschool program in Serbia, the enrollment of Romani pupils was initially very low, as was the rate for preschool enrollment – neither being higher than seven to eight percent. Through the years, thanks to the various programs funded and coordinated by REF, we have seen an increase in enrollment in the targeted municipalities, some of which have reached up to 78 percent based on UNICEF data.8

Based on these results, the Ministry of Education and Science has begun to develop professional competencies for advisors and inspectors in the areas of improving Roma education, protecting children against discrimination, and the prevention of segregation in education. Trainings were conducted on identifying the key barriers that prevent the successful inclusion of Romani children, the personal motivation of people who promote these initiatives, and key guidelines for motivating parents to send their children to school. Simultaneously, plans are being drafted for the gradual inclusion of Romani children in existing preschool groups.

A SCHOOL THAT FITS STUDENTS

REF has also launched an initiative focused on the resettled residents from the Gazela Roma settlement in Belgrade. Partners in this program are the Roma NGO “Little Prince,” the Belgrade Municipality Office of School Administration, and a branch of the Ministry of Education and Science. The team is drafting a school system model that will suit the needs of Romani children from socially deprived backgrounds. Creating this model offers a tailored approach to the needs of children and the community that involves parents and increases trust between the Romani community and the education system. The project involves working with 170 preschool and school-age children and their parents. It is presently implemented in seven elementary schools in Belgrade and at six sites inhabited by the resettled population.

Videos about this work with the Gazela Roma settlement can be found at: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/videos

In Kosovo,7 after several years of absence, REF supported three large-scale projects focusing on access to preschool programs and extracurricular support for pupils and students in primary and secondary education in 13 localities.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, REF granted funds to three new initiatives. REF supported a two-year project that aims at the educational inclusion of disadvantaged Romani children living in a camp without basic infrastructure in Mostar. The targeted students had dropped out of the education system and this project provides them with additional educational support via “catch-up classes” for the completion of their primary education. Two more initiatives were supported in Bosnia with the aims of increasing access to primary education and increasing knowledge of Romani students in the language of instruction, math, and other skills.

In Slovakia, the demand for REF projects increased in 2011 and the REF Board supported five new project partners and one previous REF grantee. This includes the launch of a new scholarship program (see page 23 for details).

REF BOOSTS ENROLLMENT IN KINDERGARTENS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SERBIA

In 2011 in Serbia, REF launched a campaign for enrollment in the preparatory preschool program (PPP) and first grade of elementary school. The campaign was conducted in cooperation with UNICEF, the Open Society Fund Serbia, the OSCE mission in Serbia, the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, and local governments. The project also involved the Ministry of Education and Science’s IPA project, Education for All, and the DILS partnership program, The Provision of Improved Services at the Local Level – DILS.

The goal of the campaign is to inform parents from vulnerable groups about the new enrollment policy in Serbia and to educate the general public about the benefits of quality and affordable education for all. REF and its partners are working to raise the level of implementation of new policies and regulations at the local level to ensure the availability of PPP to all children and to inform the wider public about the law against discrimination and new regulations in the field of education.

7 Board approved in 2011, contracting process happens in 2012.

TOTAL PROJECT FINANCING

From 2005 to 2011, the REF Board approved 277 grant requests with a total commitment of EUR 24,428,616. Project co-financing has been steadily increasing from the side of project partners, especially from those partners who have applied for continued REF support. For the past two years, co-financing has been more than 50 percent of total project funds, despite the overall increases in REF funds committed. The funds leveraged by REF projects come from local municipalities, governmental institutions (from the state budget), and contributions from third parties, such as other donors and in-kind contributions from the applicants. Such co-financing is an important indicator of the sustainability of the projects and in forecasting the partner’s potential for long-term capacity building.

Table 4 shows the total leveraged funds for the life of the grant program, while Tables 5 through 7 show the annual financial commitment of the grant program for 2011 as well as by country over the total lifespan of the program.9

### Table 4. Leveraged funds, 2005–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EUR</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funds Leveraged</td>
<td>1,764,584</td>
<td>2,060,144</td>
<td>1,023,197</td>
<td>2,235,695</td>
<td>840,858</td>
<td>3,210,141</td>
<td>3,212,151</td>
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<td>REF Funds Committed</td>
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<td>5,592,141</td>
<td>4,616,061</td>
<td>3,229,615</td>
<td>2,539,692</td>
<td>2,085,069</td>
<td>3,013,443</td>
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### Table 5. Project financing, 2005–2011

<table>
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<th>EUR</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>3,352,595</td>
<td>5,592,141</td>
<td>4,616,061</td>
<td>3,229,615</td>
<td>2,539,692</td>
<td>2,085,069</td>
<td>3,013,443</td>
<td>24,428,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracted</td>
<td>2,208,856</td>
<td>6,190,978</td>
<td>4,437,800</td>
<td>3,453,046</td>
<td>2,402,296</td>
<td>1,945,612</td>
<td>2,525,302</td>
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<td>Disbursed</td>
<td>1,048,245</td>
<td>3,852,621</td>
<td>4,797,243</td>
<td>4,429,848</td>
<td>2,701,429</td>
<td>2,467,566</td>
<td>2,201,194</td>
<td>21,498,235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some projects were approved in 2011 but were not contracted until 2012, which affects the final numbers.

10 The figures do not contain accrual reversals and repayments.
REF’S GRANT INDICATORS

Impacts made through the grants approved by the REF Board are captured under nine program indicators. Table 8 lists these and illustrates the number of REF beneficiaries by indicator in 2011. Table 9 illustrates the beneficiaries of REF-funded projects by indicator, 2005–2011. The number of project beneficiaries has steadily increased since 2005. In the last six years, REF and its partners reached approximately 441,330 beneficiaries. The largest number of beneficiaries has been captured in the indicators related to early school leaving (ESL) programs, early childhood education programs, parental participation, and desegregation. Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of project beneficiaries captured within each particular indicator.

TABLE 7. Project financing by country, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EUR</th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>Croatia</th>
<th>Czech Republic</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>179,775</td>
<td>305,021</td>
<td>146,144</td>
<td>62,097</td>
<td>74,271</td>
<td>230,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracted</td>
<td>102,342</td>
<td>381,496</td>
<td>146,144</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>118,213</td>
<td>139,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbursed</td>
<td>133,438</td>
<td>325,975</td>
<td>89,552</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>125,635</td>
<td>195,861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REF’S GRANT INDICATORS

Impacts made through the grants approved by the REF Board are captured under nine program indicators. Table 8 lists these and illustrates the number of REF beneficiaries by indicator in 2011. Table 9 illustrates the beneficiaries of REF-funded projects by indicator, 2005–2011. The number of project beneficiaries has steadily increased since 2005. In the last six years, REF and its partners reached approximately 441,330 beneficiaries. The largest number of beneficiaries has been captured in the indicators related to early school leaving (ESL) programs, early childhood education programs, parental participation, and desegregation. Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of project beneficiaries captured within each particular indicator.

TABLE 8. REF’s nine grant program indicators, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Indicators</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in preschool education</td>
<td>11,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early school leaving</td>
<td>18,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary completion rates of young people</td>
<td>6,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education graduates**</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental school participation</td>
<td>70,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio (number) of Romani pupils enrolled in segregated compulsory education settings</td>
<td>7,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio (number) of Romani pupils enrolled in special education</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service teacher training</td>
<td>3,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma employment within REF projects</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119,101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please note that this table represents the distribution of project beneficiaries among REF’s nine grant indicators. As projects can address more than one indicator, there are some instances where a beneficiary may be captured by more than one indicator (for example, “participation in preschool education” and “desegregation”). Therefore, in Figure 1 illustrates the complete impact of REF-funded projects in terms of the nine indicators and as measured by the number of beneficiaries.

TABLE 9. Beneficiaries* of REF-funded projects, by indicator and year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiaries of REF-funded projects, by indicator and year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in preschool education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of early school leaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of upper secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in tertiary education*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total number of beneficiaries includes the EU pilot project and REF Romania beneficiaries.
**Includes data from A Good Start EU pilot project, the Sándor Demján Foundation project, and REF Romania.
people drop out of school within the EU each year – about 14 percent of all pupils. They are more likely to end up unemployed, poor or otherwise marginalized. Better access to early childhood education, help for truant students and poor, performers, and “second chance” schools are key instruments for achieving this objective.

However, in the case of Roma, ESL on average starts much earlier, with more Roma leaving school even before the completion of primary education. Beyond the cost to individuals, early school leaving hinders economic growth and competitiveness. High-tech modern economies need skilled workers, and drop-outs are more likely to claim social benefits, putting pressure on state resources. For these reasons, preventing early school leaving is a priority of REF’s grant program.

In fact, the largest distribution of direct beneficiaries of REF-funded projects can be observed in those which support the prevention of early school leaving (Indicator 2). Early school leaving prevention is a concern in all Decade countries and in the European Union. Figure 2 provides an illustration of the number of beneficiaries prevented from early school leaving during the life of REF’s grant program.

The EU has set an objective of reducing the drop-out rate of all young people to less than 10 percent by 2020. Early school leaving in the European context is broadly defined as when youth between the ages of 18 to 24 years have left school with a lower secondary education or less. Today, some six million young

---

<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>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental participation in children's education</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>17,561</td>
<td>29,780</td>
<td>29,674</td>
<td>42,685</td>
<td>50,136</td>
<td>70,119</td>
<td>242,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desegregation</td>
<td>1,734</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>5,073</td>
<td>6,534</td>
<td>9,331</td>
<td>9,373</td>
<td>7,283</td>
<td>34,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention/reversal of enrollment in special education</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>2,713</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service teacher training</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>4,018</td>
<td>4,484</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>3,125</td>
<td>3,552</td>
<td>21,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma employed by REF-funded projects</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>4,203</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>441,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Figure 1.** Grant awards by indicator, 2011

**Figure 2.** Beneficiaries prevented from early school leaving, 2005–2011

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6 These numbers do not include REF’s RMUSP scholarship program beneficiaries. Please see pages 48–53 for statistics on the number of beneficiaries through this program.

7 Please note that this table represents the distribution of project beneficiaries among REF’s nine grant indicators. As projects can address more than one indicator, there are some instances where a beneficiary may be captured by more than one indicator (for example, “participation in preschool education” and “desegregation”). Therefore, 100% in Figure 1 illustrates the complete impact of REF-funded projects in terms of the nine indicators and as measured by the number of beneficiaries.
The project leader is the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Minorities. Partners include the Council for Roma Integration of Vojvodina, Association of Roma Students, the provincial Roma Inclusion Office of the Government of AP Vojvodina, and primary and secondary schools in Vojvodina.

Results and Renewed Commitments

The actual results and goals achieved through the Inclusion of Romani children in secondary schools in Vojvodina project led to a renewed commitment of support from REF, the Fund for an Open Society Serbia and the project partners. The new phase of the project (2010–2013) provides scholarships for 401 secondary school students in Vojvodina. The project is the same as the previous one in its aims and objectives, but involves a multitude of innovations, including optional free English lessons for the best scholars; more than 80 scholars have already benefited from this option. The following tables provide some statistics of the project’s achievements.

**TABLE 10**: General success of students by school year in Vojvodina, in percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentor and Financial Support to Romani High School Students in Vojvodina

In 2007, the Roma Education Fund (REF) launched the Inclusion of Roma students in secondary schools in Vojvodina project, which has provided strong financial and mentoring support to high school students of Roma ethnicity. As of 2011, 860 scholarships have been granted. Of the total number of scholars, 54.6 percent are girls and 45.4 percent are boys, which also serves to empower Romani women, who often suffer from double discrimination.

The primary objective of the project is to increase the number of Romani students attending and completing secondary school and subsequently increasing the number of students enrolling in four-year higher education institutions and motivating students to select educational profiles demanded on the labor market. As teachers and pedagogues are actively involved in the project, monitoring the work of scholars and providing mentoring support on a daily basis, the results include an increase in the motivation of teachers to work with Romani pupils and their parents. The project directly contributes to the improvement of educational levels of Roma, their professional competences and creates a solid basis for education after high school, which in turn contributes to the long-term reduction of poverty.

The project leader is the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Administration and National Minorities. Partners include the Council for Roma Integration of Vojvodina, Association of Roma Students, the provincial Roma Inclusion Office of the Government of AP Vojvodina, and primary and secondary schools in Vojvodina.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From here, special attention will be paid to discovering and developing the talents of scholars, as well as to the education of Romani female scholars on gender issues, domestic violence prevention, strengthening of their self-confidence and independence in decision-making, and identifying opportunities for professional development and continuation of education.
For the duration of the grant program (2005–2011), REF-supported ECD programs have reached about 39,099 Romani children in 14 countries.

Roma participation is essential in REF-funded grant projects for a number of reasons. One is the need to empower Romani communities. Participation creates commitments and also motivation. Efforts to open space for participation, if well managed, can create the trust and confidence that is required for successful outcomes. A second reason why participation is important is that Romani parents tend to be less involved than other parents in school management and interaction with school staff. The experience with Roma education projects shows that low parental involvement can change very rapidly, and that it is not as much of a challenge to increase participation as some would maintain. In 2011, REF has continued to actively involve Romani parents in the education of their children; working with parents has a multiplier effect in the community. Replication of good practice and involvement of parents in education is a way to a long-term and a sustainable solution.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Incorporated within REF’s grant program is a monitoring framework that strongly relies on keeping a close watch on project activities. Grantees must submit quarterly reports and on-site monitoring visits are organized every six months (financial monitoring visits are conducted once per year). Monitoring visits are attended not just by REF Country Facilitators but also by high level managers (Board members, the Executive Director, the Financial Director, and so forth). The purpose of monitoring visits is to offer assistance to the implementing organizations as they work through the project cycle as well as to review the status of the project’s implementation.

In 2011, REF staff conducted 63 such monitoring visits to 89 active grant projects. Of these, 50 were rated satisfactory, 12 unsatisfactory, and one was highlighted as a best practice. In the case that a project is rated unsatisfactory, a number of corrective measures are proposed to the implementing agency. A detailed timetable for resolving any issues is designed and the implementing agency is provided with technical assistance if needed. If the corrective measures are not implemented, the project management committee may decide to suspend the project’s implementation.

Research provides considerable data supporting the positive impact of Early Child Development (ECD) programs. One of the most striking results of evaluations conducted by the World Bank\(^\text{18}\) show that many of the programs resulted in increased school completion rates. It is also well-established that academic performance in the early grades is a significant predictor of eventual high school completion. Therefore, if an ECD program can improve performance in the early grades, it can increase the probability of high school graduation, with attendant improvements in future wages and employment opportunities.

In addition to increased school completion rates, based on REF experience, ECD programs to a large extent contribute to a decreased number of Romani children enrolled to special schools. As seen in Figure 4, ECD is an important element of REF-supported projects. Following the closure of a large project in 2008, REF has worked hard to increase support for preschool programs, resulting in a significant increase in such projects since that time.

**FIGURE 4.** Children participating in preschool education through REF support, 2005–2011\(^\text{19}\)

![Participation in preschool education](chart.png)


\(^{19}\) Participation in preschool education includes data from REF’s A Good Start Program.
Romani mayors in Slovakia, most of whom are located in remote areas. These municipalities of different sizes as well as socio-economic conditions were open to improving educational outcomes for Romani children. REF staff held a presentation about possible means of cooperation and the importance of early childhood education, which is currently not compulsory in Slovakia. It is expected that REF will continue to work with municipalities in this way and also directly through the provision of technical assistance and knowledge transfer.

Educational Inclusion of Roma – DILS/REF Project

The educational inclusion of Roma project is being implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science within the DILS project, in cooperation with REF, from the beginning of 2010 until the end of 2012. REF has a full-time consultant working in the DILS office in Belgrade, in order to ensure that REF best practices in implementation are integrated into the DILS activities and also so that REF can learn from such a large-scale program. DILS is financed by a World Bank loan and funds provided by REF. Besides all the other types of support, each one of 56 participating municipalities received a grant averaging around EUR 35,000 from the World Bank’s loan.

DILS embraced the poorest municipalities with the highest estimated number of Roma. The project is conducted by 308 local institutions and organizations – which include 56 local governments, 140 primary schools, 56 preschool institutions, and 56 Roma NGOs. The total number of Romani children aged from three to 15 covered by DILS is approximately 16,000. The implementation team includes 26 mentors from the Ministry – their obligation is to provide support to municipal teams to render the realization of the project as successful as possible.

A contract with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia stipulated that the 56 municipalities must use project funds to take on issues/problems concerning total coverage of children, equal quality of education, reduction of dropouts, halting further segregation and discrimination, nurturing cultural identity, providing papers for official residence required for children’s school admission, and, in the end, creating and adopting Local Action Plans (LAP) for education. The LAPs must include defined budget lines and a team that will monitor implementation. In all 56 municipalities, municipal teams have been formed and appointed by their respective mayor. Each local municipal team includes representatives from the local self-government, preschool institutions, at least two primary schools, and a Roma non-governmental organization. The local self-government is a stakeholder in DILS and has a leading role in the project. Another aim of DILS is to provide wide support to municipalities for the purpose of improving the quality, accessibility, and efficiency in delivery of local services. By relying on best practice examples, the project uses a decentralized and intersectoral approach and represents not only application of the new Law on Romani

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALIZATION

In 2011, REF supported or worked in partnership with over 90 municipalities on projects in more than eight countries. Municipalities play an essential role in the decentralization of education systems. The role of municipalities in REF projects is important for other reasons as well, such as developing access to educational services, strengthening partnerships with local communities, making local policy impact and change, and promoting sustainability and shared experiences.

The empowering of municipalities is a very complex theme. To ensure that the provision of public services delegated to the local level will be made in a satisfying manner, municipalities should possess some necessary preconditions such as the administrative capacity to fulfill their duties and the financial means to be able to cover the necessary expenditures. In 2011, REF participated in a debate organized by the associations of seven external project evaluations where conducted in 2011. More about these external evaluations can be found on pages 107–108.

In 2011 and in partnership with the World Bank, REF worked intensively on improving its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) instruments. To this end, it is expected that by early 2012:

- an improved monitoring results framework for REF grants will be in place;
- improved grant/project application and reporting formats will be launched;
- REF policy indicators will be developed for measuring REF’s contribution towards achieving its strategic policy objectives; and
- a set of policy indicators measuring REF’s progress in achieving its strategic policy objectives and a results framework will be developed, discussed and adopted.

REF staff is being continually trained in M&E, ensuring a constant improving of in-house skills. Towards the end of 2011, a two-day workshop was organized to improve REF staff’s knowledge of M&E for results; this included an overview of key M&E methods, results chain components, and results frameworks with a focus on opportunities for the practical application of these instruments during grant project life cycles.

Furthermore, seven external project evaluations where conducted in 2011. More about these external evaluations can be found on pages 107–108.

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DILS embraced the poorest municipalities with the highest estimated number of Roma. The project is conducted by 308 local institutions and organizations – which include 56 local governments, 140 primary schools, 56 preschool institutions, and 56 Roma NGOs. The total number of Romani children aged from three to 15 covered by DILS is approximately 16,000. The implementation team includes 26 mentors from the Ministry – their obligation is to provide support to municipal teams to render the realization of the project as successful as possible.

A contract with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia stipulated that the 56 municipalities must use project funds to take on issues/problems concerning total coverage of children, equal quality of education, reduction of dropouts, halting further segregation and discrimination, nurturing cultural identity, providing papers for official residence required for children’s school admission, and, in the end, creating and adopting Local Action Plans (LAP) for education. The LAPs must include defined budget lines and a team that will monitor implementation. In all 56 municipalities, municipal teams have been formed and appointed by their respective mayor. Each local municipal team includes representatives from the local self-government, preschool institutions, at least two primary schools, and a Roma non-governmental organization. The local self-government is a stakeholder in DILS and has a leading role in the project. Another aim of DILS is to provide wide support to municipalities for the purpose of improving the quality, accessibility, and efficiency in delivery of local services. By relying on best practice examples, the project uses a decentralized and intersectoral approach and represents not only application of the new Law on Municipalities in Slovakia, most of whom are located in remote areas. These municipalities of different sizes as well as socio-economic conditions were open to improving educational outcomes for Romani children. REF staff held a presentation about possible means of cooperation and the importance of early childhood education, which is currently not compulsory in Slovakia. It is expected that REF will continue to work with municipalities in this way and also directly through the provision of technical assistance and knowledge transfer.

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Furthermore, seven external project evaluations where conducted in 2011. More about these external evaluations can be found on pages 107–108.
Grant Program was set up as a pilot facility available for the EU member states and for non-EU members, principally in the Western Balkans. REF is also lobbying the EU and the respective government agencies managing EU funds for procedures that allow NGOs easier access to these funds.

Table 12 illustrates the status of Reimbursable Grants activities as of 2011. In comparison to 2010, our leveraging ratio (that is, how much support can be mobilized with the reimbursable grant from the main donor) has remained almost the same (36 in 2010 and 35 in 2011) as we continued to support large-scale projects mainly in Romania and Hungary. Up to now, over two-thirds of the expired loans have been fully repaid and the rest are in process. Descriptions of the current reimbursable grants can be found in the Annex on pages 196–199.

### Table 12. Reimbursable grants awarded, 2005–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Contract Year</th>
<th>REF Grant Amount (EUR)</th>
<th>Mobilized Amount (EUR)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Leveraging Ratio</th>
</tr>
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<td>REV HU 001</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14,607</td>
<td>73,350</td>
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<td>63,510</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>REV HU 006</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>REV HU 008</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>42,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>REV HU 017</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>partially reimbursed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Access to compulsory preschool education in Bulgaria is generally unavailable to Romani children due to unaffordable fees, limited spaces, and policies that give priority to children of working parents. REF has supported a number of projects with the aim of increasing access to preschool services for Romani children. In 2011, a number of successes were seen in grant projects in Bulgaria; following is a description of just some of these.

In January 2008, the municipality in Sofia introduced a new system for the enrollment of the children in kindergartens, the Informational System for Kindergartens (ISKG), which is an internet portal where every child-applicant must have a profile through which they can apply for school. Registration, applications, and all communication are available only through the internet. This significantly affects Romani families due to the lack of home PCs, lack of internet access, and the low computer skills and literacy of many Romani parents. In this light, REF supported a project (BU 148) in the Sofia municipality to assist Romani families with internet registration. Through the project, 436 new profiles were created and 211 Romani children were enrolled in targeted kindergartens.

Another REF-supported project (BU 147) provided 798 Romani children living in 15 villages of the Botevgrad municipality with equal opportunities for enrollment in preschool education. The project also strengthened good relations between Romani and non-Romani parents through the program, My Mother, My Father, and Me, through which more than 200 parents participated in events.

School desegregation continued to be a REF priority in 2011 in Bulgaria; one project that addressed this (BU 135) was implemented in partnership with the Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities (CEICPEM) and supported activities in eleven municipalities (organizations submitted applications for support to CEICPEM). The supported projects started in January 2011 and included projects aimed at preschool inclusion, school desegregation, mentoring and tutoring activities, enrollment in secondary schools, and activities addressing school optimization. The project activities reached approximately 1,400 students and children (Roma and non-Roma), 1,100 parents, and 260 teachers.

Project activities will continue with new municipalities in 2012.

The table in the Annex on page 196–199 provides a narrative of the projects operating with the support of reimbursable grant funds from REF that were active in 2011 (both those contracted in 2011 and those contracted in prior years that were still active in 2011); a complete list that includes fully reimbursed grants can be found on REF’s website.
PART II: SCHOLARSHIPS
PART II: SCHOLARSHIPS

SCHOLARSHIPS STATISTICS

REF’s Scholarships Program offers four academic merit-based scholarship schemes for all countries of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (except Spain), as well as for Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. Scholarship schemes support Romani students in Bachelor, Master, and PhD degree programs. Applications at the vocational level are eligible for consideration under the Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) scheme. Scholarships are provided for one academic year and are renewable based on successful completion of the prior academic year.

The Scholarship schemes are:
– Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP)
– Roma International Scholar Program (RISP)
– Law and Humanities Program (LHP)
– Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)

For the 2011–2012 academic year, REF granted 1,497 scholarships out of 2,451 total applications. Table 13 provides a summary of the number and amount of grants awarded between 2007 and 2011.
TABLE 13. REF Scholarships Program in five academic years, 2007–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grants Awarded (EUR)</td>
<td>Funding Granted (EUR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMUSP</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>592,938</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISP</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHP</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHSP</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support grants**</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>722,412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Grants Awarded (EUR)</td>
<td>Funding Granted (EUR)</td>
<td>Grants Awarded (EUR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMUSP</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>854,451</td>
<td>1029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISP</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>104,370</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHP</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>139,555</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHSP</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>243,290</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>1,353,247</td>
<td>1,500</td>
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</table>

* Selection ongoing
** For conference participation and language tutoring support.

ROMA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (RMUSP)

The twelfth cycle of the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) was conducted in 2011, marking the fifth cycle to be managed by REF after accepting program’s administration responsibilities from the Open Society Foundations (OSF). RMUSP aims at facilitating the access for Romani youth to tertiary education at state-accredited universities in their countries of residence. The RMUSP scheme is implemented in 13 countries within Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe.

In making RMUSP scholarship award decisions, the following factors are considered:
- the demand for scholarships as expressed in the past years measured by number of applications;
- the existence of alternative scholarship programs in the country; and
- the estimated Romani population size in each country relative to the total Romani population in the 13 RMUSP countries.

For the 2011–2012 academic year, RMUSP granted support to 1,081 students out of the 1,797 submitted applications, the ratio of accepted candidates being 60 percent out of the total number of applications. Among the 1,081 students selected in 2011–2012, 60 percent were female and 40 percent were male. Students’ ages range between 18 and 57 years old, with the median age being 22. Moreover, 73 percent of scholarship recipients are pursuing their Bachelor degree, 25 percent their Master, and 2 percent their PhD. Out of the total number of 1,081 accepted applicants in RMUSP for the 2011–2012 academic year, 626 (or 58 percent) are renewal, while, 455 (or 42 percent) are new beneficiaries, that is, were accepted within the program for the first time.

A total of EUR 1,116,277 was allocated for RMUSP scholarship support in 2011–2012. The rejected applicants (716) were not supported either because they did not meet eligibility criteria or due to the competitive nature of the selection process. The degree of competitiveness in the RMUSP in general was dictated by the program’s budgetary limitations. The competitiveness at country level also depended on the number of scholarships reserved for each particular country, which was decided according to the criteria stated above.
In 2011–2012, the countries with the highest demand for scholarships were Bulgaria and Romania, with 525 and 401 submitted applications respectively, counting for just over half of the total number of RMUSP applications. Together, these two countries received half of the total number of RMUSP grants disbursed. Table 14 summarizes the number of applications and awards by country, including the ratio out of the total number of applicants. Further, Table 15 provides data on the number of awards by country for the last seven academic years and it reveals that in most countries the number of awards increased with every year. Table 16 provides the distribution of scholarships by academic level in each country, for 2011–2012.

### Table 14. Submitted applications versus granted scholarships under RMUSP, academic year 2011–2012

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Scholarships Granted</th>
<th>Submitted Applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage of the total number of applicants</td>
</tr>
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<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>1,797</td>
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</table>

### Table 15. RMUSP awards by country, 2005–2011

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<td>1</td>
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<td>228</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>221</td>
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<td>320</td>
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<td>172</td>
<td>178</td>
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<td>254</td>
<td>219</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>140</td>
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<td>113</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>123</td>
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<td>106</td>
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<tr>
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<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>See Serbia</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>643</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>5,651</td>
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TABLE 16. RMUSP awards by country and academic level, academic year 2011–2012

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Academic level</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>BA (%)</th>
<th>MA (%)</th>
<th>PhD (%)</th>
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<td>219</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>166</td>
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<td>Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Kosovo</td>
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<td>57</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,081</td>
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</table>

Figure 5 represents the rural/urban origin of the 2011–2012 RMUSP scholarship beneficiaries. An absolute majority of RMUSP students come from provincial urban areas. Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of the 2011–2012 RMUSP beneficiaries by specialization. It reveals that a relative majority of beneficiaries study in social sciences.

FIGURE 5. Rural/Urban origins of the RMUSP student body, academic year 2011–2012

FIGURE 6. Distribution of RMUSP beneficiaries by specialization, in percent

ROMA INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR PROGRAM (RISP)

Formerly known as the Roma Supplementary Scholarship Grant and Roma Interregional Scholarship Programs, RISP supports students who study internationally at the tertiary level from all 16 countries eligible for REF’s Scholarship Program.21 The aim of the program is to support the academic mobility of Romani students by providing supplementary funds for full-time Bachelor, Master, PhD, or post-doctoral studies outside of their home country or country of residence.

A total of 36 students received scholarships out of 59 applications in 2011. Five are pursuing a PhD, 14 are studying to receive a Bachelor degree, and the remaining 17 intend to pursue Master studies.

Overall, the number of applications increased significantly over the last year. Eleven applicants re-applied after receiving a grant from RISP in the previous cycle and all applicants are new. Of the 48 new applicants, 23 had

21 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine.
previously participated in one of the REF scholarship schemes while 23 were completely new to the program. RISP grants for 2011–2012 totaled EUR 195,897 with scholarships awarded in amounts up to 9,050 EUR each. Tables 17–18 provide the statistics for RISP.

TABLE 17. RISP awards in five academic years, 2007–2012

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of applicants</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of grantees</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
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</table>

TABLE 18. RISP awards by academic level, 2011–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 7. Distribution of beneficiaries by country of origin

- Bulgaria (31%)
- Romania (22%)
- Hungary (14%)
- Moldova (11%)
- Kosovo (8%)
- Macedonia (5%)
- Croatia (3%)
- Czech Republic (3%)
- Slovakia (1%)
Most of the RISP scholars applied from Bulgaria (11), Romania (8), and Hungary (5), a trend similar to RMUSP.

The scholarships awarded through LHP for its eighth cycle totaled EUR 276,272, of which EUR 202,800 was funded by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (Die Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft, EVZ). Tables 21-23 illustrate the statistics for LHP.

**TABLE 19.** Submitted applications versus granted scholarships under LHP, academic year 2011–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of</th>
<th>Number of</th>
<th>Ratio out of the total number of applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>granted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applications</td>
<td>scholarships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova 39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia 33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine 97</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 169</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 20.** LHP in three program countries, academic years 2008–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moldova 35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia 21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine 32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 88</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 21.** LHP awards by academic level, academic year 2011–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LAW AND HUMANITIES PROGRAM (LHP)**

For the 2011–2012 academic year, the Law and Humanities Program (LHP) received 169 applications of which 53 were new and 116 were renewal applicants. Of the 157 scholarship recipients, 91 were selected from the Ukraine, 33 from Moldova, and 33 from Russia. Eighty-four LHP beneficiaries (54 percent) study at Bachelor degree level, 65 beneficiaries (41 percent) at Master level, and eight beneficiaries (5 percent) at the PhD level. For the 2011–2012 academic year, 49 percent of the selected scholars were female and 51 percent were male.
LHP has in the last three years incorporated extracurricular activities aimed at enhancing personal development and facilitating networking, closer communication, and sharing of experiences among students across the three countries. A growing interest in extracurricular activities and acquiring marketable skills through trainings demonstrates the stronger motivation and clarity of goals among the students as compared to the initial years of the program.

ROMA HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (RHSP)

The Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) has the main goal of providing support for health education for Romani students, support that includes mentorship and advocacy training. RHSP has been designed and implemented in cooperation with Open Society Foundations' Roma Health Project.

In order to address the need to develop a professional medical cohort among the Romani minority, RHSP provides scholarships for Romani students pursuing degrees as medical nurses or medical doctors at state-accredited medical and medical-vocational schools in the countries of their residence. In 2011, the program operated in South Eastern Europe, specifically in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia. As illustrated in Table 22, the overall acceptance rate in all three countries for the 2011–2012 academic year was 61 percent.

In 2011–2012, RHSP was implemented for the third academic year in Bulgaria and for the second year in Macedonia and Serbia. For 2011–2012, out of the 223 applicants accepted for scholarship, 100 (45 percent) were first-time beneficiaries and 122 (55 percent) were renewal beneficiaries. The country-specific numbers of first-time and renewal beneficiaries are indicated in Table 23.

Table 24 provides the percentages of beneficiaries enrolled in vocational education and in tertiary education programs for the last three academic years by country. The figures reveal that the majority of beneficiaries in RHSP pursue vocational studies; however, the ratio of tertiary-level students increases every year.

The male/female ratio among the RHSP applicants for the 2011–2012 academic year was 35 percent for male and 65 percent for female, which is comparable to the male/female ratio among the accepted applicants (32 percent male and 68 percent female). RHSP beneficiaries are also eligible to apply for RHSP Language Tutoring Support, which is complementary to the program and covers the costs of participation in foreign language courses. For 2011–2012, 28 RHSP beneficiaries from Macedonia, 22 from Bulgaria, and nine from Serbia were awarded grants to attend language courses in English, French, German, or Swedish.
In 2011, REF’s Scholarships Program also supported and oversaw the organization of preparatory courses for prospective medical students in the three program countries. The preparatory courses were carried out under the overall RHSP program through contracted entities in each country.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (PDF) GRANT

The Professional Development Fund (PDF) Grant is offered as a complementary grant to both RMUSP and LHP recipients. In 2011, a total of four students received such scholarships for the academic year 2010–2011. The extracurricular activities supported included research, internships, summer schools, and fellowships. The total amount provided under PDF in 2011 was EUR 3,730.

NEW ACTIVITIES AND THE NEW ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM

In order to bring more transparency and efficiency into the process of application and beneficiary selection, REF developed a multi-language online system for application submission and evaluation. In 2011, the online system was used for the first time. The system is meant to both simplify the application process for students as well as expedite the processing of applications, thus allowing for a shorter time between application submission and eventual disbursement.

According to the feedback received from the National Selection Board members and country coordinators, the online system has indeed contributed to a more objective, simplified, and automated evaluation that is based on a ranking system. Moreover, it facilitates the collection and analysis of relevant information and data for understanding particular needs and goals of students and allows for a better tailoring and targeting strategy of the program. The system has since been fine-tuned based on the program’s dynamic nature and feedback from its users in order to better serve the interests of both program and students.

In 2011, REF introduced personal interviews as part of the selection process in order to give applicants the opportunity to express their motivations as well as their academic and professional goals. In the summer

23 The PDF stipends disbursed in 2011 were those for the academic year 2010–2011. Stipends for 2011–2012 will be distributed in 2012 as the deadline for submitting applications was in February 2012.
PART II: SCHOLARSHIPS

of 2011, as an initial step towards the implementation of this new component, the Scholarships Program introduced the interviews as part of the selection process of RMUSP for incoming freshmen applicants in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Macedonia.

Also in 2011, REF introduced a system of personalized rejection letters which contained the reasons for rejection, to increase the transparency of decision-making and to assist students who may wish to apply again in future years. In parallel, REF introduced a new mechanism of complaint investigation and resolution, which includes investigations conducted by an independent Ombudsman.

Out of the 951 applicants rejected in the selection for a REF scholarship, 64 (seven percent) sent appeals against the rejection decision. Out of the 64 appeals, one was from LHP, eight from RHSP, and the other 55 were from RMUSP. Out of the total number of appeals, 11 cases (17 percent) were reconsidered and eventually granted the scholarship on the basis of the evidence presented by the respective scholarship candidates.

In 2011 REF’s Board decided to publish on the website the names and the academic affiliations of all accepted applicants in the REF scholarship programs, as part of the aim of the scholarship programs is to counter stereotypes about Roma being uneducated and to further the development of a Romani community among young educated Roma. Consent to publication is a condition of all scholarship awards.

THE WORLD OF A MODERN INTELLECTUAL

With a family history that stems from Auschwitz-Birkenau to the gulag and a life experience that spans from candlelight to the podium of Harvard, MIT, and Williams College, from a Jewish-Romani boy’s dream to the world of a restless young man, this article provides an insight into the life story of Gábor Gurbács, two-time winner of the Roma International Scholar award and fervent scholar and advocate for the ideals of an open society.

Could you tell us a little about your life so far?

From 1977 to 1986 Mom and Dad lived in Pécs in southern Hungary trying to escape their historically carried markers. They were part of the middle class. They were very happy together and a successful couple. As a six-year-old boy with only one year of formal kindergarten background, by 1996, I started elementary school. In post-communist Hungary being a Jewish-Romani boy nurturing desires to be educated was uncommon. My parents made sure I attended schools where I had a chance to meet and mix with non-Romani peers. I excelled in every subject, especially in mathematics, but I had a hard time accepting my family’s socio-economic status. However, thanks to the magical world of books, the equalizing nature of the school-desk, and my parent’s keen focus on my education, I learned what truly matters: knowledge.

What happened after you graduated from the Gandhi School in Pécs?

In 2010, via an intertwined series of events and generous helping hands from an International Monetary Fund project and people I met at Harvard University through a previous month-long scholarship, I entered the gates of Deerfield Academy for a post-graduate year in 2010, where I received scholastic preparation and assistance in my college application process. But at the end of that year my dad passed away, a couple of days before my arrival back in Hungary. I was filled with a sense of emptiness and futility about my strangely mixed Jewish-Romani identity, but I still felt compelled to follow a non-traditional life.

Now I enjoy sleepless nights spent with scholarship and work, I enjoy studying at Williams College, and I enjoy the fact that there are so many things to change out there. Every day is a new challenge, a new perspective, and an opportunity.

What do you want to do in the future?

My principal goal is to be a well-rounded intellectual and be a model not only for Roma, but for those who live in historically disadvantaged communities and believe in the power of education, hard work, and persistence. I would like to pioneer the creation of the first coherent social, political, and economic Romani elite. For this purpose education is the key word. I am unwilling to accept that Romani children have to starve, live without water and electricity, and have no real chance to make their dreams come through due to lacking educational background. John D. Rockefeller once said, “Every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty.” The opportunity and implicit right to learn and live in such high-quality educational environments where I am now creates the responsibility and duty to adequately represent, develop, and set new horizons for 21st century Romani education, public policy, and everyday reality. In fact, it is our global duty to promote tolerance, help, and opportunities through scientific, political, and financial instruments. We are all responsible to lay the foundations of and actively create a 21st century open society.
PART III: A GOOD START
PART III: A GOOD START

In 2011, A Good Start (AGS) continued its progress towards ensuring that children from ages zero to six have access to early childhood education and care services in 16 locations across four countries (Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia). AGS is supported in part by the European Union and the Network of European Foundations.

The country-specific implementation that AGS has and continues to present unique challenges in each country and each locality. The long-term outcome is highly influenced by the commitment and involvement of the local stakeholders. Comparing the objectives and targets set at the beginning of the project with the current status we can identify some main trends that have developed during the implementation of AGS, as follows:

1. Recurring beneficiary children are defined as those children involved repeatedly by the local partners and REF. The target number of children (4,000) is the total number of Romani children in the 16 localities; we are working with approximately 2,000 recurring beneficiary children.

2. AGS is successfully getting children into kindergarten. Although there are sometimes challenges with ensuring attendance, this is considerable progress as the first step in ensuring Romani children have decent educational opportunities.

3. In three countries (Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia) out of the four AGS countries, kindergarten facilities do not have enough capacity; in these instances, community and home-based AGS interventions gained higher importance.

4. Due to the limited financial resources and the complexity of the local challenges, after one year of implementation, REF decided to invest additional funds to ensure a more complex and quality ECD project for participating Romani communities.

5. Working with parents on parental skills, involving and motivating them, providing the necessary information through home visits, community events, early literacy programs, or in open house events is crucial; thus, these activities have the foremost priority in the project.

6. In many cases it was and it is still difficult to overcome prejudice.

7. During implementation, some issues arose with a few local partners, which lead to alterations from the details of the original project design.
A snapshot from these findings shows that extreme poverty is prevalent among the majority of AGS beneficiaries. AGS is interested in the living conditions of Roma, particularly in those cases where basic needs cannot be met by families struggling in substandard living conditions; as such conditions can and do affect student achievement and thus the achievements of AGS. The survey found that over 90 percent of AGS households are supplied with electricity and have a television, but only three out of four households have a kitchen. Just under two-thirds have running water, and indoor toilets are present in just over half of households. Family dwellings are usually inhabited by three people under 18 years and two people over 18 (Figure 10).

Consonant with all the indicators in the survey that highlight low educational achievement of parents, early parenthood, few employment opportunities, and low school enrollment rates for children, it was economic barriers that proved to be nearly insurmountable in most cases and explain the low enrollment rates for young Romani children. When households were asked about their reasons for not enrolling children in preschool, kindergarten, or primary school, 59 percent of all parents with non-enrolled children ages three to seven indicated that it was too expensive for them to send a child to kindergarten and 40 percent reported having no money for clothes for their children to attend. It is here where AGS has begun to have an effect, increasing not only enrollment but Romani parents’ involvement in their children’s education through its comprehensive intervention in early childhood development.

**HOUSEHOLD SURVEY: A BASELINE**

As part of its activities, a survey was administered to 1,028 families in all 16 localities participating in A Good Start.

A total of 1,781 children aged zero to seven are represented within the surveyed families. The figures relate directly to the recurrent beneficiaries of this project (parents or children who have participated in more than one activity or a recurring/ongoing activity). As such, the findings are just indicative and are not necessarily representative at the country or local level for Roma.

**Figure 9. Localities in the framework of A Good Start**
Since the start of AGS, 100 home visits have been carried out by the Abranovce and Zborov mediators, students are making progress in concentration, writing, and mathematics. After-school instruction, seven at Senica primary school and four at Bakossova primary school. According to received clothing support across four kindergartens and four primary schools. Eleven pupils are receiving immunization of eight children under age six and the use of prenatal care by 11 mothers. Further, 93 children what is happening and provide help to the family. As a result of the events and visits, KARI has organized the child does not attend preschool for more than five working days, the health assistant visits the family to assess what is happening and provide help to the family. As a result of the events and visits, KARI has organized the immunization of eight children under age six and the use of prenatal care by 11 mothers. Further, 93 children received clothing support across four kindergartens and four primary schools. Eleven pupils are receiving after-school instruction, seven at Senica primary school and four at Bakossova primary school. According to the tutors, students are making progress in concentration, writing, and mathematics.

**AGS BY COUNTRY**

**Slovakia**

**Banska Bystrica**

In Banska Bystrica, for the year 2011–2012, 22 children were enrolled and are attending preschool on a regular basis with the support of County Association of Roma Initiatives (KARI). AGS provides the monthly tuition fee and nutrition for these children, as the parents are unable to cover these costs. They also offer transport and accompaniment to school. There are some serious challenges with attendance and early school leaving at preschool, though AGS has seen some success, success that was limited by health problems for children and a change in the mediators. Challenged by the poor economic status of the regular beneficiary families, in the second year of the implementation in the 2011–2012 academic year, AGS financed the enrollment fee and food for 22 children. This was the main challenge in this location and AGS managed to provide a short-term solution for it. Also, mediators provided more regular home visits to families in need, so children's attendance rate improved. By December 2011, the mediators had carried out 629 home visits. There have been four community events on education with 154 participants and two on health for 67 participants. In some cases, where the child does not attend preschool for more than five working days, the health assistant visits the family to assess what is happening and provide help to the family. As a result of the events and visits, KARI has organized the immunization of eight children under age six and the use of prenatal care by 11 mothers. Further, 93 children received clothing support across four kindergartens and four primary schools. Eleven pupils are receiving after-school instruction, seven at Senica primary school and four at Bakossova primary school. According to the tutors, students are making progress in concentration, writing, and mathematics.

**Abranovce and Zborov**

Since the start of AGS, 100 home visits have been carried out by the Equal Chances mediators in Abranovce, a small village in the northeastern Slovakia. As a result, seven children have been enrolled in kindergarten and, according to the partner, attendance is now near perfect. Here, the main obstacle to AGS for Romani children in preschool education is insufficient space in the local kindergarten. Informal preschool education is a short-term measure which at least prepares children for preschool. These informal education sessions are carried out by both the community mediator and the family assistant. Nine children attended by the Catholic Church maintains an additional kindergarten room for AGS beneficiary children. This class accommodates about 11 Romani children four times a week. Partners have reported that AGS beneficiary children’s communication in Slovak has improved, along with hygiene habits and social skills.

A major challenge here is enrollment in mainstream education. Based on the school readiness test, school-age children are placed either in zero (preparatory) classes or in mainstream classes. In September 2011, a few AGS beneficiary children managed to join mainstream education, but the others were placed in zero classes. They will spend one more year in the school system and there is a high chance that they will start their school career in segregated classes. Equal Chances is lobbying the authorities to provide a Romanes Slovakian translator, as in many cases the language barrier is a problem. In Zborov there are six after-school tutoring classes financed by the project. As of December 2011, 42 pupils were attending instruction. The target group was broadened to cover older children; for example, there was an event held with Romani teenagers – pupils of the elementary school – talking about issues such as addiction and the importance of education.
**Martin**

The Cultural Association of Roma in Slovakia (KZRS) works with Romani families in the communities of Bambusky and Ambra Pietra along with other parts of Martin with concentrated communities of Roma (Komenského, Na Kameni, and Podhájska). The mediators from KZRS have carried out 783 home visits since the start of the project. They also organize community motivation events and education with the parents in the home. These activities focus on attendance issues and early childhood education and care, motivating parents to send their children to kindergarten and improving parenting skills.

After-school tutoring is provided to 41 pupils in five primary schools at least twice a week. According to the tutors, the pupils are improving their communication, widening their vocabulary, and getting accustomed to cooperating and working together. Three local assistants provide accompaniment to 32 children attending primary school. As in Zborov, there is a problem with segregation in Martin. A segregated class was created for Romani pupils in the primary school A. Dubcek. KZRS was active in lobbying against this class, but it has not been changed, even though Romani parents expressed that it was against their wishes.

**Romania**

**Craiova-Mofleni**

There have been 216 home visits since the start of the project in Craiova. The school mediator meets with parents and discusses issues regarding the importance of education and regular attendance and accompanies about 10 children on a daily basis to and from kindergarten or the community center in Mofleni. The children were also provided with school supplies. Due to this work, led by Romani CRISS, this year 21 children have been enrolled in first grade and 17 in kindergarten. In Craiova, a newly renovated community center was established and is maintained with AGS financial support. Within AGS, Romani CRISS offers education and play activities to children between the ages of zero and six. As of December 2011, 42 of these sessions were held, with between nine and 16 children attending each time; an increasing number of the children attend the community center on a regularly basis. The activities are helping the children to develop their ECEC skills and knowledge such as on hygiene issues, communicating, drawing, and counting.

Romani CRISS has organized eight community motivation workshops on health and education with a total of 58 participants. Psychological counseling sessions are provided for the children needing support; to date there have been 15 sessions. For those with speech problems, there has been speech therapy sessions organized at the center in Mofleni. So far, 32 sessions have been provided to four children.

**Telechiu**

AGS in Telechiu is coordinated by the Ruhama Foundation. The mediators there have carried out 161 home visits on education access issues and to advise families regarding problems they are facing, such as the lack of jobs and discrimination. There have also been community motivation events covering parental responsibilities, childcare, educational and social activities, and the educational development of small children. To date, 120 parents have participated in parents’ meetings at their children’s school. There have been eight extracurricular events for children aged three to six with 11 children and 51 parents (10 are non-Romani parents). Increasing numbers of parents are interested in reading and writing. In spring 2011, there were seven to 10 parents in the literacy program; there were 15 attending by the end of the year.

There has been a substantial increase in enrollment in Telechiu. In the 2010–2011 school year there were 18 children at the Romanian kindergarten; this year there are 44. In total for the 2011–2012 school year, 48 children have been enrolled with support from AGS and attendance being monitored for the two kindergarten groups with a standard schedule (18 children in the group for children aged five to six years and 27 children in the kindergarten for children aged three to five years) as well as three children in the kindergarten group taught in Hungarian.

Fourteen children from the Romani community currently attend the Early Childhood Education and Care program for zero-to-three-year-olds, which is held five days a week, four hours per day. The program is held at the multifunctional community center of Telechiu, where information and counseling is also offered for Romani families. Under the *Bernard Van Leer Foundation* sub-project, the building of the community center will be extended to provide services for children up to the age of three. Also, staff has been provided with ECEC training on nutrition, cognitive, social, emotional development, and age-appropriate learning by ISSA. They were also taught to use the ISSA-developed Child Portfolio and adhere to early learning and development standards. According to Ruhama, positive results for the children in the project so far include regular attendance, more discipline, improved communication in Romanian, and acquired knowledge and information appropriate to their age.

**Macedonia**

**Suto Orizari**

In Suto Orizari, Skopje, the main activities of the project have been home visits, evening meetings, and community motivation events coordinated by Ambrela NGO. The services were tailored to local needs. For example, in Shuto Orizari, many Romani families are living in deep poverty without official documentation (ID) and birth certificates for their children. In these cases, Ambrela NGO assisted the families in filing
Alongside the AGS activities, Ambrela is implementing activities within the enrolled in preschool. Lack of physical space and financial costs are among the main reasons for this. According to official data from 2005–2006, only about 3.5 percent of Romani children in Macedonia are to get identity documents and about 577 children to be vaccinated through an immunization campaign.

Health and education evening meetings reaching 598 parents. Its staff and mediators helped 239 people to get identity documents and about 577 children to be vaccinated through an immunization campaign.

Although the work is very resource-intensive in Suto Orizari, the NGO has made significant progress. As of December 2011, Ambrela staff and mediators had made 1,036 visits to Romani families and held 35 health and education evening meetings reaching 598 parents. Its staff and mediators helped 239 people to get identity documents and about 577 children to be vaccinated through an immunization campaign.

According to official data from 2005–2006, only about 3.5 percent of Romani children in Macedonia are enrolled in preschool. Lack of physical space and financial costs are among the main reasons for this. Alongside the AGS activities, Ambrela is implementing activities within the Bernard van Leer Foundation sub-project. The main focus of this is the enrollment of Romani children into the local Veselko kindergarten, which belongs to Snezana kindergarten. Parents are provided support with enrollment, tuition fees are covered, and the children are provided with a nice set of clothing. In addition to this, the kindergarten building was painted as part of the project.

As a result of these activities, 57 Romani children have been enrolled. The majority of these children are living in extreme poverty and, without the project, many of them would not have a birth certificate and would not receive any professional early childhood development (ECD) services. Further, sickness is a major problem as the housing conditions for some of the families are deplorable; many of the children live together in one room, without sanitation or running water. Repeated cases of head lice, for example, keep some children out of preschool, but parents cannot afford to treat such problems. The kindergarten, as the families live far from the school and at the top of a steep hill.

Three additional rooms were made available for the children in the kindergarten Goice Delchev in Vinica, and 30 Romani children were enrolled into preschool education there. In Vinica, a bus is provided to transport the children to the kindergarten, as the families live far from the school and at the top of a steep hill.

Step by Step Association provided training seminars to the kindergarten staff and Ambrela mediators to help them to deliver a high-quality inclusive service. ECD experts are working directly with families, and parenting workshops are organized and tailored to those in greatest need.

Ambrela also hired three learning experts who assessed all 57 enrolled children. In this personalized assessment, the children’s cognitive and learning competences were presented and future suggestions are formulated for the parents. Finally, Ambrela has been very active in terms of promoting project activities and raising awareness of the project through international conferences and study-visits, television, and radio.

Kham helped to enroll 21 children into the ”Veseli Cvetovi” kindergarten in Delchevo, paid the tuition fee, and helped to motivate the parents about the importance of education. REF also provided some financial support for improvements in the kindergarten, including providing some new doors. Migration has meant that some families left the region, with some replacements among the children. Tuition fees are covered – according to the director of the kindergarten most children could not attend without this support. There is also a Romani teaching assistant to help the Romani children in the kindergarten. Lack of kindergarten spaces is a major problem in Delcevo; 150–200 children don’t have the opportunity to attend kindergarten due to lack of facilities. According to teachers and parents, the children here are getting used to the routine in the kindergarten and learning songs, improving their communication skills, and becoming more confident.

In Crnik, a satellite kindergarten (of Pehcevo kindergarten) was renovated in November 2011. REF financed the renovation and provided equipment including beds and toys. There are now 25 children in the project attending the kindergarten, including a few Turkish children. There is mildew on the walls of the second room where the children should sleep, so for now a full day is not possible. REF and Kham are lobbying the municipality to tackle this and some of Romani parents have offered to help as they can. The parents told REF that the kindergarten has a very good impact on the children’s development and their own lives.

Three additional rooms were made available for the children in the kindergarten Goice Delchev in Vinica, and 30 Romani children were enrolled into preschool education there. In Vinica, a bus is provided to transport the children to the kindergarten, as the families live far from the school and at the top of a steep hill.
Meséd / Your Tale in Hungary

In Hungary, the mediators/mentors have been visiting families frequently to inform parents about the importance of preschool education, increase their knowledge on health issues, and help them with problems regarding housing and employment. To date in Nyíregyháza, there have been 977 home visits to 139 families (with 281 children under seven years of age). In the Máťészalka micro-region localities of Hodász, Kántorjánosi, Nagyecsed, Nagyföldek, and Nyírkáta, there have been a total of 3,884 home visits to 814 families. Further, there have been five community motivation events on health and education in Nyíregyháza and 11 across the micro-region. Since the start of the project, 342 Romani children have been enrolled in kindergarten in Nyíregyháza and the other localities in the Máťészalka micro-region. In order to improve effectiveness, REF recruited the RomanoTrájo NGO to take over the main coordinating role in Hungary from August 2011, organizing the mediators in Nyíregyháza and implementing the Home School Community Liaison Program (HSCL) and community motivation events.

The Meséd or Your Tale program has proven very successful in Hungary. The cognitive development of children is strongly linked to their vocabulary and, in the case of poor families, the vocabulary is smaller. Your Tale is helping to address this issue by providing educational support to Romani mothers and teaching them about the importance of reading to their children. The confidence of the mothers has increased as have their writing skills and knowledge of early childhood education and care. As intended, the mothers are reading to the children. Meséd is helping to address this issue. Meséd was implemented by Unity in Diversity Foundation and a team of trained facilitators (all but one are Romani women). From the start of the project to December 2011, there were 144 sessions in Nyíregyháza, reaching 72 mothers and 181 children, and 252 sessions in the Máťészalka micro-region, reaching 100 mothers and 270 children. The activity ended in December 2011 and altogether 46 mothers were motivated to register in evening classes of secondary grammar school or vocational school to continue their education.

Meséd / Your Tale in Hungary

The methodology of the Your Tale (Meséd) program is divided into trimesters. In the first phase of the program facilitators concentrate on developing mothers’ reading and comprehension skills. In the second phase the element of writing is added. Drama pedagogy is added in the third phase, helping parents develop their skills in handling the challenging situations facing them in their everyday lives such as negotiating with kindergarten teachers, doctors, or employers.

During the nine-month Your Tale sessions, mothers and facilitators read new books each week for two-hour sessions in groups of eight to 15. At each session, group members received a new children’s book. High-quality story books, particularly those that convey messages to children about their feelings, behavior, and other life lessons, were sourced especially for the project. The mothers took turns reading the story aloud, while the facilitator guided the reading and initiated discussions about elements of the story and pictures. In this way, the facilitator could engage them with the text and show them a teaching technique to be replicated with their children.

After the second phase, one of the beneficiary mothers was hired as a Your Tale facilitator. She and the other facilitators/mentors have been instrumental in negotiations with authorities and school heads in organizing adult evening classes.

Though not a target or intended outcome of the Your Tale sessions, AGS has captured some data on some secondary effects of the program. For example, out of 172 participating mothers, 58 have found jobs, possibly attributable to their increased involvement and improved self-perception. This hints at how far-reaching the effects of Your Tale have been.

The College of Nyíregyháza is also a partner in the Hungarian project. Andragogy26 and teacher training students observe and participate in the activities of AGS. One hundred and forty students have participated in Your Tale, 58 students in the Home School Liaison program, and 57 in home visits since the start of the project. As part of their obligations, the students receive lectures on multicultural education and attend different AGS activities (home visits, Your Tale, and HSCL sessions). AGS provides a chance for students to communicate with young Romani pupils and Romani parents, to make friends, and ultimately understand a different culture. This helps to eliminate any prejudices they have and improve their social work.

26 Andragogy refers to teaching pedagogy specifically for adult education and training.
Seventeen students from the college who were involved in observing activities in the project started a campaign to collect toys for Your Tale families on their own initiative.

As of December 2011, 16 parents in Nyíregyháza and 56 parents in Mátészalka micro-region had participated in the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) program. In August 2011, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation sub-project started activities aimed at ensuring quality provision in one selected locality, Nagyecsed, and also provides some supplementary services including toy libraries.

**Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) program**
The concept of establishing collaboration between parents and teachers in the interests of children’s learning, targeting in particular families and/or neighborhoods identified as being “at risk” (poverty, unemployment, high early school leaving rates) was initially introduced in Ireland. The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) program component of A Good Start aims to do just this. The principle of the program is that parents are one of the main actors in the education process. Once a week during a period of six weeks, parents came to preschool and gave classes (art, storytelling, sports, and so on) to preschool children, divided into small groups. The parents had the opportunity to show their talents and skills through this activity as well as become familiar with the kindergarten teacher’s work.

As a result, strong partnerships bonded the parents and kindergarten teachers. According the kindergarten’s experiences, there is an interest in continuing these efforts after having undertaken six HSCL programs. In Kántorjánosi, Nyírkáta, and Nyíregyháza, there is interest in running more sessions with parents, who generally do not take part in the work of the kindergartens. This would mean that kindergartens would involve more parents in their everyday work with children; they have found these occasions to influence the development of children. A total of around 70 parents were involved in the program through December 2011.

Through HSCL, parents acquire an understanding of the work of teachers and build a better relationship of trust and knowledge with the preschool. Furthermore, preschool teachers receive training by the International Step by Step Association.

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**Summary**
Table 25 shows the number of AGS beneficiaries in 2011 by country. Table 26 subsequently shows the number of beneficiaries by partner.

**Table 25. AGS beneficiaries by country, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Recurring beneficiary children who received AGS services</th>
<th>Parents who participated in AGS activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>3,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,166</td>
<td>5,638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 26. AGS beneficiaries by partner, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of parents</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrela</td>
<td>2,588</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kham</td>
<td>1,094</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,682</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romano Trajo and others</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romani CRiSS</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruham Foundation</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KARI</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRRZ</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Chances</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td>5,638</td>
<td>2,166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Unless given a more precise number, parent number is based on number on parents visited (as all families receive visits). Number of children is based on counting those in formal and informal education; inclusion of other extracurricular (or in some cases material) support depending on information available.
EVENTS AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS

A number of new developments and enhancements were introduced into AGS in 2011; the following provides a detailed description of them, a number of which have been mentioned in the AGS country updates.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation (BVL) sub-project – Additional resources for quality maximization within A Good Start

In 2011, AGS received additional funding from the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BVL) to enhance the effectiveness of the program’s implementation. Within this sub-project, the REF and its partner the International Step by Step Association are focusing on strengthening the quality of the education and care received by Romani children with the provision of supplementary services in four locations among those where AGS takes place.

During the implementation, ISSA practitioners applies their child-centered and holistic approach and promote quality practices in home learning environments, center-, or community-based services. These supplementary services provide more mentoring, organize more community motivation events, provide support to parents, and offer informal trainings on adult education. Also, they ensure the provision of additional material resources and equipment required.

In order to choose which organizations would deliver the extended services of AGS through support from the BVL sub-project, REF initiated a call for applications among the eight direct implementing Roma NGO partners. One proposal was selected per country, based on the following criteria that stipulated that the proposed actions must:

- help to ensure a quality early childhood development (ECD) program,
- address an identified need for better service in the locality,
- include outstanding partnerships and committed staff,
- deliver the greatest impact,
- include innovation development, and
- help to promote sustainability.

The four selected applications were from the following partners:

- Equalizing Chances is working with a larger Romani community in Zborov, northeastern Slovakia. Their home- and center-based ECD interventions are supported by the local municipality and a convent.
- Ruhama Foundation from Romania is working with a smaller Romani settlement and providing its services in a community center in Telechiu village in eastern Romania. Their center- and home-based approach offers a daycare center for three-to-six-year-old children; within the BVL sub-project they offer an alternative daycare center for zero-to-three-year-old children as the community center has enough facilities to do so.
- In Macedonia, REF would like to strengthen the quality of services offered by the Ambrela NGO in Suto Orizari, Skopje, Macedonia. Here, where the majority of families (approximately 70 percent of the total Romani population) are socially deprived, there is a huge need for an extension of quality services, more kindergarten support, regular mentoring, and advice for staff on a professional level.
- The Romano Trajo Association is working in Nagyecsed, Hungary, where the participating local Romani families (mostly the mothers) have already created a strong and supportive community. Besides attending the Your Tale sessions, these mothers are volunteering in the Parents Association. Although the community is open-minded and active, more material support would be required for families facing extreme poverty, in addition to more mentoring and follow-up meetings for quality purposes.

LEGO Training of the Trainers

In 2011, AGS started a cooperation with the LEGO Foundation. As a result of this new cooperation, 28 kindergartens, two community centers, and eight toy libraries in sixteen localities in four countries will receive in-kind donations.

As an important part of the toy donations, the teachers involved in the program are provided with professional training. A training of teacher trainers was held in REF’s Budapest office in early December 2011 by a Master Trainer and Educational Advisor from the LEGO Foundation. REF invited six young professionals with various backgrounds from Hungary, Macedonia, and Romania to learn how to use LEGO as a fun toy and playful learning tool.

During the two-day training, the LEGO expert introduced the small group of teacher trainers to a variety of fun games and structured activities that develop the children’s cognitive skills, social skills, language, imagination, and creativity. By working hands-on, children learn how to work together in small groups, make small presentations, focus, and listen to others. The children develop their motor skills working and playing with the LEGO bricks as well as learning colors, shapes, how to count, how to follow rules, and so on.

The trainers will be responsible for training the teachers and also participating in the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The six teacher trainers conducted five teacher trainings in February 2012. Approximately 150 teachers ultimately will be trained.
Andi nénje

Andi nénje – Auntie Andi, as children of the kindergarten group call her – is one of the most important in the lives of many Roma kindergarteners in Nyiregyhaza. Andi, their pedagogical assistant, now advancing to a preschool mentor, is the ultimate key to the success in and out of school for many children coming from the socially deprived settlement of Nyiregyhaza.

What did you want to be as a child?

I've always wanted to be a kindergarten teacher, like my grandma used to be, but in the end I chose something else. But then fate sent a kindergarten along my way, and I love to work there as a pedagogy assistant.

If you look back and compare your life story as a child to the story of the children you work with in A Good Start, how different or how similar you think your stories are?

I come from a poor family, and so do these children. I'm fully convinced though, that no matter how poor is the family from where you came, if you have the ambition and are hard-working enough, then you can break out of poverty and with a proper job you assert yourself in life.

Do you feel successful?

I will only feel successful when I get to help all the poor people around me. I'm here to support, urge, and enforce parents to educate their children. Children must continue their studies, finishing primary education, and parents have to make sure they can support in earning them at least a professional qualification, as education is the only exit from their current situation.

Looking back at the past year of AGS, how do you perceive its effects in the lives of the beneficiaries?

Well, in the premises of AGS there are again a great pool of children enrolled in the beginners group – 29 new three-year-olds in the kindergarten. The kindergarten nurses and I went to visit all families with children aged three, and luckily enough, one discussion was just enough for the parents to agree that enrolling kids to kindergarten at the earliest possible age is the only beneficial solution. Those who aren't allowed to go to school until the age of five, simply because their parents tend to think it is safer for them at home, they will hardly even be able to name colors or their home address. Mothers would love to see the Your Tole (Mesed) program component of AGS grow and continue, they all talk passionately about it, how they started reading books at home, having participated at the courses.

Toy Libraries

Toy libraries can offer services to children and families through regular, free-of-charge toy loan. These libraries provide carefully selected educational toys for borrowing; some libraries also offer information and advice about play and learning and provide an opportunity for parents to borrow books related to parenting.

Toy libraries support children by:
- enabling children from all backgrounds to have access to toys that have an educational and stimulating value;
- enabling children to develop important skills;
- helping children learn to share; and
- educating children (and their parents) about responsibility (children are rewarded when they return their toys on time and in good condition).

AGS learned and examined the practices of toy libraries through a study visit with the National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries in the UK. One of the visited toy libraries, the Pimlico Toy Library, was opened in London in 1985. Two hundred families make up Pimlico’s membership, each of which pay a minimal annual enrollment fee. At Pimlico, they believe that parents need to understand why it is important to play with the children, so they are focusing on teaching parenting skills in addition to other activities.

During the visit, AGS staff were provided with practical advice on how to set up the AGS Toy Libraries. A Toy Library Guide and a training module were developed in order to ensure a successful start. A training was delivered to all of the communities that participate in the AGS Toy Library sub-project. AGS Toy Libraries will be run soon in the localities of Zborov and Martin, Slovakia; Telechiu and Craiova-Mofleni, Romania; Skopje and Vnica, Macedonia; and Nagyecsed and Kántorjános, Hungary.
In 2011, the Roma Education Fund Romania consolidated its partnerships with Roma and non-Roma NGOs and launched a series of strategic partnerships with the Romanian Ministry of Education. These efforts go beyond European Structural Fund (ESF) projects and target policy advocacy, especially, but not limited to, secondary legislation related to the Law on Education adopted in January 2011. REF Romania also initiated a series of advocacy and cooperation partnerships with the European Commission Representative Office in Romania, the UNICEF Office in Romania, the World Bank, and the Swiss Contribution Office in Bucharest, among others.

Last year the Romanian National Agency for Roma finalized the new government strategy for Roma and REF Romania was actively involved in advocacy for the development of this important government strategy. REF Romania joined the Coalition of NGOs on the Government Strategy for Roma, led by the Roma Civic Alliance in Romania. As the strategy development process and the policy dialogue were affected by a number of pitfalls, REF Romania raised its voice about the challenges ahead.

REF Romania has been running four ESF-funded projects. In two of these, REF Romania is the main project applicant – School after School and Equal Opportunities in Education. The two remaining ESF projects for which REF serves as implementing partner are entitled Roma Youth Competitive on Labor Market and Roma Health Scholarship Project.
– Establishing support groups within schools (these groups will be formed of Romani parents, local leaders, school managers, and authorities);
– Training for teachers and educators (using an accredited program); and
– Arranging meeting sessions with Roma parents.

At the beginning of the 2011–2012 school year the 50 After School Centers started their activities. The After School program consists of five modules:
– homework supervision and guidance,
– recovery and remediation for children with difficulties in learning,
– self-knowledge and personal development activities,
– thematic activities and leisure activities, and
– skills development activities.

As such, the activities with children and parents contributed to increasing the enrollment in primary education and the school success in primary education for 2,000 children at risk of early school leaving.

The project activities in the After School Centers will last for two school years.

### TABLE 27. ESF projects managed by REF Romania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>REF RO status</th>
<th>Duration (months)</th>
<th>Total value (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. School after School</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5,799,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Equal Opportunities in Education</td>
<td>Main applicant</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5,187,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Roma Youth Competitive on Labor Market</td>
<td>Implementing partner (Main applicant: Resource Center for Roma Communities CRCR)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Roma Health Scholarship</td>
<td>Implementing partner (Main applicant: Media Monitoring Agency)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4,560,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>19,046,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2011 the schools and beneficiary children were selected and 50 After School Centers (see Figure 10) were set up within the School after School project. Teachers were trained on the new methodology developed and the contracts with different suppliers servicing the centers were launched.

The main aim of School after School 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. The implementing partners are the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports; the Resource Center for Roma Communities; the Roma Center “Amare Rromentza”; and the Roma Cultural Center “O Del Amenca.”

The main activities of School after School are:
– Developing the database and tools of monitoring, evaluation, and individual intervention for registering the beneficiaries and tracking their progress;
– Developing the program (curricula) for School after School which will be adopted by the Ministry of Education;
– Equipping schools and arranging the space where the activities will be taking place;
– Providing clothes, footwear, and required materials to students;
– Establishing support groups within schools (these groups will be formed of Romani parents, local leaders, school managers, and authorities);
– Training for teachers and educators (using an accredited program); and
– Arranging meeting sessions with Roma parents.

As such, the activities with children and parents contributed to increasing the enrollment in primary education and the school success in primary education for 2,000 children at risk of early school leaving. The project activities in the After School Centers will last for two school years.

### FIGURE 11. School after School centers in Romania

All The exchange rate used was RON 4.2 / EUR 1.
The Equal Opportunities in Education project aims to increase school success rates for 1,250 Romani children in urban and rural areas. In 2011 the participating children, teachers, and mentors were selected. The mentors and teachers were trained, suppliers were contracted, and starting with the school year 2011–2012 the children and their families have benefited from the complex intervention package aimed to support school retention and to improve learning outcomes. This intervention package consists of three key components: tutoring in the subjects that will be part of the national evaluations (mathematics and Romanian language), mentoring, and scholarships to cover, at least partially, the hidden costs of education for vulnerable families. The intervention package will be provided over a period of two academic years.

The Roma Youth Competitive on the Labor Market project aims to facilitate the access of the Roma youth in the labor market in order to reduce their social exclusion, discrimination, and risk of poverty. The implementing partners are: the Resource Center for Roma Communities, REF Romania, and the Center for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises. In the Roma Youth Competitive on the Labor Market project (the main applicant is the Resource Center for Roma Communities), 700 vocational education students were selected and are benefiting from an intervention package consisting of vocational and healthy lifestyle counseling supplemented by a scholarship to facilitate retention and subsequent graduation. As a partner in this project, REF Romania developed the selection methodology and the counseling programs for Romani youth. Within the project, other partners will contribute to student transitions into the labor market.

The Roma Health Scholarship project aims 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. This focus was selected as a means to promote employment models and combat stereotypes that affect Roma employment, resulting in their over-representation in trades without qualification or with a very low level of qualification. In 2011, within the Roma Health Scholarships project (the main applicant is the Media Monitoring Agency), REF Romania developed the selection methodology for the Personal Development Program (including three main components of an advocacy camp, mentoring support, and the scholarship program). Following the selection process, 105 Romani high school students benefited from tutoring for the admission exam in the Faculties of Medicine. Furthermore, 80 Romani students in the Faculty of Medicine or students in post-secondary non-tertiary medical schools benefited from mentoring and scholarships programs. By the end of two academic years, 275 Romani students in high school will have received tutoring support for the admission exam in the Faculties of Medicine around the country; 160 students in tertiary education or post-secondary non-tertiary medical schools will have benefited from the mentoring and scholarships program. It is noteworthy that the scholarships for the
Separately from the projects described above, REF Romania runs a grants program component which is subdivided into two main components:

– The funding of grant projects that REF is supporting in Romania. These projects are funded by REF and implemented by local NGOs. REF’s Country Facilitator for Romania liaises with the NGOs and supervises the implementation of these projects. In 2011, there were nine projects active in Romania with the Roma Women’s Association, Ruhama Foundation, Matias NGO, Centre for Education and Social Development, Policy Centre for Roma Minorities, Association for Promoting Social Inclusion, and Resource Center for Roma Communities. Moreover, the Country Facilitator supervises the implementation of AGS in two locations in Romania (Telechiu, Bihor County and Craiova, Dolj County).

– The award of grants allocated by REF for the development of the capacity of REF Romania partners for the implementation of ESF-funded projects. Three grant agreements have been signed by REF Romania and implemented in 2011 with the following partners: O Del Amentza, Center for Education and Social Development, and Amare Rromentza.

REF Grant-funded Projects in Romania

In June 2011, REF financed a pilot project for Romani children from Campia Turzii, Cluj County, Romania. The success of the project is illustrated by the involvement of the local authorities (city hall, the Cluj County School Inspectorate, and the local schools), that decided to take steps in supporting an inclusive education for Romani children at the local level. Some of the positive aspects of the involvement of the local authorities are:

– City Council Campia Turzii – as a partner, the city council co-financed the project with EUR 20,000 for a cafeteria and supported the provision of transportation for four students. Also, the municipality takes part in each activity including databases, the students’ social situation, support for the management team, project monitoring, and so on.

– School Inspectorate of Cluj County – this partner is looking to improve their methodology for the alternative curricula from the project; they provided support for the selection of teachers and are following the activities implemented by our local partner. Together with the local partner, they are working to organize a local symposium in order to promote the project’s good practices and results.

– Pavel Dan School – has participated and advised on the recruitment process of personnel, together with our local partner APIS. They are supporting APIS’s efforts to build a cafeteria/canteen for the project beneficiaries and offering their logistical support for the mentoring program.

The canteen/cafeteria will be fully operational starting February 15, 2012 and this would not be possible without the contribution of the local authorities.
PART V
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING
PART V: POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

NEW PUBLICATIONS IN 2011

The following is a selective summary of 2011 policy and capacity building activities and products. The complete versions of these publications, including the key findings, can be found at: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications

From Segregation to Inclusion. Roma Pupils in the UK. A pilot research project. (with Equality UK)

This pilot research study is the first of its kind to explore the experience of Czech and Slovak Romani pupils attending special or de facto segregated (Roma-only) schools in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, while comparing that to their experience of attending primary or secondary mainstream education in the UK. Literature and research reports on the situation of Roma in the education systems in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which have been conducted and published by various organizations including REF, were reviewed. This desk research was combined with field research undertaken by Equality UK between June and August 2011 at eight locations in England: Leicester, Chatham, Rotherham, Wolverhampton, Southendon-Sea, Peterborough, London, and Derby. During the pilot research, 61 Czech or Slovak Romani students, 28 Romani parents, and 25 school or other education staff were interviewed.

Lucie Fremlova and Heather Ureche of Equality UK conducted the field research for this study. Mihai Surdu of REF contributed to the interview guides for pupils, parents, and school staff and elaborated the chapter on the overrepresentation of Roma in special education and practical schools in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. An article about this groundbreaking report can be found at: http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/12/roma-education-uk
Country Assessments

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

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

The Country Assessments on Bosnia and Herzegovina and on Montenegro, which were revised in 2011, were first published and disseminated in 2009 while the Country Assessments on Albania, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia were developed in 2011 and all released publicly by February 2012.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS IN 2012

Ten Years After: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe
(edited by Iulius Rostas with contributions from REF staff)

School segregation has evolved as an issue in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Each country has developed its own approach to the issue, with Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania being more visible in the desegregation process. This research offers a critical analysis of the desegregation process and uses interviews with Romani activists that assumed a leading role in school desegregation. The interviews are critically reviewed by educational and policy analysts from the concerned countries. The interviews with Romani activists will be used for roundtable debates on the topic of segregation-desegregation. REF, through its Country Facilitators, will be involved in organizing and hosting these debates.

This book is published by CEU Press and will be launched in conjunction with World Roma Day in 2012.

Pitfalls and Bias: Entry Testing and Overrepresentation of Romani Children in Special Education
(with Julia M. White)

This study examines some of the ways that Romani children from Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovakia are systematically denied access to equal educational opportunities through their overrepresentation in special schools for pupils with intellectual disabilities. This happens through the implementation of legal provisions for school readiness and intelligence testing, which streams students from the earliest years into special education, where they remain throughout their school careers. This ultimately has a negative impact on their opportunities for secondary education and participation in the labor market as adults, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and geographic segregation that follows the next generation of children into schools. The study examined the different uses of readiness and intelligence testing across Europe: as developmental, formative assessments, as in Finland, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, where data from tests are used to guide instructional planning in primarily inclusive school settings, and as medical, summative assessments, as in Central and parts of South Eastern Europe, where data from tests are used largely as instruments to segregate Romani children into special schools. The study was released March 2012.

Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) project and Roma Good Start Initiative (RGS) follow-up

The Roma Education Fund, OSF, and UNICEF have collaborated successfully to develop a series of Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) reports. This research partnership was initiated in response to the commitment of each organization to the rights of Romani children. The RECI reports paint a detailed picture of early childhood policy and provision frameworks, highlighting the barriers and opportunities for improving the access of Romani children to appropriate and high-quality early childhood services. The principal objective of the reports was to make information and data on young Romani children’s exclusion available to decision-makers and key stakeholders with a view to advocate for equitable early childhood policies and programs. During 2008–2011 four such reports were prepared, one for each of the following countries: the Czech Republic, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Romania. All of these reports were validated in national stakeholder meetings. An overview report comprising all four country experiences was drafted and will be released in Brussels in March 2012.

For more on A Good Start, see pages 65–83 of this report.

30 The Roma Good Start Initiative (or RGS) should be distinguished from AGS. RGS addresses measures to promote Early Childhood Development (ECD) as an entry point for fostering the social inclusion of Romani children and as a substantial tool to fight against discrimination in four EU member states, (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Spain), and two countries in the enlargement process (the FYR Macedonia and Serbia). All six countries are members of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. RGS is managed by UNICEF and is financed by DG Enlargement. The RGS consortium partners are Open Society Foundations Early Childhood Program, the Roma Education Fund, and UNICEF’s Brussels Office.
A Good Start: Survey Spotlight of Household and Its Localities
(with the Slovak Governance Institute)

One of the monitoring and evaluation tools within the project is the household survey. This survey was applied for the first time a few months after the launch of the project and will be applied for the second time just before the end of the project in 2012. Comparing the results of the second survey against the first one will be useful for assessing the different approaches applied in project localities. The results of the first survey analyzed in this study provide the basis for sketching out the circumstances of the project participants in its localities, as well as providing insights into parental motivations, expectations, and behavior related to education of their young children.

The survey was administered to 1,028 families in 16 localities in Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia participating in A Good Start. A total of 1,781 children ages zero to seven are represented within the surveyed families. The figures relate directly to the recurrent beneficiaries of this project (parents or children who have participated in more than one activity or a recurring/ongoing activity). As such, the findings are just indicative and are not representative at the country or local level for Roma. More details of the findings are given on pages 68–69 in the chapter on AGS. This survey was published in early 2012.

Dimensions of Teachers’ Absenteeism in Roma and Non–Roma Schools in Romania
(In coordination with CURS and Romani CRISS)

This research, carried out by Center for Urban and Regional Sociology (CURS) in partnership with Romani CRISS and REF, explores the possibility of a significant relationship between teacher absenteeism and Roma participation in the primary school system in Romania. The working hypothesis is that rates of teacher absenteeism illustrate a positive coefficient with the percentage of Romani pupils in the school. This correlation, if found to be statistically significant, would then have fundamentally important policy implications regarding teacher training, recruitment, school organization, the design of neighborhood school catchment areas, and particularly segregated schools.

During 2011, the field research was carried out, consisting of a survey based on standardized questionnaires with teachers and principals, field observation, focus groups and individual interviews, case studies, and the analysis of secondary data and documents. A draft research report was reviewed by REF, which also contributed to coordination of the study and recommendations chapter. The final report will be released through public events and a press conference in the summer of 2012.

Residential Segregation, Local Policies, and School Segregation in 100 Hungarian Towns
(with Gábor Kézdi, Gábor Kertesi, and Romaversitas)

This research (carried out in 2011) contains measurement and analysis of the ethnic segregation in the Hungarian primary school system covering grades one through eight. The research was lead by two prominent sociologists and the Romaversitas Foundation; the data collection focused on the 100 Hungarian towns with the largest Romani populations (excluding Budapest). The goal of the analysis was to shed light on the causal mechanisms behind ethnic school segregation in Hungarian towns.

The research elaborates on standard measures of ethnic segregation using comprehensive data on the ethnic composition of schools from the National Assessment of Basic Competences (Országos Kompetenciamérés) from 2006 through 2010. The methodology used in the research will be disseminated among researchers from Decade countries in a seminar to be held in 2012.

A Good Start Program – Coordinating Component B – Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to design, plan, and then measure success across a project, it is essential to collect and use statistical information. In the case of Roma integration projects, there is very limited data for the region and, where it does exist, it is mostly fragmentary and not comparative. For A Good Start (AGS), a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system was designed in order to capture the initial situation and to determine the subsequent effect of the project on its beneficiaries. In order to do this, a monitoring team made up of REF, Slovakian Governance Institute (SGI), UNDP, and World Bank representatives developed the framework and trained the partner organizations to use the different tools. As the project covers 16 locations across four countries, the design of the monitoring and evaluation system had to be quite innovative to allow for comparison and lessons learned across the many different places.

The main tools utilized included:
– a Community Assessment establishing a baseline of information for each locality on the families and the early childhood education and care services available;
– a household survey focusing on parents’ attitudes and behaviors on education and care with basic socio-economic data; and
– a database which incorporates, amongst others, the household survey, information on families’ participation in project activities, and children’s attendance at preschool.

There was also a continuum for assessing caregivers (a classroom observation tool) to determine the standard of teaching in preschools, including attention to diversity issues.
At the end of the project, groups of stakeholders including municipalities, teachers, and parents will be broken into focus groups to provide their feedback on the process and the impact of AGS on the Romani parents and children. As extensive quantitative and qualitative information is being collected within AGS, the analysis should prove very useful for increasing understanding on Roma early childhood education and care issues. A guide will be produced to share information about the data collection processes.

For more on A Good Start, see pages 65–83 of this report.

REF PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY FOR ROMA

The European Roma Platform

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

United Nations

REF Grant Program Manager Beata Bislim Olahova’s presentation at the Fourth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues Guaranteeing the Rights of Minority Women (United Nations), November 29–30, 2011. The annual Forum on Minority Issues brings together a large number of high-level participants from EU member states, the United Nations, regional and intergovernmental organizations, academics, experts, and NGO representatives, all of whom are working in the field of minority issues.

For the fourth annual forum, REF’s Grant Program Manager Beata Bislim Olahova had the opportunity to share REF’s work with forum attendees. Following an overview of some common issues and statistics regarding Roma education and Romani women’s rights, Ms. Olahova shared REF’s perspective on what needs to be done as well as what works. Following is an excerpt from her presentation:

– When seeking to improve Roma inclusion in education, it is essential that the actions at the local level be aligned with appropriate national policies. It is also essential to ensure adequate institutional and financial means so that national policies can actually be implemented. Furthermore, local initiatives must receive sufficient support from local institutions, such as schools, the education inspectorate, municipalities, local branches of line ministries, and teachers’ trade unions, to cite only the more obvious.

In many cases, policies and programs fail to have an impact because of the absence of an adequate policy framework or because they underestimate the very strong negative incentives built in to the education systems and the level of institutional changes that are needed.

– In the case of Roma education, Roma participation is essential for a number of reasons. One reason is the need to empower Romani communities. Participation creates commitments and also motivation. Efforts to open space for participation, if well managed, can create the trust and confidence that is required for successful programs. A second reason why participation is important is that Romani parents tend to be less involved than other parents in school management and interaction with school staff.

The experience with Roma education projects shows that low parental involvement can change very rapidly, and that it is not as much of a problem as some would maintain.

More information about the Forum, including Beata Bislim Olahova’s full presentation, can be found at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/session4.htm

REF Input and Feedback on EU Member States’ Frameworks for National Roma Integration Strategies

2011 was a significant year for Roma integration in EU member states at the policy level. In April of 2011, the European Commission requested that all member states create or update their National Roma Integration Strategies, aligning them (or keeping them consistent with) the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion and Europe 2020 reform strategies. Member states were required to present their National Integration Strategies to the European Commission by the end of 2011.

While this is an important directive from the Commission to member states that did in fact produce new and/or updated National Roma Integration Strategies, aligning them (or keeping them consistent with) the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion and Europe 2020 reform strategies. Member states were required to present their National Integration Strategies to the European Commission by the end of 2011.

For the national strategies, REF staff thoroughly and carefully analyzed the documents line-by-line, comparing them to existing legislation, the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion and Europe 2020 strategies, the latter two which the Commission specifically directed member states to consider.

The annual Forum on Minority Issues brings together a large number of high-level participants from EU member states, the United Nations, regional and intergovernmental organizations, academics, experts, and NGO representatives, all of whom are working in the field of minority issues.
REF sent its comments to the national governments’ relevant bodies in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania (mostly to Ministries of Education) and actively participated in many discussions, roundtables, and workshops organized both by the civil sector and government. REF also shared its opinions with the relevant European Commission bodies and with the relevant Parliamentary groups. Our intent was to compare the strategies designed with the existing legislation and see if the strategies are reflected by the law and state budget. In many cases, it was discovered that there were significant disconnects between the national strategies, existing legislation, and budgets – disconnects that must be addressed as a precondition to successful implementation.

Beyond these four countries, REF also compiled similar comments in Slovakia, which were submitted to the relevant government bodies. Furthermore, beyond these five countries (which are participants in the Decade of Roma Inclusion), REF also supported new partners in Italy with a similar analysis. Through a grant from Open Society Foundations, REF sought the assistance of Dr. Monica Rossi (as project and research coordinator), Popica Onlus, Romni Onlus, ARCI, and Dr. Roberto de Angelis from the University of Rome “La Sapienza” to review the historical Roma integration initiatives of the Italian government in the areas of education and employment. These results were then shared with Romani individuals, NGOs, and teachers through three focus groups held in Cosenza, Milan, and Rome. Supplemented with interviews with government and educational representatives, the complete results of this research will be compiled into a report to be available in the first half of 2012.

Croatia

The ECHR judgment in Oršuš v. Croatia made Međimurje County the focus of attention due to the related segregation cases in several primary schools. Consequently, preschool education has been recognized by Međimurje County as one of the most important ways to prevent future educational segregation, with this in mind, the county started working in cooperation with REF in 2010. In 2011, the project With preschool to full integration (CRO015) was in its second year of implementation. Through the joint efforts of seven municipalities, five schools, and two kindergartens, and with the support of the Ministry of Science, Education, and Sports and REF, the entire cohort of children age five-and-a-half to six (500 children) has access to preschool education (nine-and-a-half months annually, five days per week, and five-and-a-half hours per day).

The efforts of the county are directed toward finding a long-term solution that will realize the integrated preschool education of all children in Međimurje County. Due to the fact that the financing of education is highly decentralized in Croatia, the role of city governments and municipalities is crucial. The city of

Mursko Središće is the pioneer of preschool integration in Međimurje County which, through support from REF and the Ministry of Education, opened the doors of their city kindergarten to Romani children starting in 2007. Today, this kindergarten is a model of good practice for the whole county and more than 30 Romani children benefit from the program together with their non-Romani friends. The county is now dedicated to replicating a similar model to as many municipalities as possible. There are still many miles to cover on that road, but the direction is firmly set.

Columbia University

Professor Jack Greenberg is an inspiration for many; he has been a crusader for freedom and equality for more than half a century. He was involved in numerous crucial cases, including Brown v. Board of Education. This decision was pivotal to the struggle for racial school desegregation in the United States. He has served as Dean of Columbia College and Vice Dean of Columbia Law School, and is currently the Alphonse Fletcher Jr. Professor of Law at Columbia University’s School of Law.

The Roma Education Fund has collaborated with Professor Greenberg for several years now; in 2011, he visited the REF office as well as project sites in Hungary and Romania. A number of his students from Columbia University have completed summer internships at REF over the past three years, and many conducted field work in the desegregation project sites supported by REF.

In 2011, Beata Bislim Olahova, REF’s Grant Program Manager had the honor to be invited by Mr. Greenberg to be a visiting lecturer in his course on Human Rights at Columbia University. Ms. Olahova met with Mr. Greenberg’s graduate law students and debated with them on school desegregation programs for Roma in Europe. It was a lively exchange and the students were keen to learn about the D.H. and Others v. Czech Republic case, Hungarian Hódmezővásárhely desegregation programs, and desegregation programs in Bulgaria. The students were positive and appreciated the discussion on Roma, which for many was their first introduction to the Roma as a minority population in Europe.

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Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aida Mihajlovic, REF Country Facilitator for Bosnia and Herzegovina, participated in the comprehensive one-day workshop entitled, Roma Inclusion Seminar: Way Forward for Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized by the European Commission. The aim of the workshop, which brought together over 80 representatives from local authorities, NGOs, and international organizations, was to discuss and propose measures to address many different challenges faced by Romani communities in the country.

Overall, the workshop was undertaken under the shared perspective that an intersectoral approach and close cooperation between all relevant stakeholders is a key to advancing in this field and to fight against the exclusion and stigma the Roma community faces in all segments of life. Specific topics of discussion in the workshop were: issues of civil registration of the members of the Romani community; education; vocational training and employment; social issues, and healthcare and housing. The key purpose was not only to identify the main policy gaps in these areas but also to find realistic solutions for addressing concrete obstacles in the social inclusion of Roma. This included discussions on how to closely involve Roma associations and local authorities in the design and implementation of policies and the coordination, evaluation, and sustainability of projects.

EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS

As part of our capacity building efforts, REF both participates in external project evaluations and coordinates external evaluations of REF projects and programs. Two descriptions of such efforts in 2011 follow next.

External Evaluations of REF Grant-funded projects

External project evaluations were conducted in 2011 on a selection of REF grant-funded projects in order to capture their impact on Roma educational integration. Table 30 provides a list of the projects and authors of these external evaluations.

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**REF Participation in International Events**

Following is a complete list of international events in which REF participated in 2011.

**TABLE 29.** REF participation in international events, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting of the Informal Contact Group</td>
<td>02/18</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventing Social Exclusion Through Europe 2020:</td>
<td>02/23</td>
<td>Budapest, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Development and the Inclusion of Roma Families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(follow up meeting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF Grant Program Manager Beata Bislim Olahova’s lecture at Columbia University</td>
<td>02/06/04</td>
<td>New York, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETF – Policies and Programmes for Inclusive Education and Training in the Western Balkans and Turkey</td>
<td>04/4-5</td>
<td>Turin, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the Gap in Educational Outcomes between Roma and non-Roma: Why the European Union Matters</td>
<td>04/14</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal Empowerment and Integration of Roma Citizens in Europe (hearing)</td>
<td>04/28</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Level Event on Roma Inclusion (conference)</td>
<td>05/23</td>
<td>Bratislava, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to live together in the 21st Century – Europe and Salzburg Global Fellowship</td>
<td>06/06</td>
<td>Salzburg, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Commission event on EU Funds for Roma Inclusion</td>
<td>06/11</td>
<td>Sofia, Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st International Steering Committee meeting</td>
<td>09/29-30</td>
<td>Skopje, Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Foundation Center (EFC)</td>
<td>10/3-4</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum for Roma Inclusion Meeting</td>
<td>10/4-5</td>
<td>Warsaw, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO Consultation on Roma Education</td>
<td>10/17-18</td>
<td>Belgrade, Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Dialogue with Civil Society on EU Cohesion</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy 2014–2020, legislative proposals (meeting)</td>
<td>11/17-18</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Platform for Roma Inclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) (meeting)</td>
<td>11/22-25</td>
<td>Istanbul, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights and Integration of Roma in the EU</td>
<td>12/9-11</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a direct outcome of the evaluation process, both qualitative and quantitative data and information was collected.

**CROSS-COUNTRY LEARNING PROGRAM**

**CEDEFOP**

In 2011, numerous general and study visits took place in Hungary, even exceeding last year’s numbers. Again, two projects were selected as best practice to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) catalogue, acknowledging the innovative nature and success of such vocational projects internationally. The CEDEFOP award is a prestigious recognition of implementers’ effort; CEDEFOP also provides financial support to arrange study trips for interested educational experts to learn about the project in detail and see it in action.

REF organized a trip in April to visit a selected vocational project aiming to provide marketable professions for Romani early school leavers (Marketable Professions for Young Roma: Reintegration into the Labor Market). In October, a second trip was arranged to visit a successful mentor project aiming to close the educational gap between Romani and non-Romani by pre-service teachers mentoring and tutoring Romani children (Moving out of Segregation: Roma Mentor Support Program). Altogether these visits were attended by 16 Western European and Balkan participants (including county government representatives from the UK, ministry representatives from Belgium, Spain, and Turkey, NGO management from Ireland, and this year for the first time we hosted Hungarian school principals from Romania). The CEDEFOP visits are good occasions to showcase and identify transferable good practices, share knowledge and expertise among participants, and build a professional international network.

Below is an excerpt from one group’s final report, which provides an impression about the trips:

“We found this as the most informative and enjoyable trip. We all felt that we had learnt an enormous amount and were deeply touched by the dedication and determination of the people we met in Acs and Komarom. We felt that the most important information that we should communicate was the use of mentors and the strong connection between the firms employing local people and the schools. The role of mentors and their close link between school and family seemed particularly important as well as the use of a local politician or figure head to drive such a project forward.”

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The following is a narrative description of two of the external evaluations of REF-funded projects that occurred in 2011. All external project evaluations can be found at: http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications

### TABLE 30. External evaluations of REF-funded projects, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Code</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALB 008</td>
<td>Inclusive Quality Pre-Primary and Primary Education for Romani/Egyptian Children</td>
<td>Ilir Gedeshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU 048</td>
<td>Romaversitas Hungary</td>
<td>Kurt Lewin Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC 043 &amp; MAC 054</td>
<td>Romans graduate and enhance their lives</td>
<td>Mario Veljkovich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC 052</td>
<td>2009-11 Scholarship, Mentoring and Tutoring for Romani Secondary Students</td>
<td>Ana Mirkovska-Kaleva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC 056</td>
<td>Romaversitas Macedonia</td>
<td>Prof. Zoran Velkovski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROM 033</td>
<td>Support for Romani high school students in Romania</td>
<td>Claudiu Marius Ivan, Roxana Georgiana Radu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRO015</td>
<td>Preschool education to complete integration</td>
<td>National Centre for External Evaluation, Department for Promotion of Quality of Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The purpose of the external evaluation of the Romaversitas Graduate and Enhance their Lives, Phases 1 and 2 project implemented by RCEC “Ternipe MK” in Delcevo, Pehcevo, and Berovo in Macedonia is to find out about the effectiveness in achieving its stated aims and objectives as stated in it the both applications.

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31 Available online: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4097_multi.pdf
32 Teachers from Romania who belong to the Hungarian minority living in Romania.
Knowledge Sharing: Hungary and Romania

REF Romania launched the European Commission-funded project – School after School – in 2011, aiming to support elementary school-aged Romani children to enhance academic performance. The project runs in 50 localities in Romania, including the smallest and most disadvantaged villages, to support 1,500 Romani students. Given its scope and scale, the project builds upon local and national partnerships involving ministries, local municipalities, schools’ leadership, and Roma NGOs.

The project stakeholders expressed an interest in observing a similar project in action in order to gain insight which might be useful for their everyday work. Therefore, REF Romania and REF Hungary organized a three-day study trip for a group of 25 project stakeholders including ministerial representatives, school directors, Romani community mediators, and scholars. The visit took place in two rural localities in Hungary and in Budapest.

Participants learned about the theoretical framework and history of inclusive educational policies in Hungary from expert researchers and had the opportunity to visit two projects in action: REF’s Early Childhood Development project A Good Start and one of REF’s CEDEFOP best practice mentor projects, Moving out of Segregation: Roma Mentor Support Program.

Participants pointed out that the mentor support program had potential to be transferred to their own project by introducing pre-service teacher students as tutors and building partnerships with academic institutions. All agreed that integrative educational practices can lead to better results for Romani children if they are equipped and prepared sufficiently to take part in the process of desegregation; to this end, the study visit made a compellingly contribution.

A Good Start Transnational Summit in Romania: Better chances for young Roma

In mid-November 2011, a group of national and international NGOs implementing A Good Start (AGS) early childhood education and care project and local representatives met in Romania to discuss progress to date and results. As AGS passed the half-way mark, this fourth and final transnational workshop was the perfect opportunity to take stock, as Mr. Costel Bercus, Chairman of Roma Education Fund, put it in his opening speech, and consider how to reach more disadvantaged young Romani children, offering them a decent start in life.
The setting was Baile Felix in Western Romania, not far from the impoverished Romani community on the roadside of Telechiu Village (Bihor County). A group of Summit participants got the chance to visit Telechiu village and the kindergarten classes located in the primary school close by, including the newly established class set up under the project, which due to Ruhama’s efforts has been given formal status by the state.

Since its inception, as a pilot project, AGS has reached 200 pupils and their families in Telechiu, increasing enrollment in formal and informal education programs, proving that Romani parents are motivated to get their children into school and that progress is possible. During the discussions over the two-day transnational workshop, it is clear that to make projects like this sustainable, the governments and local authorities will need to step up and take on their responsibilities to create the spaces and the means for these Romani children to get the opportunities they deserve.

**Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs): Western Balkans Update**

Like in previous years, REF continued in 2011 to closely follow developments related to conditional cash transfers (CCTs) for education in the Decade countries and to engage in related policy discussions with stakeholders in government and relevant international organizations.

REF’s position on CCTs was elaborated in the 2009 working paper Conditional Cash Transfers as a Tool for Reducing the Gap in Educational Outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. The purpose of the study was to fill the knowledge gap left by the near-absence of independent external evaluations of CCTs for education implemented by governments of countries in Central and Eastern Europe with sizeable Romani populations. To this end, the working paper examined Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak experiences with CCTs for education in a global context.

In contrast to the well-documented successes of many programs linking social benefits to school enrollment and/or attendance outside Central and Eastern Europe, the experiences of Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia with CCTs for education were predominantly negative. The observed difference in policy performance was attributed to an important difference between Roma and CCTs’ other potential beneficiaries: compared with members of the ethnic majority with similar levels of income, Romani living in poverty in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are more likely to face various forms of discrimination in general, and segregation in particular. As a result of residential and school segregation, issues of supply – the existence and quality of schools – constitute a greater constraint for Romani families than for impoverished families in the majority population.

Since publication of the working paper, CCTs have remained an important theme in various Decade countries, including perhaps most notably Albania and Macedonia. In Albania, talk about conditioning benefits on education has been a significant part of ongoing discussion about changes to legislation on social assistance. Contributing to this discussion, in March 2011 REF staff made a presentation on the potential and risks of CCTs for the education of Roma at a national conference in Tirana. This event was organized by the NGO Help for Children with the support of the Open Society Foundation for Albania, the Swiss Cooperation Office in Albania and the United Nations in Albania with aims including providing recommendations to the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on how to address issues related to the education and inclusion of Roma most effectively.

In Macedonia, the first payments to beneficiaries of a CCT program designed and implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and financed by a loan from the World Bank were transferred in early 2011.

Focused on secondary education and conditioned on attendance, Macedonia’s CCT is an education-specific subsidy for children from families receiving social financial assistance. Pending preliminary results of a built-in impact evaluation expected in mid–2012, anecdotal evidence suggests that the program has been effective in increasing enrollment rates, but also that payment of benefits has in some cases been delayed as a result of delayed reporting on attendance by schools. In subsequent phases, the program may be expanded to cover primary education, with additional measures to ensure a quantitatively and qualitatively adequate supply also under consideration.

REF will continue to follow closely the implementation and possible expansion of the CCT in Macedonia and to participate in discussions on the development of CCTs in Albania and other Decade countries. In so doing, REF will work to help policymakers avoid the major failures of the CCTs implemented to date in Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia by taking into account the recommendations of the working paper, which are:

- Prioritize supply-side interventions over CCTs for compulsory education;
- Focus CCTs on education on upper-secondary education;
- Avoid the addition of conditions to previously universal benefits, instead using CCTs to introduce new, education-specific benefits;
- Condition payment of benefits primarily on attendance rather than performance;
- Avoid per-family benefit ceilings;
- Make mothers the direct recipients of benefits; and
- Target benefits on the basis of socioeconomic status rather than ethnicity.
PART VI
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
PART VI.
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

REF activities are based out of three offices: REF headquarters in Budapest, Hungary; REF Switzerland in Zug, Switzerland; and REF Romania in Bucharest, Romania. In-country coordinators and facilitators provide day-to-day, on the ground support and local knowledge to REF’s work, from the programmatic to the policy level.

STAFF TRANSITIONS

Over 2011 REF staff changed in a number of ways, with current colleagues taking on these new positions and roles:

– Éva Foldesi, former Country Facilitator for Hungary, advanced to Program Officer, REF Hungary.
– Anasztázia Nagy (Program Officer, REF Hungary) left for maternity leave and gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.

We would like to welcome our new team members, who joined REF in 2011:

– Nicoleta Bosnigeanu (RMUSP Country Coordinator, Romania)
– Attila Gerőcs (Financial and Administrative Coordinator, REF Hungary)
– Milen Milanov (Country Officer, Serbia and Bulgaria, REF Hungary)
– Nikoletta Oláh (Country Facilitator, Hungary)
– Jan Stejskal (Country Facilitator, Czech Republic and Slovakia)
– Biserka Tomljenović (Country Facilitator, Croatia)
– Dennis Yonga (Overall IT Specialist, REF Hungary)

REF would like to extend its special thanks to Elise Delinger, Hadley Kincaide, Kari Smith, Mark Kavenagh, and Roger Grave for offering their help as volunteers in 2011. In addition, REF was very pleased to host the interns Orhan Usein, Jana Grajcarova, Tomas Tintor, and Marenike Fajana.
Boards of Directors

In 2011, four Boards acted as decision-making bodies within the REF Network (see Annex for a full list of their members):

- Swiss Governing Board
- Hungarian Governing Board
- Romanian Governing Board
- National Selection Boards of the Scholarship Program

Communication

In the summer of 2011, the Roma Education Fund hired a new colleague to develop its communication across the breadth of its portfolio. What followed was a renewed effort to reach international and national media to publicize the progress made by REF’s pioneering work in the field of Roma education. The highlight of the year was a gala for Hungarian Roma scholarship recipients in November at Budapest’s School of Drama. Designed as an empowering and motivational event that featured remarks by REF’s Director, one distinguished Romani elder, a Romani role model for younger students, and one Romani university student, with music provided by the Szakcsi, Jr. trio, all 168 Hungarian Romani recipients were invited to attend, along with the Hungarian press. The result was startling as numerous media outlets, including some renowned for their antagonistic attitude towards Roma, shone the lens on these students and their accomplishments. More events to publicly recognize and empower the Scholarships Program’s beneficiaries will be replicated in the region in 2012.

An advocacy campaign was also designed for the release of a report co-authored with Equality UK, From Exclusion to Inclusion, which centered on the progress of Romani pupils in the UK who had previously been educated in special (segregated) schools, culminating in an editorial article online in The Economist. This report was also presented at the Roma Platform meetings in Brussels.

REF also made an effort to rebrand its publications with the guidance of a new designer and a freelance photographer who was hired to cover REF’s activities, particularly AGS. REF also made some changes to its website and has seen its membership on Facebook expand to well over 2,000 individuals and organizations. Several video shorts were also developed in-house and commissioned, including a 24-minute portrait on Romani children who have resettled from their former homes under Gazela Bridge in Belgrade, Serbia.
Of the many documents available on REF’s website, the top five downloads are the following:

tor__rmusp_research_team_2011.doc – 1,004 downloads
ref_application_final.doc – 826 downloads
a_good_start_booklet.2001.pdf – 568 downloads
one_page_directory-romana.doc – 554 downloads
ref_budget_tables_final_2008_12_05_formatted.xls – 503 downloads

FINANCE

Evaluation of the Budget and Financial Year

REF closed 2011 with a positive balance and reached a EUR 738,151 financial surplus due to new projects and incoming funds from the main donors. Despite the growth in revenue and programmatic activity, operational expenses at REF remained modest, with just a decrease over last year. Overall, program administration expenses stood at EUR 960,205 (a 10 percent decrease compared to 2010), while operational administration expenses were EUR 791,488 (20 percent less compared to 2010). This was due to restructuring of the administrative set up of the REF Network.

REF originally planned for EUR 13,778,000 in income for 2011; the final amount was slightly less at EUR 10,947,988 mainly because of significantly less pre-financing and expense reimbursement from the Romanian Structural Funds. A surplus of EUR 738,151 will be used to cover 2012 expenses when the REF Network has less income as compared to 2011.

Owing to continual follow-up, control of the 2011 budget, and reallocations, REF was able to dedicate more funds to the Scholarships and Grant Programs and further enhance its communication strategy in the second half of the year (42 percent more for grants and 18 percent more for tertiary scholarships compared to the previous year).

Further, REF doubled the amount allocated to studies and research (for a total of EUR 150,000); as an outcome, REF was able to finance the updating of REF Country Assessments as well as several new studies. As a result of several steps aimed at streamlining, REF was also able to decrease its administrative costs by 17 percent as compared to 2010.
In the AGS program, REF Hungary submitted two interim payment requests and both were accepted by the European Commission (without any non-eligible cost), resulting in an allocation of EUR 717,244. The Romanian Foundation faced several cash flow challenges in 2011 while in the midst of Structural Funds reimbursement processes. A bridging loan from Open Society Foundations for more than EUR 500,000 enabled REF Romania to maintain the smooth operation of their programs.

Details on the budget and financial year for 2011 and plans for 2012 can be found in the Annex in the following tables:
- Consolidated cash-based profit and loss, 2011, page 200
- Consolidated cash-based management report, 2011, page 201
- Complete list of REF donors and their contributions, 2005–2011, page 202
- Roma Education Fund Network income projection 2012–2014, page 204

Ongoing Fundraising
Due to the current financial environment, REF has had to shift its fundraising strategy, focusing on the following main directions:
- Involve more supporters via bridging loans to ensure the cash flow stability of the Romanian projects.
- Work with past donors and encourage an extension of their contributions.
- Engage donors in new EU member states (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia).
- Work on scaling-up the EU Roma Pilot (AGS) project with the European Commission.
- Mobilize more private sector resources, especially from foundations and companies.
- Expand our tailor-made fundraising and organize a special donor conference for the Scholarship Program.
- Participate in a selection of tenders and calls where the REF Network can contribute its professional knowledge, but for which REF currently does not have dedicated financial resources. In 2011 this included:
  - a call from the Open Society Foundations with new partners in Italy (a non-Decade country) to conduct research related to Italy’s National Roma Integration Strategy;
  - a call from the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning Program coordinated by new partners in Spain to share knowledge through an international consortium on effective strategies for involving families in the education of their children;
  - a call from the European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, PROGRESS, in which REF submitted two proposals, one with the Slovak Plenipotentiary and the other with a partner from Belgium.
In 2011 as in the previous year, all REF entities were audited based on international audit standards and to local financial requirements by PricewaterhouseCoopers AG and Moore Stephens Hezicomp Ltd. These audits ensure the transparency of the financial operation and enable the production of a consolidated management report.

The audit reports show that in total the REF network closed 2011 with a positive balance and still has solid foundation capital for its future activities. The auditors issued for 2011 a management letter which contained proposals for further improvements regarding both the overall financial operations and particular programs (for example, the grant program).

ISO
In order to further improve the performance of the Roma Education Fund and increase the satisfaction of its donors and beneficiaries, the REF Board decided to develop, implement, and maintain a quality assurance management system in the REF Network. This quality system is modelled on and conforms to the requirements specified in ISO 9001:2008 and relates to the full range of the activities of the Roma Education Fund’s three legal entities.

The quality assurance management system of REF Switzerland and REF Hungary was awarded its ISO 9001:2008 certification by TÜV-SÜD at the time of writing this report in March 2012. TÜV-SÜD, headquartered in Munich, Germany, is an internationally accredited certification body for various management systems and one of the world’s leading service organizations.

The quality assurance management system of REF Romania has been developed and currently is being implemented, and scheduled for certification in the second half of 2012.

A complete list of REF’s donors in 2011 can be found in the Annex on page 202.

33 ISA in Romania, Swiss GAAP in Switzerland, and Hungarian GAAP in Hungary.
This year, REF would like to introduce a new section to our Annual Report where we can highlight a notable program that has been or is being supported by REF. For 2011, we would like to highlight the Romaversitas program, a success story both in providing holistic support to Roma university students and in program replicability. Romaversitas is currently being managed in three countries, each of which is described below.

ROMAVERSITAS: A GOOD MODEL FOR MOBILIZING ROMA STUDENTS

Romaversitas Hungary
Romaversitas is a successful higher education program aiming at the academic, social, and cultural empowerment of Romani students. Currently, the program in Hungary supports 54 students studying in various academic departments (including engineering, law, IT, and medicine) and has been financed by REF for five years now. The program is a complex one providing scholarships for the beneficiary students, offering academic tutoring and career guidance, as well as strengthening the cultural awareness of the students with the implicit aim of encouraging them to give to their communities via their professionalism and qualifications. The program runs in a context where there is an emerging need for Roma professionals since only one percent of Roma finish tertiary education. The mentor and guidance program, running for more than 14 years, is a successful model of compensating for the social and academic disadvantages of Roma youth. Based on Hungarian program experiences, Romaversitas has been scaled up in Serbia and Macedonia with the support of REF, and in 2011 was selected as a best practice in the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) catalogue, recognizing it as a good model complying with European standards.

Romaversitas Macedonia
The Foundation Open Society Macedonia’s (FOSM) Romaversitas project is one of the few efforts made in the Republic of Macedonia aimed at improving the university education of the Romani population. It was established in 2001, offering non-formal educational support for Romani students to assist them in achieving higher academic results, easier transitions to the next academic year, and timely graduation.
Romaversitas Serbia

Nada Petrović, a third-year student of the Preschool Teacher Training College in Novi Sad, attended classes with tutor support in the subject “Professionally mature judgment and action” in June 2011, classes which were organized by the Romaversitas program in Serbia.

Thanks to the tutor support and joint learning classes with her colleagues organized within the Romaversitas self-assistance group, Nada successfully graduated in July 2011. The tutor support and assistance from colleagues helped her to overcome all difficulties in preparing her thesis. Nada’s thesis focused on the content/discontent of preschool teachers, organizing of activities with preschool-age children, and included an essay titled: “What kind of preschool teacher I would like to be.”

Nada Petrović lives in Vajska in the autonomous province of Vojvodina and works as pedagogical assistant in the preschool institution Kolibri in Bac. She is also a member of the Monitoring and Evaluation Team within the Inclusion of Romani Children in Secondary Schools in AP Vojvodina program and is an assistant for the OSF program Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma.

“There are doors awaiting you to open them, you just have to be brave and make it happen”

My name is Diana Horvath. I was born in 1988 in a small town in Szabolcs County, as the third child of a poor Roma family. Back then my mother used to work for the local post office, having only a secondary school education, while my father worked in a factory. Following my parents’ divorce, my mother raised me and my siblings on her own. She treated it as a priority that we all had to attend quality schools and she successfully got both my older sister and myself enrolled in a primary school specialized in sports.

I remember, even as a small child, we received nothing but an enormous amount of encouragement and compliments from both my mum and the pedagogues as well; this gave us enough self-confidence and motivated us to keep up with the work no matter the circumstances.

In the meantime, my mum started her university studies parallel to her job, a good example of manifesting her words. She always used to tell us, that “studying is the most important priority and value, to take steps ahead in life.” Nevertheless, my grandparents were fully illiterate, while my mother went to university, as a part-time student—already a mother of three and working full-time. I’m the first in my family who is lucky enough to be a full-time student. This is a giant step in the life of a Roma family. I hope to be a good example to my relatives, cousins, and acquaintances.
I made the decision in high school: I WILL BE A TEACHER, and on top of that, I WILL BE A GREAT ONE! And then I received the notification from ELTE University in Budapest that they were accepting me for the teachers’ education faculty, and I’m in my last year now. Upon graduation I’m keen on starting the real work, meeting and teaching as many children as I can, sharing all I have learnt.

I’m a beneficiary of Romaversitas Hungary, receiving a scholarship and tutoring in English studies. As a matter of fact, Romaversitas means a lot more than just a tutoring opportunity to us. It is the community of young, committed, talented university people – all proud to be Roma. There is no other place for us to feel this way, and we appreciate what we receive. It feels great to be one of them, the Roma university graduates, fifty young, motivated and determined, educated Roma, who will all soon be members of the young Roma elite.

This story is an excerpt of a longer testimonial. It should be noted that Ms. Horvath was later awarded with a REF RAPIUSP scholarship and was a speaker at REF’s Scholarship Gala.

A video which features Ms. Horvath at REF’s Scholarship Gala can be found at:
http://www.romaeducationfund.org/videos
or
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EonBrDUJazzE&feature=player_embedded
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 2011 Annual Report comes at a time of continuing economic and political turmoil; it covers the activities of a year that required many organizational reactions and readjustments in the midst of worsening socio-economic conditions for the most vulnerable persons, especially those in Romani communities. Simultaneously, REF has had to respond to claims from both sides of the political aisle, whether to the demand for a more open and audible public discourse on inclusion within the European Union or the calls of the radical right to make social exclusion the status quo. REF is required to act according to the expectations of its donors, including the European Union, who have entrusted REF with achieving our shared mission of Roma inclusion and who rightly require both sustainable and clearly measurable activities and results.

In order to create a stronger evidence base for its work, REF is engaging in more action research, as well as careful monitoring and evaluation of our projects and policy designs. After six years of operation, REF stands at the threshold of a new chapter in its mission. In the past six years, the policy context has changed, with Roma inclusion becoming an unavoidable element of both serious and populist public discourse. The EU and other major institutions have now fully embraced REF’s mission of desegregating education while improving educational outcomes for Roma. This is manifest in the recent communications of the European Commission with member and enlargement states concerning the National Roma Integration Strategies. REF has commented on these documents, both on the national and European level, and considers them – despite their shortcomings – vital steps in the long process of Roma integration.

In 2011, REF introduced an online application system for the Scholarships Program. This transition was a significant change both for our applicants and staff. Despite the challenges, this has given us better tools to track the educational progress of our scholars and to determine what kind of support is truly needed. The outcome thus far is encouraging; the number of applicants has not decreased and we have gathered a very useful pool of statistical evidence about our student cohort, helping REF to better plan ahead in step with the needs of our beneficiaries and informing the decision-making of the Board. Moreover, the online system will also assist us in following the progress of our alumnae, long after our financial investment in their education has ended.

REF was engaged in a large number of projects in 2011 with many cooperating partners; such collaborative work requires effective administration and thorough monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring serves REF, its donors, partners, and grantees well, helping all of us to follow our progress and determine whether we are efficient or have failed in reaching Romani children and their parents in ways that contribute to better educational outcomes. With technical assistance from one of our funders, the World Bank, REF revisited our monitoring tools in 2011 and made important steps towards tracking our activities more comprehensively. Demonstrable evidence of good outcomes helps REF in its advocacy and allows us to demonstrate to school principals, municipal authorities, and politicians the impact potential of our proven models.

By the close of 2011, the REF Board had approved 91 projects, in contrast to the 36 approved projects of the previous year. REF spent 42 percent more for grants and 18 percent more for tertiary scholarship in 2011 as compared to 2010. For this considerable growth, we want to thank our donors and the many great applicants.

Furthermore, in the interest of ensuring transparency in our administrative procedures, REF applied for certification through the ISO quality assurance system and, at the time of writing this report, confirmation of our success in this venture was pending. I have to thank all of the staff for their commitment, exceptional dedication, and willingness to learn during the certification process.

Nevertheless, we must not mislead ourselves; despite the generosity of our donors, the dedication and professionalism of the REF staff, and new and more efficient tools, Romani children – whose segregation we try to end, whose education we intend to improve – still live overwhelmingly unacceptable circumstances. Too many are living excluded, under threat, afraid, and on the margins of society, and none of them are immune from the ongoing crisis. When reflecting on REF’s achievements, we should be aware of the immense task and many obstacles we face in the near and distant future.

Narrowing the gap between the harsh realities in the lives of Romani children and making real the Roma Education Fund’s ambition to provide quality education to the most vulnerable population groups across much of Europe calls for exceptional determination. Those on the REF Board and in the office work each and every day to achieve a goal that sometimes seems very far away. Together with our partners and especially our grantees, we look forward to continuing our work towards this goal in 2012.

Judit Szira
Director
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REF STAFF AND BOARDS

REF HEADQUARTERS IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Erzsébet Báder
Communications Assistant

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

Nino Chelidze
REF Scholarships Program – Program Manager

Nino Chelidze, born in Tbilisi, Georgia, holds MA Degrees in Linguistics and Education Management. Nino has worked for the Ministry of Education of Georgia for the Department of Foreign Affairs, monitored Minority and IDP Programs for the Ministry of Education, and served as liaison for international and GO education offices. Later, she represented ACTR/ACCELS in Georgia and managed Scholarship Programs such as: Media Development, Edmund E. Muskie Scholarship Program, Fulbright Scholar Program, and so on. As a Manager of IREX she oversaw the Edmund E. Muskie Scholarship as well as RSEP/CI (Regional Scholar Exchange Program and Contemporary Issues Program), and helped develop Musky Scholarship Alumni Association (for Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), in 1997). In 2000, she joined the US Peace Corps as an Education Project Manager and supervised Secondary School and University Teaching Programs. As of 2004, Nino joined the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program at OSI Budapest and in 2011 managed REF’s Academic Scholarship Programs (RMUSP, LHP, RHSP, Interregional – and International Scholarship Programs).
Stela Garaz
Program Officer – REF Scholarships Program
Stela Garaz is a Moldovan national. She holds a BA degree in Political Science from Moldova State University and an MA degree in Comparative Politics from Central European University. Currently, she is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Central European University, working on a research project about the link between the concentration of political power and ethnic minorities’ mobilization in post-Soviet Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Before joining REF, Stela worked for CEU Asia Research Initiatives in Budapest, and for the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg, Germany.

Attila Gerócs
Financial and Administrative Coordinator
Attila Gerócs graduated with an MA degree in Economics from the University of Pécs with the qualification of Master in Finance. He was a member of Romaversitas Hungary between 2006 and 2010. Attila worked as an intern for the Hungarian National Bank, U.S. Embassy in Budapest, and for the British American Tobacco Company in Budaörs. He has worked for the Roma Education Fund as Financial and Administrative Coordinator since June 2011.

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

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

Éva Földesi
Program Officer
Éva Földesi, a Hungarian national, holds a BA degree in Economics and an MA degree in Sociology and Anthropology from Central European University (CEU). Before joining the Roma Education Fund, Éva was working as a project assistant to a Roma labor market and an educator at the Holocaust Museum in Budapest. Additionally, she has participated in research surveying the Romani people’s situation in Hungary. In October of 2009, after graduating from CEU, Éva joined REF first as an Administrative Assistant then took the position of Country Facilitator for Hungary from September, 2010. This position included the duties of supporting grant management programs, coordinating A Good Start (the European early childhood education project of REF), and facilitating the implementation of these programs among partner organization, local stakeholders, and donors. From September 2011, she has held a Program Officer position at REF, responsible for the Hungarian grant program and project portfolio management.

Eben Friedman
Advisor on Policy Development
Eben Friedman holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of California, San Diego. His dissertation, “Explaining the Political Integration of Minorities: Roms as a Hard Case,” drew on two years of field research in Slovakia and Macedonia. Based in Skopje since 2005, Eben joined REF in 2007 after several years with the European Centre for Minority Issues.
Beata Prokaj
Finance and Administrative Coordinator
Beata Prokaj, a Hungarian national, holds an MA degree in Economics. Beata’s career started in the private sector, from which she moved to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as a Staff Development Clerk. She joined REF in June 2010 as a Finance and Administrative Coordinator working on the EU Roma Pilot A Good Start project. Beata has a strong sense of social responsibility.

Shemsi Shainov
Senior Program Officer
Shemsi Shainov is a Roma from Macedonia and holds a BA in Economics. He was appointed as Senior Program Officer from his previous assignment as Country Facilitator for Macedonia. Before joining REF, he worked as a freelance consultant, mainly on small and medium-scale enterprise development, training programs, land tenure issues, and environmental protection projects. In 1995, the government of North Macedonia appointed him as a Consultant for the World Bank in relation to the Roma community. Since 1999, Shemsi has worked on several projects funded by the European Union, the European Social Fund, and other international donors. He has a strong interest in Roma education and has been actively engaged in the development of Roma education programs in Macedonia.

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

Milen Milanov
Program Officer
Milen Milanov is a Bulgarian Roma and holds a BA in International Business Relations. Milen has been working in the Roma field since 2001, when he completed an English language course at the American University in Bulgaria. His career started as an English language teacher; after doing this for a year and a half he dedicated his efforts to Roma integration in Bulgaria. Milen worked at the Sofia Municipality as a Deputy Mayor responsible for the implementation of the local Municipal Strategy for Roma. In September 2009, Milen was appointed for one year as a National Coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in the government of Bulgaria. Along with his professional development, he has been part of long- and short-term trainings at the Council of Europe and other national and international organizations including the European Commission initiatives and actions. For a period of six years, Milen managed projects for Roma funded by different international donors as well as European Structural Funds. He has participated actively in the process of developing the National Strategy for Roma. In September 2011, Milen joined the Roma Education Fund as a Country Officer responsible for the Bulgarian and Serbian portfolios.

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

Szilvia Pallaghy
Program Manager of the EU-funded A Good Start Project
Szilvia Pallaghy is a Hungarian national and holds an MBA from the Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio and the CEU Business School, Budapest. She holds an MA in Literature and in Psychology pursued in Hungary. After working in the private sector as Human Resources Specialist for General Electric, she began to work in the Ministry of Education, Hungary, in various positions. Between 2003 and 2006, Szilvia was the Head of Secretariat at the Office of the Ministerial Commissioner for the Integration of Roma and Disadvantaged Children. From 2006 onward, she worked as the Head of Unit for Education and Equal Opportunity in the Directorate General for Equal Opportunity. She joined the Roma Education Fund as Manager of the EU-funded A Good Start project on Early Childhood Education and Care in 2010.
Marius Taba
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Marius Taba is the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the Roma Education Fund. Marius is a Roma from Romania and has been working with REF since its establishment. He graduated with an MA in Public Administration, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest. In 2011, he obtained a PhD in Sociology from the University of Bucharest. He has been very active in civil society activities in Romania since 1999. Prior to coming to REF, Marius worked for more than five years for Romani CRISS – Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies where he was implementing projects dealing with education and public awareness campaigns. Marius is founder and Board member of the Romanian Students Organization from Hungary.

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

Dennis Omondi Yonga
Overall IT Specialist
Of Kenyan nationality and formerly of KEMRI/CDC – Kenya, Dennis worked as data analyst/IT specialist for four and a half years prior to joining REF. Among other responsibilities, Dennis’ current role includes providing leading support in REF’s Grant Management System and online scholarship development and in-house support for the development and continuous maintenance of the organization’s IT systems. Additionally, he ensures that REF HQ’s (Budapest, Hungary) IT infrastructure runs smoothly; makes sure solutions are cost-effective, and fully utilize the available up-to-date technology improvements, and arranges purchases or renegotiate existing contracts with suppliers. Dennis holds a diploma in IT from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Nairobi, Kenya.

Rhine-Westphalia, Germany appointed him as a local partner consultant for a project on Economic Reintegration of Rejected Asylum Seekers, and one year later he was appointed as a Director of the Department of Entrepreneurship Development. In 2001, he became National Program Officer at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within the Swiss Embassy in Macedonia. For more than three-and-a-half years he had various assignments, working in the Czech Republic and occasionally in Poland, for The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, a UK charity, in the development of the Romany Youth Entrepreneurship Program. Shemsi also worked for three years as a journalist for the Macedonian Television Corporation.

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

Judit Szira
Executive Director
Judit Szira, a Hungarian national, holds a teachers degree in Mathematics and Chemistry, and holds a degree in Public Education. Between 1998 and 2006, she was a member of the School Board of Budapest City Council. Between 1994 and 1997, she was Program Director of the Public Education Development Program at the Soros Foundation, Budapest. Previously, she was Chief Advisor to the Roma Commissioner in the Ministry of Education of Hungary. She is a member of the Board of the National Tempus Foundation. Judit has been working from the beginning of her career on Roma inclusion issues in the field of public education. She has been published in professional journals and newspapers on equity issues, active citizenship, and social cohesion.
Claudia Bercus-Kovacs
Project Coordinator
Claudia Kovacs is Project Coordinator on behalf of Roma Education Fund Romania for the Competitive Roma Young, with equal opportunities on the labor market project. She graduated the Babes Bolyai University Cluj, with a BA in Sociology and an MA degree in European Public Policies. She is now a PhD candidate with Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bucharest. Since 1999, Claudia has been involved in various projects and activities focusing on Romani communities and other disadvantaged groups. Her experience in the non-governmental sector is mixed with governmental experience which includes training and tutoring (in local capacity development, management of a project’s cycle) and working in technical assistance for the local public authorities, elaborating partnerships, strategic planning, and project evaluation. As a Social Inclusion Union Coordinator, she was involved in developing a mechanism of sustainable financing, design and implementation of the public national and international policies for Roma via the National Strategy for Improving the Roma Situation and Sectorial Operational Program for Developing the Human Resources AMPOS-DRU. Claudia’s field of focus is social inclusion through active measures, especially through the labor market and non-formal economy.

Nicoleta Bosnigeanu
Country Coordinator for Romania
Nicoleta holds a BA degree in Philology from the University of Bucharest and an MA in Communications and Public Relations from the National School of Political and Administrative Studies. Since 2004, she has been working for non-governmental organizations and CSR departments as coordinator of educational and social programs, addressed mainly to disadvantaged groups. She has also worked as a developer of communications and PR campaigns. She started working with REF in April 2011 as Country Coordinator for the RMUSP scholarship program in Romania.

Dragos Cazacu
IT Expert
Dragos Cazacu is an IT Expert at the Roma Education Fund Romania office and is involved in all IT aspects of its activities. Dragos graduated from the Polytechnical University of Bucharest with a degree in Electronics & Telecommunications and has worked since 1996 in IT-related jobs in relevant companies acting in several industries including hospitality, construction, retail, and energy trading.
Ionela Cristea  
Project Coordinator  
Ionela holds a BA from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest and an MA in Human Resources Management at the same faculty. Since 2003, she has been actively involved with Roma civil society, working for Impreuna Agency. She has specific experience in implementing projects in the areas of youth, volunteering and education. She was also active member of the Roma community during her job as a consultant at PriceWaterhouseCoopers Romania.

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

Roxana Gheorghe  
Project Assistant  
Roxana Gheorghe is a Romanian Roma. She graduated from Law and Administration and currently she is a student at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, studying English and German.

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

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

Eugen Crai  
Country Manager  
Eugen Crai is the Country Manager of Roma Education Fund, Romania in Bucharest. He holds a Master's degree in Law from McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and has completed several post-graduate studies in management and training in Denmark, the Netherlands, Romania, and UK. Specializing in Human Rights Law and Anti-discrimination Legislation (he also completed several summer courses at Central European University, Budapest), Eugen was the Program Manager of the first EU PHARE Project for the Improvement of the Roma Situation in Romania. Eugen also worked for nine years with the UNICEF Office in Romania as Education Officer and later as Social Policy Specialist. He has been actively involved in human rights and minority rights advocacy and education policy development and advocacy in different capacities all along his professional career. Eugen has worked continuously in and for Romani communities from Romania for the past 14 years. Eugen Crai is also author and co-author of several articles and publications on issues of ethics and management, education, and minority rights.
Cristina Jitariu  
Project Coordinator

Cristina holds a BA from the Faculty of Medicine, Iasi and a Masters Degree in Social and Health Services Management from the University of Bucharest. She has worked since 2004 in implementing social projects targeting disadvantaged groups. Her experience is diverse and includes monitoring & evaluation, project management, training, evaluation, consulting in public health research, and contributing to publications. This experience comes from her work on projects for the National Tuberculosis Program (with the Project Management Unit of the World Bank and Global Fund) as well as those aiming to increase access to health services for Romani communities (with JSI/USAID), S.P.E.R. projects (via PHARE), and a study on access to health care of Roma population (with Romani CRiSS).

Georgian Lunca  
Logistics Coordinator

Georgian made his first steps in human rights activism as a reporter at Roma News, the first press agency of the Roma minority in Romania. Nearly one year after graduating from the Sociology and Social Work Faculty, University of Bucharest, he joined the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) Regional Center for Central, East and Southeast Europe, where he contributed to the successful implementation of initiatives aiming to improve the interethnic climate and situation of ethnic groups from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Former Yugoslavia. During the last three years, he has been actively involved in the media development activity of Medienhilfe, oriented to increasing the capacity of Roma media outlets to bringing their contribution to the successful integration of the Roma minority in Europe.

Laura Greta Marin  
Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator

A native Romanes speaker from Romania, Laura studied Law, Psychology, and Community Development. She has been involved in the NGO sector since 1999, working in projects focusing on Romani communities and other disadvantaged groups. Her fields of expertise include training, community facilitation/development, strategic planning, project and organizational management, public policies, and monitoring and evaluation (of projects and programs, public policies, and so on). As an expert in monitoring and evaluation, she trained over 1,000 public servants and NGO staff and took part in a number of technical assistance teams for implementing PHARE projects in Romania. Laura is co-author of The Monitoring and Evaluation System for Intervention Focused on Roma in Romania, a publication of the National Agency for Roma and General Secretariat of the Government, 2008.

Cristi Mihalache  
Project Manager

Cristi Mihalache is Project Manager at the Roma Education Fund Romania. He graduated the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest, Romania with a BA in Public Administration and holds an MA degree in Human Rights from the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary. Currently, he is a PhD candidate with Faculty of Political Science at the University of Bucharest. Cristi has been involved in activities related to public relations, international advocacy, grant administration, capacity-building, and training with organizations such as Romani CRiSS, European Roma Rights Centre, and Open Society Institute. Also, Cristi has been involved in the programming process related to social inclusion actively contributing to the elaboration of the Joint Inclusion Memorandum and the National Development Plan 2007-2013 in Romania. He acted as as a consultant for the Management Authority for the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resource Development (MA SOPHRD), the institution managing the European Social Fund in Romania, as well as for other Technical Assistance projects on issues related to the social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups. Beginning in 2007, Cristi has acted as a consultant on European Structural Funds for the Roma Education Fund.

Florin Nasture  
Program Manager

Florin Nasture is a Romanian Roma. He graduated from the Faculty of Theology and Philology, Bucharest University and has an MA in Strategic Management and Social Development. Since 1997, he has been actively involved with Roma civil society, working as a Program Coordinator for Romani CRiSS, and later as a Country Coordinator for the Pakiv European Roma Fund. He has managed programs dealing with education, culture, and income-generating activities. He has extended training and practice in community development.
Adriana Sumanaru
Project Assistant
Adriana Sumanaru has been a Project Assistant for REF Romania since December 2010 (for the projects Competitive Roma Youth, Equal Chances on the Labor Market and A Generation of Roma Specialists in the Medical Field). Adriana graduated from the Faculty of Physics with an MSc in Biophysics and Medical Physics, after which she started to work as a teacher. Switching to the private sector, she gained experience in working with and managing people. After earning an MSc degree in Managerial Communications and Human Resources, Adriana gained two years experience in training and HR development (working with volunteers). She also has over five years experience in project implementation (PHARE and European Social Funds – SOPHRD), from which three years were focused on projects concerning Roma ethnicity.

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

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

Monica Florina Silaghi
Project Assistant
Monica is a Roma from Romania who graduated with qualifications in Social Assistance and is now enrolled in a Master Course on Public Policies in Social Assistance. Monica has been active in the NGO sector since 2006, coordinating projects and programs regarding the improvement of the Romani children access in education, raising the access of the Romani community members to social services, capacity building for Roma in relation with the public authorities, civic education for young Roma, and so on. Through her work, she has worked with a number of NGOs, the most relevant being Ruhama Foundation, Impresuna Agency, FCSD, and RSDF.

Georgiana Sumanaru
Project Assistant
Georgiana Sumanaru graduated from the Faculty of Public and Business Administration, University of Bucharest, with a BA in Public Administration. Starting in January 2011, she held the position of Assistant Coordinator in the project, A Generation of Roma Specialists in the Health Field. She previously worked as Assistant Manager on a PHARE project and also as Billing Analyst in the private sector (legal domain).

Mihai Tudora
Teachers Responsible Reporting
Mihai holds a BA in Economics from University Dimitrie Cantemir and an MA in Organizational Management and Human Resources from the University Spiru Haret. He has also completed graduate courses as a Project Manager and Procurement Expert and SEAP. Since 2003, he has been an accountant but from 2006 was involved in projects with European funding (PHARE 2004, PHARE 2005, and two projects funded by European Social Funds – SOPHRD), from which three years were focused on projects concerning Roma ethnicity.
for Social Intervention and Studies) in Romania. He has worked with many international organizations as a social worker and counselor and also worked in Population Services International as a Program Coordinator in a research on Sexually Transmitted Disease within the Roma communities as a Behavior Change Communicator (BCC). Danut holds a degree in Sociology and Social Work from the University of Bucharest, Romania and an MA Degree in Community Administration of Justice. He graduated from the Roma Access Program at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary in 2005.

Serbia
Nadja Kocic-Rakocevic

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

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Aida Mihajlovic

Aida Mihajlovic is a Bosnian national. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Science, English Department, Sarajevo University, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She started working in different schools in 1987 and in the last 15 years she focused her work in the NGO sector. During this period she has held various positions in managing and coordinating in different NGOs and diplomatic mission. She has training in monitoring and evaluation, anti-bias, leadership, communication, PTSP, ethics, code, and empathy. While working with Save the Children UK, she provided valuable support and input as a member of the project coordinators team for the publication A Guide for Models of Good Practice in Regional Project-Based Work with Romani Children as an output of the Inclusive Education and Anti-Discrimination in the Western Balkans – Equal Opportunities for Romani children project. She is married and has a son.
Albania and Kosovo
Marsela Taho

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

Croatia
Biserka Tomljenović

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

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors, REF Switzerland

Costel Bercus
Chair of REF Board

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

Yvana Enzler

Yvana Enzler is currently the Swiss Ambassador to Albania. She joined the Swiss diplomatic service in 1979 and was posted in Berne (1979–80), Brussels (1980–81), Rome (1981–88), Washington (1988–91), and again Berne (1991–95) and again Berne (1995–98). From 1998 to 2002 she was Deputy Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassy in Sarajevo and, from 2002 to 2007, Head of the Swiss Liaison Office in Pristina (Kosovo). She holds a Master Degree in Political Sciences from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and a M.A.L.S. from Georgetown University in Washington D.C.

Pierre Gassmann

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

Henna Huttu

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

Lívia Járóka

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

Lisa Jordan

Lisa Jordan is Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. In this position she oversees programs and operations that impact over a million disadvantaged young children every year. Ms. Jordan is a well-known speaker, author, and applied specialist in the fields of democracy, civil society, good governance, NGO accountability and globalization. She is co-editor of the recently published book NGO Accountability:
Katarina Maternova
Senior Adviser, Europe and Central Asia Region, Roma Issues, The World Bank. Katarina Maternova, Slovak national, was appointed as Senior Adviser for Europe and Central Asia Region, and Roma Issues at the World Bank in 2010. Prior to that, between 2007 and 2010, she served as Deputy Director General for Policy Development, Communication and Coordination in Directorate General for Regional Policy in the European Commission, overseeing all policy issues related to the Structural Funds, the largest economic development programme of the European Union. In this position, Katarina spearheaded Roma related initiatives, such as the EP Pilot on Roma inclusion and the amendment of Article 7 of ERDF regulation, allowing the use of Structural Funds for housing for marginalized communities. From 2005 to 2007, as a Director in the same Directorate General, Katarina was responsible for regional policy programming and implementation in eight EU countries. Ms Maternova holds a Juris Doctor degree from Comenius University and a Master of Law degree from the University of Michigan. She is a member of the New York Bar; she speaks six languages. She started out her career in private law practice in New York and Washington, DC. Thereafter she joined the World Bank in Washington in 1993. Katarina took time off from the Bank to return to her native Slovakia to join the first reform Dzurinda government, between 1999 and 2002, to work on economic policy and institutional reforms and preparation for EU membership, as Special Adviser to Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affair. The Slovak English-language weekly, The Slovak Spectator, in 2000, named her the Slovak Woman of the Year.

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

Costel Bercus
Chairman

Katalin E. Koncz

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

Gyula Várallyay

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, REF ROMANIA

Costel Bercus
Chair of REF Board

Pierre Gassmann

Rob Kushen

Judit Szína
# NATIONAL SELECTION BOARD OF REF SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

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<tr>
<td>Mr. Redzep Ali Cupi</td>
<td>Director of the Department for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of Members of Ethnic Communities</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia National Selection RHSP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Alma Mustafovska</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Private Law office Macedonia National Selection RHSP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Senzana Cicevalieva</td>
<td>Department for European Integration Head of Department, Chair of the Executive Committee of the SEE Health Network</td>
<td>Ministry of Health of the Republic of Macedonia National Selection RHSP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Angela Dumitrascu</td>
<td>Portfolio Manager</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme Moldova National Selection LHP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Ruslan Stanga</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>NGO 'Ograda Noastra' Moldova National Selection LHP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Silvia Bicenco</td>
<td>Training and Internship Coordinator</td>
<td>Transitional Capacity Support for Public Administration of Moldova Project funded by UNDP Moldova National Selection LHP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Maria Metodieva</td>
<td>Former SP ISB member</td>
<td>OSF Bulgaria Montenegro National Selection RMUSP Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Maja Petrusseva</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Education Advising Center Skopje Montenegro National Selection RMUSP Board member</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ms. Svenka Savic
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Montenegro
National Selection RMUSP Board member

Ms. Elena Motas
School inspector
School Inspector for Roma Issues in Iasi
Romania
National Selection RMUSP Board member

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Executive Director
“Impreuna” Agency
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President
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Ms. Basak Ekim Akkan
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Ph.D scholar in USA
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Ms. Hacer Foggø
Academician (retired from Bilkent University-Ankara)
Sulukule Platform
Turkey
National Selection RMUSP Board member

Ms. Emine Onaran Incirlioglu
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Ms. Lina Kondur
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National Selection LHP Board member

Mr. Taras Lyuty
National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
Ukraine
National Selection LHP Board member
GRANTS TABLE, 2011

ROMA EDUCATION FUND: LIST OF APPROVED PROJECTS IN 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>ALB 015</td>
<td>Union for Development and Integration of the Romani Minority in Albania &quot;Amaro-Drom&quot;</td>
<td>Preschool Education in Kuçova and Grabian</td>
<td>01.06.2011</td>
<td>31.05.2012</td>
<td>36,475</td>
<td>The main objectives of this project are: 1. Increase preschool learning opportunities for 150 Romani and non-Romani children aged 3-6 years old in Kuçova and Grabian/Lushnje. 2. Enable children of different ethnic groups to interact and socialize with each other through improvement of multiethnic relationship in kindergarten, school and community. 3. Increase parental and community awareness about the importance of registration in civil state offices, early education and care in two Romani communities. 4. Continue the support (material and sensitize) for kindergarten children who will pass to the first grade and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>ALB 019</td>
<td>Rromani Baxt Albania</td>
<td>Improving and Promoting Education and Training for Romani children at National Level</td>
<td>01.09.2011</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
<td>65,867</td>
<td>The proposed project aims to continue the activities of ALB 018, preparing Romani children aged 3-5 for registration in public kindergartens through a preschool program licensed by the Ministry of Education, promoting registration of school-age children in public primary schools, and offering after-school support for children enrolled in public primary schools administered by teachers from those schools (but not the same teachers who provide the children with instruction during school hours).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>ALB 022</td>
<td>Save the Children Switzerland, Save the Children ALB</td>
<td>Inclusive Quality Pre-Primary, Primary and High Education for Roma/Egyptian</td>
<td>01.12.2011</td>
<td>31.12.2012</td>
<td>77,373</td>
<td>This project seeks to continue and build on ALB 008, which the applicants implemented with REF support from January 2009 to December 2011 in two preschool institutions and two primary schools each in the municipalities of Gjirokastra and Korça. The main target group of ALB 008 consisted of 723 preschool and school-age Romani and Egyptian children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>B&amp;H 011</td>
<td>Novi Most International</td>
<td>Novi Most Roma Education Project</td>
<td>01.03.2011</td>
<td>31.01.2014</td>
<td>62,132</td>
<td>The main objectives of the project are to increase the number of children who are enrolled in mainstream school, to decrease the number of children enrolled in special school, and to increase the number of youth who finish their elementary education (grades 1-8) through an accelerated learning program to pass special exams in a local school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Bosnian and Herzegovina
- **B&H 012** Udruženje Građana “OTAHARIN”
  - **Pilot project: Integration of Roma pupils in primary schools in Bijeljina and Zvornice**
  - Dates: 01.01.2011 to 31.12.2011
  - Cost: 42,460

### Bulgaria
- **BU 154** Foundation for Regional Development “ROMA- 1995” – Plovdiv
  - **After school**
  - Dates: 01.01.2011 to 30.09.2011
  - Cost: 9,879

### Bulgaria
- **BU 156** New Horizons Association
  - **Step by step together for better education of Romani children**
  - Dates: 01.07.2011 to 31.05.2012
  - Cost: 50,820

### Bulgaria
- **BU 159** Romany Bacht
  - **Education for all**
  - Dates: 01.07.2011 to 30.06.2012
  - Cost: 48,130

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The overall objective of the project is reducing the social and educational gap between Roma and Non-Roma and to support their integration in the civil society.

The main goal of this project is to ensure Romani children inclusion in the system of regular, compulsory primary education, inclusion of Romani children in preschool program and to enable Romani children who dropped out to continue their primary education through catch up classes and extraordinary exams.

The project aims to provide a new level of support to Romani children through opening study rooms in the donor and accepting schools, according to their needs, level of knowledge and proper training and skills on behalf of the tutors working with these children (putting pragmatism in the studying of the Romani child, enriching his personal world and experience of life).

The purpose of the project is to provide Romani children living in rural areas in Panagyurishte Municipality with equal preparation and access to school. The project objectives are:

1. To raise the motivation and understanding of Romani children, parents and the community as a whole for the importance of the education and the need to get well prepared before going (enrolling) children to preschool groups and first grade classes.
2. To develop the capacity, competences and skills of 35 teachers working in preschool groups and first grade classes in the municipality.
3. To create a school environment that respects Romani children’s culture, traditions and habits.
4. To assist Romani families in the process of enrolling and further educational development of their children in preschool groups and first grade classes.

The objectives of this project proposal are:

1. Provide conditions for quality early childhood education for the Romani children in Samokov by enrolling them in mainstream kindergartens.
2. Provide conditions for educational integration into the Bulgarian society by provision of quality early childhood education.
3. Increase the level of motivation for attending kindergarten and preschool groups of the children.
4. Increase the motivation of the parents to send their children to kindergarten.
5. Increase the level of family involvement.
6. Assist children in kindergarten with after class activities to increase their performance.
7. Build positive interethnic environment.
8. Improve the communication climate between Romani and non-Romani parents.
### The main objectives are to diversify the school life and study curriculum; attract, retain and integrate young Roma in the secondary education system; to decrease the drop out rate of young Roma from secondary schools; and to provide additional support to students with after school activities. Main outcomes: 200 students with enhanced performance at school, thanks to the textbooks revolving fund; facilitate access to modern technology for 1,000 students in 10 secondary schools; 80 students with increased level of participation in the public school life; teachers and other pedagogy staff with increased knowledge and skills for development of project proposals under the various operational programs and other EU programs.

### The objectives of the project are to provide quality services in educational, safety and health environment for the children at kindergarten age in the villages of Kulata and Nefela and thus providing opportunities for equal access to quality education in the compulsory school system. Main outcomes: All Romani children at kindergarten age enrolled in the kindergarten (70 children) (that would easily be measured since the villages are not that large and information could be also obtained from the Municipality; some baseline data also exist); increase of the educational achievements of the Romani children in kindergarten (level of performance, compared to the level of performance of the non-Romani children; level of enrollment in first grade); increased Roma parental motivation (140 parents) (number of Romani parents involved in the activities of the project); developed program for work with parents; and developed publication for lessons learnt in Bulgarian and English language.

### Improved school preparation of the Romani children from Fakulteta neighborhood to be enrolled in first grades in integrated classes in mainstream schools during the 2011/2012 academic year.

### The purpose and objectives will be achieved through expert work at the district and regional levels for preparing Roma Education Regional Maps (district workshops, regional conferences, and so on), expert work at the national level for participating in the working groups that prepare the National Roma Strategy and the National Reform Program, two national advocacy forums and a public-awareness campaign. The project is targeted at development of a model for creation of proper conditions for out of class preparation for school for 40 Romani children in school grades 1-7, and preservation of the teaching capacity of the local Roma community through employment of three your Romani teachers, graduates from the already closed university specialty pedagogy with Roma language.
The main objective of the project is a reintegration of Romani adults, who have not completed their primary and secondary education. The project will assist the members of Roma community to enroll to a “Second Chance” program, based on adult education curricula in Bulgaria and, through the work of professional teachers, the students will acquire secondary school knowledge and certificate.

The main project aims are: To create conditions for Equal Integration of the Romani children from Kyustendil in the social, economic and political life of the country in the future by creation of equal opportunities and equal access to education and improvement of the quality of life while respecting the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

The project is the continuation of the CRO013 project which was implemented in Medimurje County during 2010/2011. It presents and upgrade of all activities. Number of children increased, number of groups increased, monitoring is strengthened as well as management and the steering committee with representatives of all relevant stakeholders is introduced. CRO015 is designed based on lessons learned from the implementation of CRO013.

The main goal of the project is to provide individual support for Romani pupils and students. In the frame of the project free preparatory courses, tutor courses and consultancy will be provided. The emphasis will be put on preparation for entering exams and on school results improvement.

The main goal of the project is to support preschool and primary education desegregation of 33 Romani children from socially disadvantaged localities Brno-střed (center) and Brno-sever (north) Czech Republic, the South Moravia region, through enrollment to state kindergartens and good quality mainstream schools, and to support their sustainable educational outcomes within this more inclusive (and desegregated) environment.

The main goal of the project is the preparation of a desegregation process at the town through training of teacher staff.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>HU</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>HU 059</td>
<td>Roma Civil Rights Organization</td>
<td>Lass, ne csak nezz Tanoda</td>
<td>01.09.2011</td>
<td>30.08.2012</td>
<td>24,490</td>
<td>The objectives of the project are: 1. To improve the academic success of 30-35 pupils with low academic achievements from class 5-8; and 2. To empower Romani youth from the Roma settlements. Main Outcomes: Regarding our experiences in the study hall program the applicant expectations are 50 percent decrease in unjustified absence, 20 percent increase in high school completion, 20 percent increase in applying to high school after finishing primary school, and 40 percent reduction in failure rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>HU 061</td>
<td>Chance for Children Foundation</td>
<td>Integration Becomes Reality: joint legal and community actions in Hajdúhadház and Kaposvár</td>
<td>01.07.2011</td>
<td>31.12.2011</td>
<td>12,617</td>
<td>The objective of the project is twofold: 1. To end segregation in schools in Kaposvár and Hajdúhadház (both inter and intra-school segregation); and 2. To create a precedent in Hungarian jurisprudence on school desegregation by submitting a school desegregation plan with the claim, which specifically outlines what the local government is supposed to do to end segregation. This move will test the mandate that the Supreme Court spelled out in its December decision in Kaposvár according to which a public interest foundation within an actio popularis action can legitimately demand the ending of an illegal situation in a specific manner and will satisfy the requirement also spelled out in this Supreme Court decision which said that if a &quot;realistic, straightforward and manageable&quot; desegregation plan is submitted with the claim, the court can order the local government to execute the plan and in that way end the illegal situation of segregation. The detailed, well-researched plan makes it possible to realize a desegregation which takes into account local specificities and possible outcomes. The 2010 Supreme Court decision gives a unique opportunity to translate court decisions to actions and reality and CFCF does not want to miss this opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>HU 065</td>
<td>Chance for Renewal Social, Educational and Cultural Association</td>
<td>Csepel Tanoda – Career Guidance Club</td>
<td>01.08.2011</td>
<td>31.07.2012</td>
<td>34,494</td>
<td>The main objective of the project is the increase the number of Romani students attending secondary education and to decrease the drop out and grade repetition of 50 Romani children by establishing a Career Guidance Club and providing after school educational support (Tanoda). Main Outcomes: Improvement of the participants' school achievements; a significant decrease in the number of drop-outs among participating pupils – indicator; high proportion of children continuing their studies on the secondary level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>HU 060</td>
<td>Romaversitas Foundation</td>
<td>Romaversitas</td>
<td>01.09.2011</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
<td>44,682</td>
<td>The main goal of the program is to increase the number of Romani students graduating university, through financial and academic support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The main goal of the applicant organization is to support Romani final graders (8th class primary school students) in advancing their educational performance in order to successfully continue their education on secondary level. The other target group is the secondary school students who are benefiting from tutoring services for preventing drop-out and enhancing schooling results.

The aim of this project is to enable Romani, Ashkali and Egyptian children and youth participation in school with their Serbian and Albanian counterparts by means of a preschool program and extracurricular support for pupils and students in primary and secondary education, all provided in four Learning Centers run by the applicant in four localities in South Eastern Kosovo (Fushë Kosova, Graçanica, Plemetina, and Shitme) since early 2008 plus an additional three Satellite Centers to be opened in extremely underserved localities.

This project aims to improve access to education and to improve the quality of education by promoting inclusive and participatory approaches focusing on children from marginalized groups. To this end, the project seeks to support a total of 400 marginalized preschool and school-aged children in eight municipalities located throughout Kosovo (Gjakova/Đakovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovica North, Mitrovica South, Peja/Peć, Prishtina, and Prizren).

This project aims to reduce dropout among Romani and Ashkali children from primary schools in Kosovo and to increase the quality of education received by Romani and Ashkali children. To this end, the project seeks to support a total of 625 preschool and school-aged Romani and Ashkali children (as well as several ethnic Albanian children) through activities organized in nine Rural After School Centers.

General objective of this project is a qualitative increase of the general education condition of the Roma in the municipality, aimed at reducing the illiteracy rate as well as an affirmation of applied policies for solving Roma education problems in the Municipality of Kochani for a period to 2012 year.

To increase the quality of knowledge among at least 248 Romani pupils from 2nd to 4th grades, involved in the eight primary education in Tetovo, Gostivar, from 2.4 to GPA 3.6 (grade progress achievement, the current GPA from targeted primary schools from Tetovo and Gostivar is 2.4), and to reduce the drop-out among Romani pupils from 4th to 5th grades on primary education in Tetovo and Gostivar, with 70-80 percent, by June 2013.
The main aim of the project is full inclusion of Romani children in regular primary education through (a) better access to quality education for Romani pupils and (b) to minimize or eliminate the drop-out level of Romani pupils.

The goal of this project proposal is through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of all Romani students enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class in the school year 2011–2015.

This project has the following objectives:

1. To provide 600 Romani secondary school students per year enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class with GPA 3.00 and above in the school year 2011-2015;
2. To provide all Romani secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class in the school year 2011–2015, with school-based tutorship support according to their needs and interest (envisaged 1600 Romani students per year – total 6400 Romani students for 4 years);
3. To provide support to the Romani 4th year students on time to registered and successfully to pass the State Matura exam (envisaged 200 Romani students per year – total 800 Romani students for 4 years).

To improve education level and achievements 75 adult Roma from Delchevo, Pehchevo, Berovo and Vinica through the educational program for adult students aged 19–40 years and reception of a diploma for secondary education for the purpose of increasing their employment possibilities on the labor market.

The project is designed based on the positive experiences and needs identified in cooperation with the implementing partner organizations, both on institutional and community level during the implementation of MAC012, MAC046 and MAC051 projects in regard of inclusion of Romani children in preschool education. The project envisages including 425 Romani children into preschools in 19 municipalities.

The project has the following specific objective: Integration of Romani children (6–15 ages) from the segregated school and their equal distribution in the mixed schools as a result of school rationalization reform in Moldova; Improve the quality of education of Romani children (6–15 years) by providing additional support to Romani children in the mixed schools and increasing the retention rate; To reduce the number of Romani children who drop out from a school in Parcani, Ursari, Schinoasa; Strengthen the capacity of National Authorities and LPA in understanding the problems of Romani children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>MD 006</td>
<td>Ograda Noastra NGO</td>
<td>Facilitating and assisting quality educational processes in a school from Zirnesti attended by Romani children</td>
<td>01.03.2011</td>
<td>31.05.2012</td>
<td>€49,885</td>
<td>The aim of the project is to facilitate and assist quality education processes in one particular school attended by Romani children in South Moldova (Zirnesti School) while building domestic capacity of project actors to plan, implement, communicate and monitor on different processes of intervention favoring Roma education in Moldova.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>MN 008</td>
<td>Pedagogical Center Of Montenegro</td>
<td>Studenski volonteri - od desegregacije do kvalitetne integracije romskih učenika</td>
<td>01.04.2011</td>
<td>31.12.2012</td>
<td>€98,703</td>
<td>The main objective of the project is to start social and academic integration of 250 Romani pupils from the segregated branch school Bozidar Vukovic Podgoricanin through the volunteer work of Teachers' faculty students supporting Romani pupils in strengthening and stimulating their overall psychological and pedagogical capacities for current education and to continue further education, working with Romani parents motivation to take more active role in education of their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>RO 086</td>
<td>Policy Center for Roma and Minorities</td>
<td>The Alternative Education Club</td>
<td>01.04.2011</td>
<td>31.03.2012</td>
<td>€53,892</td>
<td>The aim of the project is to develop innovative education approaches combined with teachers training, mentorship and afterschool classes thus contributing the desegregation process, improved children education performances targeted with the project in school number 136.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>RO 092</td>
<td>Association for Promoting the Social Inclusion</td>
<td>Closer to school</td>
<td>01.07.2011</td>
<td>30.08.2013</td>
<td>€251,180</td>
<td>The project objectives are: Increase the existing GPA of Romani children project beneficiaries from I-V grade with 0.8 to 1 point; Increase the GPA of Romani children project beneficiaries from V and VI grade with 0.5 point; Support the transition in high school education of 40 students from VII-VIII grade; Support opening of school kitchen as a sustainable way of provision hot meals for all students attending the elementary school; Improved quality of teaching methods within the target schools personnel, in order to increase children's educational performance and to decrease absenteeism rate, among the Romani children; Counseling pupils and parents by qualified personnel in psycho-pedagogy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>RO 093</td>
<td>Center for Education and Social Development Association</td>
<td>Roma Access Program to Higher Education</td>
<td>01.06.2011</td>
<td>30.11.2013</td>
<td>€171,400</td>
<td>The goal of the project is to multiply the number of Romani young coming from Calarasi rural area in Universities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The project has set the following objectives:

1. To develop and provide education assistance services to 200 Romani children in 10 schools located in the counties Neamt and Botosani.
2. Improve the school performances of 200 children thus will affect their increased GPA, retention and attendance rate.
3. Trained 10 school mediators for the Romani communities from 10 villages in the counties of Neamt and Botosani that will be able to maintain an efficient collaboration relationship with the Romani children the community and the local public institutions.
4. Develop the institutional capacity of the educational system in the North East region of Romania (counties Iasi, Vaslui, Neamt, Suceava, Botosani) through training of 15 teachers who work with Romani children and improving mutual knowledge (the different cultural heritage, respect towards each other, develop aptitudes and abilities but also practical skills).

The purpose of the "The Youth are Debating" project is to properly inform, debate, argument and sensitize on the various forms in which social, ethnic, economical, health or gender differences may constitute communication barriers and also promoting tolerance. This program will contribute directly to the improvement of the perception on the Roma minority in the ranks of the youth.

1. To create equal opportunities for Romani students while they are studying at the university.
2. To contribute to the strengthening and visibility of the Romani students in Serbian society.
3. To encourage students to embrace their Roma identity and to feel responsible for the future of Roma in general.

The overall objective of the proposed Mother-Child Education Program is to contribute to the social inclusion and poverty reduction of the Roma in Serbia by improving access to Early Childhood Education for Romani children with special regard to the most disadvantaged. The program objective is to increase the access to Early Childhood Education for Romani children by developing the capacity of Roma NGOs to run community based education projects for mothers and children including a toy library project and to establish networks between stakeholders; empowering Romani mothers of preschool aged children both as mothers and as women through informal education projects to support their children in the process of education and schooling; drawing the attention of the public authorities to the importance of early childhood education and to their responsibilities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Amount (EUR)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SK 040</td>
<td>Association of Young Roma</td>
<td>Help and Support in Education in the Form of Additional Education and Mentoring</td>
<td>01.05.2011</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
<td>55,930</td>
<td>The aim of this project is to provide help and support in education in the form of additional education and mentoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SK 042</td>
<td>Civil Association SPECTRUM-EAST</td>
<td>School for everybody</td>
<td>01.09.2011</td>
<td>31.08.2013</td>
<td>69,643</td>
<td>The main objective of this project is to contribute to prevention of wrongful enrollment of socially disadvantaged children in special education system in the region of Spišská Nová Vč. By realization of planned activities, we want to achieve these specific objectives: 1/ to assess the effectiveness of zero grade classes in local circumstances in the district of Spišská Nová Vč (covering 38 elementary schools) – through comprehensive Research Study on Effectiveness of Zero Grade Classes; 2/ to provide parents with comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for children’s further education and employment, integrated preschool education and after-school support in the early years of primary education – through information campaign; 3/ to prevent enrollment of children to special education system (either special class or special school) through the accelerative program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SK 045</td>
<td>Open Society Foundation Slovakia</td>
<td>Secondary scholarship program for Roma students</td>
<td>01.09.2011</td>
<td>31.08.2012</td>
<td>152,388</td>
<td>The main goal of the project is through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of targeted Romani students enrolled in secondary education on a country level and motivate them to continue their studies. This will result in strengthening Romani intelligentsia that will take responsibility and participate in solving problems in society in future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SK 041</td>
<td>ETP Slovakia</td>
<td>Centre for sustainable development</td>
<td>01.05.2011</td>
<td>30.4.2013</td>
<td>86,808</td>
<td>The objective of this 2-year project is to improve educational level of Romani children, young people and adults experiencing poverty in Košice-Šaca thus creating Romani role models and to integrate them to mainstream society, enrollment to preschools and primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SK 043</td>
<td>Pro Donum</td>
<td>The Jarovnice project</td>
<td>1.12.2011</td>
<td>31.12.2012</td>
<td>52,800</td>
<td>The objective of the project is to improve educational outcomes of disadvantaged Romani children from Jarovnice primary schools Roma community and increase transition to secondary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>SK 048</td>
<td>Temipe</td>
<td>Afterschool model in Rimavská Sec (Phase 4)</td>
<td>1.12.2011</td>
<td>31.12.2012</td>
<td>34,796</td>
<td>The objectives of the projects are to improve through after-school activities based on the Hungarian Tanoda model Romani children’s success in education, and subsequently their competitiveness on the labor market and their social integration. Both SLO 019 and SLO 022 were consistently rated satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total (EUR)</td>
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<td>3,202,354</td>
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### ACTIVE REIMBURSABLE GRANTS IN 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Code</th>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Start Year</th>
<th>Grant Amount (EUR)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>REF RO 001</td>
<td>Ruhama Foundation (Fundatia Ruhama)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>This project offers integrated programs that aim to increase access to education and raise the educational level of children from disadvantaged communities, with a focus on Roma. This includes informing about the risks of early school leaving, increasing access to preschool and primary education, building up competences and skills, professional training for those involved in implementation, and analyzing the consequences of implementing flexible education programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>REF RO 002</td>
<td>Rroma Center Amare Rromentza</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>This project has three components: intercultural preschool education applied by the preschool teacher and the preschool teacher's assistant trained and paid in the project; bilingual preschool education (in Romanian and Rromani languages) in kindergartens from Rromani speaking communities; and traditional Rromani parents' education and scholarships for their children meant to improve their participation to school and to decrease school drop out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>REF RO 003</td>
<td>The Resource Center for Romani communities Foundation</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>The main objectives of the project are: to create 36 interethnic initiative groups in order to determine a long term change in the field of the community development and of the interethnic relationships, within a period of 34 months; increase the entrepreneurial capacity of 36 initiative groups and of the Rromani members of 36 communities from the North-Western region and the Central region within a period of 34 months; facilitate the access of the Rromani members from 36 localities to the vocational training courses, in the North-Western and Central region; and increase the number of Rromani pupils who graduate secondary school and head for high school and vocational schools from 36 communities within 34 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>REF RO 004</td>
<td>Rroma CRISIS- Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>The project Strategic steps for improving Rromani children's equal access to education aims at reducing the risk of early school dropout among the Rromani students. In the same time, the project envisages the development of integrated programs on implementation of the methodology of the Order no.1540/19.07.2007 on banning school segregation of the Rromani children and of Order no. 1534/18.07.2007 on developing diversity into the national curriculum, issued by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MECT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>REF RO 005</td>
<td>Resource Center for Romani communities Foundation</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>The main objective of the program is to support the social inclusion of the Rromani population in Romania by strengthening the formal representation of problems of the Rromani communities at local government level. This project will increase the level of training and qualification for 250 Local Experts on Roma issues through qualifications courses with the final result of getting 250 qualification diplomas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>REV RO 006</td>
<td>Asociatia Alianta Civica a Romilor din Romania</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>The project's goal is to strengthen the employability of the inactive citizens and of those looking for a job in the Southwestern region Oltenia, in 14 months, with a special focus on Roma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>REV HU</td>
<td>Tankucko Educational and Cultural Association</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>The main aim of the project is to reduce the gap between Romani and non-Romani children of Vacegres through quality and personalized education. The target group is 35 local disadvantaged kids. As a result, more Romani children will pass their final exams at primary school and continue studies to secondary schools and higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>REV HU</td>
<td>Romany Society for General and Cultural Education</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>The main goal of the project is the labor market integration of 20 Romani adults through accredited trainings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>REV HU</td>
<td>Belső Tűz Egyesület</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>The Tanoda project is an educational activity for Romani and non-Romani disadvantaged students. The project has several activities, which help to reduce the social, educational, and knowledge gap between these pupils and pupils from the majority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>REV HU</td>
<td>Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network Foundation</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>This project is an experiment in combating child poverty. It is action research limited to a specific region and is aimed at breaking the poverty cycle by interrupting the inheritance mechanisms. It involves building and operating a network of personal services for families with children living in deep poverty. It relies on upgrading the existing set of central and local government institutions in the following areas: early childhood development that includes fostering natural abilities, public education, healthcare, housing, employment, and information dissemination. The project target is universal, but emphasizes the social integration of families living in deep poverty including Romani families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>REV HU</td>
<td>Roma Arts Association of Public Benefit for Inter-European Integration, Occupation and Instruction Development</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>This project aims to preserve, present and disseminate Gypsy culture as widely as possible; foster the identity and the language; preserve social values and to make up development programs; create equal opportunities in society; engender Roma integration without assimilation; ensure equal access to education services; strengthen the market-based position of the Kalyi Jag Roma Arts Association of Public Benefit for Inter-European Integration, Occupation and Instruction Development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>REV HU</td>
<td>Independent Association of Bonyhád</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>14,724</td>
<td>The project aims to increase the educational success of Romani pupils in order to (1) increase the school achievement of 35 Romani pupils in the primary education, (2) to increase the number of Romani students attending secondary education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>261,724</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### CONSOLIDATED CASH-BASED PROFIT AND LOSS, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF Switzerland</th>
<th>REF Hungary**</th>
<th>REF Romania***</th>
<th>Total – all REF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUR</td>
<td>EUR**</td>
<td>EUR***</td>
<td>EUR****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### INCOME
- **Donations from 3rd parties**: 7,452,631, 1,218,267, 2,264,462, 10,935,360
- **Project Support Program Refund**: 66,484
- **Interest Income**: 2,968
- **Gain on Foreign Exchange**: 107,085, 83,901, 8,253, 199,239

**Total Income**: 7,629,168, 1,302,168, 2,273,550, 11,204,886

#### EXPENDITURE
- **Administrative expenses**: 183,971, 536,922, –, 720,893
- **Project Support Program**: 2,302,814, 269, –, 2,303,083
- **EU Roma pilot – A Good Start and complimentary projects**: 79,847, 950,035, –, 1,029,882
  - **REF Romania – Equal opportunities**: 2,864,784, 1,111,072, 2,234,609
  - **REF Romania – School after School**: 821,306, 2,301,933
  - **REF Romania – Health Program**: 516,824, 82,065, 501,759
  - **REF Romania – Youth on Labor Market**: 127,658, 167,363
  - **REF Romania cap. building platf., UNICEF**: 2,329, 199,239
  - **Communication**: 731,203, 285,717
  - **Policy development and capacity building**: 1,011,083, 762,909
  - **Tertiary Scholarships**: 3,124,274, 2,866,135
  - **Hungarian Micro-region Dev. Program**: 168,000, 121,719

**Total Expenditure**: 5,962,457, 2,045,494, 2,458,785, 10,466,736

**Total adjusted statutory pl**: 1,666,711, (165,235), 738,557

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### CONSOLIDATED CASH-BASED MANAGEMENT REPORT, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Plan</th>
<th>2011 Actual</th>
<th>2012 Plan***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income from Donors</td>
<td>13,778,000</td>
<td>10,935,360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimbursement of grants</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>66,484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest income</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>3,803</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign exchange gain/loss</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>199,239</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total available</td>
<td>13,884,000</td>
<td>11,204,886</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>791,855</td>
<td>720,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Support Program</td>
<td>3,414,005</td>
<td>2,301,933</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU Roma pilot – A Good Start and complimentary projects</td>
<td>1,055,000</td>
<td>1,029,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF Romania – Equal opportunities</td>
<td>2,864,784</td>
<td>1,111,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REF Romania – School after School</td>
<td>821,306</td>
<td>2,301,933</td>
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<tr>
<td>REF Romania – Health Program</td>
<td>516,824</td>
<td>82,065</td>
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<tr>
<td>REF Romania – Youth on Labor Market</td>
<td>127,658</td>
<td>167,363</td>
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<tr>
<td>REF Romania capacity building, Platform, UNICEF</td>
<td>386,510</td>
<td>234,296</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>349,876</td>
<td>285,717</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy development and capacity building</td>
<td>1,011,083</td>
<td>762,909</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary scholarships</td>
<td>3,104,274</td>
<td>2,866,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Micro-region Dev. Program</td>
<td>168,000</td>
<td>121,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total budget commitments</td>
<td>13,612,832</td>
<td>10,466,736</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Surplus (+) or Deficit (–) at year end</td>
<td>271,168</td>
<td>738,557</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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*This includes administration of REF CH and REF HU*

**The deficit for 2012 comes from the post-financing of REF Romania projects. The deficit will be covered from REF Network reserves of the previous year and bridging loan from different sources.

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*Translated from HUF at the yearly average exchange rate of 279.21 HUF/EUR of MNB yearly average
**REF Hungary received EUR 1.100.000 from REF Switzerland for operational expenses
***REF Romania received EUR 443,07 from REF Switzerland as a support of core cost, communications, RMUSP coordination, capacity building and platform
****translated from RON at the yearly average exchange rate of 4.2379 RON/EUR of the Romanian National Bank
**COMPLETE LIST OF REF DONORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS, 2005–2011**

Income received by Roma Education Fund Network, 2005–2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>ADSI</td>
<td>20,084</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austrian Government</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernard Van Leer Foundation</td>
<td>260,918</td>
<td>260,918</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA Canada</td>
<td>700,574</td>
<td>700,574</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID United Kingdom</td>
<td>290,660</td>
<td>421,888</td>
<td>1,433,907</td>
<td>1,948,455</td>
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<td>Dutch Ministry</td>
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<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>300,000</td>
<td>710,000</td>
<td>88,367</td>
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<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>– DG REGIO</td>
<td>956,555</td>
<td>717,444</td>
<td>1,673,799</td>
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<td>European Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVZ-Erinnerung</td>
<td>112,430</td>
<td>153,580</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>296,580</td>
<td>667,590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finnish Government</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
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<td>German Government</td>
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<td>1,550,000</td>
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<td>Government of Spain</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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<td>11,670</td>
<td>171,670</td>
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<td>Hellenic Aid Greece</td>
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<td>Government: MACIKA</td>
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<td>Norwegian Fund Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>4,285</td>
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<td>World Bank IBRD</td>
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<td>6,185</td>
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<td>Ireland Development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>James D. Wolfensohn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roma Scholarship</td>
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<td>7,687</td>
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<td>LEGO Foundation</td>
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<td>7,660</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Donors 2005 – 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Grand Total (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Network of European Foundations</td>
<td>4,944,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolas Cherghie</td>
<td>2,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolas Burnett</td>
<td>19,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Foundations</td>
<td>2,114,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentiers of St. Thomas</td>
<td>1,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putumayo World Music, Inc.</td>
<td>4,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raiffeisenbank Hungary</td>
<td>180,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian Management Authority-Partners</td>
<td>180,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian Management Authority-POSDRU</td>
<td>2,114,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sándor Demján Foundation</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA Sweden</td>
<td>2,114,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenian Ministry for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Agency for Development</td>
<td>2,114,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempus Foundation</td>
<td>4,093</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>6,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>6,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank Community Fund</td>
<td>67,817</td>
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<tr>
<td>William H. Newton-Smith</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank IBRD</td>
<td>5,490,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yehudi Menuhin Foundation</td>
<td>1,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total (EUR)</td>
<td>47,994,436</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# ROMA EDUCATION FUND
## NETWORK INCOME PROJECTION 2012–2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Commission-DG REGIO</td>
<td>238,564</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>238,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVZ Stiftung-Germany</td>
<td>234,000</td>
<td>234,000</td>
<td>234,000</td>
<td>702,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network of European Foundations</td>
<td>221,734</td>
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<td>Open Society Institute</td>
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<td>Open Society Institute-Health Program</td>
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<td>Romanian Management Authority-Partners</td>
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<td>Romanian Management Authority-POSDRU</td>
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<td>Sándor Demján Foundation-Hungary</td>
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<td>Sweden SIDA</td>
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<td>World Bank IBRD</td>
<td>342,930</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9,907,056</td>
<td>10,725,019</td>
<td>8,321,359</td>
<td>28,954,434</td>
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<td>In USD</td>
<td>14,040,279</td>
<td>15,200,347</td>
<td>11,793,051</td>
<td>41,033,686</td>
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</table>
THE ROMA EDUCATION FUND (REF) WAS CREATED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION IN 2005 (HEREAFTER, DECADE). ITS MISSION AND ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO CLOSE THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BETWEEN ROMA AND NON-ROMA. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, THE ORGANIZATION SUPPORTS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ROMA, INCLUDING THE DESEGREGATION OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS. THROUGH ITS ACTIVITIES, THE ROMA EDUCATION FUND PROMOTES ROMA INCLUSION IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE DECADE, AS WELL AS OTHER COUNTRIES THAT WISH TO JOIN THIS EFFORT. HEREIN REF PRESENTS ITS 2011 ANNUAL REPORT, WHICH FULLY ARTICULATES REF’S PROGRESS TOWARDS THIS MISSION AND GOAL.