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Roma Education Fund

**The Academic and Professional Trajectory of REF's Law
and Humanities Scholarship Program Student-Beneficiaries**

A Tracer Study

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Introduction – The Main Objectives and Findings of the Study

After 10 years of implementing Law and Humanities [scholarship] Program and following the request of one of the Program's donors, REF proceeded towards investigating the degree in which the respective Program contributed to the academic trajectory of its beneficiaries, as well as whether the beneficiaries managed to enter the job market on positions relevant for their studies after obtaining higher education degrees. The main reason for doing this is for identifying the ways in which the REF Scholarship Program could be better tailored to respond to the needs of its beneficiaries and to help them become successful in their initial career stages. This tracer study presents the results of this investigation.

Law and Humanities Program (hereinafter LHP; program description available [here](#)) is one of the four scholarship schemes of Roma Education Fund providing support to young Roma to pursue higher education in their own countries. LHP operates since 2004 and is open to applicants who are citizens or permanent residents of Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine. Over time the Program grew in number of participants, getting from 39 yearly beneficiaries in 2004 to 175 in 2014. Since its launch in 2004 the Program provided support to **413 people**. The participation in the Program is merit-based and applicants' academic achievements constitute the primary selection criterion.

LHP has been co-financed by REF and by the German “[Remembrance, Responsibility and Future](#)” Foundation and it has been implemented by the REF Scholarship Program in collaboration with in-country non-governmental organizations. The Program participants have been selected on annual basis, with possibility to renew their status from one year to another based on open competition. The support consisted on a scholarship and a range of academic and professional development components, as described in Section 1 of this study.

Having as main objective to investigate the degree in which LHP contributed to a successful academic trajectory of its beneficiaries, as well as the degree in which its beneficiaries managed to enter the job market after graduating higher education, the study is focused on the following **three questions**:

- 1) To what extent has the LHP support been critical for its beneficiaries to stay enrolled in tertiary education and to graduate it successfully?
- 2) To what extent have LHP beneficiaries succeeded in integrating in the professional world after obtaining higher education degrees?
- 3) Have LHP beneficiaries been active in supporting Roma inclusion in general, by working with/ for Roma communities in particular during their studies and in their working environment?

The target group for the study is constituted by the past LHP participants from Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, as well as by the current beneficiaries who have been in the Program at least for two complete academic years. The methodology is based on a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative part, the authors analyzed the background data on LHP beneficiaries from the REF database and also conducted an extensive online survey completed by the target group. For the qualitative part, the authors organized three focus groups with the participation of 24 representatives of the target group, as well as personal interviews with 10 former beneficiaries.

As for the major three questions mentioned above, the study reveals the following **findings**:

1) Among all survey respondents, only a minority (29%) could state with confidence that they would have studied in higher education even without an LHP support. But even they stated that without LHP support they would have studied in a different mode: part-time instead of full time, in another specialization, another locality, or another university, or that they would have stopped at a lower level degree. As for the amounts of scholarship, generally respondents claimed that LHP stipend could cover 40-60% of their monthly living expenses, which we believe is a significant contribution.

From these findings (but keeping in mind the methodological limitations of this type of studies as described in Section 2), it is possible to conclude that LHP support did constitute an important help for its beneficiaries to enroll,

progress, and graduate successfully tertiary education, without making compromises about the desired modes of study, or specialization.

2) As for the employment, although many LHP participants started to work even while being students, there are still many who did not manage to find a job after graduation. In our sample of survey respondents, among those who finished their studies 32% did not have an employment at the moment of survey completion. This is high if compared to the mainstream population of similar age category. In the open survey questions, in focus groups and in personal interviews many respondents mentioned that it would be truly helpful if LHP provided support to fresh graduates and graduates-to-be to find the first job, for instance by having partnerships with potential employer institutions.

This finding reveals a necessity of further Program development, i.e. strengthening the professional development and introducing an internship placement component of the Scholarship Program particularly for the beneficiaries in graduation years. This development would also be in line with the new REF strategy for 2015-2019, which for the tertiary education program states that REF would increase efforts to enhance employability prospects, as “*[higher education] graduates will have received training in job related skills and at the same time they will be actively involved in alumni, professional/trade support networks which support finding and retaining work.*”

3) As far as involvement in Roma-related activities is concerned, 70% of study respondents stated that they have been recently involved in such activities, while 40% of those employed stated that their work was somewhat connected to Roma-related issues. As for the expression of self-identity in public, absolute majority of study respondents claimed that they identify themselves – and are perceived by the public – as Roma. However, older participants seem to be more reluctant to express their identity in public than younger ones, which suggests that those who are still in the Program or recently graduated it are more open to publicly express their identity. Survey respondents also stated that participation in LHP helped them strengthen their Roma identity.

Therefore, the LHP group of former and current beneficiaries has the potential to become a valuable social capital and model for their peers and to dismantle stereotypes about Roma in their respective countries, if successfully employed.

There are also some **lessons learned** from the findings of this study for the entire REF Scholarship Program. With the constant expansion of access to higher education in European countries during the last decades, having a higher education degree became a necessary – but not sufficient – condition for finding decent and stable employment. With more and more people with higher education degrees on the job market, the competition for decent jobs is also increasing and having additional advantages on the job market (i.e. other than having higher education diploma) is more and more needed. The generally persistent youth unemployment in European countries makes it difficult for both Roma and non-Roma graduates to find stable employment. However, for Roma graduates the situation is more complicated because they come from more disadvantaged backgrounds with reduced access to professional networks, IT, and foreign language trainings. To these, there is always a higher risk of being discriminated on the labor market, especially if one’s physical traits make it easier for an employer to identify you as a Roma.

In the light of these findings and keeping in mind the importance of maximizing the impact of REF Scholarship Program’s investment, the scholarship support we provide during university studies, although extremely important, seems not be enough conducive to successful employment. Besides the scholarship support, professional development trainings provided throughout the studentship years and assistance with the first job placement in/ and immediately after the graduation year prove to be very necessary, especially in countries with relatively high unemployment rates among youth and fresh graduates. Therefore, in the years to come the Scholarship Program should consider enhancing its professional development component and developing an internship placement scheme targeting state administration at national and local levels, as well as the business sector.

The information in this study is organized in five sections. The first section presents general description of the LHP program and some statistical highlights on the pool of LHP beneficiaries. Section II presents details on the methodology of the study and its limitations. Sections III, IV, and V are focused on the three major study questions listed above. The main findings and recommendations are presented in the concluding section.

Section I - LHP Program General Statistics

The **Law and Humanities Program (LHP)** was launched in 2004 at the initiative and with the financial support of the Open Society Institute and the German “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” Foundation (EVZ). The initiative aimed to address the issue of ethnic Roma’s low enrollment in higher education in Eastern Europe, as well as the lack of a regional network of Roma intellectual elite who would be prepared with the necessary knowledge to advocate change. LHP was initially implemented within Open Society Institute and since 2007 - by Roma Education Fund. During the first three years the Program operated in four countries: Moldova, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine. Among all Eastern European countries where substantial numbers of Roma live, the initiative focused particularly on these countries because Roma communities living there suffered of forced labor and other injustices from the National-Socialist period, and the major purpose of EVZ - one of the two Program’s main donors - is making financial compensation available for those communities. In the fourth year, Poland was excluded from the Program because there was an alternative scholarship scheme available for young Roma there run by the Polish government.

The major activity of the LHP Program consisted in providing financial and professional development support to ethnic Roma enrolled for studies in accredited higher education institutions of their respective countries to students of all kind of academic specializations, but with priority given to those enrolled in social sciences and humanities (which explains the name of the Program). Exceptionally and at a limited level, vocational studies have also been supported, but only for specializations that could later lead to Bachelor (or equivalent) degrees. To make the implementation more efficient, REF partnered with one local NGO in each country that assigned a staff member to be responsible for the Program’s country coordination activity and ensure firsthand communication with beneficiaries at local level.

The access to higher education in the three countries is generally conditioned upon the successful graduation of upper secondary school level. All three countries started the implementation of Bologna system – Moldova and Ukraine by 2005, and Russia by 2007 – but the actual implementation is done at a different pace. In Moldova students generally study for 3-4 years for acquiring a Bachelor degree, for 1-2 years for a Master degree, and for 3-4 years for a Doctorate degree. In Russia many students are still enrolled in programs outside Bologna system, i.e. in continuous 5 years of higher education granting diplomas of “specialists” that are internationally equivalent to the Master degrees (which explains the higher percentage of Master-level LHP graduates in Russia reported in this study). In Ukraine along the 4-year Bachelor and 1.5 years Master degrees, there are two additional degree types: the “junior specialist” and the “specialist” levels. The former precedes the Bachelor and is equivalent to incomplete higher education, while the latter follows after Bachelor, but lasts shorter than a Master program although internationally is also equivalent to the Master degree.¹

In the last academic years the ratio of mainstream students enrolled in tuition-fee-paying places in the three countries was about 70% in Moldova, 55% in Russia, and 60% in Ukraine. Tuition fee amounts generally varied between 120 and 430 EUR in Moldova, between 700 and 3000 EUR in Russia, and between 500 and 3000 EUR in Ukraine. In all three countries students enrolled on tuition-free places may be selected for receiving monthly stipends, but their amounts are generally small: in Moldova state-sponsored student stipends are 30 - 40 EUR per month, in Russia they are 25 - 52 EUR, while in Ukraine they are 45 - 70 EUR².

LHP’s financial support:

All applicants accepted as LHP beneficiaries have been entitled to financial support via a scholarship. The calculation of the scholarship amount was initially based on the assessment needs per country, but it evolved over the years. In the first years the Program participants received between 1000 and 1300 USD per academic year,

¹ See Annexes 4a, 4b, and 4c for more details on the education systems in the three countries.

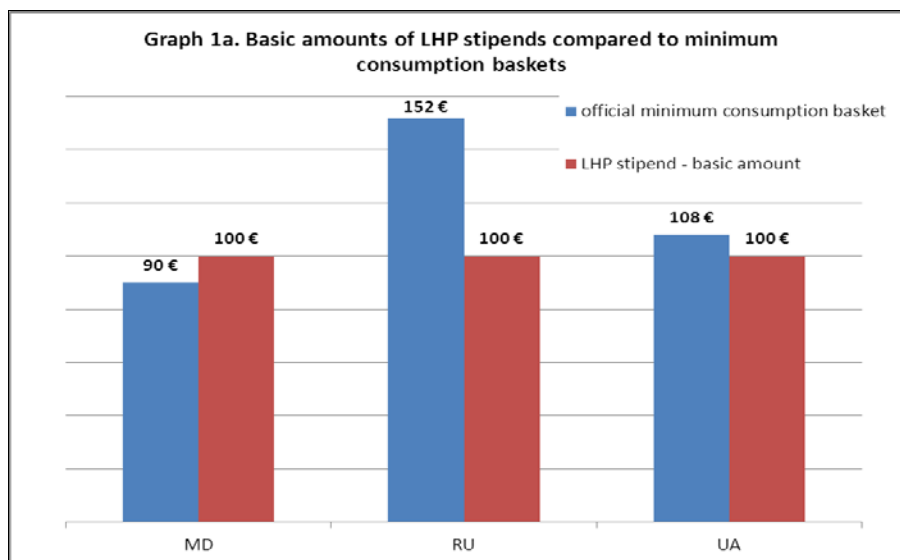
² Data sources: Data source for Moldova: Education in Republic of Moldova. Statistical Publication 2010/2011. National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; Russia: Education in Russia 2008. Statistical Bulletin. Moscow State University of Instrument Engineering and Computer Science, 2009; Ukraine: Ukraine State Statistic Service 2001/2012.

depending on the country, costs of tuition fees, and academic achievements. In the 2007-08 academic year the scholarship amounts were increased and most students received between 1300 and 2500 USD per year, while a few students with low academic achievements received only 500 USD as a social support to encourage continuation of studies and motivate for higher achievements.

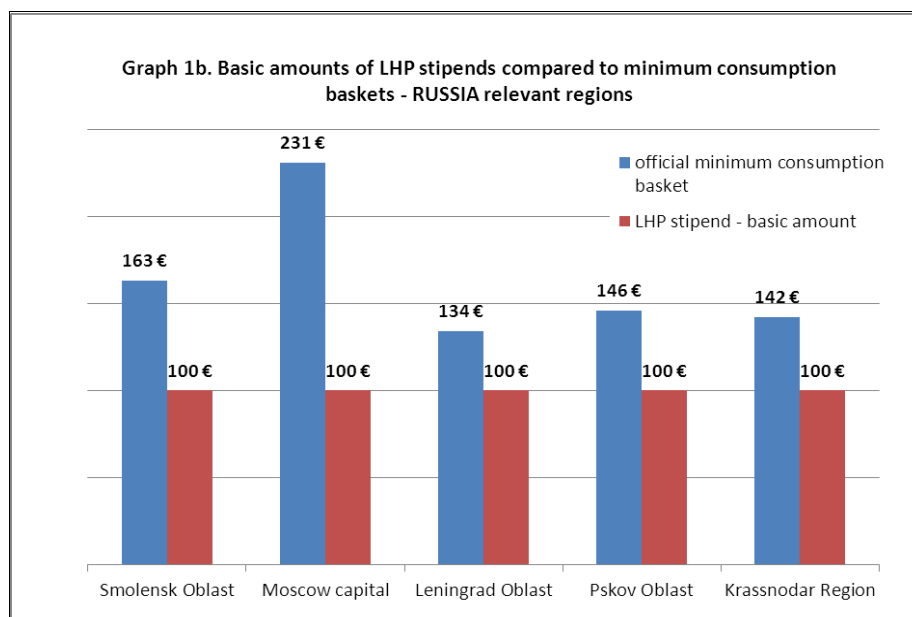
As of 2010, the scholarship amounts are calculated based on a fixed sum for helping with the living costs (1000 EUR in 2010; 1300 EUR in the years after), to which an additional financial support (limited to maximum 1000 EUR) is added for covering tuition fee costs. Hence, throughout the years and depending on the country, beneficiaries' scholarship support varied between 500 USD and 2300 EUR. On average and at Program level, the annual scholarship amount for an LHP beneficiary in the recent years has been about **1650 EUR** (i.e. **165 EUR** per academic month), including both the amount for tuition fee and for living expenses.

At country level, these average amounts have been slightly different because tuition fee costs differed from one country to another, beneficiaries from Russia usually having the most expensive tuition fees and therefore the highest amounts of financial support. Hence, in the last 4 years on average Russian students got 1882 EUR annual scholarship (i.e. 188 EUR per academic month), Ukrainian students –1631 EUR per year (or 163 EUR per month), while Moldovan students –1543 EUR per year (or 154 EUR per month). To have an idea of the actual value of the LHP financial support in each country and within specific regions of the country, we compared the average LHP amounts with the local costs of living and with the local average monthly income. The comparison with the local costs of living can give a hint about which part of the monthly basic costs the LHP stipend could cover in theory. The local average monthly incomes can put the LHP scholarship amount into perspective from point of view of how much of average income would have to be spent by beneficiaries' families on their higher education studies if not covered by LHP support.

For the local costs of living we use the official figures for the minimum consumption basket, calculated as the monthly amount needed for an adult person to cover basic living costs. Since the LHP stipend is composed of the living costs amount and tuition fee amount, in Graphs 1a and 1b we compare the amounts of minimum consumption basket with the part of LHP scholarship for living costs that was 100 EUR on average. Graph 1a illustrates the comparison in all countries, while Graph 1b illustrates it only for Russia and for the regions with most LHP beneficiaries. A separate Graph for Russia is needed because of the considerably bigger size of the country and variations in living costs.³

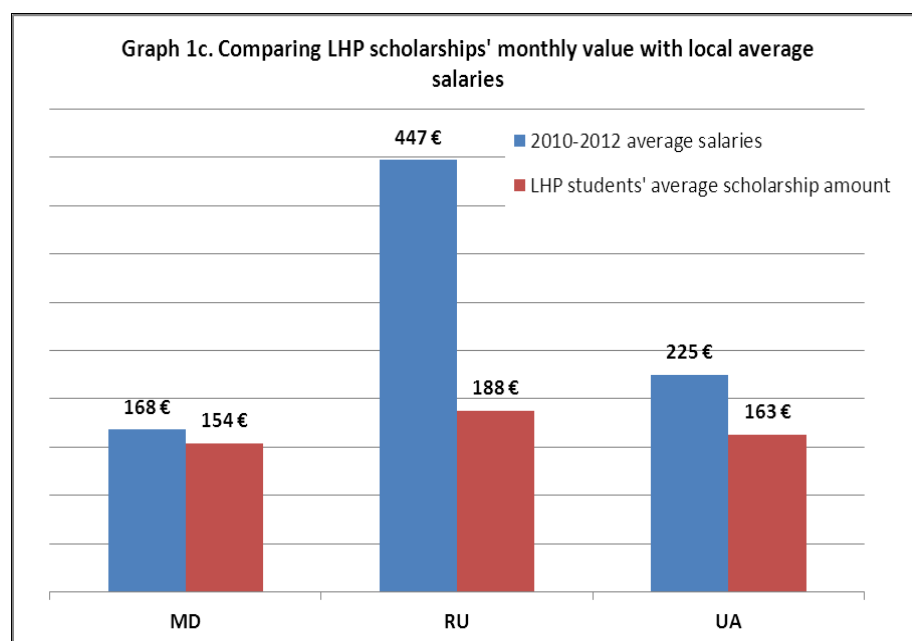


³ Data source for minimum subsistence: Federal Service of State Statistics of Russian Federation: <http://www.gks.ru/gis/tables/UROV-6.htm>; Statistics Bureau of Moldova: <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=4206#idc=429&>; Ministry of Finance of Ukraine: <http://index.minfin.com.ua/index/wage/>.

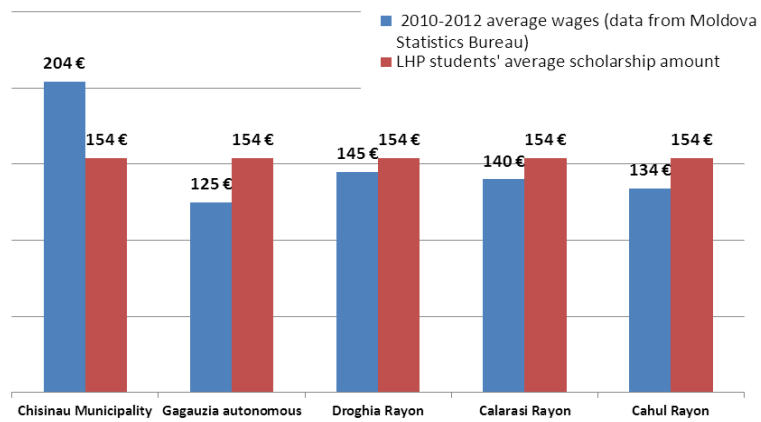


The data reveal that the basic amounts of LHP stipend was comparable with the minimum consumption baskets in Ukraine and Moldova and that it covered between 60% and 75% of it in Russian regions, except for the 5 LHP beneficiaries living in Moscow for whom the basic amount of LHP stipend equaled to 43% of local minimum consumption basket.

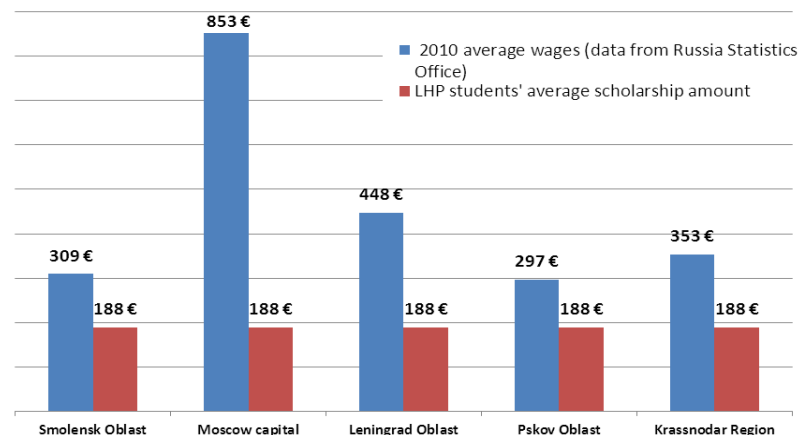
For the average monthly incomes we make the comparison with the total amount of LHP support, i.e. including both living costs and coverage for tuition fee, since these would be the amounts that beneficiaries' families/households would have needed to spend if they were not supported by LHP. The amounts for local monthly incomes used for the comparison in the Graphs 1c-1f below are the ones reported by the local statistics offices. Since there are data on income available at regional level for each of the three countries, Graphs 1d-1f illustrate the comparison within the relevant regions of each country, i.e. regions where most LHP beneficiaries reside(d).



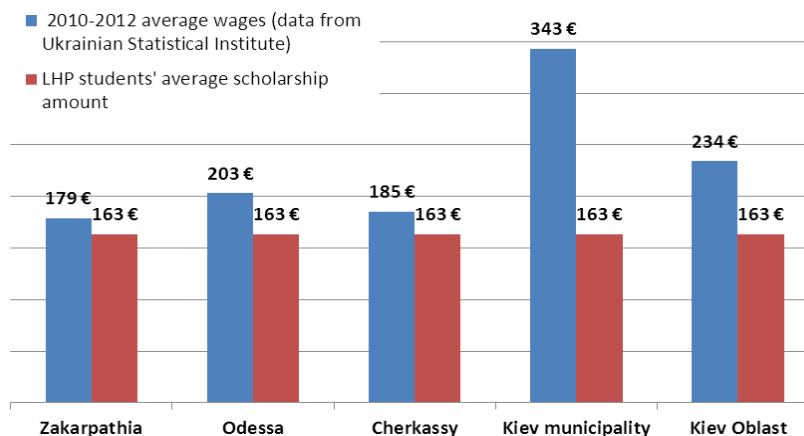
Graph 1d. Comparing LHP scholarships' monthly value with local average salaries in the relevant regions of MOLDOVA



Graph 1e. Comparing LHP scholarships' monthly value with local average salaries in the relevant regions of RUSSIA



Graph 1f. Comparing LHP scholarships' monthly value with local average salaries in the relevant regions of UKRAINE



The Graphs reveal that at country level, the LHP financial support is equivalent to 92% of the average income in Moldova, to 72% of the average income in Ukraine, and to 42% of it in Russia. The in-country graphs show that in capitals the average incomes are higher than in provinces, which means that the value of the LHP support for beneficiaries living in provincial regions is higher than for those living in capitals, especially in case of Kiev and Moscow. However, as discussed below only 12% of Ukrainian beneficiaries are from Kiev and only 6% of Russian beneficiaries are from Moscow; therefore, for majority of beneficiaries the LHP stipend had a relatively high value if compared to the official average wages.

LHP's support for academic and professional development:

In addition to the financial support, since the beginning of its existence the Program engaged its beneficiaries in extra-curricular activities. In the first years, LHP had a tutorship component offering support to students in challenging subjects and helping them improve their academic standing. In addition, the Program had an in-country internship component, offering additional funds to students willing to attend summer internships within their countries. Furthermore, each year some 2-3 students received support to attend internships outside their home countries, in companies or organizations working in their field of studies. The Program has also implemented a foreign language courses support component, covering the costs of such courses for part of its students. LHP also covered the financial costs for participation in national or regional conferences, symposia, summer or winter schools for some of the LHP beneficiaries.

In addition to the above, at least once per year the Program organized conference- and training- events with the participation of ongoing beneficiaries from all LHP countries, since most students from the region are fluent in Russian and therefore are able to communicate among each other. During these events, the Program combined professional development training with team building activities, in order to enhance the communication among Roma students across the three countries and hence encourage the formation of a program network for further professional collaboration. In the recent years, LHP intensified its efforts in building a Roma youth network within LHP, by offering training and financial support to groups of ongoing and former participants in the Program for the implementation of small-scale projects aimed at the development of Roma communities in their regions. As part of the efforts to develop REF SP's Alumni and Beneficiary Network, REF SP has established an e-group through which former and current LHP beneficiaries communicate via emails.

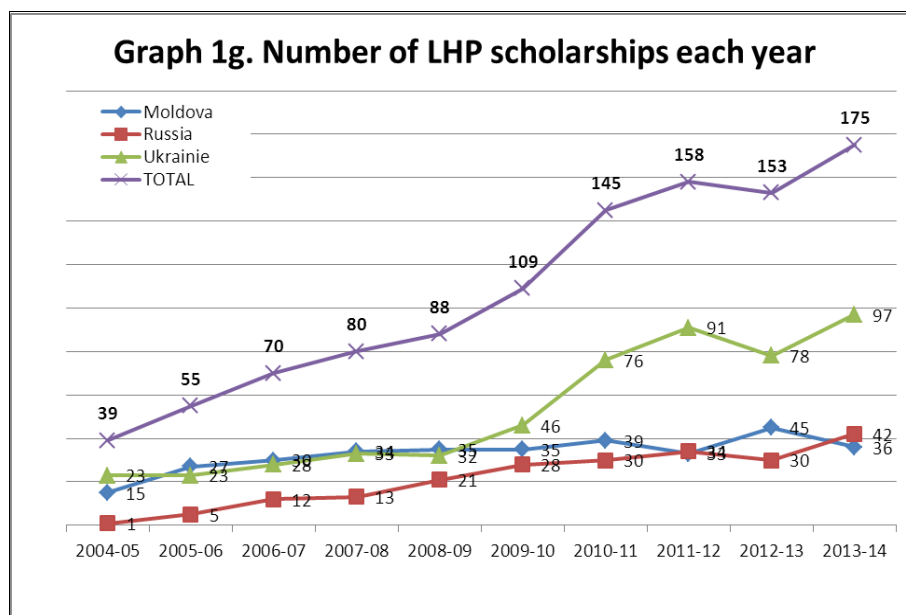
The degree in which former and current LHP beneficiaries perceive these additional LHP components as helpful is analyzed in Section 3.

LHP's number of scholarships and number of beneficiaries

Since 2004 when the Program was launched, **552 people** applied for it at least once. Majority of these applicants were from Ukraine (297 people, or 54%), followed by Moldova (156 people, or 28%), and Russia (99 people, or 18%). The respective per-country ratios are not reflective of the relative Roma population size, since according to the local censuses Russia is the LHP country with the largest number of Roma population, followed by Ukraine, and then by Moldova⁴.

The number of applicants increased with every year in all countries, evolving from 54 in 2004 to 93 in 2008 and eventually to 228 in 2013. Thanks to the availability of funds, the Program managed to maintain a generous acceptance rate over the years, despite this increase in demand for participation in the Program from one year to another. Until now, in most cases of rejected applications the main reason was the non-compliance with the eligibility criteria. Therefore, as reflected in Graph 1g, the number of accepted applications has also increased with every additional year.

⁴ According to population censuses, there are 12271 Roma in Moldova (2004), 47600 in Ukraine (2001), and 204958 in Russia (2010).



Since the Program exists, **413 people** benefited of LHP support, among them 211 (51%) being from Ukraine, 122 (30%) - from Moldova, and 80 (19%) - from Russia. According to the REF policies, the participation in the Program is annual based and it has to be renewed every year. This principle has been introduced as a way to keep students accountable on their academic progress and filter out those repeating the year or dropping out. Therefore, students could receive support several years in a row, but not longer than a maximum of 8 years, and only for one single degree of the same kind.⁵ Among the 413 participants, 35% have been in the Program for only one year and 8% - for 8 years. Only 11% of beneficiaries were in the program for more than 4 years, majority of them being from Ukraine. On average, beneficiaries spent 2-3 years in the Program in each of the three countries.

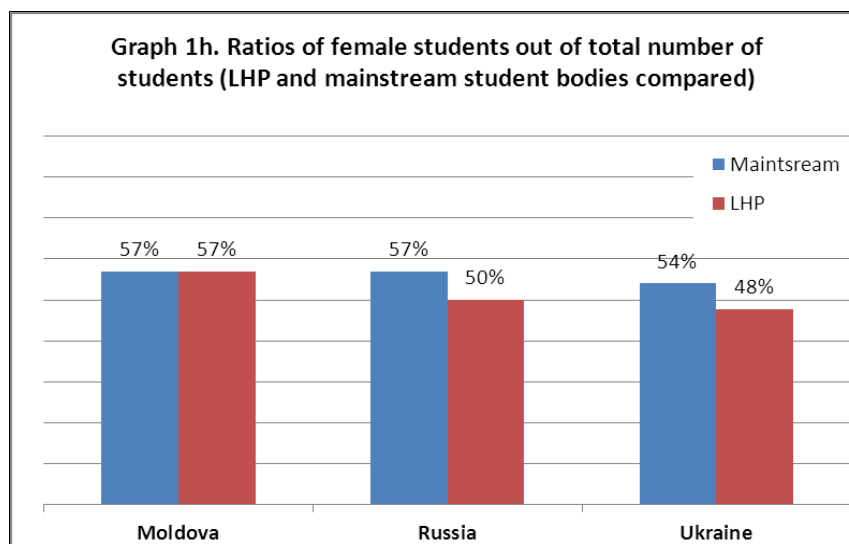
At the moment of this study (i.e. 2013-2014 academic year) around 42% of the 413 LHP participants are still in the Program; Table 1a presents the country-level figures.

Table 1a.: LHP Participants' Status as of January 2014				
	MD	RU	UA	Total
Participants who are not in the Program anymore	86	38	114	238
Participants who are still in the Program	36	42	97	175
All participants in the Program	122	80	211	413

At the level of the entire Program, the proportion of male and female among participants is almost equal, while at the level of countries one can observe slight predominance of female participants in Moldova and of male participants in Ukraine. Graph 1h compares the ratios of female students among LHP participants with the one among mainstream student body⁶ and it reveals that in Ukraine and Russia the female students are somewhat underrepresented among LHP participants as compared to the mainstream student body.

⁵ For instance, students willing to get a second Bachelor degree could not renew their LHP support if they had gotten LHP support for their first Bachelor degree.

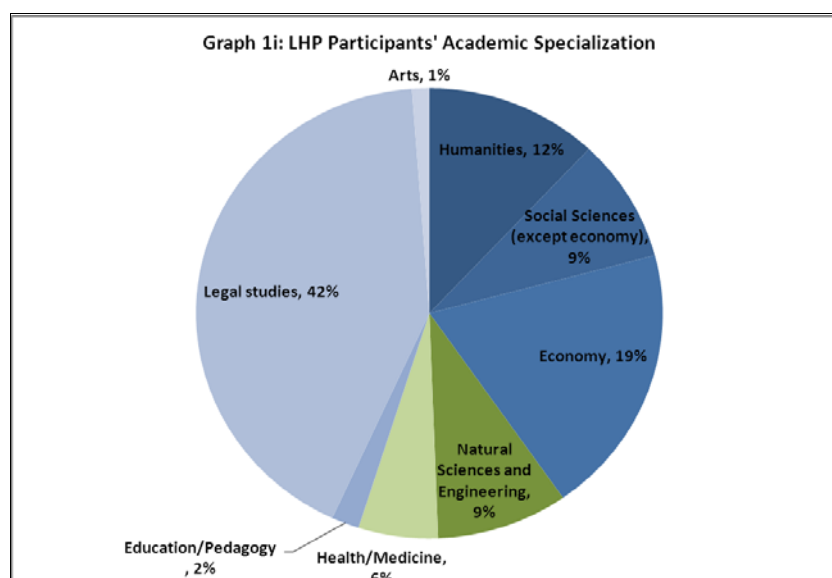
⁶ Data on mainstream student population: UNESCO education statistics database, 2005-2012.



Specializations:

The main focus of the Program used to be on legal studies and humanities, which explains why it is called “Law and Humanities” and which also explains the big number of beneficiaries in legal studies (see below). However, over time the Program became accessible to all range of accredited tertiary-level specializations, although its name was kept unchanged.⁷ In the recent years LHP had applications from a range of specializations; however, the applications from students enrolled or willing to enrol in social sciences or humanities are still in absolute majority.

Graph 1i illustrates the distribution per categories of specialization of the 413 former and current LHP beneficiaries. It reveals that until now only 15% of beneficiaries were enrolled in “hard fields” such as engineering and medicine, the remaining 85% being enrolled in “soft fields” such as humanities, social sciences, and arts. These figures characteristic for the entire Program are comparable with the one at the level of each country. Compared to the mainstream student body of EU-27, LHP Roma students are too little present in “hard fields”, since the average ratio of “hard field” students in EU-27 is 39%⁸, i.e. 2.6 times higher than the one among Roma students in LHP.



⁷ Some of the participants in focus groups and interviews criticized the title of the Program as being misleading and discouraging for potential applicants willing to pursue studies in fields such as science, engineering, or medicine.

⁸ Education statistics for 2010, EUROSTAT

On the one hand, the predominant presence of LHP beneficiaries in the “soft fields” of studies is a positive phenomenon, since these are the types of specializations teaching to young Roma intellectuals the necessary tools to become future advocates of Roma rights and policies of Roma communities’ inclusion. On the other hand, the literature on the topic suggests that graduates of “soft fields” face more risks related to job placement, since compared to the graduates of “hard fields”, those graduating in “soft fields” take longer to find a first significant job, are more often unemployed, and have generally lower income⁹. But there is no evidence proving whether these conclusions from the literature also apply to the job market realities in post-Soviet Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, therefore in order to know whether graduates of “soft fields” find it more difficult to find a decent job in the three countries require further research.

Regional distribution:

In its beneficiaries’ selection process the Program has never given advantage to one geographic region or to another within each country. However, the outreach campaigns were tailored in accordance with the geographic distribution of Roma population within countries, to make the geographic distribution of LHP beneficiaries in line with it. The three country maps in Annexes 1a-1c illustrate the geographic distribution of Roma population in each country (through the colour legends in the maps) according to the most recent available data and compare it with the geographic distribution of LHP beneficiaries (red bubbles in the maps). The data on Roma population is based on national censuses in Ukraine and Russia, and on estimates made for a UNDP study in Moldova. One should keep in mind that all these figures are greatly debated – especially the ones based on census – since they rely on self-declaration of ethnic identity. It is generally believed that many Roma avoid declaring their ethnic belonging to census data collectors for fear of stigmatization, therefore the geographical distribution of Roma population represented on these maps might not entirely reflect the reality. However, until new and more accurate data are available, we make use of the information that exists.

The maps in annexes reveal that Roma population is most territorially dispersed in Russia, where the region with highest ratio of Roma – Stavropol Kray – hosts only 10% of Roma living in Russia. In Ukraine Roma population is rather scattered too, however Zakarpathia Oblast hosts 29% of Roma living in Ukraine. In Moldova the Roma population is more compact, since 66% of Roma live in the northern part of the country, with 35% residing in Soroca rayon.

As for the comparison with LHP beneficiaries’ geographical distribution, the maps show a relatively good fit in Ukraine, where the region with 29% of Roma population is also the one with 23% of LHP Ukrainian beneficiaries. However, the eastern regions Donetsk and Dnepropetrovsk are underrepresented in the Program. In Russia, Smolensk region is the home of 25% of LHP Russian beneficiaries, at the same time according to the official population census only 2% of Roma in Russia live there. In contrast, the Program never had beneficiaries from Stavropol Kray with relatively big Roma population size. In Moldova the capital Chisinau is overrepresented in the Program, while Soroca rayon with 35% of Roma in Moldova is the home of only 2% of LHP beneficiaries.

Most cases of regional underrepresentation can be explained by the low ratio of secondary school graduation within Roma population, which is the necessary condition for accessing higher education. The recent decision by the Program donors to allow vocational-level students participate in the Program at a rate of up to 10% from all scholarships available will certainly help the Program recruit more beneficiaries from underrepresented regions and hence make the geographical distribution of LHP participants more in line with that of Roma population. This is because in these countries students can enrol in vocational studies also with completed low-secondary education.

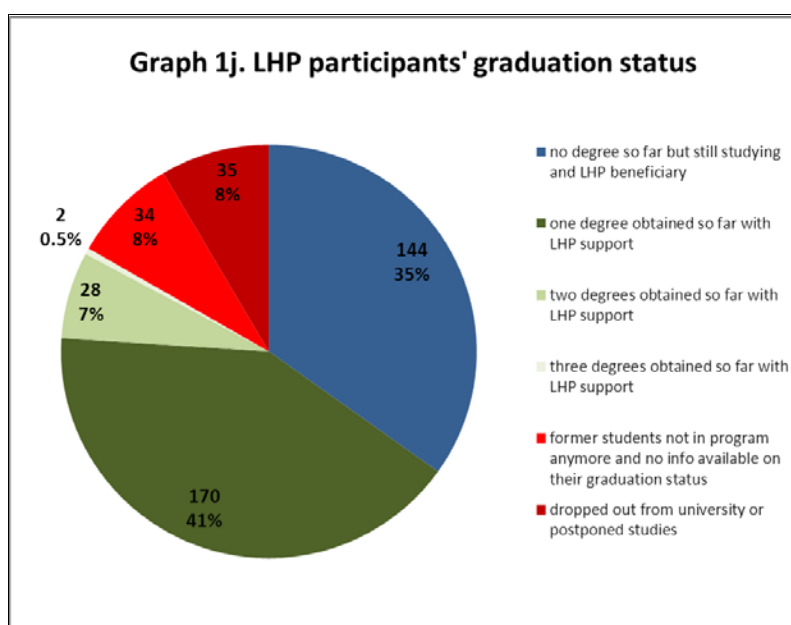
The geographic distribution of LHP participants across regions is relevant because Roma students coming from regions with higher concentration of Roma population are more likely to have social and family networks rooted within Roma communities than students coming from regions with lower concentration of Roma population. The more the personal network of a student is rooted within the Roma community, the more likely s/he will be to play

⁹ Some relevant readings on the topic: Klein, M. (2010) Mechanisms for the Effect of Field of Study on the Transition from Higher Education to Work, Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung (MZES) Working Papers, 130.; Reimer, D. & Steinmetz, S. (2009) Highly educated but in the wrong field? Educational specialisation and labour market risks of men and women in Spain and Germany in higher education, *European Societies*, 11, 723-746.

the role of an “agent of change and development” after university graduation and constitute a valuable social capital for his/her less fortunate peers.

Graduation Status:

From the 413 individuals who participated in LHP so far, **200 (48%)** obtained at least tertiary level degree with complete or partial LHP support, while 144 did not graduate yet but are still in the Program. Also, 35 beneficiaries (8%) dropped out their university studies before graduation or postponed graduation for later. Graph 1j presents further details on LHP participants’ graduation status until now.



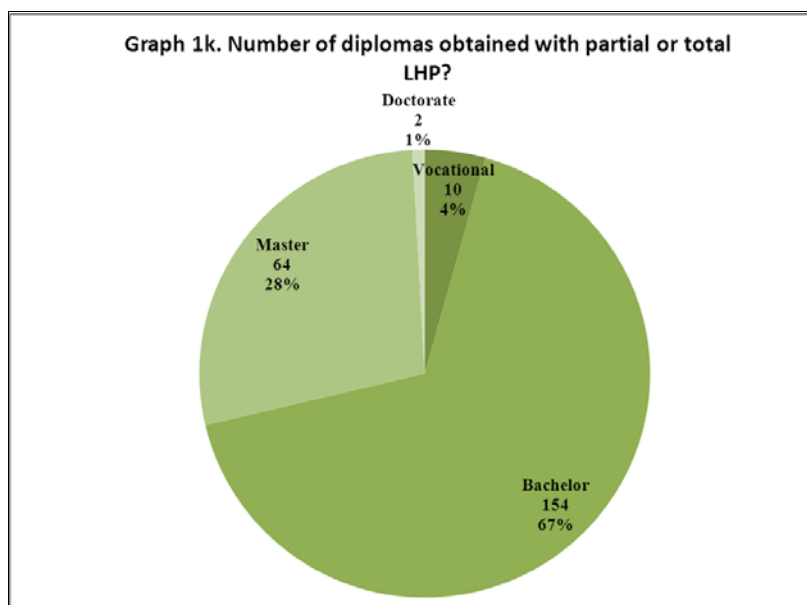
Among the 35 who dropped out or postponed their studies, absolute majority (25) are from Moldova. The main reason for abandoning or postponing studies stated by the respective Moldovan students was migration abroad together with the entire family or alone, to get better opportunities for employment.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

Whether the 8% of dropout rate in the Program is a big or a small number is relative to the initial expectations of the Program on what a “normal” dropout rate should be (since targeting 0 dropout rate is in principle not realistic). Unfortunately the initial Program concept documents did not specify the dropout rates to be expected; therefore it is hard to judge it retrospectively. However, the dropout rate in LHP could be compared to that in the mainstream population. A recent European Commission study based on 2008 data reveals that the university completion rate in Russia is 80% (i.e. dropout or postponement rate is 20%). Similar data for Moldova and Ukraine are unfortunately unavailable, but one could make a judgement based on the average university completion rate for Europe in general, which is 72% (therefore, dropout/postponement rate is 28%). The countries which according to the same EC study had the highest university completion rates in 2008 were Armenia and Portugal, with 95% and respectively 86% completion rates (i.e. 5% and 9% dropout/postponement). Compared to these figures, the 8% of dropout rate in LHP program is not that high.¹⁰

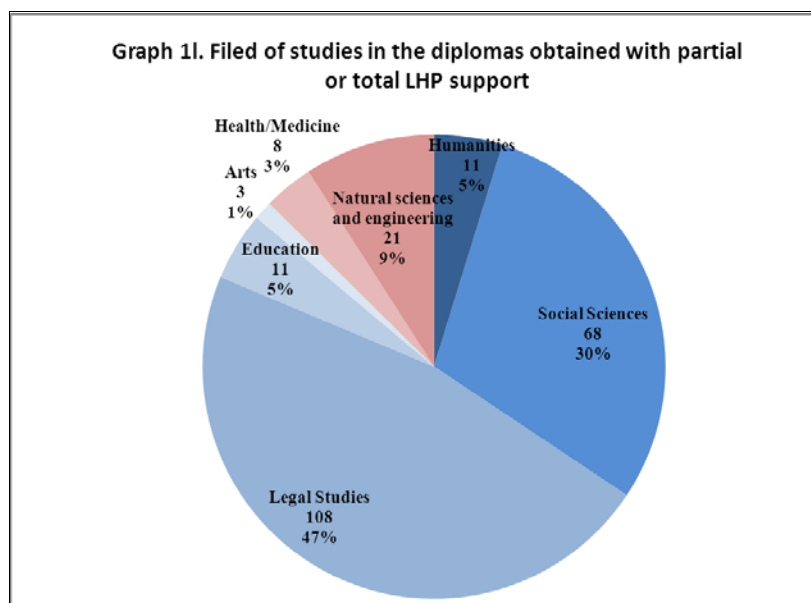
Graph 1j reveals that majority of successful graduates received LHP support for one single higher education diploma. However, some obtained two degrees with partial or total LHP support and two participants obtained even three degrees. Graph 1k shows details on the number of higher education diplomas obtained so far by the 199

¹⁰ “The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report”, European Commission Study, p. 106

graduates and the respective level of studies (vocational, Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate). Overall, the LHP Program contributed to the attainment of **229 diplomas**, among them **219** being at higher education level.



Graph 1l shows that majority of these diplomas are in the “soft fields”, notably in legal studies and social sciences.



Section II - Methodological Considerations:

In order to trace LHP beneficiaries' academic and professional trajectory, the authors combined quantitative and qualitative research techniques. For the quantitative part, the authors implemented an online survey, while for the qualitative one they organized focus groups and personal interviews. The target group for both qualitative and quantitative parts was composed of all former LHP beneficiaries and of the current beneficiaries who have been in the LHP Program for at least two complete academic years. Using these criteria of selection, the target group for the study was eventually composed of **305 people**. All the 305 have been invited to complete the online survey, 24 participated in three focus groups – one in Russia and two in Moldova¹¹, while 10 participated in personal interviews. The criteria used for participants in the focus groups are detailed below.

General considerations about the evaluation design:

In order to understand what results were caused by a program, we need to apply a **counterfactual evaluation**, i.e. to know what would have happened had the program not been implemented. The ideal would be to have a **control group** with the treatment or experimental group, but in practice the ideal design cannot be perfectly implemented since the perfect equivalence of the experimental and control groups can never be fully achieved. Different groups are made up of different subjects and observations can happen at different points in time. The basic principle of experimentation is to compare two groups - one exposed to the program and one not - and attributing the differences between the groups to the program.

The most rigorous design is called *experimental* or *randomized design*. The in-between design is called *quasi experimental design*. In the latter type the treatment group is usually already given and the comparison group is selected to match the treatment group as closely as possible. At the other end of the scale are the *implicit designs*, which are typically weak in terms of measuring changes and attributing them to a program. With implicit designs a measurement is made after exposure to the program and assumptions are made about conditions before the program. Any change from what was assumed to exist before the program is attributed to the program: it is assumed that an unspecified comparison group would experience no change, or at least not all of the change observed in the treatment group.

In case of our study, there was no chance to use an experimental design. To find another group of Roma students in each of the three countries with the same characteristics as the LHP participants would have exceeded the tools available for this study, since none of these countries collects information on students' ethnic background. Other solution could have been to make a control group from the pool of rejected applicants, but in LHP most of eligible applicants have been accepted. Therefore, considering the lack of better alternatives, this study is based on the *implicit design*.¹² Implicit designs are the most frequently used designs in social programs' impact analysis, but are also the least rigorous. Often no reliable conclusion can be drawn from such designs. In the cases where the program can be argued logically to have caused the outcome, the implicit design can work. This design is basically a post-program design with no control group. The design looks as follows:

	Exposure to Program	Measurement After
Treatment group	X	0 ₁

When no pre-program measures exist and no obvious control group is available, the implicit design is the only design that can be implemented. Even in that case there are possibilities to convert it into an implicit quasi-experimental design. One possibility is to make a theoretical control group design where the evaluator can assume the result in the absence of the program. In our case, if any data on young Roma people's unemployment rate and educational level existed in the given countries, that could be a benchmark to assess the impact of the program.

¹¹Initially the authors planned to organize two focus groups in Ukraine as well, but because of the political crisis and violent clashes in Ukraine in the first months of 2014, they had to be annulled. The authors organized personal interviews with 5 former and 3 current Ukrainian LHP beneficiaries instead.

¹² More info on types of program evaluation design can be found here: <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cee/pubs/meth/pem-mep03-eng.asp>

Since such data are missing for Russia and Ukraine, we could not apply this solution systematically. Such information exists only for Moldova in the UNDP/EC/WB 2011 Regional Roma Survey, which contains data on academic and employment status of young Roma in regions with Roma's compact settlement¹³, but they were collected in periods where LHP program existed already for some years, therefore they could not serve as a baseline for comparison. Other way to improve the design is to have retrospective pre-program measure design. We asked the respondents about whether they could have studied without the scholarship and what kind of other support but LHP stipend they could have relied upon. We also asked them to estimate directly the incremental effect of the program in several fields.

The online survey:

For the quantitative part, beneficiaries were asked via an online questionnaire integrated in the survey software SurveyMonkey about their employment status, types and extent of support they got from LHP, their opinion on the Program, and their personal data with close-ended questions. The questionnaire (Appendix 2) was designed by the authors of this study, together with fellow workers of REF and keeping in mind the feedback from two former LHP beneficiaries on earlier test versions of the survey. Based on the main goals of the tracer study, the authors elaborated four major types of questions, referring to:

1. Personal data (gender, nationality, age, parental educational level, etc.)
2. Information about the LHP scholarship program (how many times they applied, have they ever been rejected, about the sum of the scholarship, participation in other programs, field of study, etc.)
3. Information about the objective results (are they still in the program, did they finish their studies, are they employed)
4. Subjective results (how they evaluate the program, change in Roma identity, etc.)

The questionnaire was available in all Program languages – Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian, and in English. The data collection phase lasted for 5 weeks, between October and November 2013. To boost the response rate, after the initial invitations to participate at the survey, respondents were re-contacted individually via email and phone calls. With all these efforts, out of the 305 people invited to take part in the survey, 140 (46%) completed the questionnaire at least partly and 111 (36%) completed it entirely. Table 2a presents details on the response rates per country.

Table 2a: Response Rates per Country							
country	invited to complete survey	participated to the survey (complete and incomplete)		completed at least until identity questions part (i.e. last section)		completed until the very last question	
		No.	% from total invited	No.	% from total invited	No.	% from total invited
MD	97	37	38%	37	38%	36	37%
RU	53	30	57%	21	40%	21	40%
UA	155	73	47%	55	35%	54	35%
TOTAL	305	140	46%	113	37%	111	36%

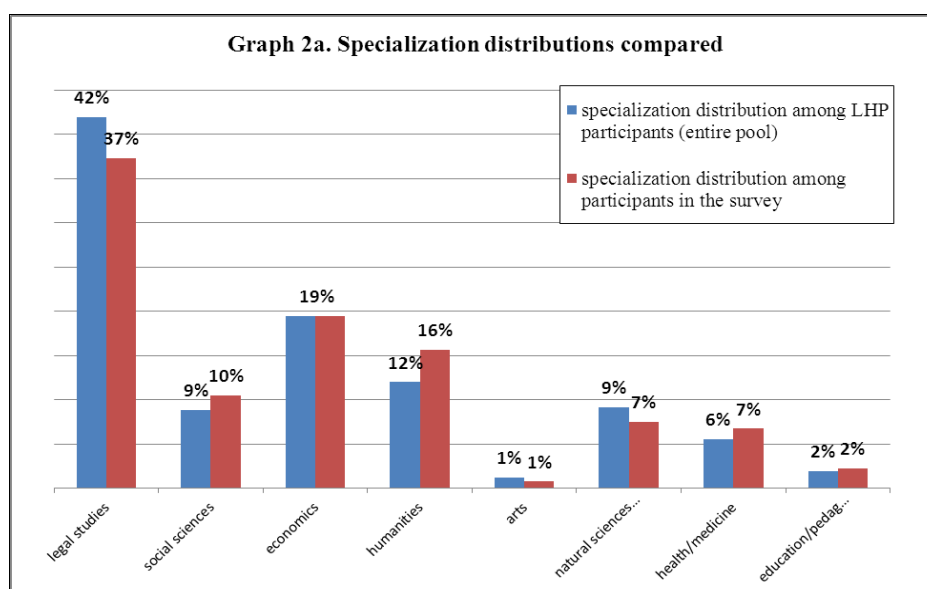
Among all respondents, 67 people (48%) are still beneficiaries of the Program¹⁴, while 73 (52%) are not part of the Program anymore. Table 2b contains the respective country-level figures. This is comparable with the total pool of former and current beneficiaries in LHP presented in Table 1a, since 43% of all those who benefited of LHP support are still LHP beneficiaries. Therefore, from the point of view of status in the Program (still-beneficiary vs. former beneficiary), the sample of respondents is representative of the entire group of LHP participants.

¹³ UNDP/EC/WB Regional Roma Survey 2011

¹⁴ To reduce the bias in responses from ongoing LHP beneficiaries, the survey was made anonymous and the respondents were notified about anonymity at the beginning of the survey.

Table 2b: Ratios of former beneficiaries and current beneficiaries among respondents per country					
country	total who completed the survey at least partly	are currently in the program at least for the 3rd year		already graduated from the program	
		No.	% from total invited	No.	% from total invited
MD	37	17	46%	20	54%
RU	30	13	43%	17	57%
UA	73	37	51%	36	49%
TOTAL	140	67	48%	73	52%

The sample is representative of the entire group of LHP participants on specialization distributions as well, with only slight overrepresentation of humanities and underrepresentation of legal studies, as Graph 2a illustrates.



There are some differences between the group of survey respondents and the entire group of LHP participants from point of view of country of origin and gender, since in the group of survey respondents Moldova is underrepresented (26% against 31% in the total pool of LHP participants) and females are overrepresented (60% against 57%). Therefore, to make our sample representative to gender and nationality, a combined weight was created and used in the analysis, as presented in Table 2c.

Table 2c. Combined weights for gender and nationality				
Respondents	MD	RU	UA	Total
Male	10%	7%	23%	40%
Female	22%	13%	25%	60%
Total	32%	20%	48%	100%
Whole population	MD	RU	UA	Total
Male	13%	10%	27%	49%
Female	17%	10%	24%	51%
Total	29%	19%	51%	100%

What cannot be repaired is that the sample of respondents was not made by random selection since there was a self-selection among LHP beneficiaries invited to complete the survey on whether to participate in it or not, therefore there it might be a self-selection bias (e.g. presumably the respondents willing to complete the questionnaire are the most satisfied with the Program).

The focus groups and interviews:

The qualitative part of the analysis is based on 3 focus groups conducted in Moldova and Russia in January and February 2014. In Moldova there have been 2 focus groups with 9 participants in each; in Russia there was one focus group with 6 participants. In addition, 2 personal interviews were conducted with 2 LHP participants – one from Moldova and one from Russia – who were in the Program in its first year (2004). The initial plan was to conduct two focus groups in Ukraine as well. But because of the political crisis and mass demonstrations with violent clashes in the country in the period for which focus groups were to be held (January-February 2014), the authors had to replace the focus groups with 8 personal interviews with former LHP participants. Therefore, the qualitative information in this study is based on both focus groups and interviews.

The participants for the focus groups and interviews were selected from the main target group of 305 students eligible to participate in the study. While inviting participants to the focus groups, we took in consideration the group diversity, based on the following criteria: still in the program or not; currently employed or not; ever employed or not; male/female; studied specialization; grew up in urban or rural area; and year of birth. Based on these criteria, among all 24 focus group participants 62% are still LHP beneficiaries, 42% are currently unemployed, 13% have never been employed, 63% were female, 33% were in legal studies, 42% grew up in rural areas, and only one was 22 years old (i.e. the theoretical age of BA-level graduation), the rest were older.

Section III - Tracing LHP Beneficiaries' Academic Path:

Most of LHP applicants – as we were informed in the focus groups – heard about the Program from the members of their extended family or from their broader network (neighbours, friends of the family, and classmates at high school). It is very typical that brothers or sisters or some other relatives (uncle) took already part in the Program and served as example for other participants. Some of them got information about LHP from Roma NGOs. Only one of them told that the headmaster of the high school turned his/her attention to the Program after having seen the announcement. Media played a relatively low role in spreading information, one of the participants heard about the Program from the radio; one of them found it through Google. As the Program develops, the alumni also advertise the Program.

Focus group and interview respondents agreed that now it is quite easy to get information on how to get to LHP; they also admitted that it was less easy when they were entering the Program years ago. It was pointed out by several participants in the qualitative part of the research that LHP-related information should not only be spread through NGO offices, but also directly within Roma communities. Some interview and focus group participants mentioned that the information is spread only in certain Roma circles and networks, which is especially the case in Russia. There are several subgroups of Roma in Russia and the most traditional one (Kotlari) is represented only by two participants in the Program. Some of the participants at the focus groups in Russia underlined that participants of the Program tend to come from the same regions.

As far as LHP application procedures are concerned, it was noted that it is important for potential participants to be able to get help when applying to LHP for the first time. Moldovan focus group participants in particular noted that even if someone knows about the Program, the application procedure is complicated. Applicants do not know how to fill in the application and schools are not very helpful.

“There is lot of people who do not know the information and cannot fill in the application. The procedure is really complicated, you should know the documents to give and know the procedure. It is difficult get the certificates, but even the school s do not know how to do it.” (Focus group, Moldova)

In Russia some focus group participants stated that some of the application questions are too delicate and to compose an essay on Roma problems is challenging.

“My cousin will apply this year, we live in different cities, but I collect information for her and help her with the essay that she has to produce about Roma problems.” (Focus group, Russia)

As for motivation to continue studies, some of the interview and focus group participants mentioned that they were motivated to attend higher education to help Roma people, either because they were discriminated, or because they already had a model for it in the family. Having a good job was also among the mentioned reasons.

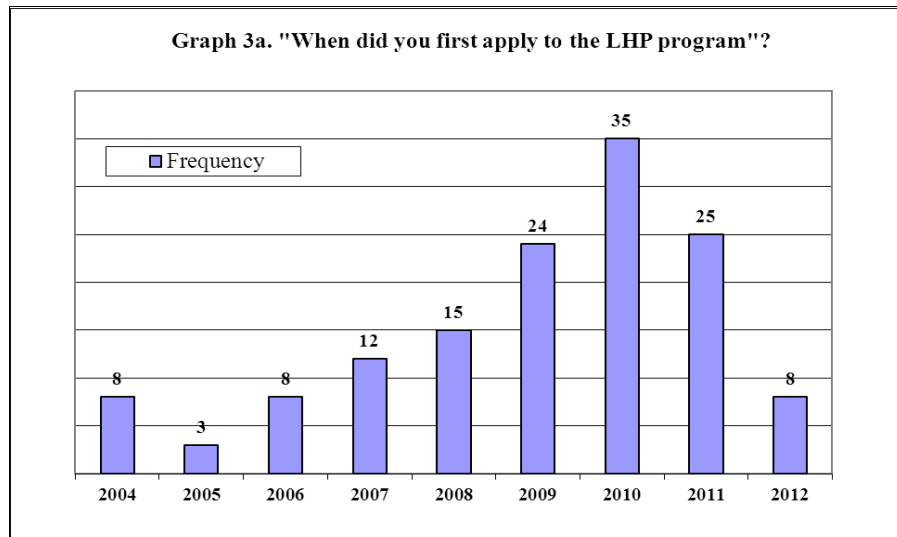
“I always wanted to become a lawyer fighting against discrimination.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“When I finished school I realized that Roma people need help to integrate them into local community.” (Focus group, Russia)

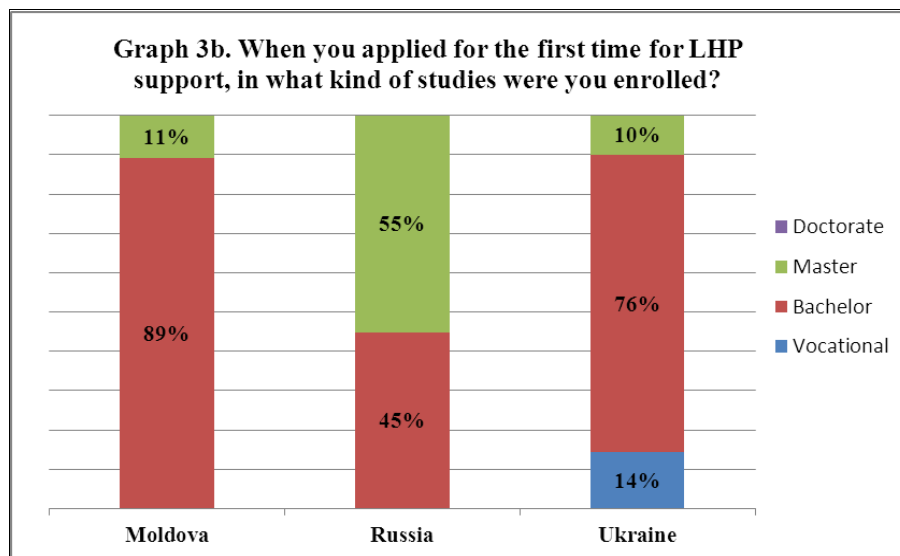
“I fill that I’m obliged to do it for my people’s sake.” (Interview, Ukraine)

“I had no patriotic intentions; I wanted to choose a useful vocation.” (Focus group, Russia).

Almost half of the 140 respondents are still in the Program (see Table 2b). Only 9% answered that their application was ever rejected, the highest proportion being indicated by Ukrainians. Most respondents applied to the Program between 2009 and 2011 and on average they spent 3.5 years in it, which is more than the average of years spent in LHP in the entire population of LHP beneficiaries (see Section 1). Graph 3a shows the distribution of respondents per year when they applied to LHP for the first time.

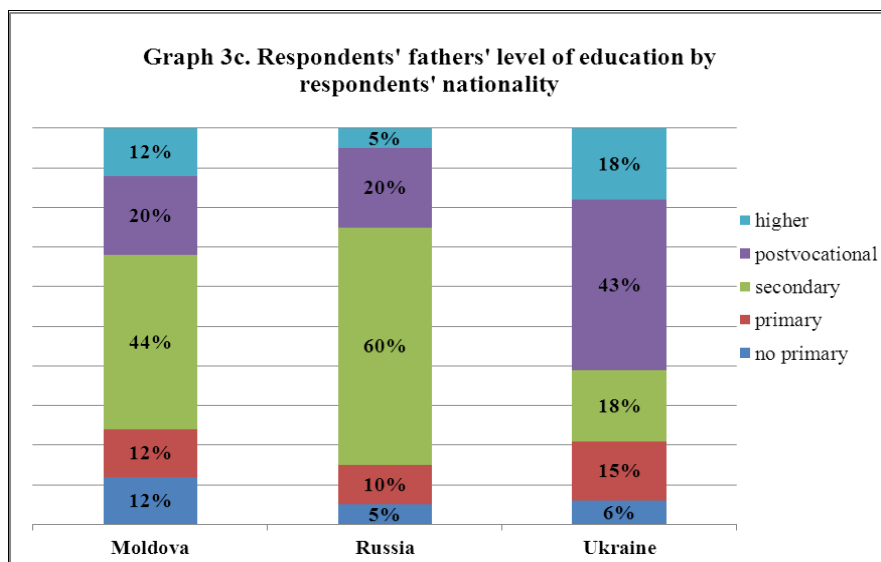


According to the answers of the respondents in the online survey, there are differences between the nationalities as to the level of the program in which they were enrolled when they solicited the LHP support for the first time.



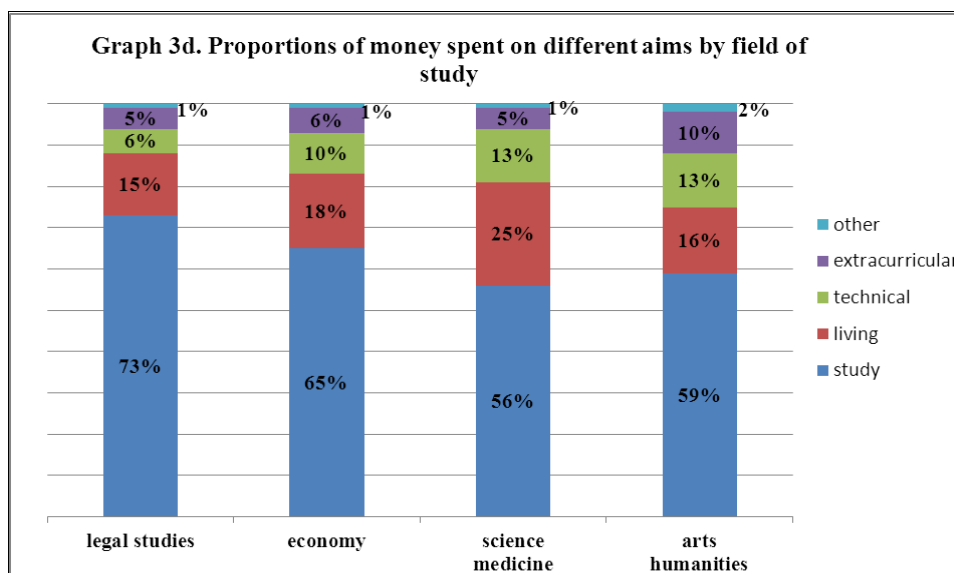
As Graph 3b reveals, many Russian respondents said they were enrolled in MA programs, while part of Ukrainians (14%) were enrolled in vocational level studies while applying for LHP support for the first time. This is related to the specificities of education systems of each country. As explained in Section 1, in Russia many students studied and still study in higher education programs outside Bologna system in 5-year programs ending with “specialist” diplomas, which are internationally equivalent to Master degree. In Ukraine, there is a step before the Bachelor level called “junior specialist” equivalent to non-complete higher education, which is also perceived as equivalent to “vocational” studies.

As far as parental education is concerned, an interesting finding from the survey is that there are significant differences among the respondents from the three countries regarding participants’ fathers’ level of education. As illustrated in Graph 3c, Ukrainian LHP participants come from more advantageous family backgrounds than Moldovans and Russians. As for participants’ mothers, there is no significant correlation between participants’ nationality and their mothers’ education level.



Presumably it is the differences in the standard of living, in the price level of the countries, and in respondents' family backgrounds that explains the significant variances on what the beneficiaries spent their LHP stipends on. While Russian and Ukrainian respondents spent two third/ three quarters of the scholarship on costs related to studies (tuition fees, textbooks and study materials, library fees, exam fees, etc), Moldovans spent only 50% of stipend to cover for such costs. Compared to Ukrainians and Russians, Moldovans spent proportionately more on living costs and technical devices. This is not surprising if one takes in consideration the higher purchasing power of LHP stipends for Moldova described in Section 1.

As for differences per specialization, respondents in legal studies indicated the highest amounts spent on costs related to studies, while students in science and medicine – the lowest. However, even for legal studies Moldovans spent less on costs related to studies (60%) compared to respondents in legal studies from the other two countries (70-75%). There are also characteristic variations in the structure of spending money by field of study. As illustrated in Graph 3d, students spend more on study-related costs in the legal field and more on technical equipment (computer, laptop, printer, scanner, camera, mobile phone, etc) in the field of science or medicine. The respondents in the field of arts spent the highest proportion of LHP scholarship for participation in extra-curricular activities (foreign language courses, participation at conferences, driving license courses, socialization with friends and peers, etc). These differences exist even when they are controlled by nationalities.



According to respondents' survey answers, the LHP scholarship generally covered between **40% and 60% of their monthly living expenses**. The LHP scholarship seems to have been the most generous for those in the field of arts, humanities, and social sciences (more than 62%) and the least – for those in the field of legal studies (40%).

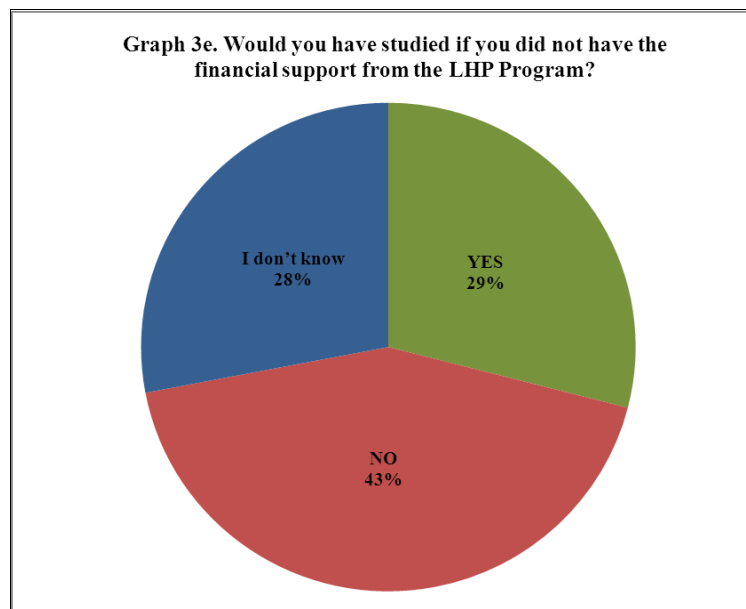
Table 3a. In which proportion your monthly expenses as a student have been covered by the LHP stipend? %				
Field of study	Nationality	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Legal studies	Moldova	33.08	13	28.102
	Russia	62.22	9	37.676
	Ukraine	36.15	26	32.010
	Total	40.21	48	33.230
Economy	Moldova	55.00	8	31.168
	Russia	54.44	9	29.202
	Ukraine	60.00	11	38.471
	Total	56.79	28	32.552
Science and medicine	Moldova	73.33	9	18.028
	Russia	30.00	2	14.142
	Ukraine	39.17	12	26.785
	Total	51.74	23	28.389
Arts/ humanities/social sciences	Moldova	65.71	7	29.921
	Russia	55.00	6	13.784
	Ukraine	62.67	15	31.275
	Total	61.79	28	27.495
Total	Moldova	53.78	37	30.854
	Russia	55.38	26	29.015
	Ukraine	47.03	64	33.650
	Total	50.71	127	31.927

Most of the students were getting the rest of money to cover their living costs from parents (66%). The others were getting it from an informal job (19%), from a formal job/official salary (10%), or from a bank loan (6%). Only 3% mentioned friends as funding help and getting money from other stipends, scholarship or by the help of the safety net tends to zero.

Interestingly, according to the results of qualitative research, although the purchasing power of the scholarship is the highest in Moldova, participants stated that they had to work because even with the LHP help they could not manage to cover their living costs. On the other hand Russians, where living is the most expensive, told that they could save money from the scholarship. This suggests that Moldovan beneficiaries come from more disadvantageous backgrounds than Russian ones and were getting less financial support from families.

As Graph 3e shows, **43%** of respondents indicated that they would not have studied without the financial support of LHP program, 28% indicated they don't know, while only 29% were certain that they would have studies anyway.

Among the respondents who answered that they would have studied even in the absence of the LHP program financial support, 52% indicated that they would have chosen a different mode of university studies (part time or distance learning), 35% would have considered only Bachelor studies and not higher degrees, 29% would have postponed their studies for later, another 29% answered that they would have chosen another specialization with lower tuition fee, and 21% would have chosen another university that was closer to home. Only one respondent indicated that s/he would have studied under the same conditions, i.e. within the same specialization, university, mode of study, etc. Among the respondents who answered that they didn't know whether they would have pursued higher education without LHP support, 35% indicated that they would have chosen another mode of study (part time or distance learning).



Most respondents who indicated that they would have studied even without LHP support also stated that they would have obtained the money necessary to fully cover living and study costs from their parents/family. About two thirds mentioned also mentioned that they would have taken the money from formal or informal employment, while a few mentioned bank loans, other stipends, and safety net.

Participants at the focus groups and interviews were generally satisfied with the quality of education at their universities, but seemingly those who started in earlier years of the Program faced more quality problems. The higher education in the countries was expanded through the nineties - early 2000s and there was a great mismatch between the demand and supply of higher education, especially in Moldova. General critics toward universities in Moldova (especially among the already graduated students) were that they are too theoretical and not developing enough practical skills:

“University is too theoretical, we need more practical knowledge. Moldovan universities do not ensure the skills needed in the labour market. [...] A practical training in the given specialization would be good.” (Focus group, Moldova)

Russian participants in focus groups mentioned the issue of bribery in universities. Some also mentioned anti-Roma statements made by university professors:

“I had problems at the university; I broke the rules and the professors said that it is because I am a Roma and all the Roma behave like that.” (Focus group, Russia)

Among the survey respondents 41% already finished their studies, while majority of those who did not complete their studies are still in the Program (97%). There is almost nobody in the survey who dropped out from the Program and from the university. Since it is known that the dropout/study postponement rate among LHP participants is 8% (Section 1), it can be assumed that drop-out and unsuccessful participants of the Program did not fill in the questionnaire.

A few participants to the qualitative research knew about LHP fellows who dropped out their studies. Those who knew cases of dropout mentioned as main reasons the “changing life priorities”: “need for money” or marriage. This confirms the statistical data on dropout rate and reasons for dropout collected by LHP on the whole pool of applicants, as presented in Section 1.

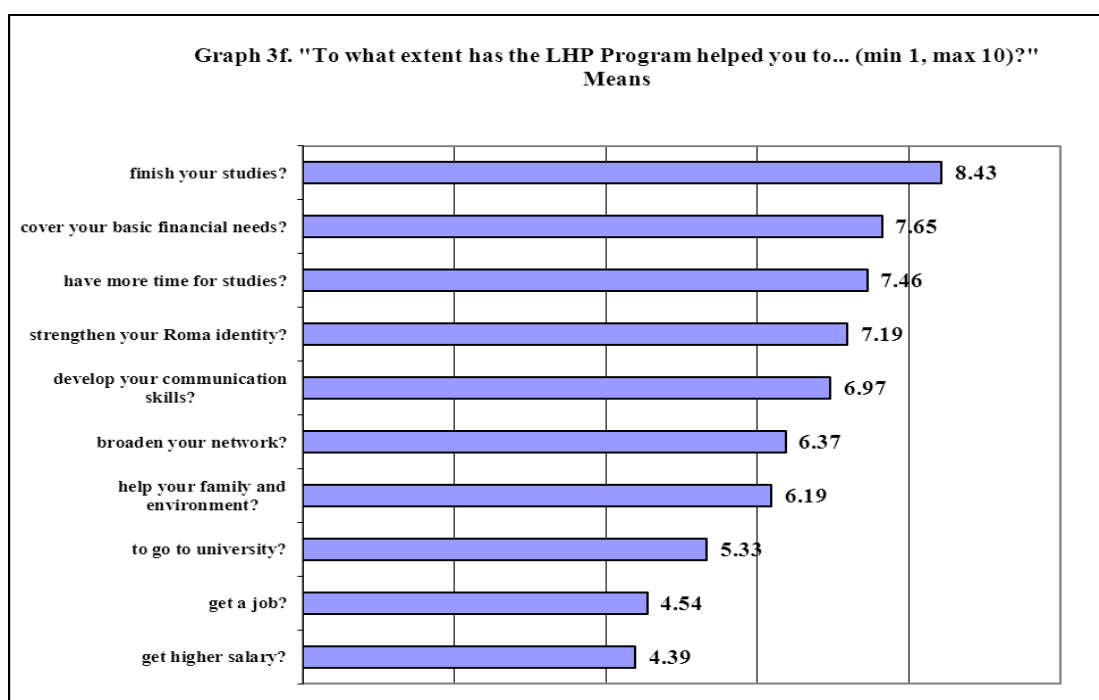
Table 3b. “Have you completed your studies?”				
	Moldova	Russia	Ukraine	Total
Respondents in the survey (N and %)				
No	17	13	42	72
Yes	20	12	18	50
Total	37	25	60	122
No	14%	11%	34%	59%
Yes	16%	10%	15%	41%
Total	30%	20%	49%	100%
Total population (N and %)				
No	36	42	97	175
Yes	86	38	114	238
Total	122	80	211	413
No	9%	10%	23%	42%
Yes	21%	9%	28%	58%
Total	29%	19%	51%	100%
Difference (%)				
No	-5%	-1%	-11%	-17%
Yes	4%	-1%	13%	17%
Total	-1%	-1%	2%	0%

When asking LHP participants in the survey how they evaluate the program overall, generally they are very satisfied: on a 10 grade scale they evaluated the LHP Program to 9.38 on average. To the open question lots of them expressed their gratitude with the Program. Statistical analysis further reveals that the level of satisfaction correlates with the proportion of the respondents’ monthly costs that were covered by the stipend. The lower this rate, the lower was the satisfaction with the Program. However, participants whose stipend covered only half or less of their monthly costs evaluated the program to 8.3 on average, which is still a high level of appreciation.

One can get a more precise picture when asking the participants how they evaluate the Program on specific areas. According to survey respondents’ inputs, the **biggest help** offered by the Program was **to help them finish their**

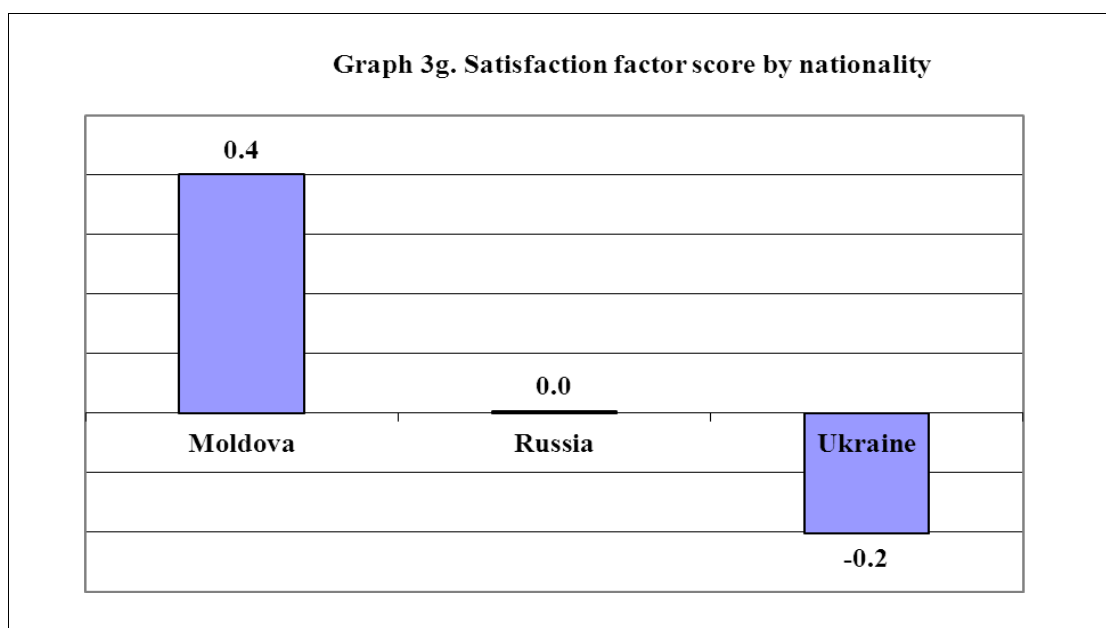
studies, to cover their basic financial needs, and providing more time for studying. The Program helped them also - although to a lower extent - to strengthen their Roma identity, to develop communication skills, and to broaden their network. The **least effective** the Program according to the evaluation of the participants was in **labour market issues**. To get a job or to get a higher salary it seems to be out of the scope of the Program and the success very much depends upon the economy of the country as well. It is understandable that some of the respondents would like to have more support to help them to enter the labour market.

“I would suggest that the LHP should focus more on follow-up activities. Although the financial support is an essential part of the Program, most Roma young people after graduating have limited access to the labour market because of different reasons: either they don't have working experience or [they have] limited knowledge on drafting/ writing the cover letter and interview with the employers. Perhaps can be created an additional REF Division which will analyse the weakness and failures of the Program and follow up activities on training/building capacities of the new graduates, consultations, negotiations and pilot projects aimed to increase public vacancy opportunities for Roma graduates.” (Response to open survey question from one of the participants).



From these variables one factor was made by the method of principal component¹⁵. This satisfaction factor can explain the 44% of the variance. The satisfaction factor comprising all the other evaluating components deviates significantly by nationalities. Moldovans are the most satisfied with the Program and the least satisfied are the Ukrainians.

¹⁵ Principal Component Analysis is a widely used method for factor extraction. Often, its operation can be thought of as revealing the internal structure of the data in a way that best explains the variance in the data. Principal component (factor) incorporates those variables that explain mostly the pattern/variance of data.



The participants at focus groups and interviews claimed that they were generally satisfied with the LHP Program. They think that the Program provided them with sufficient money to study what they wished. They were happy with the scholarship because it gave them freedom and independence from their parents.

“LHP helped me a lot. My father was ill and I was the second child. All the money went to his cure. I want to work hard and have money. I think that my parents would have found money if I hadn’t the scholarship, but perhaps I should have changed my study direction.” (Focus group, Russia)

“I would not even try [to enrol in university]. I know that my family could not afford it.” (Interview, Ukraine)

“I missed the terms for applying for scholarship once in course of my studies and we paid for it. It was very hard.” (Interview, Ukraine)

They felt enthusiastic about the Program especially because it gave them the chance to make friends and broaden their network. Besides, they mentioned they also got information on their professional field due to the students’ network.

“LHP helped directly because [...] I got to know some good people in the program and this helped me to find a job.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“Frankly speaking LHP scholarship was not decisive. But it helped me as a backup; I was doing my work calmly.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“Scholarship helped me to decide my speciality, because I knew that this possibility existed”. (Focus group, Moldova)

As to the other type of LHP components, according to the survey responses the **most popular** and one of the most frequently mentioned is the **LHP Annual Conference**. Other popular Program components are the in-county training and the language course grant. Much less frequented components are the international internship and the small scale projects. Only 10% of respondents took part in these, which is explained by the limited funds available for these components (therefore limited number of beneficiaries), and in case of Small Scale project – also by the fact that it has been introduced only two years ago.

Table 3c. Participation in – and satisfaction with specific LHP program components				
LHP events/ activities	N	Evaluation (5-very satisfied/ 1- not satisfied)	Std. Deviation	Never participated (%)
LHP Annual Conference	58	4.19	0.826	52.1
LHP in – country training	41	4	1.025	69.3
LHP Language Courses Grant	46	4	1.116	67.9
LHP Professional Development	18	3.83	1.543	90
LHP International Internship	17	3.65	1.618	90.7
LHP Small scale project	16	3.5	1.713	91.4
LHP yahoo alumni group	19	2.37	1.383	87.9

The **least popular** component seems to be **the yahoo alumni group**. The few that have ever participated in it graded it to 2.37 on a five-grade scale. On the other hand, it does not mean that they do not need this form of communication and networking, since to the last open question some of them expressed their openness for a better working virtual community. This suggests that the Program should think of better ways to enhance virtual communication with and among LHP participants, which would be tailored to the group specificities.

The focus groups and interviews confirm that among all additional LHP components, the annual conference and the language courses are the most popular. Participants stated that conference and all kinds of gatherings are very engaging and enlightening events that often lead to building friendship and network.

As for the language courses, from the three Program countries Russians took part at language courses paid by REF to the smallest extent, while Moldovans seem to be the most enthusiastic about this component. This might be because Russians live in a big county and they engage in study-abroad programs to a much lesser extent than Moldovan and Ukrainians, therefore the need to speak English is perceived differently. Russian focus group participants also mentioned that they live in little towns and language courses schools are in bigger cities. The travel can take more than an hour, it takes money and time but scholarship does not cover it.

Some focus group participants also mentioned the benefits of the LHP Professional Development support:

“I was helped to participate at an international conference in surgery. I was listening to lectures for 7 days, and it helped me to get credits.” (Focus group, Moldova)

Hence, from the data presented in this section - but keeping in mind the respective methodological limitations - it is possible to conclude that LHP support did constitute a critical help for its beneficiaries to enroll, progress, and graduate successfully tertiary education, without making compromises about the desired modes of study.

Section IV - Tracing LHP Beneficiaries' Employment Path:

At the time of the survey questioning, **45%** of respondents had formal or informal job, **13%** were neither employed nor enrolled in studies, while **42%** studied but did not work.

Among those who finished their studies, **68%** were employed and **32%** were unemployed. In the mainstream population of the comparable age groups in these countries, the unemployment rate varies between 13 and 18%.¹⁶

Table 4a. Survey respondents' employment status		
Outcome	N	%
work and finished study	34	28
work and study	21	17
study and not work	51	42
nor study neither work	16	13
Total	122	100

Among those who had a job at the time of the survey, 60% did professional work and 20% did administrative work. The remaining 20% had manual work, but most of the latter were still in the Program and did not finish their studies.

Among those who did not have a job at the time of the survey, 80% had a job within the last 5 years, although in most cases their latest job was part time or short term (i.e. up to 6 months). Among the 16 who neither studied nor worked by the time of survey completion, only 7 had an employment within the last 4 years.

Among those who have ever been employed, for 75% the most recent or last job is/was located in their home town. 20% worked outside their home town and 7% worked recently abroad. Half of the employed had full-time positions, while another half had part-time jobs.

70% of the employment was connected to the field of the study, while 40% of them had connection to Roma issues.

Among all those who finished studies and were employed at the moment of survey, 82% indicated that they needed at least Bachelor level of studies to be employed in their respective positions. Among those who work and study, the respective ratio was 52%.

Among those who finished studies, the most recent employment was most frequently in private sector (47%) and state sector (39%). A few were employed in NGOs and only 2 were self-employed. Work in NGO sector seems to be more frequent among respondents who did not complete their studies yet.

While having the job connected to the study field correlates with increased level of satisfaction in the LHP Program (both on the overall evaluation of the Program and the satisfaction factor made of several specific program components), the fact that the job is related to Roma issues correlates with relatively lower level of satisfaction about the Program.

For LHP participants it is not easy to find a job, which is shown by the fact that 20% of participants were looking for a job for more than a year. However, the majority of the graduates found a job in some months.

The binary logistics regression presented in Table 4b reveals that labour market success among LHP participants depends very much upon participants' parental level of formal education. The respondents whose mothers or fathers have lower level of formal education had considerably smaller chance to get a job compared to those whose parents have higher level of formal education. Those whose mothers have secondary or post-vocational education have 26-28 times more chance to get a job, than those whose mother did not finish primary education. Some differences

¹⁶ Source for unemployment in mainstream population: websites of National Bureaus of Statistics.

among the three countries can also be observed: Russians' odds rate to get a job is 9.5 times higher and the Moldovans' one is 5 times higher than that of Ukrainians.

Table 4b. Variables in the Equation (binary logistic regression/ dependent variable: currently employed formally or informally/ 1 – yes/ 0 –no))						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
totalamountinnumber	.000	.000	.490	1	.484	1.000
averageamount	.000	.001	.028	1	.866	1.000
mothereducation (no)			5.080	4	.279	
mothereducation5(primary)	3.135	1.697	3.415	1	.065	22.997
mothereducation5(secondary)	3.329	1.539	4.678	1	.031	27.905
mothereducation5(postvoc)	3.259	1.510	4.658	1	.031	26.012
mothereducation5(higher)	2.805	1.572	3.185	1	.074	16.527
birth (after 1991)			11.382	2	.003	
birth3(between 1989-191))	1.117	.718	2.422	1	.120	3.056
birth3(before 1989))	2.833	.858	10.914	1	.001	16.999
ygender(male)	-.106	.593	.032	1	.859	.900
nationality (U)			8.638	2	.013	
nationality(M)	1.633	.696	5.511	1	.019	5.119
nationality(R)	2.252	.838	7.225	1	.007	9.509
fathereducation (no)			2.897	4	.575	
fathereducation5(primary)	-.844	1.343	.395	1	.530	.430
fathereducation5(secondary)	-1.367	1.224	1.248	1	.264	.255
fathereducation5(postvoc)	-1.344	.988	1.852	1	.173	.261
fathereducation5(higher)	-.307	.950	.105	1	.746	.735
study (humanities)			.274	3	.965	
study4(science)	-.297	.840	.125	1	.723	.743
study4(legal)	-.245	.660	.138	1	.711	.783
study4(economy)	.083	.913	.008	1	.927	1.087
Constant	-3.844	1.869	4.228	1	.040	.021

The great differences among the Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian labour markets and chances to get a job were underlined in the qualitative study as well. Typically Moldovans have to work during their study but their jobs are to a lesser extent related to their studies or requiring special qualifications. Usually they worked informally, in the weekends or in the summer. These jobs are fragile; the salary is low or often less than was promised and there is no social benefit package attached to them.

Focus groups and interview participants mentioned that after completing their studies it was hard to get a job, and even with a diploma from the field of law or economy they could hardly find a job. The obstacles that participants mentioned in finding a job could be classified in three types: (1) the lack of practical knowledge and skills; (2) limited knowledge of English language and computer technology skills; (3) limited job experience in the field after graduation. Moldovans also mentioned the issue of nepotism (and more generally cronyism) as prevailing in the job market.

“I tried to have a job, I could get it through the recommendation of my friend. “ (Focus group, Moldova)

¹⁷ Variable(s) entered on step 1: totalamountinnumber. averageamount. mothereducation5. birth3. ygender. nationality. fathereducation5. study4.

“What is needed: Experience, and 1-2 weeks to work for free. To get an internship is also very difficult, you have to have network, friends, or you have to start your own business. 1500 LEI [80 EUR] is not enough. I have a family, a small child, I cannot accept a job with only 2000LEI [107 EUR]. Employers can require 2-3 weeks testing period, but here in Moldova only network and money are the most important.” (Focus group, Moldova)

Most participants would like to have more help from the Program in getting their first work experience.

“It would be good to find a hospital that would collaborate with the LHP Program. The Program should have links to labour market, to practical work.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“After 10 years of medical studies I could not find a vacant place, I was moving from one place to another, showing my certificates to hospitals. They were looking my very good grades saying that ‘we should accept you, but there is no vacancy available’. After 2-3 months the military hospital accepted me. I did not have a place to sleep, I had to work gratis. After one month I was accepted but I was sent to make a Ph.D., but there was no state scholarship to cover the costs. Now I do part time job, but doctors prefer their friends and network. I worked in summers in the hospital in the town, they said that there would be job, but at the end they did not give any.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“I wanted to work at the regional custom office where I was born, but it was told that there was no vacant place. But I knew that there was, because my friend told me. I am working now at a legal company in Chisinau, I had to sign short-term contract for three years.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“I learned at conference that in other countries Roma people are helped. There are no conferences to discuss Roma problems here. There are lot of foundations in other countries, but not in Russia. What is more, you have support only when you are a student, but a lot of students would be interested in help after.” (Focus group, Russia)

At the same time, the younger LHP participants in focus groups and interviews were more optimistic about the employment prospects and their power to influence it than the older ones, which may suggest that the situation with local job markets and access to employment is improving.

“I was invited by the Academy of Science, and when they saw my documents, they should have accepted me as a scientific researcher on internship, but seeing my publications they accepted me as a researcher.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“I applied for the lowest position in the company. I was doing my MA; I started to work for the project for half a year, later I was accepted for a higher position.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“I was very lucky with the head of my company. She looked at my diploma and said: ‘I pity such young girls like you who can’t get a job’. And she gave me a job.” (Interview, Ukraine)

Ukrainians work to a much lesser extent during their studies compared to Moldovans and Russians and they also have bigger difficulties in finding a job after graduation. Those graduates who were not employed in NGOs indicated huge difficulties as for finding a job especially if they wanted it to be in the field of their studies. What participants in interviews also mentioned is that working in the non-profit sector means much less money.

For Russians it seems to be relatively easier to get employed in positions related to their field even during their studies and continue working in the same places after graduation. Russian labour market seems to be in better shape than the ones in Moldova and Ukraine; both quantitative and qualitative data of this study suggest that Russian beneficiaries manage relatively better to get a job, as compared to Moldovans and Ukrainians.

“I will graduate this year. I work at the same time as a school teacher with troubled kids. I always wanted to be a real social teacher. I work at a state organization and I don’t have any problem to

synchronize my work with my study. University supports it because it is related to my study.”
(Focus group, Russia)

I went to an organization and they asked me to stay after study. I can fill in the missing parts of my education at the workplace. Since last summer I have been working as a lawyer’s assistant. I want to stay here and pass the lawyer exam.” (Focus group, Russia)

The data in this section reveal that although many LHP participants started to work even while being students, there are still many who did not manage to find a job after graduation. In our sample of survey respondents, among those who finished their studies 32% did not have an employment at the moment of survey completion. This is high if compared to the mainstream population of similar age category. In the open survey questions, in focus groups and in personal interviews many respondents mentioned that it would be truly helpful if LHP provided support to fresh graduates and graduates-to-be to find the first job, for instance by having partnerships with potential employer institutions.

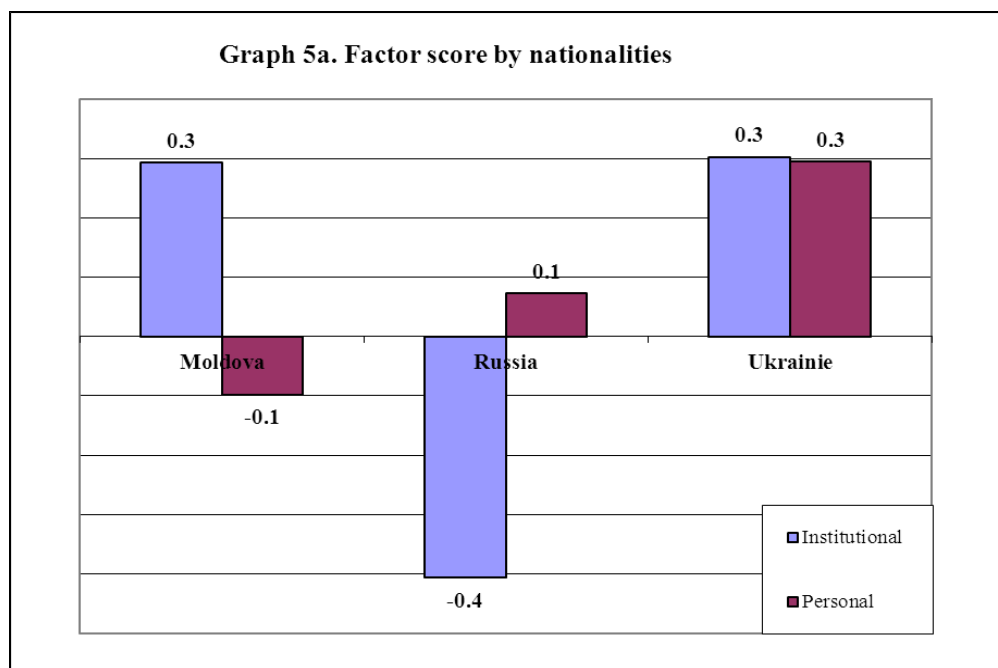
Section V - Tracing Beneficiaries' Involvement in Roma-Related Activities:

As highlighted in Section 4, 40% of the employed respondents' jobs are somehow connected to Roma issues. However it does not necessarily seem to correlate with job satisfaction. On the other hand, many of survey respondents take part in several Roma related activities. **70%** of respondents indicated that they were active in this field. Most common activities are the cultural ones (32%), but one-quarter of respondents do grass-root community work, help Roma parents and children in education, and provide counselling and guidance. The least common activity is to support Roma families in using more efficiently health-care services.

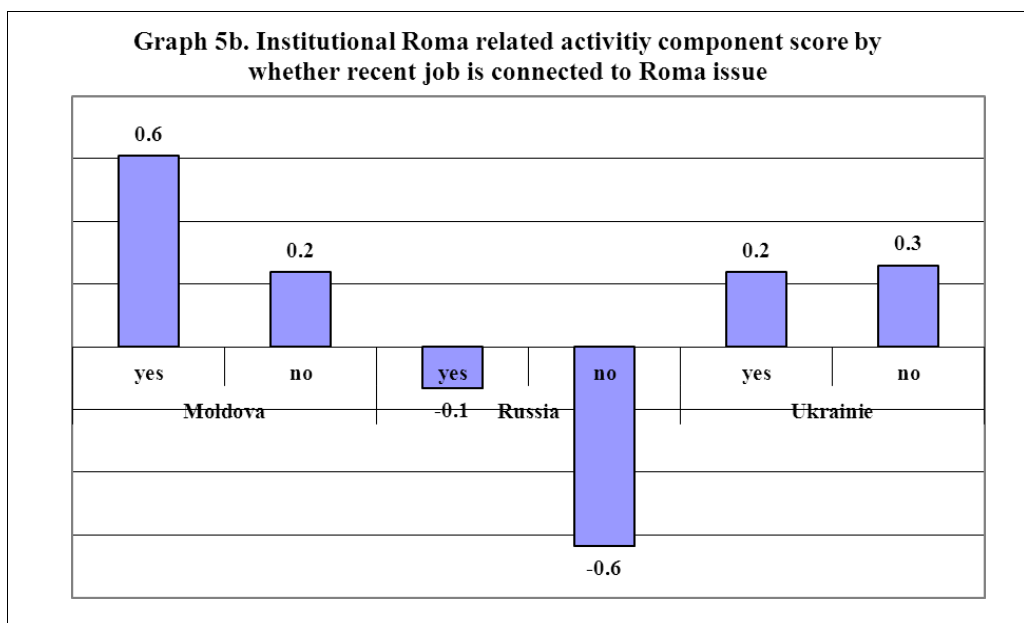
Table 5a. "In which kind of Roma-related activities have you recently participated?"		
Types of Activities	N	%
Recently participated in Roma-related activities	112	71
Cultural activities	140	32
Grass-roots community work	140	24
Supporting Roma parents and children/ young people in their effort to pursue education	140	23
Provision of counselling and guidance	140	21
Supporting development/ together with Roma and local authorities	140	17
Information and awareness raising campaigns	140	14
Supporting Roma parents and young people in using better the health-care services	140	8

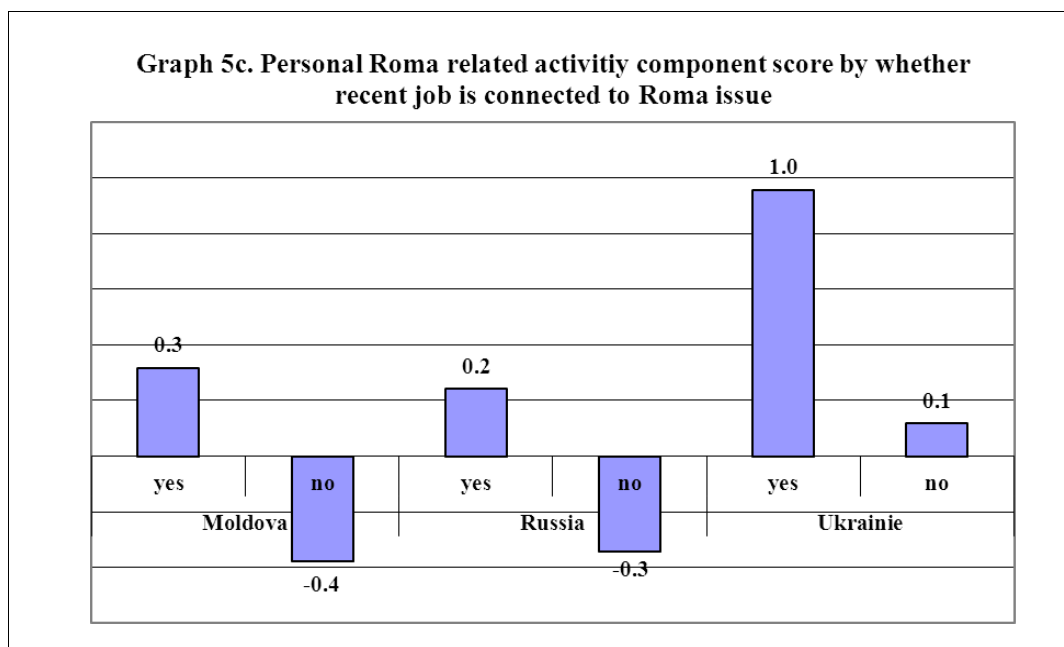
By using multivariate method (principal component) the typical Roma related activities divide into two groups: one contains the mostly *institutional types* such as work with the local authorities or communities, doing campaigns and cultural activities, while the other is very much focused on *personal relations* with Roma families. There is a characteristic pattern of these activities in the countries: Moldovans tend to be more active in the institutional types of activities, Ukrainians are active in both types of activities, while Russians seem to be much more passive compared to the other two nationalities.

Table 5b. Principal Component Analysis: participation in Roma related activities		
Roma related activities	Component (factor scores)	
	Institutional	Personal
Supporting development, together with Roma and local authorities	.710	
Grass-roots community work	.684	.138
Information and awareness raising campaigns	.653	.182
Cultural activities	.603	.221
Provision of counselling and guidance		.907
Supporting Roma parents and young people in using better the health-care services	.421	.548
Supporting Roma parents, children, and youth in their effort to pursue education	.466	.543



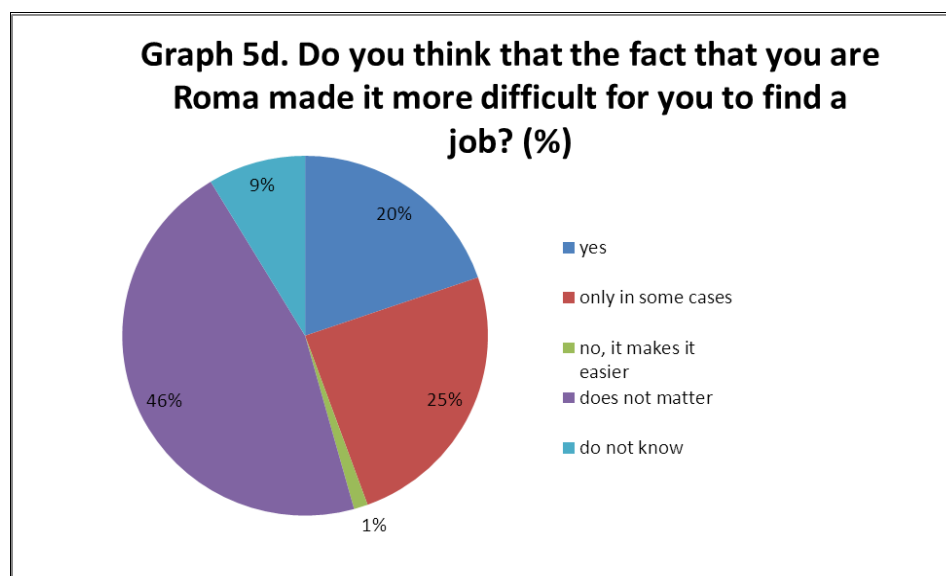
Moldovans opt for institutional type of activities, while the Ukrainians are much more personal in their activities. Russians are the most passive among the three groups. This was also confirmed by the qualitative data. One of the reasons might be that the NGO sector is under-developed and involvement in human rights related projects is generally discouraged.





Almost 90% of survey respondents answered that they keep in touch with their LHP peers. One-quarter do it weekly, one-third – monthly, and half of them – less often or occasionally. The most common way of communication is internet: the 65% of the participants contact the others via internet-based social networks. 41% of them uses phone, 29% of them meet personally, and 19% are chatting through skype/msn/etc.

The questions regarding Roma identity issues were completed by a lower number of respondents (112 or less) than the questions presented in the previous sections, since the Roma-identity related questions were placed in the last part of the survey. Among those who answered, **46%** think that being a Roma does not matter in finding and getting a job.



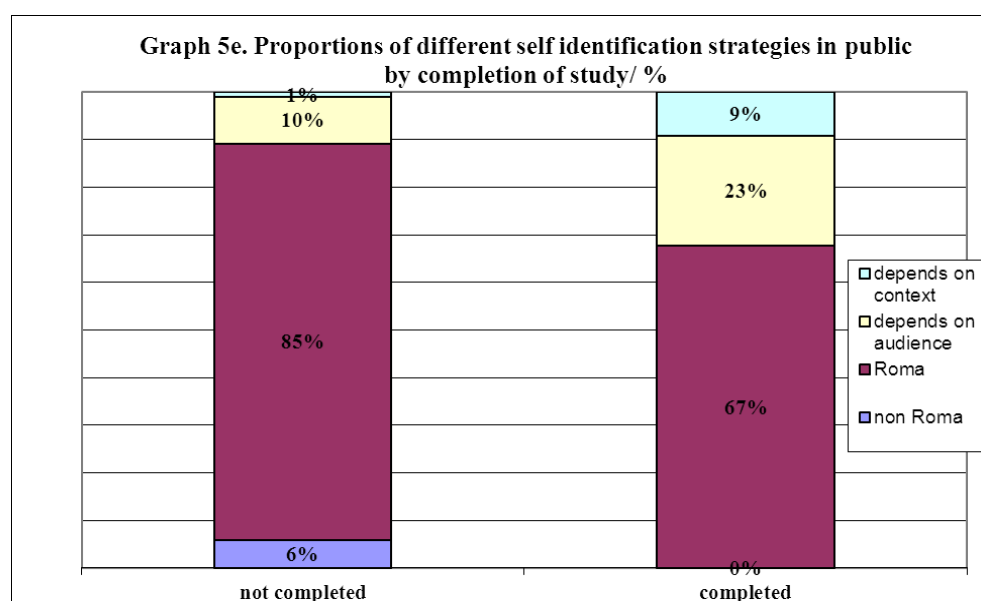
Moreover, 84% indicated that most of their friends perceive them as Roma. In case of university colleagues this rate is lower - 70% - and is much lower when it comes to respondents being perceived as Roma by university professors or colleagues at the recent workplace, since the rates for the latter are 55.5 and respectively 48.5%. One can see a significant slope from the close friends via the university colleagues and professors to the job fellows. This slope

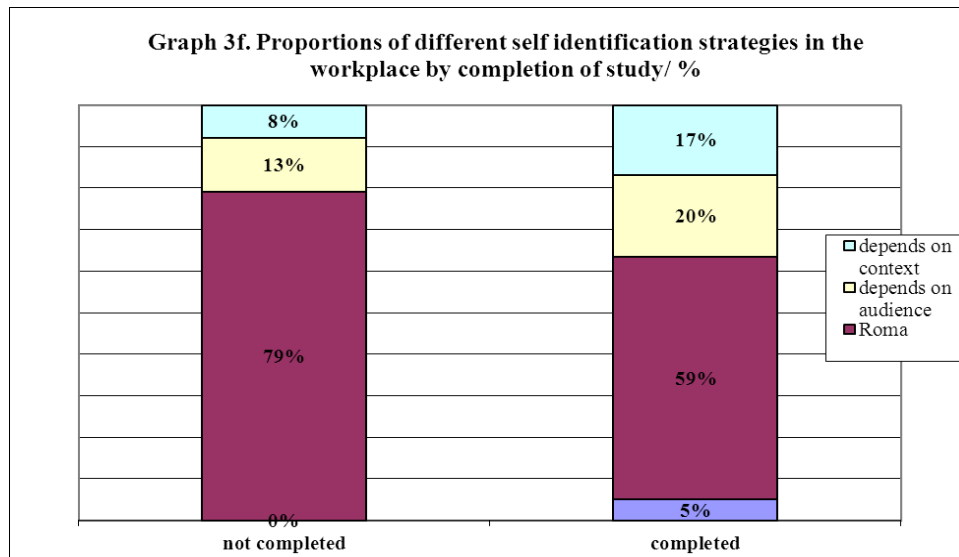
exists also when we ask participants about their preferences on self-identification. They prefer to identify as Roma mostly in private or with close friends (83%). At the university, this ratio is 78%, in public context 77%, and in the workplace it is 70%.

Table 5c. “Are you/have you been perceived as a Roma by...?”				
	by friends	by university colleagues	by professors	by colleagues at the workplace
Few	11	18	18	22
Most	84	71	55	48
Not	4	6	10	10
Do not know	2	5	17	20
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 5d. “How do you prefer to identify yourself, in...?”				
	Private context	Public context	At the university	At the workplace
Non Roma	3	2	2	2
Roma	83	77	78	70
Depends on audience	11	16	13	17
Depends on context	4	5	7	12
Total	100	100	100	100

There is interesting variation how survey respondents identify themselves as Roma in different contexts by age. The older respondents are identifying less as Roma. In private context, 92% of survey respondents born after 1991 prefer to identify themselves as Roma, while this ratio is 87% for those born between 1989 and 1991, and 67% for those born before 1989. There might have been a kind of context development over time, so that the younger people are more Roma-conscious and are less humble about their identification. Age can be the reason for the negative correlation between preference to identify themselves as Roma and the completion of study. Those who have already finished their study are less willing to identify themselves as Roma at the workplace and in public. These differences might be due to the different structure of labour markets in the countries. The reluctance to identify themselves as Roma at the workplaces after having finished their studies might be due to the still existing prejudice at the workplaces.





Strategies of self-identification alter not only by age, but by nationalities too. Among survey respondents, most of Moldovans and Russians prefer to identify themselves as Roma at their workplaces (81 and 78%), while only 63% of Ukrainian would do that and lot of them think that it depends upon the audience (20%) or upon the context (17%). According to the focus groups and interviews, Russian Roma feel very proud of their identity and they did not think that the LHP program strengthened their Roma identity.

“We live in a Roma environment, we are Roma, and we have our traditions, traditional laws. We feel responsibilities for our ancestors; we have a big family network. With this program we began to speak more with people about that we are Roma, because lot of students asked how they could take part in LHP Program and we answered that they should be Romas.” (Focus group, Russia)

In Moldova and Ukraine some LHP participants work in Roma NGOs. That is why in these two countries Roma young people feel that they could strengthen their Roma identity through the Program.

‘I’m having a good life, I’m working, I’m helping people, and I’m travelling. I’m respected by non-Roma. Other Roma see me and they think: we can be like him, we can have better life.’ (Interview, Ukraine)

Most of LHP participants are active in Roma issues and do some voluntary work. But some focus group participants stated that they prefer to have a job not related to Roma issues. They think that they have to become more powerful to act in the name of Roma people within the mainstream society:

“I do not know if I should be involved into Roma issues, now I work in a non-Roma related job. If I become an important person, a politician, then I would like to be involved into Roma issues. But the whole society has problems, not only Roma: poverty, corruption... My sister works for human rights. But I do not work for it. Human rights do not mean only rights for Roma but rights for everybody. I can be more efficient in a good [non Roma related] position.” (Focus group, Moldova)

As to discrimination, many focus group and interview participants shared that had experienced discrimination since their childhood. Most of the bad experiences they met at the elementary school. However, discrimination seems to have been felt much more by Moldovans and Ukrainians than by Russians.

“In the kindergarten we were three Roma boys, we were very noisy, after half a year we were rejected. At school I did not have friends, they were afraid that I would steal. I had good sport

results, so it changed. Later I was afraid to tell that I am a Roma. At the university I am not ashamed, I am proud of being Roma, and never will be ashamed of it.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“I attended a Russian language school. The director did not want to accept me because I was a “gipsy”. Previously they had Roma children with bad behaviour, skipping school. My mother asked the director to allow me and test me. She told him that if I skipped school they could reject me. In the class they did not know that I am Roma. After one year, [colleagues] were amazed when they found out.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“We were discriminated by school children, but we did not feel it, because we were many. But at the university I felt [discrimination] from the very first day. I put on my very best dress with long rock, I came to the university and the students were amazed. They did not give place to me. Students did not speak to me for 2-3 months. A Romanian Roma girl became my friend. I lived in a dormitory and became friends with Romanians. Students were whispering “gipsy” seeing us and did not help when I needed. Going to the place of practise, colleagues did not indicate where to take off from the trolleybus. I felt badly.” (Focus group, Moldova)

Perhaps because most Russian LHP participants come from the Ruska-Roma subgroup that is relatively better-off compared to other Roma sub-groups in Russia, they did not feel that much discrimination, or if they did, they did not bother too much about it.

“Tzigane, tzigane, they said at school, but the school director thanked to the Berezovskij family, because we were the best pupils and we gave a good example to the others.” (Focus group, Russia)

“Professors did not know that I am Roma and was saying bad comments, but after realizing who I am, changed her attitude. Some of the professors helped the Roma. But some of the peers asked us whether we had a weapon with us.” (Focus group, Russia)

Often when jokes about Roma are told by the colleagues at work or at the university, they became shy to undertake their Roma identity. The student graduated at law and working in a law firm said that some of the clients are afraid to be represented by a Roma lawyer. At the workplace usually Roma people have to face some hostility, so generally they do not declare themselves as a Roma. They do not deny it, but if they can they avoid the open declaration.

“I had bad experience at the military hospital. I did not say that I am Roma or not, but the doctors talked about it. I was so distressed when I heard the patients whispering behind my back.” (Focus group, Moldova)

“The bank security man asked my last name and smiled and asked whether I am Roma. I wanted to persuade him that Romas are not criminals, but the security system did not let me to be employed at this bank.” (Focus group, Russia)

“My friend told me they need an operator at gas station, I went there and they said they already have filled in the vacancy. And then he called them and they said they still have it. He asked about me, they said: we would hire him, but he is tsygan” (interview, Ukraine)

Interestingly there is discrimination among Roma subgroups themselves. They sharply differentiate themselves from the other groups of Roma and Ruska Romas are often considered by the other groups as non-Roma. Also there is gender discrimination, as one interviewee noted:

“I was one of the first participants of the Program. I heard about it from the head of a Roma organization, who is a man. When I asked him for help to apply to this Program, he told me that it would have been better to marry somebody, as Roma girls usually do. He wanted to dissuade me but I held on. Even now I can remember this case very clearly.” (Interview, Russia)

Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this tracer study was to investigate the degree in which the Law and Humanities Program contributed to the academic trajectory of its beneficiaries, as well as whether the beneficiaries managed to enter the job market on positions relevant for their studies after obtaining higher education degrees. The main reason for this exercise was to identify how the REF Scholarship Program could be better tailored to respond to the needs of its beneficiaries and to help them become successful in their initial career stages.

The effectiveness of the Program was measured by the satisfaction level of the LHP participants and by outcomes such as completion of study, strengthening Roma identity and entering the labour market. The target group of the study was composed of the former beneficiaries of the LHP program, as well as of the current beneficiaries who have been in the Program for at least two completed academic years.

In the process of study design, some important methodological limitations could not be avoided. The most important constraint was the impossibility to have a control group, which would have allowed making stronger statements about the Program's real impact. As explained in Section 2, the *implicit design* was the only approach that could be applied. To improve the validity of the analysis we combined quantitative and qualitative methods and tried to collect as much objective evidence as possible. In addition to this, there were also other important methodological constraints:

- From statistical point of view, the LHP Program is a small-scale program. Out of all 413 people who ever participated in the Program, only 305 could be invited to participate in the Study. The remaining 108 are ongoing beneficiaries who have been in the Program for less than 2 years and therefore their participation would not have been relevant for the main purpose of this study. From the 305 invited, with all efforts of the authors only 140 (46%) responded to the survey at least partly. While 46% as response rate to an online survey is generally good (since for such surveys it is generally 30%), in this particular survey having 140 responses did not allow making very sophisticated statistical analysis. To keep the sample size significant, for many important questions the authors had to analyse the entire pool of responses, without the possibility to control for combinations of variables.

- Implementing an online survey is cheap and quick, but it has one great disadvantage: it is not randomized so self-selection bias cannot be eliminated. It is very likely that those who are more satisfied and successful are more willing to fill in the questionnaire. REF tried to reach as many participants as they could and combine the survey results with qualitative data based on interviews and focus groups, in order to reduce the risk of bias.

As far as LHP program's effectiveness is concerned, **the main findings** of the study are:

- The LHP Program helped the participants to access and graduate higher education and notably to choose the type of studies they desired, without making compromises;
- The LHP Program helped the participants to strengthen their Roma identity;
- At the same time, there is no evidence that the Program helped participants to get employed.

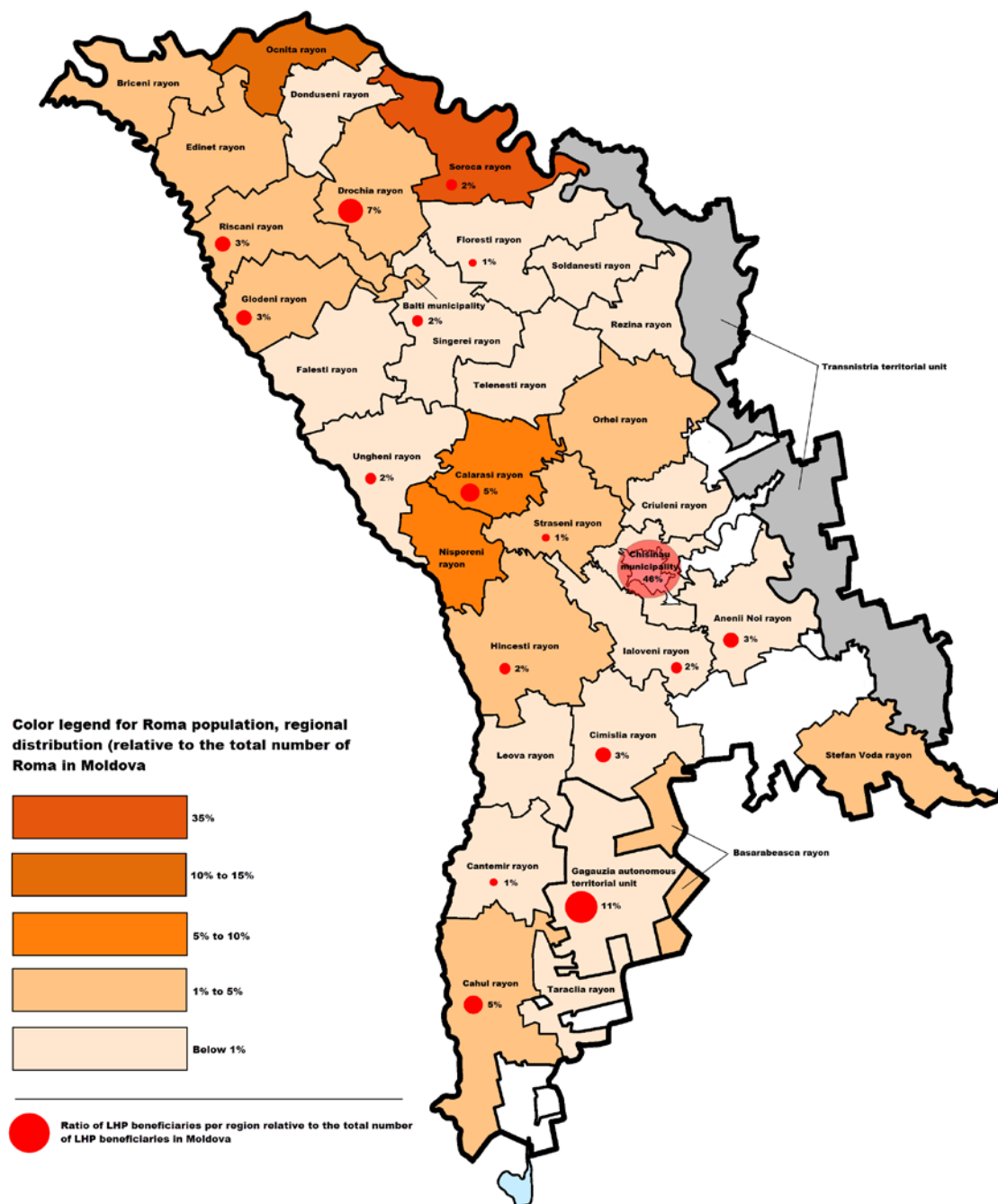
Related to the latter, respondents' answers in the survey and statements in focus groups and interviews indicate that entering the labour market is generally difficult for LHP graduates, particularly for those from Ukraine and for those whose parents have a relatively low level of formal education (which is a proxy measure for social-economic background).

To make LHP Program more efficient, the following **refinements** could be considered:

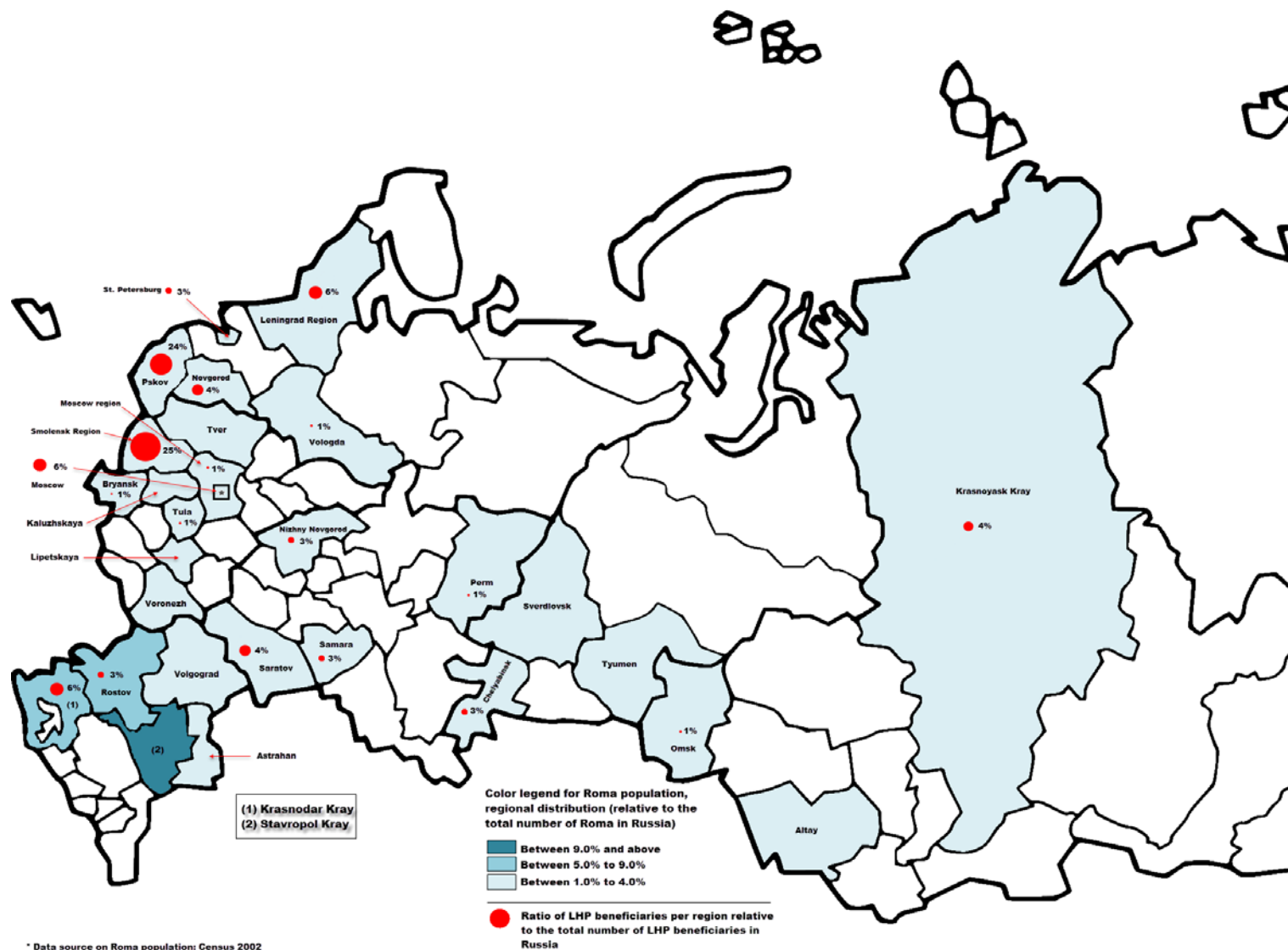
- The purchasing power of the stipend is different in different countries and in regions within countries and it is also different by field of studies. The Program might consider keeping in mind these differences while deciding upon the amounts of scholarship.

- Some of the in-country regions with relatively high concentration of Roma population are underrepresented in the pool of LHP participants. The Program should find ways to attract potential applicants from those regions as well.
- To make the Program more accessible to students with particularly disadvantageous backgrounds, the Program might want to consider more flexibility, such as accepting part-time studies at all levels or expanding the vocational-level component.
- The social capital of the Program alumni should be better used. Alumni can help the younger program participants by sharing their experiences, therefore they should be invited to all Program's events and gatherings. More effective ways in using the online communication and network-building should also be considered.
- In the process of outreach campaign schools and universities should be more involved, in order to outreach beyond the families and communities who are already represented in the Program.
- Participants would like to meet more often and would prefer to have more events, especially conferences. The online and offline networking is more than welcome among the respondents to the survey.
- To increase LHP participants' chances on the job market, the Program should strengthen the professional development components and also consider introducing a component for graduates' placement in internships, especially for participants coming from families with relatively low parental level of education.

Annex 1a – Geographic Distribution of LHP Beneficiaries and Roma Population in Moldova



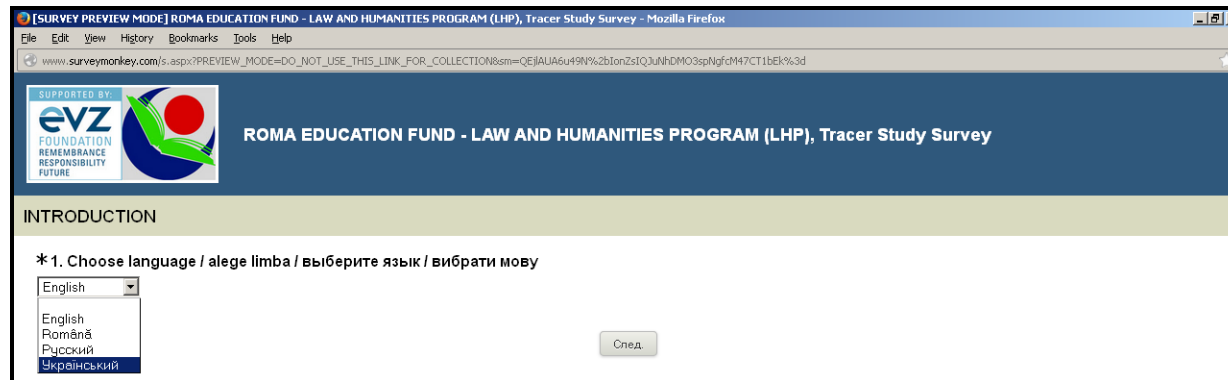
Annex 1b – Geographic Distribution of LHP Beneficiaries and Roma Population in Russia



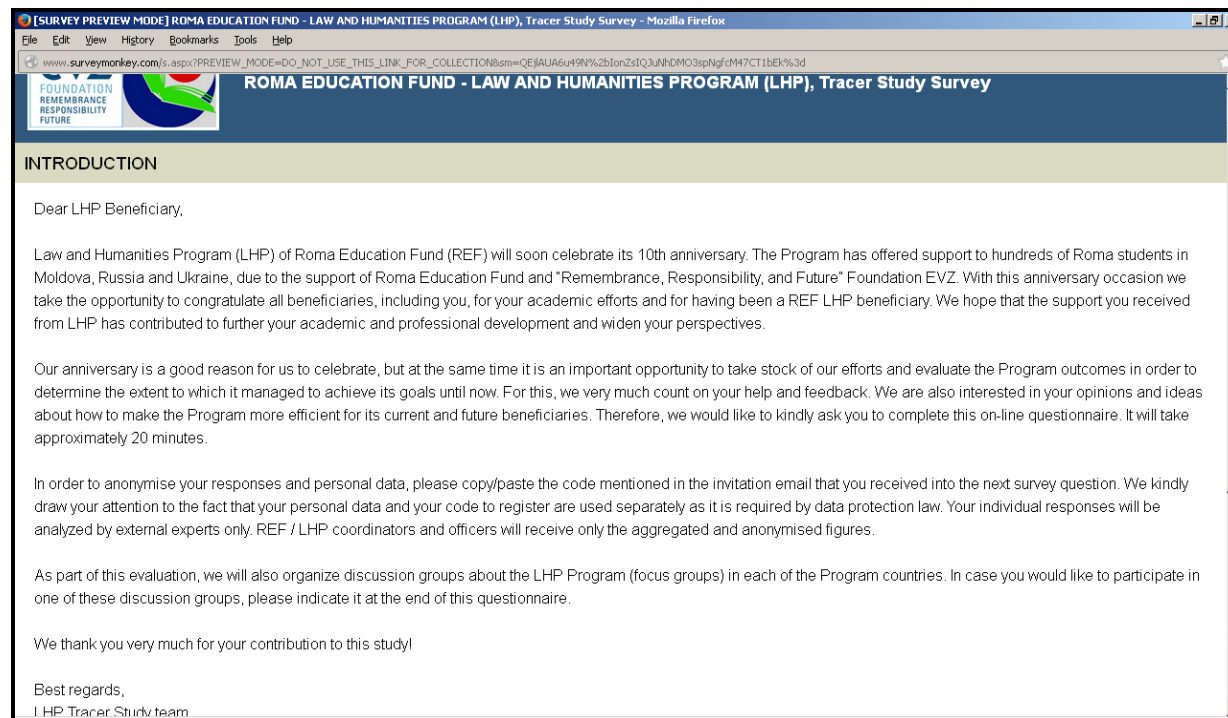
Annex 1c – Geographic Distribution of LHP Beneficiaries and Roma Population in Ukraine



Annex 2 – The Survey Questionnaire



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "[SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] ROMA EDUCATION FUND - LAW AND HUMANITIES PROGRAM (LHP), Tracer Study Survey". The address bar shows a URL from surveymonkey.com. The page header includes the EVZ Foundation logo and the text "ROMA EDUCATION FUND - LAW AND HUMANITIES PROGRAM (LHP), Tracer Study Survey". Below the header, the section "INTRODUCTION" is displayed. The main content area contains the text "* 1. Choose language / alege limba / выберите язык / вибрати мову" followed by a dropdown menu with options: English, English, Română, Русский, and Український. A "След" button is located to the right of the dropdown.



The screenshot shows the same web browser window as the previous one, but with the full text of the introduction visible. The text is as follows:

Dear LHP Beneficiary,

Law and Humanities Program (LHP) of Roma Education Fund (REF) will soon celebrate its 10th anniversary. The Program has offered support to hundreds of Roma students in Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, due to the support of Roma Education Fund and "Remembrance, Responsibility, and Future" Foundation EVZ. With this anniversary occasion we take the opportunity to congratulate all beneficiaries, including you, for your academic efforts and for having been a REF LHP beneficiary. We hope that the support you received from LHP has contributed to further your academic and professional development and widen your perspectives.

Our anniversary is a good reason for us to celebrate, but at the same time it is an important opportunity to take stock of our efforts and evaluate the Program outcomes in order to determine the extent to which it managed to achieve its goals until now. For this, we very much count on your help and feedback. We are also interested in your opinions and ideas about how to make the Program more efficient for its current and future beneficiaries. Therefore, we would like to kindly ask you to complete this on-line questionnaire. It will take approximately 20 minutes.

In order to anonymise your responses and personal data, please copy/paste the code mentioned in the invitation email that you received into the next survey question. We kindly draw your attention to the fact that your personal data and your code to register are used separately as it is required by data protection law. Your individual responses will be analyzed by external experts only. REF / LHP coordinators and officers will receive only the aggregated and anonymised figures.

As part of this evaluation, we will also organize discussion groups about the LHP Program (focus groups) in each of the Program countries. In case you would like to participate in one of these discussion groups, please indicate it at the end of this questionnaire.

We thank you very much for your contribution to this study!

Best regards,
LHP Tracer Study team

Question		Possible answers
Q1	Choose language	English/ Romanian/ Russian/ Ukrainian
Q2	Survey code	<i>Respondents fill random seven digit numbers (e.g. 0000001, 2000000... etc)</i>
Q3	When did you first apply to the LHP Program?	Choices range - 2012 to 2014
Q4	Was your application ever rejected?	Yes/ No
Q5	How many times was your application for an LHP scholarship rejected?	Once/ Twice/ Three times/ Four times/ More than four times
Q6	In what year did you become a beneficiary of the LHP Program for the first time?	Choices range - 2004 to 2012
Q7	For how many years have you been a beneficiary of the LHP Program?	For: 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8 Years
Q8	What is the total amount of financial support that you received as beneficiary of LHP Program (all years included), together with the additional LHP components if the case?	Answer provided in Euros: below 1000/ between 1000 to 2000/ between 2000 to 3000... / above 10,000 OR I don't remember
Q9	Please indicate your field of studies (multiple choice is possible)	Agriculture/ Andragogy/ Archeology/ Architecture/ Arts/ Business/ Cultural Sciences/ Economics/ Engineering/ Gender Studies/ Geology/ Graphic Design/ History/ International Relations/ Information Technology/ Journalism/ Languages/ Legal Studies/ Literature/ Management/ Mathematics/ Medical Assistance/ Medicine/ Music/ Natural Sciences/ Pedagogy/ Pharmacy/ Philosophy/ Political Sciences/ Psychology/ Public Administration/ Public Policy/ Public Relations/ Security/ Sociology/ Sports/ Theology/ Tourism/ Veterinary/ Other (please specify)
Q10	When you applied for the first time for LHP support, in what kind of studies were you enrolled?	Vocational/ Bachelor/ Master/ Doctoral
Q11	On what have you spent the money you have received from the LHP Program? Please indicate in percentage adding to 100%.	Costs related to my studies (tuition fees, textbooks and study materials, library fees, exam fees, etc)/ Living expenses (accommodation, food, transportation, clothes, etc)/ Technical equipment (computer, laptop, printer, scanner, camera, mobile phone, etc)/ Extra-curricular activities (foreign language courses, participation at conferences, driving license courses, socialization with friends and peers, etc)/ Other
Q12	In which proportion your monthly expenses as a student have been covered by the LHP stipend?	Below 10%/ about 10%/ 20%/ 30%/ 40%/ 50%/ 60%/ 70%/ 80%/ 90%/ Virtually all my monthly costs were covered by my LHP stipend
Q13/ Q16	From where were you getting the rest of money to cover your living costs?	Parents, Family/ Partner/ Friends/ Other stipends/ Safety net (subsidies or allowances provided by state welfare system as unemployment benefit housing subsidies)/ Official salary from employment , work/ Informal job/ Bank loan/ Other (please specify)

Q14	Would you have studied if you did not have the financial support from the LHP Program?	Yes/ No/ I don't know
Q15	If you did not have the LHP support:	I would have chosen another specialization with lower tuition fee - True / False / I would have chosen another specialization that was not in line with LHP program eligibility criteria - True / False / I would have chosen another university that was closer to my home - True / False / I would have chosen a different mode of university studies (part time or distance learning instead of full time) - True / False / I would have considered only Bachelor studies/ but not Master and / or Doctorate studies - True / False / I would have postponed my university studies for later - True / False
Q17	To what extent has the LHP Program helped you to: (Please indicate a score for each category) Go to University/ Finish your studies/ Get a job/ Broaden your network/ Develop your communication skills/ Get higher salary/ Help your family and environment/ Strengthen your Roma identity/ Have more time for studies/ Cover your basic financial needs	1- To an insignificant extent/ 2/ 3/ 4/ 5/ 6/ 7/ 8/ 9/ 10 - To a maximum extent
Q18	Have you ever participated in any of the additional components of the LHP Program? If yes / please indicate the required details: LHP International Internship Grant/ LHP Small scale project grant/ LHP Language Courses Grant/ LHP Professional Development Fund/ LHP Annual Conference/ LHP in – country training/ LHP yahoo alumni group	How many times?*
	If yes/ what was the total amount of financial support (if applicable)?	Never/ Once/ Twice/ Three times/ Four times/ More than four times
	If yes/ how useful was it for you?	below 500 EUR/ between 500 EUR and 1500 EUR/ between 1500 EUR and 3000 EUR/ above 3000 EUR/ not applicable
		Not useful at all/ Slightly useful/ Somewhat useful/ Very useful/ Extremely useful
Q19	Have you completed your university studies?	Yes, I have successfully graduated university studies/ No, I have not graduated university studies yet
Q20	If not/ do you still study?	Yes/ No
Q21	What is the reason for which you interrupted your studies? (multiple choice is possible)	I got a job/ I got children/ I got married/ I did not have sufficient financial means to continue my studies/ I did not have satisfactory academic results to continue my studies/ I got disappointed in my university/ I got disappointed in my specialization/ Other (please specify)
Q22	What is your highest level of completed education at the moment?	High school or vocational school degree/ Bachelor degree/ Master degree/ Doctorate degree
Q23	Have you ever been employed (formally or informally)?	Yes/ No

Q24	If never employed, do you get any unemployment allowances at the moment?	Yes/ No
Q25	Are you currently employed (in a formal or in an informal job)?	Yes/ No
(In the following section (Q26 to Q38)/ the questions have been repeated for: Information on 1st/ 2nd/ 3rd/ 4th and 5th most recent employments)		
Q27	Name of the position	Respondents fill this question by typing response. (Field is open in text limit)
Q28	What type of tasks do you or did you have to perform for this job? (multiple choice possible)	Manual, physical work not requiring special training/ Manual, physical work requiring special training/ Administrative/ Professional, intellectual
Q29	Sector	State sector/ Private sector/ Self-employed/ Non-profit (NGO/ research/ IGOs/ etc)/ Other (please specify)
Q30	Field	Accountancy/ Auditing/ Tax Administrative /Support Services /Secretarial Advertising /Marketing /PR Agriculture /Forestry /Fishing/ Architectural Services/ Arts /Entertainment/ Media Banking/ Insurance Biotechnology/ Pharmaceutical Catering / Hospitality Community / Government/ Social Services/ Non-Profit Construction/ Mining Consulting Customer Service/ Call Centre Education/ Training/ Library Employment/ Recruitment Agency/ Human Resources Engineering/ Technical/ Industrial Design Finance/ Economics Healthcare/ Medical/ IT/ Software/ Computers /Media Design Industrial/ Manufacturing/ Production Internet /Ecommerce/ New Media Legal Leisure /Sport Printing/ Graphic Design Property/ Real Estate Restaurant/ Food Services Retail/ Wholesale Sales /Business Development Science Telecommunication Translation Services Travel/ Tourism Warehousing /Distribution /Transport
Q31	Type of work	Full time/ Part time
Q32	In what year have you been employed for this job?	Choice answer: Before 2000/ 2000/ 2001/ 2002/ 2003/ 2004/ 2005/ 2006/ 2007/ 2008/ 2009/ 2010/ 2011/ 2012/ 2013
Q33	For how long have you been employed in this job? Please indicate the total number of months!	Respondents fill this question by typing response. (Field is open in text limit)
Q34	Where was this job located?	Within my hometown, city, village/ Outside my home town, city, village/ Abroad
Q35	Please indicate the name of the city / town / village where this job is (was) located	Respondents fill this question by typing response. (Field is open in text limit)
Q36	Is (or was) this job connected to your field of studies?	Yes/ No
Q37	Is (or was) this job connected to Roma issues?	Yes/ No
Q38	What was the minimum qualification you needed for being hired for this job?	No formal qualification was needed for this job/ I needed at least a secondary school diploma/ I needed at least a vocational school diploma/ I needed at least a Bachelor level diploma I needed at least a Master level diploma/ I needed a Doctorate level diploma
Q39	Information on your second/ third/ fourth and fifth most recent employment (please indicate if applicable)	Applicable/ Not Applicable

Q40	For how long did you look for a job after you graduated your highest degree?	For less than one month/ For one-three months/ For four-six months/ For seven-nine months/ For nine-twelve months/ For less than a year/ For more than a year/ I have never looked for a job
Q41	Could you please specify the reasons for which you have not tried to find a job? (multiple choice possible)	I can earn my living without a permanent job/ My family (parents, spouse, etc.) can support me/ I have a child or children so I am at home/ I think that it is impossible to find a job for me, so I do not try/ Unemployment benefits and other social allowances are enough for me/ I wanted to continue my education with a higher degree/ Other (please specify)
Q42	How many times did you apply for a job?	Once/ Two times/ Three times/ Four times/ Five times/ more than five times
Q43	Where did you try to find a job?	In my country of residence/ Abroad
Q44	Do you think that the fact that you are Roma made it more difficult for you to find a job?	Yes/ Yes but only in some cases/ No, it actually made it easier/ No, it did not matter/ I don't know
Q45/ - Q48	Are you perceived by your friends/University colleagues/Professors/in employment - as Roma?	By few of them/ By most of them/ Rather not/ I don't know
Q49/ - Q52	How do you prefer to identify yourself in a Public/Private/University/Workplace- context?	As a non-Roma/ As a Roma/ It depends on the audience/ It depends on the context/ Other (please specify)
Q53	Have you recently participated in Roma-related activities?	Yes/ No
Q54	If yes/ in which kind of activities have you participated? (multiple choice possible)	Information and awareness raising campaigns/ Grass-roots community work/ Cultural activities/ Supporting development/ together with Roma and local authorities/ Supporting Roma parents and children/ young people in their effort to pursue education/ Supporting Roma parents and young people in using better the health-care services/ Provision of counseling and guidance/ Other (please specify)
Q55	Do you stay in touch with your former and/or current LHP peers?	Yes/ No
Q56	If yes/ how often?	Weekly/ Monthly/ Occasionally
Q57	How do you communicate with each other?	Personal meetings/ By phone/ Internet based social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, odnoklassniki, vkontakte etc)/ Chats (Skype, MSN, etc)
Q58	Please indicate your year of birth	Choices range - 1950 to 1999 years
Q59	Please indicate your gender	Male/ Female
Q60	Please indicate your citizenship	Moldovan/ Russian/ Ukrainian
Q61	Please indicate the region where you come from	Regions in Moldova (36)/ Regions in Russia (166)/ Regions in Ukraine (467)
Q62	Have you grown up in a urban or in a rural area?	In a urban area/ In a rural area
Q63	What is your marital status?	Single/ Engaged/ Married/ Divorced/ Widowed
Q64	Do you have children?	Yes/ No

Q65	How many children do you have?	1 child/ 2 children/ 3 children/ 4 children or more
Q66/ Q67	Please indicate your mother's level of formal education / your father's level of formal education	No school/ Incomplete primary school/ Completed primary school/ Incomplete secondary school/ Completed secondary school/ Incomplete post-secondary vocational education/ Completed post-secondary vocational education/ Incomplete university/ Completed university (BA)/ Postgraduate studies (MA/ PHD)/ I have not been raised by my mother
Q68	How would you evaluate the LHP Program as a whole?	1 - Very bad; 2/ 3/ 4/ 5/ 6/ 7/ 8/ 9; 10 - Very good
Q69	(Optional) Please put down with your words/ what was useful/ and what was not in the LHP Program. What would you suggest to change or add to it?	Respondents fill this question by typing response. (Field is open in text limit)
Q70	As part of this tracer study/ the implementation team would like to organize a focus group in each LHP country/ to discuss in more details with former and current LHP students their academic and professional path/ as well as their experience as beneficiaries of the LHP Program. The focus group will be organized in the capital of your country and participants' travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the Program. If you are invited/ would you accept to participate in such a focus group?	Yes/ No

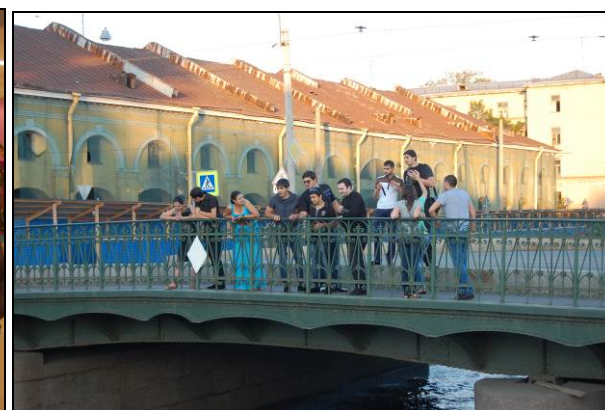
Annex 3. Pictures from Various LHP Events



Students at the LHP Annual Meeting in 2009 (Kiev, Ukraine)



Students at the LHP Annual Meeting in 2012 (Vadul-lui-Voda, Moldova)



Students at the LHP Annual Meeting in 2013 (St Petersburg, Russia)



LHP beneficiary speaking about academic and professional development opportunities to Roma students from Smolensk, Russia (LHP Small Scale Project, 2012)



LHP beneficiary distributing first-aid medicine kits to Roma population from a Roma village in Transcarpathia, Ukraine (LHP Small Scale Project, 2012)

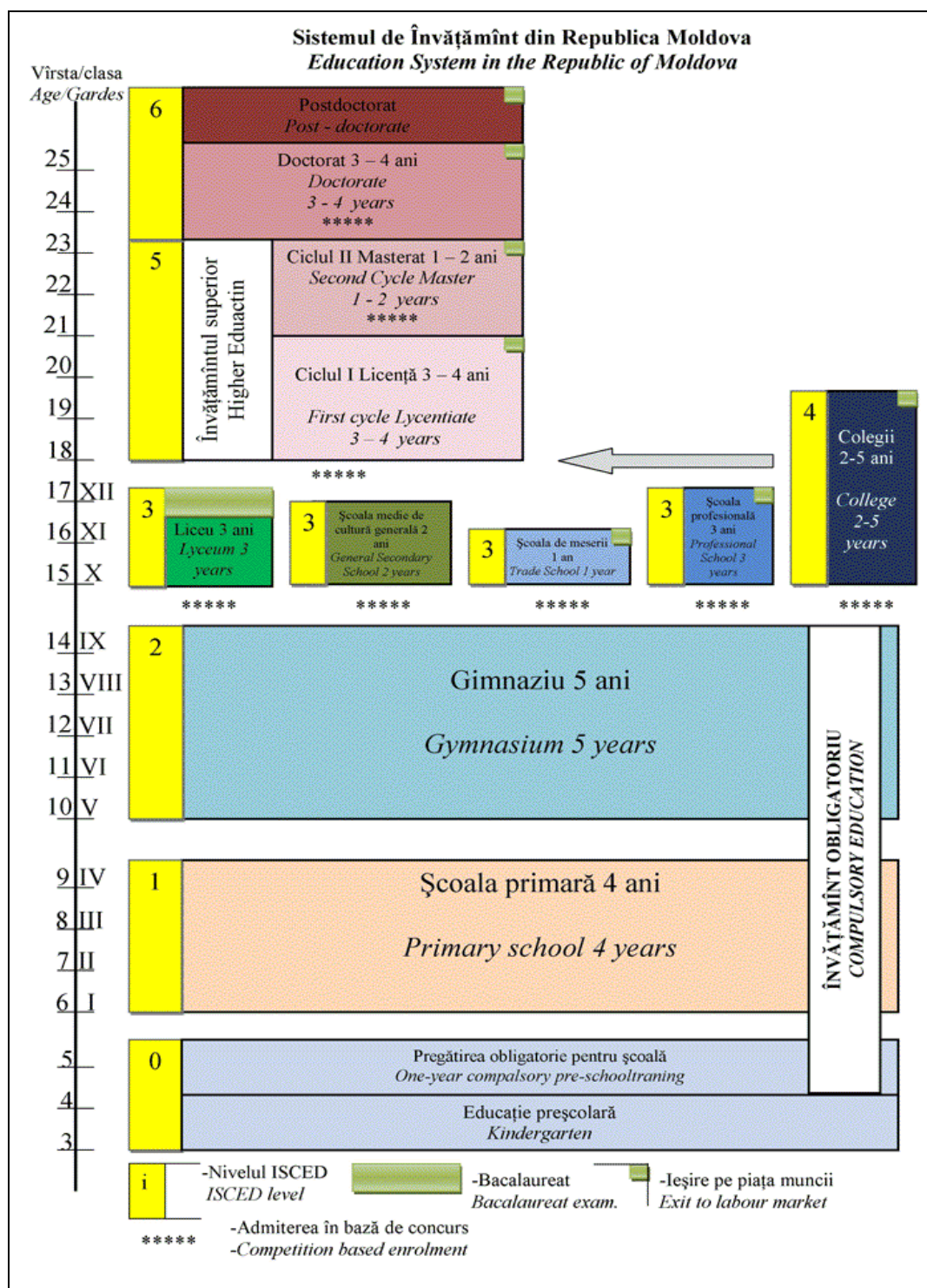


LHP beneficiary presenting about intercultural tolerance to Roma and non-Roma pupils of a mixed school in Moldova (LHP Small Scale Project, 2013)



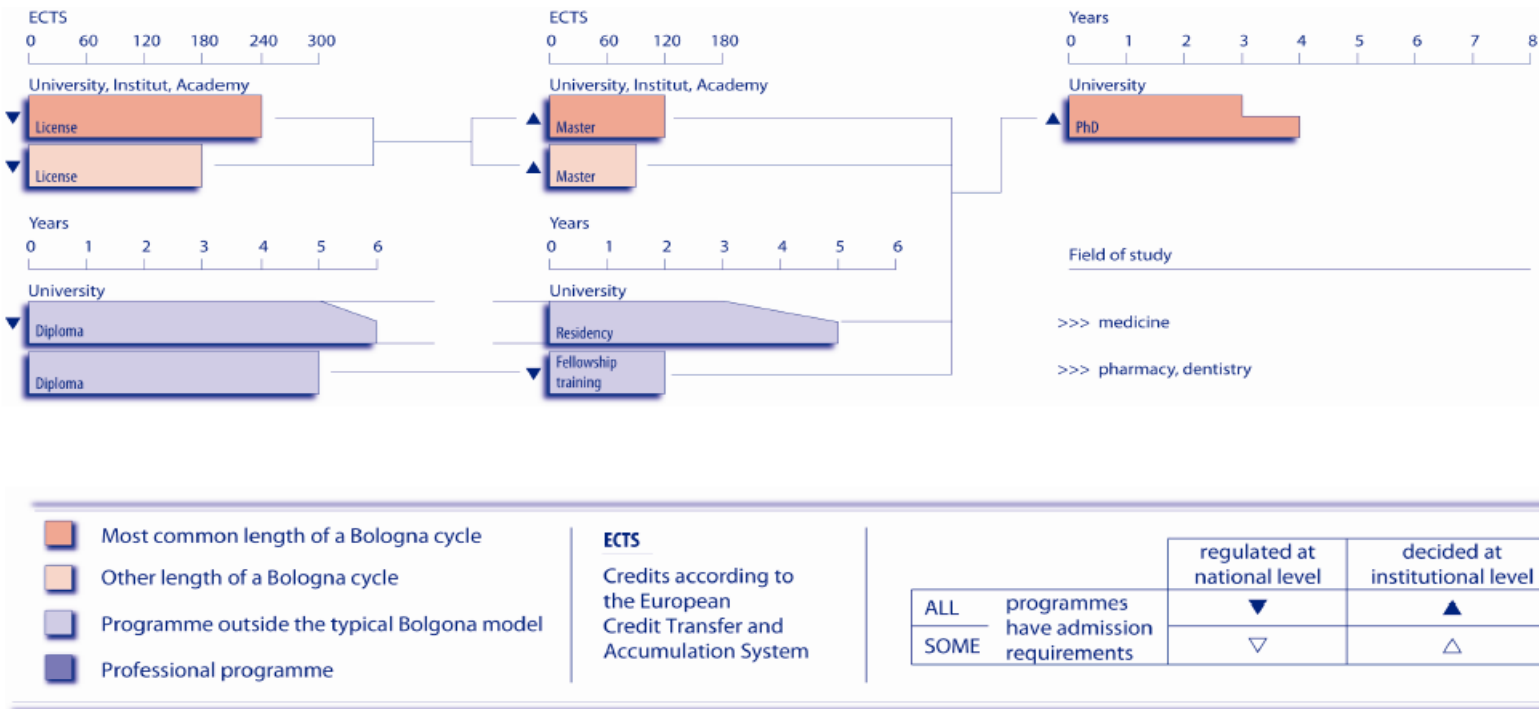
LHP beneficiary at the water well built as part of Small Scale Project in a Roma village in Moldova (2013), with the mayor and villagers

Annex 4a. Education System in Moldova



Source: Ministry of Education, Moldova <http://www.edu.gov.md/en/structura-sist-invatamint/>

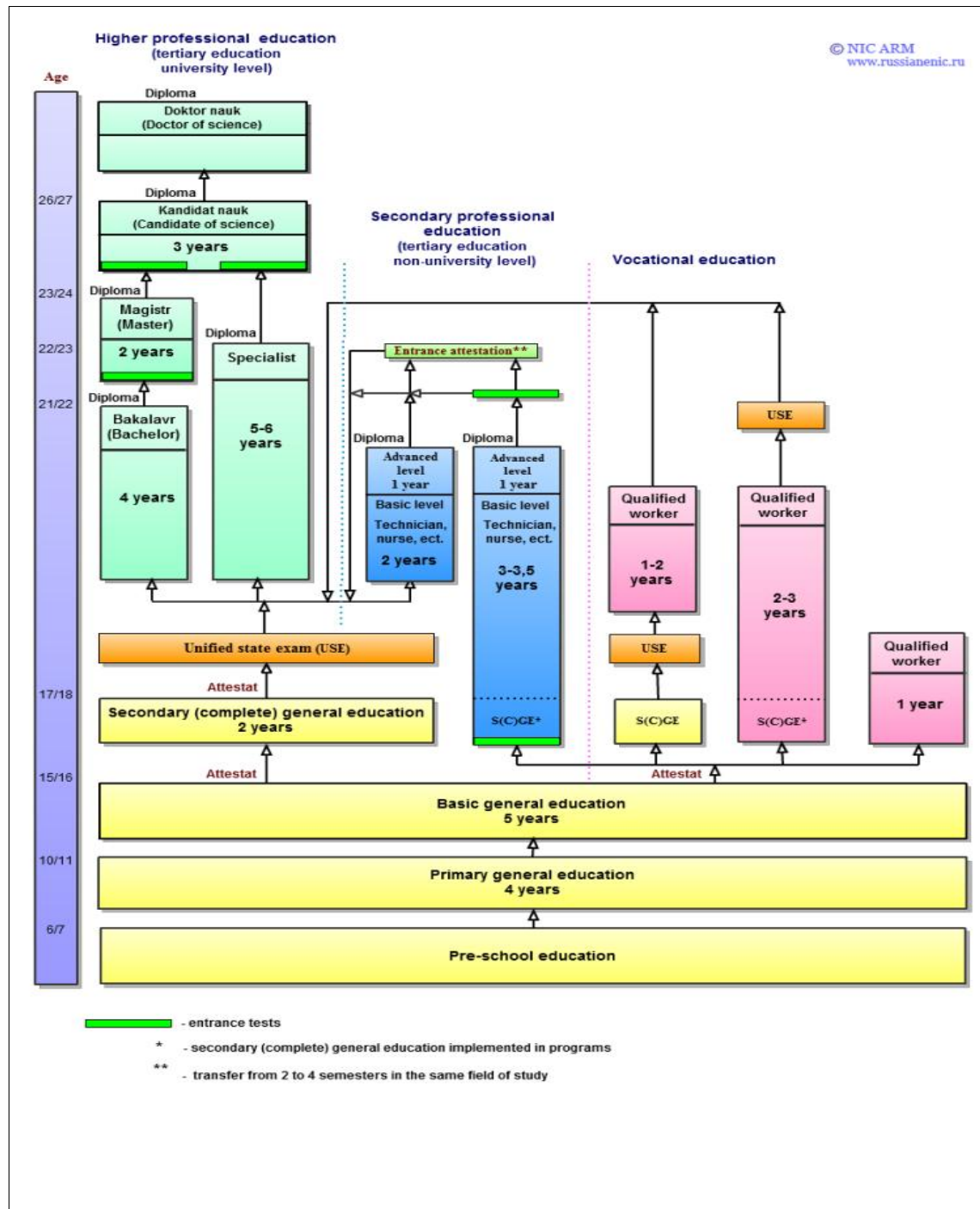
The higher education system in Moldova



Source: "Higher Education in Moldova", European Commission.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/moldova_tempus_country_fiche_final.pdf

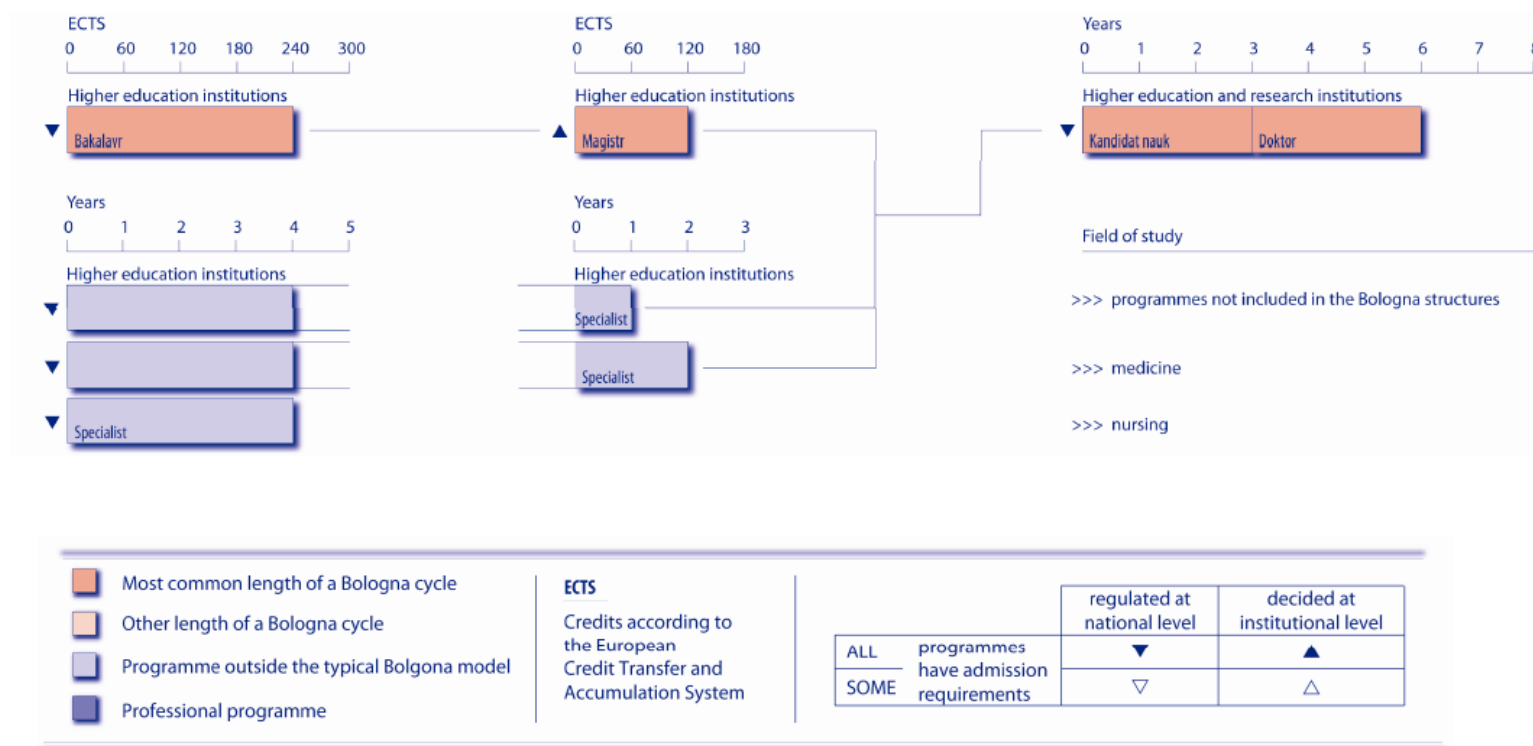
Annex 4b. Education System in Russia



Source:

- UNESCO World TVET Database – Country information for Russia, 2012 <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/worldtvetdatabase1.php?ct=RUS>
- Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation: <http://en.russia.edu.ru/edu/description/sysobr/902/>

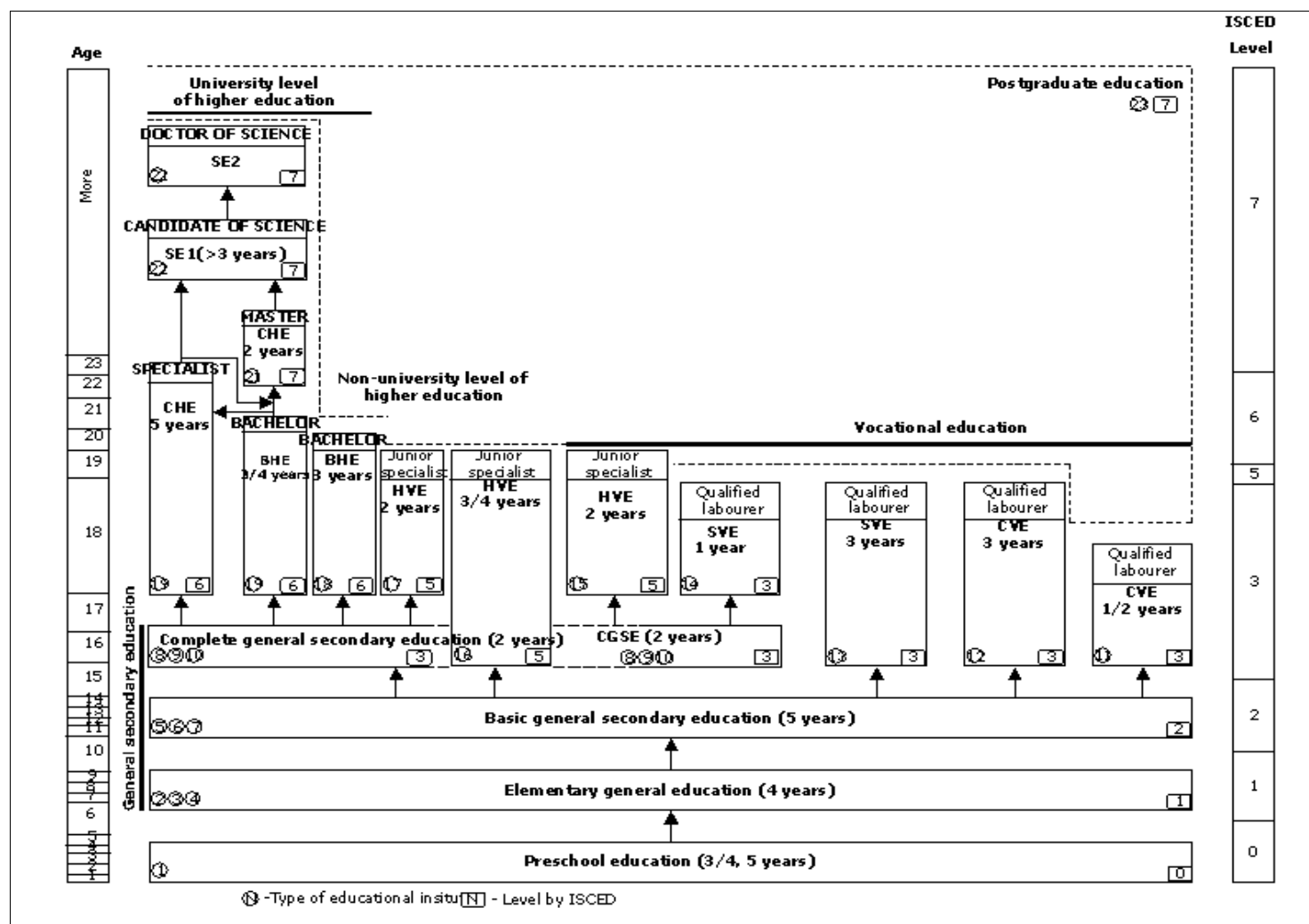
The higher education system in the Russian Federation



Source: "Higher Education in Russia", European Commission.

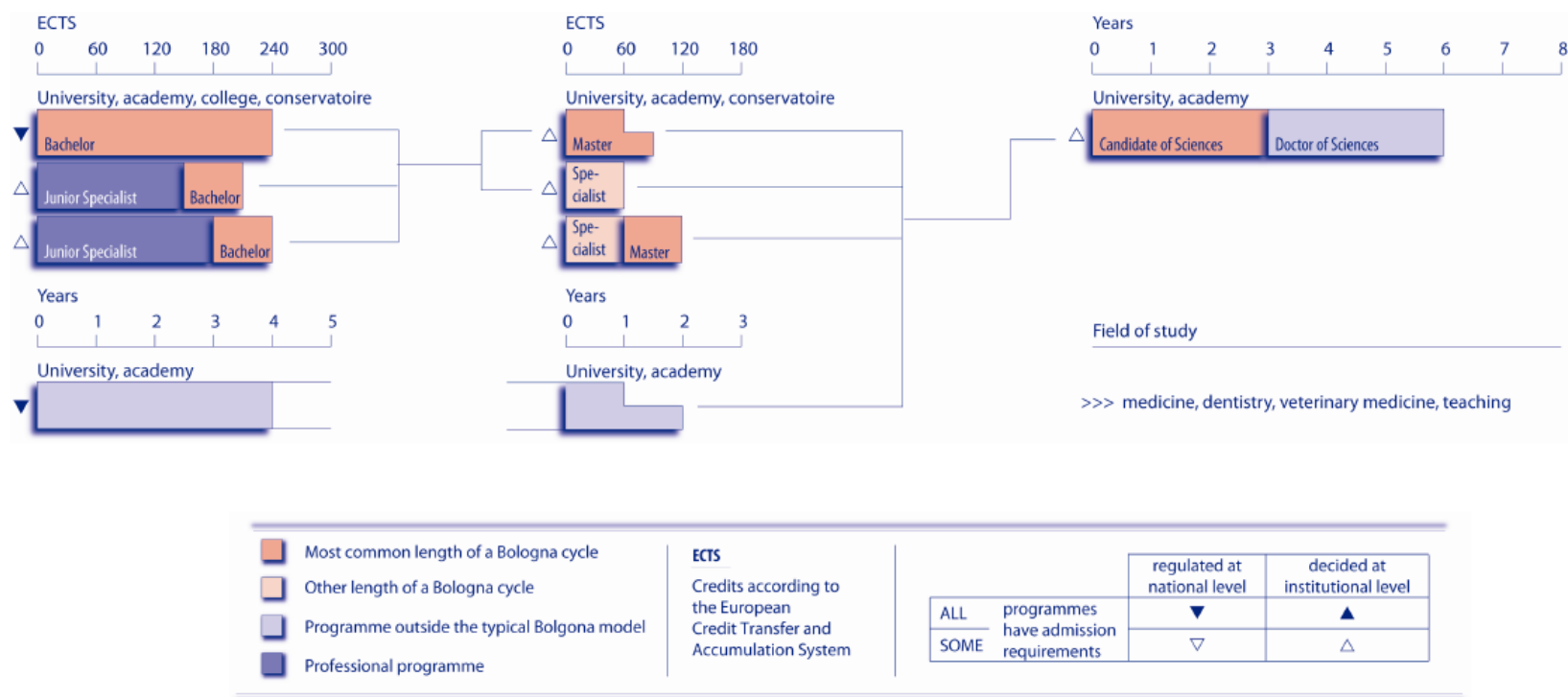
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/russia_country_fiche_final.pdf

Annex 4c. Education System in Ukraine



Source: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Country information – Ukraine, 2006
http://www.ibe.unesco.org/Countries/WDE/2006/CENTRAL_and_EASTERN_EUROPE/Ukraine/Ukraine.htm

The higher education system in Ukraine



Source: "Higher Education in Ukraine", European Commission.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/ukraine_tempus_country_fiche_final.pdf