



Roma Education Fund

# ROMA EDUCATION FUND

Country Assessment

**SLOVAKIA**



# CONTENTS

Preface	4
Acknowledgments	5
Executive Summary	6
The Romani Population in Slovakia	9
Government and Donor Commitments	12
Education System	17
REF in Slovakia	27
Annex 1: Key Education Indicators	36
Annex 2: Administration of Public Education	38
Annex 3: Student Performance on International Assessments	40
Annex 4: Levels of Engagement for Improving Roma's Education Outcomes in Slovakia	42
Annex 5: Census Results	44
Bibliography	45

# PREFACE

This document is part of a series of Country Assessments produced by the Roma Education Fund (REF). It seeks to provide an analysis of education and the ongoing education reforms from the perspective of the inclusion of Romani children in the countries taking part in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The document also reviews the different programs and activities REF has carried out since its establishment in 2005 and highlights the thematic and program areas on which REF plans to focus during the coming three years. In addition to serving as a tool for the Roma Education Fund's own programming, REF hopes that this document will offer a useful instrument for:

- Policymakers seeking to improve education policies that address the education outcome gap between Roma and non-Roma.
- Civil society representatives who wish to improve the effectiveness of their educational programs by making them more relevant to the overall education reform of their country.
- The overall development and donor community, which needs to better understand the situation faced by Romani children in order to identify niche areas where available resources would produce the greatest impact.

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

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The original model for the Country Assessment series was developed by Tünde Kovács-Cerović, Roger Grawe, and Alexandre Marc, who also edited the series through the end of 2007. The current Country Assessment follows the new format developed by Toby Linden, Mihai Surdu, and Eben Friedman in early 2009. The current editor of the Country Assessment series is Mihai Surdu.

The main author of this document is Eben Friedman. He received contributions from Lýdia Bariová, Nino Chelidze, Stano Daniel, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Juraj Kubán, Martina Kubánová, and Toby Linden, as well as from the participants at the roundtable held in Bratislava on May 31, 2011.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ROMA IN SLOVAKIA

The Slovak census of 2001 indicates the size of Slovakia's Romani population to be 89,920, or 1.7 per cent of the total population. Based on personal declarations, this figure is considerably lower than the official estimate of 253,943 in 1989, which was based on ascription. Activist estimates of the size of the Romani population of Slovakia reach 800,000, while field studies and statistical projections yield a range of 320,000 to 435,300. Statistical projections also indicate that the Romani population of compulsory school-age in Slovakia currently accounts for nearly one-fifth (18.8 percent) of the country's entire Romani population.

## EDUCATION

Slovakia adopted a new School Law in 2008 prohibiting children's enrollment in special education on the basis of social disadvantage and requiring informed consent as a condition for enrollment in such classes. A second positive development, also in 2008, was the elimination of the perverse incentive for enrollment in special education created by the scholastic achievement criterion for the social scholarship called the "Motivation Allowance."

The most pressing problem for the education of Roma in Slovakia is the continued systemic overrepresentation of Roma in special education, with field research conducted on a statistically representative sample finding that Roma account for approximately 60 percent of all pupils in special education in Slovakia. Additional problems include limited access to preschool education and segregation in standard as well as special education. Moreover, most schools are inadequately prepared for Roma, whose place in the history and culture of Slovakia is largely neglected in general education and teacher training curricula.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

REF funding in Slovakia over the next two years will reflect the following priorities:

- Preventing wrongful enrollment of Romani children in special education through measures including but not necessarily limited to the provision to parents of comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for their children's further education and employment, integrated preschool education, and after-school support in the early years of primary education.
- Promoting the sustainable transfer to standard education of Romani children wrongfully placed in special schools and classes, especially through support for local pilot projects with the potential for scaling up on the regional and national levels.
- Improving Roma's transition rates from primary to secondary education and from secondary to higher education.
- Providing technical assistance for relevant projects financed by the Slovak government with EU Structural Funds.

Major themes of REF's research and policy activities in Slovakia will include:

- An examination of structures, policies, practices, and prospects for increasing the access of Romani children to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services.
- A set of practically oriented publications on ECEC services for Roma.

Developmental priorities of the REF Scholarship Programs in Slovakia will include:

- Increasing the number of RMUSP scholars.
- Beneficiary networking.
- Promoting scholar participation in other REF activities.





# THE ROMANI POPULATION IN SLOVAKIA

## POPULATION SIZE

The first written mention of a Romani presence in Slovakia dates from the early fourteenth century and establishes that Roma were already familiar to the non-Romani population.<sup>1</sup> Whereas official measures aimed at Roma in Slovakia before 1945 ranged between assimilation and elimination, Romani-peasant relations seem to have stabilized under Habsburg rule, and then deteriorated gradually as Roma were displaced economically as a result of changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. During the Second World War, the nominally independent Slovak state concentrated Roma in large settlements, which subsequently became a major target of policies aimed at bringing about assimilation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.<sup>2</sup>

The largest subethnic group of Roma in Slovakia are the Slovak Roma (sometimes called *Servika Roma*), who account for approximately two-thirds of the country's Romani population and live throughout the country, with the largest concentrations in the east. Hungarian Roma (*Ungrike Roma*), who form the second largest group, live primarily in the southern regions of the country. Smaller groups in Slovakia are Vlach Roma (*Vlachika Roma*) and *Sinti*, with members of the latter group generally considering themselves distinct from Roma but regarded as Roma by non-Roma in general as well as by Roma. A majority of Roma in Slovakia speak some form of Romanes, with the Eastern Slovak dialect most common.

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<sup>1</sup> Emília Horváthová, *Cigáni na Slovensku: Historicko-etnografický náčrt* [Gypsies in Slovakia: Historico-ethnographic outline] (Bratislava: Vydateľstvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1964); Zuzana Kollárová, "K vývoju rómskej spoločnosti na Spiši do roku 1945 [On the development of Romani society in Spiš before 1945]," in Arne B. Mann (ed.), *Neznámi Rómovia: Zo života a kultúry Cigánov-Rómov na Slovensku* [Unknown Roma: On the life and culture of Gypsies-Roma in Slovakia] (Bratislava: Ister Science Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Anna Jurová, "Vývoj postavenie Rómov na Slovensku a otázky ich "integrácie" do spoločnosti [Development of the position of Roma in Slovakia and of the question of their "integration" into society], *Ethnologia actualis slovacica* 1, no. 2 (2000); Ctibor Nečas, "Pronásledování Cíkáň v období slovenského státu [Persecution of the Gypsies in the Period of the Slovak State], *Slovenský národopis* 36, no. 1 (1988); *Českoslovenští Romové v letech 1938–1945* [Czechoslovak Roma in the years 1938–1945] (Brno: Masarykova Univerzita, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Statistical projections of the size of the Romani population (435,300) and the compulsory school-age cohort (81,700) generated by the demographer Boris Vaňo for the year 2010. See Boris Vaňo, "The Demographics of Roma Children," in Andrej Salner (ed.), *Roma Children in the Slovak Education System* (Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, 2005).

## THE ROMANI POPULATION

### Poverty and unemployment

It has been estimated that as much as 80 percent of Slovakia's Romani population is dependent on the state's social welfare net.<sup>4</sup> The last official data on the duration of unemployment among Roma in Slovakia date from 1999 and indicate that Roma account for nearly one-third of persons unemployed for more than twelve months, two-fifths of persons unemployed for more than 24 months, and over half of persons unemployed for more than 48 months.<sup>5</sup> A more recent household survey commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme found that approximately three-quarters (75.9 percent) of unemployed Roma had been registered with the employment office for more than a year, with nearly half (48.8 percent) of unemployed Roma registered for more than three years.<sup>6</sup>

### Health

Estimates from 1999 place average life expectancy for Roma in Slovakia at 55 years for men and 59 years for women, as compared with 67 and 74 for non-Romani men and women (respectively).<sup>7</sup> Estimated birthrates of the Romani population in Slovakia vary widely, but have in common that they place the number of live births among Roma well above the corresponding figure for non-Roma.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, infant mortality rates in Slovakia are approximately twice as high for Roma as for non-Roma.<sup>9</sup> While the Ministry of Health lacks ethnically disaggregated data on Roma, data from the district and local levels indicate that hepatitis, poliomyelitis, and meningitis are more common among Roma than among other populations in Slovakia, as are less serious infectious diseases.<sup>10</sup>

### Housing

According to the sociographic mapping of Romani settlements undertaken in 2004, approximately half of Slovakia's Romani population lives dispersed among non-Roma.<sup>11</sup> In the settlements housing the other half of the Romani population, approximately one-third of dwellings are illegal, with approximately 60 percent of dwellings lacking

4 Tibor Loran, "Sociálna politika a zamestnanosť Rómov [Social policy and Roma's employment]," in Michal Vašečka (ed.), *Čačipen pal o Roma: Súhrnná správa o Rómoch na Slovensku [A Global Report on Roma in Slovakia]* (Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, 2002), pp. 565–566.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 565–566.

6 Jarmila Filadelfiová, Daniel Gerbery, and Daniel Škobla, *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma in Slovakia* (Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme, 2007), p. 75.

7 "Menšina väčšinou [Minority majority]," *Pravda*, November 13, 1999, available online at [www.pravda.sk](http://www.pravda.sk).

8 See, for example, Vladimír Srb, "Plodnosť vdaných žien podľa národnosti a veku v Československu podľa sčítání ľudu 1991 [Fertility of married women by ethnicity and age in Czechoslovakia according to the 1991 census], *Slezský sborník* 93 (1995); Michal Vašečka, "Rómovia [Roma]," in Miroslav Kollár and Grigorij Mesežnikov (eds.), *Slovensko 2000: Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti [Slovakia 2000: Summary report on the state of society]* (Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, 2000).

9 Anna Jurová, "Slovenská spoločnosť, zdá sa, ešte stále nie je pripravená na riešenie rómskej otázky [It seems that Slovak society is still not ready to resolve the Romani issue]," interview by Kristína Magdalenová in *Romano nevo lil*, September 30, 2000; Dena Ringold, *Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2000).

10 Open Society Institute, "Minority Protection in Slovakia," *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection* (New York: Open Society Institute, 2001).

11 Martina Jurasková, Elena Kriglerová, and Jana Rybová, *Atlas rómskych komunít na Slovensku 2004 [Atlas of Romani communities in Slovakia 2004]* (Bratislava: Úrad splnomocnenkyne vlády SR pre rómske komunity, 2004).

indoor plumbing and 87 percent unconnected to public sewerage. Whereas nearly 90 percent of dwellings in such settlements have access to electricity, illegal connections are common. The segregated location of many Romani settlements within regions that are themselves economically underdeveloped places a considerable proportion of Slovakia's Romani population in a position of "double marginalization."<sup>12</sup>

### Representation

Overall, Romani political representation is weak and cooperation with decision-makers poor. Whereas the elections of June 1990 saw the election of Gejza Adam to the (Czechoslovak) Federal Assembly and Anna Koptová to the Slovak National Council, Roma have not been represented in Slovakia's parliament since 1992. None of the country's approximately twenty Romani political parties have secured the necessary minimum independently, while Romani candidates running for office on the tickets of non-Romani parties have been assigned ballot positions which would have made their election to parliament possible only via preference voting. Roma also lack representation at the regional level, but participate in some municipal elected bodies.

The Slovak government established an Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities (initially called the "Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of Citizens Who Need Special Care") in 1995. Developing from a purely political appointment into an organ capable of offering expert advice under the leadership of Klára Orgovánová in the period 2001–2007, the Office has been less active since Orgovánová's departure.

A directory of Romani and pro-Romani NGOs published by the Open Society Foundation in Slovakia in 2008 contains 265 entries.<sup>13</sup> To date, coordination among NGOs in Slovakia has been generally lacking.

<sup>12</sup> Iveta Radičová, *Hic Sunt Romales* (Bratislava: Fulbrightova komisia SR/Nadácia S.P.A.C.E., 2001), pp. 76, 242.

<sup>13</sup> Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti, *Adresár mimovládnych organizácií, ktoré sa venujú rómskym programom* [Directory of non-governmental organizations devoted to Romani programs] (Bratislava: Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti, 2008).

# GOVERNMENT AND DONOR COMMITMENTS

## GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

### Overall legal framework

The Slovak Constitution both prohibits discrimination against members of “national minorities” and “ethnic groups” and guarantees them rights including education in their own language.<sup>14</sup> In similar fashion, the School Law adopted in 2008 lists “the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and especially segregation” as a fundamental principle of education and guarantees the right to education in the mother tongue to “[c]hildren and pupils belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.”<sup>15</sup> Anti-discrimination legislation adopted in 2004 prohibits discrimination in social services and employment on the basis of nationality or ethnicity while allowing for affirmative measures to neutralize disadvantages related to racial or ethnic origin.<sup>16</sup> Also enumerated in this legislation are forms of integration of pupils with special educational needs in primary and secondary schools.<sup>17</sup>

### Measures targeting Roma

Whereas Slovak governments have produced a large number of strategic documents aimed at the country’s Romani population, implementation has often been lacking. Rather than apply a program consistently, Slovak authorities have repeatedly drafted what they presented as new policy priorities and called for new pilot projects to reflect those priorities. For this reason, relevant documents are listed below primarily for the purpose of illustration.

Post-Communist Slovakia’s first policy document aimed at its Romani population, Resolution 153 of April 9, 1991 on “Principles of the Policy of the Slovak Republic towards the Roma” recognized the Roma as a nationality (*národnosť*) and promised political and legal equality as well as an ethnically neutral approach, establishing for these purposes a Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Nationalities and Ethnic Groups, as well as a Committee for Nationalities, Ethnic Groups, and Human Rights.<sup>18</sup> Government resolutions adopted in 1995

<sup>14</sup> *Ústava Slovenskej republiky* [Constitution of the Slovak Republic] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 1992), Articles 33–34.

<sup>15</sup> *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 245 of May 22, 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008), Article 1.3.d; 1.12.3.

<sup>16</sup> *Zákon č. 365 z 20. mája 2004 o rovnakom zaobchádzaní v niektorých oblastiach a o ochrane pred diskrimináciou a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov (antidiskriminačný zákon)* [Law No. 365 of May 20, 2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas, on Protection Against Discrimination, and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws (Anti-discrimination Law)] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004), Article 1.5.1, 1.6.1, 1.8.8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Article XV.6.

and 1996 created the “Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of Citizens Who Need Special Care” under the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family and set priorities for the Office.<sup>19</sup> Although the Office was defined in ethnically neutral terms and filled by an ethnic Slovak, its priorities were defined largely explicitly in reference to Roma. A government resolution issued in 1997, on the other hand, promised again an ethnically neutral approach to the problems of the Romani population.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after the change of government and Slovakia’s international-political orientation in 1998 came a government resolution that created the “Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of Citizens Belonging to the Romani Minority,” which was now filled by a Rom.<sup>21</sup> Later that same year, the Slovak government adopted the “Strategy of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of the Romani National Minority and the Set of Measures for its Implementation – Stage I”, with Stage II (called the “Elaborated Strategy of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of the Romani National Minority”) following in 2000.<sup>22</sup> Additional general policy documents targeting Roma followed in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2008. Produced through a PHARE project, the 2004 *Concept of Integrated Education of Romani Children and Youth, Including the Development of Secondary and Higher Education* serves as the central education-specific document targeting Roma.<sup>23</sup> Key objectives set out in the *Concept* include improving Roma’s school readiness and academic results, reducing the number of Roma in special primary schools, increasing Romani participation in secondary and higher education, mentoring activities for Romani pupils and students, and introducing a university-level study program covering Romani language and literature.

18 Vláda Slovenskej republiky, *Zásady vládnej politiky Slovenskej republiky k Rómom prijaté uznesením vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 153 dňa 9. apríla 1991* [Bases of the Government Policy toward Roma in the Slovak Republic Adopted with Government Resolution No. 153 of April 9, 1991] (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky, 1991).

19 Vláda Slovenskej republiky, *Štatút splnomocnenca vlády Slovenskej republiky na riešenie problémov občanov, ktorí potrebujú osobitnú pomoc* (Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 668 dňa 10. augusta 1995) [Statute of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of Citizens Who Need Special Assistance (Government Resolution No. 668 of August 10, 1995)] (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky, 1995); *Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky k návrhu úloh a opatrení na riešenie problémov občanov, ktorí potrebujú osobitnú pomoc, na rok 1996, č. 310 dňa 30. apríla 1996* [Government Resolution on the Proposal of Roles and Measures for Solving the Problems of Citizens Who Need Special Assistance, No. 310 of April 30, 1996] (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky, 1996).

20 Vláda Slovenskej republiky, *Konceptčné zámyery vlády SR na riešenie problémov Rómov v súčasných spoločensko-ekonomických podmienkach* (Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 796 dňa 3. novembra 1997) [Conceptual Intentions of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of the Roma in the Current Socio-Economic Conditions (Government Resolution No. 796 of November 3, 1997)] (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky, 1997).

21 Vláda Slovenskej republiky, *Štatút splnomocnenca vlády Slovenskej republiky na riešenie problémov občanov patriacich k rómskej menšine* (Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 127) [Statute of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solving the Problems of Citizens Belonging to the Romani Minority (Government Resolution No. 127)] (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky, 1999).

22 Vláda Slovenskej republiky, *Stratégia Vlády Slovenskej republiky na riešenie problémov rómskej národnostnej menšiny a súbor opatrení na jej realizáciu – I. etapa* (Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 821/1999) (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky); *Rozpracovaná stratégia vlády SR na riešenie problémov rómskej národnostnej menšiny do súboru konkrétnych opatrení na rok 2000 – II. etapa* (Uznesenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 294 dňa 3. mája 2000) (Bratislava: Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky, 2000).

23 Ministerstvo školstva Slovenskej republiky, *Koncepcia integrovaného vzdelávania rómskych detí a mládeže, vrátane rozvoja stredoškolského a vysokoškolského vzdelávania* (Bratislava: Ministerstvo školstva Slovenskej republiky, 2004).

As noted in REF's 2007 Country Assessment, the Slovak government has not demonstrated a clear commitment to the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Although Slovakia adopted National Action Plans in 2005, financing has been largely limited to previously existing state budget allocations and official reports on implementation have provided little information on concrete progress. Additionally, because the National Coordinator for the Decade is the Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities, implementation of the Decade in Slovakia has suffered from the instability within the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary.

## DONOR-FUNDED PROGRAMS

Before Slovakia joined the EU in 2004, government and NGOs received levels of donor funding for Roma second only to Romania. Among relevant initiatives funded through the EU's pre-accession facility (PHARE) were the projects "Reintegration of Socially Disadvantaged Children from Special Schools into Standard Primary Schools," "Further Integration of Romani Children in the Area of Education and Improvement of their Living Conditions," and "Support to the Roma Minority in the Educational Field." While the EU was a major donor in the pre-accession period, Structural Funds have come to play an increasingly central role as a result of the withdrawal of many other donors since Slovakia's entry to the EU.

A call entitled "Programmes and Courses for Pupils from Marginalized Romani Communities," issued in February 2009 under the Operational Programme Education for 2007–2013, led to funding through the Ministry of Education for 50 school-based projects with an average project budget of approximately EUR 168,000.<sup>24</sup> Forty-one of these projects are based in standard primary schools, with the remaining nine implemented by special primary schools.<sup>25</sup> An assessment commissioned by REF in 2011 on the use of the funds granted under this call found that the projects' contribution to reversing the systemic overrepresentation of Roma in special education is negligible. The main reason for the projects' lack of impact in this regard is that school management does not see the current structure of the educational system as responsible for the overrepresentation of Romani children in special schools and classes. Moreover, the research revealed that the transfer to special education from the standard primary schools funded under this call does not differ significantly from that in schools not receiving project funding.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> This call was one of thirteen issued to date in Slovakia under the Operational Programme Education for 2007–2013. The average funding per project for all projects funded under the thirteen calls was approximately EUR 501,000.

<sup>25</sup> Of the 432 projects funded under the thirteen calls, a total of 20 projects were based in special primary schools for children with mental disability, such that the nine projects implemented by special primary schools which were funded under the single Romani-specific call account for 45 percent of all projects financed by EU Structural Funds in special primary schools in Slovakia.

<sup>26</sup> See Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Tina Gažovičová, and Ingrid Kosová, *Disbursement of EU Funds for Projects: Increasing the Educational Level of the Members of Marginalized Romani Communities from the Standpoint of (De-)Segregation of Romani Children in Education* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2011).

At the national level, a project entitled "Education of Pedagogical Workers in the Inclusion of Marginalized Romani Communities" is expected to begin implementation in 2011. The main project activity is in-service teacher training. The lead implementer will be the Methodological-Pedagogical Center in Prešov, with the EUR 18.3 million allocated for the project administered by the Ministry of Education.

Expected in the autumn of 2011 is the launch of municipal-level projects funded through the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary. Municipalities will be required to develop multi-sectoral local strategies, in which they will be supported by the Roma Institute, the main Slovak partner of the Project Generating Facility established in the framework of the OSF initiative "Making the Most of EU Funding for the Roma."<sup>27</sup>

The EU also provides EUR 1.9 million for the multi-country project "A Good Start," which is implemented by REF in Slovakia in partnership with local NGOs Equalizing Opportunities, Regional Association of Romani Initiatives (KARI), Cultural Association of Roma of the Slovak Republic (KZRSR), as well as with the International Step by Step Association, and the Methodological-Pedagogical Center Bratislava – Regional Branch Prešov (MPC). The project, which targets over 500 children age zero to six and their families in four localities in Slovakia, began in June 2010 and will continue through April 2012.

Other donor institutions which have supported NGO projects aiming at the inclusion of Roma in Slovakia include the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, the Open Society Institute, the Open Society Foundation, and the Embassy of the United States.

No precise data are available on total annual investments in the education of Roma in Slovakia. But the level of coordination and sharing of information among donors active with Roma in Slovakia is relatively high.

<sup>27</sup> In her previous position as Government Plenipotentiary, the Roma Institute's Director, Klára Orgovánová, played a central role in designing the Comprehensive Approach program.





# EDUCATION SYSTEM

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Primary responsibility for education in Slovakia resides with the Ministry of Education, which until 2009 included a small unit focused on the education of Roma. Key central institutions under the Ministry of Education include the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Psychopathology, the State Institute of Vocational Education, the State Pedagogical Institute, and the State School Inspectorate. The Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education is primarily responsible for gathering and processing data on education. Tasks of the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Psychopathology include conducting research and developing diagnostic tests of scholastic ability. The State Institute of Vocational Education is responsible for coordination, research, and methodology in Slovakia's network of secondary vocational schools. The State Pedagogical Institute's competences include curriculum development, pupil performance assessment, and preparation of pedagogical materials, whereas the State School Inspectorate is responsible for oversight of school management, quality of education, and facilities. Although located in Eastern Slovakia, the Roma Education Center within the Prešov Regional Branch of the Methodological-Pedagogical Center Bratislava serves as a national-level institution providing methodological guidance and materials for meeting the needs of Romani pupils.

Previously responsible for establishing and abolishing schools of all types, Regional School Offices located in each of Slovakia's eight self-governing regions are responsible since 2008 for establishing and abolishing special schools, as well as Special Pedagogical Advising Centers and Centers for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention. Both Special Pedagogical Advising Centers and Centers for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention (formerly "Pedagogical-Psychological Advising Centers") administer diagnostic tests, offer counseling, and provide referrals necessary for enrollment in special education. Methodological-Pedagogical Centers located in Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Prešov, and Trenčín provide in-service teacher training and general methodological support.

## FINANCING

Government spending on education in Slovakia amounted in 2007 to 4.0 percent of GDP, well below the OECD average of 5.7 percent.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

Slovakia's system of financing primary and secondary education is mostly based on a per-pupil formula, with school funding determined mainly by the size of the per-pupil norm and the number of pupils in the school. Per-pupil funding in Slovakia consists of a salary norm and an operational norm; whereas the salary norm includes wages, insurance, and employers' contributions, the operational norm covers most running costs for school infrastructure and per-pupil costs for teaching.<sup>29</sup> Per-pupil costs for teaching are in turn calculated on the basis of various parameters, including school type, personnel demands, form of study, and language of instruction.<sup>30</sup>

Per-pupil funding in Slovakia tends to be considerably higher for special education than for standard education. In 2008, for example average per-pupil funding for special primary schools was approximately 1.6 times the average for standard primary schools.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, per-pupil funding for a special class in a standard primary school is 1.75 times that for an otherwise identical standard class in the same school. The norm provided for individual integration of children with special needs in standard classes, on the other hand, is 2.5 times the standard norm.<sup>32</sup> Although higher funding levels for the education of children with special needs have potential to improve education outcomes, as explained below in the section on special education, Slovakia's normative funding system creates incentives for recruiting Romani children into special education regardless of their actual needs.

## FACILITIES

School facilities in Slovakia are owned by their founders. In the case of standard public primary and secondary schools, school founders are municipalities. The founders of special public primary and secondary schools, on the other hand, are Regional School Offices, making for potential conflict of interest between standard and special schools. Field research commissioned by REF in 2008 revealed that conditions in school facilities vary by school size and region, with larger schools and schools in Western Slovakia generally better off than smaller schools and schools in Central and Eastern Slovakia.<sup>33</sup>

29 Zákon č. 597 z 6. novembra 2003 o financovaní základných škôl, stredných škôl a školských zariadení [Law No. 597 of November 6, 2003 on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2003).

30 See Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 630/2008 z 10. decembra 2008, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre školy a školské zariadenia [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 630/2008 of December 10, 2008, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Schools and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

31 Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 2/2004 z 17. decembra 2003, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre základné školy, stredné školy, strediská praktického vyučovania, základné umelecké školy a školské zariadenia [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 2/2004 of December 17, 2003, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Practical Training Centers, Secondary Art Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004).

32 Ministerstvo školstva Slovenskej republiky, Smernica č. 11/2006-R z 25. mája 2006, ktorou sa mení a dopĺňa smernica Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej socialistickej republiky z 5. júla 1985 č. 7496/1985-20 o základnej škole v znení smernice Ministerstva školstva, mládeže a telesnej výchovy Slovenskej socialistickej republiky z 28. augusta 1989 č. 8119/1989-20 a smernice Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky z 13. júla 2000 č. 1074/2000-41 [Directive No. 11/2006-R of May 25, 2006, Modifying and Amending Ministry of Education of the Slovak Socialist Republic Directive No. 7496/1985-20 of July 5, 1985 in the Wording of Ministry of Education, Youth, and Physical Training of the Slovak Socialist Republic Directive No. 8119/1989 of August 28, 1989 and of Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic Directive No. 1074/2000-41 of July 13, 2000] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo školstva Slovenskej republiky, 2006).

33 Eben Friedman and Mihai Surdu (coordinators), Eben Friedman, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Martina Kubánová, and Martin Slosiarik (authors), *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).

Despite an overall decline in the number of children in the education system, demands on school infrastructure are on the increase in many localities inhabited by marginalized Romani populations. Particularly problematic is the condition of facilities located in or near Romani settlements, with the condition of infrastructure in satellite facilities in such locations tending to be considerably poorer than in main school buildings located further from Romani settlements. A minority of schools also physically separate Romani pupils from non-Romani pupils in inferior conditions within the same building.<sup>34</sup>

## EDUCATION CYCLES AND PROGRESSION CRITERIA

Preschool education, which is aimed at children between the ages of three and six, is not mandatory in Slovakia, and offerings at this level of education vary considerably from one locality to the next despite the existence of mechanisms for providing preschool education free of charge to children from families in need. Primary education covers grades one through nine and is divided into two cycles, with the first covering grades one through four and the second grades five through nine.

All children enrolling in primary school are assessed for school-readiness, with assessment methods varying from one school to another.<sup>35</sup> If the findings of the assessment raise doubts about a child's ability to succeed in school, those administering the initial assessment refer the child for testing by a Center for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention. Recommendations for Romani children assessed as not being unready for school at age six include deferral of school attendance for a year, enrollment in a zero grade, and enrollment in special education. The most frequent solution for non-Romani children assessed as not school-ready, deferral of school attendance, is the least frequent solution for similarly assessed Romani children.<sup>36</sup> More common is enrollment in zero grades housed in standard primary schools and created for non-school-ready children from a socially disadvantaged environment who have reached age six by the first of September of a given year.<sup>37</sup> Integrated into the Slovak state education system in 2002, zero grades divide the material from the curriculum for the first year of standard primary education into two years with an eye on preparing children for entry into standard primary school classes. By way of contrast, preparatory grades in special primary schools for children with mild mental disability deliver simplified material and tend to serve as the beginning of a career in special education.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> For a detailed analysis of school-readiness assessment in Slovakia, see Julia M. White, *Entry Testing as a Factor in the Overrepresentation of Romani Children in Special Education* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Jana Tomatová, *Na vedľajšej koľaji: Je proces zaradovania rómskych detí do špeciálnych základných škôl znevýhodňujúcim činiteľom?* [Sidetracked: Is the process of enrolling Romani children in special schools a disadvantage factor?] (Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> *Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 2/2004 z 17. decembra 2003, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre základné školy, stredné školy, strediská praktického vyučovania, základné umelecké školy a školské zariadenia* [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 2/2004 of December 17, 2003, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Practical Training Centers, Secondary Art Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004); *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 245 of May 22, 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

Admission to secondary schools is decided at the level of the individual school; whereas secondary grammar and technical schools administer entrance examinations, many secondary schools that do not prepare pupils for higher education accept all applicants with completed primary education. Secondary grammar and technical schools also administer end examinations (*maturita*), as do some vocational secondary programs. Admission to institutions of tertiary education depends on a program-specific entrance examination.

School attendance in Slovakia is mandatory for ten years or until age sixteen, whichever comes first. For this reason, pupils who repeat a grade in primary education generally complete mandatory education while still in primary school.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

According to official data, in the 2007–2008 school year there were 179 special primary schools, 216 special classes in standard primary schools, and 71 special secondary schools serving children with at least mild mental disability. Official data also indicate that Roma accounted for a total of 5.3 percent of pupils in special primary schools and 1.6 percent of students in special secondary schools for pupils and students (respectively) with mental disability and/or behavioral disorders in that same school year.<sup>39</sup> Field research commissioned by REF and conducted on a statistically representative sample, however, yielded estimates that Roma accounted for approximately 60 percent of the total number of pupils enrolled in special primary schools, special classes in standard primary schools, and special secondary schools on the territory of the Slovak Republic in the 2008–2009 school year.<sup>40</sup> The proportion of Romani pupils in each of these categories is given in the table next.

38 Nadácia Milana Šimečku, *Desegregácia – za akú cenu? Možnosti desegregácie slovenského školstva vo vzťahu k rómskym žiakom* [Desegregation – At what cost? Possibilities for the desegregation of Slovak education in relation to Romani pupils] (Bratislava: Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 2007); *Vyhľadiska Ministerstva školstva, mládeže a športu Slovenskej republiky č. 212 z 10. apríla 1991 o špeciálnych školách* [Public Notice of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport of the Slovak Republic No. 212 of April 10, 1991 on Special Schools] (Prague: Sbíрка zákonů České a Slovenské federativní republiky, 1991); *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 245 of May 22, 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

39 Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, "Štatistická ročenka školstva 2007 [Statistical yearbook of education 2007]," available online at <http://www.uips.sk>.

40 Eben Friedman and Mihai Surdu (coordinators), Eben Friedman, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Martina Kubánová, and Martin Slosiarik (authors), *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).

TABLE 1. Lower-bound estimates of the number of Romani pupils in special education

Type of school	Total number of pupils	Number of Romani pupils	Proportion of Romani pupils
Special primary schools	13,807	8,200	59.4%
Special classes in standard schools	5,590	4,795	85.8%
Special secondary schools	5,114	1,794	35.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>24,511</b>	<b>14,789</b>	<b>60.3%</b>

SOURCE: Calculations based on director and teacher estimates from field research conducted for the study *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).

An alternative to enrollment in a special school or class is individual integration in a standard class with teaching materials and methods adapted to the needs of the pupil.<sup>41</sup> In practice, however, Roma rarely access this option, with reasons for this including insufficient parental information as well as a preference among standard schools for non-Roma and for children with diagnosed physical rather than mental disabilities, insufficient training of teachers for working with individually integrated pupils with special educational needs, and the financial interest of segregated special schools in keeping their pupils.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the wide gap between standard and special curricula severely limits the possibilities for (re-)integration of children from special schools and classes into standard education.

Pupils who complete primary education in special schools or classes have two options for secondary education: special technical schools (*odborné učilištia*) and practical schools. Whereas the former train mentally disabled (as well as non-disabled) pupils who have completed grade nine or the required number of years of schooling in a trade, the latter are intended for mentally disabled graduates of special primary schools who were not accepted to or who failed out of special technical schools.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, while the vocational certificate awarded graduates of special technical schools allow them to work only under the supervision of more highly skilled workers, the only formal employment opportunities available to graduates of practical schools are in special workplaces established for persons with mental disabilities (*chránené dielne*).

41 Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of May 22, 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

42 See, for example, European Roma Rights Center, *Stigmata: Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: European Roma Rights Center, 2004); Nadácia Milana Šimečku, *Desegregácia – za akú cenu? Možnosti desegregácie slovenského školstva vo vzťahu k rómskym žiakom* [Desegregation – At what cost? Possibilities for the desegregation of Slovak education in relation to Romani pupils] (Bratislava: Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 2007).

43 Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of May 22, 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008). In practice, special technical schools tend to provide training for pupils diagnosed with mild mental disability, while practical schools accept pupils diagnosed as moderately or severely mentally disabled.

Slovakia's 2008 School Law stipulates that no child may be placed in special education on the basis of social disadvantage and that no child may be placed in special education without the informed consent of the child's legal guardian, with the director of a special school accordingly required to inform the child's legal guardian of all educational options available to the child being considered for enrollment in the special school. While it is too early to assess the practical impact of these provisions, early indications are that their effect has been minimal.

## MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Public primary education in Slovakia is offered in Slovak, Hungarian, Ukrainian, and English languages. Although most Roma in Slovakia speak Romanes as a first language, Romani pupils most often attend instruction in Slovak in the country as a whole or attend instruction in Hungarian in areas near the border with Hungary. Institutions in which Romanes is taught include the Joint Conservatory and Secondary Art School in Košice, the Private Grammar School Galaktická 9 in Košice, and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra.

A positive innovation of recent years is the priority placed at the central level on the integration of multiculturalism in the school curriculum as a whole. By this approach, multicultural education should form a part of each subject taught in school. To date, however, implementation of this provision has been largely formalistic.

Drawing on apparently successful (but not formally evaluated) NGO initiatives implemented in preschools and schools serving Romani communities, the position of teacher assistant was established by the same law that institutionalized zero grades in Slovakia's education system as "a pedagogical employee who carries out the educational process in schools and preschools and participates in the creation of conditions indispensable for overcoming in particular linguistic, health, and social barriers."<sup>44</sup> Teacher assistants hired under this law began working in preschools and schools in January 2004, with their wages and contributions funded on the basis of the number of teacher assistants in a given school. Legislation introduced in 2009 changes the status of teacher assistants in such a way that the funds available for teacher assistants depend on the number of children meeting administrative criteria for material need enrolled in a given school.<sup>45</sup> This change places the position of teacher

44 *Zákon č. 408 z 27. júna 2002, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 313/2001 Z.z. o verejnej službe v znení neskorších predpisov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 408 of June 27, 2002, Which Modifies and Amends Law No. 313/2001 Coll. on Public Service in the Wording of Subsequent Regulations and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2002), Article IV.5ob.1.

45 *Zákon č. 317 z 29. júna 2009 o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 307 of June 29, 2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Expert Employees and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2009); cf. *Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 2/2004 z 17. decembra 2003, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre základné školy, stredné školy, strediská praktického vyučovania, základné umelecké školy a školské zariadenia* [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 2/2004 of December 17, 2003, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Practical Training Centers, Secondary Art Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004); *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 245 of May 22, 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

assistant at risk in many cases by creating a situation in which the number of pupils in material need which is necessary to fund a single teacher assistant position is far higher than the number of pupils who can be taught by a given teacher assistant.<sup>46</sup>

## SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS

As part of an overarching reform of the social safety net in Slovakia, three measures were introduced in 2004 to support the attendance and scholastic achievement of preschool and school-age children from families receiving social assistance or with an income below a threshold set in relevant legislation, as well as children attending a school in which at least half of pupils come from families receiving the state material need allowance.<sup>47</sup> These measures are:

1. The "Motivation Allowance," a social scholarship of EUR 6 to EUR 15 per month awarded on the basis of attendance, behavior, and scholastic achievement, with the last criterion removed in 2008;<sup>48</sup>
2. Subsidies for school meals for all children meeting the social and/or income criteria; and
3. Subsidies for school supplies for all children meeting the social and/or income criteria.

All three types of benefits rely on the initiative of the school and municipality, which must apply for the benefits in order to receive them and are not legally obligated to do so.<sup>49</sup>

In 2009, approximately six percent of Slovakia's population met the social and income criteria for these measures.<sup>50</sup> Available information further suggests that Motivation Allowances in particular have not been an effective means of reducing the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. Such information comes from a 2007 study by the Institute for Labor and Family Research, which found that Motivation Allowances were generally distributed to the families of pupils who had performed well at school even before the benefit was

46 See Mirka Hapalová and Stano Daniel, *Rovný prístup rómskych detí ku kvalitnému vzdelávaniu: Aktualizácia 2008* [Equal access of Romani children to quality education: Update 2008] (Bratislava: Človek v tísní - Pobočka Slovensko, 2010), pp. 26-27; Občianske združenie Rómskych asistentov učiteľa, *Otvorený list podpredsedovi vlády pre vedomostnú spoločnosť, európske záležitosti, ľudské práva a menšiny Slovenskej republiky Dušanovi Čaplovičovi* [Open letter to deputy prime minister of the Slovak Republic for information society, European affairs, human rights and minorities, Dušan Čaplovič], March 5, 2010.

47 See *Zákon č. 599 z 11. novembra 2003 o pomoci v hmotnej núdzi a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 599 of November 11, 2003 on Assistance in Material Need and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2003).

48 For the changes introduced in 2008 to the criteria for granting the Motivation Allowance, see *Zákon č. 562 z 25. novembra 2008, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 533/2003 Z.z. o pomoci v hmotnej núdzi a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 5/2004 Z.z. o službách zamestnanosti a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov* [Law No. 562 of November 25, 2008, Which Modifies and Amends Law No. 533/2003 Coll. on Social Assistance and on the Modification and Amendment of Certain Laws in the Wording of Subsequent Regulations] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

49 *Výnos Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky zo 14. decembra 2005 č. 3749/2005-11/1 o poskytovaní dotácií v pôsobnosti Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky* [Decree 3749/2005-11/1 of December 14, 2005 of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic on the Provision of Subsidies within the Competence of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, 2005).

50 Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, *Správa o sociálnej situácii obyvateľstva Slovenskej republiky za rok 2009* [Report on the social situation of the population of the Slovak Republic for the year 2009] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, 2010).

introduced, as well as from a household survey conducted for the United National Development Programme in Romani settlements throughout Slovakia, which found that take-up on Motivation Allowances among families meeting the social and income criteria was only 6.2 percent.<sup>51</sup> More troubling is the perverse incentive created by the Motivation Allowance until 2008 for parents to enroll their non-disabled children in special schools, where pupils tend to receive better grades than they would in standard primary schools, in order to meet the scholastic achievement criterion.

The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities offers achievement-based scholarships for Roma studying in secondary schools and universities. The amount of these scholarships depends on the individual needs of the student. Both scholarship schemes are administered by the Open Society Foundation. For the period September–December 2010, the number of scholarships awarded to students in secondary education was 67 at a total value of EUR 16,988, with 38 scholarships to students in higher education at a total value of EUR 16,147.

## PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

TABLE 2. Basic indicators on education in Slovakia for the 2009–2010 school year

	Preschool	Primary	Secondary
<b>Number of institutions</b>	2,802	2,505	660
<b>Number of pupils</b>	134,487	570,298	254,075
<b>Number of teachers</b>	13,429	35,125	18,366
<b>Pupil–teacher ratio</b>	10.0 <sup>52</sup>	16.2 <sup>53</sup>	13.8 <sup>54</sup>

SOURCE: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education.<sup>55</sup>

According to the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, there were 1,245 Romani pupils enrolled in standard public primary schools in the 2009–2010 school year, with thirteen Roma enrolled in standard public secondary schools and three in higher education in the same year.<sup>56</sup> The same source indicates the numbers of Roma enrolled in special public primary and secondary schools to be 1,209 and 56, respectively. Field research commissioned by REF in 2008 and data gathered through REF-funded projects (see Table 4) suggest that the

51 Bernardína Bodnárová, *Efektivita dotačných programov pre deti a mládež* [The Effectiveness of Subsidy Programmes for Children and Youth] (Bratislava: Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, 2007); Jarmila Filadelfiová, Daniel Gerbery, and Daniel Škobla, *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma in Slovakia* (Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme, 2007).

52 The average ratio of pupils to teaching staff in preschool education in 31 European countries in 2007 was 12.3. Data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (see <http://www.uis.unesco.org>).

53 The average ratio of pupils to teaching staff in primary education in 29 European countries in 2006 was 14.6. See Commission of the European Communities, *Key Data on Education in Europe 2009* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2009), p. 221.

54 The average ratio of pupils to teaching staff in (upper-) secondary education in 29 European countries in 2006 was 12.5. See Commission of the European Communities, *Key Data on Education in Europe 2009* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2009), p. 227.

55 Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, *Štatistická ročenka školstva 2009/2010*, available online at <http://www.uips.sk>. The figures in the table cover state institutions only and include special schools, with the exception of special schools attached to healthcare institutions.

56 *Ibid.*



official figures for both standard and primary education grossly underestimate the number of Roma in the education system in Slovakia.

The lack of accurate official data on Roma in Slovakia reduces the potential effectiveness of activities to support Roma's education. Clear even in the absence of such data, however, is that the Slovak education system's early and rigid division of children into educational streams reinforces social inequalities, such that children from low-income families are more likely to end up with lower levels of educational attainment, which in turn make it probable that the next generation of children will be raised in poverty.

## PROGRESS AND WEAKNESSES IN EDUCATION FOR ROMA IN SLOVAKIA

Recent years have seen little progress in relation to the education of Roma in Slovakia. As a result, many issues remain to be addressed as a matter of urgency in order to bring a reduction in the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.

### Areas of progress

Important advances relevant to the education of Roma in Slovakia in recent years include:

- Elimination of the perverse incentive for enrollment in special education created by the scholastic achievement criterion for the Motivation Allowance.
- The new School Law's stipulations for informed consent and against social disadvantage as a basis for enrollment of children in special education.
- The introduction of multicultural education as a priority of education policy.

### Remaining weaknesses

From the standpoint of quality education for Roma, the most significant weaknesses of the current system of education in Slovakia are the following:

- Limited access of Roma to preschool education as a result of fees associated with attendance, lack of information, insufficient space, and resistance on the part of preschool authorities.
- Insufficient measures to address language barriers faced by Romanes-speaking Roma.
- Continued systemic overrepresentation of Roma in special education.
- Segregation between Roma and non-Roma in standard as well as special education, whether resulting from residential segregation or decisions by school authorities.
- Administrative destabilization of the position of teacher assistant.
- Inattention to Roma in general education and teacher training curricula as an integral part of the history and culture of Slovakia.



# REF IN SLOVAKIA

## PROJECTS

In the half decade since its establishment in 2005 till the end of October 2010, REF had received 37 project proposals from Slovakia, thirteen of which had been approved. The total REF funding for the approved projects is approximately EUR 1.3 million, with the amounts committed fluctuating widely from year to year.

TABLE 3. Project grant commitments in Slovakia, 2005–2009

Funds committed by year (EUR)					TOTAL
	2005–2006	2007	2008	2009	(EUR)
	635,840	400,093	46,300	185,034	1,267,267

Seven of the thirteen projects approved and slightly more than half of project funding committed to date in Slovakia have aimed at directly preventing and/or reversing the streaming of Romani children in special education. An independent external evaluation conducted on six of these projects in 2010 found that inadequate data collection ruled out comparisons among different project designs in terms of their impact, recommending on the basis of the available evidence that concrete support in preschool and primary education be prioritized over information campaigns as a means of combating the inappropriate assignment of Romani children to special schools and classes.

Three other projects supported to date in Slovakia have aimed at improving Romani children's success in education through after-school activities based on the Hungarian *Tanoda* model, and subsequently their competitiveness on the labor market and their social integration. The two projects implemented to date in the village of Rimavská Seč (SLO 019 and SLO 022) brought improvements in participating pupils' scholastic achievement, reduced dropout rates in primary and secondary education, and promoted the transfer of children from special classes to standard classes. The after-school center in Rimavská Seč was included in the 2010 catalogue of the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) as a model program of best practice within the EU. The ongoing project based on the *Tanoda* model expands coverage to two localities in the Nitra region.

Two other projects have focused primarily on providing integrated preschool education in the Prešov region of eastern Slovakia. The first of these (SLO 008) was carried out from July 2006 to December 2008 and was led by the Slovak Ministry of Education, which coordinated the activities of several other implementing partners

within and outside government. An independent external evaluation of SLO 008 found that the project benefited participating Romani children, increasing enrollment in preschool education as well as attendance among children already enrolled. At the same time, however, the inadequate monitoring system in place presented a major obstacle to measuring the project's impact. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education made clear that it would not allot funding for the continuation of the project activities. In response, in the fall of 2009 REF's Board approved a similar project (SLO 031) submitted by two of the organizations involved in SLO 008.

The remaining project piloted a second-chance education program for Romani youth from isolated localities in eastern Slovakia, providing assistance in completing standard primary education and enrolling in standard secondary education. Implemented from November 2006 to November 2008 by the NGO New Roma Generation, the project (SLO 010) proved less successful than anticipated from both the administrative and substantive standpoints, with a monitoring mission in the project's second year raising questions about the grantee's capacity to manage the project and revealing that many project participants did not see a benefit from the project activities. An application for project continuation was accordingly rejected in the spring of 2009 for not introducing innovations to address the problems observed in the pilot phase.

As shown in the table below, the extent of coverage of Romani children and youth in Slovakia by REF-funded projects to date is quite small. In the best-case scenario, projects supported by REF have reached two percent of Romani children of compulsory school age and less than two percent for both Romani children of preschool age and Romani youth age fifteen to eighteen.

**TABLE 4.** Coverage of Romani child and youth population in Slovakia by REF projects, 2005–2009

Level of education	Cohort size <sup>57</sup>	REF beneficiaries <sup>58</sup>	REF coverage of cohort (%)
Preschool (3–6)	17,020–28,730	298	1.0–1.8
Compulsory (6–15)	81,700	1,470–1,598	1.8–2.0
Upper secondary (15–18)	26,031–44,401	300	0.7–1.2

<sup>57</sup> The ranges given for the preschool and upper secondary age cohorts were generated on the basis of the statistically projected size of the Romani population as a whole in 2010 and two hypothetical proportions of each cohort within the overall Romani population. For both cohorts, the lower figure assumes that the proportion of the cohort within the total Romani population is the same as that of the corresponding cohort within the general population, whereas the higher figure assumes that each cohort is 1.7 times larger relative to the total Romani population than it is within the general population. Ethnically disaggregated census data on the 0–14 and 15–49 age cohorts suggest that the latter assumption is likely to yield the better estimate for the preschool cohort, while the former may be more accurate for the upper secondary cohort. See Květa Kalibová, "The Demographic Characteristics of Roma/Gypsies in Selected Countries in Central and Eastern Europe," in Werner Haug, Paul Compton, and Youssef Courbage (eds.), *The Demographic Characteristics of National Minorities in Certain European States, Vol. 2* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000); Boris Vaňo, "The Demographics of Roma Children," in Andrej Salner (ed.), *Roma Children in the Slovak Education System* (Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, 2005). The figure given for the compulsory education cohort is a statistical projection for 2010 generated by Vaňo.

<sup>58</sup> The range given for the number of beneficiaries of REF projects in the compulsory education cohort reflects the absence of data on the degree of overlap in beneficiaries from SLO 005 to SLO 020.

## EU ROMA PILOT

REF is the lead implementing organization of the project “A Good Start,” funded by the EU at a level of EUR 1.9 million in the framework of the Open Call for Proposals 2009 “Pilot Project Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods – Roma Inclusion.” The project runs from June 2010 through April 2012 in Hungary, Macedonia, and Romania as well as in Slovakia, where the project activities bring together the experiences of REF and its partners in preschool education and the transition to primary education while adding attention to key aspects of preventive healthcare and early childhood development. Implementing partners for the activities in Slovakia include the NGO Equalizing Opportunities, the Regional Association of Romani Initiatives (KARI), the Cultural Association of Roma of the Slovak Republic (KZRSR), Methodological-Pedagogical Center Bratislava – Regional Branch Prešov (MPC), and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) through its local partner the Wide Open School Foundation.

## REVOLVING FUND

REF has provided three reimbursable grants totaling EUR 40,920 through the Revolving Fund, leveraging a total of EUR 201,731. Two loans have been repaid (albeit late) and REF is considering legal action against the remaining grantee to recover the EUR 9,000 loan.

## SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

The Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) has covered Slovakia since before REF’s founding. As shown in the table below, following a drop in the number of scholars supported in the first year after RMUSP was transferred to REF from OSI (2006–2007), the number of scholars supported has increased from year to year, with the greatest increase from 2008–2009 to 2009–2010.

TABLE 5. RMUSP awards in Slovakia, 2005–2009

Grants awarded by year						TOTAL
	2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	
	36	25	26	28	35	150

Available information on the number of applicants to RMUSP in Slovakia suggests that the acceptance rate (approximately 72 percent in 2008–2009 and 92 percent in 2009–2010) is considerably higher than acceptance rates for RMUSP in other countries (approximately 55 percent overall in the period 2005–2009). An outreach strategy developed in early 2010 is targeted to increase the number of applicants to 50–60 for the 2010–2011 academic year.

One student from Slovakia was supported in 2008–2009 and two in the 2009–2010 academic year through the Supplementary Scholarship Scheme.

## RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Three of the medium-term priorities defined in the 2007 Country Assessment have been addressed in the following two REF publications from 2009:

- *Conditional Cash Transfers as a Tool for Reducing the Gap in Educational Outcomes between Roma and Non-Roma*.<sup>59</sup> This working paper provides a partial review of scholarship and relevant social assistance schemes in Slovakia in a working paper placing in global context the Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak experiences with policies linking social benefits to participation of children in education.
- *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia*.<sup>60</sup> Based on a statistically representative sample, this study provides the first comprehensive picture of the segregation of Roma in special education, as well as an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of special education in Slovakia.

Three other pieces of research important for the education of Roma in Slovakia are the following, all published by REF in 2011:

- *Disbursement of EU Funds for Projects: Increasing the Educational Level of the Members of Marginalized Romani Communities from the Standpoint of (De-) Segregation of Romani Children in Education*.<sup>61</sup> Focusing on projects funded under a call issued in February 2009 under the Operational Programme Education for 2007–2013, this qualitative assessment suggests that these projects do not make a significant contribution to reversing the systemic overrepresentation of Roma in special education.
- *Entry Testing as a Factor in the Overrepresentation of Romani Children in Special Education*.<sup>62</sup> This policy paper, which includes a case study on Slovakia, examines the link between school readiness assessment and the disproportionate placement of Romani children in special education.
- *From Segregation to Inclusion: Roma Pupils in the United Kingdom*. The main finding of this research, undertaken in cooperation with the UK-based organization Equality, is that Romani children previously placed in segregated schools (whether standard or special) in Czech and Slovak Republics are able to make a successful transition to ethnically mixed standard schools in the UK, suggesting that the separation of Roma from non-Roma in Czech and Slovak schools is not justified by Roma's cognitive or social abilities.

59 Eben Friedman, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Mária Herczog, and Laura Surdu, *Assessing Conditional Cash Transfers as a Tool for Reducing the Gap in Educational Outcomes Between Roma and Non-Roma* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).

60 Eben Friedman and Mihai Surdu (coordinators), Eben Friedman, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Martina Kubánová, and Martin Slosiarik (authors), *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).

61 Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Tina Gažovičová, and Ingrid Kosová, *Disbursement of EU Funds for Projects: Increasing the Educational Level of the Members of Marginalized Romani Communities from the Standpoint of (De-) Segregation of Romani Children in Education* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2011).

62 Julia M. White, *Entry Testing as a Factor in the Overrepresentation of Romani Children in Special Education* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2011).

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The priorities below reflect the need to further focus REF's work in Slovakia over the coming years in order to address the problem of segregation of Roma in special education, which has deepened as a result of the lack of sustained attention to this problem by previous governments. While future segregation of this kind could be reduced greatly by ensuring that all children have access to quality preschool education, the lack of provisions to this end in the 2008 school law as well as in the Slovak government's priorities for financing projects with EU Structural Funds in 2010 and 2011 means that this potentially important basis for large-scale cooperation is also unavailable.

Taking into account the situation described above, REF project funding in Slovakia over the next two years will reflect the following priorities:

- Preventing wrongful enrollment of Romani children in special education through measures including but not necessarily limited to the provision to parents of comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for children's further education and employment, integrated preschool education, and after-school support in the early years of primary education. *Project activities in zero grades are unlikely to receive support because the experience of zero grades is that they amount to education in a segregated setting and that dividing the first year of primary education into two years places children at an educational disadvantage relative to children who attend preschool.*
- Promoting the sustainable transfer to standard education of Romani children wrongfully placed in special schools and classes, especially through support for local pilot projects with potential for scaling up on the regional and national levels.
- Improving Roma's transition rates from primary to secondary education and from secondary to higher education.
- Providing technical assistance for relevant projects financed by the Slovak government with EU Structural Funds.

### REF research and policy analysis priorities

Major themes of REF's research and policy activities in Slovakia will include:

- *An examination of structures, policies, practices, and prospects for increasing the access of Romani children to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services.* This research will be undertaken in the framework of the ongoing multi-country research project "Roma Early Childhood Inclusion," developed in cooperation the Open Society Foundation, London and UNICEF.
- *A set of practically oriented publications on ECEC services for Roma.* The following publications relevant to Slovakia will be produced in the framework of the EU-funded multi-country pilot project "A Good Start":
  - A policy paper on increasing the access of disadvantaged Romani children to quality ECEC services;
  - A practical guide on data collection in relation to ECEC programs focusing on Roma;
  - A practical guide on establishing partnerships to provide quality ECEC services to Roma;
  - A practical guide to principles of good pedagogy in ECEC programs focusing on Roma; and
  - A policy paper on implications of the EU Roma pilot for the 2013–2019 programming cycle of EU Structural Funds.

### REF Scholarship Programs

Beyond the administration of existing scholarships, developmental priorities of the REF Scholarship Programs in Slovakia will include:

- *Increasing the number of RMUSP scholars.* Sustained attention should be given to linking to RMUSP beneficiaries of the new REF-funded scholarship program for Romani students in secondary education, as well as to other relevant initiatives in secondary and higher education.
- *Beneficiary networking.* The establishment of centralized networking infrastructure should be complemented by consultation with beneficiaries of the Scholarship Programs in Slovakia as potential network members about the roles and functions such a network should fill, with in-country and/or international launching activities to be designed accordingly.
- *Promoting scholar participation in other REF activities.* Scholarship grantees with strong academic standing should be encouraged for their personal-professional development (but not as a condition for receiving scholarship support) to participate in non-academic activities organized by REF, including but not limited to joining project monitoring missions in their countries of residence.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

Based on the identification of REF's strategic priorities, results of REF activities should be visible in the next two years on the following levels:

### Legal, financial, and administrative changes

- Official government target set of lowering the proportion of the Romani population in special education to the proportion of the non-Romani population enrolled in such education by 2015.
- Clear and explicit distinctions made in relevant legislation among mental disability, social disadvantage, and ethnicity.

### Key education indicators

While no official data are available for the indicators given below, the data needed for each indicator could be generated by recording the ethnicity of all pupils/students at the time of enrollment. Individual identity could be protected by making the collected data anonymous. Additional comments for individual indicators relate to generating unofficial estimates.

- *Proportion of children in special education who are of Romani origin.* Data gathered from a representative sample of special schools and classes in the framework of the REF study *School as Ghetto* indicate that Roma account for approximately 60 percent of all children in special education in Slovakia.
- *New enrollments in special schools and classes.* In the absence of official data disaggregated by ethnicity, the research finding that most Roma in special education in Slovakia do not belong there, whereas most non-Roma in special education are genuinely mentally disabled ground, the assumption that changes in overall enrollment



rates reflect changes in the enrollment rates of Roma rather than of non-Roma.

- *Transfers from special schools and classes to standard education.* In the absence of official data disaggregated by ethnicity, research finding that most Roma in special education in Slovakia do not belong there whereas most non-Roma in special education are genuinely mentally disabled ground the assumption that transfers from special education to standard education consist primarily of Roma.
- *Roma enrollment in higher education.*

### **Social cohesion**

- Improved cooperation in educational activities between schools, and Romani communities and NGOs.





# ANNEX 1: KEY EDUCATION INDICATORS

TABLE A1. National education indicators

Note: Empty cells in the table below indicate that the corresponding data are unavailable.

INDICATOR (%)	ROMA		GENERAL POPULATION	
	Official data	Unofficial estimate	Official data	Unofficial estimate
1 Use of early care and education services (ages 0–3)	–	–	–	–
2 Enrollment in pre-primary education (ISCED 0)	<4–25% <sup>64</sup>	–	90% <sup>65</sup>	–
3 Enrollment in first year of primary education (ISCED 1)	–	–	–	–
4 School-age children in school (ISCED 1 and 2)	–	–	–	Near 100% <sup>66</sup>
5 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the first cycle of compulsory education	–	–	–	–
6 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the second cycle of compulsory education <sup>67</sup>	–	23.2–35% <sup>68</sup>	9.8% <sup>69</sup>	–
7 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the third cycle of compulsory education (if applicable)	Not applicable			

64 Lower figure from Roma Education Fund, *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009), p. 83; higher figure from the Methodological Centre Prešov for the 2000–2001 school year, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 419.

65 Data from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 418.

66 Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education of Roma in Slovakia: Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2007), p. 36.

67 Expressed as a percentage of the total number of children who enroll in primary education.

68 Lower figure from the 2001 census, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 431; higher figure reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in Anton Marcinčin and Ľubica Marcinčinová, *The Cost of Non-Inclusion* (Bratislava: Open Society Foundation, 2009), p. 20, fn 43.

69 Data for 2002 from the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 429.

INDICATOR (%)	ROMA		GENERAL POPULATION	
	Official data	Unofficial estimate	Official data	Unofficial estimate
8 Pupils in compulsory education (ISCED 1 and 2) attending special schools and classes	–	39–62.4% <sup>70</sup>	3.6% <sup>71</sup>	–
9 Pupils completing compulsory education in terminal lower secondary programs (ISCED 2C) <sup>72</sup>	62.4% <sup>73</sup>	–	1.8% <sup>74</sup>	–
10 Graduates of compulsory education enrolling in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	–	12.8% <sup>75</sup>	–	–
11 Enrollment in upper secondary technical or vocational education (ISCED 3C) not providing access to tertiary education <sup>76</sup>	–	–	44% <sup>77</sup>	–
12 Completion of upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	–	<1–15% <sup>78</sup>	72.1% <sup>79</sup>	–
13 Enrollment in post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	–	–	–	–
14 Completion of post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	–	0.2% <sup>80</sup>	11% <sup>81</sup>	–
15 Enrollment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	–	56 <sup>82</sup>	–	–
16 Completion of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	–	See Indicator 14	–	–

70 Lower figure is for the 2003–2004 school year, as reported in Roma Education Fund, *Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund: Background Paper Slovak Republic* (Paris: Roma Education Fund, 2004), pp. 19–20; higher figure is from 2001 and comes from the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 437.

71 Data for 2008 from Eurydice.

72 Expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils completing compulsory education.

73 Data for the 2000–2001 school year from the Methodological Centre Prešov, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 424.

74 Data for 2001 from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 417.

75 Figure reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 425.

76 Expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)

77 Data for 2001 from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 417.

78 Lower figure from Save the Children, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 431; higher figure reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in Anton Marcinčin and Ľubica Marcinčinová, *The Cost of Non-Inclusion* (Bratislava: Open Society Foundation, 2009), p. 20.

79 Data from the 2001 census, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, "Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia," *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 431.

80 Figure includes all Roma with completed education ISCED 4 or higher, as reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in Anton Marcinčin and Ľubica Marcinčinová, *The Cost of Non-Inclusion* (Bratislava: Open Society Foundation, 2009), p. 20.

81 Figure includes all persons with completed education ISCED 4 or higher. Data from the 2001 census.

82 Figure for 1999 reported in Save the Children, *Denied a Future? The Right to Education of Roma/Gypsy & Traveller Children in Europe* (London: Save the Children, 2001), p. 187.

# ANNEX 2: ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

TABLE A2. Administration of public education

FUNCTION	RESPONSIBLE ORGANS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher
1 Establishes and closes institutions	– Municipality	– Municipality	– Municipality	– Municipality	– Ministry of Education
2 Funds institutions	– Municipality	– Municipality	– Municipality – Ministry of Finance	– Municipality – Ministry of Finance	– Ministry of Finance – Student fees
3 Decides on admissions	– Nursery	– Preschool	– Primary school	– Secondary school	– Institution of higher education
4 Sets curriculum	– State Pedagogical Institute	– State Pedagogical Institute	– State Pedagogical Institute	– State Pedagogical Institute	– Institution of higher education
5 Assigns teachers to institutions	– Nursery director	– Preschool director	– State School Inspectorate	– State School Inspectorate	– Institution of higher education
6 Assesses institutional performance	– Nursery director	– Preschool director	– State school Inspectorate	– State school Inspectorate	– Institution of higher education – Ministry of Education
7 Assesses pupil performance	– Not applicable	– Teacher	– Teachers	– Teachers	– Professors
8 Assesses teacher performance	– Nursery director	– Preschool director	– School	– School	– Dean

FUNCTION	RESPONSIBLE ORGANS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher
9 Assesses director performance	– State school Inspectorate	– State school Inspectorate	– State school Inspectorate	– State school Inspectorate	– Faculty council – University senate
10 Establishes and closes special schools	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Regional school office	– Regional school office	– Regional school office	–
11 Funds special	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Ministry of finance	– Regional government – Ministry of finance	– Regional government – Ministry of finance	–
12 Decides on special school admissions	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Center for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention – Special Pedagogical Advising Center – Special preschool director – Child’s legal guardian	– Center for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention – Special Pedagogical Advising Center – Special primary school director – Child’s legal guardian	– Special secondary school director	–
13 Sets special education curriculum	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Special preschool	– State Pedagogical Institute	– State Pedagogical Institute	–

# ANNEX 3: STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Slovakia participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2003, 2006, and 2009. Whereas in 2003 students from Slovakia performed near the OECD average on PISA mathematics and science scales, in 2006 performance on mathematics, reading, and science scales was below the OECD average, with the difference statistically significant. In 2009, on the other hand, students from Slovakia performed near the OECD average on the mathematics scale, while Slovak students' mean performance on reading and science scales was lower than the OECD average at a statistically significant level.

TABLE A3. Results of PISA 2003–2009

Area	Slovakia 2003		Slovakia 2006		Slovakia 2009		OECD 2009		Difference Slovakia – OECD average (2009)
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
<b>Mathematics</b>	498	3.3	492	2.8	497	3.1	496	0.5	+1
<b>Reading</b>	469	3.1	466	3.1	477	2.5	493	0.5	-16
<b>Science</b>	495	3.7	488	2.6	490	3.0	501	0.5	-11

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Learning for Tomorrow's World: First Results from PISA 2003* (Paris: OECD, 2004); *PISA 2006: Science Competences for Tomorrow's World – Volume 1: Analysis* (Paris: OECD, 2007); *PISA 2006: Science Competences for Tomorrow's World – Volume 2: Data/Données* (Paris: OECD, 2007); *PISA 2009 Results: Learning Trends* (Paris: OECD, 2010)



Slovakia has also participated in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) since 1995. Whereas the performance of students from Slovakia on the science scale has been above average in all four testing cycles, performance on the mathematics scale fell below the scale average for the first time in 2007.

TABLE A4. Results of TIMSS 1995–2007

Area	1995		1999		2003		2007		Scale average (2007)	Difference Slovakia – scale average (2007)
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.		
Mathematics	534	3.1	534	4.0	508	3.3	495	4.5	500	-5
Science	532	3.3	535	3.3	517	3.2	526	4.8	500	+26

SOURCE: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.<sup>84</sup>

84 Ina V.S. Mullis et al., TIMSS 2003 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Chestnut Hill: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2004); Ina V.S. Mullis et al., TIMSS 2003 International Science Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Chestnut Hill: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2004); Michael O. Martin et al., TIMSS 2007 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Boston: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2008); Michael O. Martin et al., TIMSS 2007 International Science Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Boston: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2008).

# ANNEX 4: LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR IMPROVING ROMA'S EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN SLOVAKIA

## Assistance and Support to the Romani Community

### 1. Producing Romani professionals in education.

Affirmative action measures should be created and implemented to attract Roma into the teaching profession.

### 2. Supporting Romani parents and community leaders in recognizing and engaging key education issues:

- Providing accurate and accessible information on school choices and their consequences for longer-term

## Implementation Support to Educational Authorities

### 1. Supporting ongoing developments in education, ensuring that Roma are not left out or jeopardized by them:

- Providing technical assistance to the Methodological and Pedagogical Center in Prešov in its teacher training activities
- Providing technical assistance to schools in introducing educational content on Romani language and culture in the space allowed by curriculum reform

### 2. Increasing the focus on quality improvement in the education system:

- Extending coverage of integrated preschool education to Romani communities
- Creating conditions for enrollment of Romani children

## Policy Development with the Government

### 1. Introducing compulsory preschool education.

Technical assistance should be provided to state, regional and local governments in developing policy to make free-of-charge, integrated preschool education compulsory and accessible for all children.

### 2. Eliminating overrepresentation of Roma in special schools and classes:

- Discontinuing psychological testing as a mechanism for assigning children to special education in preschool and the early years of primary school

<p>educational and employment prospects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Encouraging Romani parents to play an active role in school boards and parent associations</li> <li>– Detecting and acting on discrimination in schools</li> </ul>	<p>in integrated, standard primary education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Applying mechanisms for identifying and reversing inappropriate placement in special education</li> <li>– Establishing a system of mentoring and additional classes for Romani children in grades seven to nine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Abolishing special primary schools for children with mild mental disability</li> <li>– Reviewing and revising the school funding scheme</li> <li>– Restructuring the system of advising centers</li> <li>– Collecting and maintaining ethnically disaggregated data in conformity with EU standards on data protection</li> </ul>
<hr/> <p><b>3. Building an education support system for Romani children at the family level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Motivating parents to enrol children in preschool education</li> <li>– Creating time and space for homework</li> </ul>	<hr/> <p><b>3. Improving linkages between education system and social support.</b></p> <p>An administrative framework for affirmative action should be developed and implemented throughout the country.</p>	<hr/> <p><b>3. Providing social support for participation in education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reviewing and revising the level and conditionality of the Child Benefit and Motivation Allowance</li> <li>– Introducing affirmative action for secondary and post-secondary education</li> </ul>
<hr/> <p><b>4. Supporting cooperation among Romani NGOs, schools and local government:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sharing experience</li> <li>– Assistance in joint activities</li> <li>– Facilitating collaboration to overcome segregation in education</li> </ul>	<hr/> <p><b>4. Supporting cooperation among Romani NGOs, schools and local government:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sharing experience</li> <li>– Assistance in joint activities</li> <li>– Facilitating collaboration to overcome segregation in education</li> </ul>	<hr/> <p><b>4. Promoting Romani input in education policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Building the capacity of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities in the area of education</li> <li>– Facilitating dialogue among the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities, the Committee for the Education of Roma and other relevant government institutions on education-related issues</li> </ul>

# ANNEX 5: CENSUS RESULTS

TABLE A5. Population structure by ethnicity (2001 census)

Ethnicity	Absolute size	Relative size (%)
Slovak	4,614,854	85.79
Magyar	520,528	9.68
Romani	89,920	1.67
Bohemian	44,620	0.83
Rusin	24,201	0.45
Ukrainian	10,814	0.20
German	5,405	0.10
Polish	2,602	0.05
Moravian	2,348	0.04
Russian	1,590	0.03
Bulgarian	1,179	0.02
Croat	890	0.02
Serb	434	0.01
Jewish	218	<0.01
Other	5,350	0.10
Unknown	54,502	1.01

SOURCE: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

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