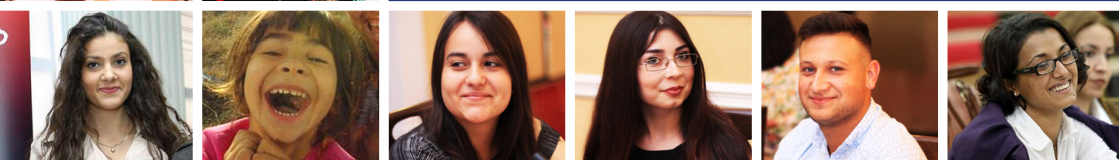




ROMA
EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage

2018
ANNUAL REPORT





ROMA
EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Roma Education Fund (REF) 2018 Annual Report includes reporting for REF foundations, offices and activities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Kosovo*, Hungary, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrzej Mirga

(Chair)

Kinga Göncz

(Vice-Chair)

Gábor Ormosy

(Treasurer)

William Lazarus Bila

Nicoleta Bitu

Yvana Enzler

Pierre Mirel

Mariam Sherman

Sybille Suter

MANAGEMENT

Nadir Redzepi

(Executive Director)

Azra Junuzović

(Deputy Director)

Andrea Dörömbözü

(Chief Financial Officer)

Loránd Gyenge

(Deputy CFO)

REF FOUNDATIONS

Hungary

(Headquarters)

Romania

Slovakia

Switzerland

(REF Network)

REF REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES

Serbia

Montenegro

Chairman's Message

2018 has been a year highlighted by successes and challenges for Roma Education Fund (REF) and its operations.

Among the successes, the new **REF Strategic Framework 2021-2030** was adopted at the board meeting in Skopje, June, 2018, after two years of development and deliberation. The new strategy signals a new direction along three approaches: a) supporting individual beneficiaries and their path to good learning outcomes, transition into labor market and public/political leadership, b) working with and sensitizing education systems through advocating for the needs and interests of Roma and c) making REF a specialized organization which is recognized as a resource center for mobilizing the human potential of Roma.

Education leading towards employment is a new area for REF's efforts, and one that is seen by the Roma community, governments and donors as a final measure of effectiveness of REF interventions. At the same time, REF and the board are fully aware of the difficulties of overcoming prejudices and discrimination in schooling and entering the labor market.

Hence, the REF Strategic Framework makes *resilience* a key word for both parents and children – resilience for demanding quality education and achieving their academic and professional aspirations.

REF has continued the process of **reorganizing its structures and functions**. Following the board's decision, REF is registering two new entities in Serbia and North Macedonia in 2019, and the Montenegro branch office will be closed. At the REF network level, internal operations were strengthened through cooperation agreements between the Swiss Foundation and REF entities, revision and adoption of the REF Network Operational Manual and protection of REF's logo in the EU.

An essential part of strengthening REF's operational efficiencies has been the review of **REF finances**, including the adoption of principles, safeguard mechanisms and an organizational culture to ensure more effective management. This is being undertaken with rising requests for REF's services and model solutions and well-illustrated by projects which were won by all REF entities in 2018. However, all successfully awarded projects also come with **co-financing demands** – including pre-financing or non-eligible costs to be covered by REF – which require thorough discussions, including with donors, on how to deal with these financial demands in the long run.

With the new REF Strategic Framework 2021-2030 and the restructuring of the organization, **REF will be entering a new phase in its history**. It is a challenge but, indeed, also an opportunity for the organization and staff. With a new outlook and better defined objectives underpinning REF's operations, it is my strong belief that REF will contribute even more meaningfully to closing the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma.

Thank you for your continued support,

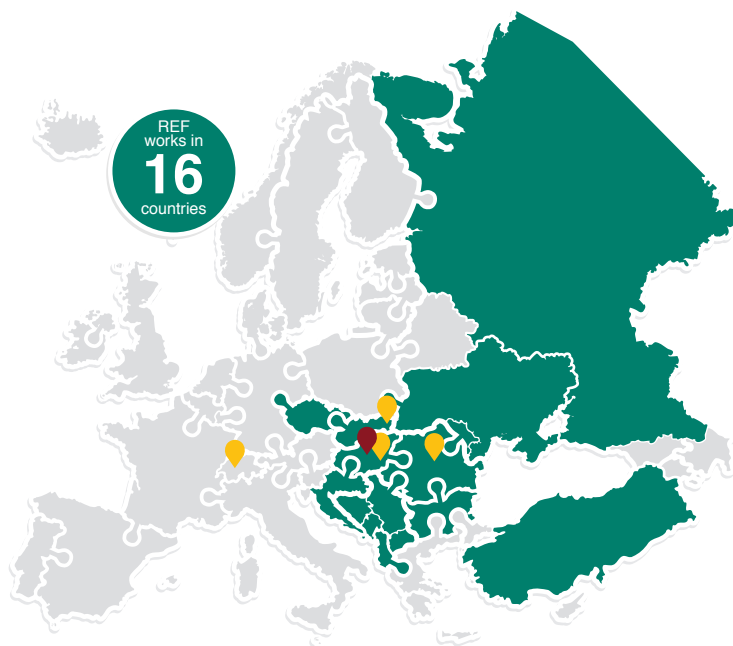
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amirga' or 'Mirga', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andrzej Mirga
Chair

2018 at a Glance

Based on in-house evidence and analytics, Roma Education Fund's 2018 Annual Report pairs a general overview with in-depth reporting about program and project activities in 16 countries. It brings to attention the key achievements and events by visualizing aggregated data and highlighting the stories and experiences of individuals for whom REF's education interventions have made a positive impact.

Model (Grant program)	Number of projects in 2018	Funds committed in 2018 (EUR)
Early Childhood Education and Care	16	454,145
Primary Education	6	213,864
Secondary Education	5	331,822
Tertiary Education	n/a	1,847,487
Adult Education	1	24,122
RomaVersitas	6	378,292
Other (Project implementation)	13	3,295,179
TOTAL		6 544 911



2018 at a Glance

REF achieves its mission to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma through:

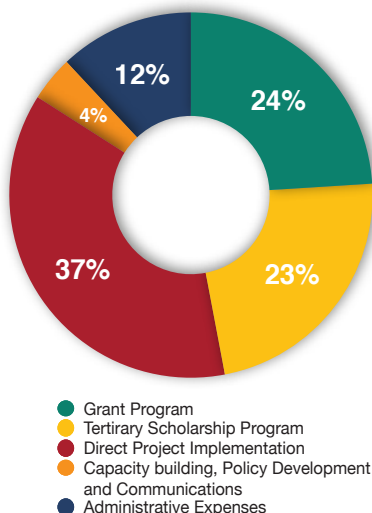
Grant program - REF provides grants to civil society and public institutions to implement education projects supporting early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education, tertiary level study and support centers, and adult education programs.

Tertiary education scholarship program - REF provides merit-based, competitive academic scholarships for Roma students pursuing Bachelor, Master or Doctorate degrees.

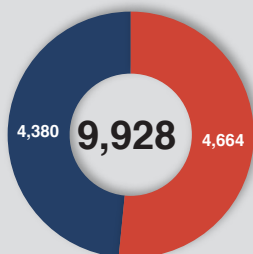
Direct project implementation - REF implements large-scale, multi-year and multi-country projects, funded in 2018 by European Union, German Development Bank - KfW and VELUX Foundations.

Influencing through capacity building, policy development and communications - REF promotes evidence-based models of good practice and advocates for innovative methodologies, curriculum reform and renewed policies targeting Roma students.

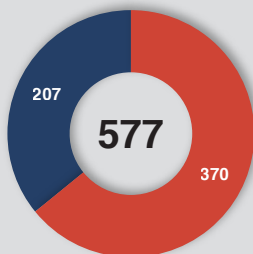
SPENDING BY PROGRAM



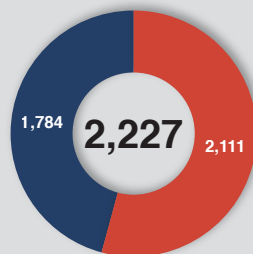
Total number of beneficiaries (grants and scholarships)



Total number of mentors and tutors



Total number of parents



● male ● female

2018 at a Glance

REF support in 2018 ensured the smooth progression from one education level to another for our beneficiaries (definition: the individuals benefiting from our programs and activities).

HOW DO WE TRACK OUR IMPACT?

Attendance rate

Are students attending school regularly?

Retention rate

Are students finishing the school year and enrolling into the following school year?

Transition rate

Are students moving to the next grade or educational level?

Dropout rate

Are students dropping out before finishing the school year?

Graduation rate

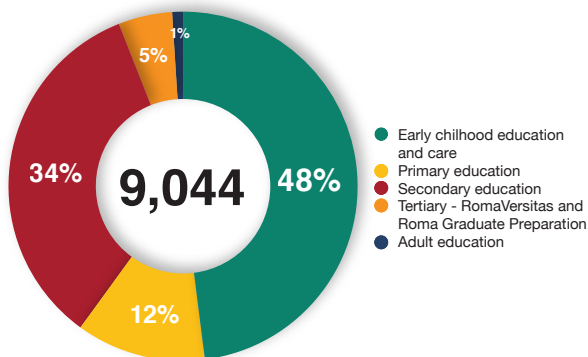
Are students successfully completing the educational level?

GPA (Grade Point Average)

Are students improving their grades?

GRANTS PROGRAM 2018

distribution of beneficiaries per educational level



GRANTS PROGRAM 2017/18 SCHOOL YEAR

Countries	Number of projects
Albania	5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3
Bulgaria	3
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	3
Hungary	6
Kosovo	3
North Macedonia	3
Montenegro	1
Romania	1
Serbia	3
Slovakia	3
TOTAL	35

Educational Levels

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Retention and transition rates are conventionally highest at the preschool level in comparison to other intervention levels. In 2018, **4,335 children (2,147 female / 2,188 male)** took part in REF-supported programs, with 70% transitioning to integrated primary schools and 30% to segregated schools.



2,823 parents participating
in ECEC programs
(2,115 female / 708 male)



2,331 registered Toy
Library members
(1,385 female / 946 male)



Dropout rate
among preschool children



PRIMARY EDUCATION

1,106 children (506 female / 600 male) took part in REF-supported primary school activities designed to prevent early school leaving and improve graduation rates through tutoring and mentoring.

1%
Dropout rate

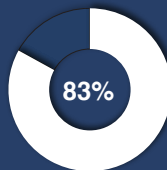
5.28%
Average GPA development after the project intervention



Transitioned to the next grade



of all final year primary pupils transitioned to secondary school



Attendance rate



primary school beneficiaries in REF-supported activities – 99% transferred to an integrated school/class.



Roma parents active in school-related events



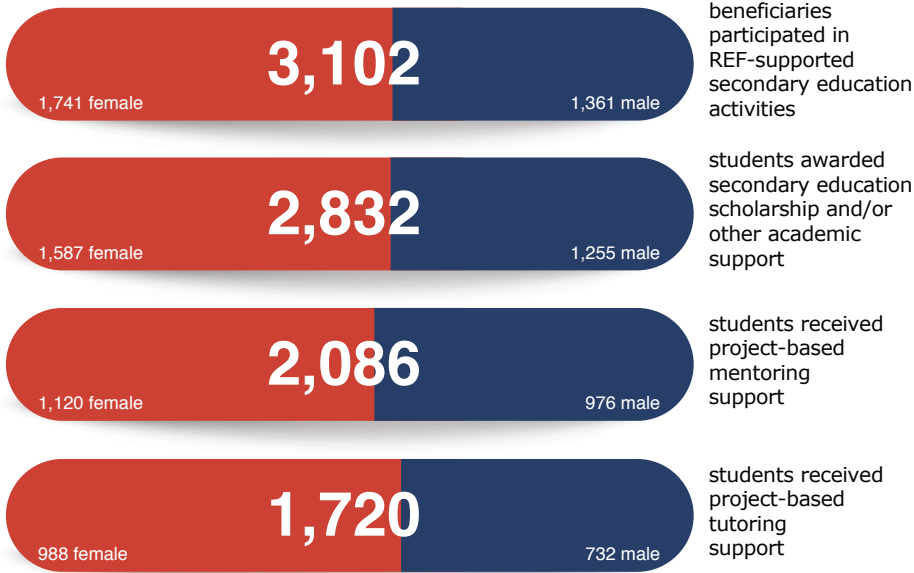
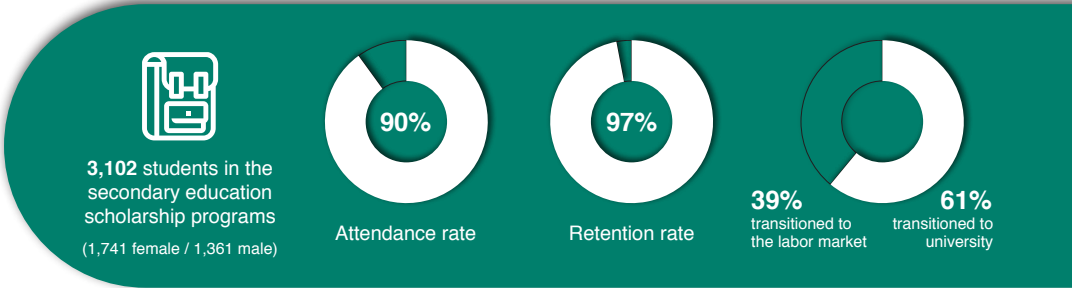
volunteers involved in provision of support to Roma primary school pupils



teachers participating in in-service teacher training

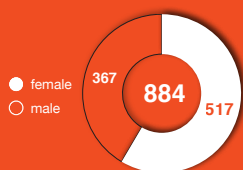
SECONDARY EDUCATION

Participants in REF’s secondary education interventions may receive any combination of scholarships, mentoring or tutoring support, with the aim to improve academic performance and decrease early school leaving.

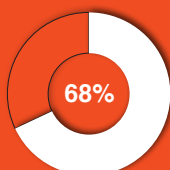


TERTIARY EDUCATION - SCHOLARSHIPS

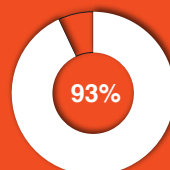
The main goal of Roma Education Fund's Tertiary Scholarship Program is to contribute to the emergence of a critical mass of Roma graduates who will become professionals in their fields and to remain connected to the Roma community to support its further advancement. In the 2017-18 academic year, REF awarded scholarships to students from **14 countries** through four tertiary education scholarship schemes.



Scholarships awarded



First generation university students



Graduation rate among final year students



Law and Humanities Program (LHP)



Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)



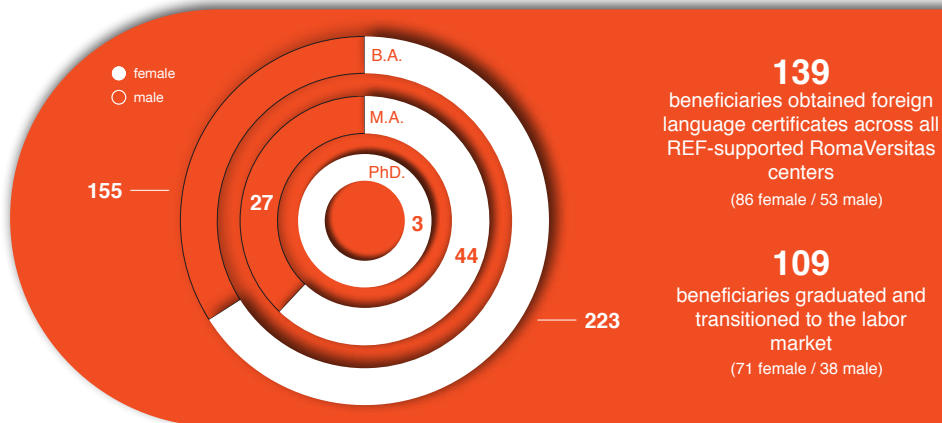
Roma International Scholarship Program (RISP)



Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP)

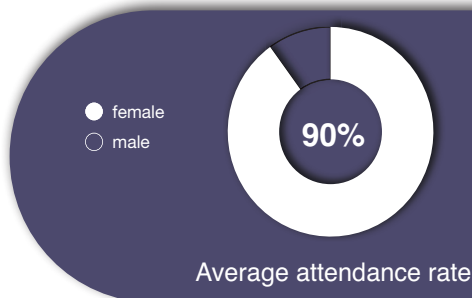
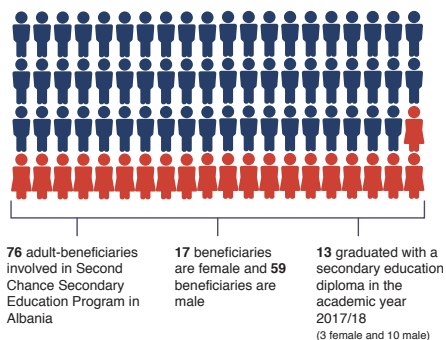
TERTIARY EDUCATION - GRANT PROJECTS

The RomaVersitas academic centers offer mentoring, tutoring and professional development training, while strengthening students' Roma identity and community participation. In 2018, RomaVersitas centers in Albania, Hungary, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia worked with **425** students.



ADULT EDUCATION

Second Chance programs provide those with incomplete primary and/or secondary education with tutoring and financial support for completing formal education. In 2018, REF supported Adult Education programs in Albania.



Spotlights

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Biljana Mursic and her family were living on the edge of poverty. Although her siblings did not have much success in school and finished only primary education, Biljana was different. She had the opportunity in third grade to move to a mainstream school where she was integrated with non-Roma pupils.

According to Biljana, her one year attending the integrated school was crucial for her educational development. During her time there she was able to increase her grades and gain more knowledge. When she returned home, she found out she was much more advanced than her classmates. In the fifth grade she asked to transfer into a non-Roma class, but her request was denied by school authorities stating that her educational achievements would be worse in a non-Roma class. Despite her setbacks, Biljana completed primary school and enrolled in secondary education with a focus on economics.

Growing up in a Roma settlement, Biljana saw many injustices which motivated her to join law enforcement. With the help of the Desa and Jerko Bakovic Foundation and REF, Biljana attended English language tutoring classes and is currently enrolled in the police academy in Zagreb. In her spare time she likes to practice martial arts.



Spotlights

SECONDARY EDUCATION

“REF’s modest stipend and academic support made all the difference during my first year of secondary school when I was considering dropping out. My tutor assisted me both in school and at home, and gave me space to share my concerns. When my tutor and I were both stuck with a particular subject, my tutor asked for additional help from the Association of Roma “Euro Rom”. It really helped my academic performance in the subject where I had been falling behind. Seeing my progress, my parents encouraged my younger sister to also enroll in secondary school.”

Kenan Suljic

Scholarship recipient, Secondary School for Mechanical Engineering Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina



TERTIARY EDUCATION

“As part of my work in the ‘Chirikli’ fund as a volunteer, I provided legal advice to Roma, especially for Roma women in the Roma settlements because these women and children are the most vulnerable. Also, in my region I performed short home courses for Roma children, helping them learn the basics of the school curriculum. I often acted as an intermediary between the local school administrations and the parents when it was necessary to solve pressing issues. Finally, I frequently help Roma youth to learn about the wonderful opportunities offered by Roma Education Fund. I am convinced that REF grows new intellectuals of Roma youth around the world.”

Olena Vaidalovych

Law and Humanities Program Scholar
MA in Human Rights and Law, Ukraine



Spotlights

TERTIARY EDUCATION

"In the hospital where I work, I cooperate with specialists in performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation to newborns and to adults. The feeling after performing a successful resuscitation cannot be described with words: in such moments one realizes the fragility of human life, how important it is to care about one's health, and it also has an incredible effect on how I answer the question whether I have chosen the right school for my vocation. And now, it is clear to me, my answer is yes. As a student of Nursing I am also interested in the health of my community and have been volunteering for two years at the community center Farebný svet (the Colored World Community Center) near where I live. The community center brings local Roma people together. Three times a year I give them lectures on various areas of health and healthcare such as first aid, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and among others, I organize motivational discussions with young Roma to motivate them to study further."

Mikulas Lakatos

BA studies in General Nursing, Faculty of Nursing and Professional Health Studies, Slovak Medical University of Bratislava, RMUSP Scholar Slovakia



ADULT EDUCATION

Katarina Dimce has been teaching mathematics in Tirana for 26 years. She joined a REF-supported project, implemented by the Roma Woman Rights Centre, to help Roma adults achieve their basic qualifications. Working as a tutor at the Lidhja e Prizrenit school, Katarina has assisted Roma adults to complete the nine years of compulsory education that are required for even basic official employment. "I congratulate the Roma students for the initiative they have taken to get back to school after several years of not attending. This is the first and most important step. Compulsory education – nine years in Albania – is undeniably important, as it plays a crucial role in preparing students for further education and life in general. I noticed that the number of girls attending school has increased, and some of them are accompanied by their parents who are also interested in their daughters' education."



Direct Project Implementation

SHAPING ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SKILLS FOR YOUNG ROMA

Target Group:



Roma Youth
(14-18)



Roma Young
Adults
(18-28)



Vocational Education
Training (VET)
Schools, Providers and
Training Companies

Duration:

2018

2022

Target Countries:



Budget:

€ 2,000,000

This project is supported by

THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS
VELLUM FONDEN • VELUX FONDEN

PEDAGOGY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM IN CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY, ROMANIA AND SLOVAKIA

Target Group:



180

14-18 year old
female secondary school students

Duration:

2014

2023

Target Countries:



Budget:

€ 2,412,751

This project is supported by

THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS
VELLUM FONDEN • VELUX FONDEN

FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CENTER REGION

Target Group:



820
Children



200
Adults



260
Teachers

Budget:

€ 2,000,800

Duration:

2018

2021

Target Countries:



ROMANIA

Mureș County,
7 schools

COMPETENCE, INNOVATION AND PROFESSIONALISM IN EDUCATION

Target Group:



300

preschool, primary, and
secondary school teachers

Budget:

€ 1,433,330

Duration:

2018

2020

Target Countries:



ROMANIA

3 regions
10 schools

IMPROVED EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROMA IN SERBIA, EMPLOYMENT EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG ROMA, AND REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES

Component One

Secondary Scholarship
and Mentorship Program

Phase 1:

Phase 2:

Component Two

Strengthening professional skills
of REF scholars and other
beneficiaries

Budget:

€ 2,373,948

Budget:

€ 4,000,000

Component Three

Educational reintegration of
young Roma returnees

Duration:

2016

2019

Duration:

2019

2021

EU REGIONAL ACTION FOR ROMA WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

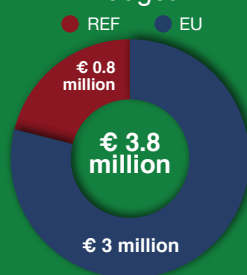
Objectives:

To reduce the gap between Roma and
non-Roma in participation in quality schooling

To improve Roma students' transition from
education towards employment

To promote desegregation and durable systemic
change within education systems

Budget:



Duration:

2018

2021

This project is
supported by:



Funded by the EU



Implemented by



Research

REF research activities deliver powerful evidence-based background to inform and guide its advocacy, scholarships, and grant-making activities. In 2018, REF research focal points included:

- Building **evidence needed for policy change** through external research and community engagement
- **Internal measurement and evaluation** for building support for the adoption of REF models by governments and other NGOs
- Using **evidence and community empowerment** to shape international, national, and local education policy
- **Shifting societal narratives** about Roma education

In 2018, REF Research worked in partnership with Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), and the Council of Europe (CoE) in conducting a textbook research titled, **“The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks.”**

Many textbooks currently contain a narrative which separates the Roma community from the national society, which cultivates ideologies in non-Roma students that perpetuate the exclusion of Roma. Eight young Roma academics analyzed the representation of Roma in over 500 textbooks with the long-term goal for a powerful counter-narrative: “Roma communities are, and historically have been, ingrained citizens of European culture and society.”

The textbook research report will be published in the summer of 2019, with promotion events and national and international advocacy actions to follow.



Advocacy

REF uses the results of our activities to advocate for sustainable changes, with the aim to bring a fair and inclusive society and **educational equity** to Roma.

REF's advocacy activities in 2018 centered on:

- **Networking, coalition building**, gaining **political support**
- Increasing REF's impact in educational **policy shaping**
- Creating educational **platforms** for engagement and empowerment of Roma communities
- Increasing the **employability** of Roma graduates

In addition to our participation in country specific issues, regional and national advocacy events, REF has also participated in following EU level advocacy events in 2018:

EU LEVEL ADVOCACY EVENTS IN 2018:



Communications, Visibility and Fundraising

REF Communication works together with all departments in order to engage our supporters, develop human capital, reinforce the message of inclusiveness, and ultimately strengthen REF's reputation as a knowledge and resource center.

Original Film: Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) – “10 Years After”

REF produced an original film marking the 10 year anniversary of the Roma Health Scholarship Program composed around four individual beneficiaries from Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia.

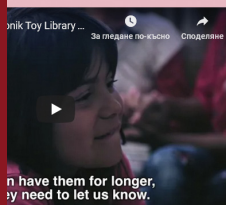


Prominent Initiative: Educated Romania

REF Romania was actively involved in the launch of a new education program titled, “Educated Romania” with His Excellency Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania and initiator of the educational strategic project.

Fundraising: “Keep Our Toy Library Open – Roma children play, learn and integrate”

REF launched its first crowdfunding campaign to help support one of our toy libraries located inside Konik Camp, Montenegro. The 50-day campaign reached two-thirds of its target amount by relying heavily on social media and peer-to-peer fundraising.



Keep our Toy Library open - Roma children play, learn and integrate
by Roma Education Fund

€3.585
OF €6.000 RAISED

29
MONTHLY SALARIES FOR A TOY LIBRARIAN

32 DAYS
REMAINING

15
DONORS

DONATE

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

SHARE

Finance and Administration

SOURCES OF FUNDS AND SPENDING OF REF FOUNDATIONS IN 2018 IN EUR

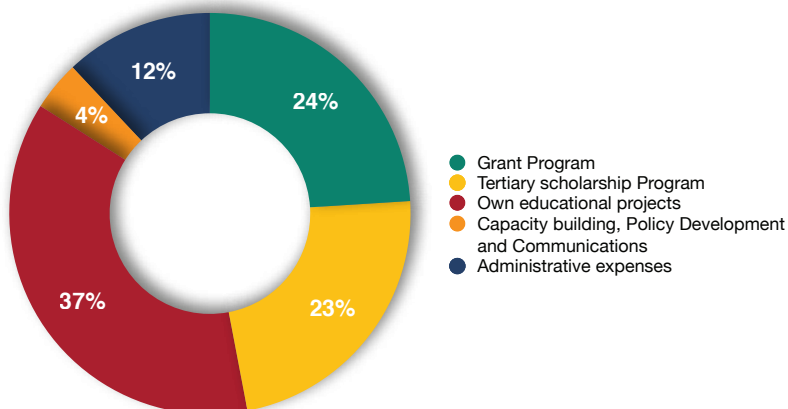
DESCRIPTION	REF SWITZERLAND	REF HUNGARY	REF ROMANIA	REF SLOVAKIA	COMBINED
Opening foundation capital	477,010	764,958	(282,379)	(135,320)	824,269
Third party donor income	7,421,498	1,803,702	211,443	96,388	9,533,031
Other income	164,021	56,943	(65,347)	437	156,054
Total Sources	8,062,529	2,625,603	(136,283)	(38,495)	10,513,354
Transfers within REF network		1,648,321	703,638	240,700	2,592,659
TOTAL SOURCES WITH TRANSFERS	8,062,529	4,273,924	567,354	202,205	13,106,012
Grant program	1,763,230	35,905	0	157,812	1,956,947
Tertiary scholarship Program	1,615,934	187,631	34,285	9,637	1,847,487
Own educational projects	35,150	2,074,418	1,097,115	88,496	3,295,179
Capacity building, Policy Development and communications	158,438	207,825	0	0	366,263
Administrative expenses	153,526	839,819	0	13,744	1,007,089
Other expenses	168,875	11,081	78,932	0	258,888
Provision for future projects & co-funding	1,508,065	0	0	0	1,508,065
Accumulated capital	402,785	247,523	(642,173)	(67,484)	(59,350)
Total Spending	5,806,003	3,604,202	568,158	202,205	10,180,568
Transfers within REF network	2,256,526	296,702	0	0	2,553,228
TOTAL SPENDING WITH TRANSFERS	8,062,529	3,900,904	568,158	202,205	12,733,796

From total overall funding of €10 million, REF spent €1.9 million on grants contracted in its grant program and €1.8 million on tertiary scholarship programs for Roma students. Altogether REF spending under these two programs in 2018 is allocated to the main educational models of REF as follows:

Model (Grant program)	Number of projects in 2018	Funds committed in 2018 (EUR)
Early Childhood Education	16	454,145
Primary Education	6	213,864
Secondary Education	5	331,822
Tertiary Education	n/a	1,847,487
Adult Education	1	24,122
RomaVersitas	6	378,292
Other (Project implementation)	4	3,295,179
TOTAL		6,544,911

In 2018, REF developed and implemented 13 projects from funding provided, inter alia, by the European Commission, KfW, and VELUX FOUNDATIONS with a total spending of €3.3 million. A further €336,000 was spent on technical assistance, capacity building and advocacy. The total administrative expenses, €1.2 million, represent 12% of total spending.

SPENDING BY PROGRAM



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This Report has been prepared by REF Communications team, Angela Alimi, Anastasia Jelasity, Svetlana D. Hristova.

Cover photo: REF photo archive

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Graphic design by Angela Alimi and Homepage, Serbia

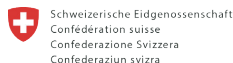
THANK YOU

2018 DONORS

**YOUR SUPPORT MEANS THE
WORLD TO US.**

We are happy to have you in our
community...
investing in, educating and engaging
Roma children, youth and families.

Central European Initiative
Council of Europe Development Bank
EEA Grants
European Commission
EVZ Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future”
Government of Montenegro, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights
Government of North Macedonia, Ministry of Finance
Government of Slovakia, Ministry of Interior
Help, Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V.
KfW Development Bank
Ministry of Interior, Slovakia
Open Society Foundations
Romanian Ministry of European Funds
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
The VELUX FOUNDATIONS
The World Bank
World Bank Community Fund



Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Република Српска Министарство
Унутрашњих Послова
Министерство за
одржавање и заштиту



Government of Montenegro
Ministry for Human and Minority Rights



MINISTRY
OF INTERIOR
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



REF NETWORK

GOVERNING BOARDS - 2018

REF SWITZERLAND FOUNDATION

Andrzej Mirga (Chair)
Kinga Göncz (Vice Chair)
Gábor Ormosy (Treasurer)
William Lazarus Bila
Nicoleta Bitu
Yvana Enzler
Pierre Mirel
Mariam Sherman
Sybille Suter

REF HUNGARY FOUNDATION

Dr. Kinga Göncz (Chair)

REF ROMANIA FOUNDATION

William Lazarus Bila

REF SLOVAKIA FOUNDATION

William Lazarus Bila
(Chair until April 14, 2018)
Andrzej Mirga
(Chair starting April 14, 2018)

REF FOUNDATIONS

Hungary (Headquarters)

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Roma Oktatási Alap
Budapest 1139, Vaci Ut 99, 2nd floor
Tel: +36-1-235-8030
info@romaeducationfund.org
www.romaeducationfund.org

Romania

Roma Education Fund Romania
Fundatia Roma Education Fund Romania
Str. Vaselor Nr.60 Sector 2
021 255 Bucuresti
Tel: +40 21 200 06 00
office@romaeducationfund.ro
www.romaeducationfund.ro

Slovakia

Roma Education Fund Slovakia
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