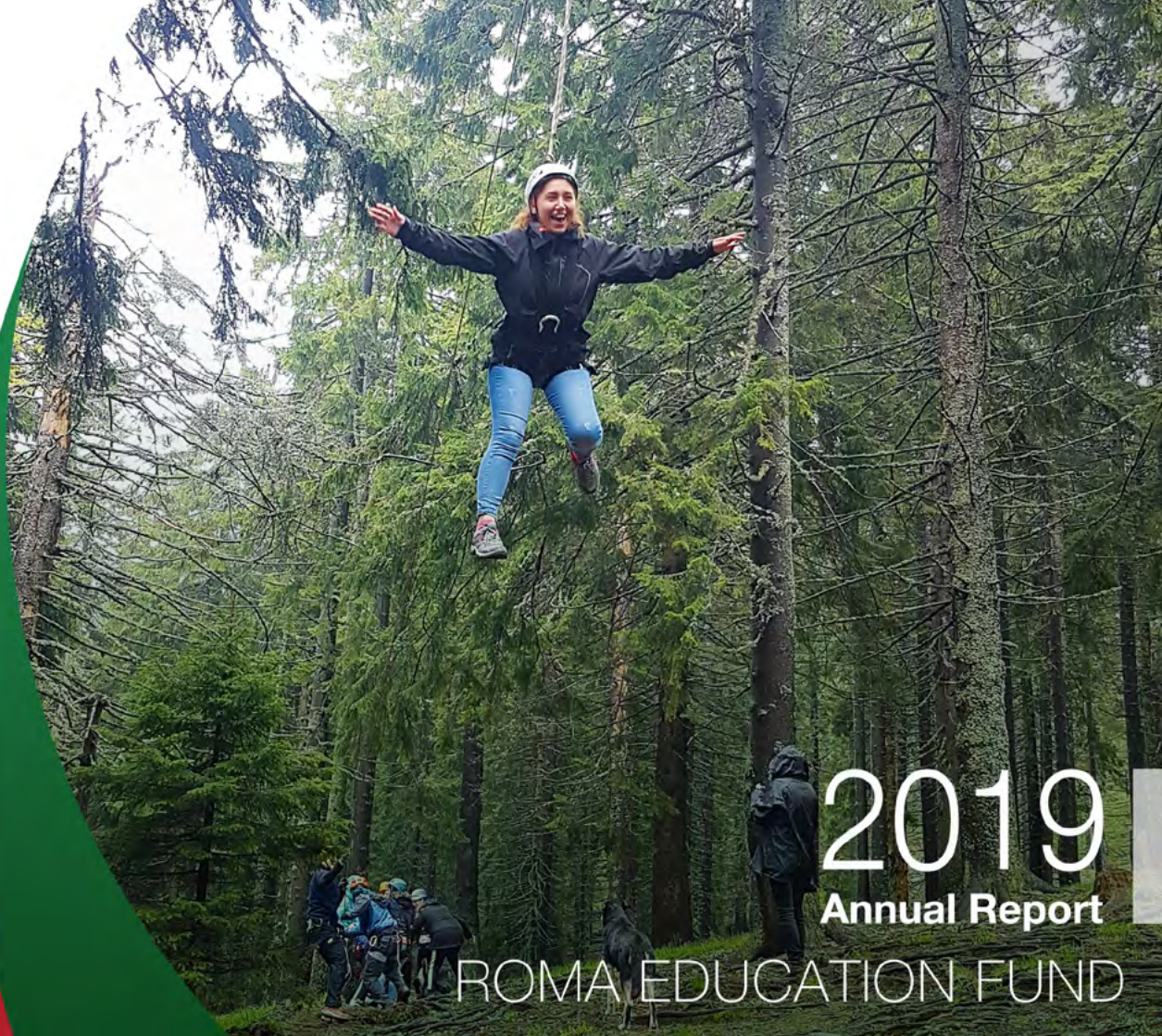




ROMA
EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage



2019
Annual Report

ROMA EDUCATION FUND

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Chairman's Message

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrzej Mirga (*Chair*)*
Ciprian Necula (*Chair*)**
Kinga Göncz (*Vice Chair*)
Gábor Ormosy (*Treasurer*)
Yvana Enzler
Timea Junghaus
Pierre Mirel
Sybille Suter
Mariam Sherman***
William Lazarus Bila****



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”
- Nelson Mandela

Thinking about education as a “danger” to the status quo for Roma communities oppressed by racism and a “weapon” of positive change in the world was key in my decision to accept the responsibility of becoming the new Chair of REF’s Governing Board in November 2019.

I now have the enormous responsibility of building on the work of my predecessors with care and passion. At the same time, my responsibility is to shape the future of an organization that has been a driver of the education agenda in Europe, positively affecting tens of thousands of Roma parents and students at all levels of education. The organization lives and works in very different times and faces different challenges than when it was created in 2005. Most importantly, governments in Central and Eastern Europe are less open to Roma, and racism is more widespread and politically reinforced, while EU enlargement still gives hope and yet raises caution. This requires important organizational adaptation and a new strategy.

In 2019, REF continued to support scholarships for Roma students, give grants for advocacy, research and educational activities, directly implement projects, and advocate for Roma education at the local, national and European levels. It was also a year of celebration, with Roma Education Fund Romania celebrating 10 years of existence. A decade of activity has meant a significant impact on the education of 23,778 pupils and adults through 2,478,075 teaching hours delivered in 557 schools. This milestone was acknowledged by Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, who participated in a celebration at one of the 11 kindergartens built with REF support during these years. I am also proud of the development of REF structures in Serbia and Slovakia that have become important actors in civil society and relevant

partners for national and local authorities in improving access to education for Roma.

In 2020, “transition” will be a key word. We will intensify and complete the transition we started in 2019: the transition of our headquarters from Budapest to Belgrade, the leadership transition at the board and management levels, and the transition from the strategy of the last 15 years to a new one for post-2020. This transition period will have a great impact on how our organization works and the change we can contribute towards in the educational experiences of Roma students, their families and communities.

2020 is not only a year of transition because of our own internal changes. All the social, political and economic contexts are changing as a response to the worldwide coronavirus crisis. Roma communities have been greatly affected by the crisis because many live in extremely poor conditions due to historical marginalization, and access to online solutions is not always available to them. REF is prepared to adapt and react to the new context, to identify the best solutions for Roma students at all levels and to contribute with our own resources to reducing the negative impact of the pandemic.

Finally, I do believe that a library card can be a dangerous weapon. However, Roma Education Fund, not only as a single institution but as part of a larger collective – together with many Roma with library cards, their parents, Roma and pro-Roma organizations, and supportive public officials – is more than a weapon. It is part of a kind of liberation army against oppression, inequality and injustice. I am ready to do my part, but I cannot do it alone without you. Are you ready to join us?

Thank you for your continued support,
Ciprian Necula
Chair

MANAGEMENT

Nadir Redžepi (*Executive Director*)
Azra Junuzović (*Deputy Director*)
Redjepali Chupi (*Network Coordinator*)
Andrea Dörömbözdő (*CFO*)
Loránd Gyenge (*Deputy CFO*)

REF FOUNDATIONS

Hungary (*Headquarters*)
North Macedonia
Romania
Serbia
Slovakia
Switzerland (*REF Network*)

REF REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES

Montenegro
Serbia

6,754

beneficiaries

2,568

preschool children

881

primary school children

2,029

secondary school students

1,276

tertiary scholarship students

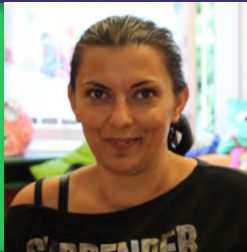
2019

YEAR IN REVIEW

16 PROJECT COUNTRIES

1,976

Roma parents



265

municipalities



200

volunteers



603

in-service trained teachers



628

mentors and tutors



595

educational facilities



Early childhood education and care

1
model

Expanding access to preschool education

▶ Albania, Czechia,
North Macedonia, Slovakia

2018/2019

1,716 children | 55% girls
| 45% boys

90% attendance rate

27 preschool facilities | in 20 municipalities

8% dropout rate

102 volunteers | 67% female
| 33% male



58 Toy Libraries
established by REF in
10 countries

6 new Toy Libraries in
2019



3,617 Roma children
were involved
in Toy Library activities
throughout 2019

2,601 registered
Toy Library
members
throughout 2019

“I think it is a positive change that there are more volunteers, preschool children, and even older students, who are more than happy to take part in playful and skill developmental activities. Through personal attention and one on one involvement the children are more motivated to do homework and are increasingly involved in learning together. I really believe that exercise games relieve stress during the day, stress at home, and the attention we give the children and personal conversations we have contribute towards a sense of balance.”

– Lajtai Kira, Special Educator, Khetanipe



Results

Primary education projects



Preventing early school leaving in primary education

50 schools ▶ 26 municipalities ▶ in 7 countries ▶ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia

2018/2019

Results

280 children | 48% female | 52% male

484 parents

76 volunteers

91% attendance rate

38 tutors

100% graduation rate of final year students

41 mentors

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

Spotlight:



competition winners

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Đenita Salkanović won 2nd place in the **Cantonal Competition in German language** for primary and secondary schools

Armin Baltić won 1st place in the sport competition for primary schools to celebrate "Day of Army Bosnia and Herzegovina" in the category – **Cross-country running**

Severdan Džinalić won 1st place in the sport competition for primary schools in the City of Mostar in the category – **Long jump**



Secondary education projects

Expanding access to secondary education through scholarships, mentoring and tutoring



133 project schools ▶ in 32 municipalities ▶ in 3 countries

Kosovo

601 students received scholarships
316 female
285 male

475 students transferred to an integrated school/class as a result of REF projects

100% graduation rate

97.5% completed the academic year

17% of the graduates continued into a university or college

2.5% dropout rate (compared to 7% regional average)

83% of the graduates transitioned to the labor market

85% of students attend vocational secondary schools

15% of students attend academic secondary schools

Hungary

34 students participated in mentoring and tutoring program

0% dropout rate

All students participated in soft skills training

40 peer mentors

Bosnia and Herzegovina

85 students received scholarships

138 parents involved in project activities

36 mentors



Results
2018/2019



Tertiary education projects

4
model

Expanding access to higher education

Scholarship Program

RomaVersitas Program

Cooperation with Universities

Scholarship Program

In the 2018/2019 academic year REF awarded

744 scholarships through four scholarship schemes to students from 14 countries.

Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP)

34 awarded scholarships

68%
female



32%
male

Specialties include general medicine, dentistry, surgery, internal medicine, nursing and health management

Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP)

574 awarded scholarships

59%
female



41%
male

82% first generation students

Law and Humanities Program (LHP)

118 awarded scholarships

45%
female



55%
male

97% graduation rate

Roma International Scholarship Program (RISP)

18 awarded scholarships

56%
female



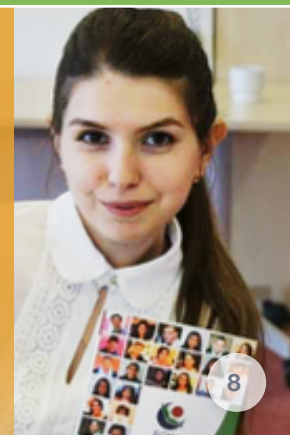
44%
male

destination countries:

Albania, Austria, Czechia, England, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Ukraine and USA

"In 2019, the LHP program gave me the opportunity to participate in the project "Roma Women in Politics", where I was trained in leadership skills. The combination of a leader and Roma future professional sounded like 'ridiculous nonsense' a couple of decades ago. Now this is reality."

- Tatiana Cebotari, Moldova



RomaVersitas program

RomaVersitas is an academic services and support program for Roma university students, with the aim to improve the retention, performance and graduation levels of Roma students by providing them with academic tutoring, mentoring and strengthening of their Roma identity and pride. The RomaVersitas model also serves as a bridge for young Roma scholars towards employment and active community participation.

2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

242 students from

58 universities

5 RomaVersitas centers in 2019



Albania
Hungary
Kosovo
North Macedonia
Serbia



67% BA
31% MA
2% PhD

2015-2019

2,196 students

221 mentors



601 tutors

Central European University (CEU) Roma Graduate Preparation Program (RGPP)

9 out of 13 graduates (7 female / 2 male) continued their studies and enrolled in MA programs



"I am often told that I am unique, mainly in comparison with other Roma women. Usually, the sentences in this context end with either "and you are Roma?" or "...even though you are Roma?". It saddens me when I am told that I am different from the rest of my community because the only difference is that I had the privilege and possibility to acquire education. I want that 'privilege' for all Roma."
- Sunita Memetovic, Sweden

Cooperation with universities

Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government



Between 2018/19 to 2024/25, the Roma Education Fund and the Blavatnik School of Government is funding one scholarship per academic year at the Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government. The scholarships will be available to Roma graduates who can demonstrate academic excellence, proven leadership and commitment to public

service and who intend to return to the public sector in their countries of origin after completing their studies.

Central European University (CEU) Roma in European Societies MA Programs (RES)

10 Roma students completed their MA



"One of the reasons I decided to continue my studies was to prove to my parents, and non-Roma people as well, that it is possible for a Roma girl from a disadvantaged background to study at an international university and achieve more than is expected from her. Roma Education Fund certainly has an important role in my academic successes and without its support I would not have been able to challenge the racial and gendered stereotypes."
- Marina Csikos, Hungary

Pedagogy Scholarship Program

in Czechia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia

This project is co-funded by:

THE VELLUX FOUNDATIONS
REALIZING DREAMS IN EDUCATION

Shaping academic and employment skills for young Roma

This project is co-funded by:

THE VELLUX FOUNDATIONS
REALIZING DREAMS IN EDUCATION

2014-2019



178

female secondary students supported through scholarships and mentoring support



140

mentors



135

participants in summer camps in Slovakia and Romania



77

students have graduated



Results

2018/2019

2019/2020

150

secondary students

57% female
43% male

160

secondary students

55% female
45% male

13

young adults

34

young adults

65

schools in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia

51

schools

100%

graduation rate

The program aims to:

- ▶ increase the number of female early childhood and kindergarten teachers of Roma origin
- ▶ increase Roma children's enrollment, attendance and success in kindergarten education
- ▶ increase Roma children's primary school readiness

The trainings we received were very useful, I really enjoyed that while we were learning, we were also playing and challenging one another, and having to complete tasks together as a team. I'm very happy to have joined this community, I'll never forget it, and I'm really excited to be able to attend the training sessions this year again.

- Erika Farkas (Grade 11)

10

Improved Education and Integration Opportunities for Roma in Serbia, Employment Empowerment of Young Roma and Reintegration of Returnees

Scholarships and project-based mentoring for vocational education in school year 2018/2019

310 students

145	female
165	male

92% of all students
successfully
completed
school year

131	female
154	male

92% graduation
rate, final
year students
received
Matura or final
certificate

42	female
64	male

Increased employability through specialized trainings in school year 2018/2019

131 young people
successfully placed
in internships

62	female
69	male

284 young people
completed
vocational training

131	female
153	male

Professional development

completed English and
German language courses

10	female
12	male

completed category B driving
license training

2	female
4	male

Reintegration of Roma returnees in school year 2018/2019

186 families

5 municipalities

Subotica
Nis
Leskovac
Vladicin Han
Surdulica

Enrollment and
textbook/materials
assistance for pre-
primary education
(children aged 5-7)

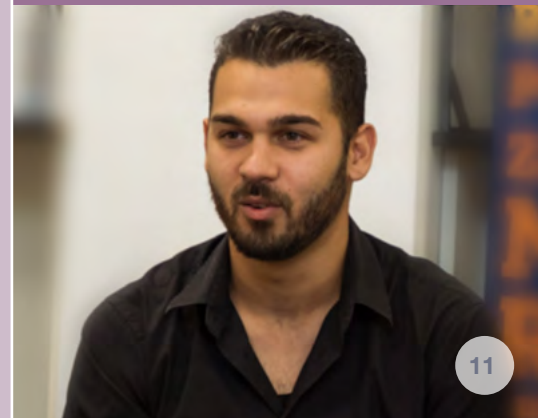
Tutoring and
language support
for primary school
(children aged 7-10)

36 girls
39 boys

88 girls
81 boys



This project is
supported by:



EU REGIONAL ACTION FOR ROMA:

Increasing Educational Opportunities for Roma in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Early childhood development

419 children were enrolled in kindergarten or preschool in school year 2018 / 2019

1,115 family (home) visits conducted by the school and project staff



Funded by the European Union

Project Countries:



Primary education

36 female
29 male
Grade 1: 65 children enrolled in Grade 1 of primary school in year 2019/2020

14 female
25 male
Grade 2: 39 children enrolled in Grade 2 of primary school in year 2019/2020



Secondary education

198 female
225 male
beneficiaries

72 internship placements

36 female
36 male



Tertiary education

45 female
34 male
scholarships

16 female
19 male
internships



Advocacy

60 young Roma employed

7 Memoranda with ministries



* 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.

Research and Advocacy

Publications



Analytical Report

Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks

A joint project carried out between 2016 and 2019, focusing on national curricula and textbooks for history, civics and geography from 22 countries. A quantitative analysis, showing how often Roma are mentioned, and a qualitative overview on topics that engage with the ethnic minority were analyzed. REF hired and trained eight Roma research fellows to examine over 850 textbooks and evaluate their portrayal of Roma.



2019 Highlights

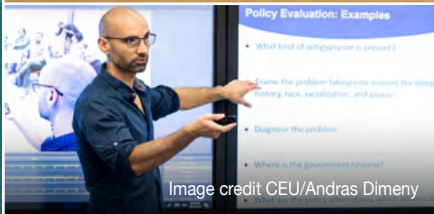


Image credit CEU/Andras Dimeny

Outreach



Advocacy grants cross-country interventions

Building-up cross-country advocacy networks and regional knowledge exchange; gaining political and civic support for placing Roma educational challenges on political agendas

European Campaign on Early Childhood Development

Advocating to the European Commission to allocate funds for ECD and bring policy changes. REF put together two case studies on desegregation and ECD Toy Library interventions for the campaign.

Post-2020 Roma Strategies

REF led the recommendations related to education for the proposal submitted to the European Commission.

Recommendation packages to the Ministry of Education in Bulgaria on the national program "Support to municipalities for implementation of activities for educational desegregation"

The recommendation package is based on REF's desegregation model that has proven its impact in several European countries.

Roma Mayors advocacy meetings in Slovakia

Emphasizing the proven results of REF's Toy Library models as an efficient tool for ensuring the entrance of children to quality mainstream primary schools, and detailed scenarios of how Roma mayors could have a lead on the nationwide policy introduction of Toy Libraries.

Book Chapter

Path to Higher Education: Combating Antigypsyism by Building Roma Students' Aspirations and Resilience

Published in "Dimensions of Antigypsyism in Europe" European Network Against Racism, 2019. Book chapter co-authored by REF scholarship alumna, Simona Torotcol, and REF Research Officer, Marko Pecak

Roma Civil Monitor Synthesis Report

Roma civil monitor pilot project:

A synthesis of civil society's reports on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies in the European Union: Educational Chapter

Communication and Visibility

Communication grant



Photo and audio exhibit

When I grow up I would like to be a rich woman



REF Slovakia beneficiaries have breakfast with Slovak President



Toy Library installation at ISSA conference 2019

Network newsletter

NEW

FEBRUARY 2020 (VOL. 8, ISSUE 1)

REFLECT
NETWORK NEWSLETTER

REF TURNS 15!



ROMA

EDUCATION FUND

United Nations Europe

An international conference of government representatives in Budapest in July 2003 laid the groundwork for the Decade of Roma Inclusion and its most visible institution, the Roma Education Fund (REF). However, it wasn't until 2005 that REF was registered as a Swiss foundation. In the spring of 2009, REF opened its doors in Budapest with the goal of increasing the inclusion of Roma children in mainstream education in Central and Eastern Europe. That same year, REF published its first study, 'Segregation in the Primary School System in Hungary'. During the past 15 years, with over 16,000 scholarships, 97 research and policy documents, and over 16 million EUR invested in grant programs, REF has been instrumental in achieving its mission and vision. Stay tuned for visibility initiatives the HQ has planned to celebrate 15 years of REF!

QUICK NEWS & SHOUT OUTS

We welcome Ann and Benjamin as interim executive director.

REF's second one has been legally set up, will currently be included in all Romanian newspapers.

We welcome Cristian Niculescu as new REF Board Chair.

The 'Analytical Report on the Implementation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks' is being published this February. The project is a joint effort by the Council of Europe, Roma Education Fund and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. The work

10 YEARS

Celebrating 10 years of REF Romania with Romanian President



67%
increase in REF Facebook traffic



New REF website launched in 2019

64%
increase of REF citations in international media



134%
increase in Instagram followers



20
new videos featured

Summary of REF financials

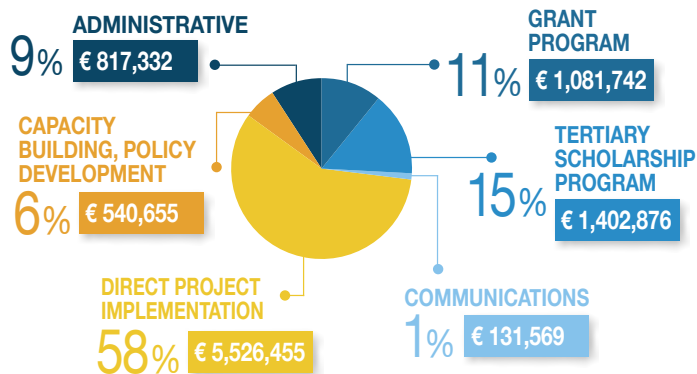
Please see 2019 full Annual Report for complete information on sources of funds and spending, donations received, statement of expenditures over income and balance sheets of all REF entities.

Commitments of REF foundations in 2019 by educational model

Model	Number of projects in 2019	Funds committed in 2019 (EUR)
Early Childhood Education	2	145,314
Primary Education	9	427,245
Secondary Education	1	159,750
Tertiary Education - RomaVersitas grants	3	240,000
Tertiary Education - Scholarship program	n.a	1,402,876
Direct Project implementation - All educational levels	4	5,526,455
TOTAL		7,901,639

Sources of funds and spending of REF foundations in 2019 in EUR

DESCRIPTION	REF SWITZERLAND	REF HUNGARY	REF ROMANIA	REF SLOVAKIA	REF N. MACEDONIA	REF SERBIA
Opening foundation capital	402,785	1,830,140	(642,173)	(67,484)	0	0
Third party donor income	7,323,249	1,689,875	523,040	72,617	0	0
Other income	74,542	59,005	32,411	1,684	0	(240)
Total Sources	7,800,576	3,579,020	(86,722)	6,817	0	(240)
Transfers within REF network		1,777,593	845,405	348,723	10,000	97,702
Write off REF CH loan at REF Romania			572,111			
TOTAL SOURCES WITH TRANSFERS	7,800,576	5,356,613	1,330,793	355,539	10,000	97,462
Grant program	1,066,057	0	0	110,583	0	0
Release(-)/Building(+) of provisions for projects granted	(370,518)	0	0	0	0	0
Tertiary scholarship Program	1,255,802	167,004	22,499	9,845	0	0
Communications	44,398	87,171	0	0	0	0
Own educational projects	0	3,585,390	1,604,417	289,516	0	53,778
Capacity building, Policy Development and communications	215,760	324,895	0	0	0	0
Administrative expenses	181,168	541,543	0	0	0	3,540
Other expenses	28,056	36,267	26,321	0	0	188
Provision for future projects & co-funding	1,517,549	0	0	0	0	0
Accumulated capital	1,481,395	54,195	(309,284)	(54,404)	10,000	39,956
Total Spending	5,419,667	4,796,464	1,343,952	355,540	10,000	97,462
Transfers within REF network	2,380,909	537,695	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SPENDING WITH TRANSFERS	7,800,576	5,334,159	1,343,952	355,540	10,000	97,462



Thank You

2019 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.

Council of Europe Development Bank

European Commission

EVZ – Erinnerung Foundation “Remembrance,
Responsibility and Future”

HELP HILFE

KfW Development Bank

Ministry of Interior, Slovakia

Open Society Institute

Romanian Management Authority (as partner)

Swedish International Development Agency

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

World Bank Community Connections Fund

CEI Cooperation Fund

The Velux Foundations



Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung



REF NETWORK:

GOVERNING BOARDS – 2019

REF SWITZERLAND FOUNDATION

Andrzej Mirga (Chair until
November 22, 2019)
Ciprian Necula (Chair starting
November 22, 2019)

REF HUNGARY FOUNDATION

Kinga Göncz (Chair)

REF ROMANIA FOUNDATION

Andrzej Mirga (Chair)

REF SLOVAKIA FOUNDATION

Andrzej Mirga
(Chair until November 22, 2019)
Ciprian Necula (Chair starting
November 22, 2019)

REF SERBIA FOUNDATION

Ciprian Necula (Chair)

REF NORTH MACEDONIA FOUNDATION

Andrzej Mirga (Chair)

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