

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

→ 15 YEARS OF ROMA EDUCATION FUND



ROMA
EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage



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15 YEARS OF REF

We aspire to live in a world in which the right to education is regarded as undeniable for every Roma child and youth, and high quality educational opportunities and practices are equitable and accessible for all.

1.1 15 YEARS OF REF IN **NUMBERS**





71 Toy Libraries

OPEN IN 10 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
SINCE 2010



~100,000 Beneficiaries

IN ALL EDUCATIONAL LEVELS (PRESCHOOL,
PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY)

5 Good Practice Models

FOR ACHIEVING IMPACT IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES
AND POLICY SETTINGS



SURVEY RESULTS

From the very beginning, through all the activities we carried out and the implemented projects, we aimed to fulfill our mission - to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.

One of the programs that brought us closer to achieving our mission, and also transformed our foundation into one of the biggest Roma organizations in Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe is *Roma Education Fund Scholarship Programs* (REF SP).

At such an important time for the foundation, the 15th anniversary of our activity, we wanted to see the influence of our educational programs on the educational trajectory of our students and alumni.

87%

said they reached a higher level of education.

86.6%

said that REF SP helped them become prouder of who they are.

82.7%

REF SP assisted them to succeed in life

83.8%

said that REF SP encouraged them to publicly embrace their Roma ethnicity.

SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY

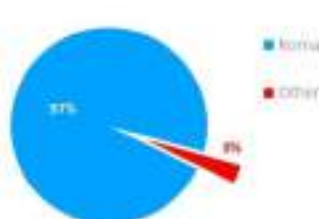
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SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF RESPONDENTS

GENDER



ETHNICITY

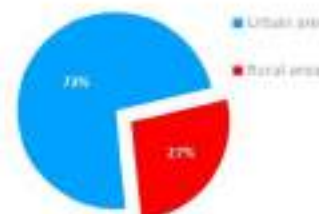


COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



Under 25 y.o. 68%
Between 26 & 30 y.o. 12.2%
Between 31 & 40 y.o. 9.2%
41 y.o. or above 0.6%

BORN IN



How do you consider you manage to cope with your day-to-day needs using the amount of money you usually earn/have at your disposal?

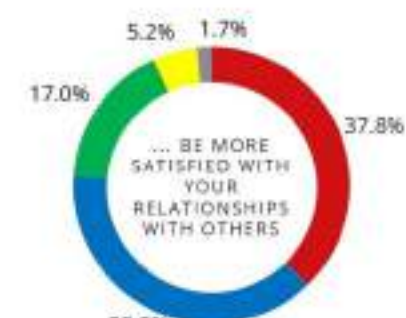
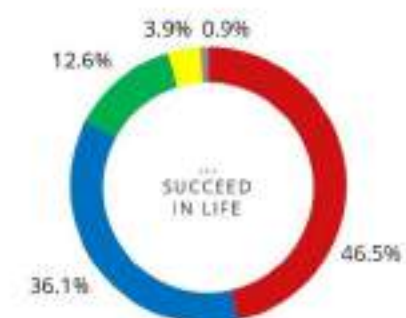
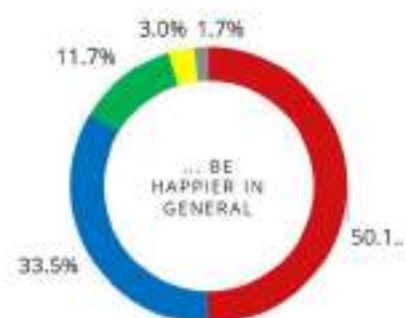
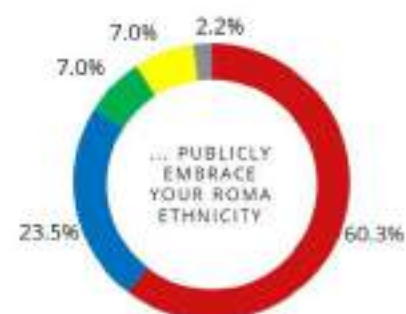
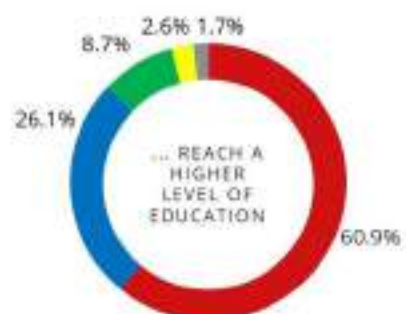
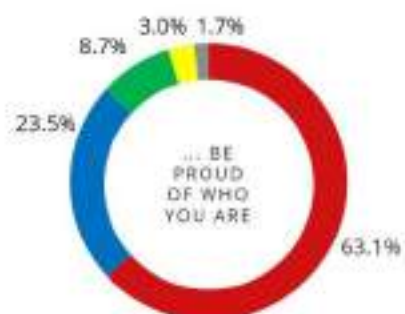


Please tell us to what extent the support provided by the Roma Education Fund has helped you ...

(N= 230 respondents)

1.2

■ To a great extent ■ To a large extent ■ To a certain extent ■ To no extent / Not at all ■ Don't know / Don't answer







ROMANIA

A FRONTLINE DOCTOR AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DAVID MANGALOIU

He is a Roma Health Scholarship Program (RHSP) beneficiary since 2013.

During the State of Emergency, David worked to near exhaustion in the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Bucharest, where he is a resident doctor, specialized in infectious diseases.

Even though he was overwhelmed with work and profoundly affected by the suffering around him, David gladly agreed to take part in REF Romania's communication campaign that addressed Covid-19 prevention & protection measures.

Between 15 and 27 of March 2020, REF Romania together with the Civic Platform Aresel created 16 short and relevant videos that were distributed on Social Media in order to help the Roma community to face the challenge.

"I want to become an infectious disease doctor and work with HIV patients. I also want to start a Ph.D. in public health. After I'll complete it, I would like to get involved in drafting public health policies for the Roma communities in Romania".





BULGARIA

YEAR FOUR STUDENT IN DENTAL
MEDICINE AT MEDICAL
UNIVERSITY OF PLOVDIV

**EMILIYAN ILIEV
MITKOV**

He is a Roma Memorial University
Scholarship Program (RMUSP) beneficiary
since 2018



"Difficulties motivate me. I want to help the Roma and all people who are in a vulnerable and distressed situation. Somehow, the media mainly represent the Roma in a bad light. I want to show that we Roma integrate every day. I am very motivated by the Roma who graduated from Medicine with your support. In some of them, I see my way of life because I'm going through the same difficult paths to get to success".

TURKEY

Serkan holds degrees in both Mechanical Engineering and Business Management. In the 2013/2014 academic year he joined the Roma English Language Program at the Central European University in Budapest. In 2018 this young man has become REF Country Facilitator for Turkey for the project "Increasing the Educational Opportunities for Roma in the Western Balkans and Turkey".

He has connected to the Roma movement via REF by participating in youth initiatives in 2009-2010. He has organized capacity-building training for Roma NGOs and young people. Serkan has also launched a scholarship initiative group in Malkara, Marmara region. He was the first Roma in Malkara to be enrolled in a higher education institution. Thanks to the scholarship initiative group, dozens of Roma from his neighbourhood were enrolled in university.

"Students tend to inquire me if I were Roma myself, because they have not often had the chance to meet an educated Roma. Then I give details about my journey to the current position, and, having similar starting position in life as most of them, inspires the Roma students that success and career are possible. However, I always advice the young Roma that financial problems and discriminative approaches should not impede their plans and dreams".

RMUSP SCHOLARSHIP BENEFICIARY WITHIN
2009 - 2013



Serkan Baysak

CURRENTLY, REF COUNTRY FACILITATOR
FOR TURKEY

BLAVATNIK SCHOOL'S FIRST ROMA EDUCATION
FUND SCHOLAR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BENJAMIN IGNAC



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Benjamin Ignac joined the Blavatnik School from a career trajectory that has taken him from carrying out research for NASA to campaigning for Roma rights with the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC).

"Without this scholarship, it would have been impossible for me to come and study at Oxford. The MPP programme has prepared me to analyse complex policy issues from different angles. It broadened my horizon to a wide range of salient topics in public policy such as big data, AI, climate change, social welfare, etc. As a recent graduate (Sep.2020) I feel prepared and excited to pursue a career in one of these areas".

"I want Roma youth to know that they can grow up and become literally anything. I believe that young smart Roma who are in high school, currently thinking about their academic path, should not limit their choices only to fields such as Social Work, Human Rights, Romani Studies, or Pedagogy (although all those are really great and necessary and important too). Having representation in politics and the civil sector is important and crucial for the Roma movement, and I am most likely going down that path".



PHD STUDENT SORBONNE, FRANCE

IONELA PĂDURE

She was a RMUSP scholarship beneficiary
2005-2008 and 2010-2012

"First of all, applying to the REF scholarship program gave me self-confidence. I mean, I wrote an application that was not easy to draft asking for financial support for my studies and it was accepted. It was a great thing. I felt valued. I felt that someone cared about my professional development and, more than that, that someone extended a helping hand to me. The fact that my scholarship application was accepted increased my self-esteem. It was WOW. It was my first success.

There was a question in your applications form: What did you do for the Roma communities? That question has changed our vision about life because it motivated us - me and my husband, who's also a REF scholarship beneficiary - to give back to our Roma community. It inspired us!"

Ionela graduated from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work at the University of Bucharest and has a master's degree in Educational Management at the same university. During those five years of study, she was a REF scholarship recipient. She worked in NGOs, she was a French teacher in Paris and she is now in her second year of her Ph.D. also in Paris.



TOY LIBRARY

THE MAGIC OF
LEARNING THROUGH PLAYING

*Kids from our first Toy Library
ever opened in 2010,
Hungary*





TOY LIBRARY

Between 2010 and 2012, REF and its local partners - supported by European Commission DG Regional Policy - implemented an early childhood development project called 'A Good Start' (AGS) in 16 localities in Slovakia, Romania, North Macedonia and Hungary.

"REF Toy Libraries helped the families to learn that playing can be a lot of fun and a great way to spend time together, and it is not a shame for adults to play. In the beneficiary families children and parents were bonded, they had better relationships, they played together, read books together and spent quality time at home, which is not usual in case of severe adversity, hardships and distress. The children enjoyed the opportunities and proudly shared in their kindergarten and elementary school that they had exciting books and toys at home. They improved their competencies and skills, their logic and short term memory, their ability to identify letters, numbers, colours, directions, shapes and size. They learnt to share, to be able to wait while the others have their turns and they learnt that they can lose the games and cannot win all the time. These children had an easier start in school, their vocabulary was bigger, they had better fine-motor skills, which is needed to do many school-related tasks".

Szilvia Pallaghy

REF's Program ECD Officer 2010-2016



✓ NAGYECSED, HUNGARY - 2010

The first Toy Library was established and piloted in 2010 in Nagyecsed, Hungary.

✓ ZBOROV, SLOVAKIA - 2011

The selection of the locality for the establishment of the toy library was influenced by the vulnerable situation of the Roma in Zborov (2011), which was zero pre-school attendance rate among the Roma children.

From 50 registered children to more than 300 in 10 years

"CHILDHOOD WITHOUT TOYS DOES NOT EXIST"



"With the assistance of the Toy Library, the families have stronger motivation to expand knowledge and skills. The meaningful time spent in playing games develops the cognitive functions of the child, and it does improve the socio-emotional relationships within the family. Childhood without toys doesn't exist!"

Edita Kováčová,
Director of Vyrovnávanie šanci / Equal Chances Association,
Slovakia, REF's local partner in this project

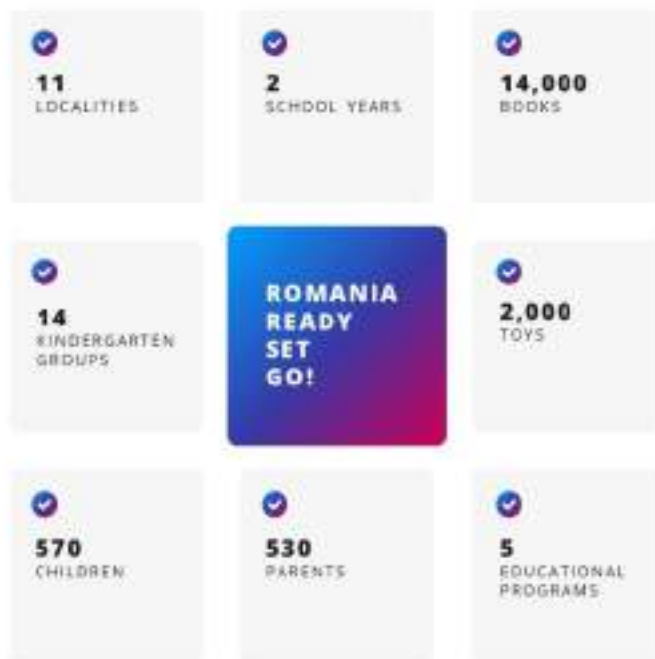


YOUR STORY PROGRAM

"The parental sessions (which were known as "Your Story" sessions) represent an innovative activity thanks to which plenty of Roma mothers managed to obtain basic literacy and connection to the written texts, to the books. The mothers learnt to read with comprehension; almost all of them improved their reading technique and were not afraid to read in front of a group of people. This has had an impact on the whole family because the mothers were allowed to take the books home and read them to the children and to the other siblings. Hence, the municipal library in Zborov began to borrow books to the Roma families. Many women have requested a library "club card" and have regularly attended it."

Edita Kováčová,
She is also a kindergarten teacher,
working with Roma children and with their parents since
1993





Between 2015 and 2017, in Romania, the Toy Library project evolved into something bigger and with long-term positive results. The Ready, Set, Go! Project

5 kindergartens were built from the ground-up and another 6, whose buildings were in ruins, were completely rehabilitated.

The project "Ready Set Go!" increasing Early Childhood Development Outcomes for Roma Children was funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 and by Open Society Foundations.

VISIT FROM THE PRESIDENT

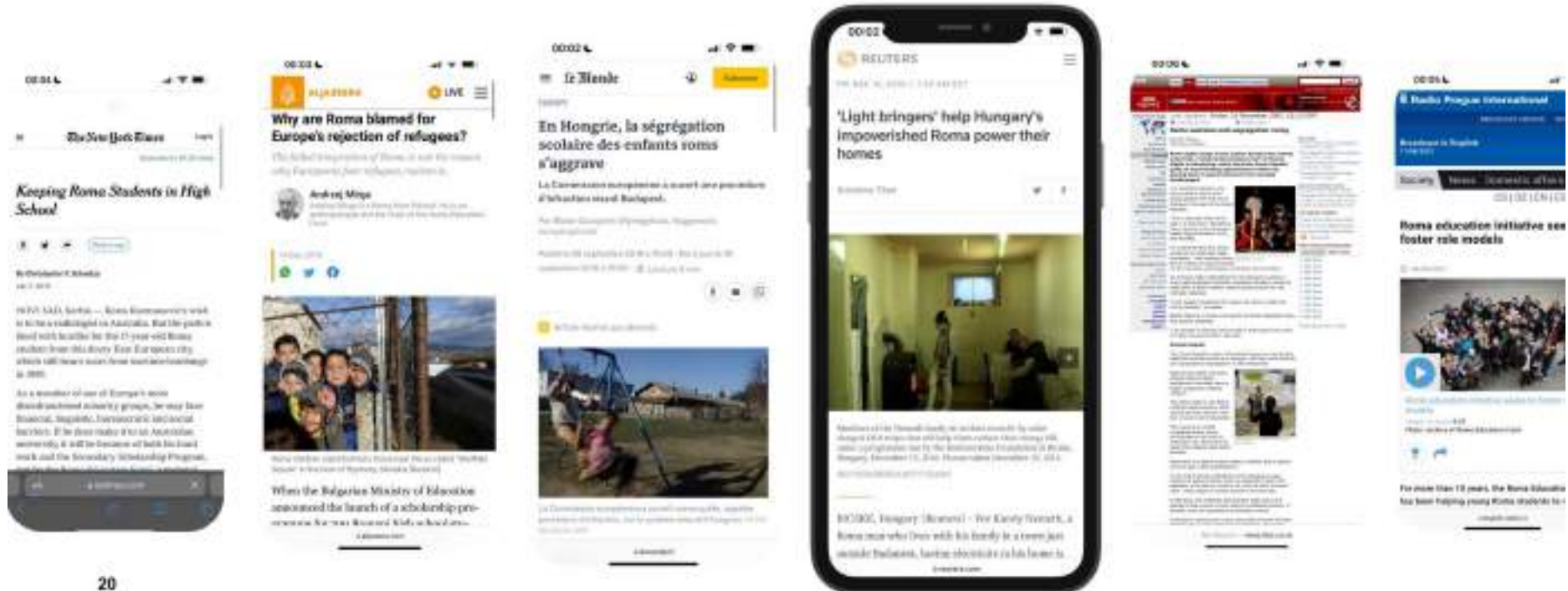


In 2019, on the anniversary of ten years of REF in Romania, His Excellency, Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, President of Romania visited one of those kindergartens. He congratulated the REF team on their outstanding results.



15 YEARS IN THE MEDIA

OVER THE YEARS, OUR ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN STORIES WRITTEN BY VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS





2020 PANDEMIC YEAR

As a consequence of COVID-19, Roma families and communities have been enduring disproportioned health, socio-economic, and educational impact. In response to the current challenges, in 2020, Roma Education Fund launched an Emergency Fund and Action Plan.





REF EMERGENCY FUND



NEEDS ASSESMENT

- Roma students in different educational levels faced difficulties studying remotely
- A significant number of Roma students did not have daily access to tablets, computers, or mobile phones, as well as internet services, TV sets or even stable electricity
- Some Roma students were struggling to find places to study at home, as well as to share devices with their siblings
- At the same time, the students lost connection with their teachers and classmates which was valuable for their motivation and educational attainment
- Roma parents have been suddenly burdened with larger responsibility to guide and contribute to their children's education – a pedagogical role which surpassed the majority's capacity and knowledge.



ACTION PLAN

- Humanitarian aid up to 20% of the budget approved, the rest was used for educational activities
- Phase 1 implementation:
 - June 1st until August 31, 2020
 - April 1st 2021 – June 30th 2021



BUDGET

Total amount
592,195 EUR

Total amount phase 1
357,332 EUR



BUDGET

COUNTRY	EUR
 Albania	52,871.00
 Bosnia and Herzegovina	39,974.21
 Kosovo*	39,850.00
 Montenegro	12,890.00
 North Macedonia	38,116.00
 Serbia	104,830.00
 Bulgaria	15,000.00
 Croatia	6,999.00
 Hungary	23,000.00
 Slovakia	23,802.00
Total:	€ 357,332.21

RESULTS

Type of provision and support	Total number in all countries	Beneficiaries Education level
Humanitarian aid	310	Socially disadvantaged Roma families were provided with humanitarian aid packages.
Mentoring and Tutoring	4606	Students in primary, secondary and tertiary education have been provided with mentoring and tutoring support, both of whom increased their chances to successfully complete the academic school year and in some cases, transition from one school year to another.
Tablets and Laptops	1545	Roma students from primary, secondary, and tertiary education
Internet access	1170	
Toys and educational packages	900	Families of children in Early Childhood Development schemes (ECD)
Didactic materials and textbooks for students	545	Primary education
Assistance to families in employment in ECD, primary and secondary schools and universities	486	Families have received assistance in enrolling their children in ECD, primary, secondary and tertiary education, either with the help of teachers or through Roma exam preparations with tutors for the needed subject.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNHCR (1947) and the OSCE field in the former designation of independence.



ROMA
IA

SCHOOL OF SOLIDARITY

School of solidarity is a visionary place, based on Solidarity by Design, a unique and scalable solution to make high-quality level education available for the Roma communities. It was a virtual place where kids from disadvantaged communities could be enrolled by their parents to receive meditations via phone and on-line.

Mobilized the REF Alumni network, the Roma beneficiaries from Pedagogy Scholarship Program, students part of the RMUSP and RHSP programs, politicians and so on.

INOVATIVE PROJECTS



ȘCOALA SOLIDARITĂȚII

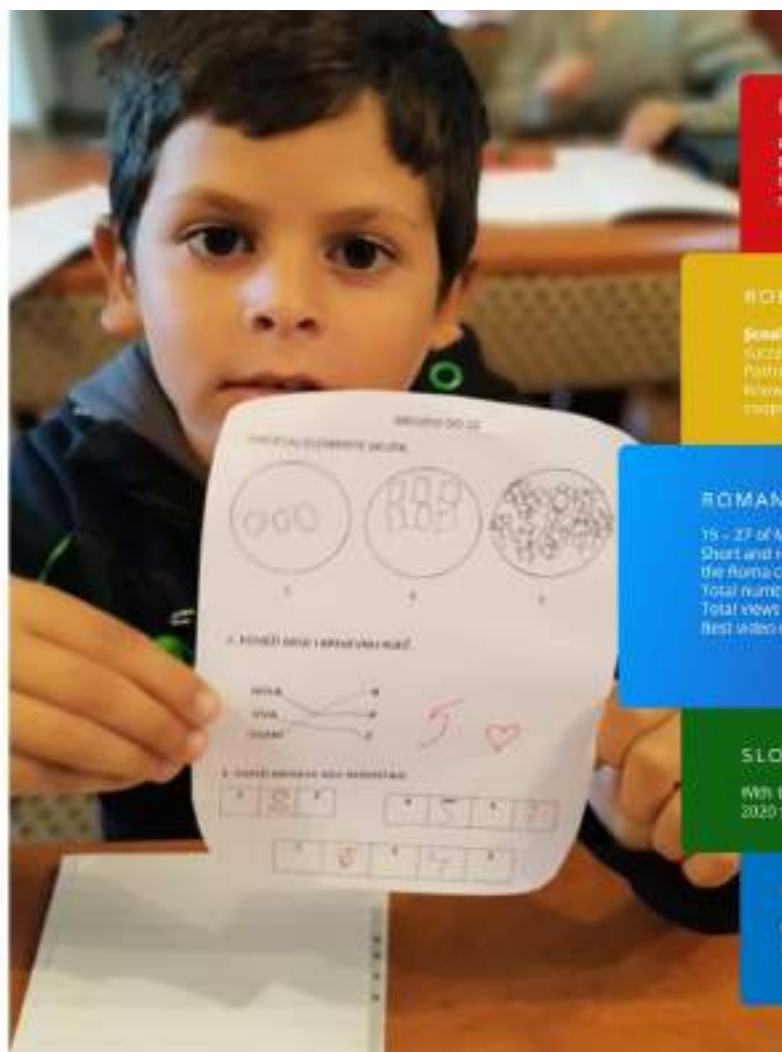


ALBANIA, NORTH MACEDONIA AND
SERBIA

EMERGENCY RESPONSE CALL-CENTRES

Have provided preventive health and safety rules information to Roma families and facilitated their access to medical assistance. Young Roma interns have been running the call-centres and assisting senior Roma in the procurement of food and sanitary supplies.

SPECIAL ACTIONS



ROMANIA

PEPCO Company has accepted the redesign of the **Creators of Joy Project** that REF Romania won in 2019. Instead of organizing educational summer activities, the company has gladly accepted to help 650 children from G communities offering them and their families value coupons and school supplies.

ROMANIA

Schools on the Web (Schools on the Web) – an initiative designed to help teachers successfully make the transition from school in the classroom to online education. Partners: TechSoup, Teach for Romania, Communication Research Centre, Leading Knowledge Foundation, REF Romania, and Polish Teacher Training Centre, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Research.

ROMANIA

15 - 27 of March – **Online campaigns** launched together with the Civic Platform Anadol. Short and relevant videos created by REF's students were distributed on Social Media in order to help the Roma community to face the new situation.
Total number of video material during that period posted online – 16
Total views on Facebook – 240,679
Best video made by Ștefania Băcârș, REF Student and a police officer (163,00 views)

SLOVAKIA

With the support of the Ministry of Education, REF Slovakia has started by the end of 2020 the development of an online tutoring centre – **Amos Academy**

ROMANIA

Formal and Non-Formal Education for Sustainable Development in the Centre Region project has been redesigned, so the Foundation was able to purchase 576 tablets.

CREATORS OF JOY PROJECT

Nicu is one of those 600 children that were helped by Pepco. He looks tiny and frail. Nicu has a way with words, though he often stares at his toes when he speaks. His sports shoes are so shaggy, they look like they were gnawed on by some pooch.

For some years now, his father is the only one taking care of him. He is one of four children of this poor single-parent family. Their mother walked out on them in 2013, at a time when Nicu's youngest sister was, in the words of a neighbour, "no larger than a spoon". The neighbour is called Viorica, and she is also a teacher in the village school. Perhaps equally important, every day she brings something to eat to those children.

When he grows up, Nicu wants to be a mechanic or a train driver. He's not very sure as of now. He does speak better than the average city boy, he knows the meaning of words, although his voice quivers a bit whenever he has to pronounce words a tad too big for his young age.

NICU STATE

GOSTINARI, GIURGIU COUNTY, 2020

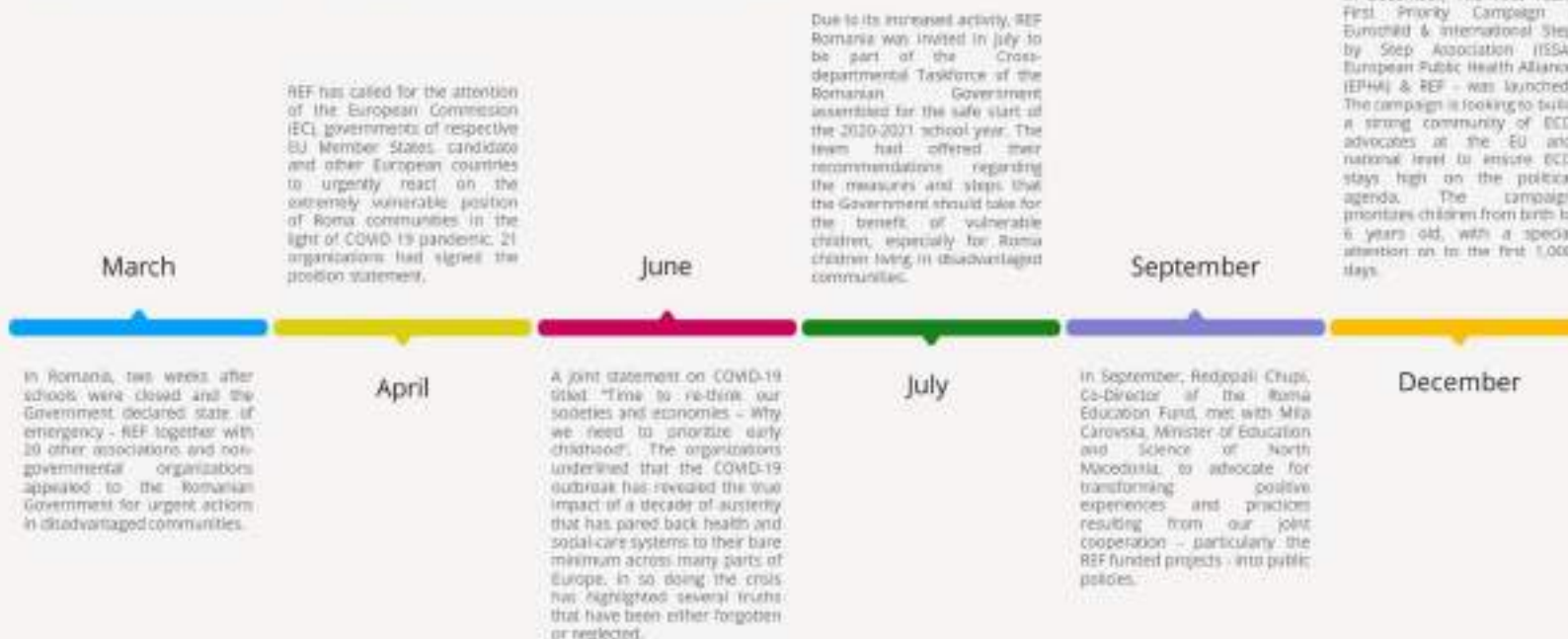


ADVOCACY

During the 2020 pandemic, Discrimination and Stigmatization increased in an alarming way. Roma people were often blamed for the spread of coronavirus, and too many times they were portrayed as scapegoats in the media and in public debates.

In response to this new harsh reality, REF intensified its advocacy campaigns by petitioning and urging international institutions and national governments from the countries where we implement our projects to take immediate measures to protect and support Roma citizens and vulnerable communities.

ADVOCACY TIMELINE FOR 2020



HUNGARY

- 3 In the context of the Debrecen Court of Appeals verdict on the case of Gyöngyöspata, which stated that Roma children's right to equal treatment was violated and that the victims deserve compensation, REF Hungary called upon the government to recognize the state's responsibility in providing quality education to all, in integrating school settings adhering to Hungary's legal frameworks, and the Roma Integration Strategy with its commitment to international regulations in education.



DESPITE THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC AND THE UNDERGOING REORGANISATION OF THE FOUNDATION, THE REF TEAM CONTINUED ITS ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS AND THE IMPLEMENTATIONS OF ALL THE ONGOING PROJECTS AND EVEN SIGNED NEW PARTNERSHIPS



CROATIA

In 2020, REF achieved an important success in **Croatia**, where the Government finally introduced, after years of advocacy campaigns, the new Roma curriculum. Sinisa-Senad Music, the Roma Education Fund's Country Facilitator in Croatia, has been involved in the drafting of the *Language and Culture of the Roma National Minority Model C curriculum*.

The Roma Curriculum allows children to attend extra classes for two to five hours per week, taught in their native language with the aim of preserving the language and culture of Roma in this country. The Language and Culture of the Roma National Minority curriculum puts value on innovative and interactive learning, incorporating cultural artefacts and digital media.



ONGOING PROJECTS IN 2020

CHAPTER 4





REF HUNGARY



Pedagogy Scholarship Program -
Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania,
and Slovakia

Funded by the
VELUX Foundations

REF HUNGARY



Shaping Academics and Employment
Skills for Young Roma (SHAPYK) in
Hungary, Romania and Slovakia

Funded by the
VELUX Foundations

REF HUNGARY



EU Regional Action for Roma
Education: Increased Education
Opportunities for Roma Students
and Roma Youth in Western Balkans
and Turkey

Funded by the
European Union

REF SERBIA



Education, Employment,
Partnerships and Gender Equality: A
Winning Formula for Roma in VET

Funded by
Austrian Development Agency

REF SERBIA



Employment, Empowerment of Young
Roma - Phase II

Funded by the German Financial
Cooperation implemented by RTW on
behalf of the German Government -
Ministry for Economic Cooperation and
Development.

REF SLOVAKIA



Mentoring and tutoring program for
Roma pupils in Banska Bystrica
district

Funded by Operational Program
Human Resources

REF SLOVAKIA



Mentoring and tutoring program for
Roma pupils in Prešov district

Funded by Operational Program
Human Resources

4



REF SLOVAKIA



Mentoring and tutoring program for Roma pupils in Bratislava District

Funded by Operational Program Human Resources

REF SLOVAKIA



Cherish to Have a Future

Funded by Operational Program Human Resources

REF ROMANIA



Formal and Non-Formal Education for Sustainable Development in the Centre Region

Funded by Operational Programme (OP) Human Capital

REF ROMANIA



Competence, Innovation & Professionalism in Education

Funded by Operational Programme (OP) Human Capital

REF ROMANIA



Together for a better life

Funded by Operational Programme (OP) Human Capital

REF ROMANIA



Misrecognition of Minorities in Europe

Funded by Volkswagen Foundation (new partnership)

REF ROMANIA



European Cooperation for Roma Inclusion / ECRRI

Funded by Erasmus + Youth and Sport Programme

REF ROMANIA



Creators of my project

Funded by Pepco company



2020 PROJECTS IN NUMBERS





WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR
STUDENTS AND WE FEEL
RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH AND
EVERY ONE OF THEM



SERBIA

A ROMA EDUCATION FUND SCHOLARSHIP
BENEFICIARY - MED SCHOOL GRADUATE

KRISTINA ASANOVIĆ

"I was enrolled at the faculty, majoring in Integrated Academic Studies of Medicine. Towards the end of my studies, I immediately started volunteering at the COVID clinic within the health centre, in July and August 2020. That coincided with my mandatory state internship which has lasted for 6 months. When the internship was over, I continued working at the Clinical Centre for COVID. (...) COVID, though a critical crisis, has been an accident which brought about a positive thing: the state has started to pay more attention to health. Some young people managed to get jobs in COVID clinics, whether in health centres or clinical centres".

4.1

TYPES OF REF SCHOLARSHIPS



Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program

RMUSP

is REF's largest tertiary scholarship scheme designed to facilitate access to tertiary education and to enable larger numbers of Roma to enter the labour market as mainstream professionals



Roma Health Scholarship Program

RHSP

has been running since 2008 in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and North Macedonia. The program will continue throughout 2022. The aim of RHSP is to provide support for medical studies through scholarships, mentorship, and advocacy training for Roma students.



Roma International Scholarship Program

RISP

RISP students receive financial support to study outside their home countries in Master's or Doctoral programs.



Law and Humanities Program

LHP

has been co-financed by REF and by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ) since 2007 and will continue through 2021. REF implements the scholarship program in cooperation with national partners in Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.



Specializations RMUSP 2019-2020	
• Pedagogy	116
• Engineering, Architecture	61
• Medicine	55
• Law	44
• Other	257

96.1%

GRADUATION RATE

FEMALE BENEFICIARIES - 57.5%

42.5% - MALE BENEFICIARIES



ROMA STUDENTS

	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021
RMUSP	573	738
RISP	18	15
RHSP	34	13
LHP	125	65
TOTAL:	750	831

PARTNERSHIPS FOR QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION

4.1

Central European University

Roma Education Fund partnership
with Central European University

- In the academic year 2020-2021
we had 27 students

RomaVersitas

222 Tertiary Students in Albania,
Hungary and Kosovo*
96.4% of them underwent training
courses (in Roma culture, digital
literacy, etc.)

- 87 mentors and tutors



EU Regional Action for Roma Education

Project "EU Regional Action for Roma
Education: Increased Education
Opportunities for Roma Students
and Youth in Western Balkans and
Turkey" (RARE)

- 68 scholarships
- 22 internships

Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government

Between 2018/19 to 2024/25, the Roma
Education Fund and the Blavatnik School of
Government are 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.



→ RMUSP ALUMNI



INTERNSHIP IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE

DÁVID KOVÁČ



SLOVAKIA

An internship at the Presidential Palace is the dream of many students who are interested in politics, international relations and public affairs. The opportunity to take part in the internship was offered to Dávid Kováč by the Roma Education Fund Slovakia.

Dávid is a young student at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and a Roma Memorial University Scholarship holder of the Roma Education Fund. Through the internship at the Presidential Palace in Bratislava Dávid gained rich experience and knowledge, which he will use in future studies and professional practice.

The Presidential Office of the President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová, made the internship of Dávid come true.

REF STUDENTS CREATE "ROMANES" LANGUAGE LEARNING APP

ARTUR IVANENKO



UKRAINE

Artur Ivanenko with his colleagues Nataliia Tomenko and Suzanna Ivanenko, Law and Humanities Scholarship Program (LHP) beneficiaries, received a small-scale REF grant to create a smartphone application that teaches the Romanes language.

"We started to discuss the issue as a destructive factor in the preservation of culture and its transmission to subsequent generations. During research, we found that the issue started to appear due to the fact that the Romani language is not a priority for study among the Roma of the 21st century. Thus, Roma youth do not have the opportunity to communicate among themselves using their native language, and do not have additional skills to communicate with Roma representatives at international events. That is why we came up with the idea to create an interactive educational product that will teach or increase the knowledge of the Romani language among young people"

SECONDARY EDUCATION & VOCATIONAL STUDIES PROJECTS

4.2



EU REGIONAL ACTION FOR ROMA EDUCATION: INCREASED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROMA STUDENTS AND ROMA YOUTH IN WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

The objective of the project is to promote equal participation in quality education for Roma children and youth at all educational levels (pre-school, primary, secondary, university and vocational), and to improve educational outcomes of Roma students, with a special focus on reducing the wide gap between male and female.

To improve Roma youth employability and smooth transition between the completion of studies and entering the labour market.

To encourage systemic durable change for Roma in the education sector by strengthening the capacities of relevant central and local institutions, through advocacy and research and through utilizing Roma role models as actors of change.



EMPLOYMENT, EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG ROMA – PHASE II

To provide practical support and effective mechanisms, such as training in particular sets of skills, necessary to combat discrimination and create conditions in which young Roma can access quality education and labour market and, therefore, greater employment opportunities.

The target groups are secondary school students, young Roma in need of employment, and young Roma returnee. The project has three components:

- Education,
- Employment,
- Educational Reintegration of Returnees



EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND GENDER EQUALITY: A WINNING FORMULA FOR ROMA IN VET

The activities and outputs of the project are focused on two specific outcomes: education and employability.

The primary target groups are up to 300 Roma beneficiaries (50% female) in both countries, as they would receive VET-related scholarships, training or employment.



THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS

VILLUM FONDEN X VELUX FONDEN

4.2



PEDAGOGY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This project aims to increase the number of female early childhood and kindergarten teachers of Roma origin in order to contribute to the employment of Roma in kindergartens and nurseries.

77 Beneficiaries
83,5 % Female
6,5 % Male
1 Summer Camp in Slovakia



In June 2020, 19 out of our 24 students who benefited from the Pedagogy Scholarship Program in Romania, co-financed by the Velux Foundations, successfully passed their baccalaureate exam. Only 5 students out of the 24 failed to take the exam. The disciplines of mathematics and logic created difficulties for them. But no one is willing to give up. They will try to take this exam in 2021. All applied also for a university degree.

"With the help of the program, I learnt to be more courageous, open, determined"

ZSOLT FURUS
BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

"The Pedagogic Scholarship program was a tremendous help, especially their English language tutoring, considering that I plan to continue my education in English. I learnt a lot with this project, thanks to you, and I want to express my gratitude."

She passed her exams with an average of 9.58 out of 10 points.



ANA MARIA CONSTANTIN
BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS

VILLUM FONDEN X VELUX FONDEN



SHAPING ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SKILLS FOR YOUNG ROMA – SHAPYR

Aims to increase the number of Roma gaining qualifications and graduating from vocational secondary education.

Number of Beneficiaries – 175

53,7 % Female

46,3 % Male

Language courses in English, Spanish and German

Soft skills training



My cultural background means a lot to me. As I am of Roma origin, I often have to do a lot more to meet the requirements and make my parents proud. If I could go back to the beginning of my studies, I would learn a profession, pass the language exam and apply for the Criminal Investigation program at the National University of Public Administration.

I also want to help others to become what they want to be even if there might be obstacles that hinder progress. I really enjoyed making new friends and participating in all the 2019-2020 SHAPYR workshops and programs. I'm proud to have become friends with them and other Roma young people, and I hope I will have the opportunity to be a participant of the program and the activities again in the 2020-2021 academic year.

What I would heartfully share with others: never give up on your dreams, don't let others to distract you from what you've been planning since you were a child, and you can achieve your goals, just fight for them. I wish everyone good luck."

GUSZTAV MÁTÉ
HUNGARY

YOUNG ADULT EDUCATION

43

SHAPYR

- 30 Beneficiaries
- Activities- language courses in English, Spanish and German; soft skills trainings on communication and job search; workshop on self-employment
- Specialties: electrician, cook, cosmetician, shop assistant, nursing;

EU REGIONAL ACTION FOR ROMA EDUCATION: INCREASED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROMA STUDENTS AND ROMA YOUTH IN WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

- 355 scholarships
- 63 internships
- 55 employment
- 113 tutors and mentors

PROJECT TITLE: EMPLOYMENT EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG ROMA - PHASE II



EDUCATION:

Number of secondary schools included in the project - 78
 Number of municipalities included in the project - 55
 Number of secondary school beneficiaries in this project - 176 (88F-88M)
 Number of students-beneficiaries who dropped out from secondary school - 2
 Number of mentors involved and trained - 92

EMPLOYMENT

Beneficiaries who completed vocational trainings - 350
 Beneficiaries who are still attending vocational trainings - 33
 Beneficiaries on internship practice - 170

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES

Number of organizations working with Roma returnees - 4
 Number of families included in the project - 234
 Total number of Roma children included in project - 464
 Number of After school classes of Serbian language and other school subjects for children in the age of primary school (including individual tutoring classes for higher grades 5-8th) - 3383
 Number of Roma parents attending info sessions - 211



 SERBIA

ROBERT KASUMOVIC

Serbia has a master's degree in pharmacy. He has done internship at a pharmacy during the first lockdown in 2020, secured by the project "Employment Empowerment of young Roma - Phase 2". The state of emergency in Serbia has significantly affected the area of employment, with most of the project interns requested to work from home. However, pharmacies continued to work, as well as Robert's involvement in providing protective sanitary equipment to his customers.



MONTENEGRO

SAMANTA BAJRAMI

A beneficiary of the mentoring program - "Increasing access and participation of Roma students in secondary education and transition to the labour market", funded by the European Union and implemented by REF, with NGO "Young Roma" as a local partner in Montenegro

Be patient, do not give up, everything will pay off one day because you are building your future".





ECEC AND PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECTS

4.4

4,066 BENEFICIARIES IN 8 COUNTRIES

A FIVE YEARS OLD BOY FROM KAKANJ

ABDULAH AGIC



BOSNIA &
HERZEGOVINA

Abdulah wants to become a doctor when he grows up in order to help his fellow Roma community members with whom he shares a destitute living in Varda. He became a regular visitor of the Toy Library immediately after it was set up in the kindergarten of the township, and he was absolutely fascinated by the new opportunities that had opened up for him. It wasn't long before the carers of the Toy Library found Abdulah to be displaying a rare gift for creativity, being one of the brightest young minds in his group. The staff instantly adored the child whose ability to communicate and to bond with anyone, whose modest and well-mannered behaviour, as well as sheer cleverness about almost anything suddenly rose him to the status of a Toy Library star attendant.

Once the schools were forced to shut down, Abdulah could not attend the Toy Library that he loved so much and play the games that seemed to have become an inextricable part of his life. The Roma support centre "Romalen" Kakanj had to come up with quick solutions that would allow children to remain focused on their education and to help them advance their skills and knowledge – online meetings. Abdulah joined the online group and in no time he became the unchallenged leader of his digital community, not to mention a full-time virtual activist.



TEACHERS PROGRAM

COMPETENCE, INNOVATION & PROFESSIONALISM IN EDUCATION



In 2018, REF Romania embarked on a new path and started to innovate by introducing new pedagogical strategies that make education qualitative, based on the learning needs and adapted to the contemporary developments.

The project aims to improve the skills of pre-university (preschool, primary and secondary) teaching staff and school managers in order to promote quality educational services tailored to the needs of children / pupils and an inclusive school in disadvantaged communities, with around 80% of the pupils being Roma.

The teachers program has an integrated, double-impact approach that includes both training opportunities (providing a training package to strengthen specific transversal skills, general and innovative and non-formal training, materialized through 11 types of training sessions) as well as mentoring and mentoring after training (offered throughout the project) so that in the target schools we can prepare teachers for the future society and support the children's aspirations.

Funded by the by the
Operational Programme(OP) "Human Capital"



10 SCHOOLS

In vulnerable communities, covering 3 regions in Romania



314 TEACHERS

involved in comprehensive self-development programs through training and mentoring, including online assistance during the period of the pandemic



66 SMALL GRANTS

provided for the Teachers in order to practice their pedagogical strategies and innovative methods, ensuring quality education



1 PLATFORM

A platform for best practices experience and sharing



45,000 TRAINING HOURS

Over 45,000 training hours and counting



40 TEACHERS REWARDED WITH SCHOLARSHIPS

following the performance they register with their pupils, both in terms of educational outcome, betterment and of fighting early school leaving among vulnerable/disadvantaged children



15 PEDAGOGICAL MENTORS

delivered tailored pedagogical support for the Teachers



5 SUPPORT GROUPS

Support Groups for initiatives in Education (SGIE)

COMMUNITY BUILDING

TOGETHER FOR A BETTER LIFE



REF Romania is one of the partners that are implementing the "Together for a better life" project.

The project's objective is to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion for 620 people living in the marginalized areas of Vărăști, Giurgiu county, a village with a significant Roma population by implementing integrated local development measures. The project was focused on a multisector approach, correlating and ensuring complementarity between investments in infrastructure and those intended for the development of human capital.

Funded by the by the
Operational Programme (OP) "Human Capital"

2020 Results & Outcomes Education REF Romania

39 beneficiaries

The ECEC educational services that continued online – around 10% of the total beneficiaries participated.

20 beneficiaries

Of education services for primary school. The support activities and remedial education continued online – around 10% of the total beneficiaries.

20 beneficiaries

Of education services for lower secondary. The support activities and remedial education continued online – around 50% of the total beneficiaries.

74 beneficiaries

Of parental support (out of total of 40) involved since the establishment of the service.



CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH 2020

THE RESEARCH REPRESENTS THE KEY FOR PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS OF REF OPERATIONS AND PRACTICES. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WAYS TO LEARN FROM OUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES AND INITIATIVES. QUALITY RESEARCH IS CRITICAL FOR GOVERNMENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCES OF ROMA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, AS WELL AS TO IDENTIFY THE POLICY GAPS IN THE SYSTEM THAT LEAD TO DISCREPANCIES OF QUALITY AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION.

REF RESEARCH IMPROVED THE ORGANIZATIONS INITIATIVES. ITS RESULTS AND LESSONS HAVE INSPIRED NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, OTHER NGOS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND ACADEMIA TO ACT AND DEVELOP BETTER POLICIES FOR ROMA.

REF ROMANIA, A PARTNER IN AN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FINANCED BY THE VOLKSWAGEN FOUNDATION ALONG SIDE A COALITION OF TOP UNIVERSITIES

MISRECOGNIZING MINORITIES IN EUROPE - THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY MINORITIES IN EUROPE

PARTNERS

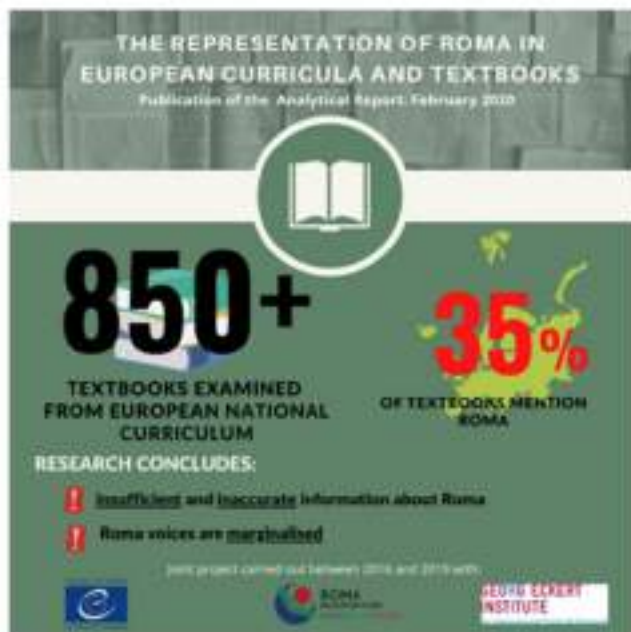
Bielefeld University (Germany), Amsterdam University (The Netherlands), Paris-Nanterre University (France), Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary), St. Andrews University (Scotland), Novi Sad University (Serbia), REF Romania.

OBJECTIVE

The project wishes to understand the experiences which give rise to the sense of misrecognition and, more particularly, the role that surveillance plays in this. Although surveillance is propagated to increase security, it can be perceived as a measure of misrecognition, and this may lead to a state of misrecognition. This approved extension project is going to see whether the misrecognition experienced by minorities in Europe, particularly Muslims in Western Europe and Roma people in Eastern Europe, is specifically increased by the COVID-19 pandemic context, and whether the trust in the authorities has been shaken.



CLAUDIU IVAN
REF RESEARCHER



TEXTBOOK AND CURRICULA RESEARCH

REF's report "Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks", published in 2020 in partnership with the Council of Europe and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, discovered that in most of the analysed textbooks Roma voices are marginalized, if not ignored, and only a few textbooks include sources from Roma authors or stories from Roma witnesses.

ROMA CIVIL MONITOR: TWO SYNTHESIS REPORTS

In 2020, REF guided the development of three annual monitoring reports. The reports from this third monitoring cycle focused on areas of Roma inclusion policies that have not been included or considered by the EU Member States.

REF supported the local monitoring NGOs in the form of providing guidance in policy analysis with a frame of Antigypsyism and monitoring.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY



REF HIGHER EDUCATION BENEFICIARIES ARE AMONG THE FACES OF THE NEW EU ROMA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2020



SEVDA HRISTOVA

Nurse in a cardiac surgery department in Sofia and a Roma Health Scholar

BENJAMIN IGNAC

Master of Public Policy
University of Oxford



SIMONA TOROTCOI

Roma International Scholar and a Global Teaching Fellow at Bard College Berlin

In 2020, the REF communication team launched a social media campaign using the hashtag

#Allinthisogether

During the entire year, we published stories about the emergency response to covid-19 actions, about our beneficiaries' needs but also about their resilience, involvement, commitment, kindness.

ROMA EDUCATION FUND PRESENTS



Solidarity in the face of a pandemic: Meet the REF-supported individuals and organizations making a difference



ROMA
EDUCATION FUND
Invest | Educate | Engage

FINANCIAL REPORT

CHAPTER 7

SOURCES OF FUNDS AND SPENDINGS OF REF

	REF SWITZERLAND	REF UGANDA	REF ROMANIA	REF SLOVAKIA	REF MALDOVIA	REF SERBIA
Opening fund balance	1,481,886	54,185	159,242	8,835	10,000	77,876
Revolving fund income	3,393,736	1,621,333	1,153,964	1,452,117	0	292,300
Others income	1,86,623	72,091	8,227	920	0	(242)
Total Sources	5,967,335	3,147,199	2,321,397	2,960,873	10,000	327,434
Transfers to non-REF projects		1,231,255	452,812	235,216	0	700,000
Write off REF CH loan at 2019 General			0			
TOTAL SOURCES WITH TRANSFERS	5,967,335	3,149,451	2,368,814	306,873	10,000	1,027,434
Operating expenses	482,029	0	0	176,229	0	187,619
Repayment of provisions for provisions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tertiary education program	3,816,091	76,872	17,880	8,876	0	0
Communications	33,546	58,734	0	0	0	0
Other educational projects	0	1742,333	1737,880	221,780	0	3,040
Capacity building Policy Development and implementation	4,720	144,875	0	0	0	0
Administrative expenses	141,888	723,560	0	0	0	362,234
Other projects	80,886	82,574	24,989	52,546	0	2,783
Provision for future projects & re-funding	33,021,142	0	0	0	0	0
Accumulated costs	844,182	788,489	871,402	6,646	10,000	471,760
Total Spending	5,834,389	2,972,913	2,368,814	306,873	10,000	1,027,434
Transfers to non-REF projects	0	1,76,255	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SPENDING WITH TRANSFERS	5,834,389	3,149,451	2,368,814	306,873	10,000	1,027,434

DONATIONS RECEIVED BY REF ENTITIES IN EUR 2016-2020

DONORS	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
RECEIVED BY REF SWITZERLAND						
CTU				8,953		8,953
St. Gallen Foundation		4,073				4,073
German Regional Office for Business Europe		4,376	2,686			7,062
SGL - Stiftung	263,080	263,080	263,080	336,783	791,700	1,215,499
St. Gallen	782	782	582	4,001		6,147
Rondell	96,000					96,000
SDA-Sonder	153,294	1,078,796	486,000	794,799	480,095	3,266,970
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	430,000	4,466,000
Open Society Institute	4,816,134	4,536,480	5,813,531	5,345,756	2,155,221	22,197,115
German Municipality	7,000					7,000
SW Development Fund	11,534	7,114	6,789	15,091		38,527
Swiss Bank (BPD)	27,840					27,840
Total received by REF Switzerland	6,945,126	6,625,324	7,421,466	7,303,346	3,369,016	31,404,613
RECEIVED BY REF ROMANIA						
CTD-Medical	81,621	154,073	13,749			249,443
CE-Fund 050		28,740	1,181	18,312		48,233
European Commission			1,054,400			1,054,400
Interpol	75,721	312,388	64,083	27,336		499,728
Inter	789,081	586,184	1,819,634	1,884,887	987,742	6,167,730
Bureau of Education Homologation	5,418					5,418
Ministry for Human and Economic Interchange	74,657	66,340	25,408			195,325
OSCE	55,001	48,483				103,484
Ref-Romania (BPD project)	8,101					8,101
The Index Foundation		397,662	889,420	140,080	140,024	1,914,186
Open Society Institute					2,274	2,274
Interpol, Interpol, Interpol, Interpol	6,432	7,484	6,432	3,732	777,758	713,758
Other donors (individuals)					75,000	75,000
Total donations from third parties	6,116,018	6,421,000	6,190,484	6,489,876	1,821,080	31,415,337
REF Switzerland	5,195,178	5,223,908	5,688,321	5,777,083	1,382,255	23,415,300
Total donations income	8,389,193	8,644,908	9,947,765	9,467,466	3,893,155	47,494,643
RECEIVED BY REF ROMANIA						
OSCE - SDI World for SDI		17,100				17,100
European Migration Service for R		8,100				8,100
Romanian Management Authority - REF 40 partner		1,075,582	325,288	81,378	74,077	1,556,325
Romanian Management Authority - REF 40 partner	1,886,038				1,022,766	2,908,804
REF and Ministry of Health	1,000,186	645,581				1,645,767
Other donors (individuals)	2,438	8,148	8,174	8,319	98,087	125,166
Total received by REF Romania	2,892,252	536,433	311,442	523,646	1,155,152	5,115,320
RECEIVED BY REF ROMANIA						
Ministry of Justice, Justice	12,000	18,000	96,366	72,817	143,217	344,222
Total received by REF Slovakia	12,000	36,000	96,366	72,817	143,217	344,222
RECEIVED BY REF SLOVAKIA						
Austrian Development Agency					230,000	230,000
Total received by REF Slovakia	0	0	0	0	230,000	230,000
TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED	18,882,189	8,489,194	11,128,712	8,486,781	4,768,383	46,575,463

BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2019 AND 2020

	REF SWITZERLAND		REF HUNGARY		REF ROMANIA		REF SLOVAKIA		REF MACEDONIA		REF SERBIA	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR
Current assets	0,166,770	5,657,316	877,531	1,122,888	1,001,770	947,127	118,871	94,280	10,000	10,000	20,836	218,765
Receivables	0	0	481	12,080	142,074	102,819	50,824	198,661	0	0	0	0
Loans to REF Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inventories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other current assets	0	0	35,480	34	0	0	1,254	1,280	0	0	0	218
Total current assets	6,166,770	5,657,316	713,226	1,122,888	1,173,781	946,541	702,255	917,387	10,000	10,000	20,836	218,765
Receivable Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Long term loan to REF Romania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accrued income	0	0	0	0	0	0	276,304	96,785	0	0	0	0
Intangible assets	0	0	271	99	0	0	0	0	0	0	89	1,187
Long term assets	0	0	35,391	18,700	15,090	38,684	0	0	0	0	0	25,778
Total long term assets	0	0	35,662	18,699	15,090	38,684	276,304	96,785	0	0	89	25,778
TOTAL ASSETS	6,166,770	5,657,316	748,888	1,141,587	1,188,871	985,225	978,559	1,014,172	10,000	10,000	20,925	244,543
Liabilities	7,700	6,607	671,180	200,238	86,187	98,634	38,290	27,683	0	0	0	1,122
Accrued expenses	66,660	80,758	8,381	87,770	0	0	888,798	903,660	0	0	0	0
Provisions for projects granted	1,607,294	5,088,400	0	0	0	0	66,774	26,946	0	0	0	0
Provisions for future projects	5,025,814	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accounts payable to partner	0	0	0	0	1,761	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loan from CSD and REF Switzerland	0	0	0	0	1,430,255	1,538,088	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funds raised	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other short-term liabilities related parties (OOR)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total liabilities and provisions	6,693,704	5,183,765	679,561	288,008	1,496,143	1,536,722	1,423,862	1,067,329	0	0	0	1,122
Foundation capital as of January 1	400,760	1,881,286	1,838,140	56,188	442,773	828,281	6,636	6,028	0	10,000	0	17,476
Excess of expenditures over income	1,078,610	487,285	1,733,681	762,628	316,790	148,038	18,878	22,254	10,000	0	30,641	846,389
Year-end transition difference	0	0	62,484	34,331	13,184	6,907	76,122	82,246	0	0	0	0
Foundation capital as of December 31	1,479,370	2,368,571	1,903,905	858,147	772,747	983,226	84,634	108,528	10,000	10,000	30,641	974,865
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL	6,166,770	5,657,316	748,888	1,141,587	1,188,871	985,225	978,559	1,014,172	10,000	10,000	20,925	244,543

REF TEAM & OFFICES

CHAPTER 8

LEADERSHIP

READ MORE ON
OUR WEBSITE
WWW.ROMAEDUCATIONFUND.ORG



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Co-director



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CLAUDIA LIXANDRU
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THANK YOU

FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND FOR YOUR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN OUR MISSION,
WHICH IS CLOSING THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES BETWEEN ROMA AND
NON-ROMA!

www.romaeducationfund.org

