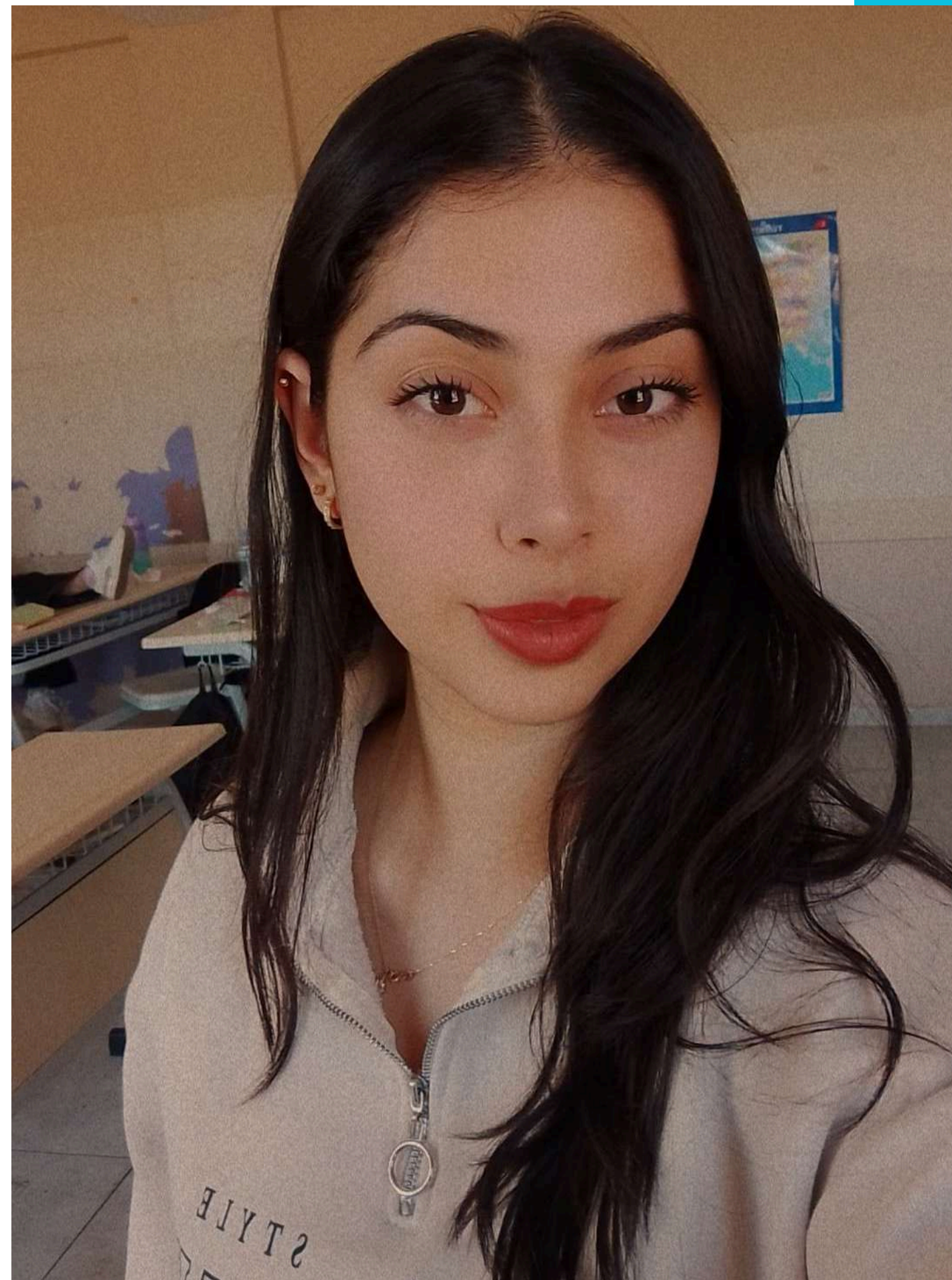


**EU REGIONAL ACTION FOR ROMA  
EDUCATION: INCREASED EDUCATION  
SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
ROMA STUDENTS IN THE WESTERN  
BALKANS AND TURKEY (RARE),  
PHASE II  
REPORT**

2024





The project is funded by the European Commission through the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and is implemented by REF Romania and REF Serbia

## ACTIVITY 1 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

### MONITORING VISITS IMPLEMENTED

- Early Childhood Development (ECD): 8 visits (Albania: 2, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1, Montenegro: 1, North Macedonia: 1, Kosovo: 1, Serbia: 1, Turkey: 1)
- Secondary Education (SEC): 10 visits (Albania: 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1, Kosovo: 2, Montenegro: 1, North Macedonia: 3, Turkey: 2)
- Tertiary Education (TER): 10 visits (Albania: 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1, Kosovo: 2, Montenegro: 1, North Macedonia: 3, Turkey: 2)

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOPS

Two online Project Implementation Workshops for IPOs were conducted via the Zoom platform:

- First Workshop: Held on February 26-27, with 41 participants from all 7 countries, including the entire project staff and IPO staff involved in project implementation.
- Second Workshop: Conducted on December 2, with 35 participants from 6 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Turkey).





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## ACTIVITY 1 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

### PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPED

Promotional materials were developed across 7 countries, including roll-up banners and other visibility items such as leaflets, and print and digital materials.

### ADDITIONAL UPDATES

- The kick-off event initially scheduled for November 2024 was rescheduled for April 2025
- Seven Country Facilitators were hired, one in each country across the Western Balkans and Turkey. The call for applications was published on February 19, 2024, and remained open until February 29, 2024.
- Cooperation with a partner organization from Montenegro ended after the first project year, which concluded at the end of July. A new call was launched to support the RARE project intervention in Montenegro across all 4 educational levels, with an application deadline of January 15, 2025.



## ACTIVITY 2. EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/ECD SERVICES

### ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

- **Call for Implementing Partner Organizations:** A call was published on May 31, 2024, for implementing partner organizations in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The focus was on expanding access to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) and primary school education for Roma children. The call remained open until July 14, 2024.
- **Eligible Activities:** The activities eligible for this initiative included access to quality ECD services, opportunities for outdoor activities and learning, child-focused education programs, parenting programs, enrolment of children in primary schools, digital learning, and advocacy and policy actions.
- **Applications and Selection:** A total of 16 applications were received. Out of these, 7 were selected by the Selection Committee and awarded sub-grants totaling 1,008,000 EUR (Year 1: 205,530 EUR; Year 2: 402,000 EUR; Year 3: 400,470 EUR).
- **Contracting for Academic Year 1:** Finalized in January 2024, with the project duration extending until July 31, 2024.
- **Contracting for Academic Year 2:** Initiated in October 2024, with the project duration extending until August 31, 2025.





## ACTIVITY 2. EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/ECD SERVICES

### ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

Expanding Access to Quality Early Childhood Development (ECD)

- **Children Supported:** At least 585 children aged 4-6 were supported in accessing quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) services and opportunities for outdoor activities and learning. The distribution was as follows: Albania – 60, Bosnia and Herzegovina – 63, Kosovo – 60, North Macedonia – 85, Montenegro – 122, Serbia – 159, Turkey – 40.
- **Parental Support:** Approximately 550 parents directly benefited from support facilitating enrolment in pre-primary and primary education institutions, as well as engagement in parenting programs and advocacy initiatives.
- **Workshops for Parents:** A total of 76 workshops were implemented for parents on various topics, including good parenting, digital skills, discrimination, and anti-gypsyism.
- **Outdoor Activities for Children:** More than 40 outdoor activities were conducted for children.
- **Workshops for Children:** Over 35 workshops were implemented for children.
- **Toy Libraries:** Developed 5 Toy Libraries.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Engaged 45 volunteers.
- **Advocacy Meetings:** Implemented around 10 advocacy meetings.



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## ACTIVITY 3. EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AND IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY

### COMPONENT INITIATION AND ACTIVITIES

- **Initiation:** The component was initiated in October 2024 in cooperation with 7 Implementing Partner Organizations (IPOs) that had previously implemented Early Childhood Development (ECD) activity sets in the first project year.
- **Eligible Activities:** The eligible activities for this component include outreach and enrolment, support for children enrolled in primary school, working with volunteers, establishing a network of primary schools and sharing lessons learned, digital learning, and advocacy and policy actions.
- **Working Plans and Outreach:** IPOs have developed working plans for the second project year and have initiated outreach activities.

### PROJECT GOALS

This component aims to support interventions that facilitate easier access to formal primary education institutions for 1,500 children by the end of the project.





# ACTIVITY 4. INCREASING PERFORMANCE AND EMPLOYABILITY OF ROMA SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

## ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

- **Call for Implementing Partner Organizations:** A call was published on May 31, 2024, for implementing partner organizations in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The focus was on increasing the performance and employability of Roma secondary school students. The call remained open until July 14, 2024, and was relaunched for organizations from Serbia on November 11, 2024.
- **Eligible Activities:** The eligible activities included scholarship support for 300 students (per academic year) in secondary education in the assigned countries, mentorship and tutorship support for Roma students in secondary education, targeted support for students in their final year of secondary education, establishment of alumni networks, soft skills training for employability, and training on digitalization.
- **Applications and Selection:** A total of 12 applications were received. Out of these, 7 were selected by the Selection Committee and awarded sub-grants totaling 945,000 EUR (3 years x 315,000 EUR).
- **Contracting for Academic Year 1:** Finalized in January 2024, with the project duration extending until July 31, 2024.
- **Contracting for Academic Year 2:** Initiated in October 2024, with the project duration extending until August 31, 2025.

## INCREASING PERFORMANCE AND EMPLOYABILITY OF ROMA SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Student Beneficiaries:** A total of 289 secondary education (SEC Edu) students benefited from the project in Year 1, distributed as follows: Albania – 51, Bosnia and Herzegovina – 51, Kosovo – 83, North Macedonia – 24, Montenegro – 10, Serbia – 10, Turkey – 60.

**Scholarship Support:** 253 SEC Edu students were supported with scholarships ranging from 350 to 500 EUR.

**Tutoring Support:** 37 SEC Edu students received tutoring from 18 tutors, with 159 individual and 16 group tutoring sessions conducted.

**Mentoring Support:** 235 SEC Edu students benefited from mentoring provided by 46 mentors, with 1,226 individual and 310 group mentoring sessions conducted.

**Soft Skills and Employability Training:** 210 SEC Edu students participated in 13 training sessions focused on soft skills and employability.

**Internship Opportunities:** 53 internship opportunities were provided.

**Alumni Meetings:** 10 alumni meetings were held, benefiting 64 SEC Edu students.

**Employer Engagement:** 9 meetings with employers resulted in 8 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the employment of 8 graduated students following their internships and graduation.





# ACTIVITY 5. INCREASING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF ROMA STUDENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO LABOR MARKET THROUGH EMPLOYABILITY

## ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

- **Call for Implementing Partner Organizations:** A call was published on May 31, 2024, for implementing partner organizations in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The focus was on increasing access and participation of Roma students in tertiary education and facilitating their transition to the labor market through employability initiatives. The call remained open until July 14, 2024, and was relaunched for organizations from Serbia, North Macedonia, and Kosovo on November 11, 2024.
- **Eligible Activities:** The eligible activities included scholarship support for 200 students (per academic year) in tertiary education in the assigned countries, mentorship and tutorship support for Roma tertiary students, establishment of alumni networks, soft skills training for employability, and training on digitalization.
- **Applications and Selection:** A total of 14 applications were received. Out of these, 7 were selected by the Selection Committee and awarded sub-grants totaling 735,000 EUR (3 years x 245,000 EUR).
- **Contracting for Academic Year 1:** Finalized in January 2024, with the project duration extending until July 31, 2024.
- **Contracting for Academic Year 2:** Initiated in October 2024, with the project duration extending until August 31, 2025.





# ACTIVITY 5. INCREASING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF ROMA STUDENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO LABOR MARKET THROUGH EMPLOYABILITY

## INCREASING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF ROMA STUDENTS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION AND TRANSITION TO LABOR MARKET THROUGH EMPLOYABILITY

- **Student Beneficiaries:** A total of 158 tertiary education (TER Edu) students benefited from the project in Year 1, distributed as follows: Albania – 41, Bosnia and Herzegovina – 16, Kosovo – 41, North Macedonia – 10, Montenegro – 10, Serbia – 10, Turkey – 30.
- **Scholarship Support:** 138 TER Edu students were supported with scholarships ranging from 800 to 1,000 EUR.
- **Tutoring Support:** 33 TER Edu students received tutoring from 11 tutors, with 193 individual and 5 group tutoring sessions conducted.
- **Mentoring Support:** 142 TER Edu students benefited from mentoring provided by 19 mentors, with 651 individual and 133 group mentoring sessions conducted.
- **Soft Skills and Employability Training:** 63 TER Edu students participated in 18 training sessions focused on soft skills and employability.
- **Internship Opportunities:** 12 internship opportunities were provided.
- **Alumni Meetings:** 15 alumni meetings were held, benefiting 89 TER Edu students.
- **Employer Engagement:** 6 meetings with employers resulted in 5 Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and the employment of 5 graduated students following their internships and graduation.





## ACTIVITY 6 CONTRIBUTING TO POLICY DIALOGUE AND REGIONAL BEST-PRACTICE EXCHANGES IN THE PROJECT COUNTRIES

### KEY MEETINGS AND MISSIONS

- **February 2024:** A joint mission was conducted with Clara Sanchez Pastor, the DGN key responsible for the RARE Project. The mission included meetings with implementing partners from seven projects, beneficiaries of tertiary education in Kosovo, and key officials such as Nazan Safci, Head of Division for Community Education Ministry of ESTI, and Habit Hajredini, Director of the Office of Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues.
- **April 2024:** A meeting was held with Mentor Alishani, the Rector of the University of Prizren, to facilitate the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Prizren and RomaVersitas Kosovo. The discussion focused on opportunities for joint activities for tertiary students.
- **November 2024:** A meeting was held in Belgrade with Enrica Chiozza, a representative of DG NEAR for Policy, Poverty, Inclusion, and Local Development. Members of REF Serbia, including Director Redjepali Chupi and Project Officer Ana Duraki, presented the project results, shared insights and practices from the regional approach, and discussed the perspectives of the Belgrade-based partner organization implementing field activities.





The project “EU Regional Action for Roma Education: Increased Education Support and Opportunities for Roma Students in the Western Balkans and Turkey (RARE), phase II” is funded by the European Commission through the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and is implemented by REF Romania and REF Serbia.

