

Toward Roma Inclusion

A Mapping of Roma
Education Initiatives in Central
and South-eastern Europe



Objectives

- To more clearly delineate successful initiatives in secondary and primary Roma education, suitable for further investment.
- To document initiatives that can be mainstreamed into government systems.
- To contribute to directing the efforts of organizations already working in the field.
- To suggest follow-up research and hone efforts in tackling challenges in scaling up initiatives.



Methodology

- Analysis limited to:
 - Primary and secondary Roma education.
 - Information mostly from ISSA, OSI, REF, and UNICEF.
- Initial desk review – eliminated countries with the least amount of activity and documentation.
- 2nd review and field trip to Hungary/Romania:
 - Meetings with approx. 11 stakeholders.
 - Reduced no. of initiatives from 30 to 6.

Methodology cont.

- Criteria for Assessment: Drawn up before 2nd desk review, 5 areas were identified:
 1. Design – structure and organization of initiative.
 2. Goals – the same focus areas as this report
 3. Approach – processes and strategies employed.
 4. Results – measurable outcomes
 5. Scaling-up – potential for replication or being turned into policy.

Desegregation Project - Vidin, Bulgaria

- Widely understood as successful.
- Endeavors to stimulate positive attitudes toward desegregation and successfully integrate all schools.
- Main components include providing transportation and educational support.
- Funded by REF & government; implemented by Roma NGOs and local schools and authorities.

Desegregation Project cont.

- Components, among others:
 - Work with parents, providing school materials & transportation, scholarships & tutoring, extra curricular activities.
- Successful results include: positive enrollment and retention numbers and state exam results.
- There are plans to intensify efforts in improving school performance.
- Now 10 desegregation projects; 7 supported by EU structural funds; similar projects in other countries.

Alliance for Inclusion of Roma in Education - FYRO Macedonia

- Goals: To improve transition & retention rates, school performance in mainstream secondary schools.
- Main components include providing scholarships and mentorship to Roma secondary school students.
- Grew out of a previous project piloted in 2004/05, new one to run from 2005/06-Sept 2009.
- Currently funded by REF; implemented by FOSIM, MoES, BDE, 78 schools.

Alliance for Inclusion of Roma in Education cont.

- Project attempts to address both access to and the quality of education.
- Successful results include:
 - 2007 98.5% of 4th year students in the program graduated.
 - 2006/07 On a scale of 1-5 ave. school performance increased from 3.19 form the year before to 3.30.
- Program has grown within Macedonia and similar programs are being run in Hungary and Romania.

Roma Education Program: focus on Roma Education Centers (RECs) - FYRO Macedonia

- RECs are a central component of the REP.
 - They primarily help facilitate transition from preschool to primary school.
 - Help develop academic and psychosocial skills of preschool Roma children in preparation for primary school.
- Grew from earlier work of FOSIM.
 - 4 centers recognized as best practice and were funded by REI.
- Since 2004 has been funded in part by USAID and is planned to run till 2010.

Roma Education Program: focus on Roma Education Centers (RECs) cont.

- RECs are a part of REPs comprehensive approach:
 - Changes inside and outside schools.
 - Parental participation.
 - REP as a whole had the investment of a broad array of stakeholders.
- RECs' preschool emphasis in language, math, and social skills, hygiene, and motivation to learn.
- Results are positive for both preschool and primary school children.

Phare Programme: Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups - Romania

- Endeavors to facilitate social inclusion of Roma by improving access to and quality of education.
- Interventions include: school renovation, teacher training, curriculum changes, Roma empowerment and more.
- This project was developed jointly by the MoERY and the EU Commission & has grown and changed since 2001.
- MoERY is financing the programme with matching funds from EU Phare.

Phare Programme: Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups

cont.

- Approach is holistic and community oriented—dealing with obstacles to education, within and without schools.
- The programme is documented as successful in meeting many of its goals.
- The programme was scaled-up considerably since 2001, political will is key to replication in other countries.
- There are plans to continue projects after funding runs out in 2009.

Equal Chances Projects - Serbia

- Two projects:
 - “Equal Chances-Integration of Roma Children and Youth into the Educational System”.
 - “Equal Chances in Secondary School” - till 2010.
- Endeavors to facilitate inclusion and improve quality of education in Nis and Kragujevac.
- Roma NGOs & the Center for Interactive Pedagogy have been the main implementers.
- Funders included Fund for Open Society Serbia, REI, Pestalozzi Children’s Foundation, MoES.

Equal Chances Projects Cont.

- Strategy concentrated in 3 areas: influencing policy, school level changes, direct collaboration of Roma.
- Comprehensive approach included:
 - Roma NGOs worked with school admin & ran workshops
 - Educational Social Justice Training for teachers
 - Step-by-Step methodologies
 - Roma Teaching Assistants (RTAs) were established
- Secondary education work was scaled up in Nis, Kragujevac, Novi Sad; RTAs to be increased.

Roma Education Initiative in Slovakia-Jarovnice-Karice Roma Settlement

- Main objectives were long-term integration and improving quality of education for Roma children.
- Preschool education in preparation for primary school is highlighted as a best practice.
- Implemented from 2003-05 by the Wide Open School Foundation, Roma NGOs, Roma parents and local schools.
- Funded by REI.

Roma Education Initiative in Slovakia Cont.

- To influence long-term integration the strategy was:
 - Providing quality preschool education
 - Changing local attitudes
- Multi-pronged approach:
 - Community approach - life-long learning
 - Step-by-Step methodologies & RTAs used in Jarovnice kindergarten
 - Home-based preschool program run by parents
- Step-by-Step programming and community centers are proved to be replicable.

Future Research

- More in-depth mapping of best practices.
- Research into managing/ influencing the lack of political will on the governmental level:
 - Tracking what happens to initiatives that are taken over from NGOs.
- Research into strategies on how to navigate changes in government.

