



# Good Practice in Using Structural Funds for Improving Educational Outcomes of Roma

## The Roma Education Fund

6 May 2009

Roma Education Fund



# What is the Roma Education Fund?

- The Roma Education Fund was established as part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015)
  - Work 14 countries, including in all New Member States as Decade signatories
- REF's objective is to reduce the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma children
- It has three major programs:
  - Project grants (160 to date)
  - Higher Education scholarships (800 a year)
  - Policy Development, Advocacy and Technical Assistance
- Total budget around 7 m EUR per year
- 17 Staff in Budapest office, 8 staff in country



# Overview of the Session

- Five different inputs from us:
  - Three different examples which use SF to:
    - Go from projects to policies (Bulgaria)
    - Scale up effective interventions (Romania)
    - Go from policies to local structural change (Hungary)
  - Monitoring and Evaluation in SF interventions
  - Increasing absorption capacity for SF



# Input 1: Going from projects to policies (Bulgaria)

– Anasztazia Nagy



# Desegregation in Bulgaria

- In 2000, Drom organization has started the process with OSI support , then in 2005 the REF took over the OSI's role:
- *10 desegregation projects in Berkovitsa, Kiustendil, Montana, Pazardzhik, Pleven, Plovdiv, Sofia, Sliven, Stara Zagora and Vidin.*

## **Components of the projects:**

### *Community work*

Busing of children

Working with parents ( training, clubs)

### *Academic support*

After school classes

Educational materials

Teacher training

### *Campaign activities*

- Media campaign

- Conferences

## **2008/09 academic year**

Total budget of the projects: 937 568 Euro

Number of beneficiaries: 2415

**Local authorities' contribution:** salaries of tutors, cost of busing



# Institutional Development

Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013 (OP HRD): The Priority Axis 4 – Improving the access to education and training has two priority areas:

4. 1. Access to education and training for disadvantage groups
4. 2. Children and youth in education and society

Call for proposals:

1. Creating favourable multicultural environment for the practical application of intercultural education and training

2008/09 academic year

Total budget approx. 7.8 millions Euro

50 000 Euro/ project

2. Making the school more attractive for young people

2009/10 academic year

Total budget: approx. 10.8 millions Euro

199 000 Euro/project



# Institutional Development

- Regarding the elaboration of these priority lines, the Deputy Minister of Education Ms Vitkova said at a press conference *‘The best practices of the Roma Education Fund were taken as bases for the elaboration of these priority lines, and we thank the Roma Education Fund for that.’*
- 2008/09 academic year: 5 projects were supported from Structural Funds with a total 174 100 Euro - 34.05%
- 2 new desegregation projects have started ( not REF grantees)
- 2009/10 academic year 9 Roma NGOs have applied for approx. 1`124`000 Euro



- Input 2: Scaling up effective interventions (Romania)
  - Mihai Surdu



# Learning Lessons and Scaling Up with Upper Secondary Scholarship and Mentorship Support

The intervention is a direct response to the early drop out of Roma in countries such as Romania, Macedonia and Serbia.

## Goals:

- to improve the retention and achievement rate of targeted Roma students enrolled in secondary education;
- to increase the number of Roma with completed secondary education as well as to improve the transition rate of Roma students from secondary to university education.
- to support excellence in education of Roma students.

REF scholarships are merit based, and there are mechanisms to continue or discontinue the grants, based on reports from mentors and on the GPA obtained by pupils.

## Diapositiva 9

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EJF8

Changed case for title

Eben Friedman; 06/05/2009



The mentorship component is the key component and it uses an individualized approach for each pupil.

The average ratio of pupils per mentor is 5:1 and the main lesson learnt is that the lower this ratio the higher the quality of the program

The mentors have the role in:

- helping students to increase their school achievements
- extracurricular activities
- strengthening of the school-parents relationships

From the evidence gathered over time the retention rate through the REF scholarship schemes is very high (over 95%).

The improvement in school achievement is significant for those pupils who benefited the program for at least 2 years.



- The secondary education scholarship program **scaled up in Romania** in Romania **with the support of European Social Fund (ESF)** under the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources.
- Using previous knowledge and lessons learnt from Macedonia and Serbia REF succeeded to leverage **5 million Euro** from ESF for extending the secondary scholarship for Roma nation wide in Romania
- In Romania, REF supported initially on a regional level 275 pupils with 25 mentors, for a four year project. Based on REF knowledge, support to project application design and a contribution of 500,000 Euro, a program in partnership with the National Agency for Roma and other NGOs won the competition for ESF funds in order to scale up the scholarship program for 800 pupils for a 3 year period.



- Input 3: Going from policies to local structural change (Hungary)
  - Orsi Szendrey



# Equal Opportunity-based supporting policy in public education / the Hungarian example

## GOALS:

- To prevent support for the maintenance of segregated schooling and for educational projects increasing inequalities
- To promote equity in education and access to quality education for multiple disadvantaged (Roma) children in all levels of public education from age 3 to 18
- To enforce an equal opportunity approach into every public education development project (ERDF, ESF projects and developments supported by national funds) even if they are not targeting disadvantaged groups directly
- To support the development and implementation of equal opportunity development measures, which are adjusted to local situations, problems and needs



## Equal Opportunity-based supporting policy in public education / the Hungarian example

### TOOLS:

- Public Education Equal Opportunity Situation-analysis and Action Plan must be elaborated by every school maintainer organisation
- ❑ condition of support from both EU and national sources (Public Education Act amendment 2007, 2008)
- ❑ based on the situation-analysis and action plan the proposed development project is evaluated by its potential impact on equity in education
- ❑ in case the project is accepted, the implementation of the Public Education Equal Opportunity Action Plan is a contractual obligation of the beneficiary
- Providing free consultancy on the elaboration of situation analysis and Equal Opportunity Action Plans through a network of trained equal opportunity experts
- Providing financial and professional support for the implementation of Equal Opportunity Plans through an ESF funded measure of the Social Innovation Operational Program (total budget: 50,000,000 EUR for 2007-2014)



# Equal Opportunity-based supporting policy in public education / the Hungarian example

## ACHIEVEMENTS:

- ✓ The network of public education equal opportunity experts: 101 trained experts by April 2008
- ✓ App. 1400 Public Education Equal Opportunity Situation Analysis and Equal Opportunity Action Plans with expert support
- ✓ The situation analysis and action plans have been used in the evaluation process of educational infrastructure and information technology development measures, as well as in the selection of public education innovation project proposals in 2008 and 2009
- ✓ Call for proposal of TAMOP 3.3.2 measure is published on April 30, 2008 to provide support for the implementation of equal opportunity action plans (budget: app. 12,000,000 EUR for 2007 – 2009)  
The 106 project proposals are currently in the evaluation process.



- Input 4: Effective monitoring and evaluation



# REF Monitoring and Evaluation

- Project Implementation Plans for systematic monitoring during the project
  - REF provides training on monitoring and evaluation to the grantees and potential applicants.
  - Focus on outcomes (did the student graduate?) not just outputs (did they enroll in school?)
  - Each project is monitored 1-2 times per year by the staff. Monitoring reports shared with the implementer. The monitoring could recommend a change in the course of action.
- Importance of using Roma organizations to gather data on Roma
- External evaluations for the projects over 200,000 Euro or with implementation over more than one year.
- The REF system of indicators grounded on the international literature on indicators.
  - Data on impact of REF interventions collected and updated yearly based on our indicators



- Input 5: Increasing absorption capacity
  - Toby Linden



# Increasing Absorption Capacity

- Expertise to Governments
  - Focus to date on Hungary and Romania
- REF's Revolving Fund
  - Responds to need for transitional funding to align funding flows with school year
  - 21 loans; 287,000 EUR leveraging 2.4 m EUR
  - Available to all Decade countries
- NGO Capacity Building
  - Through the 6 country facilitators REF is building the capacity of the Roma NGOs to use Structural Funds for solving educational issues.
  - REF's procedures such as PIPs, quarterly reports from the applicants and final reports contribute to capacity of the NGOs in project writing, reporting and implementation.
  - SF Transnational funding: Through our knowledge sharing program we are disseminating the knowledge and lessons learnt in one country to other countries from our portfolio (CEDEFOP catalogue).