



# **Advancing the Education of Roma in Slovakia**

## **REF Country Assessment - 2014**



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## Preface

This document is part of a series of Country Assessments produced by the Roma Education Fund (REF). It seeks to provide an analysis of education and the ongoing education reforms from the perspective of the inclusion of Romani children in the countries taking part in the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The document also reviews the different programs and activities REF has carried out since its establishment in 2005 and highlights the thematic and program areas on which REF plans to focus during the coming two years. In addition to serving as a tool for the Roma Education Fund's own programming, REF hopes that this document will offer a useful instrument for:

- Policy-makers seeking to improve education policies that address the education outcome gap between Roma and non-Roma.
- Civil society representatives who wish to improve the effectiveness of their educational programs by making them more relevant to the overall education reform of their country.
- The overall development and donor community, which needs to better understand the situation faced by Romani children in order to identify niche areas where available resources would produce the greatest impact.



## Acknowledgements

The original model for the Country Assessment series was developed by Tünde Kovács-

Cerović, Roger Grawe and Alexandre Marc, who also edited the series through the end of 2007. The current Country Assessment follows the new format developed by Toby Linden, Mihai Surdu and Eben Friedman in early 2009.

The main author of this document is Szilvia Németh. She received contributions from Nevsija Durmish, Beata Olahova and Stela Garaz.

## Executive Summary

### *Size Roma population in Slovakia*

According to the census of 2011 there are 105,738 Roma living in Slovakia, which is 2.0 per cent of the total population of 5 404,322 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> The Slovak census of 2001 indicated the size of Slovakia's Romani population to be 89,920, or 1.7 per cent of the total population. But, even with this slight increase, the 2011 census shows considerably lower Roma population than the non-official statistical projections that yield a range of 320,000 to 435,300.<sup>2</sup>

Project called ATLAS of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013<sup>3</sup> collected information on different types of settlements: on segregated settlements, settlements on the edge of town/village, residential concentrations inside the town/village, Roma living dispersed among majority population (estimates) and information on the village/town with presence of Roma settlements. Estimates indicate population of 402,840. So the share of Roma according to the ATLAS 2013 is 7.45 per cent, from which 187,285 (46.5 percent of Roma population) lives mixed among majority; 51,998 (12.9 percent) Roma live in settlements inside the municipality; 95,971 (23.8 percent) Roma live in settlements on the edge of the municipality; 68,540 (17.0 percent) of Roma population live in segregated settlements.<sup>4</sup>

### *National Roma Integration Strategy – framework for action*

By 2014 it can be stated that there is a document that tried to summarize all priorities and goals of all previously written strategic materials, the National Roma Integration Strategy. Its priority areas are: education, employment, health, housing, financial issues, inclusion, non-discrimination, and also targeting majority population. The topic of education is introduced as a first priority dimension of the Strategy. The authors of the Strategy highlight that the Slovak system of education needs a comprehensive reform relying mainly on a massive increase in the schooling of children of “marginalized Roma communities” aged 3 years and over in preschool

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<sup>1</sup> For more details see Appendix 5 of the present paper.

<sup>2</sup> For more on demography of Roma in publications of Demographic Research Centre, see: <http://www.infostat.sk/vdc/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> Project financed by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family within the framework of the cost-sharing program between UNDP and the Ministry.

<sup>4</sup> Atlas, 2013.



facilities; developing and implementing desegregation standards in schooling, which should respect the principle of social interaction of Roma and non-Roma children; and developing specific models of school integration and creating an inclusive educational environment.<sup>5</sup>

The global goal of educational transformation is to improve access to quality education including the early childhood, elementary, secondary and university education with removing possible segregation at schools; prevent premature termination of school attendance and ensure a smooth transition from school to employment, bridge gaps in the educational level of Roma and the rest of the population.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Necessary intervention-points, weaknesses of the education of Roma*

The period considered in this country assessment i.e. the years between 2010 and 2013/2014, did not have major legislative transformation of public education. The legal framework had been set so the attention had to be shifted from policy making toward implementation. The implementation process was backed by creating a list of indicators and necessary actions in the National Roma Integration Strategy. Two years have been passed since the acceptance of this Strategy but from the standpoint of quality education for Roma, still significant weaknesses characterize the current system of education in Slovakia. These are the following:

- Participation of Roma children in preschool education is still lagging behind the European average, especially the participation rates of some of the surrounding countries.
- Roma's educational achievements continue to be far below those of non-Roma, regardless of how these are measured.
- Continued systemic overrepresentation of Roma in special education, the number of children taking part in special education does not decrease.
- Segregation between Roma and non-Roma in standard as well as special education, whether resulting from residential segregation or decisions by school authorities.

#### *Strategic directions for future REF activities*

Taking into account the situation described above, REF project grant funding in Slovakia will reflect on priorities that do not overlap with the ones of the Government of Slovakia whose national projects focus on programs and courses in primary schools for pupils from marginalized Roma communities, social services offered in large network of existing and newly built community centers offering non-formal education such as literacy and adult education, as well as actions addressing the long-standing problem of overcrowded facilities and building container schools in communities with high representation of Roma. Instead, over the next two years, REF's work will focus on promoting desegregation and integration of Roma in education in communities currently not under support of governmental initiatives.

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<sup>5</sup> Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020. Bratislava, December, 2011.

National Roma Strategy, p.28.

<sup>6</sup> National Roma Strategy, p.29.



REF should reflect on the following priorities in Slovakia in order to address the remaining weaknesses of the current education of Roma in Slovakia:

- Promoting access to Early Childhood Education and Care services for children from the age 0 to 3.
- Promoting preschool enrolment of children, increasing access to quality preschool, supporting preschool attendance from age 3 onwards.
- Continuation of providing secondary and tertiary education scholarship support.
- Continuing the prevention-activities from wrongful enrolment of Romani children in special education through measures including but not necessarily limited to provision to parents of comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for children's further education and employment, preschool education and after-school support in the early years of primary education.

#### *REF research and policy analysis priorities*

Major themes of REF's research and policy activities in Slovakia will include:

- Policy analysis on the results of the Slovak whole-day school project regarding Roma children.
- Collecting and monitoring good practices of inclusive education in Slovakia, producing case studies,
- Reviewing the possibilities of introducing innovative pedagogical-methodological teaching and learning techniques in desegregated schools, and the possibility of introducing creative educational forms in primary education and vocational training.
- Publishing of guidelines for tutoring and mentoring in secondary scholarship program.

## **2. The Romani Population in Slovakia**

### **History and population size**

The first written mention of a Romani presence in Slovakia dates from the early fourteenth century and establishes that Roma were already familiar to the non-Romani population.<sup>7</sup> Whereas official measures aimed at Roma in Slovakia before 1945 ranged between assimilation and elimination, Romani-peasant relations seem to have stabilized under Habsburg rule, and then deteriorated gradually as Roma were displaced economically as a result of changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. During the Second World War, the nominally independent Slovak state concentrated Roma in large settlements, which subsequently became a major target of policies aimed at bringing about assimilation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Emília Horváthová, *Cigáni na Slovensku: Historicko-etnografický náčrt [Gypsies in Slovakia: Historico-ethnographic Outline]* (Bratislava: Vydateľstvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1964); Zuzana Kollárová, "K vývoju rómskej society na Spiši do roku 1945 [On the Development of Romani Society in Spiš before 1945]," in Arne B. Mann (ed.), *Neznámi Rómovia: Zo života a kultúry Cigánov-Rómov na Slovensku [Unknown Roma: On the Life and Culture of Gypsies-Roma in Slovakia]* (Bratislava: Ister Science Press, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> Anna Jurová, *Vývoj postavenie Rómov na Slovensku a otázky ich "integrácie" do spoločnosti*



The largest sub-ethnic group of Roma in Slovakia are the Slovak Roma (sometimes called *Servika Roma*), who account for approximately two-thirds of the country's Romani population and live throughout the country, with the largest concentrations in the east. Hungarian Roma (*Ungrike Roma*), who form the second largest group, live primarily in the southern regions of the country. Smaller groups in Slovakia are Vlach Roma (*Vlachika Roma*) and *Sinti*, with members of the latter group generally considering themselves distinct from Roma but regarded as Roma by non-Roma in general as well as by Roma. A majority of Roma in Slovakia speak some form of Romanes, with the Eastern Slovak dialect most common.

According to the census of 2011 there are 105,738 Roma living in Slovakia, which is 2.0 per cent of the total population of 5 404,322 inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> The Slovak census of 2001 indicated the size of Slovakia's Romani population to be 89,920, or 1.7 per cent of the total population. But, even with this slight increase, the 2011 census shows considerably lower Roma population than the non-official statistical projections that yield a range of 320,000 to 435,300.<sup>10</sup>

Project called ATLAS of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013<sup>11</sup> collected information on different types of settlements: on segregated settlements, settlements on the edge of town/village, residential concentrations inside the town/village, Roma living dispersed among majority population (estimates) and information on the village/town with presence of Roma settlements. Estimates indicate population of 402,840. So the share of Roma according to the ATLAS 2013 is 7.45 per cent, from which 187,285 (46.5 per cent of Roma population) lives mixed among majority; 51,998 (12.9 percent) Roma live in settlements inside the municipality; 95,971 (23.8 percent) Roma live in settlements on the edge of the municipality; 68,540 (17.0 percent) of Roma population live in segregated settlements.<sup>12</sup> According to ATLAS 2013, what differentiates the segregated settlements from the ones on the edge of the municipality is the distance in which they are located (a segregated settlement is located at least 900 m to 7 km away from the nearest settlement of a municipality).<sup>13</sup>

The problem of residential segregation is more severe considering UNDP findings that the majority of Roma remain in their municipality of origin, meaning that Roma living segregated and separated are still more "attached" to the place of their birth. If the Roma population does relocate, this is most often only one time and within the municipality itself.<sup>14</sup>

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[Development of the Position of Roma in Slovakia and of the Question of their "Integration" into Society], *Ethnologia actualis slovacica* 1, no. 2 (2000); Ctibor Nečas, Pronásledování Cikánů v období slovenského státu [Persecution of the Gypsies in the Period of the Slovak State], *Slovenský národopis* 36, no. 1 (1988); *Českoslovenští Romové v letech 1938-1945 [Czechoslovak Roma in the Years 1938-1945]* (Brno: Masarykova Univerzita, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> For more details see Appendix 5 of the present paper.

<sup>10</sup> For more on demography of Roma in publications of Demographic Research Centre, see:

<http://www.infostat.sk/vdc/en/>.

<sup>11</sup> Project financed by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family within the framework of the cost-sharing programme between UNDP and the Ministry.

<sup>12</sup> Atlas, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Prvé výsledky ATLASU rómskych komunít na Slovensku 2013 [http://www.minv.sk/?atlas\\_2013](http://www.minv.sk/?atlas_2013)

<sup>14</sup> Report on the living conditions of Roma households in Slovakia 2010. UNDP Europe and the CIS, Bratislava Regional Centre, 2012. p.12.



## General situation of the Romani population

### *Poverty and unemployment*

While there is no official ethnically disaggregated data on employment of Roma<sup>15</sup>, however, statistical data from district levels compared to maps of municipalities with Roma population indicate that it is in the counties with a high number of Roma citizens where the unemployment rate is highest<sup>16</sup>. Unofficial data on Roma unemployment from the last 5 years make it clear that the number of unemployed Roma in the Slovak Republic grows systematically; and that the Roma population represents a significant chunk of the long-term unemployed in the Slovak Republic.<sup>17</sup>

UNDP 2010 report analyzed the declared economic activity of respondents aged 15 and more, it became clear that the unemployed constitute the largest group within the Roma population aged 16-64: 72 percent of Roma men and 75 percent of Roma women are unemployed.<sup>18</sup> In an identical survey using identical methodology 20 percent of Roma men and 11 percent of Roma women claimed they were employed. The World Bank<sup>19</sup> used the same methodology and found statistically identical results: 71 percent of unemployed Roma men and 75 percent of unemployed Roma women. The employment rate of Roma men peaks at 20 percent, while Roma women level at 12 percent.

According to the regular Labour Force Survey of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, by 2014 the number of unemployed people is with 120,000 more than in 2008. In 2008 there were 258,000 citizens officially registered as unemployed, while there number by 2014 has increased to 378,000.<sup>20</sup>

The FRA survey<sup>21</sup> also finds high unemployment rates for the Roma in Slovakia. In most Member States, the number of Roma saying that they are unemployed is at least double than the number of non-Roma; in Slovakia, up to 4 to 5 times more Roma than non-Roma said they are unemployed. So app. 34 percent of respondents aged 20 to 64

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<sup>15</sup> Zuzana Kusá summarized the problems regarding the lack of unemployment data of Roma as follows: “Statistics on unemployed and minimum income recipients does not survey their ethnicity. Reporting ethnicity of unemployed and minimum income recipients (based on attribution of ethnicity by officials) was prohibited in the late 1990s due to the pressure from human rights organisations and Council of Europe and this condition has been supported by the new antidiscrimination legislation of the first half of 2000s. In effect, collection on ethnicity is considered to be ‘prohibited’ by most of governmental bodies nowadays.<sup>26</sup> According to many experts, there is unintended but systematic exclusion of Roma communities living in segregated rural areas and destitute urban concentrations from representative surveys, such as Labour force Survey and EU-SILC.<sup>27</sup> Thus, these key social surveys are not fully representative for poorest population living in destitute neighbourhoods that are often separated or segregated from the majority population” In: Zuzana Kusá: Promoting the Social Inclusion of Roma. A Study of National Policies. The Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences Bratislava, July, 2011. p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> See monthly data at: <http://slovak.statistics.sk/>

<sup>17</sup> Roma strategy of Slovakia, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Regional Survey of Marginalized Roma, UNDP/World Bank

<sup>19</sup> Regional Survey of Marginalized Roma, UNDP/World Bank

<sup>20</sup> [www.slovak.statistics.sk/nezamestnanost](http://www.slovak.statistics.sk/nezamestnanost)

<sup>21</sup> Roma at a glance. FRA, 2012. p. 19.





considered themselves as unemployed compared to 8 percent of non-Roma. UNDP analysis of 2010 data highlights that the measured level of unemployment of the Roma population is significantly higher (up to seven times higher) than in the surveyed geographically close general population; on the basis of self-declaration of unemployment this even more.<sup>22</sup>

UNDP/World Bank/EC data on unemployment reveal that the unemployment rates reported for Roma women is on average one third higher than those for Roma men, much higher than the gap between non-Roma men and women.

### *Health*

Several reports on the state of Roma population in Slovakia indicate that since 1990 the overall health status of the Roma population has been deteriorating. The Roma Strategy of Slovakia states that poor living conditions in segregated Roma settlements and in regions with a high concentration of Roma population, as well as the very low health awareness contribute to a frequent occurrence of infectious diseases. Certain indications suggest that illnesses such as hepatitis and bacillary dysentery present a serious problem for many Roma communities. Serious problems affecting Roma are also infections of the respiratory apparatus. Lack of hygiene gives birth to illnesses such as scabies and pediculosis (lice).<sup>23</sup> According to UNDP survey half of the Roma population (51 percent) reported that they had to interrupt their daily activities as a consequence of common health problems – they had to stop going to work, school or had to stop performing other common daily activities.<sup>24</sup>

Estimated birth-rates of the Romani population in Slovakia vary widely, but have in common that they place the number of live births among Roma well above the corresponding figure for non-Roma.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, infant mortality rates in Slovakia are approximately twice as high for Roma as for non-Roma.<sup>26</sup> According to the Roma Strategy of Slovakia the infant mortality in the Roma population is as high as 18 percent, compared to the 14.6 percent in non-Roma population.<sup>27</sup>

### *Housing*

According to the socio-graphic mapping of Romani settlements undertaken in 2013, in the mapped settlements there are 21,168 dwellings of Roma, out of which 47 percent of “lower standard.” There are 33.7 percent of all dwellings that are not registered on cadastre; they are unfinished bricked or wooden houses, shacks or

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<sup>22</sup> UNDP, 2012, p.16.

<sup>23</sup> Roma Strategy of Slovakia, p.34.

<sup>24</sup> UNDP, 2012, p.14.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Vladimír Srb, Plodnost vdaných žen podle národnosti a věku v Československu podle sčítání lidu 1991 [Fertility of Married Women by Ethnicity and Age in Czechoslovakia According to the 1991 Census], *Slezský sborník* 93 (1995); Michal Vašečka, “Rómovia [Roma],” in Miroslav Kollár and Grigorij Mesežnikov (eds.), *Slovensko 2000: Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti [Slovakia 2000: Summary Report on the State of Society]* (Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Anna Jurová, “Slovenská spoločnosť, zdá sa, ešte stále nie je pripravená na riešenie rómskej otázky [It Seems that Slovak Society is Still Not Ready to Resolve the Romani Issue],” interview by Kristína Magdalenová in *Romano nevo ľil*, 30 September 2000; Dena Ringold, *Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends and Challenges* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Roma Strategy of Slovakia, p. 34.



caravans. Water pipeline can be used by 73 percent households, (59 percent households in practice use it, 24 percent households use (also) its own well, 11 percent households is without access to running water or use non-standard sources); 45 percent dwellings in settlements are not connected at all to sewage, cesspool or domestic wastewater treatment equipment.<sup>28</sup> UNDP data<sup>29</sup> show that in the great majority of Roma households (92 percent) electric energy was the main source of lighting, however the access to electrical energy was often interrupted and also for longer time periods: nearly 30 percent of them did not have electricity for two months, 12 percent had to live without electricity for three months, more than a third of Roma households with an interrupted supply remained without electricity for four or more months.

An illustration of the level of material deprivation of Roma households can be taken from EDUMIGROM research conducted in 2010 in two Slovak districts with ethnically mixed inhabitants. Its results show that Roma households were much worse equipped than non-Roma households: the variable “quality of housing” was constructed from these items: whether the flat/house has toilet, bathroom, density and heating. 41 percent of Roma households were very poorly equipped comparing to 12 percent of non-Roma households.<sup>30</sup>

### *Representation*

Romani political representation in Slovakia is still weak, although in the elections of 2012 Peter Pollak became the first Roma representative in the Slovak Parliament. Roma also lack representation at the regional level, but participate in some municipal elected bodies.

The Slovak government established an Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities (initially called the “Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of Citizens Who Need Special Care”) in 1995. Since 2012 Peter Pollak is the head of the plenipotentiary office. The goals of the work of the Plenipotentiary Office is to improve educational attainment, access to education and to vocational training of Roma people, improve living conditions of Roma communities, increase their legal awareness, increase the active participation of Roma in public life and governance, using their human and professional potential, support conducting scientific studies on Roma communities, actively participate in international projects aimed at improving the lives of Roma communities.<sup>31</sup> The Office is the main Slovak coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. It takes up tasks relating to the revised National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015, 2011 – 2015, and it is also responsible for tasks relating to Roma integration strategy of the Slovak Republic for 2020.

Roma parties, alliances started to emerge in the 1990’s, but they remained rather powerless organs. For example Rómska iniciatíva Slovenska (RIS) was established in

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<sup>28</sup> Atlas 2014, p.

<sup>29</sup> UNDP, 2012, p.11.

<sup>30</sup> Zuzana Kusá., David Kostlán, Jurina Rusnáková: *Community Study Report*. EDUMIGROM 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Hlavné úlohy splnomocnenca vlády SR pre rómske komunity, [http://www.minv.sk/?ulohy\\_usvrk](http://www.minv.sk/?ulohy_usvrk)



1996 failed to get into the Parliament, or Strana Rómskej únie na Slovensku participated in the parliamentary elections of 2012 but without massive support. Roma alliances or parties could not win Parliamentary elections but local elections in 2010 brought huge success for Roma candidates in eastern Slovakia. In Roma-dominated settlements like Jarovnice, Podhorany and Svinia Roma mayors were elected.



### 3. Government and Donor Commitments

#### Government institutions

##### *Overall legal framework*

The Slovak Constitution both prohibits discrimination against members of “national minorities” and “ethnic groups” and guarantees them rights including education in their own language.<sup>32</sup> In similar fashion, the School Law adopted in 2008 lists “the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and especially segregation” as a fundamental principle of education and guarantees the right to education in the mother tongue to “children and pupils belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups.”<sup>33</sup> Anti-discrimination legislation<sup>34</sup> adopted in 2004 prohibits discrimination in social services and employment on the basis of nationality or ethnicity while allowing for affirmative measures to neutralize disadvantage related to racial or ethnic origin. In October 2005 the Constitutional Court declared the provision on positive measures linked to disadvantaged people of certain racial and ethnic origin to be unconstitutional. The comprehensive amendment of the Act in 2008 reflects the decision of the Constitutional Court and introduces very specific examples of temporary positive measures intended for the elimination of disadvantages linked to racial and ethnic origin, national or ethnic minorities, sex, age and disability, e.g. creating equal opportunities in access to employment and education through special preparatory programmes, spreading information, and other measures.<sup>35</sup> The original version of the Act enumerated forms of integration of pupils with special educational needs in primary and secondary schools.<sup>36</sup> The amendment of 2008 did not make any changes in provisions regarding this topic.

##### *Measures targeting Roma*

As noted in REF’s 2010 Country Assessment,<sup>37</sup> the Slovak governments in the last decade produced a large number of strategic documents aimed at the country’s Romani population, but the implementation had often been lacking. Rather than apply a program consistently, Slovak authorities repeatedly drafted what they presented as new policy priorities and called for new pilot projects to reflect those priorities. Above all - it agreed with the analysis of the REF’s 2007 Country Assessment<sup>38</sup> that - implementation of the Roma Decade actions in Slovakia had suffered from the instability within the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary (this office was the main coordinator of the actions.).

<sup>32</sup> *Ústava Slovenskej republiky [Constitution of the Slovak Republic]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 1992), Articles 33-34.

<sup>33</sup> *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of 22 May 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008), Article I.3.d; I.12.3.

<sup>34</sup> *Zákon č. 365 z 20. mája 2004 o rovnakom zaobchádzaní v niektorých oblastiach a o ochrane pred diskrimináciou a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov (antidiskriminačný zákon) [Law No. 365 of 20 May 2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas, on Protection Against Discrimination and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws (Anti-discrimination Law)]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004), Article I.5.1, I.6.1, I.8.8.

<sup>35</sup> European Anti-discrimination Law Review No. 6/7 – 2008, Slovakia. <http://www.non-discrimination.net/content/media/LR-6%2B7-SK-1.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> *Zákon c. 365*, , Article XV.6.

<sup>37</sup> REF Country Assessment – Slovakia, p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> REF Country Assessment – Slovakia, p.



By 2014 it can be stated that there is a document that tried to summarize all priorities and goals of all previously written strategic materials, the National Roma Integration Strategy. According to the introductory part of the document the Strategy is a result of collaboration between the Office for the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma communities, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), the Open Society Foundation (OSF), the Association of Cities and Municipalities of the Slovak Republic, and various non-governmental organizations. Its priority areas are: education, employment, health, housing, financial issues, inclusion, non-discrimination, and also targeting majority population. The topic of education is introduced as a first priority dimension of the Strategy. The authors of the Strategy highlight that the Slovak system of education needs a comprehensive reform relying mainly on a massive increase in the schooling of children of “marginalized Roma communities” aged 3 years and over in preschool facilities; developing and implementing desegregation standards in schooling, which should respect the principle of social interaction of Roma and non-Roma children; and developing specific models of school integration and creating an inclusive educational environment.<sup>39</sup>

The global goal of educational transformation is to improve access to quality education including the early childhood, elementary, secondary and university education with removing possible segregation at schools; prevent premature termination of school attendance and ensure a smooth transition from school to employment, bridge gaps in the educational level of Roma and the rest of the population.<sup>40</sup>

Its partial goals are: to increase the participation of children of marginalized Roma communities and socially disadvantaged in pre-primary education from approximately 18 percent (in 2010) to 50 percent by 2020; improve motivation, school results and attendance of Roma children in elementary schools and ensure that upper grades of the elementary school and lower secondary education was reached by 100 percent of all schoolchildren; increase the proportion of Roma students who reach secondary education (ISCED 3A, 3B 3C) to the level of general population of the Slovak Republic, which means devoting targeted attention to children to marginalized Roma communities and socially disadvantaged at the time of their transfer from elementary to secondary schools and support the improvement of grades at high schools, set up adequate financial support; improve the care of pedagogical staff and specialists and increase the proportion of teachers and specialists fluent in Romani (local community dialect); exercising the right to education in a Romani language or to learning the Romani language; address problematic issues of education and upbringing in special schools and school facilities, including school consultancy and prevention services; improve the process of diagnostics and placement of children into the system of special education and remove the reason for unjust placement of children into this system.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020. Bratislava, December, 2011. National Roma Strategy, p.28.

<sup>40</sup> National Roma Strategy, p.29

<sup>41</sup> National Roma Strategy, pp 28-30.



The National Roma Integration Strategy becomes the basic document for planning the EU Structural Fund's sources for the programming period of 2014-2020 regarding Roma integration processes.

Besides becoming one of the main contributors to the national Roma Strategy the plenipotentiary office in 2012 launched a complex reform package, called "The right way – Roma Reform."<sup>42</sup> Since its introduction 10 main principles have been elaborated, one of which focuses on education. According to the document school must be available for all children, slightly mentally handicapped should remain in mainstream schools instead of going to special schools, and inclusive/integrating education should be supported.

### **Donor-funded programs**

Since Slovakia's entry to the EU, Structural Funds have become a major donor of developmental processes and projects aiming Roma communities. Planning the use of these European financial sources is not just a question of money allocation but it shapes the priority issues of the national developmental processes for a certain time-period. That is why it was of an utmost importance that while defining the strategy of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) (2007-2013) the topic of marginalized Roma communities was defined as one of the four horizontal priorities.<sup>43</sup>

The purpose of each horizontal priority was to ensure the achievement of its defined target, which is related to several priorities of the NSRF.<sup>44</sup> All horizontal priorities were reflected in the operational programmes and centrally coordinated through sponsors of the horizontal priorities. Within issue of marginalized social groups, the specific issue of marginalized Roma communities (MRC) was highlighted. Its purpose was to strengthen cooperation and to achieve more effective coordination of activities and of financial resources aimed at improvement of living conditions of the members of these communities. The support for marginalized Roma communities was planned to be focused on four priority areas: education, employment, health, living, and three related problem spheres: poverty, discrimination and gender equality. The tools aimed at achievement of these purposes were "individual projects" (demand-oriented projects) and a "complex approach to solutions of MRC problems," which was applied in some of the operational programs.<sup>45</sup>

On the political level, the person responsible for the Horizontal priority Marginalized Roma Communities (HP MRC) was the Deputy Prime Minister for knowledge-based society, European affairs, human rights and minorities and for coordination the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities was responsible.

### *Projects under Operational Programmes within NSRF (2007-2013)*

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<sup>42</sup> Srávna cesta – Romská reforma, <http://www.minv.sk/?romskareforma1>

<sup>43</sup> Four horizontal priorities were defined in the NSRF: marginalized Roma communities, equal opportunities, sustainable development, information society.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.nsr.sk/sk/horizontalne-priority/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.nsr.sk/en/horizontalne-priority/marginalizovane-romske-komunity/>



A call entitled “Programmes and Courses for Pupils from Marginalized Romani Communities,” issued in February 2009 under the Operational Programme Education for 2007-2013, led to funding through the Ministry of Education for 50 school-based projects with an average project budget of approximately EUR 168,000.<sup>46</sup> Forty-one of these projects, were based in standard primary schools, with the remaining nine implemented by special primary schools.<sup>47</sup>

At the national level, a project entitled “Education of Pedagogical Workers in the Inclusion of Marginalized Romani Communities” (MRK1) began its implementation in 2011. The main project activity was in-service teacher training. The lead implementer was the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre in Prešov, with the EUR 18.3 million allocated for the project administered by the Ministry of Education.

Another national project, led by the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre in Prešov “Inclusive educational models of preschools” (MRK2) was launched in February 2013 (will end in 2015) with 110 kindergartens, funded by the EU with 16 million EUR. The aim of the project is to strengthen inclusive practices of preschools and widen the pedagogical-methodological knowledge of their educators.

Based on the experiences of these two national projects, a new one, called PRINED, was introduced in May, 2014. The project with its budget of 16 million EUR, will employ 250 pedagogical assistants at 200 primary schools and 50 kindergartens in order to provide individual support for children being at risk of getting into special education.<sup>48</sup>

In the autumn of 2011 funding of municipal-level projects started through the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary. Municipalities were required to develop multi-sectorial local strategies, supported by the Roma Institute, the main Slovak partner of the Project Generating Facility established in the framework of the OSF initiative “Making the Most of EU Funding for the Roma.” Between 2011 and 2013 151 complex local strategies were accepted, financed and monitored.

In 2013, the Ministries of Education, Interior and Finance have created a jointly funded scheme to pilot a project that would address the long-standing problem of overcrowded school facilities in communities with high representation of marginalized Roma. The project is run by the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary which has selected 3 Roma settlements where container schools will be built. 200,000 EUR is allocated from the state budget for each container school and 20,000 EUR from other funds are also earmarked for the school equipment in each school. The Office selected another 15 Roma settlements where these containers are planned to be built by the end of 2014.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> This call was one of thirteen issued to date in Slovakia under the Operational Programme Education for 2007-2013. The average funding per project for all projects funded under the thirteen calls was approximately EUR 501 000.

<sup>47</sup> Of the 432 projects funded under the thirteen calls, a total of 20 projects were based in special primary schools for children with mental disability, such that the nine projects implemented by special primary schools which were funded under the single Romani-specific call account for 45 percent of all projects financed by EU Structural Funds in special primary schools in Slovakia.

<sup>48</sup> <http://peterpollak.sk/aktuality/metodiciko-pedagogicke-centrum-predstavuje-novy-projekt/>

<sup>49</sup> <http://peterpollak.sk/aktuality/kontajnerove-skoly-stavaju-v-dalsich-troch-obciach/>



By the end of 2014, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary in cooperation with 54 municipalities launched an EU funded project that will have 54 newly built community centers to provide social services to contribute to the social inclusion of Roma. The project budget is 11.1 million EUR.<sup>50</sup>

The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary has just recently announced to have received 300 million EUR by the EU for the period of 2014-2020, to implement projects that will focus on finding a solution to the social and cultural needs of extremely unfavorable Roma communities.<sup>51</sup>

The EU also provided EUR 1.9 million for the multi-country project “A Good Start,” which was implemented by REF in Slovakia in partnership with local NGOs Equalizing Opportunities, Regional Association of Romani Initiatives (KARI), Cultural Association of Roma of the Slovak Republic (KZRSR), as well as with the International Step by Step Association and the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre Bratislava – Regional Branch Prešov (MPC). The project, which targeted over 500 children aged 0-6 and their families in four localities in Slovakia, began in June 2010 and ended in June 2012. The objectives of the project were to improve early childhood education and care for Roma children to enhance their school readiness and subsequent life opportunities and to scale up access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children.<sup>52</sup>

Since January 2013 until December 2014, a Progress project, led by the plenipotentiary office in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund, SGI, and J-PAL has been focusing on early childhood education and care services. The project is working with approximately 525 children from ages zero to six and 315 mothers in accessing early childhood education and care services in 21 different locations in the southern part of Slovakia. It will measure the impacts and progress against a predetermined set of indicators in order to analyze if the methodology being used is effective in raising the competencies of the children as well as their primary caregivers. The project seeks to empower families, especially women, through a program called Your Story. Your Story is a program that uses literacy as a tool for empowerment through the reading of children’s books. This process engages women in the context of the stories as well as simultaneously emulating a teaching method that they can replicate later in their own homes.<sup>53</sup> The overall budget of the project is 746,916 EUR.<sup>54</sup>

The Education program of Open Society Foundation in Slovakia also focuses on connecting and networking various stakeholders in the field of education. It facilitates discussions, experience sharing and international cooperation. It emphasizes on supporting marginalized groups of children, mainly from excluded Roma communities, and identification of exit strategies from their situation. The program target group includes experts in education, parents of the students, representatives of the state and public administration, self-governments, schools – teachers and students,

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<sup>50</sup> <http://peterpollak.sk/aktuality/na-slovensku-bude-do-konca-roka-2014-novovybudovanych-54-komunitnych-centier/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://peterpollak.sk/aktuality/eu-dala-dalsiu-sancu-slovensku-a-zaroven-aj-romom/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/activities>

<sup>53</sup> REF Annual Report 2013. p.35.

<sup>54</sup> For more detailed description of the project see Part 5: REF in Slovakia.





NGO experts in education. Combining the capacities of the education experts from various environments will have synergic effect and carry out reform in the Slovak educational system. Education program implemented a wide spectrum of activities supporting transformation of educational system towards inclusive module and environment as a part of open, multicultural and just system. In 2012, a research project Benefits of Inclusion in education was carried out, with its results published in a study *Segregation or Inclusion of Roma in Education: A Choice for the Schools?* Other grants for the supporting education projects for Roma (2012 - 2014) were awarded under different grant schemes within OSF BA, such as the Equal Opportunities Program (supporting advocacy activities) and EEA/Norway Financial Mechanism.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs have launched a 1,36 million EUR project in 2012<sup>55</sup> with the goal to increase the quality of life of Marginalized Roma Communities. It will extend the social and education services through development and equipment of 10 community centers located in 10 cities and villages throughout Kosice and Presov. By the end of 2013, 10 Community Centers have been established, providing a wide range of preschool education services, tutoring and health awareness programs to 7,000 children, as well as training of 101 employees of the Centers.

The Swiss-Slovak cooperation program has provided 150,719 EUR for promoting community development through community service centers in selected locations of the Presov region.<sup>56</sup> These fund are planned for establishing a new community center in the locality Presov – Stara tehelna; 4 community centers to provide free-time, leisure, educational activities and social consultancy services to 100 adults and 300 children and adolescents; to increase the capacity of at least seven workers of the community centers by external trainings and supervision; and to organize at least 15 events in the communities in order to increase the participation of inhabitants to communal activities.

Other donor institutions which have supported NGO projects aiming at the inclusion of Roma in Slovakia include the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, and the United States Embassy. No precise data are available on total annual investments in the education of Roma in Slovakia. On the other hand, the level of coordination and sharing of information among donors active with Roma in Slovakia is relatively high.

## 4. Education System

### Governance structure

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<sup>55</sup> [http://www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch/slovakia/en/Home/Projects/Approved\\_projects\\_in\\_detail?projectinfoID=210992#form2](http://www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch/slovakia/en/Home/Projects/Approved_projects_in_detail?projectinfoID=210992#form2)

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.bgsfm.sk/en/block-grant-for-ngos/supported-projects-ngos/63-developing-communities.html>



The latest Education Act, approved in 2008, created legislative space for implementation of content reform of regional education. According to the Act the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic remained the central body of the state administration for pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education, educational facilities, lifelong learning, science and technology and of the state care for youth and sports. Within the area of its competence the Ministry establishes budget and profit-making organizations, supervises and evaluates their activities. The Ministry manages schools and school facilities at the territory of the Slovak Republic through generally binding rules, by providing vocational guidance to all founders; it administers the network of school and school facilities in the Slovak Republic.

At local level the school state administration is realized through municipalities and higher territorial units, which secure activities implied their founder competencies. Higher education institutions are legal entities and their organization and activities are decided by the bodies of academic self-government in compliance with the Act on higher education, as amended by subsequent provisions.<sup>57</sup>

Key central institutions under the Ministry of Education include the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Psychopathology, the State Institute of Vocational Education, the State Pedagogical Institute and the State School Inspectorate. The Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education is primarily responsible for gathering and processing data on education. Tasks of the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Psychopathology include conducting research and developing diagnostic tests of scholastic ability. The State Institute of Vocational Education is responsible for coordination, research and methodology in Slovakia's network of secondary vocational schools. The State Pedagogical Institute's competences include curriculum development, pupil performance assessment and preparation of pedagogical materials, whereas the State School Inspectorate is responsible for oversight of school management, quality of education and facilities. Although located in Eastern Slovakia, the Roma Education Centre within the Prešov Regional Branch of the Methodological-Pedagogical Centre Bratislava serves as a national-level institution providing methodological guidance and materials for meeting the needs of Romani pupils.

Regional School Offices located in each of Slovakia's eight self-governing regions are responsible since 2008 for establishing and abolishing special schools, as well as Special Pedagogical Advising Centres and Centres for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention. Both Special Pedagogical Advising Centres and Centres for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention (formerly "Pedagogical-Psychological Advising Centres") administer diagnostic tests, offer counselling and provide referrals necessary for enrolment in special education. Methodological-Pedagogical Centres located in Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Prešov and Trenčín provide in-service teacher training and general methodological support.

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[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Organisation\\_and\\_Governance](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Organisation_and_Governance)



## Financing

Public funds for education are funds from the public budget comprising the state budget, municipal budgets and budgets of higher territorial units. Its position, function and drawing up are regulated by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 253/2004 of the Law Code on budgetary rules of public administration. The Act No. 597/2003 of the Law Code on financing primary schools, secondary schools and school facilities has put in place normative financing per pupil, starting from 1 January 2004. The school financing is based on normative principle; the schools are financed according to number of pupils and personnel and economic demands of educational process.<sup>58</sup>

From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, the financial resources for education from the state budget have been allocated from the budget chapter of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic to the schools, in which the education is considered as systematic training for profession in the founder competence of higher territorial units; and from the budget Chapter of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic to the schools, in which the education is considered as systematic vocational training in the founding competence of the municipality, church founder, private founder and district office in the seat of the region; to the kindergartens for children with special education needs in the founder competence of the district office in the seat of the region, ; to the school facilities in the founder competence of the district office in the seat of the region.<sup>59</sup>

From own taxes of municipalities and higher territorial units are funding kindergartens, basic schools of art, language schools and school facilities in the founder competence of the municipalities and higher territorial units; kindergartens, basic schools of art, language schools and school facilities in the founder competence of church and private founders.<sup>60</sup>

As shown in *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012*, published by the European Union's education agency (Eurydice), total public expenditure on education in Slovakia as a percentage of GDP was in 2011 lowest among all EU-27 countries, at a mere 3.6 percent, while the EU average was 5.1 percent. In terms of annual expenditure per one full time equivalent pupil/student in 2008, Slovakia was also lagging considerably behind the EU average of 5,430 EUR. Slovakia occupied also the lowest position in terms of share of staff expenditures within total annual expenditure in public education. About 58 percent of total expenditures went to education employees' salaries, compared to 60 or 70 percent in other EU countries. In the school year 2011/12, the average annual gross salary of teachers, in Euro purchasing power standard (EURO PPS), reached a mere 13,925 Euros in Slovakia, which was the fourth-lowest sum in the EU.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding\\_in\\_Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding_in_Education)

<sup>58</sup> [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding\\_in\\_Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding_in_Education)

<sup>59</sup> [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding\\_in\\_Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding_in_Education)

<sup>60</sup> [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding\\_in\\_Education](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Slovakia:Funding_in_Education)

<sup>61</sup> Kalman Petocz: Education in Slovakia: No Consensus on Fundamental Principles.  
<http://visegradrevue.eu/?p=1614>



In September 2013, teachers' unions organized a one-day warning strike at all types of schools in Slovakia. Approximately 90 percent of primary schools joined the strike. The Slovak teachers' trade unions claimed that the announced increase by EUR 16.6 million on state budget on education included EU funding as well. So if the EU's contribution was deducted, the budget for 2013 was EUR 7.85 million lower than in 2012. Trade unions worried that this would be reflected in teachers' salaries, as these, similar to overhead costs, could not be financed within EU-funded projects.<sup>62</sup>

### *Per-pupil normative support*

Slovakia's system of financing primary and secondary education is mostly based on a per-pupil formula, with school funding determined mainly by the size of the per-pupil norm and the number of pupils in the school. Per-pupil funding in Slovakia consists of a salary norm and an operational norm; whereas the salary norm includes wages, insurance and employers' contributions, the operational norm covers most running costs for school infrastructure and per-pupil costs for teaching.<sup>63</sup> Per-pupil costs for teaching are in turn calculated on the basis of various parameters, including school type, personnel demands, form of study, and language of instruction.<sup>64</sup>

Per-pupil funding in Slovakia tends to be considerably higher for special education than for standard education. For example average per-pupil funding for special primary schools was approximately 1.6 times the average for standard primary schools.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, per-pupil funding for a special class in a standard primary school is 1.75 times that for an otherwise identical standard class in the same school. The norm provided for individual integration of children with special needs in standard classes, on the other hand, is 2.5 times the standard norm.<sup>66</sup> Although higher funding levels for the education of children with special needs have potential to improve

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<sup>62</sup> <http://chalkboard.tol.org/slovakia-cut-education-spending-to-give-more-money-to-schools/>

<sup>63</sup> *Zákon č. 597 z 6. novembra 2003 o financovaní základných škôl, stredných škôl a školských zariadení* [Law No. 597 of 6 November 2003 on Financing Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> *See Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 630/2008 z 10. decembra 2008, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre školy a školské zariadenia* [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 630/2008 of 10 December 2008, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Schools and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> *Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 2/2004 z 17. decembra 2003, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre základné školy, stredné školy, strediská praktického vyučovania, základné umelecké školy a školské zariadenia* [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 2/2004 of 17 December 2003, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Practical Training Centers, Secondary Art Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004).

<sup>66</sup> *Ministerstvo školstva Slovenskej republiky, Smernica č. 11/2006-R z 25. mája 2006, ktorou sa mení a doplňa smernica Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej socialistickej republiky z 5. júla 1985 č. 7496/1985-20 o základnej škole v znení smernice Ministerstva školstva, mládeže a telesnej výchovy Slovenskej socialistickej republiky z 28. augusta 1989 č. 8119/1989 -20 a smernice Ministerstva školstva Slovenskej republiky z 13. júla 2000 č. 1074/2000-41* [Directive No. 11/2006-R of 25 May 2006, Modifying and Amending Ministry of Education of the Slovak Socialist Republic Directive No. 7496/1985-20 of 5 July 1985 in the Wording of Ministry of Education, Youth, and Physical Training of the Slovak Socialist Republic Directive No. 8119/1989 of 28 August 1989 and of Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic Directive No. 1074/2000-41 of 13 July 2000] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo školstva Slovenskej republiky, 2006).



education outcomes, as explained below in the section on special education, Slovakia's normative funding system creates incentives for recruiting Romani children into special education regardless of their actual needs.

These data in tables below show that operation of special institutions is much more expensive for the state as a maintainer than mainstream education. The amount of the normative support for special schools and kindergartens is increasing year by year.

2013	Normative support for salaries	Normative support for teaching-learning process	Normative support for teachers' in-service trainings
Primary schools	926.07	34.18	13.89
Special primary schools	1,431.78	45.62	21.48
Special kindergartens	2,783.21	63.20	41.75

Table: Normative support for 2013 in EUR<sup>67</sup>.

2014	Normative support for salaries	Normative support for teaching-learning process	Normative support for teachers' in-service trainings
Primary schools	963.77	34.71	14.46
Special primary schools	1,490.08	46.32	22.35
Special kindergartens	2,877.70	64.26	43.17

Table: Normative support for 2014 in EUR<sup>68</sup>

### Facilities

School facilities in Slovakia are owned by their founders. In the case of standard public primary and secondary schools, school founders are mainly municipalities, but schools can be founded by self-governing regions, regional school-offices, churches, private legal entities and individuals as well. The founders of special public primary and secondary schools, on the other hand, are Regional School Offices, making for potential conflict of interest between standard and special schools. Field research commissioned by REF in 2008 revealed that conditions in school facilities vary by school size and region, with larger schools and schools in Western Slovakia generally better off than smaller schools and schools in Central and Eastern Slovakia.<sup>69</sup>

Despite an overall decline in the number of children in the education system, demands on school infrastructure are on the increase in many localities inhabited by marginalized Romani populations. Particularly problematic is the condition of facilities located in or near Romani settlements, with the condition of infrastructure in satellite facilities in such locations tending to be considerably poorer than in main

<sup>67</sup> [file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Normativy\\_na\\_rok\\_2013\\_v\\_euro.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Normativy_na_rok_2013_v_euro.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.socutrhoviste.sk/aktuality2014/normativy2014.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Eben Friedman, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Martina Kubánová, and Martin Slosiarik, *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).



school buildings located further from Romani settlements. A minority of schools also physically separate Romani pupils from non-Romani pupils in inferior conditions within the same building.<sup>70</sup>

### **Education cycles and progression criteria**

Preschool education, which is aimed at children between the ages of three and six, is not mandatory in Slovakia, and offerings at this level of education vary considerably from one locality to the next despite the existence of mechanisms for providing preschool education free of charge to children from families in need (the last year in kindergarten is free of charge but meals should be paid by parents.). Primary education covers grades one through nine and is divided into two cycles, with the first covering grades one through four and the second grades five through nine.

All children enrolling in primary school are assessed for school-readiness, with assessment methods varying from one school to another. If the findings of the assessment raise doubts about a child's ability to succeed in school, those administering the initial assessment refer the child for testing by a Centre for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention. Recommendations for Romani children assessed as not being ready for school at age six include deferral of school attendance for a year, enrolment in a zero grade and enrolment in special education. The most frequent solution for non-Romani children assessed as not school-ready, deferral of school attendance is the least frequent solution for similarly assessed Romani children.<sup>71</sup> More common is enrolment in zero grades housed in standard primary schools and created for non-school-ready children from a socially disadvantaged environment who have reached age six by 1 September of a given year.<sup>72</sup> Integrated into the Slovak state education system in 2002, zero grades divide the material from the curriculum for the first year of standard primary education into two years with an eye to preparing children for entry into standard primary school classes. By way of contrast, preparatory grades in special primary schools for children with mild mental disability deliver simplified material and tend to serve as the beginning of a career in special education.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Jana Tomatová, *Na vedľajšej koľaji: Je proces zaradovania rómskych detí do špeciálnych základných škôl znevýhodňujúcim činiteľom? [Sidetracked: Is the Process of Enrolling Romani Children in Special Schools a Disadvantaging Factor?]* (Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, 2004).

<sup>72</sup> *Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 2/2004 z 17. decembra 2003, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre základné školy, stredné školy, strediská praktického vyučovania, základné umelecké školy a školské zariadenia [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 2/2004 of 17 December 2003, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Practical Training Centers, Secondary Art Schools, and School Facilities]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004); *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of 22 May 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> *Nadácia Milana Šimečku, Desegregácia - za akú cenu? Možnosti desegregácie slovenského školstva vo vzťahu k rómskym žiakom [Desegregation - At What Cost? Possibilities for the Desegregation of Slovak Education in Relation to Romani Pupils]* (Bratislava: Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 2007); *Vyhľadávka Ministerstva školstva, mládeže a športu Slovenskej republiky č. 212 z 10. apríla 1991 o špeciálnych školách [Public Notice of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport of the Slovak Republic No. 212 of 10 April 1991 on Special Schools]* (Prague: Sbíрка zákonů České a Slovenské federativní republiky, 1991); *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of 22 May 2008 on Education (School Law) and*



Admission to secondary schools is decided at the level of the individual school; whereas secondary grammar and technical schools administer entrance examinations, many secondary schools which do not prepare pupils for higher education accept all applicants with completed primary education. Secondary grammar and technical schools also administer end examinations (*maturita*), as do some vocational secondary programmes. Admission to institutions of tertiary education depends on a program-specific entrance examination.

School attendance in Slovakia is mandatory for ten years or until age sixteen, whichever comes first. For this reason, pupils who repeat a grade in primary education generally complete mandatory education while still in primary school.

### **Special education**

According to official data, in the 2013-2014 school year there were 41 special kindergartens, 179 special primary schools, 65 special classes in standard primary schools, and 110 special secondary schools serving children with special educational needs,<sup>74</sup> from which 155 special primary schools are for children with mild mental disability. Special educational institutions were visited by 34,188 children and nearly 5000 teachers were working there (4,562 as full time employees and 442 people as part time teachers).

Official data also indicate that there are only 520 Roma accounted in special institutions and classes in this school year from all pupils.<sup>75</sup> However, a previous field research commissioned by REF and conducted on a statistically representative sample, yielded estimates that Roma accounted for approximately 60 percent of the total number of pupils enrolled in special primary schools, special classes in standard primary schools and special secondary schools on the territory of the Slovak Republic in the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>76</sup>

According to international data from 2011, special school attendance in Slovakia is still on the increase, and so is school segregation. Over one third (36 percent) of Roma children are reported to be in all or mostly Roma classes, and 12 percent of Roma pupils are reported to be in special schools. While only 6 percent of Roma over the age of 30 attended special schools, the rate stands at 11 percent among pupils who are currently of schooling age: in other words, in the space of approximately a generation, Roma's attendance rate of special schools has more or less doubled.<sup>77</sup>

An alternative to enrolment in a special school or class is individual integration in a standard class with teaching materials and methods adapted to the needs of the

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*on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws*] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, "Štatistická ročenka školstva 2013-14 [Statistical Yearbook of Education 2013]," available at online at <http://www.uips.sk>.

<sup>75</sup> Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, "Štatistická ročenka školstva 2013-14 [Statistical Yearbook of Education 2013]," available at online at <http://www.uips.sk>.

<sup>76</sup> Eben Friedman, Elena Gallová Kriglerová, Martina Kubánová, and Martin Slosiarik, *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009).

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9669\\_file1\\_policy-advice-on-the-integration-of-roma-in-the-slovak-republic.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9669_file1_policy-advice-on-the-integration-of-roma-in-the-slovak-republic.pdf), p.27.



pupil.<sup>78</sup> In practice, however, Roma rarely access this option, with reasons for this including insufficient parental information as well as a preference among standard schools for non-Roma and for children with diagnosed physical rather than mental disabilities, insufficient training of teachers for working with individually integrated pupils with special educational needs and the financial interest of segregated special schools in keeping their pupils.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, the wide gap between standard and special curricula severely limits possibilities for (re-)integration of children from special schools and classes to standard education.

Pupils who complete primary education in special schools or classes have two options for secondary education: special technical schools (*odborné učilištia*) and practical schools. Whereas the former train mentally disabled (as well as non-disabled) pupils who have completed grade nine or the required number of years of schooling in a trade, the latter are intended for mentally disabled graduates of special primary schools who were not accepted to or who failed out of special technical schools.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, while the vocational certificate awarded graduates of special technical schools allow them to work only under the supervision of more highly skilled workers, the only formal employment opportunities available to graduates of practical schools are in special workplaces established for persons with mental disability (*chránené dielne*).

Slovakia's 2008 School Law stipulates that no child may be placed in special education on the basis of social disadvantage and that no child may be placed in special education without the informed consent of the child's legal guardian, with the director of a special school accordingly required to inform the child's legal guardian of all educational options available to the child being considered for enrolment in the special school. While it is too early to assess the practical impact of these provisions, early indications are that their effect has been minimal.

### **Multicultural education**

Public primary education in Slovakia is offered in Slovak, Hungarian, Ukrainian and English languages. Although most Roma in Slovakia speak Romanes as a first language, Romani pupils most often attend instruction in Slovak in the country as a whole, attending instruction in Hungarian in areas near the border with Hungary. Institutions in which Romanes is taught include the Joint Conservatory and Secondary Art School in Košice, the Private Grammar School Galaktická 9 in Košice and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra.

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<sup>78</sup> *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of 22 May 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

<sup>79</sup> European Roma Rights Center, *Stigmata: Segregated Schooling of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: European Roma Rights Center, 2004); Nadácia Milana Šimečku, *Desegregácia - za akú cenu? Možnosti desegregácie slovenského školstva vo vzťahu k rómskym žiakom [Desegregation - At What Cost? Possibilities for the Desegregation of Slovak Education in Relation to Romani Pupils]* (Bratislava: Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 2007).

<sup>80</sup> *Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of 22 May 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws]* (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008). In practice, special technical schools tend to provide training for pupils diagnosed with mild mental disability, while practical schools accept pupils diagnosed as moderately or severely mentally disabled.





A positive innovation of recent is the priority placed at central level on the integration of multiculturalism in the school curriculum as a whole. By this approach, multicultural education should form a part of each subject taught in school. However, implementation of this provision has been largely formalistic.

Drawing on apparently successful (but not formally evaluated) NGO initiatives implemented in preschools and schools serving Romani communities, the position of teacher assistant was established by the same law that institutionalized zero grades in Slovakia's education system as “a pedagogical employee who carries out the educational process in schools and preschools and participates in the creation of conditions indispensable for overcoming in particular linguistic, health, and social barriers.”<sup>81</sup> Teacher assistants hired under this law began working in preschools and schools in Legislation introduced in 2009 changes the status of teacher assistants in such a way that the funds available for teacher assistants depend on the number of children meeting administrative criteria for material need enrolled in a given school.<sup>82</sup> This change places the position of teacher assistant at risk in many cases by creating a situation in which the number of pupils in material need which is necessary to fund a single teacher assistant position is far higher than the number of pupils who can be supported by a given teacher assistant.<sup>83</sup> However, EU funded national projects (MRK1, MRK2, PRINED) try to employ as many teacher assistants in disadvantaged regions as possible.

### **Social support for pupils and students**

As part of an overarching reform of the social safety net in Slovakia, three measures were introduced in 2004 to support the attendance and scholastic achievement of preschool and school-aged children from families receiving social assistance or with an income below a threshold set in relevant legislation, as well as children attending a

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<sup>81</sup> Zákon č. 408 z 27. júna 2002, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 313/2001 Z.z. o verejnej službe v znení neskorších predpisov a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 408 of 27 June 2002, Which Modifies and Amends Law No. 313/2001 Coll. on Public Service in the Wording of Subsequent Regulations and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2002), Article IV.50b.1.

<sup>82</sup> Zákon č. 317 z 29. júna 2009 o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 307 of 29 June 2009 on Pedagogical Employees and Expert Employees and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2009); cf. Nariadenie vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 2/2004 z 17. decembra 2003, ktorým sa ustanovujú podrobnosti rozpisu finančných prostriedkov zo štátneho rozpočtu pre základné školy, stredné školy, strediská praktického vyučovania, základné umelecké školy a školské zariadenia [Government Decree of the Slovak Republic No. 2/2004 of 17 December 2003, Which Fixes the Details of the Specification of Financial Means from the State Budget for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Practical Training Centers, Secondary Art Schools, and School Facilities] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2004); Zákon č. 245 z 22. mája 2008 o výchove a vzdelávaní (školský zákon) a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov [Law No. 245 of 22 May 2008 on Education (School Law) and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

<sup>83</sup> See Mirka Hapalová and Stano Daniel, *Rovný prístup rómskych detí ku kvalitnému vzdelávaniu: Aktualizácia 2008 [Equal Access of Romani Children to Quality Education: Update 2008]* (Bratislava: Človek v tísni - Pobočka Slovensko, 2010), pp. 26-27; Občianske združenie Rómskych asistentov učiteľa, *Otvorený list podpredsedovi vlády pre vedomostnú spoločnosť, európske záležitosti, ľudské práva a menšiny Slovenskej republiky Dušanovi Čaplovičovi [Open Letter to Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for Information Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities, Dušan Čaplovič]*, 5 March 2010.



school in which at least half of pupils come from families receiving the state material need allowance.<sup>84</sup> These measures are:

1. The “Motivation Allowance,” a social scholarship of EUR 6 to EUR 15 per month awarded on the basis of attendance, behaviour and scholastic achievement, with the last criterion removed in 2008;<sup>85</sup>
2. Subsidies for school meals for all children meeting the social and/or income criteria; and
3. Subsidies for school supplies for all children meeting the social and/or income criteria.

All three types of benefits rely on the initiative of the school and municipality, which must apply for the benefits in order to receive them and are not legally obligated to do so.<sup>86</sup>

In 2009, approximately 6 percent of Slovakia’s population met the social and income criteria for these measures.<sup>87</sup> Available information further suggests that Motivation Allowances in particular have not been an effective means of reducing the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. Such information comes from a 2007 study by the Institute for Labour and Family Research, which found that Motivation Allowances were generally distributed to the families of pupils who had performed well at school even before the benefit was introduced, as well as from a household survey conducted for the United National Development Programme in Romani settlements throughout Slovakia, which found that take-up on Motivation Allowances among families meeting the social and income criteria was only 6.2 percent.<sup>88</sup> More troubling is the perverse incentive created by the Motivation Allowance until 2008 for parents to enroll their non-disabled children in special schools, where pupils tend to receive better grades than they would in standard primary schools, in order to meet the scholastic achievement criterion.

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<sup>84</sup> See *Zákon č. 599 z 11. novembra 2003 o pomoci v hmotnej núdzi a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov* [Law No. 599 of 11 November 2003 on Assistance in Material Need and on the Revision and Amendment of Certain Laws] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2003).

<sup>85</sup> For the changes introduced in 2008 to the criteria for granting the Motivation Allowance, see *Zákon č. 562 z 25. novembra 2008, ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 533/2003 Z.z. o pomoci v hmotnej núdzi a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 5/2004 Z.z. o službách zamestnanosti a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov v znení neskorších predpisov* [Law No. 562 of 25 November 2008, Which Modifies and Amends Law No. 533/2003 Coll. on Social Assistance and on the Modification and Amendment of Certain Laws in the Wording of Subsequent Regulations] (Bratislava: Zbierka zákonov Slovenskej republiky, 2008).

<sup>86</sup> *Výnos Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky zo 14. decembra 2005 č. 3749/2005-II/1 o poskytovaní dotácií v pôsobnosti Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky* [Decree 3749/2005-II/1 of 14 December 2005 of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic on the Provision of Subsidies within the Competence of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, 2005).

<sup>87</sup> Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, *Správa o sociálnej situácii obyvateľstva Slovenskej republiky za rok 2009* [Report on the Social Situation of the Population of the Slovak Republic for the Year 2009] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny Slovenskej republiky, 2010).

<sup>88</sup> Bernardína Bodnárová, *Efektivita dotačných programov pre deti a mládež* [The Effectiveness of Subsidy Programmes for Children and Youth] (Bratislava: Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, 2007); Jarmila Filadelfiová, Daniel Gerbery, and Daniel Škobla, *Report on the Living Conditions of Roma in Slovakia* (Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme, 2007).



The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities offers achievement-based scholarships for Roma studying in secondary schools and universities. The amount of these scholarships depends on the individual needs of the student. Both scholarship schemes are administered by the Open Society Foundation.

## Participation in education

### Basic indicators on education in Slovakia for the 2013-2014 school year

	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
<b>Number of institutions</b>	2,716	2,003	514
<b>Number of pupils</b>	145,497	399,760	194,155
<b>Number of teachers</b>	14,001	27,803 (full-time) + 4,541 (part-time)	15,091 (full-time)+ 3,085 (part-time)
<b>Pupil: teacher ratio</b>	10.39 <sup>89</sup>	14.37 (for full-time) 12.35 <sup>90</sup> (for all)	12.86 (for full-time) 10.68 <sup>91</sup> (for all)

Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education<sup>92</sup>

In order to understand the data above, it is essential to know that according to the Key data on Education – 2012, the same maximum number of children per adult is generally set for all age groups, with the exception of a small number of countries (Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia) where the limit increases with the age of children (3-year-olds: 20, 4-year-olds: 21, 5-year-olds: 22). Official regulations in several countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia) further reduce the maximum number of children per adult where one or more children have special needs.<sup>93</sup>

Besides the above listed data there are 42 private institutions with 4,874 students and 114 church schools with 22,743 pupils in the Slovak education system. There are 1,067 teacher assistants in primary education, from which 727 assistants are employed in Eastern Slovakian regions (264 in Kosický kraj, 240 in Prešovský kraj, 223 in

<sup>89</sup> The average ratio of pupils to teaching staff in preschool education in high-income countries in 2012 was 13.1. Data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (see <http://www.uis.unesco.org>). According to UNESCO data (2012), the Pupil-teacher ratio by level of education (headcount basis) in Slovakia in pre-primary education was 12.4.

<sup>90</sup> The average ratio of pupils to teaching staff in primary education in 32 European countries in 2009 was 14.1. See Commission of the European Communities, Key Data on Education in Europe 2012 (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2012), p. 14. According to UNESCO data (2012), the Pupil-teacher ratio by level of education (headcount basis) in Slovakia in primary education was 14.9.

<sup>91</sup> The average ratio of pupils to teaching staff in (upper-) secondary education in 32 European countries in 2009 was 12.1. See Commission of the European Communities, Key Data on Education in Europe 2012 (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2012), p. 14. ). According to UNESCO data (2012), the Pupil-teacher ratio by level of education (headcount basis) in Slovakia in lower-secondary education was 11.2, in upper-secondary education was 11.4.

<sup>92</sup> Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, *Štatistická ročenka školstva 2013/2014*, available online at [www.uips.sk](http://www.uips.sk). The figures in the table cover state institutions.

<sup>93</sup> Key data on Education in Europe – 2012, Eurydice, p.154.



Banskobystricky kraj). In private primary schools there are altogether 13 teacher assistants, while in church schools this number is 51.

According to the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education, there were 771 Romani pupils enrolled in standard public primary schools in the 2013-2014 school year, 17 Roma enrolled in secondary grammar schools, and 65 in secondary vocational schools and 2 in higher education in the same year.<sup>94</sup> The same source indicates the numbers of Roma enrolled in special public primary and secondary schools to be 520. However, field research commissioned by REF in 2008 and data gathered through REF-funded projects suggest that the official figures for both standard and primary education grossly underestimate the number of Roma in the education system in Slovakia.

The lack of accurate official data on Roma in Slovakia reduces the potential effectiveness of activities to support Roma's education. Clear even in the absence of such data, however, is that the Slovak education system's early and rigid division of children into educational streams reinforces social inequalities, such that children from low-income families are more likely to end up with lower levels of educational attainment which in turn make it probable that the next generation of children will be raised in poverty.

### **Student performance in international measurements (PISA, TIMSS)**

Slovakia participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012. Whereas in 2003 students from Slovakia performed near the OECD average on PISA mathematics and science scales, in 2006 performance on mathematics, reading and science scales was below the OECD average, with the difference statistically significant. In 2009, on the other hand, students from Slovakia performed near the OECD average on the mathematics scale, while Slovak students' mean performance on reading and science scales lower than the OECD average at a statistically significant level. According to the data of 2012 the performance of Slovak students decreased significantly in all measurement areas, compared to the previous national results and to the OECD average.<sup>95</sup>

Slovakia has also participated in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) since 1995. Whereas the performance of students from Slovakia on the science scale has been above average in all four testing cycles, performance on the mathematics scale fell below the scale average for the first time in 2007. In 2011 the Slovak pupils significantly increased their performance in both of measured areas.<sup>96</sup>

The potential to measure learning and schooling characteristics of Roma students with PISA, and other international student surveys, is currently limited as only very few countries sample a sufficiently large number of Roma students. Reasons for the underrepresentation of Roma students are manifold, such as Roma students might speak other languages than Romani as the first home language – currently the only

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> For more details see Appendix 3.

<sup>96</sup> For more details see Appendix 3.



way to identify Roma students in the sample – or might not want to identify themselves as Romani-speaking in order to avoid stigmatization and discrimination. Moreover, some Roma students might be absent from school or have dropped out of school before the age of 15, or might be among those 15 year olds that are excluded from PISA as they still attend low grade levels at this age.<sup>97</sup>

Christian Bruggemann and Simone Bloem analysing the PISA database of 2009<sup>98</sup> highlight that Romani-speaking students of Slovakia come from more disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds compared to their Slovak and Hungarian-speaking peers. “Romani students show schooling and learning characteristics that are negatively associated with performance, notably little average preschool experience and a higher average share of students in vocational tracks with direct access to the labor market. The performance gap as compared to their peers represents about four years of regular schooling. The great majority of Romani-speaking students (96 percent) performs below Level 2, the baseline level considered necessary for full participation in social and economic life in modern societies. Romani-speaking students also repeat classes more frequently during their school career and, related to this, are in lower grades than their peers at age 15. It is obvious that Romani-speaking students thus face multiple disadvantages that may present severe barriers for success in society and the labor market after the end of their schooling. Due to very small sample sizes, in particular for Romani-speakers, results can only be considered as first indication of learning characteristics and outcomes for Roma students that need to be investigated further. Despite these shortcomings, results overall speak for various disadvantages Romani-speaking students face in Slovakia.”<sup>99</sup>

### **Overview of progress and remaining weaknesses in education for Roma in Slovakia**

The REF country assessment of 2010 had seen little progress in relation to the education of Roma in Slovakia. Its conclusion was that many issues remained to be addressed as a matter of urgency in order to bring a reduction in the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. Between 2006 and 2010 the most important progress was made in the field of legislation and provisions as elimination of the incentive for enrolment in special education created by the scholastic achievement criterion for the Motivation Allowance; the new School Law’s stipulations for informed consent and against social disadvantage as a basis for enrolment of children in special education and the introduction of multicultural education as a priority of education policy.

The period, being in the center of the present country assessment, the years between 2010 and 2013/2014, did not have to focus on legislative transformation of public education. The legal framework had been set so the attention had to be shifted from policy making toward implementation. The implementation process was backed by

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<sup>97</sup> REF Annual Report, 2013. p. 28.

<sup>98</sup> Christian Bruggemann-Simone Bloem: The Potential of International Student Assessments to Measure Educational Outcomes of Roma Students.  
[http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/documents/bruggemann\\_bloem\\_2013\\_the\\_potential\\_of\\_international\\_student\\_assessments\\_to\\_measure\\_educational\\_outcomes\\_of\\_roma\\_students\\_0.pdf](http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/documents/bruggemann_bloem_2013_the_potential_of_international_student_assessments_to_measure_educational_outcomes_of_roma_students_0.pdf)

<sup>99</sup> REF Annual Report, 2013. p. 28..



creating a list of indicators and necessary actions in the National Roma Integration Strategy. Two years have been passed since the acceptance of this Strategy but from the standpoint of quality education for Roma, still significant weaknesses characterize the current system of education in Slovakia. These are the following:

- Participation of Roma children in preschool education is still lagging behind the European average, especially the participation rates of some of the surrounding countries.
- Roma's educational achievements continue to be far below those of non-Roma, regardless of how these are measured.
- Continued systemic overrepresentation of Roma in special education, the number of children taking part in special education does not decrease.
- Segregation between Roma and non-Roma in standard as well as special education, whether resulting from residential segregation or decisions by school authorities.



## 5. REF Program in Slovakia

### Supported projects

According to the previous REF country assessment of 2010 since its establishment to the end of October of 2010, thirteen project proposals had been approved. The total REF funding for the approved projects was approximately EUR 1.3 million, with amounts committed fluctuating widely from year to year. Between November 2010 and December, 2013: 15 new projects were contracted, with more than 895,000 EUR. So altogether 2,494,839 EUR were committed on Slovak projects between 2005 and December 2013.

### Project grant commitments in Slovakia between 2011 to 2013

Funds committed by year (EUR)			
2011	2012	2013	TOTAL (EUR)
432,365	295,262	483,205	1,210,832

Four of the fifteen approved projects – slightly more than a quarter of project funding committed to date in Slovakia - have aimed at supporting early childhood education and care projects. All four projects are continuations of A Good Start program, carried out by previous project partners. The main objectives of projects SK 049, SK 051 and SK 052 was to reduce the gap in early childhood development outcomes between Roma and non-Roma, to improve the parental abilities and increase the share of the Romani parents involved in the activities, to improve the preschool participation rate among the targeted Romani children and enhance the teaching quality and sensitivity of the teaching staff in preschool facilities.

Project SK 050 worked to provide access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children, including ensuring the quality of ECEC in former AGS project sites; to raise early childhood development outcomes for Roma children so as to enhance their school readiness; to contribute to systematic changes at the national level in the design and delivery of ECEC and basic education services; and to develop strategic partnerships to increase and sustain the attention of local and national governments (cooperation with higher education institutions).

Two of the projects supported to date (SK 048, SK 055) in Slovakia have aimed at improving academic progression by providing after-school activities based on the Hungarian *Tanoda* model, the Romani children's success in education and subsequently their competitiveness on the labour market and their social integration. These projects are continuations of two previously supported projects financed in the same settlement, Rimavska Seč. The two projects implemented in 2009-2010 brought improvements in participating pupils' academic achievement, reduced dropout rates in primary and secondary education and promoted the transfer of children from special classes to standard classes. The after-school centre in Rimavská Seč was included in the 2010 catalogue of the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) as a model program of best practice within the EU. Project SK 048, guaranteed the sustainable operation of the after-school in 2011-12, and the ongoing project (SK 055) supports after-school tutoring in micro-groups, targeting 75



disadvantaged Roma children and 5 non-Roma children, who belong to the age-range from 7 to 15.

Between 2011 and 2013 by supporting a project in Košice-Šaca, in cooperation with the local municipality, a new community center was established, where long-term, comprehensive services were provided to Roma by professionally trained ETP staff. The centre offered services and activities on daily basis for all people of the settlement but with a particular focus on children and young people. The aim of the project was to encourage communication between Roma and non-Roma and to improve educational level of Roma children, young people and adults living in poverty, by creating Roma role models and to integrating them to mainstream society (SK 041).

Two other projects (SK 042.1, SK 042.2) have focused primarily on preventing and monitoring the biased enrollment of socially disadvantaged children into special education system in the region of Spisska Nova Ves. By realization of planned activities the following specific objectives were set: to assess the effectiveness of zero grade classes in local circumstances in the district of Spisska Nova Ves; to provide parents with comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for children’s further education and employment, integrated preschool education and after-school support in the early years of primary education – through information campaign; to prevent enrollment of children to special educational institutions (either special class or special school) through the accelerative program. The aim of the monitoring project was to assess the effectiveness of zero grade classes in local circumstances in the district of Spisska Nova Ves (covering 38 elementary schools) through comprehensive Research Study on Effectiveness of Zero Grade Classes.

The remaining projects (SK 040, SK 054) worked to increase the attendance and higher academic performance of Roma students in mainstream education. One project provided mentoring help for reaching this goal (SK 040), while the second one (SK 054) supports the implementation of special psychological and pedagogical methodology and trainings to educational personnel in mainstream schools.

As shown in the table below, the extent of coverage of Romani children and youth in Slovakia by REF-funded projects to date have reached approximately 3 percent of Romani children of compulsory school age; REF’s secondary scholarship’s program covers about 1 percent of Roma students in the secondary schools. REF also made significant progress in boosting Romani children’s participation in preschool programs, where the figures rose from less than 2 percent to over 11 percent in the scope of the last five years.

**Coverage of the Romani child and youth population in Slovakia by REF projects from 2005 to 2008**

Level of education	Cohort size <sup>100</sup>	REF beneficiaries	REF coverage of
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<sup>100</sup> The ranges given for the preschool and upper secondary age cohorts were generated on the basis of the statistically projected size of the Romani population as a whole in 2010 and two hypothetical proportions of each cohort within the overall Romani population. For both cohorts, the lower figure





			<b>cohort (percent)</b>
Preschool (3-6)	17,020 – 28,730	450	1.6%
Compulsory (6-15)	81,700	2348	2.9%
Upper secondary (15-18)	26,031 – 44,401	68	0.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,866</b>	

### 2009-2013

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Cohort size<sup>101</sup></b>	<b>REF beneficiaries</b>	<b>REF coverage of cohort (percent)</b>
Preschool (3-6)	17,020 – 28,730	3,269	11.4%
Compulsory (6-15)	81,700	2,722	3.3%
Upper secondary (15-18)	26,031 – 44,401	486	1.1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,477</b>	

### EU Roma pilot – the AGS-project

REF was the lead implementing organization of the project “A Good Start,” funded by the EU at a level of EUR 1.9 million in the framework of the Open Call for

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assumes that the proportion of the cohort within the total Romani population is the same as that of the corresponding cohort within the general population, whereas the higher figure assumes that each cohort is 1.7 times larger relative to the total Romani population than it is within the general population. Ethnically disaggregated census data on the 0-14 and 15-49 age cohorts suggest that the latter assumption is likely to yield the better estimate for the preschool cohort, while the former may be more accurate for the upper secondary cohort. See Květa Kalibová, “The Demographic Characteristics of Roma/Gypsies in Selected Countries in Central and Eastern Europe,” in Werner Haug, Paul Compton and Youssef Courbage (eds.), *The Demographic Characteristics of National Minorities in Certain European States*, Vol. 2 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000); Boris Vaňo, “The Demographics of Roma Children,” in Andrej Salner (ed.), *Roma Children in the Slovak Education System* (Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, 2005). The figure given for the compulsory education cohort is a statistical projection for 2010 generated by Vaňo.

<sup>101</sup> The ranges given for the preschool and upper secondary age cohorts were generated on the basis of the statistically projected size of the Romani population as a whole in 2010 and two hypothetical proportions of each cohort within the overall Romani population. For both cohorts, the lower figure assumes that the proportion of the cohort within the total Romani population is the same as that of the corresponding cohort within the general population, whereas the higher figure assumes that each cohort is 1.7 times larger relative to the total Romani population than it is within the general population. Ethnically disaggregated census data on the 0-14 and 15-49 age cohorts suggest that the latter assumption is likely to yield the better estimate for the preschool cohort, while the former may be more accurate for the upper secondary cohort. See Květa Kalibová, “The Demographic Characteristics of Roma/Gypsies in Selected Countries in Central and Eastern Europe,” in Werner Haug, Paul Compton and Youssef Courbage (eds.), *The Demographic Characteristics of National Minorities in Certain European States*, Vol. 2 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000); Boris Vaňo, “The Demographics of Roma Children,” in Andrej Salner (ed.), *Roma Children in the Slovak Education System* (Bratislava: Slovak Governance Institute, 2005). The figure given for the compulsory education cohort is a statistical projection for 2010 generated by Vaňo.



Proposals 2009 “Pilot project Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods – Roma inclusion.” The project was running from June 2010 through April 2012 in Hungary, Macedonia and Romania as well as in Slovakia, where the project activities bring together the experiences of REF and its partners in preschool education and the transition to primary education while adding attention to key aspects of preventive healthcare and early childhood development. Implementing partners for the activities in Slovakia included the NGO Equalizing Opportunities, the Regional Association of Romani Initiatives (KARI), Cultural Association of Roma of the Slovak Republic (KZRSR), Methodological-Pedagogical Center Bratislava – Regional Branch Prešov (MPC) and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) through its local partner the Wide Open School Foundation.

AGS activities targeted children, parents, local preschools, local government bodies, Roma communities in general, and – to a lesser extent – national governments. The different types of activities facilitated through AGS included community motivation events on education and health issues for parents, parenting education, home visits, and assistance to families in enrolling their children in preschools. Also included were various forms of support for the preschool attendance of children: material support such as clothes, shoes, school supplies, and hygiene packages; the facilitation of transport to and from preschool; accompaniment of children to and from schools; and tutoring for pupils attending the first grade of primary schools. As such, AGS activities were targeted at a wide range of actors; with local partner NGOs having considerable flexibility in their local approach. As the most important result after the project, positive tendencies in the enrolment of children and regular attendance of preschools were indicated in the results of a subsequent Household Survey: non-enrolment rates (the share of children staying at home) were shown to be decreasing continuously with the rising age of children in all countries, with different breakpoints where enrolment rates increased substantially.<sup>102</sup>

In Slovakia 350 children, 490 parents and 39 university students/professionals benefited directly from the project.

After the first two years of AGS, REF started the project’s second phase in order to adapt AGS’s best practices to local circumstances and to focus on creating strategic partnerships and synergies with local and national decision-makers. Based on these principles REF invited its local partners and continued the work in 17 localities, out of them 3 are in Slovakia. The second phase was implemented on the basis of the first phase’s experiences, results, and achievements. The project period was September 2012 - December 2013 with an extension to June 2014. The project built on activities tested during the pilot bringing together reading sessions (Your Story) with Roma mothers, open public events to educate the whole community, teacher training, involvement of Roma mothers in preschool teaching (Home-School-Community Liaison), material support to cover preschool fees and other needs and home visits. The objective was to influence parenting practices, quality of ECD programs for Roma children and improve access to ECD programs.

Evaluation results are available, the evaluation shows that the project represented a significant step forward from A Good Start phase I, absorbing its lessons, resulting in better quality of partnership between REF and its local partners (Roma NGOs and other local stakeholders).

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<sup>102</sup> REF Annual Report, 2012. p. 68.



## **PROGRESS: Social Experimentation and Early Childhood Development-project**

Since 2013 the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities in Slovakia, has been implementing an early childhood project that utilizes REF's experience under the umbrella of PROGRESS, financed by the European Commission (DG EMPL). REF's involvement in PROGRESS is motivated by its aspiration that the research results will be the basis for an evidence-based policy framework surrounding early childhood education not only in Slovakia but also on a larger scale. Besides the Slovak government as the main implementing entity alongside REF, other international and national partners are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the project, such as the World Bank, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab and the Slovak Governance Institute. PROGRESS also contains an evaluation aspect designed to measure the results of the various activities and REF's main role in the project is to provide technical assistance and support surrounding the content and quality of the early childhood education and care interventions. The project is working with approximately 525 children from ages zero to six and 315 mothers in accessing early childhood education and care services in 21 different locations in the southern part of Slovakia. It will measure the impacts and progress against a predetermined set of indicators in order to analyze if the methodology being used is effective in raising the competencies of the children as well as their primary caregivers. The project seeks to empower families, especially women, through a program called Your Story.

The evaluation component of the project has been carefully built into the overall process allowing for a rigorous evaluation of the outcomes for the beneficiary children. Seeing as the project aims to ultimately address policymakers, it is essential to draw evidence-based conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the interventions being made. The counterfactual impact evaluation is important in this case, as it helps to verify or reject the presumed casual connection between the intervention and results. The project seeks to identify net effects or impacts. Ultimately it seeks to compare the results of the intervention participants to the results of a group not involved in the intervention. The "treated" or "treatment" groups were distinguished from the "control" groups. The selected localities are as follows: Plavecky Štvrtok, Zlate Klasy, Jelka; Šimonovce, Širkovce, Rapovce; Prakovce, Rudňany, Krompachy; Vyborna, Rakusy, Ľubica; Stara Ľubovňa, Žehňa, Sabinov; Čaña, Vechec, Sobrance; Jasov, Medzev, Drienovec. The project has a diverse target group that includes Slovak-, Romanes- and Hungarian-speaking mothers. Activities are always tailored and carried out in the language that is spoken by the majority of the mothers in a given session. Based on the evaluation method, only the mothers in the "treatment" group are involved in project activities, not mothers in the "control" group. The implementation of the project is still ongoing.

### **Scholarship support**

### **Secondary scholarship program**



Open Society Foundation Slovakia was partnering REF in distributing scholarships for Roma students participating successfully in secondary education. The financial background of this pilot-project has been provided from two project sources since 2011.<sup>103</sup> The goal of the project SK 045 was to improve the retention and achievement rate of targeted Roma students enrolled in secondary education on a country level and motivate them to continue their studies, with a hope of strengthening Roma intelligence. The second phase of the project (SK 051) has been supporting tutoring and mentoring activities and providing secondary scholarships on national level as well.

According to the REF Annual Report – 2013, the secondary school scholarships have made it possible for Romani students to successfully finish their studies; for example, 72 percent (232) of students have one or both parents who are jobless and live off social welfare. Out of 320 (the total number of Romani students supported), 310 passed to the following academic year. Out of 57 students in the final year, 55 successfully completed their studies, two female students failed school. Six students will continue their studies in schools of music, where they will receive the teachers' training degree which will make them eligible for teaching in elementary art schools. In terms of the project's goal of increasing the number of students who after finishing their high school would continue their studies at universities – out of 49 students finishing in fourth grade, 22 submitted applications to universities and 18 of them were admitted. However, only 15 actually started attending school, and the remaining three students did not start studying due to financial reasons.

The scholarship program engaged 42 mentors (four of them Roma) and 68 tutors who worked with students. Twenty-three mentors had been trained and this improved, to a great extent, the attitude of teachers towards Romani students in the participating schools. The highest ratio of supported beneficiaries originates from the poorest regions in Slovakia with the highest rates of unemployment. From 320 students, 110 were from Presov region, 127 from Kosice region, 66 from Banska Bystrica, two from Zilina, 11 from Nitra, three from Trnava, one from Bratislava.<sup>104</sup>

### **The Roma Memorial Scholarship Program**

The Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) has covered Slovakia since before REF's founding. RMUSP was transferred to REF from OSI in the academic year of 2006-2007. The number of scholars supported had increased from year to year, between 2006 and 2010 altogether 114 university students were awarded by grant.

#### **RMUSP awards in Slovakia from 2011 to 2013**

<b>Grants awarded by year</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	
45	69	92	206

<sup>103</sup> REF and Government' Plenipotentiary Office for Roma

<sup>104</sup> REF Annual Report, 2013. p.33.



### Scholarship grant commitments in Slovakia between 2011 to 2013

<b>Funds committed by year (EUR)</b>			
<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>TOTAL (EUR)</b>
<b>44,292 EUR</b>	<b>78,800</b>	<b>116,346</b>	<b>239,438</b>

The country assessment of 2010 highlighted, that according to the available information the acceptance rate (approximately 72 percent in 2008-2009 and 92 percent in 2009-2010) was considerably higher than acceptance rates for RMUSP in other countries (approximately 55 percent overall in the period 2005-2009).<sup>105</sup> So an outreach strategy was developed in early 2010 targeted to increase the number of applicants to 50-60 for the 2010-2011 academic year. This strategy was successful, as in 2013 in Slovakia, REF received 143 applications for the tertiary level in-country Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) and 6 applications for the study-abroad Roma International Scholar Program (RISP). Among these applications, 92 for RMUSP and 4 for RISP successfully passed the selection process.

### Pedagogy Scholarship Program in Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia

With the support of the Velux Foundation, the Roma Education Fund addresses the problem of systemic absence of Roma teachers from nurseries, kindergartens in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. The aim of the project is to increase the number of female kindergarten teachers and nurses of Roma origin in the regions of Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia in regions of high number of Roma residents. The project started in early 2014 and it will last until 2022. It will support and mentor two cohorts of young Roma (only girls) from families with disadvantaged social-economic background: it will follow the life-paths of the beneficiaries from the months preceding their enrolments in pedagogical education until their graduation and actual employment. The project supports 180 Roma (within 2 cohorts, with 90 per cohort), 80 in Hungary, 60 in Slovakia, and 40 in Czech Republic, intervening in 4 regions in Slovakia (Kosice, Presov, Banská Bystrica, Nitra). During their pedagogical vocational studies, the project beneficiaries will receive mentorship support, placement in internships in local kindergartens; they will attend a summer school for additional pedagogical training, and will get financial support for their studies (i.e. covered transportation costs, accommodation costs, food costs, as well as a yearly stipend for the last 2 years of vocational training). As short-term outcomes of the project the beneficiaries' level of performance at school will be increased, there will be active cooperation between beneficiaries' parents and school teachers, more Roma students will enroll in vocational and Bachelor pedagogical specializations and there will be increased number of graduates from these programs, and more female Roma will be employed in local kindergartens.

<sup>105</sup> REF Country Assessment, Slovakia, 2010.



The project - based on the experiences of other REF programs - expects a 90 percent graduation rate by project's beneficiaries by the end of vocational education, and another 90 percent at Bachelor level. The budget of the project is: EUR 2,151,058 (Velux | EUR 1,139,000 || REF | EUR 1,012,058)

### **Research and policy analysis**

Between 2010 and 2013 REF funded policy-publication on the effectiveness of “zero grades,” and an external evaluation of the effectiveness of Roma secondary scholarship program.

- Vladimir Klein, PhD produced a policy publication on the effectiveness of “zero grades” with a particular focus on Romani children. The study reviews the practice of zero grades in 38 selected elementary schools in Slovakia, and had made number of recommendations for policy makers and school practitioners. The publication has been widely distributed in academic fields and to pedagogic school preparing young professionals in education system.
- Institute of Ethnology, SAS, Bratislava evaluated the pilot project “Roma secondary scholarship program in Slovakia” (SLO 45). Based on the findings of the external evaluation the most important factor for the students to join the project was the financial support. The evaluation research also revealed that mentoring is very effective part of the project helping significantly to improve mentored students’ self-esteem and confidence. The most of the scholarship recipients were naturally motivated to improve their academic results because the Grade Point Average (GPA) is one of more criteria assessed at the application process for universities. According to mentors and teachers involved in the project, absenteeism rate has direct impact on GPA of the students. Intervention of mentoring played an important role in decreasing absenteeism rate, including decreasing of excused absences. Despite the general opinion of high dropout rate and low retention rate of Romani students, the evaluation did not revealed any case of dropout from schools. The pilot project has been evaluated as satisfactory and a second phase was supported by REF Board under project SLO (51) with increased target group.<sup>106</sup>
- “Pitfalls and Bias,” a policy paper that examines the ways in which Roma children from Central and South Eastern Europe are segregated from their non-Romani peers and placed in special education, and presents international good practice in the use of assessments for integrating rather than segregating children;
- “From Segregation to Inclusion,” pilot research study that looked at the educational attainment of Roma pupils who migrated with their parents from the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the UK and compared their experience of attending special or segregated schools to the one of attending mainstream education in the UK.
- External evaluation of Secondary scholarship’s program
- External evaluations of AGS phase 1 and 2

### **Strategic directions for future REF activities**

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<sup>106</sup> REF Annual Report, 2012. p.36.



Taking into account the situation described above, REF project grant funding in Slovakia will reflect on priorities that do not overlap with the ones of the Government of Slovakia whose national projects focus on programs and courses in primary schools for pupils from marginalized Roma communities, social services offered in large network of existing and newly built community centers offering non-formal education such as literacy and adult education, as well as actions addressing the long-standing problem of overcrowded facilities and building container schools in communities with high representation of Roma. Instead, over the next two years, REF's work will focus on promoting desegregation and integration of Roma in education in communities currently not under support of governmental initiatives.

REF should reflect on the following priorities in Slovakia in order to address the remaining weaknesses of the current education of Roma in Slovakia:

- Promoting access to Early Childhood Education and Care services for children from the age 0 to 3.
- Promoting preschool enrolment of children, increasing access to quality preschool, supporting preschool attendance from age 3 onwards.
- Continuation of providing secondary and tertiary education scholarship support.
- Continuing the prevention-activities from wrongful enrolment of Romani children in special education through measures including but not necessarily limited to provision to parents of comprehensive information on the consequences of special education for children's further education and employment, preschool education and after-school support in the early years of primary education.

#### *REF research and policy analysis priorities*

Major themes of REF's research and policy activities in Slovakia will include:

- Policy analysis on the results of the Slovak whole-day school project regarding Roma children.
- Collecting and monitoring good practices of inclusive education in Slovakia, producing case studies,
- Reviewing the possibilities of introducing innovative pedagogical-methodological teaching and learning techniques in desegregated schools, and the possibility of introducing creative educational forms in primary education and vocational training.
- Publishing of guidelines for tutoring and mentoring in secondary scholarship program.

#### **Expected results of REF activities**

Based on the identification of REF's strategic priorities, results of REF activities should be visible in the next two years on the following levels:

#### *Key education indicators presented by models*



While no official data are available for the indicators given below, the data needed for each indicator could be generated by recording the ethnicity of all pupils/students at the time of enrolment. Individual identity could be protected by making the collected data anonymous. Additional comments for individual indicators relate to generating unofficial estimates.

#### *Early Childhood Education*

- Reduced gap in gross/net enrolment rates of Roma children aged 3-6 in mainstream kindergartens.
- Improved ECD outcomes among the targeted young Roma children.
- Number and share of Roma children aged 6 who enroll 1<sup>st</sup> grade in primary education.
- Improved parenting practices among the targeted Roma as measured by increased frequency of parent-children interaction.

#### *Primary Education*

- Increased gross primary enrolment rates of Roma students in selected non-segregated project schools.
- Reduced gap in primary school completion rate between Roma and non-Roma.
- Reduced repetition rate by grade in primary education.
- Reduced transition rate into special primary education of Roma children.

#### *Secondary Education*

- Improved graduation rate of Roma secondary school students, recipients of the scholarship support.
- Improved retention rate of Roma secondary school students, recipients of the scholarship support.

#### *Tertiary Education*

- Improved graduation rate of Roma tertiary school students recipients of the scholarship support.
- Improved retention rate of Roma tertiary school students recipients of the scholarship support.

#### *Social cohesion*

- Improved cooperation in educational activities between schools on the one hand and Romani communities and NGOs on the other.





## Annex 1: Key Education Indicators

**Table A1. National education indicators**

**Note:** Empty cells in the table below indicate that the corresponding data are not available.

	INDICATOR	ROMA		GENERAL POPULATION	
		Official data	Unofficial estimate	Official data	Unofficial estimate
1	<i>Use of early care and education services (ages 0-3)</i>				
2	<i>Enrolment in pre-primary education (ISCED 0)</i>	<4-25% <sup>107</sup>	28% <sup>108</sup>	90% <sup>109</sup>	59%
3	<i>Enrolment in first year of primary education (ISCED 1)</i>				
4	<i>School-aged children in school (ISCED 1 and 2)</i>				Near 100% <sup>110</sup>
5	<i>Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the first cycle of compulsory education</i>				
6	<i>Children enrolling in primary education</i>		23.2%-35% <sup>112</sup>	9.8% <sup>113</sup>	

<sup>107</sup> Lower figure from Roma Education Fund, *School as Ghetto: Systemic Overrepresentation of Roma in Special Education in Slovakia* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2009), p. 83; higher figure from the Methodological Centre Prešov for the 2000-2001 school year, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 419.

<sup>108</sup> UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey, data from 2011 quoted in World Bank study: Policy Advice on the Integration of Roma in the Slovak Republic, 2012. p.26.

<sup>109</sup> Data from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 418.

<sup>110</sup> Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education of Roma in Slovakia: Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund’s Strategic Directions* (Budapest: Roma Education Fund, 2010).



	<i>(ISCED 1) who do not complete the second cycle of compulsory education<sup>111</sup></i>				
7	<i>Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the third cycle of compulsory education (if applicable)</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
8	<i>Pupils in compulsory education (ISCED 1 and 2) attending special schools and classes</i>		39%-62.4% <sup>114</sup>	3.6% <sup>115</sup>	
9	<i>Pupils completing compulsory education in terminal lower secondary programmes (ISCED 2C)<sup>116</sup></i>	62.4% <sup>117</sup>		1.8% <sup>118</sup>	
10	<i>Graduates of compulsory education enrolling in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)</i>		12.8% <sup>119</sup>		
11	<i>Enrolment in upper secondary technical or vocational education (ISCED 3C) not</i>			44% <sup>121</sup>	

<sup>112</sup> Lower figure from the 2001 census, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 431; higher figure reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in Anton Marcinčin and Ľubica Marcinčinová, *The Cost of Non-Inclusion* (Bratislava: Open Society Foundation, 2009), p. 20 fn 43.

<sup>113</sup> Data for 2002 from the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 429.

<sup>111</sup> Expressed as a percentage of the total number of children who enroll in primary education

<sup>114</sup> Lower figure is for the 2003-2004 school year, as reported in Roma Education Fund, *Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund: Background Paper Slovak Republic* (Paris: Roma Education Fund, 2004), pp. 19-20; higher figure is from 2001 and comes from the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 437.

<sup>115</sup> Data for 2008 from Eurydice.

<sup>116</sup> Expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils completing compulsory education

<sup>117</sup> Data for the 2000-2001 school year from the Methodological Centre Prešov, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 424.

<sup>118</sup> Data for 2001 from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 417.

<sup>119</sup> Figure reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 425.



	<i>providing access to tertiary education</i> <sup>120</sup>				
12	<i>Completion of upper secondary education (ISCED 3)</i>		<1-15% <sup>122</sup>	72.1% <sup>123</sup>	
13	<i>Enrolment in post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)</i>				
14	<i>Completion of post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)</i>		0.2% <sup>124</sup>	11% <sup>125</sup>	
15	<i>Enrolment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)</i>		56 <sup>126</sup>		
16	<i>Completion of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)</i>		<i>See Indicator 14</i>	<i>See Indicator 14</i>	

<sup>121</sup> Data for 2001 from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 417.

<sup>120</sup> Expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)

<sup>122</sup> Lower figure from Save the Children, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 431; higher figure reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in Anton Marciničín and Ľubica Marciničinová, *The Cost of Non-Inclusion* (Bratislava: Open Society Foundation, 2009), p. 20.

<sup>123</sup> Data from the 2001 census, cited in EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program, “Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma: Slovakia,” *Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma*, Vol. 2 (Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2007), p. 431.

<sup>124</sup> Figure includes all Roma with completed education ISCED 4 or higher, as reported by UNDP on the basis of field research conducted in 2005, cited in Anton Marciničín and Ľubica Marciničinová, *The Cost of Non-Inclusion* (Bratislava: Open Society Foundation, 2009), p. 20.

<sup>125</sup> Figure includes all persons with completed education ISCED 4 or higher. Data from the 2001 census.

<sup>126</sup> Figure for 1999 reported in Save the Children, *Denied a Future? The Right to Education of Roma/Gypsy & Traveller Children in Europe* (London: Save the Children, 2001), p. 187.



## Annex 2: Administration of Public Education

**Table A2. Administration of public education**

	FUNCTION	RESPONSIBLE ORGANS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
		Early childhood (ages 0-3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher
1	<i>Establishes and closes institutions</i>	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality	Ministry of Education
2	<i>Funds institutions</i>	Municipality	Municipality	⇒ Municipality ⇒ Ministry of Finance	⇒ Municipality ⇒ Ministry of Finance	⇒ Ministry of Finance ⇒ Student fees
3	<i>Decides on admissions</i>	Nursery	Preschool	Primary school	Secondary school	Institution of higher education
4	<i>Sets curriculum</i>	State Pedagogical Institute	State Pedagogical Institute	State Pedagogical Institute	State Pedagogical Institute	Institution of higher education
5	<i>Assigns teachers to institutions</i>	Nursery director	Preschool director	School director	School director	Dean
6	<i>Assesses institutional performance</i>	Nursery director	Preschool director	State School Inspectorate	State School Inspectorate	⇒ Institution of higher education ⇒ Ministry of Education



7	<i>Assesses pupil performance</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	Teacher	Teachers	Teachers	Professors
8	<i>Assesses teacher performance</i>	Nursery director	Preschool director	School director	School director	Dean
9	<i>Assesses director performance</i>	State School Inspectorate	State School Inspectorate	State School Inspectorate	State School Inspectorate	⇒ Faculty council ⇒ University senate
10	<i>Establishes and closes special schools</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	Regional School Office	Regional School Office	Regional School Office	
11	<i>Funds special schools</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	Ministry of Finance	⇒ Regional government ⇒ Ministry of Finance	⇒ Regional government ⇒ Ministry of Finance	
12	<i>Decides on special school admissions</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	⇒ Centre for Pedagogical-Psychological Advising and Prevention ⇒ Special Pedagogical Advising Centre ⇒ Special preschool	⇒ Centre for Pedagogical - Psychological Advising and Prevention ⇒ Special Pedagogical Advising Centre ⇒ Special primary school director ⇒ Child's legal	Special secondary school director	



			director ⇒ Child's legal guardian	guardian		
13	<i>Sets special education curriculum</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	Special preschool	State Pedagogical Institute	State Pedagogical Institute	



### Annex 3: Student Performance on International Assessments

Table A3. Results of PISA 2003-2012

Area	Slovakia 2003		Slovakia 2006		Slovakia 2009		Slovakia 2012		OECD 2012		Difference Slovakia – OECD average (2012)
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
<b>Mathematics</b>	498	3.3	492	2.8	497	3.1	482	3.4	494	0.5	-12
<b>Reading</b>	469	3.1	466	3.1	477	2.5	463	4.2	496	0.5	-33
<b>Science</b>	495	3.7	488	2.6	490	3.0	471	3.6	501	0.5	-30

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development<sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Learning for Tomorrow's World: First Results from PISA 2003* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004); *PISA 2006: Science Competences for Tomorrow's World – Volume 1: Analysis* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007); *PISA 2006: Science Competences for Tomorrow's World – Volume 2: Data/Données* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *PISA 2009 Results: Learning Trends* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010), <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>



**Table A4. Results of TIMSS 1995-2011**

Area	1995		1999		2003		2007		2011		Scale average (2011)	Difference Slovakia – scale average (2011)
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.		
<b>Mathematics</b>	534	3.1	534	4.0	508	3.3	495	4.5	507	3.8	500	+7
<b>Science</b>	532	3.3	535	3.3	517	3.2	526	4.8	532	3.8	500	+32

Source: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center<sup>128</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Ina V.S. Mullis et al., TIMSS 2003 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Chestnut Hill: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2004); Ina V.S. Mullis et al., TIMSS 2003 International Science Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Chestnut Hill: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2004); Michael O. Martin et al., TIMSS 2007 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Boston: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2008); Michael O. Martin et al., TIMSS 2007 International Science Report: Findings from IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study at the Fourth and Eighth Grades (Boston: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, 2008).





## Annex 4: Levels of Engagement for Improving Roma's Education Outcomes in Slovakia

Assistance and Support to the Romani Community	Implementation Support to Educational Authorities	Policy Development with the Government
<p><b>1. Producing Romani professionals in education.</b> Affirmative action measures should be created and implemented to attract Roma into the teaching profession.</p>	<p><b>1. Supporting ongoing developments in education, ensuring that Roma are not left out or jeopardized by them:</b> ⇒ Providing technical assistance to the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre in Prešov in its teacher training activities ⇒ Providing technical assistance to schools in introducing educational content on Romani language and culture in the space allowed by curriculum reform</p>	<p><b>1. Introducing compulsory preschool education.</b> Technical assistance should be provided to state, regional and local governments in developing policy to make free-of-charge, integrated preschool education compulsory and accessible for all children.</p>
<p><b>2. Supporting Romani parents and community leaders in recognizing and engaging key education issues:</b> ⇒ Providing accurate and accessible information on school choices and their consequences for longer-term educational and employment prospects ⇒ Encouraging Romani parents to play an active role in school boards and parent associations ⇒ Detecting and acting on discrimination in schools</p>	<p><b>2. Increasing the focus on quality improvement in the education system:</b> ⇒ Extending coverage of integrated preschool education to Romani communities ⇒ Creating conditions for enrolment of Romani children in integrated, standard primary education ⇒ Applying mechanisms for identifying and reversing inappropriate placement in special education ⇒ Establishing a system of mentoring and additional classes for Romani children in grades 7-9</p>	<p><b>2. Eliminating overrepresentation of Roma in special schools and classes:</b> ⇒ Discontinuing psychological testing as a mechanism for assigning children to special education in preschool and the early years of primary school ⇒ Abolishing special primary schools for children with mild mental disability ⇒ Reviewing and revising the school funding scheme ⇒ Restructuring the system of advising centres ⇒ Collecting and maintaining ethnically</p>



		disaggregated data in conformity with EU standards on data protection
<p><b>3. Building an education support system for Romani children at the family level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Motivating parents to enrol children in preschool education</li> <li>⇒ Creating time and space for homework</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. Improving linkages between education system and social support.</b> An administrative framework for affirmative action should be developed and implemented throughout the country.</p>	<p><b>3. Providing social support for participation in education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Reviewing and revising the level and conditionality of the Child Benefit and Motivation Allowance</li> <li>⇒ Introducing affirmative action for secondary and post-secondary education</li> </ul>
	<p><b>4. Supporting cooperation among Romani NGOs, schools and local government:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Sharing experience</li> <li>⇒ Assistance in joint activities</li> <li>⇒ Facilitating collaboration to overcome segregation in education</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Promoting Romani input in education policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Building the capacity of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities in the area of education</li> <li>⇒ Facilitating dialogue among the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities, the Committee for the Education of Roma and other relevant government institutions on education-related issues</li> </ul>



## **Annex 5: Census Results**

### **Table A5. Population structure by ethnicity (2011 census)**

<http://portal.statistics.sk/files/table-10.pdf> (the table should be download from here)

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2014.



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