



# DEVELOPING INTERVENTION MODELS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Since its establishment in 2005, REF has evolved into an active international non-governmental organization with a mission and ultimate goal to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. To achieve this mission, REF uses five models:

1. Expanding Romani children's access to quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)
2. Improving primary education outcomes for Romani children aged six to fourteen
3. Boosting academic performance and graduation rates from secondary education for Romani pupils
4. Supporting access to tertiary education, improving graduation levels and strengthening identity of Romani university students
5. Bettering employment prospects for young Romani adults through second chance programs for adult education and training

## TYPES OF REF SUPPORT

- **GRANTS** provided to consortia of civil society and public institutions to implement education reform projects
- **REIMBURSABLE GRANTS** provided for bridge funding to ensure efficient implementation of EU-supported education projects
- **SCHOLARSHIPS** provided to Romani students in secondary and tertiary education
- **POLICY ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH** to promote evidence-based models of best practice, introduce innovative methodologies and curriculum reform, and advocate for policies that deliver increased equity in access and outcomes for Roma students
- **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION** REF directly implements large-scale EU-funded and EEA and Norway grants

# ROMA AND EDUCATION IN EUROPE

The Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority estimated at between 10 and 12 million people. Research and surveys confirm that educational attainment gaps between Roma and non-Roma remain large across Europe. Low preschool attendance rates contribute to long-term disadvantages for Roma students. Roma pupils have higher rates of absenteeism and early school leaving. Many Roma attend ethnically segregated schools or classes, and many others are placed in special schools. As a consequence of the economic crisis in Europe, drastic cuts in public expenditure have adversely affected education, with the poorest and most disadvantaged communities hardest hit.

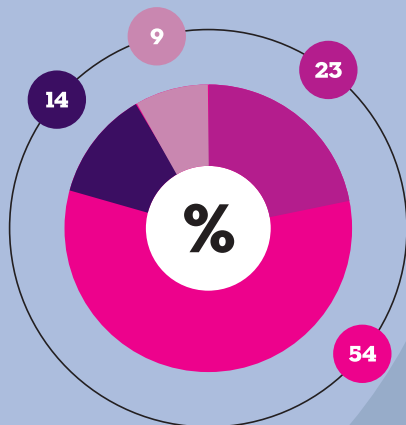
## WHAT MAKES REF UNIQUE?

- REF has an extensive geographic reach, covering 16 countries across Central and Eastern Europe; its strong emphasis on substantive Roma participation; and its range of interventions at all levels in the education cycle, from preschool to post-graduate studies.
- The extent of REF's strong working partnerships with educational institutions, municipalities and ministries, Romani NGOs, national and international organizations and institutions is unmatched.
- REF has a highly efficient and effective mechanism for identifying good projects that can be speedily implemented, monitoring their progress and evaluating their outcomes.
- REF has a proven track record of developing and implementing complex programs in collaboration with governments and civil society.
- REF is uniquely placed to steer change, direct its own funding, and leverage other-source funding to make equal access and equitable educational outcomes a reality for Romani children and young people across Central and Eastern Europe.
- REF has gained extensive experience about the interventions and approaches to Roma education that work in the field.

## REF ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2005 REF reached 5,000 beneficiaries. Ten years later REF's outreach has multiplied twentyfold and the cumulative number of annual beneficiaries exceeds 100,000.

- More than 60,600 children have been supported with direct enrollment in early childhood development programs.
- Early School Leaving programs have reached over 113,000 Romani children in 13 countries of Central and South Eastern Europe.
- Parents are key to the educational success of their children. Through their activities, REF partners have reached out to over 300,000 Romani parents.
- Since 2005 REF has trained more than 30,000 teachers in making school environments more welcoming and inclusive for Romani children.
- Over 4,000 scholarships have been granted annually to Romani students to complete their upper secondary education through the provision of school-based mentoring and tutoring.
- REF university scholarship schemes support around 1,500 students in 15 countries annually.



### SHARE OF REF BENEFICIARIES BY CATEGORY IN 2014

Preschool education - 23%

Primary school - 54%

Secondary school - 14%

Tertiary education - 9%

Štefan Vavrek, recently elected mayor of Rimavská Seč in Slovakia, former REF scholarship beneficiary and project leader of REF-funded Ternipe after-school project featured in EU best practice catalogue *CEDEFOP: 2014*. Štefan's campaign poster is reproduced here.



Alexandru F. pictured with his grandmother in 2011 and in the early childhood development and kindergarten program (center) of REF. In 2014, three years later, Alexandru enrolled in preschool and is proudly sitting in his class in Bihor County, Romania.



*Front page:*

Young Romani pupils who were REF beneficiaries in its early childhood program are now successfully enrolled in primary school in Zborov, Slovakia.



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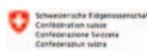
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