



Roma Education Fund

# ROMA EDUCATION FUND

Country Assessment

**ALBANIA**



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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 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 three 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:

- Policymakers 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.

The information presented in the document has been discussed with representatives of governments and civil society in Albania in order to ensure that the document realistically reflects the actual situation and that the recommendations made are viable. The document reflects the situation at the time when the document was produced. Many Roma Decade countries are experiencing relatively rapid changes, and REF plans to update these assessments on a regular basis.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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 current editor of the Country Assessment series is Mihai Surdu.

The main authors of this document are Gjergji Sinani and Bujar Taho. They received contributions from Nino Chelidze, Eben Friedman, Zoe Gray, Marius Taba, and Marsela Taho, as well as from the participants at the roundtable held in Tirana on November 9, 2010.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ROMA IN ALBANIA

Because Albania's 2001 census did not include questions on ethnicity or linguistic identity, no official figures exist about the true size of Albania's Romani population. Unofficial estimates of the number of Roma in Albania vary from 80,000 to 150,000, or between 2.5 and 4.7 percent of the total population. While there are also no official data on the size of Albania's Egyptian population, NGO estimates exceed 200,000. Although many non-Roma and Roma think of Egyptians as Roma, the members of this group consider themselves distinct from Roma on historical, linguistic, and cultural grounds. To the extent that Egyptians and others in Albania face problems in accessing quality education similar to those encountered by Roma, the members of these groups also constitute candidates for inclusion in activities supported by the Roma Education Fund (REF).

## EDUCATION

Although the Albanian government adopted the *National Strategy for the Improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority* in 2003 that included various provisions in the area of education, a 2007 progress report showed very little progress in implementation. Moreover, sustained efforts to reform the education system in Albania began only in 2008.

Roma's low enrolment rates constitute the most pressing problem for the education of Roma in Albania. And those Romani children who do attend school frequently encounter discrimination, including but not limited to seating Roma separately from other children. There are few qualified teachers of Romani origin and only one Rom employed in key institutions of the education system. Additionally, attention to Roma as an integral part of the history and culture of Albania is absent in general education and teacher training curricula.

Important advances relevant to the education of Roma in Albania include the adoption of policies aimed at ensuring that all pupils have access to textbooks, the (re-)construction of facilities providing preschool and primary education, the reduction of administrative barriers to school enrolment, and the introduction of a second-chance program for out-of-school youth.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

REF funding in Albania over the next three years will take into account the following priorities:

- Securing access for Romani children to quality, integrated preschool education.
- Preventing early school leaving through measures including (but not necessarily limited to) raising parental awareness about the importance of education, securing material support (e.g., meals, school supplies, textbooks) needed for participation in education, providing after-school support in the early years of primary education and promoting intercultural education among teaching staff and school administration.
- Supporting pilot projects in the area of adult education as a means of building the capacity of Romani parents to support their children's education while contributing to their own employability.
- Developing academic tutoring support for Roma in secondary and higher education, drawing on REF's experiences in Hungary, Macedonia, and Serbia.

The major themes of REF's research and policy activities in Albania will include:

- A qualitative and/or quantitative assessment of the representation of Roma in special education.
- An overview of local government initiatives for improving the educational situation of Roma.

The developmental priorities of the REF Scholarship Programs in Albania will include:

- Increasing the number of RMUSP scholars, with an emphasis on rural and other marginalized areas.
- Beneficiary networking.
- Promoting scholar participation in other REF activities.



# THE ROMANI POPULATION IN ALBANIA

## HISTORY AND POPULATION

In the absence of reliable data establishing when Roma arrived on Albanian territory, educated guesses range between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> As is the case elsewhere in the Balkans, although Roma in Albania have usually lived on the periphery of society, as a general rule they have not been the targets of policies aimed at eliminating them. While there is extremely little documentary evidence concerning the treatment of Roma in Albania during the Second World War, it appears that the Romani populations were spared wholesale extermination as a result of foot-dragging on the part of local fascist authorities.<sup>2</sup> Roma had no official status as a distinct group in the Socialist People's Republic of Albania.

Although Roma in present-day Albania are recognized as an ethno-linguistic minority, the census of 2001 did not include questions on ethnicity or linguistic identity. Unofficial estimates of the number of Roma in Albania vary from 80,000 to 150,000, between 2.5 and 4.7 percent of the total population of 3.8 million. The estimated growth rate of the Roma population is three percent, higher than that of the Albanian population reported at about 1.9 percent.<sup>3</sup> Roma are spread almost all over the country's territory (mainly in segregated quarters) or in villages close to the towns. The greatest number of Roma are concentrated in central and southeastern Albania in the areas of Tirana, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Berat, Korça, Pogradec, Bilisht, Gjirokastra, Delvina, Kruja, and Shkodra.<sup>4</sup>

Although many non-Roma and Roma think of Egyptians as Roma, the members of this group consider themselves distinct from Roma on historical, linguistic, and cultural grounds. Unlike Roma, Egyptians speak only Albanian. There are no official data but Egyptian NGOs claim their number is over 200,000. The Egyptians have a relatively better level of education than Roma but about a quarter have no education.<sup>5</sup> To the extent that Egyptians and others in Albania face problems in accessing quality education similar to those encountered by Roma, the members of these groups also constitute candidates for inclusion in activities supported by the Roma Education Fund (REF).

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Donald Kenrick, *Gypsies: From India to the Mediterranean* (Toulouse: Gypsy Research Center/CRDP Midi Pyrénées, 1993); John Kolsti, "Albanian Gypsies: The Silent Survivors," in David Crowe and John Kolsti (eds.), *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1991); George C. Soulis, "The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 15 (1961): 142–65.

<sup>2</sup> John Kolsti, "Albanian Gypsies: The Silent Survivors" in David Crowe and John Kolsti (eds.), *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Program in Albania, *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania* (Tirana: UNDP Albania, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Council of Ministers, *National Strategy for Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority* (Tirana: Official Gazette, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Development Program in Albania, *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania* (Tirana: UNDP Albania, 2006).

## THE ROMANI POPULATION

### Poverty and unemployment

The average income per capita for the Romani community is around 3.3 times less than for the non-Roma population, and as much as 80 percent of the Roma community lives below this poverty line.<sup>6</sup> The average income per month of a Romani household according to the survey was EUR 68, compared to EUR 174.5 for non-Roma living near Roma.<sup>7</sup> The monthly income of 51 percent of Roma does not exceed EUR 50, whereas half of the non-Romani population earns incomes over EUR 150 per month.<sup>8</sup> Available information suggests that most Egyptians also live in poverty.

As a result of high illiteracy (48 percent among Roma compared to three percent among non-Roma), an extremely low level of education and qualification, and discrimination, Roma experience a higher rate of unemployment and long-term unemployment compared to the non-Romani population.<sup>9</sup> Eight percent of surveyed majority members were unemployed and 24 percent of Roma. Furthermore, women and young people are particularly negatively affected. The length of unemployment among Roma is a particular cause for concern, with 73 percent of unemployed Roma never employed and long-term unemployment much higher for Roma who have a low level of education.<sup>10</sup> The informal sector is the main source of jobs. Roma mostly do unqualified, part-time, or casual jobs, including trading used clothes, performing music, recycling cans and scrap iron, agriculture, and construction work.<sup>11</sup>

### Health

Official data on the status of the health of Roma in Albania are few, but it is almost certain that the health of Roma has deteriorated to a greater extent since the regime change than for the rest of the population over the last two decades. Figures show a high incidence of pulmonary diseases and asthma among Roma.<sup>12</sup> There is a lack of access to public health services as a result of not having civil registration documents, which is itself a result of the fact that most Roma are either employed in the informal sector or unemployed without being registered as such.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8; Halil Dunder et al., *Poverty and Education in Albania: Who Benefits from Public Spending* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Development Program in Albania, *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania* (Tirana: UNDP Albania, 2006), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

### Housing

Housing conditions have worsened for many Romani families since the regime change, with many families that left villages and settled in the periphery of several cities building shacks and living without the necessary infrastructure and at risk of eviction.<sup>13</sup>

### Representation

Roma have been unable to get their representatives into the parliament, and the only party representing national minorities has never supported any Roma candidate for general elections. Moreover, there is no legal regulation for representation of national or linguistic minorities in local government units. Nonetheless, a few Roma are currently members of local councils (e.g., in Elbasan, Fier, and Tirana), with most Romani elected officials coming from the NGO sector.

Only a few Roma are employed or elected within public administration at the central and local levels. Further, most of those employed in public institutions occupy positions of low rank.

<sup>13</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *ECRI Report on Albania (Fourth Monitoring Cycle)* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2010).

# GOVERNMENT AND DONOR COMMITMENTS

## GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Although policy toward Roma in Albania and the collection of ethnically disaggregated data to guide such policy got off to a slow start, recent years have brought some improvement in both regards.

### Overall legal framework

Albania has ratified most of the major instruments concerning the protection of human rights, with the notable exception of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Albanian Constitution provides for equality before the law and prohibits unjust discrimination on several grounds including ethnicity. It allows for just discrimination whenever there is a legitimate aim and objective reason, leaving room for affirmative action.<sup>14</sup> In this direction, Albanian legislation on social assistance simplifies access to benefits for Romani families.<sup>15</sup> The Criminal Code makes any discrimination by a public official based upon ethnic grounds an offense, with sanctions ranging from fines to five years imprisonment.<sup>16</sup> The Labor Code also prohibits discrimination, and the Code of Administrative Procedure embodies the principle of equal treatment in interaction between public administration officials and national minorities.<sup>17</sup>

The Law on Protection Against all Forms of Discrimination in the Republic of Albania, which came into force in March 2010, prohibits discrimination on several grounds including ethnicity and language in the areas of employment, education, and a service provision. Moreover, the section on education prohibits discrimination in educational institutions, and authorizes temporary “special measures” to overcome historical discrimination and promote equality in education, while a Commissioner for Equal Protection has been established to review complaints and is empowered to impose sanctions such as fines on violators of the provisions of this law, so far there has been no case in the Albanian courts to test the effectiveness of these norms.

<sup>14</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Albania*, Article 18.

<sup>15</sup> See Ligj nr. 9355, datë 14.2.2005 për përcaktimin e kritereve, procedurave dhe masave për ndihmën ekonomike [Law no. 9355 of 14.2.2005 on the Determination of Criteria, Procedures and Measures for Economic Assistance]. *Fletorja zyrtare e Republikës së Shqipërisë*, no. 98.

<sup>16</sup> Law no. 7895 of 27.1.1995, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania*, no. 2, Article 253.

<sup>17</sup> Law no. 8485 of 12.5.1999, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Albania*, no. 19, Article 11.

Another important legal step was taken with the introduction of the Law on Child Protection of November 2010. This law provides for the right to children belonging to national minorities to freely express their ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity.

Currently in the process of being re-drafted, the Law on Pre-University Education of 1995 provides for free education, as well as separate classes or schooling for ethnic minorities in their own language.<sup>18</sup> In practice, however, these provisions are not applied to Roma as a result of an insufficient number of qualified Romani-language instructors and the absence of a curriculum on Romani language or culture.

### Measures targeting Roma

Roma are represented in the State Committee on Minorities in the Council of Ministers, which serves as an advisory body at the prime minister's office. To date, however, this body has not exerted significant influence on policy.

The Albanian government adopted the *National Strategy for the Improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority* in 2003. The Strategy addresses five broad areas, including education, where it gives priority to Albanian- language support classes, provides for mother-tongue teaching in areas with large Romani population, and promotes scholarships and subsidies as a means to improving education for Roma. Although NGOs were involved in preparing the *Strategy* and the final document attends to youth and gender issues, some formulations in the *Strategy* are problematic, such as the proposal to study the "Roma way of living" with the objective to "change it". Also problematic are the absence of baseline data and of clear responsibilities and budget, with Romani NGOs in many cases assigned responsibility for implementing measures contained in the *Strategy*. In 2007 a progress report prepared by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities with the support of UNDP showed very little progress in implementing the *Strategy* and called for its revision.<sup>19</sup> Two years later, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance called on the Albanian government to increase resource allocations for both central-level monitoring and local-level implementation of the *Strategy*, as well as to better involve all relevant ministries, local authorities, and the Roma community.<sup>20</sup>

Albania joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion in July 2008. An inter-ministerial committee led by the Deputy Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities worked with UNDP to prepare the Decade Action Plan, which the government presents as an operational plan complementing the *Strategy*. In effect, the Action Plan reviews and updates the *Strategy* and takes into account various social and economic studies providing baseline information

<sup>18</sup> Estevan Ikonomi, Bardhyl Musai, and Kseanela Sotirofski, *Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity: Albania Country Report* (Turin: European Training Foundation, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Rajmonda Duka, *Progress Report on the National Strategy "On Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma Community"* (Tirana: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *ECRI Report on Albania (Fourth Monitoring Cycle)* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2010), p. 29.

for each of the Decade priority areas. Along with education, employment, health, and housing, the Albanian Decade Action Plan has two more fields: cultural heritage and public administration. The objectives were reviewed by each of the line ministries in consultation with Romani NGOs and the representatives of the local government, and each action is followed by clear indicators. Significant improvements over the *Strategy* include a division of responsibilities for implementation and monitoring, as well as the inclusion of information on the timeframe, costing, and funding sources. Also boding well for implementation of the Action Plan at the local level is the establishment in April 2010 of regional committees for social services.

The *National Strategy for the Improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority* also receives specific mention in the *National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007–2013*, which also promises support for professional training programs for Roma.<sup>21</sup>

## DONOR-FUNDED PROGRAMS

Albania has received financial assistance under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) since 2007, with the European Commission allocating a total of EUR 70.7 million in 2008. In the previous two years, foreign aid in support of education and vocational qualification came from the EU (mainly through CARDS), as well as from the Austrian and Swiss governments. Providing support to higher education in this same period were the Council of Europe Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, and the World Bank as well as the Italian government. From 2000–2005, on the other hand, donor support focused largely on construction and refurbishment of school facilities, with a total of approximately USD 18 million provided during this period by donors including Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Open Society Foundation for Albania, UNICEF, and the World Bank.<sup>22</sup>

Since 1998, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has funded the project called “Alternated Education and Vocational Training” (CEFA). Implemented by the NGO “Help for Children” (*Ndihmë për Fëmijët*) in partnership with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, the project focuses on integration of Romani children and their families through formal/vocational education, protection, and social inclusion. In the current phase of the project, approximately 320 Romani children attend public schools in the cities of Berat, Elbasan, Korça, and Tirana, with another 160 Roma expected to benefit from certified vocational trainings. The project’s budget for 2009–2011 is EUR 1,450,000.

21 Council of Ministers, *National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013* (Tirana: Council of Ministers, 2008).

22 Ministry of Education and Science, *Education for All/Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) Proposal* (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science, 2005).

Another significant ongoing initiative is the three-year joint UN program “Empower Vulnerable Communities in Albania.” Launched in April 2010 with a budget of USD 2,700,000, the program is being implemented in Roma and Egyptian populated areas in the regions of Durres, Elbasan, Fier, and Tirana with the aims of supporting community participation in local decision-making; enhancing community access to social services and rights; and institutional strengthening for social inclusion. Among the measures foreseen toward these ends are the formation of a network of mediators on health, child protection, and education.

No precise data are available on total annual investments in the education of Roma in Albania. Additionally, until recently there was little sharing of information and coordination among donors active with Roma in Albania.



# EDUCATION SYSTEM

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Sustained efforts to reform the education system in Albania began only in 2008, with decentralization still in the early stages. At the central level, the Institute for Pedagogical Research coordinates the curriculum development processes. Additionally, the Primary and Preschool Education Sector in the Department for Curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Science deals with issues related to the education of minorities in general and follows the implementation of the *National Strategy for the Improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority* in particular.

At the regional level, Regional Education Directorates under the Ministry of Education and Science operate with a mission of advising and inspecting the schools. At the local level, local authorities are responsible for building and maintaining school infrastructure. Regional Education Directorates and local authorities are expected to cooperate with one another as well with Romani NGOs in the creation and implementation of programs to support the education of Romani children.

Available information suggests that the only Rom employed in the governance structure for education in Albania is the head of the Cultural Department in the Regional Education Directorate in Fier.

## FINANCING

Government spending on education accounted for 3.5 percent of GDP in 2008.<sup>23</sup> This places Albania well below the OECD average of 5.7 percent.<sup>24</sup> School operating expenses, including maintenance of buildings, water, electricity, and telephone, are covered from a central transfer from the Ministry of Finance to units of local government in the form of a block grant. This grant, the size of which is based on population, area, and an urbanization coefficient, is not earmarked for education, and the units of local government are also expected to finance other public services from it.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Estevan Ikononi, Bardhyl Musai, and Kseanela Sotirofski, *Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity: Albania Country Report* (Turin: European Training Foundation, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Halil Dundar et al., *Poverty and Education in Albania: Who Benefits from Public Spending* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005).

Whereas decisions regarding staff allocation to schools are made by the Ministry of Education and Science, decisions on distribution of supplies and teaching materials are made at the regional level, while decisions on expenses for operation and maintenance and small repairs are taken by units of local government. This fragmentation has created some challenges, in many cases generating inefficiencies and unequal distribution of resources.

Primary and secondary education in public institutions is free of charge for all pupils. Pre-primary and post-secondary education are neither free nor mandatory.

## FACILITIES

Between 2004 and 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science financed the construction of 31 new schools and the rehabilitation of 376 others throughout the country. As a result of the block grant scheme described in the previous section, spending on education varies significantly by locality. At the same time, fiscal decentralization has created opportunities for local authorities to use their own funds for the reconstruction of kindergartens and schools when they have been able to mobilize them, with five kindergartens reconstructed in Tirana between 2004 and 2006. Additionally, since 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science has awarded grants for funding education facilities on the basis of competitions prioritizing vulnerable groups, including Roma.

## EDUCATION CYCLES AND PROGRESSION CRITERIA

While preschool education is not compulsory in Albania, under serious consideration is a plan to make one year of pre-primary education mandatory. Primary education lasts nine years and is mandatory. Secondary education, which is not mandatory, is delivered in three types of school: general high school, professional (vocational), and professional (vocational) technical. Exit examinations are administered at the end of grades nine and twelve.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Although there are no ethnically disaggregated data that would allow the proportion of Roma in special education to be calculated, available information suggests that Roma may not be overrepresented in special education in Albania to the same extent that they are in many other Decade countries.

## MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Public education in Albania is offered in Albanian, Greek, and Macedonian, with private institutions offering instruction in other languages. Although Romanes is the first language of nearly all Roma in the country, Romani pupils most often attend instruction in Albanian. Moreover, information on Romani history and culture is rarely included in school curricula despite the possibility for schools and parents' boards to adapt curricula to local conditions, and the number of qualified Romani teaching staff is extremely low.

Over 90 percent of Romani pupils students reported being labelled "Gypsy" or "Black" by their non-Romani peers or teachers, while more than 80 percent of Romani children reported sitting in the middle or the last row in class.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, schools in areas highly populated by Roma are sometimes labelled "Gypsy schools," with non-Romani parents accordingly transferring their children to other schools. On the other hand, Regional Education Inspectorates run training sessions on intercultural education and non-discrimination, and Romani parents are increasingly present on parents' boards. Still, the lack of space devoted in preservice teacher training programs to developing competencies in inclusive education remains a problem, as do the low entry standards and social status of the teaching profession.

## SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Albania's *National Strategy of Pre-University Education* provides for the establishment of preparatory classes for children from groups in need (including Roma) entering the first year of primary education.<sup>27</sup> According to data from the Ministry of Education and Science, there were 36 Romani children enrolled in such classes in the 2009–2010 academic year. In similar fashion, the 2005 *National Strategy and Action Plan for Children* calls for scholarships to be offered to ensure the participation of Romani children in compulsory education, but no scholarships have been specifically set aside for Roma and there is no information as to how many Romani children have benefited.<sup>28</sup> Finally, while the units of local government are responsible for providing transportation in order to enable children and youth living far from schools to participate in education, the conditioning of this service on the availability of funds has meant that only three local governments have provided transportation for a total of 109 Romani children.

<sup>26</sup> Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e femijeve rome ne Shqiperi (Educational situation of Romani children in Albania)* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Education and Science, *National Strategy of Pre-University Education 2009–2013* (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> See Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, *National Strategy and Action Plan for Children* (Tirana: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, 2005).

Since 2003, there have been several government policies to ensure access to textbooks for pupils in primary education from families in need. By the current scheme, initiated in 2009, the costs of textbooks are to be reimbursed in full for pupils from families receiving social assistance. In practice, however, the books were often received late and most Romani parents did not qualify for the reimbursement, either because they are not registered as unemployed or because they do not meet the criteria for social assistance. Moreover, some parents who qualified for the reimbursement scheme reportedly were unable to advance the funds necessary to purchase the books in the first place. Also reported were delays in providing the reimbursement, such that the scheme cannot thus far be considered a success from the standpoint of promoting Roma's full participation in education.

In several regions of Albania, children and youth between the ages of six and sixteen who have dropped out of school before completing primary education are eligible to participate in the "Second Chance" program of the Ministry of Education and Science.<sup>29</sup> Participants in the program undergo a year of intensive instruction to enable them to re-enter standard classes the following year and continue their primary education. Additional Albanian language instruction is also offered through the program. While the program is in principle open to all ethnicities, the majority of participants are Roma. In some localities, problems in attitudes toward Roma displayed by teachers engaged to provide instruction for the program have led to additional teacher training and the mobilization of Romani teaching assistants.

At the level of secondary education, despite provisions in documents of the Ministry of Education and Science for subsidized textbooks and for raising parents' and children's awareness about the importance of education, there is little information available on what has actually been done to support Roma's participation in secondary education. At the level of university education, on the other hand, the Ministry of Education and Science set aside a total of 30 places in public universities for Romani students in the 2010–2011 academic year.

## PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

Data collected by UNICEF in 2007 indicate that 62 percent of Roma aged three to sixteen do not attend schools or kindergartens.<sup>30</sup> With regard to preschool education in particular, UNDP reports a participation rate of 13.5 percent among children age three to five.<sup>31</sup> School attendance among Roma age six to sixteen varies considerably by region, but the state-wide average is low, at 46.5 percent for males and 44.5 percent for females.<sup>32</sup> By way of contrast, the Ministry of Education and Science reports a compulsory education completion

<sup>29</sup> See Ministry of Education and Science, *Instruction no. 34 of 08.12.2004 on the Implementation of the Second Chance Project for the Education of Children Who Have Dropped Out of School and Children Who Are Housebound for Blood Feud Reasons* (Tirana: Ministry of Education and Science, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri (Educational situation of Romani children in Albania)* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Development Program in Albania, *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania* (Tirana: UNDP Albania, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri [Educational Situation of Romani Children in Albania]* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 16.

rate of over 99 percent for the general population. Although attendance rates are higher among Romani girls aged six to nine than among their male counterparts, the situation changes after age ten.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the highest grade completed by Roma aged six to sixteen is shown in the table below, the overall proportion of the Romani population with completed secondary or higher education is approximately seven percent.

TABLE 1. Highest grade completed by Roma aged six to sixteen

Age	Highest grade completed										
	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6	73.1%	26.9%									
7	51.0%	41.3%	7.7%								
8	37.5%	21.7%	34.7%	6.1%							
9	30.9%	7.9%	25.7%	33.1%	2.6%						
10	34.2%	7.2%	11.1%	23.5%	20.5%	3.4%					
11	29.0%	6.3%	8.6%	16.2%	19.5%	17.8%	2.6%				
12	26.8%	3.7%	9.5%	16.1%	16.8%	12.1%	12.4%	2.7%			
13	31.2%	3.5%	5.7%	13.9%	10.4%	8.8%	14.8%	11.0%	6%		
14	34.6%	4.3%	7.0%	8.9%	12.8%	7.3%	7.6%	8.9%	8.6%		
15	42.9%	4.0%	6.3%	6.3%	7.5%	7.1%	7.1%	3.2%	13.9%	1.6%	
16	44.8%	2.0%	3.6%	5.2%	9.9%	8.7%	4.0%	4.8%	11.9%	3.2%	2.0%

SOURCE: UNICEF and Save the Children.<sup>34</sup>

As shown in the table below, literacy rates among Roma and Egyptians are low, particularly when compared with Albania's overall adult literacy rate of 99 percent.<sup>35</sup>

TABLE 2. Literacy rates among Roma and Egyptians in Albania

Age group	Literacy rate	
	Roma	Egyptians
7–20	36%	76%
15–16	57%	No data
20–40	60%	89%

SOURCE: UNICEF and Save the Children.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See United Nations Development Program, "Adult Literacy Rate (Percent Aged 15 and Above)," available at <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/89.html>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Available information suggests that the major barrier to Roma's participation in education in Albania is the family's financial situation, as a result of which child labor is often prioritized over school attendance.<sup>37</sup> Also common are seasonal labor migrations, particularly to Greece, which usually result in children missing at least part of the school year. Further complicating matters is the lack of data on Roma in Albania in general and on Roma in the education sector in particular, which reduces the potential effectiveness of activities to support Roma's education.

## PROGRESS AND WEAKNESSES IN EDUCATION FOR ROMA IN ALBANIA

While significant advances are evident in relation to the education of Roma in Albania, many issues remain to be addressed in order to bring a lasting reduction in the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma.

### Areas of progress

Important advances relevant to the education of Roma in Albania in recent years include:

- General improvements to the education system affect all children, such as the increase in teachers' salaries, renovation of laboratories, and extension of compulsory education to nine years.
- The adoption of policies aimed at ensuring that all pupils have access to textbooks.
- The reconstruction of some schools serving areas largely inhabited by Roma Roma.
- The adoption of the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion.
- The increase in the number of preschool facilities.
- The adoption of a regulation to allow children without civil registration documents to enroll in school.
- The introduction of the Second Chance program for out-of-school youth.

### Remaining weaknesses

From the standpoint of quality education for Roma, the most significant weaknesses in the current system of education in Albania relate to the following:

- The extremely low rates of coverage of Roma at all levels of education, which exacerbates exclusion and leaves children vulnerable to trafficking.
- Discrimination against Romani children in schools, including but not limited to seating Roma separately from other children.
- Inattention to Roma in general education and teacher training curricula as an integral part of the history and culture of Albania.
- The absence of qualified Romani teaching staff.
- The persistence of administrative barriers to Roma's access to education.

<sup>37</sup> See United Nations Development Program in Albania, *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania* (Tirana: UNDP Albania, 2006).

- The absence of an adequate database on the Romani population in general and the lack of systematic collection of data on Romani pupils in particular as a basis for the design and monitoring of appropriate measure to target the most significant barriers to Roma's education.
- The lack of a unified quality-control mechanism for assessing the various preschool programs for Romani children.
- Insufficient cooperation by education authorities and schools with Romani parents.





# REF IN ALBANIA

## PROJECTS

As of end 2010, REF had received fourteen project proposals from Albania, five of which had been approved. The total REF funding for these projects is approximately EUR 421,000.

From 2006 to 2008, UNICEF Albania and Amarodrom implemented a project with REF's support that focused on advocacy to improve the implementation of the Roma Strategy, an awareness raising campaign about the importance of registering births for education and increasing involvement of Romani children in preschool education. Seven Romani NGOs and 200 teachers, five district administrations, and a number of Romani community leaders were involved in this project. The project was evaluated by REF as a best practice. In the final monitoring visit REF staff noted that challenges included the need to pay attention to ethnic balance and communicate with non-Romani parents. UNICEF Albania advocated successfully for recommendations which focus on social inclusion to become part of the *National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007–2013*. Other positive results include:

- Birth certificates issued to 130 newborn Roma, with an additional 1,000 Romani adults made aware of the importance of registering births.
- 150 children attending preschool institutions, with a total of 500 Romani families informed about the benefits of preschool and primary education.
- 1,000 children benefited from new methodologies for multicultural teaching.

Also receiving REF support in Albania is the NGO Romani Baxt's work to promote access to mainstream education for Romani children in Tirana and Fier. The project provides additional classes, a summer school, and raises awareness about birth and school registration to parents. In its first phase, which ran from January 2009 to February 2010, the project succeeded in enrolling 53 children in public primary schools, also providing 89 children with after-school instruction. The project's second phase aims at improving further on these results and runs through August 2011.

The third initiative funded by REF in Albania supported a fellowship program for Romani and Egyptian students at the Center for Political Studies of the European University of Tirana in 2006 and 2007. The Center won the approval of the university to provide two to four scholarships for Romani/Egyptian students every academic year. As a result, there are over 10 Romani/Egyptian students studying the European University of Tirana. Starting in April 2009, Save the Children Albania has implemented a project supporting the development of inclusive education in four schools and four kindergartens in two pilot regions of Albania inhabited by a considerable number

of Romani/Egyptian children. REF staff undertook a monitoring visit in June 2010 and found that the implementers have been successful at integrating children into the mainstream schools. In one of the project localities, Gjirokastra, a school facility titled “Together” has been established as a community initiative, attended by 74 children of whom 20 are Roma and 10 are Egyptians. Among the challenges for the remainder of project implementation will be to transfer the model of cooperation between public authorities and civil society in Gjirokastra to other regions of the country.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

REF extended its higher education Scholarship Programs to Albania in 2008. For the 2008–2009 academic year, all four of the applications for the Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) were approved, with ten of the thirteen received applications (including the four grantees from 2008–2009) approved for the 2009–2010 academic year. For the 2010–2011 academic year, the number of applications increased to 31, of which seventeen were approved (including seven renewals).

Scholars supported through RMUSP receive a monthly stipend of EUR 80 during the ten-month academic year to cover basic living costs and some other study-related costs. Students who pay tuition fees are eligible to receive a supplement proportionate to the fee. REF Scholarship Program expenditures in Albania to date total approximately EUR 27,750.<sup>38</sup>

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

REF funding in Albania over the next three years will take into account the following priorities:

- Securing access for Romani children to quality, integrated preschool education.
- Preventing early school leaving through measures including (but not necessarily limited to) raising parental awareness about the importance of education, securing material support (e.g., meals, school supplies, textbooks) needed for participation in education, providing after-school support in the early years of primary education and promoting intercultural education among teaching staff and school administration.
- Supporting pilot projects in the area of adult education as a means of building the capacity of Romani parents to support their children’s education while contributing to their own employability.
- Developing academic tutoring support for Roma in secondary and higher education, drawing on REF’s experiences in Hungary, Macedonia, and Serbia.

<sup>38</sup> USD 4,000 in 2008–2009, EUR 8,800 in 2009–2010 and EUR 15,930 in 2010–2011.

In pursuing the substantive priorities listed above, REF will also attend to developing the capacity of civil society, promoting coordination among donors active with Roma in Albania, and leveraging funding from central and local governments. Additionally, to the extent that Egyptians and others in Albania face problems in accessing quality education similar to those encountered by Roma, the members of these groups also constitute candidates for inclusion in activities supported by REF.

### REF research and policy analysis priorities

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

- *A methodologically grounded qualitative and/or quantitative assessment of the representation of Roma in special education.* Following on similar studies conducted by or in cooperation with REF in other Decade countries, the findings of this assessment could provide a basis for designing measures in cooperation with the Albanian government to address the possible overrepresentation of Romani children in special education, as well as for setting an additional priority for REF project funding.
- *An overview of local government initiatives for improving the educational situation of Roma.* The identification of municipalities which have taken steps to promote quality, integrated education for local Romani communities would serve as a basis for networking and support.

In addition to undertaking the Albania-specific activities listed above, REF will share information and materials generated in the framework of the EU-funded multi-country pilot project “A Good Start,” which REF leads from June 2010 through April 2012 in Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia.

### REF Scholarship Programs

Beyond the administration of existing scholarships, the developmental priorities of the REF Scholarship Programs in Albania will include:

- *Increasing the number of RMUSP scholars.* Outreach with an emphasis on rural and other marginalized areas should be undertaken through the advising centres operated by the Open Society Foundation for Albania in Elbasan, Gjirokastra, Korça, and Shkodra, as well as through print and electronic media.
- *Beneficiary networking.* The establishment of centralized networking infrastructure should be complemented by consultation with beneficiaries of the Scholarship Programs in Albania as potential network members about the roles and functions such a network should fill, with in-country and/or international launching activities to be designed accordingly.
- *Promoting scholar participation in other REF activities.* Scholarship Program grantees with strong academic standing should be encouraged for their personal-professional development (but not as a condition for receiving scholarship support) to participate in non-academic activities organized by REF, including but not limited to joining project monitoring missions in their countries of residence.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

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

### **Legal, financial, and administrative changes**

- Revision of the current textbook provision policy to eliminate or reduce the economic burden imposed by the reimbursement scheme.
- Introduction of feeding programs in schools serving communities inhabited largely by impoverished Roma.

### **Key education indicators (baseline data)**

- *Enrolment in preschool education among members of impoverished Romani communities.* According to the Ministry of Education and Science, there were 516 Romani children enrolled in public kindergartens in the 2010–2011 school year.
- *Roma's completion rates in primary education.* According to the Ministry of Education and Science, 304 Romani children completed primary education in the 2010–2011 school year.
- *Roma's enrolment in upper-secondary and post-secondary education.* Data from the Ministry of Education and Science for the 2010–2011 school year indicate that 56 Roma enrolled in upper-secondary education, with a total of 85 Roma in tertiary education.

### **Social cohesion**

- Reduced discrimination in the classroom as a result of improved attitudes and behaviors of teachers and school directors towards Romani children.





# 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 <sup>39</sup>	Unofficial estimate	Official data <sup>40</sup>	Unofficial estimate
1 Use of early care and education services (ages 0–3)	–	–	–	–
2 Enrollment in pre-primary education (ISCED 0)	516	13.5% <sup>41</sup> 148 <sup>42</sup>	51%	–
3 Enrollment in first year of primary education (ISCED 1)	547	27% <sup>43</sup>	37,632	–
4 School-age children in school (ISCED 1 and 2)	2,888	45.6% <sup>44</sup>	399,504	–
5 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the first cycle of compulsory education	177	54% <sup>45</sup>	0.28% <sup>46</sup>	–
6 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the second cycle of compulsory education <sup>47</sup>	66	54% <sup>48</sup>	0.65%	–
7 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the third cycle of compulsory education (if applicable)	–	–	–	–

<sup>39</sup> All data in this column were provided by the Ministry of Education and Science and are for the 2010–2011 school year.

<sup>40</sup> All data in this column were provided by the Ministry of Education and Science. Except where otherwise noted, the data are for the 2010–2011 school year.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Development Program in Albania, *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania* (Tirana: UNDP Albania, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri (Educational situation of Romani children in Albania)* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri (Educational situation of Romani children in Albania)* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 11. The figure in this cell is the percentage of Romani children who enroll in primary education that does not complete compulsory education.

<sup>46</sup> The figure in this cell is the percentage of the total number of children who enroll in primary education that do not complete the first cycle of compulsory education.

<sup>47</sup> Expressed as a percentage of the total number of children who enroll in primary education

<sup>48</sup> Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri (Educational situation of Romani children in Albania)* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 11. The figure in this cell is the percentage of Romani children who enroll in primary education that does not complete compulsory education.

INDICATOR (%)	ROMA	GENERAL POPULATION		
	Official data	Unofficial estimate	Official data	Unofficial estimate
8 Pupils in compulsory education (ISCED 1 and 2) attending special schools and classes	–	–	200	–
9 Pupils completing compulsory education in terminal lower secondary programs (ISCED 2C)	417	–	209	–
10 Graduates of compulsory education enrolling in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	22 <sup>49</sup>	5% <sup>50</sup>	118,306	–
11 Enrollment in upper secondary technical or vocational education (ISCED 3C) not providing access to tertiary education	<i>Not applicable</i>			
12 Completion of upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	15	4.3% <sup>51</sup>	–	–
13 Enrollment in post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	–	–	–	–
14 Completion of post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	–	–	–	–
15 Enrollment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	85	–	134,877 <sup>52</sup>	–
16 Completion of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	–	0.2% <sup>53</sup>	82,358 <sup>54</sup>	–

49 The numbers of Roma in the second and third years of secondary education during the 2010–2011 school year were nineteen and fifteen, respectively.

50 Adem Tamo and Theodhori Karaj, *Situata arsimore e fëmijëve romë në Shqipëri (Educational situation of Romani children in Albania)* (Tirana: UNICEF and Save the Children, 2007), p. 11.

51 Data from the United Nations Development Program's 2005 survey "Vulnerable Groups in Central and South Eastern Europe," cited in Open Society Institute, *Monitoring Education for Roma: A Statistical Baseline for Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe* (New York: Open Society Institute, 2006), p. 15.

52 Data for the 2009–2010 school year.

53 Data from the United Nations Development Program's 2005 survey "Vulnerable Groups in Central and South Eastern Europe," cited in Open Society Institute, *Monitoring Education for Roma: A Statistical Baseline for Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe* (New York: Open Society Institute, 2006), p. 21.

54 Data for the 2009–2010 school year.

# 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 Establishes and closes institutions	– Local government – Ministry of Health	– Local government – Ministry of Education Science	– Local government – Ministry of Education Science	– Local government – Ministry of Education Science	– Council of Ministers
2 Funds institutions	– Local government	– Local government – Ministry of Education Science	– Local government – Ministry of Education Science	– Local government – Ministry of Education Science	– University rectorate
3 Decides on admissions	– Local government	– Regional Education Directorate <sup>55</sup>	– Regional Education Directorate <sup>56</sup>	– Regional Education Directorate <sup>57</sup>	– University rectorate
4 Sets curriculum	– Nursery – Regional Education Directorate	– Ministry of Education and Science	– Ministry of Education and Science	– Ministry of Education and Science	– University rectorate
5 Assigns teachers to institutions	– Local government	– Local Education Office – Regional Education Directorate	– Local Education Office – Regional Education Directorate	– Local Education Office – Regional Education Directorate	– University rectorate

<sup>55</sup> Admissions decisions made in accordance with a plan approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> *Op. cit.*

FUNCTION	RESPONSIBLE ORGANS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher
6 Assesses institutional performance	– Local government – Ministry of Health	– Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– University rectorate
7 Assesses pupil performance	– Local government – Ministry of Health	– School staff (teachers, social worker, director) – Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– School staff (teachers, social worker, director) – Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– School staff (teachers, social worker, director) – Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Subject instructors – Department head – University rectorate
8 Assesses teacher performance	– Local government	– Preschool director – Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Primary school director – Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Secondary school director – Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Department head – University rectorate

FUNCTION	RESPONSIBLE ORGANS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher
9 Assesses director performance	– Local government	– Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– Regional Education Directorate – National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education	– University rectorate
10 Establishes and closes special schools	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Council of Ministers	– <i>Not applicable</i>	–
11 Funds special schools	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Ministry of Education and Science	– <i>Not applicable</i>	–
12 Decides on special school admissions	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Special primary school director	– <i>Not applicable</i>	–
13 Sets special education curriculum	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– <i>Not applicable</i>	– Special primary school director – Ministry of Education and Science	– <i>Not applicable</i>	–

# ANNEX 3: STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Albania participated in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) for the first time in 2009. To date, Albania has not taken part in other important assessments, such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2001 and 2006.

As shown in the table below, Albania achieved results that were well below the average for OECD countries in all three tested areas, with the weakest results in the area of mathematics and the strongest in the natural sciences. Achievements this weak raise the question of Albania's competitiveness on the international scene.

TABLE A3. Results of PISA 2009

Area	Albania		OECD		Difference Albania – OECD average
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
<b>Mathematics</b>	377	4.0	496	0.5	-119
<b>Reading</b>	385	4.0	493	0.5	-108
<b>Science</b>	391	3.9	501	0.5	-110

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do – Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science (Volume 1)* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

# ANNEX 4: LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR IMPROVING ROMA'S EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN ALBANIA

## Assistance and Support to the Romani Community

**1. Producing Romani professionals in education. Affirmative action measures should be created and implemented to attract Roma into the teaching profession.**

**2. Supporting Romani parents and community leaders in recognizing and engaging key education issues:**

- Encouraging Romani parents to play an active

## Implementation Support to Educational Authorities

**1. Supporting ongoing developments in education, ensuring that Roma are not left out or jeopardized by them:**

- Providing technical assistance to institutions engaged in teacher training
- Providing technical assistance to primary schools in introducing content on Romani language and culture in the space allowed by curriculum reform

**2. Increasing the focus on quality improvement in the education system:**

- Extending coverage of integrated preschool education to Romani communities

## Policy Development with the Government

**1. Introducing compulsory preschool education.**

Technical assistance should be provided to state and local governments in developing policy to make free-of-charge, integrated preschool education compulsory and accessible for all children.

**2. Institutionalizing affirmative action.**

Affirmative action for secondary and post-secondary action should be made national policy, attending to the relevant

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### Assistance and Support to the Romani Community

- role in school boards and parent associations
- Detecting and acting on discrimination in schools
- Monitoring enrolment and progression in the education system

### Implementation Support to Educational Authorities

- Establishing a system of mentoring and additional classes for Romani children in grades 7–9
- Developing academic tutoring support for Roma in secondary and higher education

### Policy Development with the Government

provisions of the *National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007–2013*, the National Action Plan adopted in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the *National Strategy for the Improvement of the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority*.

### 3. Building an education support system for Romani children at the family level:

- Motivating parents to enrol children on time
- Creating time and space for homework

### 3. Improving linkages between education system and social support.

An administrative framework for affirmative action should be developed and implemented throughout the country.

### 3. Developing per-pupil school financing.

Support for this development is necessary for an efficient redirection of resources to the areas in which they are most needed, particularly schools located in proximity to sizeable Romani communities.

### 4. Supporting cooperation among Romani NGOs, schools and local government:

- Sharing experience
- Assistance in joint activities

### 4. Promoting Romani input in education policy:

- Building the capacity of the State Committee on Minorities to address educational issues faced by Roma
- Facilitating dialogue on education-related issues between the State Committee on Minorities and other relevant government institutions on education-related issues

# ANNEX 5: CENSUS RESULTS

Because Albania's 2001 census did not include questions on ethnicity or linguistic identity, there are no official statistics on the structure of the population of Albania by ethnicity.

Bearing in mind that the absence of reliable data on the Romani population constitutes a considerable barrier to efforts to improve the education situation of Roma in Albania, REF encourages the Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Education and Science, and other relevant institutions to systematically collect and maintain ethnically disaggregated data in conformity with EU standards on data protection.



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