



Roma Education Fund

ROMA EDUCATION FUND

Country Assessment

MACEDONIA

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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 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 Macedonia 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 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.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ROMA IN MACEDONIA

Whereas informed estimates indicate that Roma account for around six percent of Macedonia's approximately two million inhabitants, the figure from the 2002 census is 53,879 Roma, such that Roma account for approximately 2.7 percent of the total population. The same census reports an Egyptian population numbering 3,713 persons. Although both non-Roma and Roma tend to think of Egyptians as Roma, Egyptians consider themselves distinct from Roma on historical, linguistic, and cultural grounds. To the extent that Egyptians and others in Macedonia 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

Recent years have seen central and local governments in Macedonia assuming increased administrative and financial responsibility for scaling up successful projects piloted in the NGO sector. The government has also adopted legislation facilitating the completion of secondary education by adults who had previously left the educational system, as well as policies aimed at ensuring that all pupils have access to textbooks, and if necessary, transport to and from school. The availability of scholarships for Romani pupils in secondary and higher education has expanded, and various measures have been adopted to promote multicultural education.

The most pressing problems for the education of Roma in Macedonia are limited access to preschool education, overrepresentation of Roma in special education, and segregation between Roma and non-Roma in schools, whether resulting from residential segregation or decisions by school authorities. While Roma are employed at various levels in the system of education, their representation in relevant institutions remains below the proportion of Roma in the population of Macedonia as a whole. Additionally, attention to Roma as an integral part of the history and culture of Macedonia is absent in general education and teacher training curricula.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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

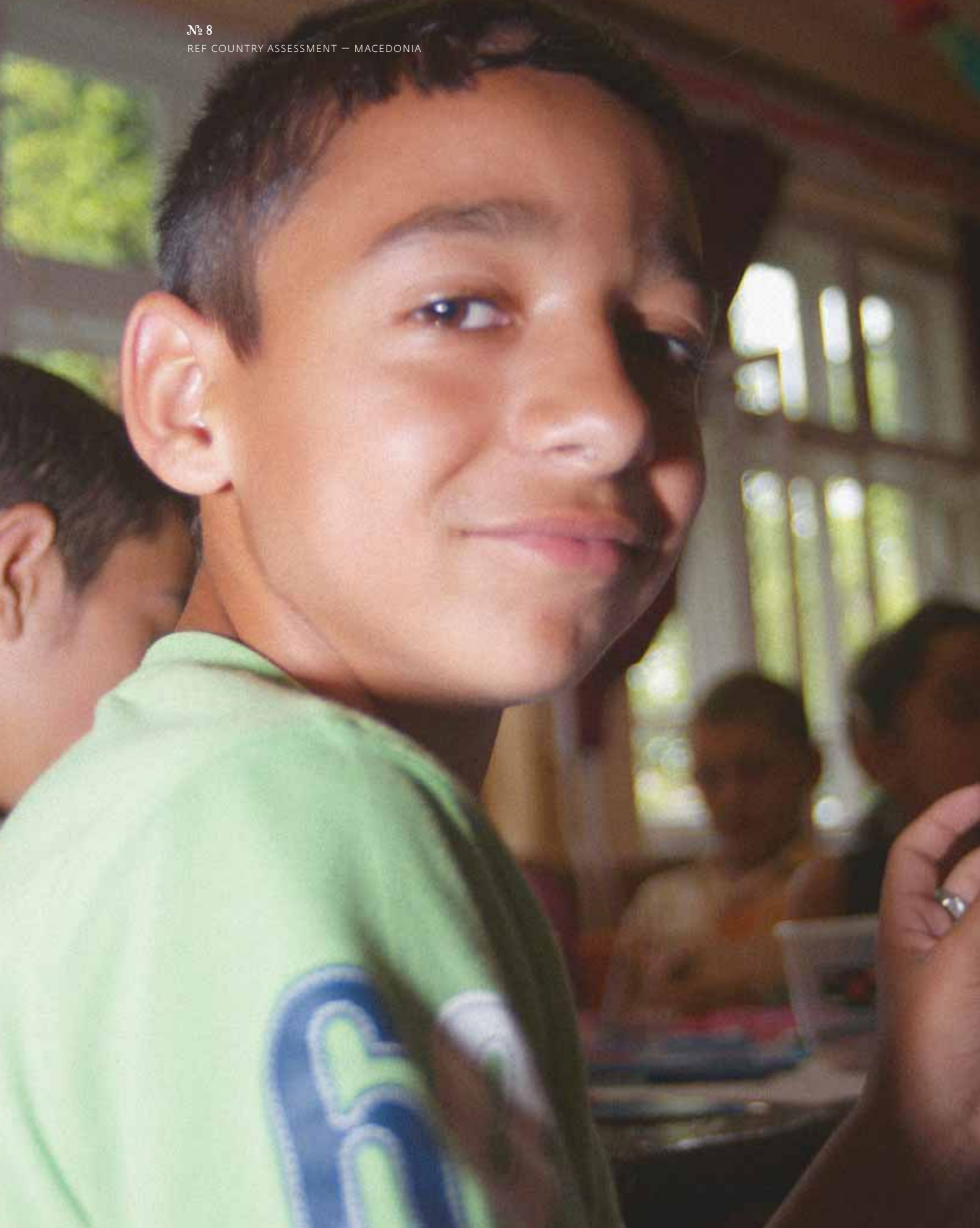
- Securing access for Romani children to quality, integrated preschool education.
- Bringing Romani children into the standard school system, with target groups including but not necessarily limited to children lacking identity documents, children in welfare centers, refugees, returnees, street children, and youth caught between primary schools and schools for adult education.
- Combating functional illiteracy by increasing the quality of primary education to ensure that progression from one grade to the next is based on concrete learning outcomes.
- Providing academic tutoring and mentoring support to Romani children in the years of transition from upper-primary to lower-secondary education.
- Continuing in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to provide scholarships, academic support, and mentoring for Romani students in secondary education.
- Scaling up successful pilot projects in the area of adult education in accordance with new legal provisions.

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

- A methodologically grounded quantitative assessment of the representation of Roma in special education.
- A set of practically oriented publications on early childhood education and care services for Roma.

Developmental priorities of the REF Scholarship Programs in Macedonia will include:

- Building links among academic programs.
- Beneficiary networking.
- Promoting scholar participation in other REF activities.



THE ROMANI POPULATION IN MACEDONIA

HISTORY AND POPULATION

Owing to the fragmentary nature of available data, scholars can only make educated guesses about the time of the Roma's arrival in Macedonian territory, with estimates based on records of a Romani presence elsewhere on the territory of the former Yugoslavia ranging from the late thirteenth century to the fifteenth century.¹ As is the case elsewhere in the Balkans, while Roma in Macedonia have usually lived on the periphery of society; as a general rule they have not been subject to policies aimed at assimilating and/or eliminating them. While there is very little documentary evidence concerning the treatment of Roma during the Second World War in what is now the Republic of Macedonia, it appears that the Romani populations in both Bulgarian- and Albanian-occupied territories were spared wholesale extermination as a result of foot-dragging on the part of local fascist authorities.² The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia also paid little attention to Roma until the early 1960s, with official attempts to cultivate Romani culture increasing through the 1970s and 1980s.

According to the 2002 census, Macedonia had a population of slightly over two million people. Within the total population, Roma account for approximately 2.7 percent (53,879), making Roma the country's fourth largest ethnic community (after Macedonians, Albanians, and Turks). As is the case elsewhere, it is likely that official figures underestimate the total number of Roma; informed estimates from local Romani NGOs suggest that Roma account for closer to six percent of the total population. A new census is planned for 2011.

¹ See, for example, Donald Kenrick, *Gypsies: From India to the Mediterranean* (Toulouse: Gypsy Research Center/CRDP Midi Pyrénées, 1993); Muhamed A. Mujić, "Položaj Cigana u jugoslovenskim zemljama pod osmanskim vlašću" [The position of Gypsies in the Yugoslav lands under Ottoman rule], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 3–4 (1952–1953): 137–93; Đurđica Petrović, "Društveni položaj Cigana u nekim jugoslovenskim zemljama u XV i XVI veku" [The societal position of Gypsies in some Yugoslav lands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries], *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis* 1–2 (1976): 45–66; Trajko Petrovski, "Potekloto i istorijata na Romite [Origin and history of the Roma], *Puls* 10, no. 470 (2000): 59–61; Grattan Puxon, "Romite vo Makedonija i Vizantija" [The Roma in Macedonia and Byzantium], *Glasnik na Institutot za nacionalna istorija* 18 (1974), no. 2: 81–95; 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; Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Makedonija vo turskoto srednovekovie (od krajot na XIV – početokot na XVIII vek)* [Macedonia in the Turkish Middle Ages (From the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century)] (Skopje: Kultura, 1989); Olga Zirojević, "Romi na području današnje Jugoslavije u vreme turske vladavine" [Roma on the Territory of Today's Yugoslavia in the Time of Turkish Rule], *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu* 25 (1981): 225–45.

² Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "The Bulgarian Romanies during the Second World War," in Donald Kenrick (ed.), *In the Shadow of the Swastika: The Gypsies During the Second World War*, Vol. 2 (Hatfield: Centre de recherches tsiganes/University of Hertfordshire Press, 1999); Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

Among subethnic groups of Roma in Macedonia are *Arli, Barutčia, Džambazi, Gilanlia, Konopari, Kovači, and Topaanila*. Census data indicate that more than 90 percent of Roma in Macedonia are Muslim, whereas approximately 80 percent of Roma speak Romanes as their first language.

Roma live in 64 out of 85 municipalities across the country. Approximately 45 percent of the Romani population in Macedonia lives in ten municipalities: Bitola, Debar, Gostivar, Kičevo, Kočani, Kumanovo, Prilep, Štip, Tetovo, and Vinica. Almost the same percentage of the Romani population (43.1 percent) lives in the capital Skopje, half of them in the Romani-majority municipality of Šuto Orizari.

The 2002 census also reports an Egyptian population numbering 3,713 persons or 0.18 percent of the total population. Although both non-Roma and Roma tend to think of Egyptians as Roma, Egyptians consider themselves distinct from Roma on historical, linguistic, and cultural grounds.

GENERAL SITUATION OF THE ROMANI POPULATION

Poverty and unemployment

Official data from 2010 indicate that Roma account for 5.2 percent of all unemployed persons.³ Data from 2008 provide insight into the educational profile of the unemployed Romani population: 33 percent had not completed primary education, seven percent had complete or incomplete secondary education, and only 0.1 percent (31 persons) had completed tertiary education.⁴ An analysis completed in 2010 further found that Roma's unemployment rate in 2008 was 75 percent, the highest of all of Macedonia's ethnic communities and more than double the national average of approximately 30 percent.⁵ The same study found that income-based poverty among was 63 percent, as compared with 27 percent for ethnic Macedonians and 29 percent for ethnic Albanians, whereas expenditure-based poverty was 44 percent for Roma, 14 percent for ethnic Macedonians, and 30 percent for ethnic Albanians. While the Macedonian government has adopted measures in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion to increase the number of employed Roma, approved funding consistently lags behind projected funding levels.

³ Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, *Analiza za sostojbata i namaluvanjeto na romskite devojčinja i momčinja vo obrazovniot proces vo Republika Makedonija* [Situation analysis and the attrition of Romani girls and boys in the educational process in the Republic of Macedonia] (Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2010).

⁴ Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2009. *Revizija na Nacionalnite akciski planovi od "Dekadata za vključuvanje na Romite 2005–2015" i Strategija za Romite vo Republika Makedonija za period 2009–2011* [Revision of the National Action Plans of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 and Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia for the Period 2009–2011]. Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika.

⁵ United Nations Development Program and South East European University, *People-Centred Analyses* (Skopje and Tetovo: United Nations Development Program and South East European University, 2010).

Health

The Romani population is younger than the general population, with birth-rates comparatively high and life expectancy comparatively low. An illustration of this situation is that approximately 30 percent of Roma are in the age group 0–14 years, whereas only about 21 percent of the total population belongs to this age group.⁶ Similarly, only about 4.4 percent of Roma are older than 65 years, as compared with 10.6 percent in the general population. Infant mortality rates are also significantly higher for Roma than for ethnic Macedonians, with calculations by the Institute for Health Protection of Mothers and Children suggesting a gradual reduction in this gap since 2005. Projected funding for the National Action Plan for Health under the Decade of Roma Inclusion in the period 2009–2011 amounts to EUR 1,058,747, or approximately EUR 6.5 per Rom per year.

Housing

Romani families often live in substandard housing conditions in segregated settlements, with approximately one-fifth of Macedonia's Romani population living in Šuto Orizari. Research conducted in seven Romani communities in Skopje (not including Šuto Orizari) found that while 63 percent of Romani families live in solid-construction houses, 29.5 percent live in dilapidated and montage houses, and 7.25 percent live in improvised houses built from non-construction materials (for example, cardboard, nylon, tin, plastic). More than half of families included in the research had less than five square meters per family member, with approximately 40 percent living in houses shared with at least one other family. Moreover, whereas 77 and 58 percent of families use outdoor toilets and taps (respectively), ten percent lacked access to water supply, with only 16 percent of houses equipped with indoor plumbing. An estimated half of families lack access to sewage or a septic system.⁷ Beyond experiencing poor housing conditions, media reports indicate that an unknown number of Romani families have been subjected to forced eviction and demolition of their homes. Projected funds for housing of Roma in Macedonia for the period 2009–2011 under the Decade of Roma Inclusion total EUR 11,392,520, but no figures are available on actual allocations.

Representation

In comparison with Macedonia's neighbors, Roma are well represented in government. At the central level, prominent positions held by Roma since the parliamentary elections of 2008 include one member of parliament, a minister without portfolio serving as National Coordinator for the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the *Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia*, and a deputy minister. At the local level, eight municipal councils include one Rom each, with Roma accounting for nine of the 16 members of the municipal council in Šuto Orizari. Additionally, several municipalities employ Romani civil servants, usually for the purpose of addressing the situation of Roma or minorities in general.

⁶ Republički zavod za zdravstvena zaštita, *Godišen izveštaj na zdravstvenata sostojba vo RM za 2005 godina* [Annual report on health status in the Republic of Macedonia for 2005] (Skopje: Republički zavod za zdravstvena zaštita, 2005).

⁷ Enisa Eminovska and Neda Milevska-Kostova, *Report on the Condition of Housing and Health in Roma Community in Republic of Macedonia* (Gostivar: Humanitarian and Charitable Roma Association "Mesečina," 2008).

Beyond government, while the 30 or so active Romani nongovernmental organizations in Macedonia are much fewer than the over 100 registered Romani NGOs, coordination among them and between Romani NGOs and government has been relatively successful, with Romani activists providing input on strategic documents and communicating with government on a regular basis. Macedonia is also home to two private television stations (BTR and Šutel, both based in Skopje), as well as to three community radio stations (in Gostivar, Prilep, and Štip). Finally, there is a growing number of Romani internet-based media, most of which are at an early stage of development.

GOVERNMENT AND DONOR COMMITMENTS

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Legislation and policies in Macedonia generally attend to the rights of minorities, with significant attention focused on Roma. In this situation, problems at the level of implementation occur most frequently as a result of insufficient resource allocations.

Overall legal framework

International human rights documents to which the Republic of Macedonia is signatory include: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia explicitly recognizes Roma as an ethnic community on the same level as the Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian, and Bosniak communities.⁸ Additionally, the Constitution contains a provision for the equitable representation of all communities in public administration and presents the right to education as universal (Article 44). Legislation on primary and secondary education prohibits discrimination and guarantees minority-language instruction.⁹ The 2008 *Law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Members of Communities That Are Less than 20% of the Population of the Republic of Macedonia* lists primary, secondary, and higher education as areas in which community (that is, minority) rights apply (Article 3) and guarantees the right to education in minority languages at all levels in accordance with law (Article 5).¹⁰ The 2008 *Law on the*

⁸ Ustav na Republika Makedonija [Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 52/1991; Amandmani IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII i XVIII na Ustavot na Republika Makedonija [Amendments IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII and XVIII to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 91/2001.

⁹ See Zakon za osnovnoto obrazovanie [Law on Primary Education], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 103/2008; Zakon za srednoto obrazovanie [Law on Secondary Education], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 152/2002; Zakon za izmenuvanje i dopolnuvanje na Zakonot za srednoto obrazovanie [Law on Modifications and Amendments to the Law on Secondary Education], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 49/147; Zakon za izmenuvanje i dopolnuvanje na Zakonot za srednoto obrazovanie [Law on Modifications and Amendments to the Law on Secondary Education], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 92/2008.

Use of a Language Spoken by at Least 20% of Citizens in the Republic of Macedonia and in the Units of Local Government identifies education as an area at the national level in which a minority language can be used and provides details on the use of languages at all levels of education (Article 2 and Section 14, respectively).¹¹ Finally, the 2010 *Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination* provides for prevention and protection against discrimination in the enjoyment of rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia and proscribes any direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, color of skin, gender, membership in a marginalized group, ethnicity, language, citizenship, social origin, religious conviction, other beliefs, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, mental or bodily disability, age, family or marital status, income status, state of health, or any other ground proscribed by law or international treaty.¹²

Measures targeting Roma

Adopted in 2004, the *Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia* sets goals in the area of education, including equal quality of knowledge and education between Romani and non-Romani children, increasing the level of formal education among young Roma as well as adults who are outside the formal educational system, building professional and social competences, and elimination of causes for illiteracy. The absence of reports on implementation of the Strategy, however, makes it difficult to assess its impact.

Macedonia has been a part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005–2015) from the beginning, adopting National Action Plans in the priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing in 2004 and revising them in 2009. A National Action Plan for Romani Women has also been adopted. Whereas from 2005 to 2008 responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Strategy for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia and the Decade National Action Plans resided entirely within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, with the appointment of a Romani minister without portfolio following the parliamentary elections of 2008, this responsibility has been divided between the minister without portfolio and a specialized unit (also created in 2008) within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. This division has proven a source of confusion both within and outside government. Additionally, while responsibility for monitoring implementation of the Strategy and the National Action Plans resides with a National Coordination Body consisting of representatives of relevant line ministries, other governmental institutions and NGOs, this body has met rarely and not produced publicly available reports on its activities. Total funding from the state budget for activities to be undertaken in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2010 is under EUR 250,000 and constitutes a reduction of approximately 30 percent relative to the previous year.

¹⁰ Zakon za unapreduvanje i zaštita na pravata na pripadnicite na zaednicite koi se pomalku od 20% od naselenieto vo Republika Makedonija [Law on Advancement and Protection of the Rights of the Members of the Communities Which Are Less than 20% of the Population in the Republic of Macedonia], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 92/2008.

¹¹ Zakon za upotreba na jazik što go zboruvaat najmalku 20% od graganite vo Republika Makedonija i vo edinice na lokalnata samouprava [Law on the Use of A Language Spoken by at Least 20% of the Citizens in the Republic of Macedonia and in the Units of Local Government], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 101/2008.

¹² Zakon za sprečuvanje i zaštita od diskriminacija [Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 50/2010.

In 2007, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs launched a project to establish Romani Information Centers (RIC) to serve as liaisons between local Romani communities and municipal government. Operating in eight municipalities located throughout the country in cooperation with local Romani NGOs, the Centers have received mixed reviews for their work to date. Jointly adopted in late 2009 by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the eight partner NGOs, the *Work Program and Action Plan for Romani Information Centers for the Period 2010–2012* is expected to be useful for focusing the Centers' activities.¹³

DONOR-FUNDED PROGRAMS

Donor-funded programs supporting the inclusion of Roma in education in Macedonia have targeted both the government and NGO sectors.

The largest donor-funded initiative implemented by NGOs for the education of Roma in Macedonia is the Roma Education Project. With a total budget approaching EUR four million for the period 2004–2013 provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje, the project has been coordinated by the Foundation Open Society Institute–Macedonia (FOSIM) and implemented in cooperation with five local Romani NGOs. Foci of the Roma Education Project include preschool preparation of Romani children in Roma Education Centers, financial support as well as tutoring and mentoring for Romani pupils, anti-prejudice training for teachers, and awareness-raising workshops for local Romani communities.

Also implemented by FOSIM in cooperation with local Romani NGOs was the project "Equal Educational Opportunities for Roma Pupils." With a budget of approximately EUR two million from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the period 2006–2009, this project focused on increasing Roma's participation in primary education in nine localities located throughout the country through material and academic support.

At the university level, the FOSIM program known since 2001 as "Romaversitas" has provided approximately 400 scholarships to Romani students since 1997. In addition to financial support, components of the program have included access to computers, a library, and study space, lectures, mentoring, organized social activities, small research grants, training, and tutoring. Financial support for Romaversitas has been provided by the Higher Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute in Budapest, the Roma Education Fund, and USAID.

¹³ Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, *Programa za rabota i akcionen plan na Romskite informativni centri – RIC za periodot 2010–2012 godina* (Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2009).



Beyond its contribution to the Roma Education Project, the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje has also funded a pre-service teacher training project with potential for significant impact on the educational situation of Roma in Macedonia. Piloted in the 2009–2010 academic year in cooperation with the Skopje-based Romani NGO Sumnal under the name “Strengthening Future Teachers’ Capacity to Work in a Multi-Ethnic Context through Increased Practicum Opportunities with Roma Children,” the project has expanded to involve also ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian NGOs as well as four of the five institutions in Macedonia which offer pre-service teacher training. In the 2010–2011 academic year, the project offers 120 students practical interethnic teaching experience for university credit.

The EU provides EUR 1.9 million for the multi-country project “A Good Start,” which is implemented by REF in Macedonia in partnership with local NGOs National Roma Centrum, Roma Education Centre Ambrela, and Kham (Delčevo), as well as with the International Step by Step Association. The project, which targets over 2,500 children aged 0–6 and their families in five localities in Macedonia, began in June 2010 and will continue through April 2012.

In addition to the donor organizations listed above, the European Agency for Reconstruction, Freudenberg Stiftung, the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, UNHCR, and UNICEF have supported NGO projects aiming at the inclusion of Roma in education in Macedonia.

The most significant initiatives for the education of Roma implemented in direct cooperation between donors and state and local authorities include two projects supported by the Roma Education Fund and accordingly described in Section 5 of this document. Another important initiative implemented jointly by an international donor and the Macedonian government is the EUR 20 million Conditional Cash Transfers Project funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs from 2010. While this project does not target Roma explicitly, its targeting of recipients of social assistance and its focus on secondary education make it particularly relevant for the Romani population.

No precise data are available on total annual investments in the education of Roma in Macedonia. Nonetheless, the level of coordination and sharing of information among donors active with Roma in Macedonia has been relatively high.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Apart from the competences that have been transferred to the municipalities in the framework of the decentralization process as outlined in the 2002 Law on Local Self-Government,¹⁴ the Ministry of Education and Science is accountable for the overall educational system starting from primary through tertiary education, including adult and non-formal education. More concretely, the Ministry of Education and Science is in charge of the establishment and operation of the educational institutions and their accreditation, approval and adoption of curricula, approval and publication of textbooks, and endorsing hires in educational institutions. The major exception in this regard is preschool education, which falls primarily within the competences of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, with certain competences related to the planning of activities assigned to the Ministry of Education and Science's Bureau for the Development of Education.

Bodies within the Ministry of Education and Science include the Bureau for the Development of Education, the State Education Inspectorate, and the Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in the Languages of the Communities. Additionally, the Macedonian government has established the following as independent institutions: the State Examination Center, the Vocational Education and Training Center, the Vocational Education and Training Council, the Adult Education Center, and the Adult Education Council. Whereas the State Examination Center administers the secondary school leaving exam and external assessment of student performance, the other four institutions mentioned in the preceding sentence were established in recent years to plan and administer vocational and adult education at the central level.

The overall reference framework for the activities in the field of education is the 2005–2015 National Program for the Development of Education.¹⁵ Major sources of reforms in the area of education include the Education Modernization Project (co-financed by the Macedonian government, the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the World Bank), UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools Project, and the USAID-funded Primary Education Project, as well as the (completed) PHARE/CARDS and (ongoing) IPA programs for the reform of vocational education.

¹⁴ Zakon za lokalnata samouprava, *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 5/2002.

¹⁵ Ministerstvo za obrazovanie i nauka, *Nacionalna programa za razvoj na obrazovanieto vo Republika Makedonija, 2005–2015* [National Program for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia, 2005–2015] (Skopje: Ministerstvo za obrazovanie i nauka, 2004).

While Roma are employed in various institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science (including at the head of the Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in the Languages of the Communities), their representation in these institutions remains below the proportion of Roma in the population of Macedonia as a whole.

FINANCING

The education budget for 2010 amounted to approximately 4.6 percent of GDP,¹⁶ which is well below the OECD average of 5.7 percent.¹⁷ Approximately 80 percent of this budget is allocated for employees' salaries.

Education continues to be financed from the central budget, with the method by which resources are allocated to municipalities depending on each municipality's phase of decentralization. Municipalities in the first phase of decentralization receive earmarked subsidies to cover goods and services for primary and secondary education, whereas municipalities in the second phase of decentralization receive block subsidies to cover salaries as well as goods and services for these two levels of education. While the size of the subsidies allocated to the municipalities depends largely on the number of pupils, there is no per capita financing of education in Macedonia, and the use of the subsidies is left to the discretion of municipal authorities.

Primary and secondary education in public institutions are free of charge for all pupils. Also provided without charge are textbooks, as well as transportation for students and pupils residing two kilometers or more from their school. Participation in preschool and tertiary education in Macedonia generally requires financial participation by families and/or students. A 2010 government decision sets aside a total of 1,570 free-of-charge places for women older than 35 and men older than 45 enrolling in certain courses of study at state universities.¹⁸

FACILITIES

Most preschool, primary, secondary, and university buildings in Macedonia were built in the 1970s. Conditions in educational facilities vary widely, with schools in rural municipalities and on the outskirts of poorer urban municipalities (where Romani children tend to attend school) often in poor repair. Since 2008, 81 primary schools and 20 secondary schools have been reconstructed and repairs completed in an additional 390 schools. Additionally, ten primary schools and two secondary schools were built. Much discussed but not completed to

¹⁶ Figure provided by the Ministry of Education and Science.

¹⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2010: OECD Indicators* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

¹⁸ Odluka broj 51-2020/1 [Act 51-2020/1], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 74/2010. The number of places in this category filled in the 2010-2011 academic year was 406.

date has been construction of a secondary school in the Roma-majority Skopje municipality of Šuto Orizari. Construction and reconstruction of school facilities rely on foreign donations, as does the distribution of computers to all schools, not all of which have been able to make use of the donated equipment for lack of space.

EDUCATION CYCLES AND PROGRESSION CRITERIA

An overview of the system of education and educational institutions in Macedonia is given in the table below.

TABLE 1. The system of education in the Republic of Macedonia

Level of education	Institutions
Preschool ¹⁹	52 public preschools (housed in 181 buildings in 41 municipalities)
Primary	353 public primary schools, ²⁰ 638 satellite schools, 1 private primary school for children of foreign nationals
Secondary	110 mixed public secondary schools (grammar and vocational classes), 4 special public secondary schools, 2 religious secondary schools, ²¹ 11 private secondary grammar schools
Tertiary	State institutions: 4 universities (45 faculties), 3 technical colleges Private institutions: 10 private universities, 3 tertiary education institutions, and 3 faculties

SOURCE: State Statistical Office;²² Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Preschool education in Macedonia is neither mandatory nor free of charge. Rates of participation in this level of education are accordingly low, at under 15 percent for the general population and lower still for Romani children. The introduction of nine-year primary education responds to this situation by adding a zero-year for children aged six to seven.²³ Beginning in the 2005–2006 school year, this measure is expected to be of particular benefit to vulnerable groups, including Romani children.

¹⁹ Although recent legislative changes allow the establishment of private preschools, no such institutions had been registered as of December 2010.

²⁰ Figure includes special primary schools.

²¹ The Islamic Religious Community and Macedonian Orthodox Church each operate one religious secondary school. Both are independent from the state both financially and in developing their respective curricula.

²² Državen zavod za statistika, *Osnovni i sredni učilišta na krajot na učebnata 2008/2009 godina* [Primary and secondary schools at the end of the 2008/2009 School Year] (Skopje: Državen zavod za statistika, 2010).

²³ Zakon za osnovното obrazovanie [Law on Primary Education], *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 103/2008.

Primary education is organized in three cycles of three years each. Assessment of pupil performance in grades one to three is descriptive, with numerical assessment beginning in grade four. As a result of this arrangement, pupils are sometimes advanced to the next grade without having developed the necessary level of knowledge and skills, leading in turn to frustrations and drop-outs in the upper cycles of primary education.²⁴ Additionally, pupils in the upper cycles of primary education are sometimes promoted from one grade to the next despite not meeting performance criteria. While this is usually done with the child's well-being in mind, the practice also risks promoting teacher abdication of responsibility for pupils' academic competencies. The introduction of a final examination at the end of primary education is currently under discussion.

Secondary education has been compulsory in Macedonia since the 2008–2009 school year. General secondary (grammar school) education covers a period of four years, whereas vocational secondary education lasts from two to four years, depending on the specific program. According to official data, approximately 60 percent of secondary school pupils in Macedonia attend vocational programs. Pupils enroll in secondary education on the basis of their performance in primary education. Pupils in four-year secondary education programs take a national standardized examination (*matura*) administered by the State Examination Centre.

Enrolment in higher education takes place on the basis of prospective students' results on the examination administered at the end of secondary education and on secondary end examinations in elective subjects. Faculties are also entitled to administer their own entrance examinations. Studies at all universities in Macedonia are organized in accordance with the principles of the Bologna Declaration, with the title Master awarded after five years of study (divided into two cycles of three plus two years or four plus one year).

SPECIAL EDUCATION

According to official data, in the 2008–2009 school year a total of 1,054 pupils (of whom nearly two thirds were boys) were educated in 171 special classes of 40 standard primary schools and five special primary schools.²⁵ Whereas the language of instruction in 39 of these schools is Macedonian, in five schools the language of instruction is Albanian, whereas in one school instruction is offered in both Albanian and Macedonian languages. At the level of secondary education, 283 pupils (over 70 percent male) were educated in 49 classes of four special secondary schools (three located in Skopje and one in Štip). The significantly lower number of female pupils in special education is a potential indicator of a tendency among parents to avoid enrolling girls in special schools at the expense of any formal education.

²⁴ See Government of the Republic of Macedonia, *Report on the Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals* (Skopje: United Nations Development Program, 2009).

²⁵ Državen zavod za statistika, *Osnovni i sredni učilišta na krajot na učebnata 2008/2009 godina* [Primary and secondary schools at the end of the 2008/2009 school year] (Skopje: Državen zavod za statistika, 2010).

Children are enrolled in special education on the basis of a decision by an assessment commission. Formed by the director of each primary school and consisting of a psychologist or a pedagogue and one class teacher from the lower-primary level, the commission assesses all children enrolling in the school. Special schools and classes administer a reduced curriculum and there is no mechanism for returning to standard classes once enrolled in special education. Efforts to date aimed at deinstitutionalizing children with special education needs have encountered resistance from various entities, including but not limited to special pedagogues.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs reports that the number of Romani pupils enrolled in special primary education in the 2007–2008 school year was 385 (of which boys accounted for two-thirds) and that the number of Roma in special secondary education was 80 (of which 64 male).²⁶ In the absence of complete data from a single source on the representation of Romani children in special education, combining the data on overall enrolment in special education from the 2008–2009 school year with the figures on the number of Roma enrolled in special education from the previous year yields a rough estimate that Roma account for approximately 36 percent of all children in special primary education and 28 percent of the total in secondary education. Anecdotal evidence suggests that reasons for the overrepresentation of Roma in special education include biased assessment procedures and state-provided financial, transport, and employment benefits. Although there are no measures in place to address the overrepresentation of Roma in special education, recent years have seen increased government attention to this issue, and a discussion of policy options among relevant ministries is ongoing.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Recent years have seen considerable progress in policies and programs designed to promote multiethnic and multicultural communication in Macedonia. Examples of such progress at the central level include the establishment of the Directorate for the Development and Promotion of Education in the Languages of the Communities within the Ministry of Education and Science, the adoption of a curriculum for teaching Romani language and culture in primary education, publication of a *Handbook on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination in the Education System in the Republic of Macedonia*,²⁷ ongoing work on a comprehensive strategy for developing an ethnically integrated education system,²⁸ and the inclusion within the IPA Operational Program “Development of Human Resources” of a measure to provide access to quality education for members of ethnic communities in

²⁶ Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, *Analiza za sostojbata i namaluvanjeto na romskite devojčinja i momčinja vo obrazovniot proces vo Republika Makedonija* [Situation analysis and the attrition of Romani girls and boys in the educational process in the Republic of Macedonia] (Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2010).

²⁷ Ministerstvo za obrazovanie i nauka, *Priračnik za sprečuvanje i zaštita od diskriminacija vo vospitno-obrazovniot sistem vo Republika Makedonija* [Handbook on prevention and protection against discrimination in the education system in the Republic of Macedonia] (Kočani: Geneks, 2010). This handbook was produced by the National Roma Centrum in the framework of the REF-funded project “Campaign for the Education of Roma.”

²⁸ Ministry of Education and Science and OSCE HCNM, *Steps Toward Integrated Education in the Education System of the Republic of Macedonia*. (Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science, 2009).

the period 2010–2012 by introducing to curricula elements of intercultural education as well as developing training programs aimed at teachers and school directors and for Romani parents for the explicit purpose of supporting Romani pupils and students in the education process.²⁹ Also significant is the introduction of an optional four-semester study program for Romanes at the Faculty of Philology of the Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.³⁰ On the other hand, plans to establish an institute for Romani studies and a Romani-language study group in pre-service teacher training remain unrealized.

Despite progress at the level of policy, multicultural education in practice remains the exception rather than the rule. For example, textbooks tend to promote a monocultural model as a result of insufficient and sometimes inappropriate representation of ethnic communities other than the one in the language of which the textbooks are published, with textbooks published in different languages varying considerably in content.³¹ Similarly, while public education is offered in Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, and Serbian languages, the general tendency is toward mono-lingual and mono-ethnic instruction. Roma constitute an exception in this regard: Although most Roma in Macedonia speak Romanes as their first language, over 95 percent of Romani pupils studied in Macedonian in the 2008–2009 school year, with the remainder generally studying in Albanian or Turkish.

While Roma study in the languages of other ethnic communities, the effect of this fact on the integration of Romani with non-Romani pupils is quite limited. Following a general trend set by relations between the country's ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian populations, Roma in Macedonia are often enrolled in *de facto* segregated classes in schools located in close proximity to Romani settlements. Moreover, despite the potential of extracurricular activities such as field trips to promote multiculturalism by virtue of their format as well as their content, in practice such activities often develop into a factor of discrimination, as the poverty of many Romani families leaves them unable to finance their children's participation.

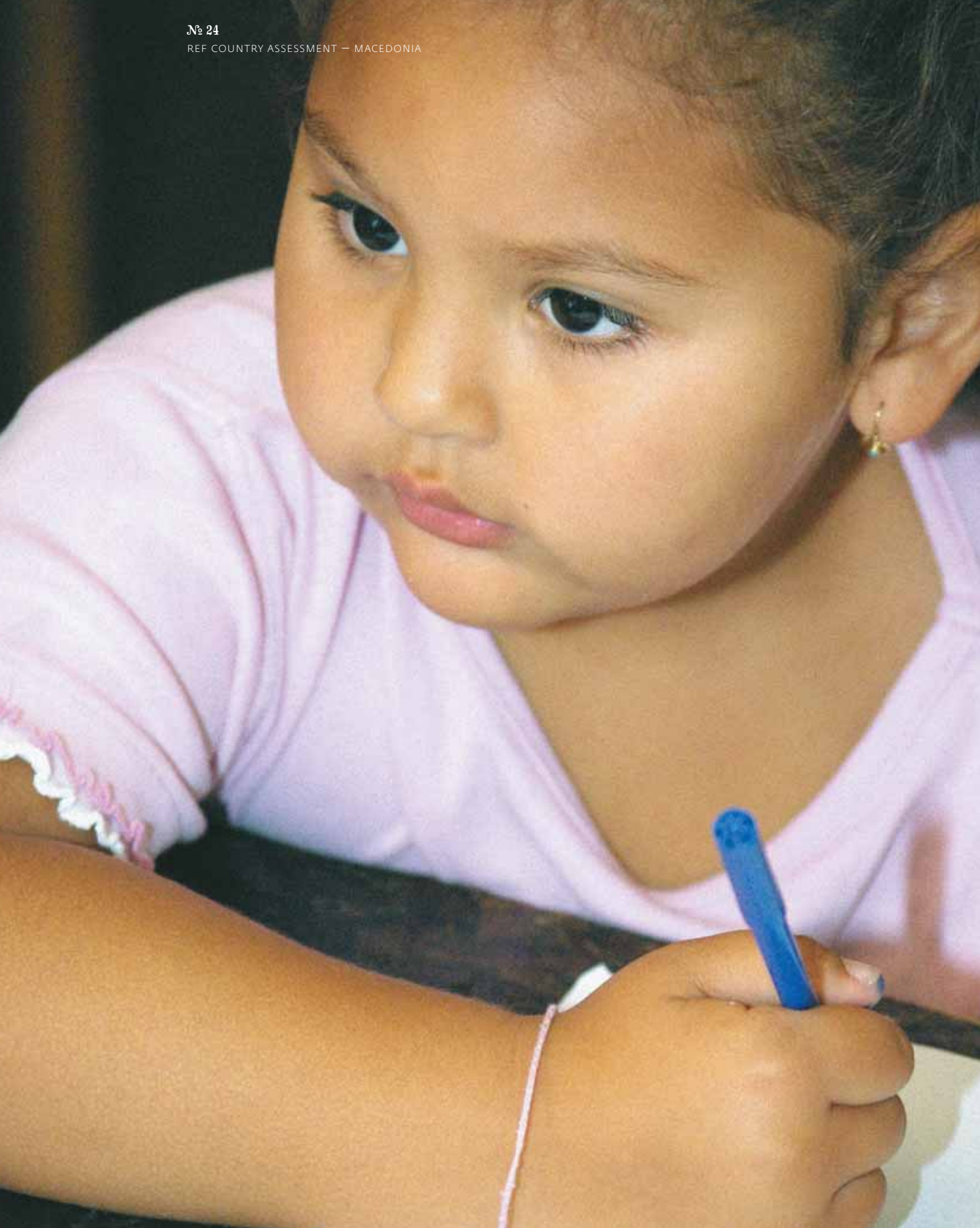
SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS

The Ministry of Education and Science awards scholarships for pupils in secondary education as well as for university students in amounts ranging from EUR 30 to EUR 50 per month, with scholarships granted to 413 talented pupils and 1,428 students in the 2008–2009 academic year. Additionally, since the 2005–2006 school REF has

²⁹ Other initiatives which focus on various aspects of multicultural education in Macedonia include the British Council-supported production of a handbook to support foreign language acquisition, the development of a teacher's kit on socio-cultural diversity by UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Science and the Ministry of Culture, and the European Training Foundation's work on inclusive education policy, as well as the Education Modernization Project, UNICEF's Child-Friendly Schools Project and the USAID-funded Primary Education Project mentioned earlier this section.

³⁰ Data provided by the Faculty of Philology indicate that there were no applications for this course of study at the beginning of the 2010/11 school year.

³¹ See European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, *Third Report on "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2005); Violeta Petroska-Beshka et al., *Study on Multiculturalism and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Education* (Skopje : UNICEF, 2009).



financed a scholarship program for Romani pupils in secondary education, with a total of 1,101 beneficiaries as of the end of the 2009–2010 school year. In the 2009–2010 school year, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced a measure allowing Romani pupils to enroll in secondary schools with a ten-percent lower grade point average than their non-Romani peers. Finally, parents of children and youth through age 26 with special educational needs resulting from physical and/or mental disability are entitled to financial support amounting to 30 percent of the average salary.³²

In higher education, a system of affirmative action based on ethnically defined admissions quotas has been in place since the late 1990s. Additionally, in the 2010–2011 academic year the Goce Delčev University in Štip introduced free-of-charge studies for Romani students meeting admissions requirements.

PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

TABLE 2. Basic indicators on primary and secondary education in the Republic of Macedonia

	Primary	Secondary
Number of employees	16,205	6,832
Number of pupils	215,078	93,164
Number of institutions	991	110
Number of classes	10,713	3,295
Pupil: teacher ratio	13	14
Average class size	20	28
Adult literacy rate (15+)	98.6	

SOURCE: State Statistical Office; UNDP.³³

Tables 3 through 5 below provide an overview of Roma's participation in primary and secondary education in terms of absolute numbers.

³² In September 2010, the average net salary was MKD 20,554, equivalent to approximately EUR 336. Current figures on average net salary are available from the website of the State Statistical Office: <http://www.stats.gov.mk>.

³³ United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2009 (Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development)* (New York: United Nations Development Program, 2009).

TABLE 3. Roma enrolled in primary education 2005–2010

Academic year	Boys	Girls	Total
2005–2006	4,469	3,940	8,409
2006–2007	4,441	3,940	8,381
2007–2008	5,268	4,882	10,150
2008–2009	5,421	5,130	10,571
2009–2010	5,528	5,225	10,753

SOURCE: Ministry of Education and Science.

TABLE 4. Roma enrolled in the first year of primary education 2005–2010

Academic Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2005–2006	685	671	1,356
2006–2007	715	654	1,369
2007–2008	782	699	1,481
2008–2009	839	833	1,672
2009–2010	754	729	1,483

SOURCE: Ministry of Education and Science.

TABLE 5. Roma enrolled in secondary education 2005–2010

Academic year	Boys	Girls	Total
2005–2006	654	586	1,240
2006–2007	678	526	1,204
2007–2008	831	641	1,472
2008–2009	930	546	1,476
2009–2010	1,054	900	1,954

SOURCE: Ministry of Education and Science.

Official data indicate that 709 Roma completed primary education and 310 completed secondary education (230 in four-year secondary schools, the rest in three-year schools) in the 2008–2009 school year. Dropout figures for Romani pupils in the 2007–2008 school year were 243 (136 boys and 107 girls) in primary education and 53 (27 girls and 26 boys) in secondary education. The number of Roma attending adult primary education in the 2007–2008 school year was 332, of which 232 were men and 100 women.³⁴ The total number of Romani teachers in primary schools is twenty, with three Romani teachers employed in secondary schools.

Although available information suggests that the overall coverage of Roma by the education system in Macedonia is relatively high, children from migrant families, street children, and children seeking to enroll in school for the first time between the ages of ten and 14 face specific barriers to participation in education. As a result of requirements that children be enrolled in school in the locality indicated as the place of permanent residence in parents' personal documents, children from families that migrate (usually as a result of being evicted from illegal housing) rarely attend school and are often placed in day centers for street children (*dnevni centri za deca na ulica*). While such centers provide informal education, integration into standard schools is problematic for lack of a mechanism for establishing equivalency between such education and the education provided in schools. Moreover, because some day centers devote much of their capacity to children from migrant families, the centers are often unable to work with actual street children, such that the street children lack access even to organized informal education.

Children seeking to enroll in school for the first time between the ages of ten and 14 fall into a gap in Macedonian legislation. Whereas the Law on Primary Education stipulates that children may enroll in primary schools up to the age of nine, the 2008 Law on Adult Education sets the minimum age for participation in adult education at fifteen.³⁵ As a result, children older than nine and younger than 15 officially cannot enroll in formal education. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that institutions providing adult education sometimes waive enrolment requirements and enroll children in this age group, the absence of a systemic solution leaves enrolment decisions to the good will of the individual schools. In addition to children in the categories mentioned in the previous paragraph, this gap particularly affects Romani children returned with their families from Western Europe.

PROGRESS AND REMAINING WEAKNESSES

While Macedonia can be considered a regional leader for its advances in relation to the education of Roma, 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 Macedonia in recent years include:

- The assumption by central and local governments of increased administrative and financial responsibility for scaling up successful projects piloted in the NGO sector.

³⁴ Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, *Analiza za sostojbata i namaluvanje na romskite devojčinja i momčinja vo obrazovniot proces vo Republika Makedonija* [Situation analysis and the attrition of Romani girls and boys in the educational process in the Republic of Macedonia] (Skopje: Ministerstvo za trud i socijalna politika, 2010).

³⁵ Zakon za obrazovanie na vozrasnite, *Služben vesnik na Republika Makedonija* 7/2008.

- The adoption of policies aimed at ensuring that all pupils have access to textbooks and, if necessary, transport to and from school.
- The expanded availability of scholarships for Romani pupils in secondary and higher education through activities carried out by government and nongovernmental actors.
- New legislation facilitating the completion of secondary education by adults who had left the educational system.
- Various measures adopted by government to promote multicultural education.

Remaining weaknesses

From the standpoint of quality education for Roma, the most significant weaknesses of the current system of education in Macedonia are the following:

- Limited access of Roma to preschool education in many municipalities as a result of fees associated with attendance.
- Significant delays in the provision of free-of-charge textbooks.
- Insufficient measures to address language barriers faced by Romanes-speaking Roma.
- The absence of a systemic solution to the problems faced by children enrolling in school for the first time between the ages of ten and 14.
- Overrepresentation of Roma in special education.
- Segregation between Roma and non-Roma in schools, whether resulting from residential segregation or decisions by school authorities.
- Inattention to Roma in general education and teacher training curricula as an integral part of the history and culture of Macedonia.
- Insufficient numbers of qualified Romani teaching staff.

REF IN MACEDONIA

SUPPORTED PROJECTS

Since its establishment to the end of April 2011, REF had received 67 project proposals from Macedonia, eighteen of which had been approved. The total REF funding for the approved projects is approximately EUR 2.9 million, with amounts committed fluctuating widely from year to year.

TABLE 6. Project grant commitments in Macedonia, 2005–2010

2005–2006	Funds committed by year (EUR)			TOTAL (EUR)
	2007	2008	2009–2010	
1,364,556	356,901	351,045	474,619	2,710,657

Almost half of project funds disbursed in Macedonia have supported development of a scholarship program for supporting Romani students in secondary education through financial support and school-based mentorship. From 2005 to 2009, MAC 001 was implemented by the Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia (FOSIM). Beginning in the 2009–2010 school year, the project (MAC 052) was taken over by the Department for Promotion and Development of Education in the Languages of Minorities of the Ministry of Education and Science. Whereas MAC 001 provided scholarships to a total of 657 Roma secondary school students (out of 954 applicants), the number of scholarships awarded through MAC 052 in the 2009–2010 school year was 444.

Three of the other projects supported to date in Macedonia (MAC 012, MAC 046, and MAC 052) have aimed at increasing Roma's preschool participation. The main implementers have been the Department for Child Protection of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education and Science, public preschools, and Romani NGOs. Initially implemented in fifteen municipalities in Macedonia, the project now covers 18 municipalities.

Another series of projects (MAC 006, MAC 023, MAC 029, MAC 045, and MAC 064) aims to increase the inclusion of Romani children in standard primary education and to reduce dropout rates by promoting both the social responsibility for the implementation of education policies and parental responsibility for the child as a pupil along with the elimination or minimizing the dropout rate. This initiative expanded from three localities in its first phase to a total of 15 municipalities throughout the country.

An additional two projects (MAC 028 and MAC 056) financed by REF were implemented by Romaversitas for the purpose of providing Romani university students with tutorial and supplementary academic support. More recently, REF has supported an initiative (MAC 043 and MAC 054) in eastern Macedonia piloting a second-chance education program for Roma youth by providing assistance in completing secondary education and facilitating access to tertiary education and the job market.

Finally, REF has supported several one-off projects (MAC 014, MAC 027, MAC 057, and MAC 060) aimed at supporting Roma's participation in education in various ways.

As shown in the table below, the extent of coverage of Romani children and youth in Macedonia by REF-funded projects varies widely by level of education, from a majority of Roma attending primary school to just over three percent of Roma in the usual age range for attending university. Insofar as official figures likely underestimate the size of the Romani population, the actual extent of coverage by REF-funded projects is probably lower than indicated in the table.

TABLE 7. Coverage of the Romani child and youth population in Macedonia by REF projects, 2005–2010

Level of education	Cohort size ³⁶	REF beneficiaries	REF coverage of cohort (%)
Preschool (4–5)	2,240	703	31.4
Primary and lower secondary (6–14)	10,305	6,292	61.1
Upper secondary (15–18)	4,342	1,112	25.6
University level (19–23)	5,279	165 ³⁷	3.1

EU ROMA PILOT

REF is 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 Proposals 2009 “Pilot project Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods – Roma inclusion.” The project runs from June 2010 through April 2012 in Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia as well as in Macedonia, 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 Macedonia

³⁶ Data from 2002 census provided by State Statistical Office.

³⁷ Does not include REF Scholarship Programs.

include the National Roma Centrum, Roma Education Centre Ambrela, Kham (Delčevo), and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) through its local partner the Step by Step Foundation.

SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

The Roma Memorial University Scholarship Program (RMUSP) has covered Macedonia since before REF's founding. As shown in the table below, the number of scholars supported has increased from year to year except from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 and from 2009–2010 to 2010–2011. The acceptance rate for RMUSP in Macedonia during the period 2005–2010 is close to the program average of approximately 55 percent for all countries, with the lowest acceptance rate approximately 47 percent (for 2010–2011) and the highest 66 percent (for 2009–2010)

TABLE 8. RMUSP awards in Macedonia, 2005–2009

Grants awarded by year						TOTAL
2005–2006	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	
55	70	113	111	123	108	580

Romani students from Macedonia have also received support through the Interregional and Supplementary Scholarship Schemes from 2007 to 2009, as well as through the Roma International Scholar Program formed by the merger of those two schemes in 2010. Whereas one of the three applicants to the Supplementary Scholarship Scheme for the 2007–2008 academic year was supported, the single application received for the 2008–2009 academic year was rejected, with no applications received for the Supplementary Scholarship Scheme for the 2009–2010 academic year. Numbers of applicants and grantees of the Interregional Scholarship Scheme are shown in the table below. For the 2010–2011 academic year, three of the four applications submitted to the Roma International Scholarship Program were funded.

TABLE 9. Interregional Scholarship Scheme applicants and awards in Macedonia from 2007 to 2009

	Academic year		
	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010
Applicants	1	6	6
Awards	1	4	5

RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Macedonia was included in the first phase of the ongoing multi-county research project “Roma Early Childhood Inclusion,” developed as a cooperative initiative among the Open Society Foundation—London, REF, and UNICEF. Key findings of the research in Macedonia include the following:

- There is a shortage of affordable and accessible early childhood education and care (ECEC) options, with Romani families often facing barriers of costs and distance.
- Initiatives aimed at improving the quality of preschool education should focus broadly on ensuring that all children benefit from stimulation, positive experiences, and interactions that nurture all aspects of their development, with public funding sufficient not only to finance capital and operating costs, but also to ensure adequate infrastructure and training.
- Monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be elaborated, with research focusing on practice and findings disseminated in user-friendly form.³⁸

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Taking into account developments in Macedonia since publication of the 2007 Country Assessment as well as persistent problems faced by Roma in the area of education, REF funding in Macedonia over the next three years will reflect the following priorities:

- Securing access for Romani children to quality, integrated preschool education.
- Bringing Romani children into the standard school system, with target groups including but not necessarily limited to children lacking identity documents, children in welfare centers, refugees, returnees, street children, and youth caught between primary schools and schools for adult education.
- Combating functional illiteracy by increasing the quality of primary education to ensure that progression from one grade to the next is based on concrete learning outcomes.
- Providing academic tutoring and mentoring support to Romani children in the years of transition from upper-primary to lower-secondary education.
- Continuing in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to provide scholarships, academic support, and mentoring for Romani students in secondary education.
- Scaling up successful pilot projects in the area of adult education in accordance with new legal provisions.

These priorities will be further narrowed and targets defined following collection of official data to generate baselines for each of the aspects of education enumerated above.

³⁸ Enisa Eminova, Nadica Janeva, and Violeta Petroska-Beška, *Roma Early Childhood Inclusion: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Country Report* (in press, 2011).

REF research and policy analysis priorities

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

- *A methodologically grounded 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 would provide a basis for designing measures in cooperation with the Macedonian government to address the likely but insufficiently documented overrepresentation of Romani children in special education, as well as for setting an additional priority for REF project funding.
- *A set of practically oriented publications on ECEC services for Roma.* The following publications relevant to Macedonia will be produced in the framework of the EU-funded multi-country pilot project "A Good Start":
 - A policy paper on increasing the access of disadvantaged Romani children to quality ECEC services;
 - A practical guide on data collection in relation to ECEC programs focusing on Roma;
 - A practical guide on establishing partnerships to provide quality ECEC services to Roma; and
 - A practical guide to principles of good pedagogy in ECEC programs focusing on Roma.

To the extent that Egyptians and others in Macedonia 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 Scholarship Programs

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

- *Building links among academic programs.* Sustained attention should be given to connecting to RMUSP beneficiaries of the REF-funded scholarship program for Romani students in secondary education, as well as to other relevant initiatives in secondary and higher education.
- *Beneficiary networking.* Per the 2010 draft strategy on this topic, the establishment of centralized networking infrastructure should be complemented by consultation with beneficiaries of the Scholarship Programs in Macedonia 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 years on the following levels:

Legal, financial, and administrative changes

- Preschool provided free of charge to impoverished families.

Key education indicators (baseline data)

- *Enrolment in preschool education among children from impoverished Romani communities.* While data for this indicator are not available at present, they could be generated by recording the number of preschool age children and the number of children registered in preschools serving communities inhabited largely by impoverished Roma. Individual identity could be protecting by making the collected data anonymous.
- *Roma's completion rates in compulsory education.* Data from the Ministry of Education and Science from the 2008–2009 indicate that 709 Romani children completed primary education in that year, while 310 Roma completed secondary education, with Romani female students accounting for approximately 45 percent of that figure.
- *Roma's enrolment in post-secondary education.* Official data are not available for this indicator. The needed data could be generated by recording the ethnicity of all students at the time of enrolment, with individual identity protected by making the collected data anonymous.

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 ³⁹	Unofficial estimate	Official data ⁴⁰	Unofficial estimate
1 Use of early care and education services (ages 0–3)	0.6% ³⁹	–	10.8% ⁴⁰	–
2 Enrollment in pre-primary education (ISCED 0) ⁴¹	14% ⁴²	–	23.6% ⁴³	–
3 Enrollment in first year of primary education (ISCED 1)	1,483 ⁴⁴	–	97.9% ⁴⁵	–
4 School-aged children in school (ISCED 1 and 2)	10,753 ⁴⁶	–	90.96% ⁴⁷	–
5 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the first cycle of compulsory education	–	–	–	–
6 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the second cycle of compulsory education	–	–	–	–
7 Children enrolling in primary education (ISCED 1) who do not complete the third cycle of compulsory education (if applicable)	–	–	–	–

³⁹ Calculation based on enrolment data for the 2008–2009 school year and census data from 2002. Enrolment data available online at <http://www.unicef-irc.org/databases/transmonee>.

⁴⁰ Calculation based on enrolment data for the 2008–2009 school year and population data from June 2009. Enrolment data available online at <http://www.unicef-irc.org/databases/transmonee>. Population data from State Statistical Office.

⁴¹ Data for this category are for age 4–5 years.

⁴² Calculation based on enrolment data for the 2008–2009 school year and census data from 2002. Enrolment data available online at <http://www.unicef-irc.org/databases/transmonee>.

⁴³ Calculation based on enrolment data for the 2008–2009 school year and population data from June 2009. Enrolment data available online at <http://www.unicef-irc.org/databases/transmonee>. Population data from State Statistical Office.

⁴⁴ Data from the Ministry of Education and Science for the 2009–2010 school year.

⁴⁵ Calculation based on enrolment data for the 2008–2009 school year and population data from June 2009. Enrolment data available online at <http://www.unicef-irc.org/databases/transmonee>. Population data from State Statistical Office.

⁴⁶ Data from the Ministry of Education and Science for the 2009–2010 school year. This figure is higher than the total number of Roma aged six to fourteen (10,305) according to the 2002 census.

⁴⁷ Data from the State Statistical Office for the beginning of the 2008–2009 school year.

INDICATOR (%)	ROMA	GENERAL POPULATION		
	Official data ³⁹	Unofficial estimate	Official data ⁴⁰	Unofficial estimate
8 Pupils in compulsory education (ISCED 1 and 2) attending special schools and classes	36% ⁴⁸		0.46% ⁴⁹	
9 Pupils completing compulsory education in terminal lower secondary programs (ISCED 2C)	<i>Not applicable</i>			
10 Graduates of compulsory education enrolling in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	45% ⁵⁰		68.3% ⁵¹	
11 Enrollment in upper secondary technical or vocational education (ISCED 3C) not providing access to tertiary education ⁵²			21% ⁵³	
12 Completion of upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	340 ⁵⁴		76.2% ⁵⁵	
13 Enrollment in post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	<i>Not applicable</i>			
14 Completion of post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)	–	–	–	–
15 Enrollment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	4.4 % ⁵⁶		38.2% ⁵⁷	70,950 ⁵⁸
16 Completion of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	0.26% ⁵⁹		13.3% ⁶⁰	

⁴⁸ Calculation based on data from the State Statistical Office for overall enrolment in special primary education in the 2008–2009 school year and data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the number of Roma enrolled in special primary education in the 2007–2008 school year.

⁴⁹ Data from the State Statistical Office for the end of the 2008–2009 school year.

⁵⁰ Calculation based on enrolment data for the 2009–2010 school year from the Ministry of Education and population data from June 2009 from the State Statistical Office.

⁵¹ Data from the State Statistical Office for the 2008–2009 school year.

⁵² Expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in upper secondary education (ISCED 3).

⁵³ Data from the State Statistical Office for the 2008–2009 school year.

⁵⁴ Data from the State Statistical Office for the 2008–2009 school year. According to the 2002 census, the total number of Roma in the age group 15–18 was 4343.

⁵⁵ Data from the State Statistical Office for the 2008–2009 school year.

⁵⁶ Calculation based on enrolment data from the State Statistical Office for the 2008–2009 school year and census data from 2002. The census data used are the total number of Roma between the ages of 19 and 23.

⁵⁷ Data from the State Statistical Office for the 2008–2009 school year.

⁵⁸ Data from the Ministry of Education and Science for the 2009–2010 school year.

⁵⁹ Calculation based on the number of Romani graduates of higher education in 2008 as reported by the State Statistical Office and the total number of Roma between the ages of 19 and 23 according to the 2002 census. The graduation rate among Roma enrolled in tertiary education can be estimated at six percent on the basis of the number of Romani graduates of higher education in 2008 and the number of Roma enrolled in tertiary education in the 2008–2009 academic year.

⁶⁰ Data from the State Statistical Office for 2008.

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	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– Municipality	– Municipality – Ministry of Education and Science ⁶²	– Ministry of Education and Science
2 Funds institutions	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– Municipality ⁶³	– Municipality ⁶⁴	– Ministry of Education and Science – Student fees
3 Decides on admissions	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs – Nursery director	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs – Preschool director	– Ministry of Education and Science – School-based commission	– Ministry of Education and Science – School-based commission	– University – Ministry of Education and Science
4 Sets curriculum	– Bureau for Development of Education	– Bureau for Development of Education	– Bureau for Development of Education	– Bureau for Development of Education	– University ⁶⁵
5 Assigns teachers to institutions	– Nursery director	– Preschool director	– School director	– School director	– Dean
6 Assesses institutional performance	– Nursery director	– Preschool director	– State Education Inspectorate	– State Education Inspectorate	– University – Ministry of Education and Science

FUNCTION	RESPONSIBLE ORGANS BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION				
	Early childhood (ages 0–3)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher
7 Assesses pupil performance	– Not applicable	– Not applicable	– Teachers	– Teachers – State Examination Centre ⁶⁶	– University
8 Assesses teacher performance	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– State Education Inspectorate	– State Education Inspectorate	– University
9 Assesses director performance	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	– School Board – State Education Inspectorate	– School Board – State Education Inspectorate	– Faculty Council – University Senate
10 Establishes and closes special schools			– Ministry of Education and Science	– Ministry of Education and Science	
11 Funds special schools			– Government/ Ministry of Education and Science	– Government/ Ministry of Education and Science	
12 Decides on special school admissions			– School commission	– School commission	
13 Sets special education curriculum			– Ministry of Education and Science – Bureau for Development of Education	– Ministry of Education and Science – Bureau for Development of Education	

⁶¹ Establishment and closing of institutions of public education at all levels is subject to government approval.

⁶² Applies to secondary art schools.

⁶³ Funds transferred to municipalities by Ministry of Education and Science in amount based primarily on operating costs and number of employees.

⁶⁴ Funds transferred to municipalities by Ministry of Education and Science in amount based primarily on operating costs and number of employees.

⁶⁵ University curricula are prepared by the individual universities and submitted for approval by an independent Accreditation Board consisting of university professors and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science.

⁶⁶ The State Examination Center assesses pupil performance only in the final year of secondary education.

ANNEX 3: STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

To date, Macedonia has participated in three international assessments of students' scholastic performance: the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2000; Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) in 1999 and 2003; and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2001 and 2006. On all three assessments, the results of students from Macedonia were significantly below international averages. Whereas the difference between mean performance of students from Macedonia and the OECD average for the three areas of PISA 2000 are given in Table A3 below, Macedonia was ranked thirtieth out of 35 and thirty-first out of 45 participating entities on TIMSS in 1999 and 2003, respectively. On PIRLS, Macedonia occupied the twenty-ninth position among 35 countries in 2001 and thirty-eighth place among 45 entities in 2006.

The subject of some public debate, Macedonia's weak results on PIRLS, PISA and TIMSS raise questions about the country's competitiveness on the international scene.

TABLE A3. Results of PISA 2009

Area	Macedonia		OECD		Difference Macedonia – OECD average
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
Mathematics	381	2.7	500	0.6	-119
Reading	373	1.9	500	0.6	-127
Science	401	2.1	500	0.6	-99

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Lirije Redžepi, Tanja Andonova-Mitrevska, and Olga Samardžikj-Jankova, *PISA 2000: Postiganja na učenicite vo Republika Makedonija* [PISA 2000: Pupils' achievements in the Republic of Macedonia] (Skopje: Biro za razvoj na obrazovaniето, 2004).

TABLE A4. Results of TIMSS 1999 and 2003

Area	1999		2003		Difference 2003–1999
	Mean	S.E.	Mean	S.E.	
Mathematics	447	4.2	435	3.5	-12
Science	449	3.6	458	5.2	9

SOURCE: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.⁶⁸

TABLE A5. Results of PIRLS 2001 and 2006

Area	2001		2006		Difference 2006–2001
	Mean	Scale average	Mean	Scale average	
Combined reading literacy	442	500	442	500	0
Literary subscale	441	500	439	500	-2
Informational subscale	445	500	450	500	+5

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics⁶⁹

⁶⁸ 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).

⁶⁹ National Center for Education Statistics, *The Reading Literacy of U.S. Fourth-Grade Students in an International Context: Results From the 2001 and 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2007).

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

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 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

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 implementing the curriculum on Romani language and culture

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

- Continuing to extend coverage of integrated preschool education to Romani communities
- Establishing a system of mentoring and additional classes for Romani children in grades 7–9

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. 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.

Assistance and Support to the Romani Community

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

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

Implementation Support to Educational Authorities

3. Improving linkages between education system and social support.

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

Policy Development with the Government

3. Eliminating administrative barriers to enrolment in education.

Efforts should be directed at simplifying and reducing requirements for enrolment at all levels of education, with particular emphasis on a systemic solution for the problems faced by children enrolling in school for the first time between ages 10 and 14.

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

- Sharing experience
- Assistance in joint activities
- Facilitating collaboration to overcome segregation in education

4. Promoting Romani input in education policy:

- Building the capacity of the Directorate for the Development of Education in the Languages of the Communities to address educational issues faced by Roma
- Facilitating dialogue on education-related issues among the Office of the Minister without Portfolio, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education

ANNEX 5: CENSUS RESULTS

TABLE A5. Population structure by ethnicity (2002 census)

Ethnicity	Absolute size	Relative size (%)
Macedonian	1,297,981	64.18
Albanian	509,083	25.17
Turkish	77,959	3.85
Romani	53,879	2.66
Serb	35,939	1.78
Bosniak	17,018	0.84
Vlach	9,695	0.48
Macedonian Muslim	8,422	0.42
Egyptian	3,713	0.18
Other	8,858	0.44

SOURCE: State Statistical Office.

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