

Ex post evaluation – South-eastern Europe

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Sector: Education (CRS code 110)
Programme/Project: Roma Education Fund, BMZ No.: 2007 65 982*
Implementing agency: Roma Education Fund



Ex post evaluation report: 2015

		Project (Planned)	Project (Actual)
Investment costs (total)	EUR million	36.15	36.15
Counterpart contribution	EUR million	34.15	34.15
Funding	EUR million	2.00	2.00
of which BMZ budget funds	EUR million	2.00	2.00

*) Random sample 2015

Summary: In the context of supporting projects in education, student scholarships and public relations, the Roma Education Fund (REF) is dedicated towards helping the Roma to gain access to education, to enhance their qualifications and therewith to offer them better integration and employment opportunities in the countries of central and south-eastern Europe.

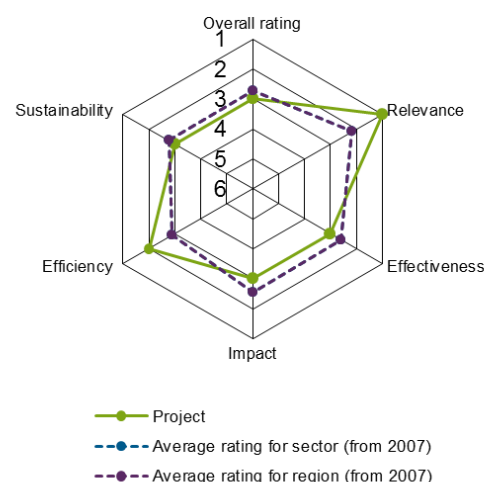
Objectives: The aim of the project was to contribute to improved access to education for Roma in central and south-eastern European countries by supporting the REF (programme objective). This was to enable the better integration of Roma into the respective societies and promote their social participation (ultimate objective).

Target group: The target group primarily includes Roma school pupils, students and job starters, but also their parents and other individuals involved in adult education.

Overall rating: 3

Rationale: The projects of the Roma Education Fund are highly relevant. They were implemented efficiently and helped Roma gain access to education institutions and obtain education qualifications. However, the fragmentation and short duration of the projects curtailed the impact and sustainability.

Highlights: Overall some 10 % of Roma children and young people living in the countries of southern and eastern Europe benefited from the activities of the REF. In countries such as Serbia and Hungary for example, integration approaches were incorporated into national policies or local administration structures, which has thus far only succeeded for adult education in countries like Bulgaria. This contributed to the sustainability of the integration models and led, in some cases, to the improved integration of children and young people. Measures to combat the reasons for the displacement of Roma in the field of education have been particularly effective, as these support both NGO representatives as well as students among the Roma population, thereby helping to break the cycle of poverty.



Rating according to DAC criteria

Overall rating: 3

Relevance

The project aimed to solve a core development policy problem: to contribute to improved access to education for Roma in central and south-eastern European countries by supporting the REF. According to European Commission estimates from 2011, approximately 10-12 million Roma live in Europe, of which around 6 million live within the European Union.¹ As the largest minority in Europe, Roma are often discriminated against when it comes to their education and health as well as on the housing and labour markets, making the subject of Roma integration also one of political relevance.

The developmental objective of the programme is consistent with the current objective of the “EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” from April 2011, which states: “It is therefore of crucial importance to invest in the education of Roma children to allow them later on to successfully enter the labour market.” In member states with significant Roma populations, this already has an economic impact. According to estimates, in Bulgaria, about 23 % of new labour entrants are Roma, in Romania, about 21 %.² Furthermore, the programme was also relevant back in 2005, when it was initiated in the context of the “Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015” in order to implement integration projects in the education sector.

The programme is also in line with the objectives of the BMZ, which is committed to the integration of Sinti and Roma within the context of access to education, migration and the protection of ethnic minorities.

The effect relationships that the project concept builds on were essentially plausible. The development, trial and implementation of Roma integration models (output) should result in improved, inclusive access to education (outcome) and to closing the gap in education between Roma and non-Roma, which will in turn enable the better integration of Roma into mainstream society and promote their social participation (impact).

The selection of the Roma Education Fund, a regional programme, resulted in exemplary donor coordination, as the REF pools donor funds from 50 bilateral and multilateral organisations and passes these on to civil society organisations and NGOs, who then implement the integration models developed by the REF and assume monitoring responsibilities. Furthermore, measures to combat the reasons for the displacement of Roma in the field of education have been particularly effective, as these support both NGO representatives and students, thereby helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Relevance rating: 1

Effectiveness

The aim of the project was to contribute to improved access to education for Roma in central and south-eastern European countries through support from the REF. To achieve this, 33 small projects, implemented across 8 countries by local, mostly Roma-led NGOs, were supported by the REF with EUR 2 million in FC funds. In each case, one or more of the five integration models developed by the REF were used.

1. Early childhood development and nursery attendance (‘toys library’, where toys can be borrowed, and parental counselling)
2. Integration of Roma pupils in primary schools and prevention of early school leaving (tutoring and parental involvement)

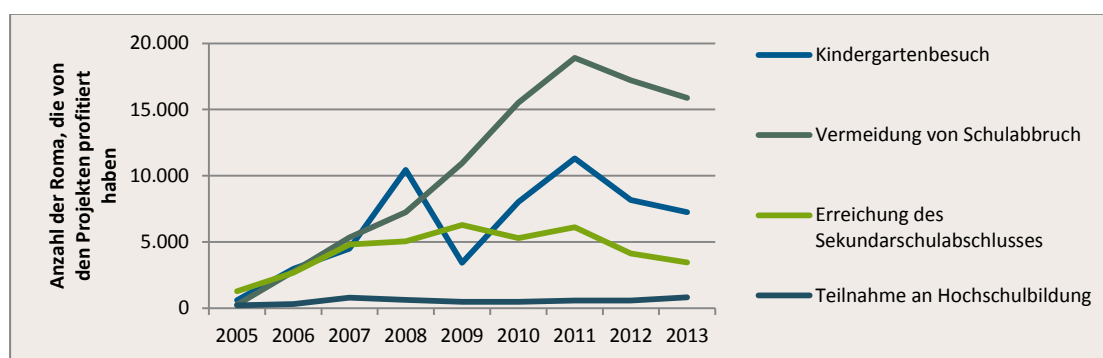
¹ Hornberg, Sabine und Brüggemann, Christian. 2013. http://books.google.de/books?id=bU9AQAQAQBAJ&pg=PA5&lpg=PA5&dq=die+bildungssituation+von+roma+in+europa&source=bl&ots=4DyTqwXFQ&sig=IsWQ3M_ybFE9AyZb_Jvn9h9dV_4&hl=de&sa=X&ei=1bhxVKbRHev-ygOT4CYBw&ved=0CE4Q6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=die%20bildungssituation%20von%20roma%20in%20europa&f=false

² EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. Brussels, 2011. In: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0173:FIN:DE:PDF>.

3. Measures aimed at facilitating secondary education attendance (free textbooks, working groups on active citizen participation, student parliaments, art and debating competitions and tutoring)
4. Access to universities through scholarships and the Roma Versitas programme with additional courses in English and information technology as well as monthly weekend seminars for the training of “elite” Roma students
5. Literacy programmes for parents as well as formal qualifications.

For all projects funded by the REF, the achievement of the programme objective defined at the programme appraisal – to contribute to improved access to education for Roma in 13 central and southeastern European countries – is illustrated in Figure 1. The figure shows the number of Roma children, young people, students and parents who used the five integration models defined by the REF each year and thus overcame the access barriers to education for Roma.

Figure 1 - Improved access to education for Roma and use of the Roma integration models developed by the REF in 13 southern and eastern European countries (2005-2013)



Source: Roma Education Fund: Annual Report 2013 and FZE graph

According to Figure 1, in the period 2005-2013 some 200,000 Roma (children, young people and students) benefited from the REF integration models. Comparing these figures with Council of Europe estimates on the total number of Roma in south-eastern Europe – some 5.2 million (2010 estimate) – and with the results of a UNDP study from 2011, according to which around 55 % of the Roma living in south-eastern Europe are between 0 and 24 years of age, it can be assumed that the REF projects benefited around 10 % of Roma youth (this estimate is optimistic, as in some projects the same pupils and students were supported over the course of several years).

In addition, parents were encouraged in the education of children and in the acquisition of functional reading and writing skills. By means of forwarding donor funds and the implementation by predominantly Roma-led NGOs, in 2013 alone project funds also supported around 650 Roma NGO representatives in their work. This is all the more important because Roma with a university education are discriminated against on the labour market in many countries and therefore get involved in civil society organisations.

As shown by the REF statistics, not only has the data relating to access to education for Roma pupils improved, but school dropout rates have also declined. According to a UNDP survey conducted in 2012 on the educational situation of Roma in eastern Europe, the proportion of Roma aged 14 to 20 who obtained a primary education improved from 77 % in 2004 to 86 % in 2011, and the proportion who obtained a secondary education rose from 40 % in 2004 to 56 % in 2011. In Serbia, the proportion of Roma with a primary-level education increased by 10 percentage points to 63 %.³

With regard to educational quality and learning success, only isolated statistics have been collected to date. In the Fakulteta district of Sofia, for example, which has a predominantly Roma population, the learning outcomes for Roma improved, with the result that Roma students in the school year 2010/11 per-

³ Brüggemann, C. 2012. Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme, p. 20 et seq.

formed better on average than non-Roma students (the average grade for Roma students – ‘good’, at 4.25 – was slightly higher than the average grade for non-Roma students – ‘good’, at 3.96 – with the cut-off for the grade ‘very good’ being 4.70). This success is likely attributable to the intensive support of the REF, but the planned impact study will provide more reliable data and attribution in this regard.

Admittedly, state-wide policies, such as the legal requirement to have a primary-level education as a condition for obtaining a driving licence in Bulgaria, have probably contributed more to the number of Roma successfully graduating from school than any other measures. Likewise, a change in Bulgarian law linking school funding to student enrolment and child benefit – in the form of “conditional cash transfers” – to school attendance has succeeded in achieving a greater improvement in school enrolment rates than any other measures. In other countries, statutory free-of-charge nursery places for children from the age of 5 in Serbia, and from the age of 3 in Hungary, have been decisive in increasing enrolment.

Overall, we consider the effectiveness of the programme to be satisfactory, particularly in view of the fact that the REF developed five educational models and promoted participation in education and integration through a number of small projects and Roma-led NGOs.

Effectiveness rating: 3

Efficiency

The production efficiency (input to output ratio) of the REF can be assessed as satisfactory. A total of 92 % of the REF project funds benefit the projects. Compared with other global and regional programmes, the administrative costs are very low at 8 %. According to an IEG World Bank study carried out in 2011 on global and regional programmes, administrative costs vary between 3.2 % of general project costs in the case of the “Population and Reproductive Health Capacity Building Program”, and 65 % of project costs in the case of the “International Land Coalition Program”.⁴ Even the “Association for the Development of Education in Africa Program”, a similar regional programme in the education sector, spends more on administration than the REF’s 8 %, with administrative costs totalling 16.6 % of project costs.

The decision-making power over project resource allocation and project funding lies with the REF executive board in Budapest, whereby the principle of subsidiarity is not fully guaranteed. Furthermore, there are a total of four hierarchical levels between the donor institution and the local target group members, which is an outcome of the fragmented nature of the initiatives (donors, executive board Budapest, REF secretariat Budapest, local project managers in each country, local NGOs in each country, beneficiaries in each country). However, this limits the efficiency of the programme in a certain sense.

The allocation efficiency (input to impact ratio) can be assessed as good in those countries in which the Roma integration models could be integrated into government structures. While such has been successful in Serbia and Hungary for example, this has not been the case thus far in Bulgaria. In addition, the REF has, by means of existing donor funds, successfully made use of EU structural funds or what are known as “Pre-Accession Funds”, and funds from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), thereby increasing the overall impact of REF funds.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations as the result of complex administrative structures in the project implementation, we assess the efficiency as good due to the relatively low administrative costs (production efficiency) and predominantly good allocation efficiency.

Efficiency rating: 2

Impact

The overarching development objective was to promote better integration of Roma into the respective communities and to encourage their social participation.

In the past, the REF has collected information regarding the impact of its projects only for individual sub-projects. A change in the monitoring system in 2014 implies that in the future indicators on project impact will be collected and evaluated for each beneficiary. Furthermore, the “baseline” for a World Bank impact

⁴ http://ieg.worldbank.org/Data/reports/grpp_eval.pdf, page 40.

evaluation was established in 2014 in cooperation with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which specialises in such investigations. This impact evaluation will test the effectiveness of the REF integration models using experimental design. Since the results to date are not yet available, the present evaluation assessed the effects of the integration models on location in three countries on the basis of the REF reports and the evaluation mission.

Based on the triangulation of reports, interviews and secondary sources, the ultimate objective has been partially achieved. According to statements made by the government officials and school principals surveyed during the evaluation mission, Roma pupils from special schools or segregated schools were integrated to some extent into regular schools in cities like Sofia, Plovdiv and Ratzgrad in Bulgaria, and Belgrade and Valjevo in Serbia.

On a scale from 1 (no integration) to 10 (strong integration), the subjective assessment of the integration of Roma in the respective communities was 5.6 across 32 (Roma and non-Roma) respondents in Bulgaria, including government officials, NGO representatives, teachers, parents and students, and 8.1 across 15 respondents in Serbia. This also shows, among other things, that the national context has a major impact on the integration progress - a fact that was further verified by a household study conducted in 2012 by the "Agency for Fundamental Rights" (FRA) and UNDP, which showed that Roma in Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic and Greece are particularly disadvantaged.⁵

Due to the successful integration in certain countries and the simultaneous continuation of segregation in others, we consider the overarching developmental impact to be satisfactory.

Impact rating: 3

Sustainability

The sustainability of the REF is assessed as satisfactory. On the one hand, although investments in children, pupils, students and their parents often do not pay off until years later, they should, however, be classified as sustainable. On the other hand, the fragmented nature of the REF-funded projects and their short funding periods of one to two years are detrimental to their sustainable impact. In some countries, however, such as Serbia and Romania, it was possible to expand REF projects and give them a more sound financial basis.

A good example of this is Serbia, where it has been possible to continue REF pilot projects for nursery integration, to combat early school leaving and for secondary school funding through subsequent financing from the World Bank and the OSCE/EU and to integrate these into Serbian community financing. By expanding the pilot projects in 56 Serbian municipalities with significant Roma populations, a broad and sustainable impact has been achieved through the pilot projects.

Due to the investment in human capital as well as the continuation and expansion of the projects using World Bank and EU funds, we assess the sustainability of the REF-funded projects as satisfactory despite their fragmented nature and short lifespan.

Sustainability rating: 3

⁵ FRA and UNDP. 2012. The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States Survey results at a glance. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects (and programmes) are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency** and **overarching developmental impact**. The ratings are also used to arrive at a **final assessment** of a project's overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

Level 1	Very good result that clearly exceeds expectations
Level 2	Good result, fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
Level 3	Satisfactory result – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
Level 4	Unsatisfactory result – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
Level 5	Clearly inadequate result – despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
Level 6	The project has no impact or the situation has actually deteriorated

Rating levels 1-3 denote a positive assessment or successful project while rating levels 4-6 denote a negative assessment.

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected).

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and is very unlikely to improve. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The **overall rating** on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. Rating levels 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while rating levels 4-6 denote an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally be considered developmentally "successful" only if the achievement of the project objective ("effectiveness"), the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental impact") and the sustainability are rated at least "satisfactory" (level 3).