An Overview of Successful Practices in support of Roma Education
Presentation Overview

1. Will briefly outline research done to date.
2. Present key findings and lessons learned.
3. Describe proposed future research.
Toward Roma Inclusion: some successful practices in Roma Education in Central and South Eastern Europe (working title)

• First draft written in fall 2008.
• Still more work to be done to finalize.
• Not an exhaustive report.
• It is one contribution—through discussions we hope the no. of initiatives will expand.
• Want to combine the findings of other organizations.
Objectives of this Report

• To more clearly delineate successful initiatives in secondary and primary Roma education, suitable for further investment.

• To document initiatives that can be mainstreamed into government systems.

• To contribute to the efforts of organizations already working in the field.

• To suggest follow-up research including tackling challenges in scaling up initiatives.
Based on assessment criteria, desk reviews and interviews, six initiatives were picked:

1. Desegregation Project, Vidin Bulgaria
2. Alliance for Inclusion of Roma in Education, Macedonia
3. Roma Education Program (REP), Macedonia
4. Phare Programme: Access to Education for Disadvantaged Groups, Romania
5. Equal Chances, Serbia
6. Roma Education Initiative (REI) in Jarovnice-Karice, Slovakia
Key Shared Elements & Approaches for Success

They include but are not limited to:

• Including all stakeholders in program development implementation and monitoring.
• Non-segregation – programmes that are targeted at Roma not as an isolated group but in heterogeneous environment
• Roma/local community/local authorities participation.
• Work with parents.
• Roma Teaching Assistants/community liaisons.
Elements & Approaches for Success cont.: 

- Ongoing service provider training in cultural sensitive practices.
- Focus on transitions between levels of education.
- Child-centered pedagogy.
- Liaising formal and non-formal education
- Multi-sectoral: i.e. joint work of different social sectors (e.g. health, education, child care institutions).
- Holistic: dealing with obstacles and using resources inside & outside of schools.
Two Examples from the Report

Bulgarian Desegregation Project

- Utilized: Work with parents, providing school materials & transportation, scholarships & tutoring, extra curricular activities.

- Results: positive enrollment and retention numbers and state exam results, and scaling up to 10 desegregation projects; 7 supported by EU structural funds; similar projects in other countries
Two Examples from the Report cont.

Phare Programme, Romania

- Utilized: School renovation, teacher training, curriculum changes, Roma participation; approach dealt with obstacles to education inside/outside schools.

- Results: 11.6% increase in enrolment overall, drop out rates halved for primary school; additionally the program was scaled up considerably.
Lessons Learned & Hurdles in Research

Came across countless initiatives:

1. But monitoring and thorough documentation were lacking:
   - Baseline evaluations were often missing.
   - Conspires to make it impossible to assess effectiveness.
   - Impossible to know with certainty which initiatives to invest in.
Lessons Learned & Hurdles in Research cont.

2. Despite countless initiatives, huge gaps in educational outcomes remain; large numbers of Roma children are still excluded:

- Sporadic measures limited in scale and number of beneficiaries limit the overall potential impact.
- Initiatives not including meticulous plans for scaling up in their design.
- Central governments may need to consider more oversight over local implementation.
Implications

• Integrated and universal changes continue to be lacking—this should be a goal.
  – Scaling up is not automatic, and not done to fullest potential.
  – Changes in governments creates inconsistent implementation affecting success rates.

Both indicate a lack of political will and a continuing need to shift general attitudes and priorities.
The Future

The initiatives in Romania and Bulgaria were scaled up—BUT coverage is far from 100%.

• Research into strategies in scaling up:
  – How to foster political will & sustain programs?

• Longitudinal studies: What happens to initiatives when taken over by governments?
  – Is the quality of implementation the same?
  – Are the results and success rates the same?
  – Identification of successes and gaps.
Closing Thoughts

• Input form partners and stakeholders on these issues are not only welcomed, but necessary.

• By working collaboratively we hope this work will result in a positive difference in the lives of an increasing number of Roma children.