



Roma Education Fund

Closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma

# Policy suggestions based on experiences of the 'A Good Start' for early childhood education with focus on marginalized Roma communities

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# Why invest in quality early childhood education and care?

- ▶ Ending the intergenerational transmission of poverty
- ▶ A return on investment/ preventive action
- ▶ Brain Development / well being of children
- ▶ Preparation of school (preventing early school leaving) + enhances chances to succeed in life
- ▶ Children's rights and social responsibility



# ,A Good Start' facts

Two main objectives of the project:

- ▶ to scale-up access to quality ECEC services for disadvantaged Roma children and
- ▶ to raise early childhood development outcomes for Roma children so as to enhance their school readiness;

Budget: aprox. 2.5 million EUR by EU and other donors;

Target: 4000 direct beneficiaries in 4 countries, 16 locations,;

Timeframe: 24 months;

Partners: 12 implementing local partners, 3 international partners– ISSA, FSG and SGI;

Evaluation and capacity building by the WB and UNDP

Roma involvement at all levels



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Let me kindly invite you to watch together a  
movie about the project  
directed by Milutin Jovanovic (3.45 min)



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# DATA FROM THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY ON ENROLLMENT OF ALL CHILDREN AGED 3-7 IN AGS, 2010

	number of children aged 3-7 years	A at home and not enrolled	B mother/child programme	C Crèche	D kindergarten	E community center	F primary school	G special primary school	H other institution
<b>Slovakia</b>	293	<b>45.4%</b>	8.2%		<b>21.8%</b>		21.8%	1.4%	1.4%
<b>Romania</b>	97	<b>3.1%</b>			<b>56.7%</b>	29.9%	9.3%	1.0%	
<b>Macedonia</b>	282	<b>72.0%</b>			<b>13.1%</b>	0.4%	13.1%	0.4%	
<b>Hungary</b>	381	<b>5.8%</b>	0.5%		<b>88.5%</b>		5.2%		



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# Challenges in the 4 countries - addressed by AGS

- lack of proper legislative framework
- capacity problem, lack of kindergarten facilities
- scarcity of ECEC services for age group 0–3
- quality of ECEC services is often under the required minimum standards
- segregation in kindergartens and school education system
- channelling Roma children to special education, or to zero classes
- insufficient preparation with the language of instruction
- Poverty and material deprivation, poor housing conditions
- health status of children



# Preschool as a bridge to mainstream education

## Slovakia

AGS Zborov, Abranovce – capacity problems, language issue, inter-cultural relations

- ▶ community mediators empowered parents to enrol children\*
- ▶ material support\*
- ▶ tutoring for children attending zero classes\*
- ▶ provided financial support to establish preschool services
- ▶ employed teacher, Romani teacher assist. and kitchen assist.
- ▶ informal preschool class for Roma children run by the church

AGS Martin, Banska Bystrica – capacity problems, transportation

- ▶ \* above
- ▶ monthly kindergarten fee covered
- ▶ financing tutoring for children in zero classes
- ▶ open house events in kindergartens and primary schools
- ▶ transportation and accompaniment





# Community Resource Centres focused on ECEC in Romania

AGS Telechiu, Craiova – isolation, extreme poverty, lack of infrastructure

- ▶ community center established in the community – temporary solution
- ▶ alternative, community-based and comprehensive intervention: social worker, health mediator, education mediator and pedagogue
- ▶ informal adult education (focus on mothers)
- ▶ nursery/ crèche for 0–3 established in the centre (in the process of accreditation)
- ▶ liason between municipality and the Roma community



# Supporting preschool enrolment in Macedonia

AGS Skopje, Shuto Orizari – issues with official documentation, capacity problems, extreme poverty

- assisted registration of children to obtain birth certificates, and vaccinations
- financing tuition fee
- material support for families
- evening meetings for mothers
- facilitate access to social services

AGS Eastern–Macedonian localities – transportation issues, poverty

- commitment of municipalities, joint investment in infrastructure
- transportation provided, staff employed partly by AGS, partly by the municipalities
- financing tuition fee



# Interconnected interventions in Hungary

AGS 6 localities low quality of services in geographically isolated communities,

- Home visits by the community mediators
- Meséd (Your Story) – literacy for empowerment
  - developing parenting skills and knowledge to improve ECED outcomes for young children
  - training and engagement of local Roma as mentors and facilitators
- Home Pre-School Community Liaison program
- Focus on the mainstream society – theoretical and practical part of teacher's training modified
  - curricula adjusted
  - obligatory practice module modified



# Instruments for evidence-based project implementation

- ▶ Community Assessment
- ▶ The application of the Household Survey
- ▶ Database of beneficiary children
- ▶ Continuum for Assessing Caregivers in Center and Community-based Programs
- ▶ Applying regular monitoring tools



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# Outputs at the end of December 2011

- ✓ More than 9000 home visits to families in the project
- ✓ 776 Roma children enrolled with support from AGS: 483 in kindergarten, 203 in primary school and 90 in other forms of ECD (mother-child programs)
- ✓ 172 Roma mothers and 451 children participated *Your Story* program
- ✓ 186 teachers and 36 paraprofessionals trained
- ✓ More than 300 students (future teachers) participated activities
- ✓ More than 800 children received material support
- ✓ In Macedonia, 351 parents and children obtained official documents/ birth certificates; more than 1000 children were assisted with vaccination
- ✓ About 100 community motivation events held
- ✓ Good-practice guides and policy papers in preparation



# Lessons learned, policy suggestions for governments

- ▶ Two years of subsidized or free kindergartens for all
- ▶ Inclusive and integrated approach to ECEC
- ▶ Variety of basic quality services (home-based and community-based services for children 0-3/ kindergarten for children 3-6)
- ▶ Focus on home based parenting
- ▶ Community empowerment with focus on mothers
- ▶ Quality human resources (teachers, health workers, Roma mediators)
- ▶ Greater focus is needed in urban settings



# Recommendations for EU memberstates on their National Programming Documents connected to 2014-2020 EU funds

- a) Linking SF to mainstream educational strategies
- b) ECEC horizontal priority
- c) Long term strategies/provisions – moving away from pilot project
- d) Targeting of deprived micro–region and urban centers
- e) Incentives for local actors to comply with conditionality (partnership – cooperative culture)
- f) Technical assistance (ex–ante assessments/guidance in implementation)
- g) ECEC Infrastructure (**desegregation**)
- h) Revision of the national strategies (**defining budgets**)





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