

ПРОГРАМА ЗА  
ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ  
НА РОМИ

ROMA EDUCATION  
PROGRAM

PROGRAMA BAŠI  
EDUKACIJA E  
ROMENGI

*The changes  
behind  
the numbers*

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## *The changes behind the numbers*

ROMA EDUCATION PROGRAM – SIX YEARS LATER

Skopje 2010

## ON ROMA EDUCATION PROGRAM...

The Roma Education Program of the Foundation Open Society Institute - Macedonia (FOSIM) was launched in June 2004 with financial support from the American people through United States Agency for International Development (USAID), FOSIM and the Pestalozzi Children's Foundation from Switzerland. The program goals were additionally supported by OSCE and the Hungarian Embassy in the Republic of Macedonia that funded the high-school component and by the Roma Education Fund from Budapest that supported the university component.

The overall goal of the Program is to help Roma students remain in the education system and improve their performance and attendance by means of positive interventions at all educational levels, ideally in multicultural stimulating environments where Roma children are fully integrated in the school community.

The specific objectives are:

1. To provide better educational basis for preschool Roma children to enter primary education;
2. To improve the retention rate, transition and achievement of Roma students in primary education;
3. To improve the retention rate, transition and achievement of Roma students in secondary education;
4. To increase the academic achievement of Roma university students.

Program activities focus especially on transitional points (from grade-to subject-based teaching in primary school, from primary to secondary, and from secondary to higher education) where Roma children and youth are most vulnerable to drop out from the education system.



The Program is structured around components on preschool, primary, secondary and higher education. FOSIM implements the Program in partnership with local NGOs that manage the five Roma Education Centers providing informal educational support to Roma children and primary school pupils in their relevant environments.

A total of 10 primary schools benefit from training aimed to strengthen the capacities of teaching and administrative staff and delivered by FOSIM and the Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives „Step by Step“. In cooperation with high schools throughout the country, FOSIM implements the high-school component, while the higher education component is carried out through its operational project Romaversitas.

The ultimate goal of Roma Education Program is to create a critical mass of educated Roma who will discontinue the cycle of poverty and exclusion and contribute to long-term Roma community's integration in the Macedonian society.



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## PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION COMPONENT

The preschool and primary education component is implemented in partnership with five local NGOs : “Dendo Vas” (settlement Dame Gruev) and “Soncogedi” (Klanica) in Skopje; “Vrama Si” (settlements Lozja, Bavci and Baraki) and “Kham” (Sredorek) in Kumanovo; and “Aid for the Disabled and Poor People” (settlement Trizla) in Prilep, which run informal Roma Education Centers in their relevant environments.

Project activities are implemented in cooperation with seven primary schools: “Straso Pindzur” and “Braka Miladinovci” in Skopje, “11 Oktomvri”, “Hristijan Todorovski-Karspos”, “Krstje Misirkov” and “Braka Miladinovci” in Kumanovo, and “Dobre Jovanovski” in Prilep. Three primary schools (“26 Juli” and „Braka Ramiz and Hamid” in Skopje, and “Gorgi Sugarev” in Bitola) were additionally included in the training and technical assistance envisaged under this project component.

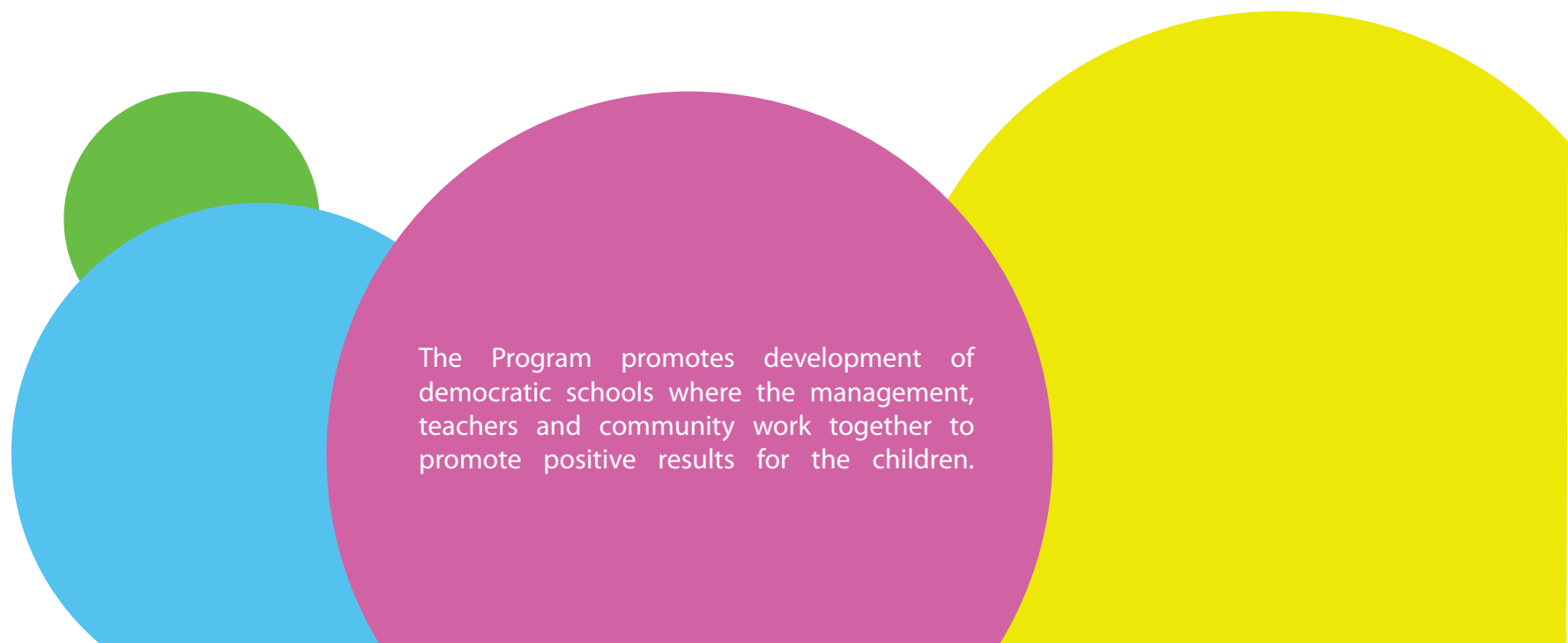
Activities for Roma children at preschool age are implemented by Roma Education Centers and focus on improving their Macedonian language skills, basic knowledge in Mathematics, and improving social and cognitive skills.

At Roma Education Centers, project-targeted Roma primary students receive additional day-to-day out-of-school support in homework writing, subject-based tutoring, English language and IT courses, creative and other workshops. The Centers also provide the link between Roma families and schools and carry out educational and other activities intended for parents.

FOSIM has equipped all project schools with didactic materials. In cooperation with the „Step by Step” Foundation, training was provided for teaching and administrative staff on child-centered innovative teaching methodology, education for social justice and development of organizational capacity to draft school development plans.

This approach promotes development of democratic schools where the management, teachers and community work together to promote positive results for the children.

Depending on the needs, schools receive technical and advisory assistance for an efficient application of knowledge and skills acquired in the training process and in the light of strengthening school’s ties with the local community.



The Program promotes development of democratic schools where the management, teachers and community work together to promote positive results for the children.

## LIFE BECOMES BEAUTIFUL FOR ROMA FROM THE “DAME GRUEV” SETTLEMENT IN SKOPJE

### Zaklina Durmis

Executive Director, Center for Education Support “Dendo Vas”, Skopje

“Life is beautiful” – someone said once and the saying echoes among people worldwide. However, Roma people add: life is beautiful for those with money, jobs, salaries, and food on the table. We, the Roma do not have these things, and therefore our lives are not beautiful. What do we have? The family, our language, our customs, poverty, hunger... Moreover, we have isolation, mistrust in the system, unemployment, handful of educated people, lots of undereducated people, non-acceptance by the majority, stereotypes, discrimination.

5 years passed from the initiation of our activities under FOSIM and USAID funded “Roma Education Program” implemented in the settlement Dame Gruev, Municipality Gjorce Petrov. The said program and activities there in supported the education process, which is essential for employment and better life and improves the general education status of Roma children in the settlement Dame Gruev. We succeeded in achieving the goals set.

We outreached in order to identify school age children, to acquaint the families of children-beneficiaries, as well as those who sometimes visit the Center and talked with them on issues related to their lives.

We watched children growing up; they are all here and regularly attend school, apart from the few who changed their place of residence. Their school achievements are much better compared to their achievements prior to the initiation of support activities targeting children from the settlement. This is a result of the program targeting children at the age of 4 to 6 and aiming to equip them with basic knowledge, space orientation, development of narrating skills in Macedonian language and hand-motor functions. The program focused on mastering school materials, in particular mastering the alphabet, reading and writing skills, as well as basic mathematical operations taught in lower primary classes.

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Various workshops on socialization, communication, identity, Roma language, Roma people and their origin, history and current lifestyles enhanced the project beneficiaries’ self-confidence; they learned more about children rights, various holidays (especially their own holidays), strengthened and expressed their affinities and skills. As part of the project, many of them for the first time saw a lake and a spring, and went to the zoo. Dropping out from primary school is now a rarity.

Most students who had completed 8th grade (upper primary school) enrolled at secondary school and completed it as well. We developed cooperation with children’s parents and teaching staff from the primary school “Straso Pindzur”. We introduced parents with children rights, various diseases and prevention thereof. In addition to regular project activities, we also assisted them in exercising certain family rights (for example, obtaining social assistance, obtaining single monetary assistance for fire accidents, medical treatments for the children, visiting children accommodated with families by the Social Work Center...), and we organized actions to collect old clothes and distribute it to people in need.

We developed mutual trust with teachers from the primary school “Straso Pindzur”, openly discuss problems and needs and seek joint solutions thereto. Stereotypes were stumbled down, Roma children were better accepted by teachers and fellow pupils, they are no longer shy to raise questions and be active in classes.

“Dendo Vas” project team made a step forward in the realization of the motto “life is beautiful” for Roma people from the settlement Dame Gruev. We came so far, but do not know what will happen further. Nevertheless, we are quite certain that support should continue. We proved that Roma children are willing and able to succeed as long as they have open doors.





## OUR SUPPORT REDUCED THE DROP-OUT RATE OF ROMA PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM SREDOREK

*Milan Demirovski,*

Executive Director, KHAM - Kumanovo

“Sredorek” is the largest settlement in Kumanovo, located between the two rivers Konjarka and Lipkovka, with a population of approximately 2,500 inhabitants, 97% of which are social allowance beneficiaries, 2% are employed and 1% are retired, with poor infrastructure and minimum living conditions. Such social and economic conditions necessitated the establishment of an association that would provide help and assistance to the endangered population.

In 2006, our association carried out a research on population’s economic and social status. The research sample included 418 families from the settlement “Sredorek”. Results thereof indicated that children are the most vulnerable group of Roma population. Decrease in quality and quantity of social services, as well as livelihood issues faced by their parents and affecting the family unity often result in children’s negligence as regards their education and socialization.

Children at the age of 3, 4 and 5 years were not involved in any education process that would enable them to adapt, socialize and acquire the Macedonian language. Similar is the situation with school age children who, despite their poor knowledge of Macedonian language, have difficulties in acquiring school materials (they fail in acquiring elementary education and lag behind their fellow students). Parents failed to perceive education as a factor required for better future; instead they focus on things that would make them earn their livelihood. Students showed poor school achievements – extremely low attendance rates, high drop-out rates, small number of students with completed primary education and enrolled at secondary schools, frequent juvenile marriages, emergence of stereotypes and prejudices at schools and like.

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Nevertheless, as from the initiation of USAID and FOSIM funded project, the situation rapidly changed. The project targeted children at the age of 3-5 years, i.e., pre-school children, and assisted them in mastering Macedonian language, acquisition of hygiene habits, as well as mastering cognition skills. Thereby, children were better prepared to start first grade smoothly and more efficiently, which resulted in easier student-teacher communication. Every year, we helped parents to enroll their children in 1st grade.

Assistance provided by “KHAM” (Roma Women Humanitarian Association) helped children to regularly do their homework, receive assistance in subjects they underachieve and to prepare for school, and encouraged them to develop self-confidence and express themselves in front of teachers. Children were supplied with required studying aids so as to be able to successfully perform their tasks. Drop-out rates and discrimination were decreased, attendance rates improved, Roma children’s willingness to attend school increased, as well as participation in extracurricular activities, both at the school and in the Center, along with their interest to attend lectures, etc. All these resulted in reduced drop-out rate of Roma students when transferring from lower to upper primary classes, as well as completion of primary education and continuation of their education at secondary schools.

By attending various educational and creative workshops organized for the parents, some of them comprehended the importance of education; many of them continued their own education and showed increased interest to have their children complete their education process. At the creative workshops parents created different products from wool, clay and like. Parents became interested in their children’s regular attendance; most of them attended parent-teacher meetings at the primary school and the Center, were involved in Center’s Advisory Board and School Board, attended various lectures on health delivered by health professionals (health care and proper hygiene maintenance of their children, immunization’s importance), etc.

Parents became interested in their children’s regular attendance; most of them attended parent-teacher meetings at the primary school and the Center.

The cooperation established with the primary school "11 Oktomvri" had a major contribution to the project outcomes, as we exchanged information on students' regular attendance, achievements, problems faced by teachers, whose resolutions were jointly addressed. We also organized joint parent-teacher meetings, both in the Center and the school. Together with the school's teaching staff we developed a joint strategy to overcome problems and organized joint extracurricular activities.

"KHAM" Center cooperated with the Roma community as well, in particular on different surveys concerning the Centre's activities. Survey results showed that the Centre's work is of particular importance for the children to maintain continuity of improved education at the school, reduce parents' illiteracy, as well as to promote their active participation in societal processes.



## FIGURES CANNOT REFLECT THE LIFE STORIES OF CHILDREN FROM KLANICA

### "Soncogledi"-Skopje

It all began in 2003 when the non-governmental organization "Sunflowers" started the implementation of the pilot-project "Enabling Formal Education to Children from the Settlement 'Klanica'".

Later, in 2005, "Sunflowers" joined the Roma Education Program. This program focused on education of Roma children and youth from the settlement Klanica in the Municipality of Gazi Baba and small part of the settlement Aerodrom, located by the river Vardar, and part of Madzir Maalo, who do not attend school regularly or at all. In the beginning, we focused on field activities, targeting their habitats by the river Vardar.

Children and parents welcomed us with small dose of skepticism when we first visited them. Each following meeting, however, was more close and friendly. Thus, a stable relation based on mutual trust was created and lasts nowadays.

When we first met these families, few children regularly attended school or were not enrolled at all. Children had poor cultural and educational habits. Many children were past their school enrolment age. They were literally left on the streets. That is why we established the Elementary Literacy Group and started bringing children regularly to our Center located in Kisela Voda. They slowly became literate and then we enrolled them at the adult school "AS Makarenko". Parents were grateful and content, but not all of them could afford to complete it. Some children dropped-out because of the home-school distance as they needed money for transport. We accommodated the dropping-out children at our Center until they changed their place of residence.

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In the past 6 years, we managed to persuade parents that from their earliest age children need to start their instruction and education process. Thus, we lowered the kindergarten enrollment age at 2.5 years. Children regularly attended and acquired first hygiene habits and good manners. Some of them started learning the Macedonian language. They attended kindergarten until they reached the age when they could enroll in first grade. "Sunflowers" partnered with the primary school "Braka Miladinovci", where Roma students have been enrolled for more than 20 years. We attended school entrance tests, assisted in document collection, informed families and reminded them about their school responsibilities. Children attended school more regularly compared to the year 2003. During the field visits we informed parents that children must attend school, but they told us that children must also work and help the family so they can eat. Parents enrolling their children on their own initiative and without being reminded thereof were few in number.

Now, the situation is changed. Increasing is the number of families holding all documents required to enroll their child in the education process. Employees at the school were grateful for our cooperation and mediation with parents. Children's achievement has been significantly increased and improved, unlike previous school generations that have not benefited from any support in their schooling process. Macedonian pronunciation was also improved.

Many things have happened in the past 6 years. They were both pleasant and less pleasant. We shared many happy, but also sad moments. We became close with the children, became part of their families. We organized picnics, attended concerts, masquerades, different children shows, visited zoos and museums, climbed mountains, strolled in parks, by rivers... We celebrated all holidays and birthdays, and were invited to their private parties.

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We learned a lot from each other. At present, for example, all small children at the age of 3 can say "good afternoon", "thank you", "goodbye" and like in Macedonian. Their older brothers and sisters who visited our Center are now big boys and girls and they assist younger children and teach them things they have acquired at our Center. They can sing songs and tell stories in Macedonian and know cartoon characters, fairy tales and stories.

The difference the project made is enormous. Figures may not reflect that, however they cannot always mirror life stories.

## THE IMAGE OF TRIZLA 2 IN PRILEP IS CHANGING

### Zarko Ginovski

Executive Director - Humanitarian Organization "Aid for Disabled and Poor People" - Prilep

Prior to the beginning of "Roma Education Program" in July 2004, the Roma settlement TRIZLA-2 was characterized by great negligence of Roma population and their children in many areas - health care, housing, and, in particular, education.

Only 3 (three) children attended kindergarten (based on individual payment), few Roma children were enrolled in first grade, only 4 Roma children were enrolled in secondary schools, only 4 (four) Roma completed secondary education and not a single Roma held higher education degree. They were all unfamiliar with their mother tongue, foreign languages and computer technologies, which is indicative of the disastrous status of Roma population in the Municipality of Prilep.



Conditions at the primary school "Dobre Jovanovski" in Prilep were substandard. The school building was on the verge of collapse: non-functional toilets, bowed ceilings, broken windows - in one word: substandard conditions for normal instruction delivery. The school lacked instruction materials and aids, didactic materials, IT equipment... Teachers were unwilling to cooperate, most of them cherished stereotypes, underestimated Roma children and families, excluded them from school performances and competitions, as well as from Parents Board...

Roma settlement Trizla-2 was not urbanized and without proper infrastructure (utilities, water and electricity supply). Neighborhood unit Trizla-2 was not operational due to lack of adequate working conditions, shortage of premises and human resources to address community issues.

We encountered these challenges when we initiated the "Roma Education Program" in July 2004. Beginnings were difficult, not only due to the low awareness on the importance of education, but also due to lack of confidence, openness and willingness to cooperate.

However, day-to-day hard efforts made by the Education Center "Romano Pro Angle", in classrooms at the primary school "Dobre Jovanovski" in Prilep, field (home) visits and cooperation with all public and state institutions, NGOs, media and the business sector resulted in resolved problems over a period of 6 (six) years, from July 2004 to April 2010.

Today, the image is quite different:

- 240 preschool age Roma children are prepared to start grade;
- 100% Roma children are enrolled in first grade;
- 70% (76 Roma beneficiaries of the Center) are enrolled at secondary schools;

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- 70% (76 Roma beneficiaries of the Center) are enrolled at secondary schools;

- 4 (four) Roma completed higher education;
- decreased drop-out rate (up to 15%) of Roma students in primary education;
- improved achievement of Roma students in primary education;
- improved discipline of Roma students in primary education;
- 120 Roma beneficiaries acquired Roma language by attending courses;
- 112 Roma beneficiaries acquired English language by attending courses;
- 286 Roma beneficiaries acquired IT skills by attending courses;

Today, conditions at the primary school "Dobre Jovanovski" in Prilep are much improved. The building was renovated, all classrooms and toilets repaired, and video surveillance was installed with foreign donor funds.

Today, by means of training and workshops, teachers are equipped with the newest teaching methods and techniques so as to better approach and assess students. They are more open to cooperate, exchange opinions and experiences with interested parties, stereotypes affecting Roma students are eliminated; Roma children are included in school performances, competitions and other events organized by the school. Closer communication and cooperation with Roma parents have been established and they are included in the Parents Board and other bodies at the primary school "Dobre Jovanovski" in Prilep. Roma settlement Trizla-2 has been urbanized and proper infrastructure was constructed (utilities, water and electricity supply). Preparatory works for construction of homes for Roma living in substandard conditions (cardboard houses, tents and homeless people) is underway.

It takes time for education results to become visible, but if they bring benefits for the Roma community and in general for the Municipality of Prilep, all investments thereto are worthwhile.

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## WE MADE A TRUE DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OUR BENEFICIARIES

### Ramis Osmanovski

Executive Director of the Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si"- Kumanovo  
(Address speech at the Roma Education Program public event held on 28th of May, 2010)

My name is Ramis Osmanovski, Head of the Roma Education Center and Director of the Association "Vrama Si" from Kumanovo. When my colleagues from the Foundation asked me to address to this event, I was slightly anxious. Mostly due to the dilemma whether to present shares and figures on the work and achievements made in the past five or six years, or, to talk about the most important thing, i.e., what are the changes made by the people from the five Roma Education Centers working with children and what the figures mean in real terms?

I opted for the second. I decided to talk about the changes made in communities targeted by our actions, namely the settlements Bavci, Baraki, Stari Lozja and Sredorek in Kumanovo, Trizla 2 in Prilep, and Dame Gruev and Klanica in Skopje. Ultimately, the work performed by the five partner organizations – "Vrama Si" and "Kham" from Kumanovo, "Dendo Vas" and "Sunflowers" from Skopje and "Assistance for Disabled and Poor People" from Prilep – can be summarized to shares and figures, but one should not forget that these figures concern real people, with real destinies and goals.

Figures on Roma population in the project-targeted settlements indicate that people live in substandard conditions, most often cramped in one or two dark and damp rooms, without sanitary facilities, low level of hygiene and under poor social and economic conditions. Most Roma parents have not completed primary education. More than 90% of families are social assistance beneficiaries. They earn their living by collecting waste - PVC, paper and scrap iron – and doing season work.

..."How can we help our children with school work, illiterate as we are?" - parents told us. There was a great need, but nobody to lend a helping hand. This was the major reason for the establishment of our Center. Beginnings were difficult. We were not properly understood. Some thought of us as parallel education institutions. It was not long before they realized that we do what parents and schools should have done, but they were unable to comprehend it.

At our Center, many children learned their first words in Macedonian language prior to enrolling at school. Here they gain literacy literate, learned to read and write, multiply and divide. Many children grew up with us. We stimulated and encouraged them, discussed the reasons behind every failing grade and unjustified absence, and shared their joy for every excellent grade they obtained.

We outreached and visited homes, thus became close with children and their families. We shared moments of success and hardship. We addressed different problems. We managed to overcome some, but failed to impact others, such as season work and migration, as there is so much to be done and problems persist.

We tried to address different community needs. We organized actions to collect old clothes and distribute it to people in need. We helped parents enroll their children in first grade, informed them on their progress, organized immunization actions targeting children from our settlements, and environmental actions aimed to clean the litter polluting the settlements.

Many children grew up with us. We stimulated and encouraged them, discussed the reasons behind every failing grade and unjustified absence, and shared their joy for every excellent grade they obtained.





We established excellent cooperation with the schools. We implemented joint activities with parents, continuously monitored the progress and regular attendance of our beneficiaries and developed joint strategies aimed to assist and teach them how to improve their school achievement and better use their potentials. We acknowledged partnerships with schools as very important, since the schools are the place where changes should and are slowly but certainly occurring. The image of Roma students taking back row seats in classrooms is changing. Together with us, teachers from schools attended different training on social justice, interactive instruction methods, preparing school development plans and like. They now better understand problems faced by Roma students and are better prepared to address their needs and help them.

When barely providing for own livelihood, education is not likely to be one's paramount, instead it is securing food for the family. Today, economic status of Roma parents is not improved, but their understanding for education's importance is. They realized that without education, the likelihood of their children struggling with poverty is greater. They all speak in one voice, saying - yes, we live in poor conditions, but my child must attend school and progress, must not drop out, as only by doing so it can have a better life than ours. Today, parents show greater interest in their children's achievement and regular attendance, attend parent-teacher meetings more regularly, and some of them are members of the Parents and School Boards, thus actively participate in the decision-making process. These previously unfathomable things are now reality.

Reality now includes other things as well, those being: the number of early dropping-out students is insignificant, the number of beneficiaries who successfully completed the grade is increased; students' school achievement is improved. It is our belief that our work contributed to a great extent to double the number of Roma primary and secondary school students who completed their education in the Republic of Macedonia.

The parents realized that without education, the likelihood of their children struggling with poverty is greater. They all speak in one voice, saying - yes, we live in poor conditions, but my child must attend school and progress, must not drop out, as only by doing so it can have a better life than ours.

There are many reasons to be content and proud with the results achieved. In the year prior to the project initiation, only two Roma students in Kumanovo have completed eighth grade (upper primary class). Last school year 23 Roma students from Kumanovo completed their primary education - all of them were project beneficiaries. The total number of Roma secondary school students in Kumanovo more than doubled - from 30 secondary school students prior to the project initiation to 79 secondary school students in the last school year. But do our achievements suffice?

Our work cannot be described as miracle. Nevertheless, I am convinced that thanks to the support provided by USAID, FOSIM and the Pestaloci Children's Foundation we succeed to make a true difference in the lives of our beneficiaries, and thereby in the lives of their families. Our goal was to demonstrate that Roma students can advance at school same as their fellow students, when given equal opportunity, care and attention. We proved that it is possible. Now it is state's turn to continue our efforts.



## BENEFICIARIES ON THE PROGRAM

### *Kasanda from Skopje*

...“Sunflowers” have many toys - dolls and teddy bears, small plastic animals, puzzles, and shopping carts that we play with and pretend to go shopping at supermarkets. There are numerous picture books, and a wooden horse. I have never seen so many toys in one place. All children coming here are allowed to play with them! We have pencils and crayons in different colors. We draw with them, learn the numbers and letters“...

### *Marciano from Kumanovo*

...“I am an excellent student. I love the program I am involved in. I learned a lot at the Center, and like that I can draw and make dough figures, learn poems, write compositions and compete in knowledge quizzes. I am happy because I acquired the Macedonian language well and now I can express myself better at school and everybody can see what I know and can do“...

### *Enis from Kumanovo*

“I like the Center because I have a place to study, while teachers assist us in studying and writing our homework. I am happy because I improved my grades and learned more things. We attend computer courses, and after we finish our homework, we practice and study on computers. Here I feel good and relaxed“...

### *Adela from Prilep*

I like the Center’s activities. We have free-of-charge English language and computer courses. We also had free-of-charge excursions and visited different places throughout Macedonia, which I have only heard of but never been to“...



### *Mevlida from Prilep*

I learned a lot at the Center and I know more things than children who do not attend the Center. My favorite subject is English, and I improved my grade in Geography. When I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian and treat animals.

### *Benjamin from Prilep*

The Center helped in my studying, and I improved my grades. When I grow up, I want to be Spiderman because he climbs wherever he wants.

### *Erdijan from Skopje*

From my fourth grade, I regularly attend the Center. My school achievement is improved. Here, teachers help me with my homework and comprehension of different units and lessons. I learned to work on computers and use Internet; I am involved in debates and discussions, and went to excursions organized by the Center.

### *Nadzija from Kumanovo*

I like Biology a lot. When I grow up, I want to be a teacher.

### *Arbenita from Kumanovo*

I improved my grades in Macedonian and Mathematics, now I know how to solve my math problems myself. I want to be a librarian and read many books.

### *Siberdzana from Skopje*

I learned multiplications and divisions, and I can add and subtract effortlessly. My favorite subject is Mathematics and Macedonian language. When I grow up, I want to be an architect and work at Bin Yapi.





***Izabela from Skopje***

The Center is a great place for studying. I come here for several years. Now my grades are better. My favorite subject is Arts, because I like to draw. I want to be a hairdresser.

***Nermando from Kumanovo***

My favorite subjects are Computer Science and Biology. I want to be a football player like Kristiano Ronaldo.

***Mirsada, parent from Prilep***

The Center helps my child to do homework. It provides better studying conditions. We do not have this at our home, because I am illiterate and as much as I want to I cannot help my child.

***Firdes, parent from Prilep.***

My child receives school materials. Teachers show him how to do his homework correctly. My child also learns to use computers. We did not have anyone to show us how to do that before. Now, the number of students who complete the eighth grade and enroll at secondary schools is increased.

***Suada, parent from Kumanovo***

As a parent I must work all day to be able to provide food for my children and I do not have much time to explain school tasks to them. At the Center they study, write, interact and learn new things.

***Vaska, parent from Kumanovo***

The Center helps us with many necessary things when nobody else is willing to – to obtain documents required for social services and like. The Center regularly organizes environmental actions. We live in debris and the organization "Vrama Si" is the only one that organizes cleaning actions.

***Vezira, parent from Kumanovo***

My child attends the Center to learn more, to complete education and get a job in future, so that he would not have to struggle as we do now. There is no success without schooling!!!

***Muarem, parent from Kumanovo***

When I attend parent-teacher meetings I see that children attending the Center show better achievement, including my children as well.

***Zejnep, parent from Skopje***

The Center is important for us. It helps children to acquire school materials more easily and achieve better results at school. I want my daughter to learn, to achieve more in life.

***Marjan Matrakoski, Advisor on education and sports at the Municipality of Prilep***

The project increased the number of Roma secondary school students, and made the local self-government in Prilep better informed on problems and achievements of Roma youth in Prilep, notably in terms of their education. In the Humanitarian Organization "Aid for Disabled and Poor People" from Prilep, the local self-government in Prilep recognized a true partner in education actions. The organization acts as the link between Roma and non-Roma population, not only in terms of the operation of the Center for Education Support "Romano Pro Angle", but also in their day-to-day outreach work in the Roma settlement Trizla-2.





***Violeta Laskoska, Principal of the primary school  
"Dobre Jovanovski"- Prilep***

The Center's contribution can be seen in the improved quality of knowledge acquired by Roma children, increased attendance rate of Roma students and increased interest and motivation showed by Roma parents as regards the importance of education. The primary school "Dobre Jovanovski"- Prilep also benefited from the training delivered for teachers on different instruction methods, and received instruction and didactic aids...

***Danica Talimdzioska, Head of the Inter-Municipal Department  
at the Bureau for Development of Education, Prilep***

Cooperation with the education center "Romano Pro Angle" is of mutual benefit as it improves the education of Roma children attending the primary school "Dobre Jovanovski"- Prilep.

***Olivera Stojanova, Principal of the primary school  
"Hristijan Karpos", Kumanovo***

Cooperation between the primary school "Hristijan Karpos" and Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si" was initiated as early as the school 2002/2003 year, when few Roma were enrolled at the school who had low transfer rate and poor school performance. Today, around 40 Roma students are enrolled in first grade and their transfer rate is evidently increased, as well as their interest to get involved in different school activities.

Together with "Vrama Si" we visited families, jointly tested Roma students for school admission, organized joint parent-teacher meetings, workshops, etc. The annual program of the primary school "Hristijan Karpos" includes a priority targeting better cooperation between the school and parents. As a result of the successful implementation of planned joint activities, Roma parents demonstrated increased interest for their children's inclusion in the education process. There are three Roma parents in the Parents Board and one Roma parent in the School Management Board.

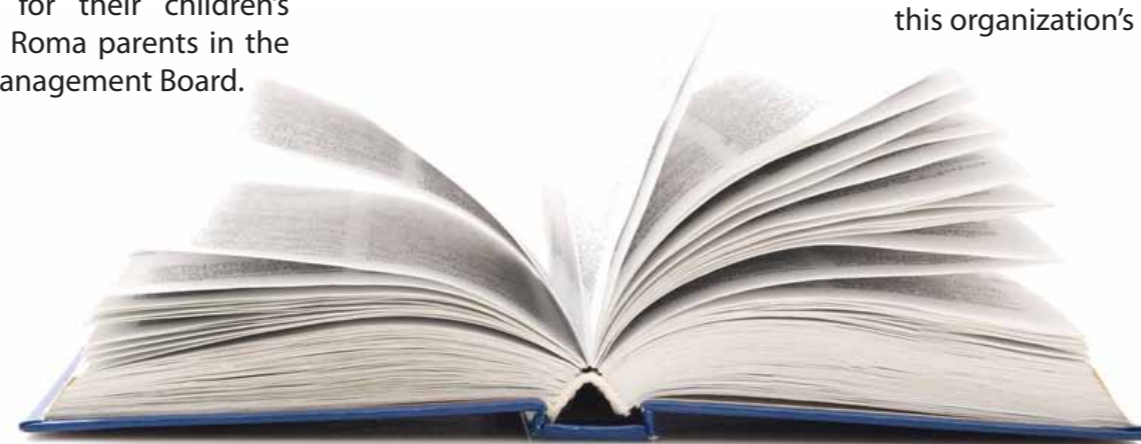
Together we work on implementation of intercultural local curricula in History, which were warmly welcomed by students. Numerous intercultural workshops improved the school atmosphere and more students tend to interact among themselves. Teachers from our school started attending training sessions together with Centre's educators and later we were involved in numerous projects aimed to promote and upgrade the teaching staff.

The single problem we faced for years was the increase of season work in Kumanovo, which is the main reason for students dropping-out from the primary school "Hristijan Karpos". We made great efforts within the scope of our possibilities, such as organizing elementary instruction delivery at the school and the Center in order to address this problem, but it still persists. Nevertheless, we will not give in, but will continue to work together.

Our perennial partnership is an example of positive practices that trigger interest with other schools and non-governmental organizations from Kumanovo profiled in education issues, as well as the Education Inspectorate, which highly assessed this partnership.

***Tome Spirovski, Education Inspector, Kumanovo***

I am actively involved in the work of Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si" from its establishment in 2002. This is so because I believe in the work of "Vrama Si" and the results it produces. "Vrama Si" is a well-equipped organization, acts in organized and strategic manner. It is distinguishable, transparent and well ranked by the local self-government. Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si" is consulted as a relevant stakeholder in the municipal decision-making process. The good cooperation established with all relevant institutions, such as the local self-government, Social Work Center, Health Institute, non-governmental and business sector speaks on this organization's success.



Numerous results were achieved: identification of children who were to be involved in the education process; increased information and education of Roma parents concerning the importance of education; reduced drop-out rate of Roma students from the education process; decreased number of students repeating school grades; increased number of Roma students enrolled in secondary education – all due to affirmative actions organized by Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si" much ahead of the adoption of the law on mandatory secondary education. The actions taken during the school 2008/2009 year provided a positive example for secondary schools in Kumanovo to replicate them with the support from "Vrama Si". Numerous training sessions were delivered to teachers and resulted in eliminated stereotypes held by most teachers. They started implementing intercultural local curricula, included Roma students in extracurricular activities and Roma parents in Parents Board and Management Board, thus enhancing the cooperation among parents, students, school and the Center.

The list of positive results and initiatives implemented by Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si" is endless. "Vrama Si" is a successful organization, a trustworthy partner of the Roma population and a place they can refer to with their problems.

**Zoran Pavlovski, Head of sector at the local self-government, Municipality of Kumanovo**

Together with Roma Citizens' Association "Vrama Si" we worked on many projects, such as the project aimed to improve the infrastructure in the city of Kumanovo (river bed of the river Kumanovka), with emphasis on Roma settlements. In 2003, "Vrama Si" was the "culprit" for the construction of water supply systems, sewage systems, land-line telephones, paved roads, etc. in the non-urbanized Roma settlements in Kumanovo.

"Vrama Si" actively participated in affirmative actions aimed to collect clothes and books, cooperated with the Red Cross from Kumanovo, organized immunization and medical checks for Roma people in cooperation with the Health Care Centre, and is a reliable partners in need for the Roma.



"Vrama Si" is the single organization that cleaned illegal landfill sites created in ghettoized Roma settlements in Kumanovo, which were the reason for numerous diseases affecting the Roma population and their short life span. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy should be engaged and develop an appropriate program that would address the issue of parents' season work, an issue already diligently addressed by "Vrama Si" and the primary school "Hristijan Karpos".

**Krune Mladenovski, Principal of the primary school "11 Oktomvri", Kumanovo**

For years now, the primary school "11 Oktomvri" cooperates with "Vrama Si" in the organization of affirmative actions targeting secondary school enrollment of eighth grade students and information provision on the Roma population contained in their 2003 database, which is now updated. This year the primary school "11 Oktomvri" deepened its cooperation with "Vrama Si" by introducing and developing intercultural curricula, a positive model assumed from the cooperation between "Vrama Si" and the primary school "Hristijan Karpos". Because of "Vrama Si" success and the reputation enjoyed by the organization among the Roma population, our cooperation will not stop here – in future we plan to work on adult education, training and in-service training, etc.

**Stojanka Duducki, Macedonian language teacher at the primary school "Krste Misirkov"**

Cooperation with "Vrama Si" resulted in increased number of Roma students enrolled at the primary school "Krste Misirkov", improved achievement and attendance rate. I believe that greatest results were achieved at the workshops organized by "Vrama Si". These workshops provided students with opportunities to get acquainted interact, express themselves creatively, etc. Students eagerly wait to be informed on the next workshop, and the number of interested students continuously grows from one workshop to another. Students attending workshops organized by "Vrama Si" are more active in classes and feel free to voice their opinions. I have attended few workshops and witnessed students' enthusiasm, which made me apply their working method in my instruction.





*Olga Jovanovska, lower primary class teacher at the primary school "Hristijan Karpos"*

We have established good and long-standing cooperation with "Vrama Si", based on regular meetings with their educators, where we exchange information on Roma students' achievement and attendance rate, undertake joint field visits targeting families, organize parent-teacher meetings and implement affirmative actions to collect clothes, books, and like.

I know which students from my class are regular beneficiaries of services provided by "Vrama Si", even without being informed thereof as they master lessons without difficulties and are more active on classes - they are interested to participate in extracurricular activities, attend instruction regularly, have better Macedonian language skills and their parents are more interested in their education, compared to other Roma parents.





## SECONDARY EDUCATION COMPONENT

In the period 2004 - 2008, this education component secured scholarships for 262 Roma students throughout their secondary education (first to fourth year), mentorship and additional academic support by means of participation in various training, summer and winter schools, foreign language and computer courses. 200 from the total of 262 scholarship recipients (76.00%) successfully completed their secondary education (153 Roma high school students completed their four-years secondary education and 47 completed their three-years vocational education and training).

In the school year 2008/9, 102 high school students (enrolled in their third year of their four-years secondary education) with a GPA exceeding 3.0 received scholarships and mentorship support to better prepare their final Matura Exams for a period of two school years until they graduated (2008-2010). 98 of them continued to benefit from scholarships and additional educational support in the school year 2009/10.

The scholarships provided financial support for educational needs of targeted Roma students (textbooks, additional teaching materials, transportation and food costs, clothing, etc.). Scholarship renewal depends on their regular attendance, performance and successful transition to the next year of secondary education.

Mentorship activities aim to provide assistance to overcome shortcomings and gaps in the knowledge inherited from their previous education level. By means of an open competition, a total of 157 secondary school subject teachers were selected and on daily basis - individually or in mentor teams - offered mentoring support to scholarship beneficiaries from project schools. Mentors received basic and advanced training, as well as appropriate professional literature on effective mentoring techniques and on work with parents. Their primary task is to directly tutor the subjects where students show poor results and where they face difficulties in comprehending the contents concerned.

The scholarships provided financial support for educational needs of targeted Roma students (textbooks, additional teaching materials, transportation and food costs, clothing, etc.).

They also encourage and assist the integration of the students within the school community, help them develop planning and organization skills, including good learning habits, motivate them and encourage their interest in extracurricular and other activities available in the school.

The additional academic support enables expansion of knowledge and interests of Roma students included in the Program by participation in winter and summer schools organized on various topics (presentation and communication skills, leadership, street law, etc.) as well as English language and computer courses.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON THE PROGRAM

*Akif Kariman and Fetija Demirovska were beneficiaries of the secondary school scholarships provided by the Roma Education Program in the period 2004/05-2007/08. These are their address speeches at the public event held on 17th October 2008 on the occasion of secondary school graduation of the first group of 200 Roma secondary school students-beneficiaries of the Program. Speeches are published with their permission.*

### Akif Kariman

Good day to you all. I am Akif Kariman and come from Tetovo. I am one of the beneficiaries of the scholarships provided by USAID and FOSIM's Roma Education Program. As of 1st October I am a freshman at the Faculty of Medicine within the "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje.

I am truly honored with the opportunity given to address this audience and speak about the last four years of education on behalf of all students who completed secondary school and benefited from Program's scholarships. For me, and I believe for other beneficiaries as well, the program support was of enormous importance. When I say support, I do not refer only to the scholarships we obtained in the course of school years, but also mentors' assistance, numerous seminars and training sessions organized for us, English language and computer courses, which, in my opinion, were even more significant.



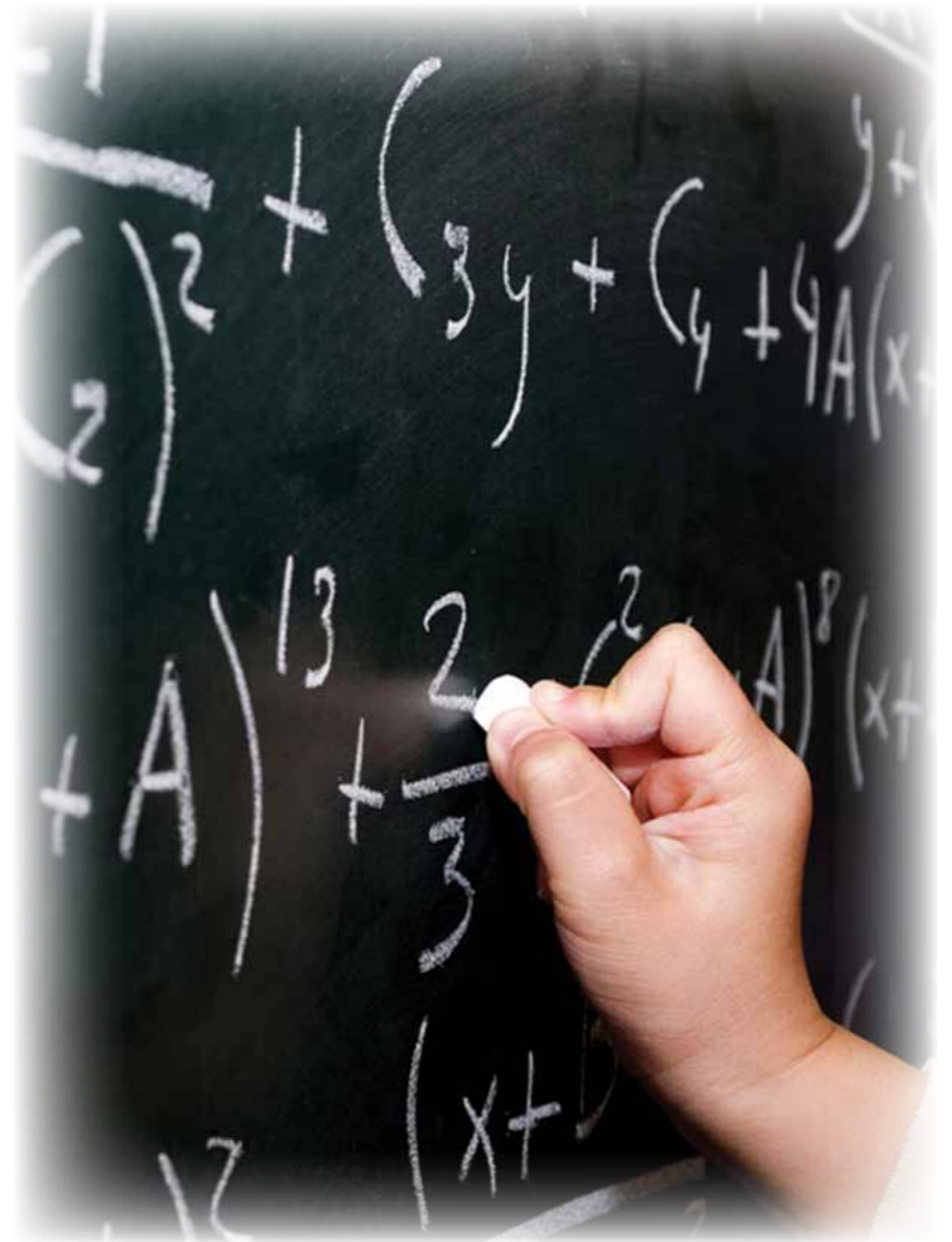
What did we get from it? We acquired communication, leader and debating skills and sense of team work; we developed our orating skills and were familiarized with the constitutional and legal system of the Republic of Macedonia, our fundamental rights and civil responsibilities. We were trained on active job seeking, entrepreneurship and self-employment, which I believe will help us a lot in getting the job we are qualified for or starting the careers we desire. As high achievement was the basic precondition to continue benefiting from the program, we were motivated to advance and achieve better results at school.

I would say few words on the thing of greatest importance for me - the mentor's assistance. My mentor, who is also the school psychologist, helped me not only to discover myself and my abilities, but was responsible for all academic and personal successes. We felt secure with the mentors, because we knew there was somebody at the school who was always there to support, help and encourage us, to share moments of joy and hardship. Believe me, we had such moments when faced with the question: what next?

At the beginning, the greatest difficulty faced by all Roma Education Program beneficiaries was whether to set unattainable goals for ourselves and fail to achieve them or to set easily attainable goals and attain them. Nevertheless, something completely different happen that we are all particularly proud of - we set high goals and attained them. We will never be what we are today, as we can only be better. We chose our future. Today, I believe that every single one of us knows what to do next, what is good for us, our families and our children's future.

At the end I would like to THANK USAID and FOSIM. We thank you for the support you provided, the belief in us and our capacities, the additional motivation you provided us with in order to realize our ambitions, and we especially THANK the program staff who was always there for us when we needed them.

We felt secure with the mentors, because we knew there was somebody at the school who was always there to support, help and encourage us, to share moments of joy and hardship. Believe me, we had such moments when faced with the question: what next?



**Fetija Demirovska**

Good day to you all. I am Fetija Demirovska and come from Berovo. Until recently I was a Program beneficiary and today I am a student at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, at the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy.

To share my experiences from the program participation would mean to repeat all what Akif already shared with you. Therefore, I will only add one more thing. The Program encouraged us to debate on various important issues affecting us, the youth, to listen to others' opinions, to confront positions, compete... It helped us prepare better for the Matura Exam, learn new things we would have probably not learned. The Program enabled us to interact, acquire new friends from all over Macedonia, with whom we still keep in touch. More importantly, for me and for all of us here, the Program helped us be where we are now.

When I came to Skopje to submit the faculty enrollment application, I told my parents: do not expect me back in Berovo. They looked at me, slightly frightened – they probably wondered what I meant. What I wanted to tell them was that I will enroll at faculty and succeed in life. And I did enroll at faculty and now, more than ever in my life, I am certain that I will succeed. Not only will I succeed to complete my undergraduate studies in social work, but will also continue my education at postgraduate studies, work the job I like and help other Roma make their lives better.

Uneducated female Roma are now an image of the past, we eliminated that stereotype. If I could do it, if we could do it, then others can do it as well. Today, I would like to send this message to other Roma students. Future is in education. Be persistent, do not give up! Everyone can succeed, if they put effort and hard work in to it, and YOU can succeed too!

Uneducated female Roma are now an image of the past, we eliminated that stereotype. If I could do it, if we could do it, then others can do it as well.

Finally, on behalf of scholarship beneficiaries I would like to thank USAID and FOSIM. Thank you for your support in these four years, thank you for everything you did for us, and most of all – thank you for your belief in us.

**Ajten from Gostivar**

The scholarship was an incentive not to drop-out from school, and now is an incentive to continue my university education.

**Belguzar from Skopje**

Under mentor's assistance, my third year achievement was much better compared to the second year of high school when I did not have a mentor and was not benefiting from the scholarship. Now, the mentor helps me prepare for the forthcoming Matura Exam.

**Sebi from Vinica**

I plan to continue my education at the Police Academy in Skopje, because I like the profession. I believe that in doing so I will contribute more to my community, as I will complete the faculty and hope to get employed according to my qualifications.

**Emran from Skopje**

If it were not for this program, many Roma children would very hardly obtained education degree because of their parents' poor social and economic status.

**Suzane from Ohrid**

The Program is of great importance, because Roma students have the opportunity to demonstrate their qualities and prove they are not second-class citizens. I am going to enroll at faculty and specialize in gender studies, as I believe this is where I can contribute most to society.



***Semran from Skopje***

I will study law, as I am interested in legal sciences, human rights and freedoms.

***Agnur from Skopje***

Yes, I will certainly continue my education. I will enroll at the Teacher Training Faculty, because there is lack of Roma teaching staff, and I believe that I will find job more easily.

***Bedri from Gostivar***

I welcome the program. I am certain that it will impact all secondary school students and encourage them to consider their education and future. It is a fact that the number of Roma secondary school students has significantly increased compared to previous years.

***Dzemail from Skopje***

When I first enrolled at the secondary school my primary goal was to study at the Faculty of Philology.



## HIGHER EDUCATION COMPONENT

Romaversitas is part of FOSI-Macedonia implementing the university component of Roma Education Program. It was established in 2001 as a joint initiative of FOSIM and the Higher Education Support Program from OSI-Budapest. Romaversitas is a logical continuation of FOSIM's efforts initiated in 1997 by the Roma Scholarship and Mentorship Program and a step further in promoting equal opportunities and access to higher education institutions in the Republic of Macedonia for young Roma students.

Approximately 40 to 80 Roma university students in social studies and humanities have had the opportunity to choose and participate in the annual scope of activities organized by Romaversitas depending on their interest, field of studies and free time. Romaversitas offers informal educational support for Roma students to assist them in achieving higher academic results, easier transition to the next academic year and timely graduation. This is enabled by means of scholarships, tutor assistance and additional academic support.

The scholarships provide financial assistance to cover tuition fees, transportation costs and purchase of basic literature, while the students attending universities outside their home towns are provided with financial means to cover their accommodation costs as well.

Tutoring provided by junior university professors, assistants and peers helps them comprehend complex academic contents.

The additional academic support makes their studies easier and expands their academic views by means of various basic and advance academic training including: essay writing, academic reading and writing, communication skills, scientific research methodology, learning strategies, etc. Students have the opportunity to attend foreign language and computer literacy courses and develop their language and computer skills necessary for further academic upgrading.

By means of small grants for student initiatives and projects, they can also express and exchange their academic knowledge and skills in their relevant fields of studies, as well as research, analyze and suggest solutions to problems and issues relevant for the Roma community in Macedonia. The university students' magazine "Roma Index" provides an additional opportunity for them to articulate their own views in the form of essays. Romaversitas provides an additional opportunity for participation in summer schools organized on topics suggested by the students themselves.

Located in Skopje downtown area, Romaversitas premises dispose with computers and Internet access, as well as a library, whose fund is continuously increased. Students are given the opportunity to use all available resources as to research the latest trends in their field of studies.

## UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON THE PROGRAM

### *Sebijan Fejzula*

*(Address speech at the Roma Education Program public event held on 28th of May, 2010)*

I am Sebijan Fejzula and am senior year student at the Faculty of Philosophy within the "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University. I come from Roma family and live in a traditional Roma settlement, where somebody else decides on Roma women's future – their family and relatives, and not themselves. I grew up in an environment where the only profession of Roma women was to be good housewives.

During my primary school education, many girlfriends were forced to drop-out from school, most commonly because their families did not have finances to support their schooling. The only thing I knew was that I did not want that to happen to me.

Romaversitas provides an additional opportunity for participation in summer schools organized on topics suggested by the students themselves.

When I completed the primary school, I wanted to continue my education in secondary school. My parents were the first who encouraged me to do so. Then I realized that from that moment on I was the master of my own destiny. And if I want my environment to change, I need to start from myself: to invest in my education in order to become the master of my destiny.

And it did happen! I enrolled at the secondary school and I found like-minded fellow-students. I was proud to be the single Roma in the classes, although we were few in number. I was happy to see more Roma enrolling at the secondary school with every new school year.

As years went by, I gradually approached the major challenge – to acquire the status of a UNIVERSITY STUDENT. I was aware that it was a major challenge, but at the same time a ticket for better future as a Roma woman. I had huge desire to study, however few questions constantly distressed me: will my parents have enough money to pay for my studies, what will my two sisters have to give up from so that I can study, what will happen if my parents do not have enough finances?

From my fellow-students I learned about the Roma Education Program. I was overwhelmed with hope and excitement, and decided to apply. The scholarship I obtained was my biggest support. It was a great alleviation since I knew I was not causing additional expenses to my parents' budget and I could continue my education. The scholarship was my motive, but a responsibility also to pass my exams successfully and justify the Program's investment in me, because I was aware that any other student could have been in my place.

Romaversitas offered Roma students opportunities to enhance their individual academic capacities. It was what I needed. Participation on many workshops and seminars, organization of debates, press-conferences and events, enabled me to acquire skills I could later apply in my studies and future professional career.

I was proud to be the single Roma in the classes, although we were few in number

Contacts I established with many Roma and non-Roma students whom I daily met at the Romaverzitas helped me access new information, acquire experiences, learn from the best, and benefit from assistance for exam-taking, as part of the tutoring program. It was a great honor for me to be given the opportunity to present Romaverzitas' programs outside the Republic of Macedonia – an extraordinary and exceptionally positive experience. I attended two international seminars organized for Roma students throughout Europe.

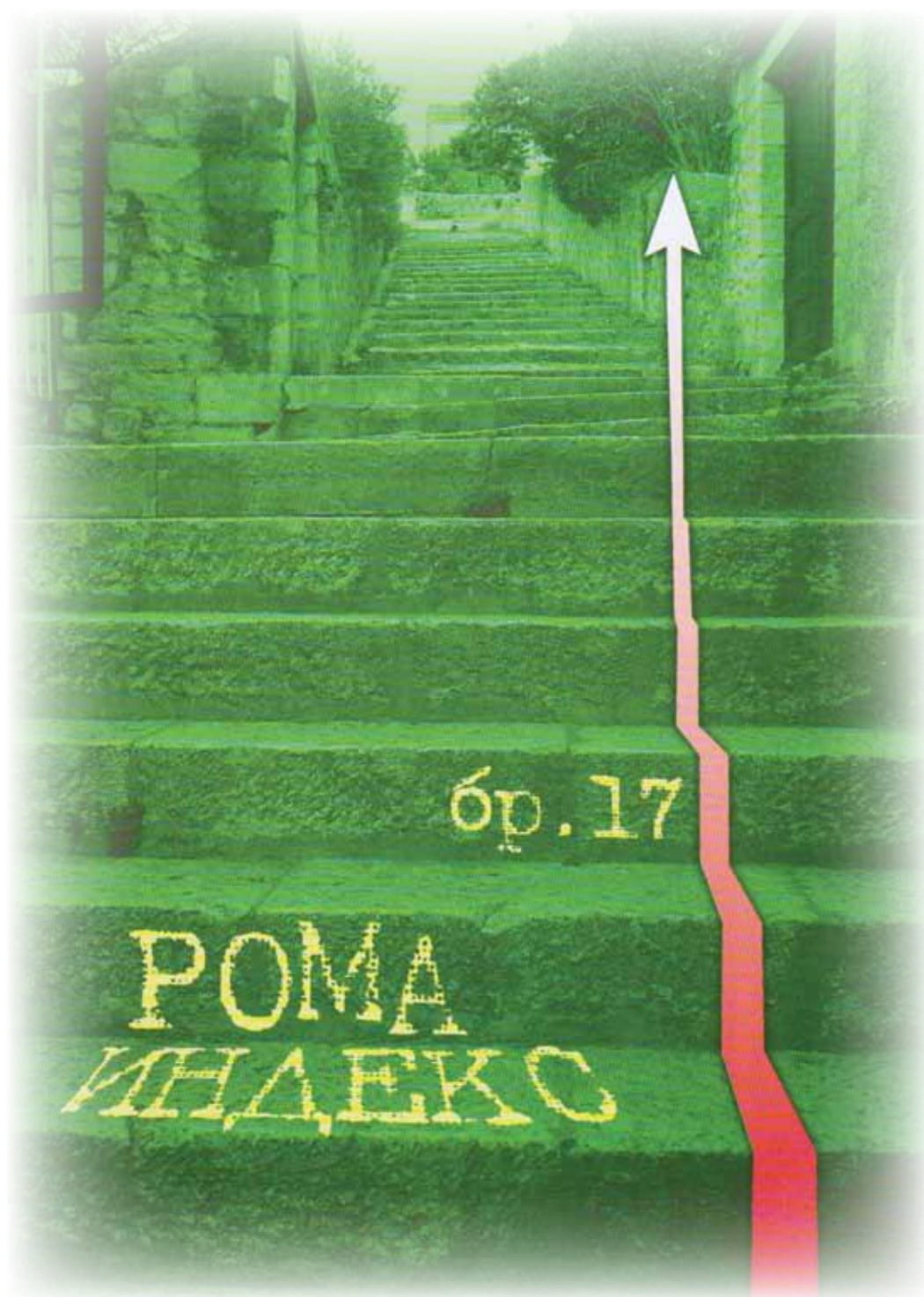
The time came for me to demonstrate the knowledge and experience I acquired. Two years ago I was called to a job interview and successfully passed it, thanks to the training and foreign languages courses I attended. After I was employed, my employer told me that he was informed about me from the Roma Education Program.

At present I am completing my studies, I work and after graduation I will enroll at Master Studies. In my free time, I am actively involved in many informal groups working on improving the status of Roma in Macedonia. I believe that my example will contribute to better future of young Roma women and prove that they too have the right to personal choices in their lives. This significant transformation in my life and everything I contribute to my community today could not have been possible without the enormous support provided by Romaversitas, USAID and the Roma Education Fund.

I wish other Romas to experience the same as well. That will be possible only if Roma education support programs continue to operate. Therefore, I would like to use this opportunity and thank the donors who invested and are still investing in my future and in the future of my present and future colleagues.

After I was employed, my employer told me that he was informed about me from the Roma Education Program.





***Elvis Memeti from Tetovo, graduated political scientist***

I was a beneficiary of the Romaversitas scholarships and take great pleasure in saying that I am part of Romaverzitas' first generation of students. The assistance was essential for every moment of my studies – the scholarship, mentorship, training – they all helped me become a more successful student. At present, I am enrolled at postgraduate studies, employed at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and continuously involved in student-organized activities.

***Redzep Ali Cupi from Gostivar, graduated attorney-at-law***

Scholarship and mentorship were of great assistance in completing my law studies. By attending English language and computer courses, training sessions, seminars, summer schools, I acquired many useful skills, knowledge and experiences that meant a lot to me then and are particularly useful today in my day-to-day professional and private engagements. At present I hold a public office at the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia – I am Director of the Department for Development of Education in the languages of Minorities. I attend postgraduate studies in European and International Policy with Diplomacy at the First Private University – FON in Skopje.

***Sejla Fidani from Tetovo, graduated communication specialist***

Romaversitas invested a lot in me. I lived in Gostivar, studied in Tetovo, and came to Skopje to attend additional training. I commuted every day, but I was convinced that it was worthwhile and did not complain. My message to secondary school students and future university students is: "Do not wait for everything to be in order. Things will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and poor conditions. So what? Start now. Every step you take makes you stronger, more qualified, more confident, more successful!"

**Suzana Sabanovska from Skopje, graduated sociologist**

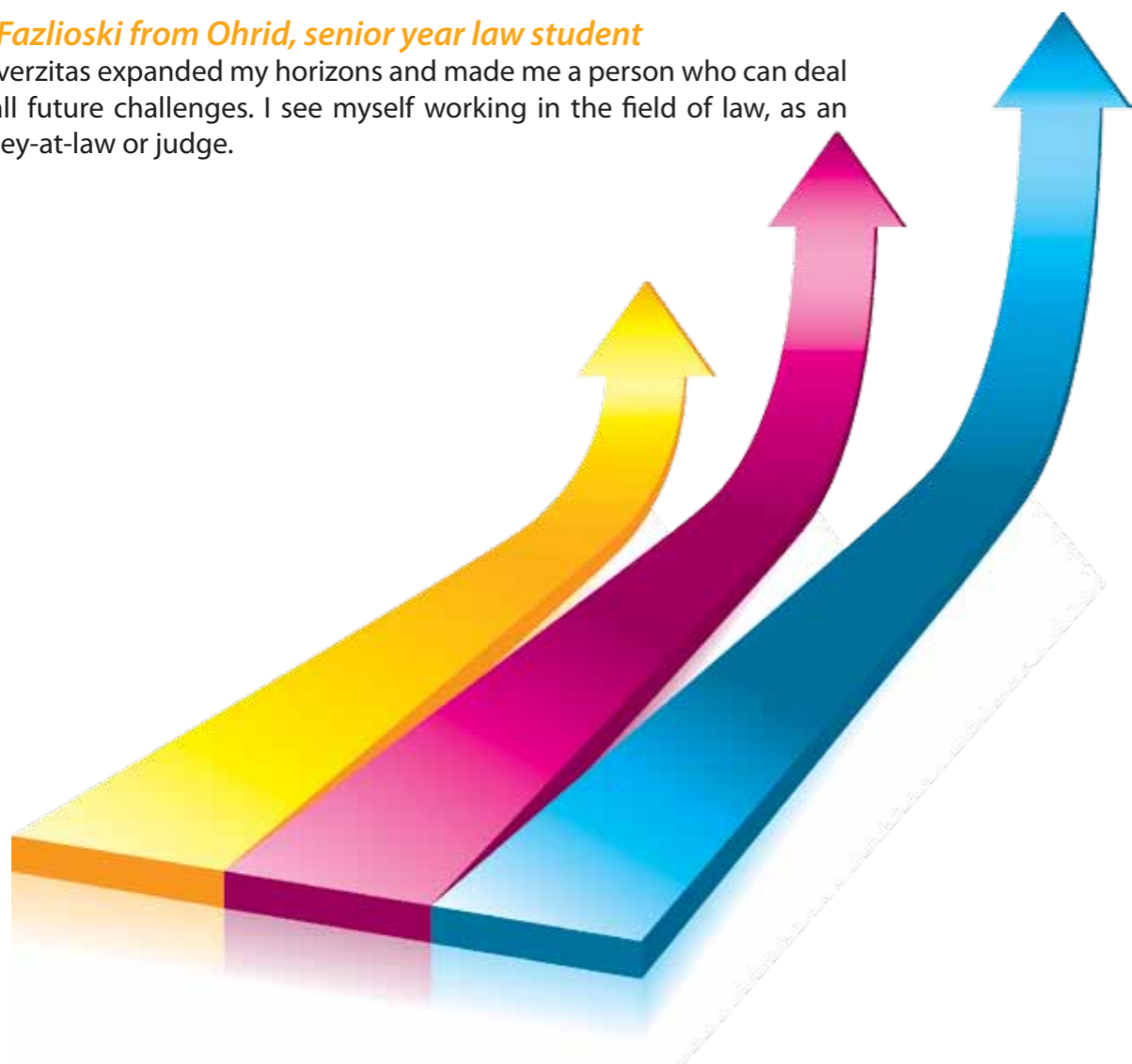
Romaverzitas, as a program targeting Roma university students was of great importance for me, primarily because of the financial means I received in the course of my four years studies. I would have not been able to study without it. Training and interaction with other students were important as well.

**Fatma Bajram from Skopje, graduated pedagogue**

Assistance we received from Romaverzitas was priceless. Now I have greater self-confidence, increased number of friends and multiplied knowledge. I learned to communicate with professors and I know what I want and how to get it. I recommend future secondary school and university students to continue their education because it is the only way to be included in the society. Thank you for your support!

**Elvis Fazlioski from Ohrid, senior year law student**

Romaverzitas expanded my horizons and made me a person who can deal with all future challenges. I see myself working in the field of law, as an attorney-at-law or judge.



## ROMA EDUCATION PROGRAM FIGURES AND RESULTS

- Each year, 200-250 preschool children received day-to-day assistance to better prepare for regular school.
- 700-850 Roma primary school students received day-to day after school support from educators engaged at Roma Education Centers, established and run by partner NGOs.
- 364 secondary school students received scholarships and mentorship support from 157 teachers, for a period of one to four years of secondary education.
- Around 80 university students annually benefited from services offered by Romaversitas (tutorship, foreign language and commuter courses, workshops, seminars, summer schools), while every year 35-60 students received scholarships.
- 305 primary school teachers were trained in child-centered methodologies, critical thinking strategies, education for social justice, school development plans.
- 157 secondary school teachers were trained in education for social justice and mentoring of students.
- Over 1,000 Roma parents participated on teacher-parent meetings, as well as on different workshops, public debates and meetings dedicated to education of their children.
- Organizational development of 5 local NGOs was strengthened through various training, while educators working at relevant Roma Education Centers were trained in provision of good educational service to their community – work with children and parents.



- There is no drop out among the primary school program beneficiaries, their completion rate is by 20% higher than the completion rate of non-project Roma students.
- The completion rate of secondary school students is by 20% higher compared to the national completion rate of Roma secondary school students for 2004, prior to project initiation.
- Every project year, 91% of Roma university students-scholarship and tutoring support recipients successfully completed the academic year and continued to the next.
- Since 2004, 44 university students-scholarship and other academic support recipients graduated from university.
- FOSIM Roma Education Program contributed to the increased education attainment of Roma and doubled the number of Roma primary, secondary and university graduates compared to the baseline year (2004).
- Roma parents are now members of the Parents Councils and School Boards.
- REP scholarship and mentoring scheme has been already replicated in Serbia, Romania and Hungary.
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia began to implement activities based on the program's model of scholarships/mentorship for high school students.
- Roma Education Program is recognized as good practice throughout Europe.

- Based on five areas subject to assessment and analysis (design, goals, approaches and methods, results and potential for scaling up the initiative), the most recent UNICEF Report included REP (in the total of eight selected Roma education initiatives) among best practice projects in SEEU.
- The ETF Report identified FOSIM's Roma Education Program as best practice project from Macedonia, among 46 best practices from the region of Western Balkans and EU Member-States.
- Under four of the eight recommendations to improve the status of Roma women, Amnesty International in its report called the Government of the Republic of Macedonia to implement activities in conjunction with FOSIM.





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## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

### Roma Women Humanitarian Association "Kham"

Location: settlement Sredorek, Municipality of Kumanovo  
Contact: Milan Demirovski  
Address: Done Bozinov 71  
1300 Kumanovo  
Tel: +389 31 437 911  
Fax: +389 31 437 912  
E-mail: kham@mt.net.mk



About the organization: Roma Women Humanitarian Association "Kham" was established in 1999 in Kumanovo for the purpose of improving the socio-economic and educational status and integration of Roma population from the settlement Sredorek. Its primary scope of work is education, culture, infrastructural and health problems of the population, women and children's rights, and Roma women emancipation.

The Roma Education Center within "Kham" has rented premises equipped with didactic materials, administrative staff of 3 employees, as well as a trained team of 5 educators implementing program activities with children. Kham implements its activities in partnership with the primary school "11 Oktomvri".

**Roma Citizens Association "Vrama si" - Kumanovo**

Location: settlement Bavci, Baraki and Stari Lozja (Banevo Trlo),  
Municipality of Kumanovo  
Contact: Ramis Osmanovski  
Address: Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj 5,  
1300 Kumanovo  
Tel: +389 31 428 942  
Fax: +389 31 428 942  
E-mail: vramasi@mol.com.mk



About the organization: Association of Roma Citizens "Vrama Si" is an independent organization since January 2006, but it actively works on educational support for Roma children from January 2002 within the framework of a program within the Roma Community Center "Drom" from Kumanovo.

"Vrama Si" works primarily on educational problems faced by targeted Roma population. It operates two rented facilities, one located in the Roma settlement Bavci, and the other in the settlement Banevo Trlo in the vicinity of Roma settlement Stari Lozja.

The Center is equipped with didactic materials and refurbished to meet the needs of children and students using its services. The Center employs administrative staff of 4 people, while 8 trained educators and assistant educators work with the children. "Vrama Si" implements its activities in partnership with the primary schools "Hristijan Todorovski – Karpos", "Krstе Misirkov" and "Braka Miladinovci".

**Aid for Disabled and Poor People**

Location: settlement Trizla 2, Municipality of Prilep  
Contact: Zarko Ginovski  
Address: Krume Jaskoski 31  
7500 Prilep  
Tel: +389 48 401 230  
Fax: +389 48 431 097  
E-mail: ahp\_mk@yahoo.com;  
ahpmk@freemail.com.mk



About the organization: It was established in November 1999 for the purpose of improving the educational level and meeting the educational needs of Roma children and students from the local community Trizla 2.

The Roma Education Center "Romano Pro Angle" operates within the organization located within premises of the Tobacco Company from Prilep.

The Center is equipped with teaching and didactic materials, computer classroom and library. 14 people are engaged in the implementation of Center's program activities - 5 are administrative staff and 9 educators trained to work with children. The Center operates in partnership with the primary school "Dobre Jovanovski".

**Soncogledi**

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About the organization: It was established in August 2001 on the initiative of the International Network of Balkan Sunflowers with headquarters in Pristina for the purpose of responding to the social crisis situation of Kosovo refugees in Macedonia.

Organization's beginnings date way back when part of Balkan Sunflowers' local volunteers provided educational assistance to socially deprived families from the Skopje settlements Momin Potok and Klanica. The Roma Education Center was established at the beginning of 2003 and offers support to children from the settlements Klanica and Madzir Maalo involved in the education system.

The Center works with children outside the system and/or beyond education age in terms of literacy and returning them to schools. Activities are implemented by a team of 6 educators – teachers, pedagogues and social workers and 2 administrative employees and within rented premises in Kisela Voda. The Center works in partnership with the primary school "Braka Miladinovci".

#### Center for Educational Support "Dendo Vas" Skopje

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About the organization: "Dendo Vas" is a Roma nongovernmental organization registered in 2001 actively working to provide educational support for Roma children and students ever since 1997 as part of FOSIM's program in the Municipality of Suto Orizari.

The Roma Education Center within the organization has its own premises of 180 square meters secured by a donation in the settlement Dame Gruev. It also disposes with a library and computer classroom. Educational services are delivered by a trained team of 8 educators and 4 administrative staff. "Dendo Vas" operates in partnership with the primary schools "Straso Pindzur".

#### Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives "Step by Step"

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About the organization: The Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives "Step by Step" was established by FOSIM in 2000 for the purpose of continuing educational and rearing program "Step by Step".

The Mission of the Foundation is to encourage, develop and implement programs that will assist children in developing their full potentials. The Foundation is committed to improving the education in Macedonia by democratization of teaching process and continuous training and support for teaching staff at preschool and primary schools. The Foundation has its own premises of 130 square meters, as well as internationally certified teams of trainers capable of delivering training on child-centered educational methodologies.

The Foundation "Step by Step" implements training intended for improving the educational and rearing practice of teaching staff at the project schools participating in the Roma Education Program, as well as the work of the educators of Roma Education Centers.



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