

Session: Supporting Roma from Kindergarten to University

Thursday (6 May) 15:00 – 16:00

SUPPORTING ROMA: FROM KINDERGARTEN TO UNIVERSITY (Hungarian Soros Foundation)

1. Short introduction of Roma Educational Programs led by the Hungarian Foundation
 - *Roma Versitas* – scholarship for Roma youth in higher education
 - Alternative kindergarten and primary school program for Roma children in *Edeleny* (an Eastern-Hungarian village)
 - Scholarship for Roma secondary school students and their mentors
(Increasing Roma students' opportunities for secondary education; helping them take the general certificate of education examinations.
Proving the feasibility of a support model which prevents Roma students from dropping out of high schools)
 - Providing summer vacation for participants of the Teacher-Student Grant Program for Roma High School Students; creating an opportunity for children with similar problems to get acquainted; exchange of experience and promotion of social integration. Introduction of a new form of extra-curricula education which will serve as a model to demonstrate how to prevent Roma students from dropping out of high school.
2. Guidelines of supporting Roma education

END OF THE YEAR REWARD-SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Promoting Roma students' opportunities in accessing education and training and in self-realization in a majority society. Proving the feasibility of a support model which gives incentives and assistance to Roma students in the higher grades of elementary school to continue studies at a secondary level.

Surveys show that the number of Roma students in high schools is far below their proportion among the child population. If this is to be changed, we should help Roma students in the 6th and 7th grades of elementary school (where the rate of drop-outs is largest) to finish their primary studies, thus improving their chances to continue in secondary education. This was the Foundation's intent when it launched the year-end grant to Roma students program in 1996 as part of the Public Education Development Program.

Eligible applicants are Roma students aged 12-13 whose grade point average at the end of the academic year reached 4 at the end of the 6th, 7th grade. Applications can be submitted once a year. The USD 40 award gives an incentive to students to perform better at schools. This year about 340 students will receive a grant.

ONE TIME SUPPORT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Promoting Roma students' opportunities in accessing education and training and in self-realization in a majority society. Proving the feasibility of a support model which gives incentives and assistance to Roma students in the higher grades of elementary school to continue studies at a secondary level.

Surveys show that the number of Roma students in high schools is far below their proportion among the child population. Roma families find it extremely difficult to pay current costs of schooling let alone to undertake the burden of sending their children to secondary education. Consequently, Roma children very often do not even start secondary studies. In 1996, the Foundation initiated the Grant to Promote Secondary Education Scheme as part of the Public Education Development Program. Achievements so far seem to underscore the initial supposition that the grant compels families to send their children to high schools who would not have dreamed about this earlier.

Launched once a year, the program offers a one-time USD 104 grant to Roma students applying to study in high schools providing a general certificate of education at the end of the studies. The grant can be used to purchase school textbooks, clothing or transportation card. This year about 250 students will receive grants.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR ROMA SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR MENTORS

Increasing Roma students' opportunities for secondary education; helping them take the general certificate of education examinations.

Proving the feasibility of a support model which prevents Roma students from dropping out of high schools.

Even if they make it to high schools, Roma students do not finish their secondary studies in most cases due to financial and/or family reasons. The Foundation addressed this problem when it initiated Joint Teacher-Student Grant Program in 1996. Not only do Roma students receive financial support but they are assisted by a teacher (mentor) in

coping with difficulties in their studies. The mentor's role is also important in helping students with family or other problems which might cause them to give up studies.

Past experience has shown the positive impact of this grant scheme on students as well as teachers.

Launched once a year, the program supports Roma high school students who are assisted by their chosen mentor in their studies and also on a human scale, so that they can take a successful end-of-studies examination. During the 1998/99 academic year, approximately 600-700 students and their mentors receive USD 20 and USD 12 respectively over a period of 10 months.

SCHOLARSHIP FOR ROMA YOUTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Promoting the emergence of Roma middle classes and intellectuals, proving the feasibility of a support model which helps Roma students to accomplish university or college studies and to obtain a degree.

Surveys show that the proportion of Roma students in higher educational institutions is very low. One reason is that Roma families are unable to shoulder the financial burden of higher education.

The need to continue supporting Roma students higher educational studies first arose in conjunction with high school students who received grants prior to 1996. Over the years the program proved to be extremely successful. Currently more than 350 Roma students receive high school grants.

In the wake of the Soros Foundation's program, the Hungarian National Ethnic Minorities Public Foundation also initiated a similar higher education grant scheme for Roma students.

Roma students admitted to a university or college offering degrees or diplomas accredited by the state can apply once a year. The grant amounts to USD 50 per month and extended for a period of ten months.



Notetaker's notes

Prepared by Natalya Shablya

Hungarian Foundation on Roma Projects

It is important when one works on designing Roma programs that the situational analyses and needs analyses of Roma problems like: Roma population, governmental degrees related to Roma, and economic situation they live in be well studied first. This information will help to develop projects which will contribute to the success of programs put together to remedy the situation in Roma education. None of the Foundations will be able to solve problems of Roma. Only the government can intervene to produce a systemic impact in dealing with this issue.

The problem of Roma drop out is very serious and very important therefore we would like to concentrate on it as well as on the integration of children into the mainstream schools.

Adaline

Roma initiative project.

Our school started to operate in 1992 with 30 children out of which 29 are Roma. Children could enter the school only through attendance test which meant that a lot of them would not make it to school. Before 1992 the school was financed and supervised by municipal educational authorities. When my colleagues and I decided to undertake new approach in education of Roma children the management of the school did not agree with us and we got unemployed. In one year and a half municipality stopped to maintain the municipal school and a lot of children came to the school which we opened by then. The school was supported by the Soros foundation. In 94-95 we became legal successors of the municipal school and we opened a primary school.

Kindergarten

We try to persuade parents of small children to send them to kindergarten at the appropriate age so that children will be prepared for the primary school. Our kindergarten approach is based on educating children together with parents. We use American approach. Our school is supported with state funds as well as various foundations. Children come to us the age of 3 then they go to primary school and secondary school.

We also try to strengthen our work by involving community leaders in the school life. We realised that scholarships are not the solution to help with the education for Roma. Financial support is needed for teachers who assist students in their studies .

Participants were presented a film about the summer camp in which students and teachers spend two weeks together.

Rosa Mendi

Roma Versitas

The proportion of Roma students in special schools is very high. Sometimes it reaches 80-90%. Research on social situation of Roma in Hungary was conducted. The results showed that there is little progress in educational provisions/outcomes for Roma. The

only achievement was that more students were finishing primary education which said that only six percent of primary students could finish the school and 1.5% can finish primary school from the whole Roma population in Hungary.

Roma Versatis

The situation in Romani access to higher education is even worse. Out of 1000 students only one gets into universities. This project helps Roma students not to drop out from the universities and also to create Roma elite which will be able to protect Roma civil rights. Three tasks of this program is to assist in professional studies of Roma students, develop their inner human competencies and establish communities which will not be seen as the disadvantaged communities only because Roma people live there. About 350 students all over Hungary participate in this program and study at various Hungarian institutes.

Participants of this session requested for materials on programs presented during the session to be sent to them .