



Roma Health Network, 15th of October 2020
Roma Education, its relation to health and the COVID19 pandemic

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REF's standpoint

- **Mission:** to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma
- The issue of broader understanding the relation between **education and health**.
- Good **health conditions** and examinations are **prerequisites** for successful enrolment to standards schools



Mission and ultimate goal is **to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma**

- Over the last decade more than 290 implemented projects + more than 20 ongoing in EU member states
- 130 000 children and youth have participated in REF supported projects (ECD, primary school desegregation, secondary school)
- More than 215 000 parents have participated in REF programs
- The dropout rate decreased to 0-5% where REF intervenes
- 5-10 % average improvement of the GPA after the project intervention
- Around 80% of graduation rate in case of REF intervention
- Bulgaria and Macedonia joint REF and Ministerial tertiary scholarships provided for Roma

Contributions

- Positioning Roma inclusion on political and policy agendas, policy development
- Contributing to child health, brain, and educational development of Roma children
- Increasing the contact and developing sustainable relations between Roma and non-Roma communities and school stakeholders
- Increasing parental awareness, developing parental skills
- Contributing to Roma children receiving education for longer period of time□ decreasing the time period of dropout rate
- Better school performance and educational achievements□ more Roma continues their studies
- Increasing the number of Roma professionals, employees as well as change makers
- Altogether contributes to social and economic inclusion of Roma

- **Misdiagnosis** and **misplacement** of Roma children to **special education** is a seriously concerning issue □ mental health status (Example: More than **80%** of students are Roma in special schools in Slovakia)
- **Vaccinations** and general **medical health checkup** are either mandatory or strongly recommended in European countries □ the information flow about the importance and compulsory nature of vaccination and health checkup is limited
- **Elitist** and inequitable tendencies in tertiary medical education □ exclusion of Roma students from pursuing medical studies □ lack of **Roma professionals in healthcare institutions**
- Roma medical professionals are challenging the **stereotypes** □ shifting the perceptions about Roma medical professionals □ contributors into the **health-related policy-making**

Roma Education during the pandemic

- **Challenges** Roma face: proper housing, encouraging and supportive home environment, language assistance, internet access, possessing laptop/PC and television, access to electricity, clean drinking water, limited food supplies, poor access to medical coverage, health services and hygiene products etc.)
- **Preconditions** for health and safe environment (clean drinking water, access to healthcare services, proper housing, vaccination etc.)
- **Pandemic effect** on education of Roma
 - the educational gap between Roma and non-Roma further deepens as most Roma has no equal access and tools for remote education
 - also leads to weakened mental and physical health status
 - physical distancing and isolation are requested□ deepens the social gap between Roma and non-Roma children, no interaction,
 - long-term negative impact on the educational achievements of Roma□ contributing to potential increase in school-dropout