

**First Meeting of the Roma Decade Steering Committee:
Minutes and Summary
December 11-12, 2003
Budapest, Hungary**

I. Introduction and Background

At the initiative of the Government of Hungary, the first meeting of the Roma Decade Steering Committee was held in Budapest from December 11-12, 2003. The objective of the meeting was to launch the preparation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005-2015. The meeting was hosted and opened by the Minister for Equal Opportunities, Ms. Katalin Levai and State Secretary for Roma Affairs, Laszlo Teleki. Representatives of eight governments attended, along with Roma civil society leaders and representatives of partner organizations, including the World Bank and Open Society Institute, which contributed to the organization of the meeting. A full list of participants is included as Annex 1.

The meeting reached consensus on next steps to be undertaken in preparation for the Decade which will start in 2005. This included broad agreement on: (i) priority areas of focus during the Decade; (ii) institutional arrangements for the Steering Committee, country-level working groups, and a coordinating secretariat; and (iii) a provisional agenda and timing for the next meetings of the Steering Committee. This document summarizes the main outcomes of the meeting.

The countries which participated in the meeting were the same as those that participated in the June Conference: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and the Slovak Republic. It was noted at the meeting that the Decade could be open to any other countries which were interested in participating.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion: 2005-2015

The Decade of Roma Inclusion is a direct outcome of the regional conference: *Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future* which was held in Budapest from June 29-July 1 2003. At the conference, government leaders, led by the Hungarian Prime Minister, committed to launching a Decade of Roma Inclusion to run from 2005 to 2015. During this Decade, within the broader context of inclusive national economic and social policies, countries will design and implement policies promoting Roma inclusion to break the vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion. The objective of the Decade is to accelerate progress in improving the economic status and social inclusion of Roma by creating an action framework comprising three activities:

- (i) The setting of clear, quantitative national targets for improvements in economic status and social inclusion of the Roma population, and the establishment of the necessary information base to measure progress toward these targets,
- (ii) The development and implementation of national action plans to achieve those targets, and

- (iii) Regular monitoring of progress against agreed targets, and adjusting action plans as necessary over the Decade.

The Hungarian government offered to take the lead in preparing for the Decade which will take place during 2004. During this year, governments, with the involvement of Roma and other stakeholders, will work on reaching consensus on goals for the Decade and quantifiable targets for monitoring at both the country and cross-country levels; identifying data requirements and monitoring mechanisms; and developing country level plans for reaching the targets, including necessary policies and programs and estimates of resources needed. The Steering Committee meeting was the first step toward implementing the Decade in practice. The agenda, included discussion of the priority areas to be monitored during the Decade and the organization of country-level discussions to develop a plan for implementing the Decade in each country.

The meeting focused on the process of launching the Decade. This was an important first step in order to establish at the outset that the Decade will be an inclusive and consultative process. The discussions underscored that the structures and process need to be flexible, able to evolve over time and adapt to each country context. A critical next stage of the preparation will be to build ownership and commitment for the Decade on a broader basis, within governments, and within Roma leadership organizations, including the international Roma organizations.

Participants noted the importance of the Decade to:

- (i) Provide a regional framework for coordination on Roma issues, sharing of experience and encouraging progress;
- (ii) Focus on monitoring quantifiable goals and targets to assess real impact;
- (iii) Achieve results and impact on the ground and to hold all stakeholders (governments, Roma, international community) accountable.

The challenge is to define the goals, targets and indicators that will be monitored at the country and cross-country levels. The principle of “less is more” is critical for the success of the Decade. Participating countries should be selective in choosing goals and targets, such that the objectives of the Decade are challenging, yet realistic, such that expectations can be met.

Roma Education Fund

A concrete output of the June Conference was an agreement to set up a cross-country Roma Education Fund (REF) that would improve educational outcomes for Roma by supporting the scaling up of pilot initiatives and projects, and strengthening partnerships between NGOs and governments. The objective of the proposed REF is to improve the educational status and performance of Roma by providing additional financing for programs to reduce the gap in access to quality education between Roma and non-Roma. The REF would thus become a key instrument in achieving the education goals now being determined for the proposed 2005-2014 Roma Decade launched at the Conference. In Budapest in July 2003 the World Bank committed to take the lead in setting up the Fund.

Nicholas Burnett is coordinating the preparation of the REF on behalf of the World Bank. He briefed the Steering Committee on progress so far. The objective is to hold a pledging conference in the autumn of 2004 that would formalize donor commitments to the Fund, and to have the Fund ready to go at the beginning of 2005. Prior to this an extensive round of discussions with the governments of countries with significant Roma populations, with Roma representatives, with potential donors, and with potential partner institutions will take place. A meeting will be held in early 2004 to discuss the specific goals, targets and indicators to be monitored during the Decade in the area of education and key policy issues, including scaling up of preschool, school integration programs, and other initiatives for improving educational outcomes for Roma.

II. Priority Areas for the Decade

The Steering Committee selected the strategic priority areas and cross-cutting themes for the Decade. Within each area, countries will choose goals, targets and indicators which will be achieved and monitored. While countries will share these strategic priorities and some specific indicators may be common across countries, in other areas countries might select country-specific indicators to meet their particular needs.¹

The long-list of strategic priorities discussed by the Committee was based on the summary of policy discussions at the June Conference. The Steering Committee recommended that three cross-cutting themes be incorporated in Decade goals: (i) income poverty, (ii) discrimination and (iii) gender equality of Roma.

The following broad areas of priority were adopted by the Steering Committee:

1. Education;
2. Health;
3. Employment; and
4. Housing.

Participating governments are encouraged to be selective in adopting goals, relevant targets and suitable indicators to monitor progress. The particular nature of Roma poverty and exclusion will have to be taken into account in each country when adopting Decade goals. Selectivity will be crucial to the Decade's success given the need to maximize the impact of scarce resources.

¹ For example, one country might choose to make progress on primary school enrollment rates for Roma, while another might find secondary enrollment more relevant.

Box: An Example of Goals, Targets and Indicators

In preparation for the Decade, each country will develop its own specific goals, targets and indicators in the priority areas for monitoring during the Decade. **Goals** are broad objectives. For example in the case of education a goal would be to “improve Roma education outcomes.” **Targets** are specific achievements which contribute to reaching the objectives. For education, possible targets would be: “all Roma boys and girls complete compulsory education,” or “Roma children’s educational achievement equals the majority population.” **Indicators** are measures which can track progress, such as primary school enrollment rates.

III. Working Arrangements

During 2004, the preparatory year for the Decade, each country will develop Decade Action Plans (DAPs) including the goals, targets and indicators in each of the priority areas (see Box). These DAPs will build on the strategies for Roma which already exist in many countries, and extract priority measures and define specific indicators to be monitored. The process will be overseen by an International Steering Committee, with broad membership from governments, Roma and international partners. Country-level work will be undertaken by Country Working Groups, which will be flexible and adapted to each country’s existing institutional arrangements for addressing Roma issues. A Secretariat, hosted by the Hungarian Government will coordinate the work across countries.

The meeting reached consensus on Terms of Reference (TORs) for each of these bodies. The documents were revised during the meeting, and the amended versions are attached as Annex 3. Minister Levai will send the documents to the participating governments for final review. It was emphasized that the documents are intended to be flexible and can be changed as needed during the preparation process.

International Steering Committee

The International Steering Committee (ISC) will coordinate the preparation of the Decade, including: (i) selecting priority areas; (ii) supporting the preparation of Decade Action Plans in each country; (iii) agreeing on monitoring arrangements for Decade targets and indicators; and (iv) coordinating international involvement. The ISC will also provide feedback on the design of the Roma Education Fund. The Government of Hungary will chair the ISC during the preparatory year. The Chair may rotate subject to further discussion by the ISC.

Country Working Groups

The main work of setting and monitoring goals, targets and indicators for the Decade will take place at the country level. Countries will have flexibility to build the Working Groups for the Decade onto existing coordination bodies for Roma issues (e.g. intergovernmental or interministerial commissions), adding participants as needed. The process is flexible and the organization and composition of Country Working Groups will differ on a country-by-country basis. The focus of the Working Groups will be to (i) develop Decade Action Plans for the country, including country-specific targets and

indicators; (ii) facilitating access to data, identify data gaps, process, analyze and evaluate data; and (iii) monitoring progress on Decade goals and adjust progress as needed.

Decade Secretariat

The Hungarian government set up a Secretariat to coordinate the preparation of the Decade and to support the International Steering Committee. The main tasks of the Secretariat will be to support the ISC, including: (i) organizing meetings; (ii) sharing information across countries, and (iii) initiating public information activities. Romania and Macedonia indicated their interest in seconding staff to work in the Secretariat in Budapest. This was welcomed by the Steering Committee.

Data

Data are an essential input for the Decade. Each country will need to identify reliable indicators that can be used to monitor progress in the sector areas. This will be a substantial challenge given the lack of quality data related to Roma. In many countries, data availability is constrained by privacy legislation which does not allow data collection by ethnicity. In other cases, Roma are not included in surveys, because they are inadequately captured in census data, which serve as the basis for sample frames. Another constraint is the reluctance of Roma to declare their ethnicity in surveys, for various reasons.

These challenges will need to be confronted in order to ensure that quantitative measures are available for monitoring outcomes, together with qualitative information and other sources. Representatives from statistical offices should have an active role to play in the Country Working Groups. UNDP also indicated its willingness to support a cross-country working group on data issues, as well as support for data collection.

Communications and Outreach

Two important questions will need to be addressed primarily by national governments to ensure successful implementation of the Decade goals. First, the media in each country should be approached through a pro-active outreach by government and encouraged to be involved in the news and the various themes of the Decade. Second, the population of each participating country will need to be informed through public relations campaigns to support the Decade, stressing the social, economic and political importance of achieving the Decade goals, the interest shared by both Roma and non-Roma in successfully implementing the Decade.

Financing the Decade

The Decade will require two types of financing. First, funds to support the Decade itself, including the costs of the International Steering Committee, Country Working Groups, and the Secretariat. Resources will be needed for monitoring the Decade, including data collection and analysis. Second, the main cost of the Decade will be incurred in the scaling up of programs needed to meet the goals of the Decade. Governments will need to mainstream programs and ensure that they are financially sustainable in order to succeed. Funds will need to be targeted to areas which have the greatest impact. International organizations can help on a short-term basis, however their impact will be marginal in comparison with what governments spend. Financial support

from the European Union will be more substantial, particularly for the new member states which will become eligible for Structural Funds.

A number of international organizations present at the meeting indicated their willingness to support Decade-related costs. OSI committed to continuing its support for Roma civil society and participation, and will ramp up its support for the building of broad-based Roma alliances for the Decade in each country--building upon the core of the young leader delegates and others who came to the June conference. UNDP indicated its willingness to support the data needs of the Decade, including convening a working group on data and measurement and support for survey work to fill data gaps. The World Bank can help to convene Country Working Group meetings, is continuing to support the preparation of the Roma Education Fund, and will provide on-going capacity-building for Roma leadership to involve them in the Decade.

IV. Roma Participation

A recurrent theme throughout the meeting was how to ensure adequate Roma involvement and representation in the Decade process. A main conclusion of the June Budapest conference was that Roma need to be involved in the planning and implementation of the Decade in order for it to succeed. The ISC meeting was successful in involving Roma. Young Roma leaders from each of the eight countries, who participated in the June Conference, attended. The second day of the meeting was chaired by Gyula Vamosi, a Roma leader from Hungary, with the assistance of Rumyan Russinov from Bulgaria. Background information on the young Roma leaders is provided as Annex 4.

Participants – including government officials and Roma – expressed concern about the need to ensure Roma representation in the Country Working Groups and in the ISC. There was general agreement that participation should be broadened to include more views, while keeping the size of meetings manageable. The young Roma leaders noted that they are continuing to disseminate the findings of their work on the Decade to a broader constituency. OSI indicated its intention to continue to expand the broad-based alliances of Roma in each country to facilitate their participation in the Decade.

It was agreed that Roma participation should be discussed in the Country Working Groups and that each country will bring a plan for ensuring Roma involvement in the Decade to the next meeting of the ISC (planned for late March). It was noted that the Decade process should be as inclusive, open and flexible as possible.

V. Next Steps

For governments and Roma, the important next step is to communicate the outcomes of the ISC meeting broadly in each country, to reach an understanding of the Decade and how it will be implemented across government ministries and throughout the Roma community. Specifically, this should involve:

- Country Working Groups will convene to start planning the Decade, including discussion of goals, targets and indicators in the priority areas listed above. (*First meeting to be held by mid February 2004*).

- An international workshop on Education Goals is planned for the first quarter of 2004. This would involve government and Roma technical specialists in education from each country to start discussing the selection of education goals, targets and indicators.

At least three more meetings of the ISC are planned during 2004. The next meeting will be held at the end of March, the second in June/July, and the third in October/November. The agenda for the March meeting will include discussion of the following:

- Draft Decade Action Plans, including an estimated financing plan, indicating where external support is needed;
- Strategies for Roma participation at the country level; and
- Communication/public relations at the international and country levels.

The first meeting of the International Steering Committee marked a very positive step forward in the launch of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The Hungarian government provided excellent chairmanship and organization of the meeting, setting a positive example for the work ahead.

Annexes:

- Annex 1: List of Participants
- Annex 2: Terms of Reference
- Annex 3: Update on Roma Education Fund
- Annex 4: Background on Young Roma Leaders

Annex 2: Terms of Reference

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015

Decade Steering Committee Draft Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference refers to the setting up of an international Decade Steering Committee which will coordinate the preparation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion endorsed by the participating countries at the regional conference, “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future,” June 30-July 1, 2003 in Budapest, Hungary.

The Decade is a country-led process. Attempt will be made by the Steering Committee to operate by consensus. When necessary, the Committee will vote with each country delegation having one vote each.

1. Composition of the Steering Committee

- 1.1. Chair: During the preparatory year, the Steering Committee will be chaired by the Government of Hungary.
- 1.2. Country Representatives: All countries that participated in the conference will be invited to be represented on the Steering Committee. Members would be appointed by and report to Prime Ministers.
- 1.3. Roma Representatives: Young Roma leaders/representatives of NGOs who have played a prominent role in the technical work carried on for the equal opportunity of Roma in the countries that participated in the Budapest conference;
- 1.4. International Organizations: The international community will support the Steering Committee and be invited to attend all meetings. This could include, but not be limited to: OSI, WB, UNDP, EU, OSCE, CEB, CoE, ERIO, international Romani fora, faith-based organizations and other interested partners.
- 1.5. Bilaterals: Representatives from other interested countries, particularly those which attended the conference could be represented.
- 1.6. Others: National and international experts would be invited as necessary.

2. Duration

It is envisaged that the Steering Committee will exist in this format for the period 2003-2004 during the lead-up to the launch of the Decade of Inclusion. The Steering Committee may wish to remain intact during the Decade itself, but this would be worked out during the preparatory discussions.

3. Tasks of the Steering Committee

The proposed tasks of the Steering Committee could include, but not be limited to the following:

- 3.1. Agree on shared goals for all countries (for example in suggested areas of priority such as education, employment, health, and housing).
- 3.2. To coordinate with international actors referred to under point 1.4, to ensure constructive cooperation at the international and national levels, avoid duplication of existing programs, initiatives and structures and learn from past experience (good examples and failures).
- 3.3. Review country-specific goals (for example a country may want to have a goal in housing which other countries would not share, or a country might have a different indicator for a shared goal, such as expanding secondary instead of primary education).
- 3.4. Provide guidance and feedback on the development of Decade Action Plans (DAPs) proposed by the Country Working Groups; including the structure, outcomes and calendar for meeting benchmarks during the planning year.
- 3.5. Approve an action plan for the 2005-2015 period.
- 3.6. Agree on monitoring arrangements for the shared goals and the country-specific ones: for example decision on how monitoring would be done, the establishment of methodology and means to be used, identification of data to be used, development of reporting mechanisms, as well as financing.
- 3.7. Agree on mechanisms for Roma participation through encouraging Roma representatives on the Steering Committee to actively involve, consult, and share information with other Roma organizations within their countries and internationally.
- 3.8. Participate in international and national launch(es) of the Decade in early 2005.
- 3.9. Estimate the resources necessary for the launch and realization of the Decade.
- 3.10. Provide feedback on the development of the Roma Education Fund.
- 3.11. Coordinate and guide public dissemination of programs and findings.

4. Meetings

The Committee may wish to hold 2-3 meetings before the launch of the Decade for Roma Inclusion. The first meeting could be planned for end 2003/beginning 2004.

5. Relationship with other Working Groups/Advisory Bodies

- 5.1. An advisory group of international organizations and donors (see list in §1.4) could guide and monitor the work of the Steering Committee and the Country Working Groups. The Steering Committee may share information and working documents with this body and work with them to realize the tasks set out above.
- 5.2. The Roma young leader delegates who attended the conference are continuing with follow up work in their respective countries, including reflection on the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the Roma Education Fund. Their input should be taken into account through continuous dialogue.

6. Decision-Making System

The decisions of the Committee could be taken either be (a) by vote (75% +1) or (b) by consensus, with one vote per country.

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015

Country Working Groups

Terms of Reference

The main work of setting and monitoring goals, targets and indicators for the Decade will take place at the country level. Countries should have flexibility to build the Working Groups for the Decade on existing coordination bodies for Roma issues (e.g. intergovernmental or interministerial commissions), adding participants as needed. The process is flexible and Country working groups will differ on a country basis. Countries may wish to set up subcommittees which would work more intensively on specific tasks (e.g. data, education).

1. Composition of the Working Group

- 1.1. Chair: The Chairperson of the Working Group would be appointed by the Prime Minister or his representative at the conference. The Chair should also sit on the Decade Steering Committee.
- 1.2. Government Representatives: The following government bodies could be represented: the Prime Minister's Office, the Roma Office (or another relevant office if there is no Roma Office), ministries involved in the Decade goal sectors (for example education, health, justice, labor and social policy, regional development).
- 1.3. Local and Regional Authorities. Representatives of local and regional governments should be involved.
- 1.4. Sectoral Experts. Representatives of the national office of statistics, employment, education, health and other experts in priority areas.
- 1.5. Roma Representatives: Roma men and women representing civil society groups should be selected to join the Working Group. This should include the Roma delegations who attended the Budapest conference.
- 1.6. International Organizations: Local offices of the international community could participate to support the Working Group. This could include but not be limited to: OSI, WB, UNDP, EU, OSCE, CEB, CoE, ERIO, international Romani fora and other interested organizations.
- 1.7. Others: Faith-based organizations, experts, and representatives of other government bodies would be invited as needed.

2. Duration

It is envisaged that the Working Group will exist in this format for the period 2003-2004 during the lead-up to the launch of the Decade of Inclusion. The Working Group may wish to remain intact during the Decade itself, but this would be worked out during the preparatory period.

3. Tasks of the Working Group

The proposed tasks of the Working Group could include, but not be limited to the following:

- 3.1. Facilitate access to data, identify data gaps, process, analyze and evaluate data, in cooperation with the Decade working group on data and measurement facilitated by UNDP.
- 3.2. Establish country specific goals for the Decade to be approved by the Steering Committee.
- 3.3. Develop a Decade Action Plan (DAP) for the 2005 launch of the Decade and the means to achieve the goals of the Decade by sector: who; what; when; where; how. The DAP could be based on each country's existing Roma strategy. The plan could include the policy reforms and attendant programs necessary to achieve the Decade goals by 2015 in education, employment, health, housing amongst other sectors, as well as an assessment of necessary capacity-building and any other problems foreseen.
- 3.4. Country Working Groups could submit their DAPs to the Steering Committee periodically for cross-country coordination and feedback.
- 3.5. Regularly monitor progress against the goals and adjust the plans as needed.
- 3.6. Regularly meet with and assess input from Roma monitors on progress to meet goals.
- 3.7. Identify solutions for ministries where capacity for planning and delivery is needed.
- 3.8. Identify new mechanisms at local and regional levels to assure that Decade goals are being carried out.
- 3.9. Collect data and other information for on-going monitoring and future planning.

4. Meetings

The Working Group may wish to meet every two months before the launch of the Decade for Roma Inclusion. The first meetings should happen prior to the first meeting of the Decade Steering Committee.

5. Relationship with other Working Groups/Advisory Bodies

- 5.1 An advisory group of international organizations and donors (see list in §1.4) will guide and monitor the work of the Steering Committee and the Country Working Groups. The Working Group may share information and working documents with local representatives of this body and work with them to realize the tasks set out above.
- 5.2 The Roma young leader delegates who attended the conference are continuing with follow up work in their respective countries, including reflection on the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the Roma Education Fund. Their input should be taken into account through continuous dialogue and involving them in the Steering Committee.

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015

Decade Secretariat

Draft Terms of Reference

1. Administrative Arrangements

- 1.1. The Decade Secretariat will be established under the auspices of the Government of Hungary, at least until 2006.
- 1.2. The Secretariat will be based in Budapest, Hungary.
- 1.3. The responsibilities and activities of the Secretariat will be set out in a work program prepared by the Government of Hungary.

2. Staff

- 2.1. The Secretariat could be staffed by professional staff and consultants as needed, including Roma.

3. Tasks

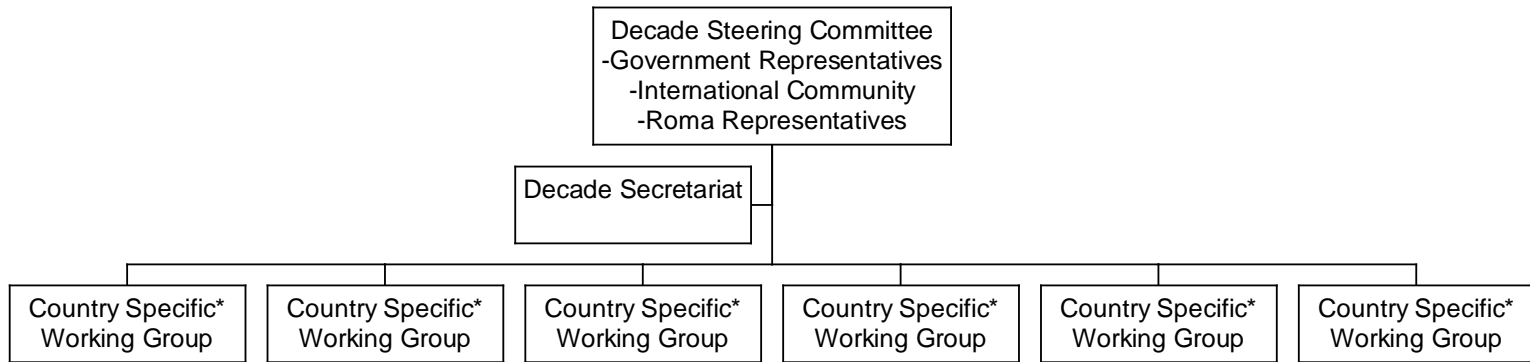
The proposed tasks of the Secretariat will be twofold: (i) support to the Decade Steering Committee and (ii) support to the Hungarian Country Working Group. OSI Budapest could assist with the former, particularly with regard to the logistical arrangements of meetings. Specifically, the tasks will include, but not be limited to the following:

- 3.1. Support to the Decade Steering Committee
 - 3.1.1. Draft and coordinate meeting agendas, coordinate minutes and the flow of information between members of the Steering Committee.
 - 3.1.2. Support to Chair of Steering Committee as needed.
 - 3.1.3. Help individual countries prepare for Steering Committee meetings.
 - 3.1.4. Support coordination among the Country Working Groups and facilitate the flow of information.
 - 3.1.5. Monitor progress toward the launch in 2005.
 - 3.1.6. Determine cost issues: implementing Decade goals, etc.
 - 3.1.7. The working languages for the Secretariat will be English and Hungarian. Translation support in Roma languages will be provided for key documents and meetings as needed.
- 3.2. Support to the Hungarian Country Working Group
 - 3.2.1. Provide administrative support to the Country Working Group.
 - 3.2.2. Monitor the progress of the Country Working Group.
 - 3.2.3. Identify the capacity in ministries charged with specific goals and assess the capacity-building needs.
 - 3.2.4. Coordinate the Country Working Groups.

4. Duration

It is envisaged that the Secretariat will exist in this format during the lead-up to the launch of the Decade. The Secretariat may remain intact during the Decade itself, but this would be worked out during the preparatory discussions.

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015



*Each country participating in the conference would be invited to set up a country specific working group, as well as other interested countries.

Annex 3: Update on Roma Education Fund

Roma Education Fund Status Report December 16, 2003

This note sets out the work that the World Bank intends to undertake to establish the proposed Roma Education Fund.

Background. A concrete output of the successful Roma Conference was an agreement to set up a cross-country Roma Education Fund (REF) that would improve educational outcomes for Roma by supporting the scaling up of pilot initiatives and projects, and strengthening partnerships between NGOs and governments. The objective of the proposed REF is to improve the educational status and performance of Roma by providing additional financing for programs to reduce the gap in access to quality education between Roma and non-Roma. The REF would thus become a key instrument in achieving the education goals now being determined for the proposed 2005-2014 Roma Decade launched at the Conference. In Budapest in July 2003 the World Bank committed to take the lead in setting up the Fund.

It is already clear that some of the contributions of such a Fund can be its:

1. predictability (many past projects for Roma have failed because of a lack of sustained financing);
2. scale (previous projects have tended to be rather small);
3. policy relevance (previous projects have been ad hoc and not linked to the policy framework or systemic reforms underway in the countries);
4. professional approach with a particular emphasis on evaluation (previous projects have not been appraised in advance or evaluated afterwards according to the strict standards of organizations such as the World Bank)
5. international nature (experience can be transferred from one country to another, appropriately modified) and there could also be multi-country operations; and
6. advocacy, explicit and implicit (it will become clear where the Fund can have effective operations due to an appropriate policy environment and this can be reported on in the Fund's reports and to the broader Roma Decade framework).

Preliminary Work Program. The objective is to hold a pledging conference in the autumn of 2004 that would formalize donor commitments to the Fund, and to have the Fund ready to go at the beginning of 2005. Prior to this we are engaging in an extensive round of discussions with the governments of countries with significant Roma populations, with Roma representatives, with potential donors, and with potential partner

institutions. While work has only just started, it is clear that it must proceed simultaneously along several dimensions.

1. Linkage to the Decade. What are to be the Decade's education goals? How should the Fund support their implementation?
2. Scope of Operations. What will the Fund finance? This will presumably include budget support to governments with appropriate policies, grants to NGOs and others with education programs for Roma, buying down interest rates on loans from the World Bank and other donors, analytical studies, etc. It will be important to put emphasis on scale and also on evaluation. Some evaluation of existing projects financed by others will likely also be necessary as may the financing of capacity building and knowledge development regarding Roma education. It will be important to develop an inventory of existing knowledge of what does, and does not, work
3. Demand Assessment. It will be necessary to assess in a preliminary way the financing needs for Roma education in order to obtain a rough idea of the desirable size of a Fund. This will likely be done through combining estimates from global numbers of Roma children, from examining countries' national programs for Roma education, and by making estimates based on others' successful projects.
4. Surveying Donor Activities. We need to know what others are doing, in order to see how the Fund's activities can either encompass this (if the donors wish) or complement it. As part of this, a background report on World Bank activities is currently under preparation.
5. Deciding an Appropriate Structure for the Fund. Should it be one pooled Fund or a series of bilateral arrangements or a mix of both? Who should administer it? Are there existing institutions in Europe to which it might be attached? How will it be governed? What sort of effective partnerships might it enter into, e.g. on evaluation, on research as needed?
6. Canvassing Donors. Mr. Soros has indicated that the Open Society Institute is willing to transfer its existing Roma education programs and funding to the Fund with a 10-year commitment. We are exploring how the European Commission will participate, and this will probably be at least in Bulgaria and Romania, likely through some sort of parallel financing if not through direct involvement. Discussions have begun with these donors and the Council of Europe Development Bank. Other donors are to be approached – these are to include not just official sources but also private foundations and the private business sector. We are also examining how the World Bank might contribute itself, recognizing that the Bank is not a grant-making institution.
7. Project Preparation. For the Fund to succeed, and to be seen to succeed, it must start to disburse immediately once it is set up. For this, it will be necessary to have a pipeline of projects such that 2 or 3 are ready to be

approved as soon as it is established. Having a pipeline will also make it easier to approach donors. How can such a pipeline be developed? What project preparation funds might be available?

8. Consultation with Roma. Roma must be involved in the design of the Fund and also in its governance. Consultation has begun with Roma in Hungary, Romania and Serbia and with Young Roma leaders during their visit to Washington. How else can Roma be consulted?
9. Country Coverage. The working assumption is that the countries that participated in the Budapest Roma conference which endorsed the concept of the Fund would be the main target countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovakia). However other countries in Europe and Central Asia may be interested in participating (e.g. Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Albania); similarly EU member states may also be interested. How should this be handled? Should the fund initially focus on a subset of countries and then be expanded over time?

Role of Governments. Considerable assistance will be needed from governments in preparing the Fund. Very informal discussions have so far been held with government education officials in Hungary, Romania and Serbia. More formal involvement might include, but not be limited to:

- General discussions about the Fund's role;
- Participation in the needs assessment, including provision of data.
- Development of costed national Roma education policies.
- Proposals on the volume of counterpart funding likely to be available for projects.
- Development of initial projects that might be financed by the Fund.

Contact Point. The World Bank has designated Nicholas Burnett as the coordinator for the proposed Roma Education Fund. He may be contacted:

Nicholas Burnett
Human Development Unit
Europe and Central Asia Region
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
USA

+1 202 473 4757 Phone

+1 202 477-1996 Fax

nburnett@worldbank.org

Annex 4: Background on Young Roma Leaders

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION ROLE OF THE ROMA COUNTRY-LEVEL DELEGATIONS

In order to have active and diverse Roma participation in the June-July Budapest conference, “Roma in an Expanding Europe Challenges for the Future,” the World Bank and the Open Society Institute selected delegations of 10-12 young Roma leaders to participate in the conference and to develop common country presentations. The delegations worked intensively together in the months preceding the conference and have remained active after the event, both disseminating information on the event to the wider Roma community in their respective countries, and participating in follow-up activities.

These young Roma are dedicated, talented and experienced individuals who have been contributing to the process of the Budapest conference and its follow-up unpaid by government or donor organizations. They are committed to communicating with a wide range of Roma stakeholders, but they are not expected, nor do they claim, to be representative of Roma in their countries. The delegates are specialists who have agreed to be involved in this important process which started at the Budapest conference and continues today.

Delegation selection process.

The young leaders were selected based on criteria developed by OSI and the World Bank. These include: a) experience working in one or more sector areas addressed in Budapest (education, health, employment, human rights, gender, etc.), b) commitment to soliciting and representing a broad range of perspectives, c) language capacity (as only limited translation could be provided for the 24+ countries represented in Budapest), d) demonstrated leadership capability, and e) affiliation with an organization or network with effective outreach connections for the dissemination of conference findings and commitment to do so. Selection was competitive; the World Bank and OSI jointly solicited brief applications from young Roma who fit the criteria. Based on the quality of applications, approximately 10 young Roma were identified per country. An effort was made to balance delegates selected with respect to gender as well as areas of expertise.

Budapest conference preparations and involvement.

In the four months leading up to the conference the young leaders worked together via telephone, email, face-to-face meetings and videoconferences with World Bank and OSI staff in Washington to understand the goals of the conference and prepare their contributions. Qualified local facilitators were hired in each country to provide additional logistical support to the delegations and donor staff throughout this process. The World Bank, OSI and UNDP supported the costs of the meetings (transportation, food, translation as needed), and participation in the Budapest conference itself.

Each country-level delegation nominated one member to represent the group in a 10 minute oral presentation at the Budapest conference. [For transcripts, go to: www.worldbank.org/romaconference.] The delegates also actively participated in other aspects of the event, including displaying their work in the NGO marketplace, serving as chairpersons, rapporteurs, and presenters in the panel sessions as well as actively participating in discussions at the conference. One of the young leaders, Rumyan Russinov, presented on behalf of the

delegations in the final session of the conference held in the Parliament building of Budapest. [For a transcript of his remarks, which consolidated the country-level contributions of all the delegations, go to: www.worldbank.org/romaconference]

Study tour to Washington DC and New York, November 2003.

As a result of the impressive work of these delegations, Mr. Wolfensohn invited representatives from each of the country delegations to come to Washington and New York for a study visit. World Bank staff worked with the delegations to identify 1-2 people per country. English language proficiency was a requirement. A summary of the process was emailed out to all delegates. The study visit included a week of meetings with World Bank staff, including Mr. Wolfensohn, and off-site visits to community based organizations and Capitol Hill. Meetings at the World Bank included intensive discussions on the role of Roma in the follow-up activities to the Budapest conference, specifically the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the Roma Education Fund. The study visit also included meetings in New York with OSI, including with Mr. George Soros, and UNDP. [For more on the Study Tour, go to: <http://www1.worldbank.org/gdln/roma.htm>]

Decade of Roma Inclusion Steering Committee, Budapest, December 11-12, 2003.

Following the Roma study tour, participants were asked to help organize the selection of a delegation member to attend the December Decade Steering Committee in Budapest (this had to be done very quickly as the Study Tour ended Nov. 19th and the December meeting begins on the 11th). Delegations worked together to nominate someone who could represent the group in either English or Hungarian.

In order to spread the opportunities around to as many delegation members as possible, the Roma delegations selected their representative. Criteria were provided to ensure that participants nominated could make the most of this special event. The criteria were:

- availability to travel to Budapest, Hungary on December 10-13, 2003;
- ability to present and participate actively in discussions in English or Hungarian;
- demonstrated leadership capacity;
- an understanding of the different issues facing Roma and a commitment to representing the range of views and various opinions within the delegation and beyond;
- willingness to spend additional time preparing for the meeting with help from other delegation members and including consultations with broader Roma constituencies as possible to refine delegation's priority issues and policy recommendations;
- ability to present ideas effectively in front of a large audience;
- dedication to disseminating information gained and lessons learned back to the home country delegation and broader constituents, and to work with the delegation and others in formulating in-country next steps.

Future involvement.

The role of the Roma delegations in the Roma Decade will evolve as the process takes shape at the country level. The delegations are informed and ready to help catalyze the preparations for the Decade that will be needed in each country. They can contribute to the country level working groups and the discussions on the selection of Decade targets and plans for achieving them. They can play important roles as interlocutors between diverse Roma communities and their governments, and as partners in monitoring progress throughout the Decade. The World Bank and OSI are committed to continuing to support the work of the delegations through facilitating their communication/networking (e.g. on-going support for meetings and the Virtual Learning Environment) and demand-driven capacity building through training opportunities.

Input on the process and priorities may be sent to: roma@worldbank.org. For more information on the Roma Conference and the activities and contributions of the Roma delegations, go to: www.worldbank.org/romaconference. Click on *Participate in an On-line Forum* to access additional resources regarding delegation activities