

***PROJECT “SCHOLARSHIP,
MENTORING AND TUTORING
FOR SECONDARY ROMA
STUDENTS”***

Ana Mickovska-Raleva

*External Evaluation
Report*

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Executive summary

The **general aim** of the project ‘Scholarship, mentoring and tutoring for secondary Roma students’ (MAC 052) is **through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of all Roma students enrolled in secondary school**. The project is managed by the Department for Promotion and Development of Education in the Languages of Minorities, in the frames of the Ministry of Education and Science and is based on **two main pillars**: providing **scholarships** to secondary school Roma students with a GPA of at least 3.00 and providing **mentorship and tutorship support** to all Roma students enrolled in secondary education. The main project beneficiaries during the past two project implementation years were: 784 students (444 in 2009/10 and 611 in 2010/11, 271 of which second-year grantees) recipients of scholarship and mentorship support, a pool of students (about 100 in 2010/11) which were not financially supported but received mentorship/tutorship support, 84 secondary schools throughout the country where the project activities were taking place and 353 teachers selected as mentors or tutors. This evaluation report provides an assessment of the first two years of project implementation (2009/10 and 2010/11 school years) with regards to the project efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Although starting with a delay in activities, all major project activities were implemented. The project formally started in January 2010, with a 2 month delay in the inception activities, which lead towards a delay in the following activities not only in the first, but also in the second project year. Nevertheless, apart from the decisions to omit several elements considered as less essential, all major activities took place in the form they were initially envisioned. This is mainly due to the efficiency of the project team and the Selection Committee, who have managed to make timely and accurate decisions and hence facilitate the project decision-making process, which was frequently prolonged as a result of the technocratic procedures of the MoES. However, the delays and the un-implemented activities had effects on the incomplete accomplishment of part of the envisaged outcomes.

The financial management can be characterised as cost-efficient, mainly as a result of two decisions carried in the frames of the project. Specifically, the decision to link the continuation of the scholarship only to the criteria – not dropping out during the school year, instead of also linking it to the GPA was in favour of the cost-efficiency of the project. In addition, the decision to include two categories of scholarships in the second project year can be considered as cost-efficient since it enabled more students to be included in the program through providing a material safeguarding mechanism from early school termination, and hence working in favour of achieving the transition and retention objectives of the project. While 26% of the funds disbursed for scholarships in 2009/10 and 16% in 2010/11 went to students who failed to achieve the set objective of GPA over 3.00, savings were made as a result of the lower number of students who failed to complete the school year compared to their maximum anticipated number. Hence, overall, no significant loses have occurred.

One of the main project objectives – improving the achievement rate of the students-beneficiaries was only partially accomplished. Specifically, while expected that 90% of students supported with scholarship will complete the school year with a GPA over 3.00, this was achieved by only 80% of students. About one third of the students who entered the program with a GPA between 3-3.5, and about 14% who have entered with a GPA above 3.5 have reduced it during the school year they have been granted a scholarship.

The decrease in the average achievement level is due to the first year grantees, whose achievement has dropped greatly. The reasons for the reduced GPA have been explored with regards to their relation with the **year of schooling**, the **gender of grantees** and the **type of school attended**. Results indicated that the differences in GPA are mostly related to the year of schooling, with the first year students-grantees having significantly lower achievement compared to students from 2nd, 3rd and 4th year during both project years.

This implies that first year students are the most vulnerable when it comes to maintaining (and especially increasing) their GPA from primary school.

The scholarship recipients' transition and retention rates are excellent and are in the frames of the national average. The comparison of the rates of scholarship recipients with the national average (in 2009/10) does not indicate big discrepancies between the two. Specifically, the transition rate (98.4% is slightly higher than the national average (98.2%), while the retention rate (99.5%) is slightly lower than the national average (99.7%).

Analysed from the perspective of the standards of the school which the grantees are enrolled in their GPA is either within the frames of the average GPA at the level of their school or higher than the school's average; and their number of absences (both excused and unexcused) are rarely higher than the average number of absences in their school. The comparison of the average GPA on the level of school and the average GPA of the scholarship recipients from the same school points out that the achievement of the granted students is within the average of the school they are attending, and in some cases higher than the school's average. The average number of absences is usually within the frames of the school's average, while for some schools they are significantly lower than the school's average.

The inclusion of Roma students who did not receive scholarship, in the mentoring and tutoring process has been challenging. The vast majority of students who were not financially supported did not feel obliged to come to the mentoring/tutoring classes, many did not perceive the potential benefit of coming to the classes, and hence the initial impulse for improved attendance and achievement was lacking. On the other hand, the interest and inclusion of the scholarship recipients has been respectful. The fact that they have been selected as scholarship recipients appears to have influenced their sense of responsibility and raised an awareness regarding the obligations they have towards upholding the expectations set for them.

Non-scholarship recipients which made use of the tutorship support showed significant improvement in the achievement. Data related to the end-of-year achievement of the students which were not financially supported, but received tutorship support (total of 106 in 2010/11, no data for 2009/10) indicates that half of them have reached a GPA over 3.00 which opened the possibility to apply for a scholarship during the following school year. Moreover, 10 of them, which have repeated the previous year, have even achieved a GPA of 5.00. These data witness the power of the tutorship in cases where students are intrinsically motivated to improve their achievement. In addition, the data indicate a good transition rate of 89.6% and retention rate of 92% among these students. However, since there is absence of certain data concerning the non-scholarship recipients, only limited assessments can be made regarding the progress of these students.

The average number of absences is within the legally allowed number of excused and unexcused absences. The scholarship recipients on average have had 50-60 absences, which is significantly below the limit of 200 absences legally allowed. While there are no differences in the number of absences with regards to the year of schooling, they are evident between students from different types of school, with the 3-year vocational school student having more excused and unexcused absences compared to their peers attending grammar school. In addition, the average number of unexcused absences is around 8, indicating that it is below the maximum allowed number of 25. However, students which did not receive financial support, have significantly higher total number of absences (75.7) compared to scholarship recipients (59.4), as well as significantly more unexcused absences (12.3 vs. 7.8).

During the project implementation, changes in the mentoring/tutoring scheme occurred, as well as the terminology used. While the first year the focus was on selecting mentors (primarily mathematics teachers) and afterwards tutors depending on the specific needs of students; the second year, without strictly holding on to the subject they teach, teachers have been selected at the beginning of project

activities and engaged as tutors. Besides the differences in terminology and the subject area taught, the roles of the mentors and tutors, as elaborated in their contract, were to a large extent the same.

Overall, the mentor/tutor-student ratio was favourable to students, although certain schools and teachers are significantly more overburdened with students. In general and per city the student-teacher ratio was favourable, especially during the 2009/10 school year. However, when analysed with regards to subject teachers, the data indicates a slightly different situation. The problem occurs when there is small number of teachers for a certain subject and many students interested/in need of receiving additional classes in the subject. Specifically, in some schools where large numbers of Roma students were enrolled certain mentors were responsible for over 20 students which raise concerns over the efficiency of the additional classes realized.

Almost all final-year students took the Matura exam or the Final exam and all of them have passed the exams. Out of the 72 4th year students, 41 (57%) passed the Matura exam, while 29 (40%) passed a Final Exam. 23 students received assistance by tutors for these exams and have successfully passed them.

The project activities have contributed towards: increased students motivation, improved attendance, and developed respect for authority. The improved attendance is so far the biggest benefit of the project activities. Students are developing habits for regularly coming to school and hence an understanding of the schooling process in general. While there are students which are lagging behind in achievement despite the intervention; teachers notice an increase in the motivation within the majority of students. In addition, the emotional closeness which is being developed between the students and teachers results in developing a respect of authority, which was lacking within many students. Moreover, the vast majority of students interviewed expressed **high hopes for their future**, which can be considered as an indicator of their positive self-perceptions and belief in their abilities.

The delays in selecting students-grantees and teachers mentors/tutors impedes the possibility to follow these students from the beginning of the school year. The late opening of the calls for students and mentors is perceived as a major impediment by teachers to influence the students' achievement and behaviour from the start. This is especially significant for the first year students, since for them the beginning of the school year is the most difficult period. In addition, the late selection of the mentors for the State Matura Exam is considered as another setback, since they only have a month to work with the students, and often preparing for this exam can take the form of restructuring and building a completely new set of knowledge within the student.

The project activities were publically promoted, but the project achievements were insufficiently promoted. The information on the program was covered by various types of media who mostly reported during the period when the call for applications from students for the 2010/11 school year was announced, providing purely explanatory information on the program, with no specific details on the achievements during the previous year of project implementation and illustrations in the form of success stories.

It can be concluded that hat the vast majority of outcomes have been achieved, and some even beyond the expectations. The biggest success can be attributed to the effect the program had on reducing the absenteeism among the supported students and increasing the rates of completion of the school year. It had lesser effects on increasing the students' achievement, which calls for a need for more efficient delivery of the mentoring and tutoring activities during the following project implementation period.

I. Introduction and project description

The general aim of the project ‘Scholarship, mentoring and tutoring for secondary Roma students’ (MAC 052) is through positive interventions to improve the retention and achievement rate of all Roma students enrolled in secondary school. It represents a continuation of a 4-year program (MAC 001) lead by FOSIM in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, which formally ended in 2009. Encouraged by the achievements of this program¹, and guided by the goals of the Roma Decade Action Plan², the MoES/Department for Promotion and Development of Education in the Languages of Minorities applied for its continuation in the school year 2009/10 and took over the management of project activities, relying on the financial assistance of REF and the MoES. This evaluation report provides an assessment of the first two years of project implementation (2009/10 and 2010/11 school years) with regards to the project efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

The project has the following objectives:

1. To provide a selected number of Roma secondary school students with scholarship support.
2. To provide all Roma secondary school students with school-based mentorship and tutorship support.
3. To provide support the 4th year Roma students for timely registering and successfully passing the State Matura exam
4. To provide support to the secondary school Roma students in developing skills for better communication, interaction with other schoolmates and integration in the school environment.

With regards to accomplishing these objectives, the project activities are based on two main pillars:

1. **Student scholarships.** All Roma students who have a GPA of at least 3.00 during the previous school year could apply for a scholarship for the following school year, provided they haven’t repeated a year during their schooling and do not receive scholarship from another source.

During the first project year, all students assessed as fulfilling the required criteria were awarded monthly scholarships in the amount of 2.200 MKD (36 EUR) for a period of nine months; while during the second year, it was decided to award two categories of scholarship: 1.500 MKD (25 EUR) for students with a GPA ranging between 3.00 and 3.50) and 2.200 (36 EUR) for students with GPA over 3.5.

The continuation of the scholarship was dependent on several criteria , such as: regular school attendance, regular attendance to the additional classes, maintaining or increasing the GPA, and completing the school year. Failing to upkeep these requirements could lead towards ‘freezing’ or losing the scholarship.

2. **Mentoring and tutoring.** Scholarship recipients, as well as other Roma students were provided mentors and tutors in their school to assist them with the learning process, as well as contribute towards their better socialization. Mentors were mainly professors of mathematics, since it was determined that this is the most problematic subjects for students; while tutors were professors of different subjects which students were found to have difficulties with.³ Teachers were selected on the basis of their qualifications, with considerations of the number of students-grantees in the particular school and their requirements. They received a monthly fee of 3.000 MKD (50 EUR) for a period of nine months, which could be terminated in case they did not complete their duties elaborated in the contract: informing students on the

¹ Improved attendance and transition rate, increased achievement, etc.

² Available at:

<http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/Decade%20Documents/macedonia%20Decade%20action%20plan.pdf>

³ The terms mentor and tutor in the report are often used as synonyms since despite their initial differentiation, the tasks outlined for these teachers in the contracts are overlapping

learning regime and conditions, meeting with the parents for the aim of informing them on the students' progress, assisting students to plan their study time, advising students regarding their academic tasks and socialization activities, providing additional classes in the subject s/he teaches, following the progress of all students and reporting it to the project team, etc.

In addition to this aspect, during the second year of project implementation⁴, students attending the final year had the opportunity to receive assistance for a period of one month from a tutor in the subject/s they have selected for the State Matura Exam or the Final Exam.

The main project stakeholder is the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), through the Department for Promotion and Development of Education in the Languages of the Nationalities which is responsible for the overall management, coordination and reporting on the project, providing support to the schools involved in the project, ensuring the project's visibility and integrating the priorities of the National (Decade) Action Plan on Education into the national education policy.⁵ The activities are managed by a team of three people, employed for the aims of the project by the MoES/Department for Promotion and Development of Education in the Languages of Minorities, while the decision-making power with regards to selecting students-grantees and teachers mentors/tutors is granted to the Selection Committee, established for the purposes of the project. All major decisions need to receive a final approval by the Minister of Education and Science.

The main project beneficiaries during the past two project implementation years were: 784 students (444 in 2009/10 and 611 in 2010/11, 217 of which second-year grantees) recipients of scholarship and mentorship support, a pool of students (about 100 in 2010/11) which were not financially supported but received mentorship/tutorship support, 84 secondary schools throughout the country where the project activities were taking place and 353 teachers selected as mentors or tutors.

⁴ During the first year, 4th year students were not included in the program since many were already beneficiaries of a FOSIM's program

⁵ Project Monitoring Report, June 2011

II. Project Evaluation

1. Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation aimed at:

1. Assessing completed project activities, including the efficiency of implementation; assessment of the project management;
2. Identifying particularly strong aspects of the project, including those that might be considered best practice, and aspects of the project that might have been executed more effectively;
3. Evaluating the relationship activities, outputs and outcomes after two years of the project implementation and comparing it with the baseline;
4. Meeting with a selection of project beneficiaries in order to assess the satisfaction with the approaches, activities (i.e. whether the funds reached the intended recipients; relationships with mentors and tutors; their communication with the program management; any suggestions for improving the activities), motivation for education;
5. Assessing the cooperation between mentors and parents;
6. Assessing the database, baseline data and record keeping, access to information on the project and the decisions, publicity of the Project.
7. Evaluating the achieved transition/retention rate (%) of the students supported with scholarships on a project yearly base vs. projected transition/retention rate at the beginning of the project;
8. Evaluating the Average GPA and regular attendance (excused and unexcused attendance) in regard of the type of the school (grammar school, vocational four year, vocational three year, males, females);
9. Assessing how the academic progress (transition/retention rate, attendance and GPA) of project beneficiaries compares with other comparison groups (based on the evidence gathered from the schools or from other sources);
10. Assessing the transition to tertiary education of the graduate students.⁶

2. Evaluation methodology

The initial phase of **desk research** was based on review of documents. In particular, the following documents have been used as sources of information:

- Decisions and reports from the work of the project Selection Committee
- Calls for applications for student scholarships and for teachers mentors/tutors
- Documents required for applying to the abovementioned calls
- Documents from REF related to the approval of the project
- Lists of selected and rejected applicants to the calls
- Quarterly reports to REF

⁶ Terms of Reference, Final External Evaluation of Roma Secondary Scholarship Project: Scholarship, mentoring and tutoring for secondary Roma students, REF and MoES

- REF Monitoring report
- Project log-frame and project implementation plan
- Information issued for publicity purposes
- Employment contracts of the project team and contracts for engaging external members of the Selection Committee
- Sample of contracts for teachers and students

In addition, all received **quarterly reports from teachers and students** were made available for analysis. A randomly selected sample of reports was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Specifically, 50 reports from teachers were selected (out of 318) or 16% and 89 reports from students (out of 218) or 40%. They were mainly used to determine the frequency of meetings between teachers and students, the types of topics treated at the additional classes, the frequency of parent-teacher meetings and the general satisfaction with particular project activities.

The main source for assessing the accomplishment of project objectives was the **project database** which includes quarterly information on the grades per each subject, excused and unexcused absences and the assessment of the behaviour of each student. **Methods for data analysis** included: frequencies and percentages, cross-tabulations, means, Chi-square test, t-test for differences between means and linear regression analysis. Differences are reported as significant if their level of significance is at least 0.05.

For the purpose of assessing the publicity of the project and especially the manner in which media reported on its activities, **press-clipping** of project-relevant information was conducted, followed by **content analysis** of the articles. The focus was on the type of information provided and its connotation.

Considering that the achievement of students is quite dependent on the standards/criteria of the school they are being enrolled in, data on the **GPA and average number of excused and unexcused absences on the level of school** were requested from 9 schools with the highest number of grantees, in order to identify where the grantees are positioned with regards to their GPA and number of absences in comparison to rest of the students in their school. 6 (66%) of the contacted schools have sent the requested data, which have been used as a **control data set** to the scholarship recipients' data. Unfortunately, data from two schools with the highest number of beneficiaries⁷ has not been provided, a fact which should be taken into consideration when reading the data.

Finally, a small-scale **field research (focus groups)** was conducted with the aim to examine the perceptions of project beneficiaries. During the months of December 2011 and January 2012, total of 9 focus groups were organized in three locations, where a larger number of project beneficiaries are situated, with consideration of their geographic positioning: the capital city of Skopje where most of the grantees were located; Gostivar-a town in the western part of Macedonia, with the second largest population of project beneficiaries; and Shtip-a town in the eastern part of Macedonia. In each of these locations, three focus groups were conducted, with students, with parents and with teachers. (See sample in Table 2.1). Total of 32 students, 34 teachers (mentors and tutors) and 15 parents have been interviewed. They were requested to share their opinions regarding the main aspects of the project: the scholarship scheme, the mentorship and tutorship scheme, the assistance for the Final and Matura exams by presenting their experience with each, as well as pinpointing certain problems they have encountered.

⁷ Arseni Jovkov-Skopje and Panche Karagjozov-Skopje

Table 2.1: Structure of focus groups participants

Location	Students ⁸	Teachers	Parents
Skopje	16 (5 schools)	16 (7 schools)	9
Gostivar	8 (3 schools)	8 (3 schools)	4
Shtip	8 (4 schools)	10 (4 schools)	2
Total	32 (13 schools)	34 (14 schools)	15

Although both grantees and non-grantees have been invited to participate at the focus groups, only representatives of the grantees came. 13 of them were currently attending the 2nd year, 10, the 3rd year, and the rest were 4th year students. 15 were female while 17 male (See lists of participants in Annex 1).

Challenges and limitations of the evaluation process

Several important limitations need to be recognised and taken into consideration when devising the plan for the future evaluations.

Firstly, the project database, while very detailed and regularly maintained, was not structured in the form which allows the statistical analysis which was required from the ToR. Since data for each student were kept in a separate spread sheet, in order to allow for more systematic statistical analysis, the most important data have been transferred to a joint matrix in SPSS. This process was quite time-consuming and required a detailed checking, back-checking and consultations with the project team in order to equalise the information in the matrix with the data provided in the project documents. While the developed database generally relies on the information from the project database, several elements have been adjusted. Namely, some of the data on gender from the project database did not match the data on gender from the lists of selected grantees or the list of grantees in the ULTRA program for transferring scholarships. Hence, the information in the latter documents was taken as a more reliable source since it contains the students' personal numbers. Nevertheless, the author of this report acknowledges that data on gender in the newly developed database may need to be further revised.

Secondly, the absence of certain data limited the possibility for assessing the achievement of certain outcomes. Specifically, the absence of information on GPA during the previous school year for the students who were not granted scholarship, but used tutorship support in 2010/11 hinders the possibility to evaluate the effects of the support to their achievements. In addition, the absence of data on the number of absences for some students and schools may impact the reliability of the results and hence the assessments of the achieved outcomes related to this aspect.

Thirdly, the absence of systematic information regarding the continuation to tertiary education⁹ impedes the possibility to precisely address some of the requirements from the ToR.

In addition, the fact that there were no data available for assessing the achievement of project beneficiaries in comparison to other students, since the national external assessment of the students' knowledge has not been conducted yet¹⁰, impeded the possibility of responding to one of the requirements

⁸ All students who participated at the focus groups were scholarship recipients. While non-recipients were also invited, none of them came.

⁹ No information on the field of studies and the university enrolled for some students, no information on whether they have enrolled in the state quota or the quota for minorities.

¹⁰ Expected to happen during the following school year 2012/13

from the ToR. This obstacle was partially overcome through requesting data on overall achievement of students from several project schools and comparing it to the achievement of the project beneficiaries.

Finally, while the number of focus groups participants was satisfying, the fact that none of the students which did not receive scholarship support attended can be considered as a hindrance for assessing their perception with regards to the project activities.

3. Evaluation of the project efficiency

The following section provides a review of the planned activities during the two years of project implementation and assesses whether and to what extent they have been implemented. In doing this it uses the project proposal(s) and timeframe as sources of the planned activities; and the official project documents, interviews with the school team and the project beneficiaries as sources of implemented activities. Furthermore, it elaborates the system of project management through reviewing the model of decision-making, reporting employed and detecting possible missing accountability links. Finally, the system of financial management is shortly reviewed with a focus on the planned and spent funds and the efficiency of spending.

3.1. Realization of project activities

The grant for the project was awarded by REF in October 2009¹¹ and according to the initial timeframe¹² for project implementation the activities were expected to begin in the beginning of November 2009 by distributing information on the project through a press conference, announcing job vacancies for the project team, announcing the scholarship scheme through the media and by directly communicating it to schools; as well as setting up a Project Selection Committee. This set of activities is difficult to be realistically achieved in such a short timeframe, especially bearing in mind the bureaucratic procedures which come with the fact that the project is administered by a government body. This accounted for serious delays in the project activities from the initial phase of project implementation which reflected in delays of the rest of the planned activities.

Project launch activities

Although planned for the beginning of November 2009, decisions for the announcements for student scholarships¹³ and engaging mentors¹⁴ were carried on January 18th 2010, and published in two printed media within two days. At the same time, a call for temporary employment of four employees for the needs of the project was issued.¹⁵

The project Selection Committee was officially set up on 1st of February 2010 and consisted of five members, three of which from the MoES and two external members, one representative of a Roma NGO and one representative of the FOSIM. Additionally, the project team was selected on February 24th,

¹¹ Grant approval letter MAC 052, 12 October, 2009

¹² Project timeframe document

¹³ Decision for announcing a call for awarding scholarships to Roma secondary school students for the 2009/10 school year. Archived: 18.01.2010, No.23-393/1

¹⁴ Decision for announcing a call for 92 mentors for Roma secondary school students for the 2009/10 school year. Archived: 18.01.2010

¹⁵ Decision for announcing a call for temporary employment of four employees for the needs of the project for supporting secondary school Roma students. Archived: 18.01.2010, No.23-349/1

consisting of 2 project coordinators and one project assistant¹⁶, who officially began to work on the project on March 3rd 2010.

It can be concluded that once the project implementation officially started, the preparatory activities took about one month to be realized, which is a satisfactory timeframe, considering the large number of activities. However, the fact that the first phase has been delayed for approximately 2.5 months has implications on the implementation of the subsequent activities.

The delays were attributed to the following reasons:

1. The adoption of the MoES's annual budget in December, and the insecurity whether they were going to allocate resources for the implementation of the project.
2. Respecting the terms related to administrative processes
3. Many administrative processes have been delayed as a result of the New Year and Christmas holiday.¹⁷

Selection of grantees and mentors/tutors

2009/10 school year

While initially planned to be realized during mid-November, the preliminary selection of candidates who fulfilled the predetermined criteria for receiving a scholarship was made by the Selection Committee on February 12th. The total number of selected students was 455, out of 928 applicants. However, soon after the project team commenced their positions, 11 of these students were removed from the list of scholarship recipients since 9 of them have been detected to have failed a school year and 2 have terminated their schooling.

Soon after, on February 18th, 89 candidates for mentors have been selected (out of 167 applicants) on the basis of fulfilment of the required criteria. One of the main criteria for selection of mentors was for them to be mathematics teachers. However, since mathematics teachers from certain school did not apply, they have been replaced with 23 teachers of other subjects. Attention was paid to include teachers of subjects which represent difficulty for the majority of students, which usually implied teachers of physics, chemistry or some technical vocational subject.¹⁸

A decision for announcing a call for additional mentors was made after reviewing the needs of Roma students, on the basis of the data on their achievement in different subjects from the first semester of the 2009/10 school year. According to the needs of students from different schools, information to schools indicating which subject teachers are encouraged to apply was distributed. Additionally, 72 mentors have been selected in May 2010.

2010/11 school year

The activities anticipated for the second year of project implementation again started with a delay. Specifically, the announcement of the scholarship scheme was planned for the beginning of October 2010, but the decision for opening a call for awarding scholarships was carried with two-month delay, on December 7th 2010.¹⁹ Building on the experience from the previous project implementation year, this time, the call included having an account on the name of the student as one of the needed application documents.

¹⁶ Lists of selected project coordinators and project assistant, Archived: 24.02.2010, No.23-1536/1

¹⁷ Report to REF February-April 2010

¹⁸ Interview with the project team (27.01.2012)

¹⁹ Decision for announcing a call for awarding scholarships to Roma secondary school students for the 2010/11 school year. Archived: 7.12.2010, No.23-9604/1

The decision for opening a call for tutors was announced at the same time.²⁰ Again, based on the previous experience, the call did not specify that they have to be mathematics teachers, but instead stated that this would be considered an advantage. Total of 707 students applied to the call. At the meeting of the Selection Committee held on 20.01.2011, 94 of them were found not to fulfil the required criteria, 412 were found to fulfil the criteria for receiving first category scholarship, while 201 fulfilled the criteria for receiving second category scholarship.²¹ The remaining of the applicants did not fulfil the criteria of GPA over 3.00. Soon after the selection,, 2 of the selected students (one recipient of first and another one of second category scholarship) have not signed the contract and were removed from the list of grantees.

At the Board meeting from 26.01.2011, the review of the applications for tutors took place. Out of the 245 received applications, 160 were found to fulfil the required criteria,²² but soon after 3 of the selected tutors cancelled the contracts.

A decision for opening additional call for engaging 30 tutors to assist with the Final exam and the State Matura exam was carried towards the end of April 2011.²³ Based on this, on May 6th, the applications (13 in total) have been reviewed and 13 tutors were selected.²⁴

Bearing in mind that the initial activities related to selection of grantees and mentors/tutors have been projected to be realized during November 2009 and October 2010 accordingly, the both years of project implementation begun with a 2-3 months delay in activities. These delays can be expected to have had significant impact on the predicted project outcomes, since instead of being included in the program from the first semester; students were included during the second semester. In addition, the initially selected mentors had only 4 months in 2009/10 and 5 months in 2010/11 to work with the mentees, while the additionally selected mentors in 2009/10 and the tutors for the Matura exam had only 2 months.

Teacher training/informing

In the project plan, holding a workshop with the selected mentors on methods of working with the students-beneficiaries of the project was anticipated for December 2009.²⁵ However, this activity was not realized. Instead, in the first week of March 2010, at the Pedagogical Faculty in Skopje the first informative meeting with 80 of the selected mentors was held, where they have signed the grants. The meeting was primarily informative, and included explanation of the activities and the next procedures. During the second year of project implementation, no meeting of this kind was organized.

Transferring scholarships

2009/10

The transferring of scholarships has been assessed as the most problematic aspect of the project implementation. This is mainly due to the initially unaccounted problems which caused significantly delays

²⁰ Decision for announcing a call for 200 tutors for Roma secondary school students for the 2010/11 school year.

Archived: 7.12.2010, No.23-9605/1

²¹ Report on the work of the Committee for awarding scholarships to Roma secondary school students in the 2010/11 school year

²² Report on the work of the Committee for selection of tutors for Roma secondary school students in the 2010/11 school year

²³ Decision for engaging additional 30 tutors for assisting secondary school Roma students for passing the Matura and final school exam in the 2010/11 school year. Archived:26.04.2011, No.23-2856/1

²⁴ Report on the work of the Committee for selection of 30 tutors for assisting secondary school Roma students for passing the Matura and final school exam in the 2010/11 school year

²⁵ Report to REF February-April 2010

in the process. One major problem during the first year of project implementation was the fact that many students were underage and couldn't open an account. While their parents were responsible for opening the account, most of them didn't understand the procedure. Furthermore, part of the grantees had no parents and/or adult caregivers, and in addition did not possess a birth certificate or identity card. In order to overcome this setback, the project team contacted several NGOs and police inspectors to grant them personal documents, then the social centres for seeking custody of children without parents and children with disabilities. Opening of new accounts took much of the time.²⁶

The first week of May, the transfer of the first scholarship instalment (for the months: September, October and November 2009) for 438 grantees was disbursed²⁷, with a five-month delay from the planned period. Six of the grantees were not paid for this period due to incomplete bank documentation.²⁸

The disbursement of the second and third instalment was made at once in November 2010, covering the months: December, January, February, March, April, May 2010. It was delayed because of the State budget rebalance and the summer holidays.²⁹ In this period, 3 of the grantees who have completed the documentation before the end of the project activities were paid scholarship for 9 months. However, three of the grantees were not paid at all, because they had problems to issue a complete identification and bank documentation.³⁰

2010/11

In the first week of April 2011 the project team had training for using and working with the main program for transferring the scholarships, while during the second week of April the first installment of the scholarship for 5 months (September, October, November, December and January) was transferred.³¹ According to the initial plan, the first installment was planned to be disbursed in December 2010, while the second in March 2011.

The second installment (for the months February, March, April and May 2011) was disbursed in August for a total of 598 students, since 13 students did not complete the school year..

Monitoring and reporting

The project team visits all schools two times a year. Once at the beginning of the program with the purpose of signing the contracts and informing the students and teachers on their responsibilities³²; and another time at the end of the school year with the purpose of assessing the implementation of activities at the school level, the responsiveness of teachers, as well as identifying potential problematic aspects. In addition, the project staff maintains a regular communication with the beneficiaries through telephone or email and teachers and students are encouraged to come to the project offices whenever they feel the need to discuss certain issues in person.

With regards to the reporting arrangement, the project team submits regular quarterly reports on the project achievements to REF and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as bi-monthly reports to the Coordinator for Projects at the Ministry of Education.

²⁶ Report to REF February-April 2010

²⁷ The initially planned period for transfer was December 2010

²⁸ Report to REF May-July 2010

²⁹ Report to REF May-July 2010

³⁰ Report to REF August 2010

³¹ Report to REF February-April 2011

³² Report to Ref: February-April 2011

The majority of teachers have been reporting on a regular basis in the frames of the two years of project implementation since the timely reporting was set as criteria for transferring of the fees.

Fulfilling quarterly reports from students was planned initially, but was not realized in the frames of the first project year, due to the late beginning of the activities. During the 2010/11 project implementation period, students have been requested to file quarterly reports to the project team and this activity has been successfully realized. Still, considering the delays in activities, the deadlines for submitting quarterly reports were also postponed (ex. The first report planned for January 2011 was postponed for March 2011). However, since the reporting on behalf of students was not linked to the receipt of scholarship, some students have failed to submit reports. Also, the relatively late provision of instructions on how to fulfil the reporting forms (three months into the project implementation³³) may have an impact on the lack of reporting on behalf of certain students.

Final exam and Matura examination

The activities related to assisting the students with the Final School Exam and the State Matura Exam were implemented only during the 2010/11 school year, since the previous year the project did not include the fourth year students. The process of providing tutorship support is as follows: the project team calls each student at the final year of schooling and asks if s/he needs a support for passing the Final or Matura exam and in which subjects. The students personally select the teachers they would like to be tutored by and are advised to invite the teachers to apply. During the month of April, the project team made a list of students who were in the final year, on which subject they have to be examined, who is going on final exam or state Matura and for which subject they need additional tutorship support. The selection of teachers was delayed from April to May 2011, which left for only 1 month to work with the students, since the exam takes place in June.³⁴

Regardless of the abovementioned delays in project activities, which resulted in decisions to omit several activities considered as less essential³⁵, it can be concluded that all major activities took place in the form they were initially envisioned. Nevertheless, the delays and the un-implemented activities had certain effects on the accomplishment of the project objectives. These aspects are elaborated in the following sections.

3.2. Project management

The project management was assessed in terms of the responsibilities of the project team and the decision-making structures, with a focus on the hierarchy of the decision-making process.

With regards to the first aspect, the Skopje-based project team, made up of three people is responsible for the general implementation of the project activities. Their responsibilities include: communicating with the project stakeholders (schools, government bodies, NGOs, international organizations) and the direct beneficiaries (students, teachers and parents); assignments related to the public promotion of the project; monitoring the implementation of the project activities (through field visits to schools, reviewing reports from students and teachers, regularly contacting them by phone or e-mail); developing and updating the project database; keeping and organizing the project documentation; reviewing the application documents of students and teachers; financial management with regards to collecting data for performing the

³³ Report to REF: May-July 2011

³⁴ <http://matura.gov.mk/>

³⁵ E.g. training of teachers, submitting reporting forms from students

payments (accounts and personal data) and the preparation of documents for disbursement of scholarships and teachers' fees. They are recognized by the beneficiaries as a focal point where they could turn in case a certain problem or question arises. The students often feel free to call the team in the office and ask for an advice. Considering the large number of project beneficiaries the team has a commendable set of assignments, and the timely manner in which they are implemented speaks of the high efficiency of the people engaged.

The main decision-making body is the Selection Committee, which decides on the timing for issuing calls for the project, as well as performs the selection of students grantees and teachers mentors/tutors. They decide upon initially prepared documents from the project team, and judging by the available reports, manage to carry timely and accurate decisions despite the complexity of the tasks. However, all decisions have to be approved by the Minister of Education, which although adds to the complexity of the process, does not prolong the process for more than 4-5 days. The main delays in the project implementation are due to the timing of the launching activities which are planned for November-December, a period in which the Ministry is planning its annual budget for the following year. Since MoES is co-funding the project, each year its contribution is being reviewed and until a final decision is being made, the contract with REF is not being signed.³⁶

The overall process is relatively consultative. Students' and teachers' feedback, whenever possible, is taken into consideration for further development of the activities. In addition, the project team and Selection Committee took into consideration the setbacks which occurred during 2009/10 and revised/amended certain processes and requirements for the 2010/11 year, such as the requirement for opened account when applying for scholarships, not restricting the applications for tutors to only mathematics teachers, etc.

However, there is a noticeable lack of involvement of certain stakeholders in the project activities. For example, the role of the Local Self Governments (LSG) is not visible.³⁷ The civic organizations are also insufficiently involved. Except for the Roma Information Centres assisting with the dissemination of information regarding the scholarship scheme and representatives of two NGOs being included as members of the Selection Committee, their potential of being 'watchdog' organizations, overseeing the work of the schools, mentors and students; as well as promoting the results of the project is not sufficiently exploited.³⁸

3.3. Financial management

During the first year of project implementation, the Sector for Higher Education of the MoES was responsible for transferring the scholarships to students, while the following year, this assignment was transferred to the Project team, thus significantly increasing their responsibilities. The procedure for transferring scholarships is rather complicates, since it involves the approval of several institutions. Namely, once the project team prepares the lists for payments they are initially submitted to the Minister of Education for approval, then the Ministry of Finance for a second approval and finally the State Treasury. Since scholarships are paid for all students at once, a mistake regarding one student blocks the payment of the rest and requires additional preparation of the payment lists. While the delays in payment of scholarships are partially due to the complicated administrative process, they mainly occur as a result of

³⁶ Interview with the project team (27.01.2012)

³⁷ Project Monitoring Report, June, 2011

³⁸ Ibid.

the waiting for the funds to be approved funds by the Ministry of Finance, which could take up to several months.

On the other hand, the process of transferring the fees for teachers is simpler and executed in a timely manner, since they are being paid on Authors' Contract through the Authorship Agency.

The total project budget totalled at 367.590.00 EUR, with a grant from REF in the amount of 264.650,00 EUR and a contribution from the MoES of 102.949.00 EUR. The REF grant was initially aimed for a 10 month period, from November 1st 2009 to 31st August 2010 with a plan to be received in three instalments.³⁹ However, after the first year of project implementation, which is considered a pilot year, significant amount of funds remained after accomplishing the planned activities. Specifically, out of the funds planned directly for student scholarships and teachers fees, 137.220 EUR remained, primarily as a result of the lower number of student grantees selected, as well as the lower number of months teachers were engaged for (see Table 3.3.1). The remaining funds have been transferred into the following year, thus extending the grant period to additional 11 months.⁴⁰

During the second year of project implementation, the balance was significantly reduced, as a result of the better synchronization between the planned and the actual number of beneficiaries. The biggest 'saving' of 50.750 EUR was due to the reduced number of selected tutors (i.e. 157 selected out of 200 planned) and the lower number of months teachers were engaged for (5 instead of 9).

Table 3.3.1. Planned and disbursed funds for stipends and teachers fees in 2009/10 and 2010/11⁴¹

2009/10	Planned number	Rates	Planned funds (EUR)	Exact number	Disbursed funds (EUR)	Balance
Students	800	36 EUR * 9 months	259.200	441	142.884	116.316
Teachers	92 + 104	39 EUR * 9 months 39 EUR * 2 months	32.292 + 8.112	89 (4 months) 72 (2 months)	13.884 + 5.616	18.408 + 2.496
total			299.604		162.384	137.220
2010/11	Planned number	Rates	Planned funds (EUR)	Exact number	Disbursed funds(EUR)	
Students	500 (1 st category) 200 (2 nd category)	36 EUR* 9 months 25 EUR* 9 months	162.000 + 45.000	611 (5 months) (411-1 st category; 200-2 nd category) 598 (4 months ⁴²)	73.980 + 25.000 + 86.976 + 19.500	1.044 500
Teachers	200 + 30 (tutors for Matura)	50 EUR * 9 months 50 EUR * 1 months	90.000 + 1.500	157 (5 months) 13 (1 month)	39.250 + 650	50.750 + 850
total			298.500		245.356	53.144

³⁹ REF, Contract for receipt of REF funding, Grant recipient: MESRMDPDELM, project Code: MAC 052

⁴⁰ REF, Amendment to Grant Contract, Project Code: MAC 052

⁴¹ The remaining budget items are not included since the complete budget was not available for analysis

⁴² Excluded were 7-1st category and 5-2nd category recipients who have dropped out in the meantime

When assessing the efficiency of spending, we need to bear in mind the project objectives in order to analyze whether any part of the funds have been spent inefficiently. Specifically, as the student scholarships are primarily aimed to foster improved GPA (above 3.00) and improved retention and transition rate; the following analysis focuses on how much has been spent on students which did not achieve the required GPA and failed to complete the school year (have dropped out or repeated the school year they have been granted for).

Table 3.3.2. Anticipated and disbursed funds for students who achieved GPA bellow 3.00

	No. of students with end-of-year GPA bellow 3.00 (maximum anticipated)	Rates	Funds anticipated (EUR)	No. of students with end-of-year GPA bellow 3.00 (actual)	Funds disbursed (EUR)
2009/10	44	36 EUR*9 months	14.256	88	28.512
2010/11	61	36 EUR *9 months 25 EUR*9 months	16.744⁴³	57 (1 st category) 64 (2 nd category)	18.468 14.400
total			31.000		61.380

Base for calculations: Total number of scholarship recipients in 2009/10 – 444, in 2010/11 - 611

Table 3.3.3. Anticipated and disbursed funds for students who failed to complete the school year

	No. of students who failed to complete the school year (maximum anticipated)	Rates	Funds anticipated (EUR)	No. of students who failed to complete the school year (actual)	Funds disbursed (EUR)
2009/10	44	36 EUR*9 months	14.256	7	2.268
2010/11	61	36 EUR *9 months 25 EUR*9 months	16.744⁴⁴	13 (7 - 1 st cat; 5- 2 nd cat) ⁴⁵	1.508
total			31.000		3.776

Base for calculations: Total number of scholarship recipients in 2009/10 – 444, in 2010/11 - 611

Data in table 3.3.2 and table 3.3.3 indicate that 26% of the funds disbursed for scholarships in 2009/10 and 16% in 2010/11 went to students who have failed to achieve the set objectives. However, bearing in mind that the set objectives predicted the lack of achievement of the desired GPA of 3.00 on behalf of maximum 10% of grantees and failure to complete the school year on behalf of maximum 10% of grantees, the overall discrepancies are negligible. Specifically, out of the maximum 62.000 EUR anticipated to be spent on these students, a total of 65.156 EUR was spent. This is due to the fact that the maximum anticipated number of scholarship recipients with GPA bellow 3.00 was twice lower compared to their actual number, while the

⁴³ The maximum predicted number (61) was multiplied by an average value of the rates for 1st and 2nd category scholarships (i.e. 30.5 EUR)

⁴⁴ The maximum predicted number (61) was multiplied by an average value of the rates for 1st and 2nd category scholarships (i.e. 30.5 EUR)

⁴⁵ The students received scholarship for the first 5 months

maximum anticipated number of scholarship recipients not completing the year was 15-20 percent higher than their actual number. Hence, overall, no significant losses have occurred.

Also, the decision to 'loosen' the conditions for continuation of the scholarship to only remaining in school (not dropping out), instead of also linking it to the GPA, the absenteeism and the regular attendance at the mentoring classes was a decision which goes in favour of the cost efficiency of the project. Finally, the decision to include two categories of scholarships in the second project year can be considered as cost-efficient since it enabled more students to be included in the program through providing a material safeguarding mechanism from early school termination, and hence working in favour of achieving the transition and retention objectives of the project.

4. Effectiveness: Accomplishment of the project objectives during the two year implementation

This part of the evaluation report focuses on the specific objectives and outcomes set in the project log-frame and addresses their level of achievement. It is structured in three sub-sections: objectives related to the scholarship scheme; objectives related to the mentorship and tutorship scheme; objectives related to passing the State Matura exam; and objectives related to the publicity of the project.

4.1. Objectives related to the scholarship scheme

Outcome 1.1: 800 Roma secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year with GPA 3.00 and above receive scholarship support in 2009/10

The first year of project implementation, 444 out of a total of 928 students-applicants were found to fulfil the required criteria for receiving a scholarship (table 4.1.1). The planned number of 800 grantees was set too high and while it may have been reasonable bearing in mind the total number of Roma students attending secondary school⁴⁶, it highly outnumbered the students who fulfil the required criteria.

Table 4.1.1. Structure of applicants and granted students in 2009/10

School year of secondary students	I year			II year			III year			TOTAL		
	total	male	fem.									
Number of applicants	511	235	276	229	127	102	186	79	107	928	470	458
Number of awarded scholarships	250	106	144	106	58	48	88	35	53	444	199	245

Source: Report to REF February-April 2010 and Info letter to the Selection Committee on behalf of the project team

It is important to emphasize that more than half of the grantees were first year students, which should be considered as an opportunity, since it provides for them to be guided throughout the secondary schooling process from its beginning. However, a potential problem can be the fact that while they have been awarded the scholarships based on the GPA from the primary school, many are quite vulnerable to a GPA decrease during the first year of secondary school.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ 1 628 enrolled, according to the State Statistical Office, Primary lower secondary and upper secondary schools at the end of the school year 2009/10, 2011

⁴⁷ More about this phenomenon in section 4.1.1

The gender distribution is slightly in favor of female students, which is a positive aspect considering their bigger vulnerability for dropping out, mainly as a result of marriage.

Outcome1.2: 700 Roma secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th class with GPA 3.00 and above receive scholarship support in 2010/11

The second year of project implementation, the expected number of grantees was lowered to 700 which was more synchronised with the number of potential candidates. Out of 707 applicants, 613⁴⁸ were found to fulfil the required criteria, out of which 201 for the first category scholarship, while 412 for the second category (table 4.1.2). The gender distribution was slightly in favor of male students.

Table 4.1.2. Structure of applicants and granted students in 2010/11

		Number of applicants	Number of awarded scholarships	Number of applicants who met the criterion from first category(GPA 3.50 – 5.00)	Number of applicants who met the criterion from second category (GPA 3.00 – 3.49)
I year	Total	268	215	160	55
	Male	131	106	77	29
	Female	137	109	83	26
II year	Total	207	188	126	62
	Male	113	104	72	32
	Female	94	84	54	30
III year	Total	154	138	81	57
	Male	95	83	46	37
	female	59	55	35	20
IV year	Total	78	72	45	27
	Male	35	33	21	12
	Female	43	39	24	15
TOTAL	Total	707	613	412	201
	Male	374	326	216	110
	Female	333	287	196	91

Source: Report to REF: November 2010-January 2011

271 (61%) of the first-year grantees reapplied and were granted a scholarship for the 2010/11 school year as well. 21% of the first year grantees could not re-apply because of lowered GPA below the threshold of 3.00 or because they have repeated or terminated the school year, while the 3% coming from 3-year vocational schools have completed their secondary schooling in 2009/10. Out of the second-time grantees, 127 of were female and 144 male. The majority (132) have enrolled into the second year of studies, 89 into the third and 50 into the fourth year of studies. The data indicate that the majority of the grantees attending the second, third and fourth year in 2010/11 have been scholarship recipients during the previous school year.

⁴⁸ Afterwards, two of the 613 initially selected students did not sign the contract and were not transferred the scholarship rates.

The fact that the actual number of scholarship recipients was lower than initially predicted, does not imply that the outcome was not achieved, since students applied in big numbers, but the Selection Committee was required to respect the predetermined selection criteria. In addition, the funds which remained from the first year of project implementation were transferred to the second year and through adjusting the scholarship scheme by including two categories of scholarships, the funds were efficiently utilised for covering 1055 grantees in total during the two project years.

Outcome 2: At least 90% of the scholarship supported students will successfully complete the school year

According to the latest available official statistical data (for 2009/10), the overall percentage of secondary school students who have failed to complete the school year is 1.73 (0.22% did not complete the school year because of different reasons and 1.51 have failed/repeated the year).⁴⁹ Although there is an absence of official data on the overall retention and transition rates of Roma students, the comparison of the rates of scholarship recipients with the national average does not indicate big discrepancies between the two. Specifically, the transition rate (98.4% is slightly higher than the national average (98.2%), while the retention rate (99.5%) is slightly lower than the national average (99.7%).

While during the first project implementation cycle (2005/6-2008/9), the retention rate of supported students was 98%⁵⁰, the outcome related to the retention in the following two years was set at 90%, probably because the plan of including larger number of students, compared to the previous project cycle, implied a higher risk of dropping out. The outcome was accomplished, considering that the percentage of students who have completed the school year in 2009/10 was 98.4% and 97.8% in 2010/11 (table 4.1.3). While the retention rate for the two project years was higher than expected, it is worth mentioning that a number of students (6.5% in 2009/10) took correctional exams as a result of low grades. While they have passed the exams, they represented a potential risk of reducing the retention rate and hence threatening the achievement of the set outcome.

Table 4.1.3. Retention rate of the scholarship recipients

No.	2009/10		2010/11	
Total number of scholarship recipients	444	100%	611	100%
Scholarship recipients who repeated the school year	5	1,12 %	2	0.4%
Scholarship recipients who have dropped out	2	0,45 %	11	1.8%
Total number of student who have completed the school year	437	98.4%	598	97, 8 %

Source: Report to REF May-July 2010 and Report to REF May-July 2011

Although the sample of students who failed to complete the school year is rather small, a clear pattern of gender-specific reasons for dropping out can be observed. While the main reason for terminating the schooling for female students is marriage, for male students it is reduced behavior and large number of absences which lead to removal from school.

⁴⁹ State Statistical Office, Primary lower secondary and upper secondary schools at the end of the school year 2009/10, 2011

⁵⁰ Alliance for Inclusion of Roma in Education (MAC 052): Final External Evaluation, 2009, pg. 42

4.1.1. Outcomes related to the changes in GPA

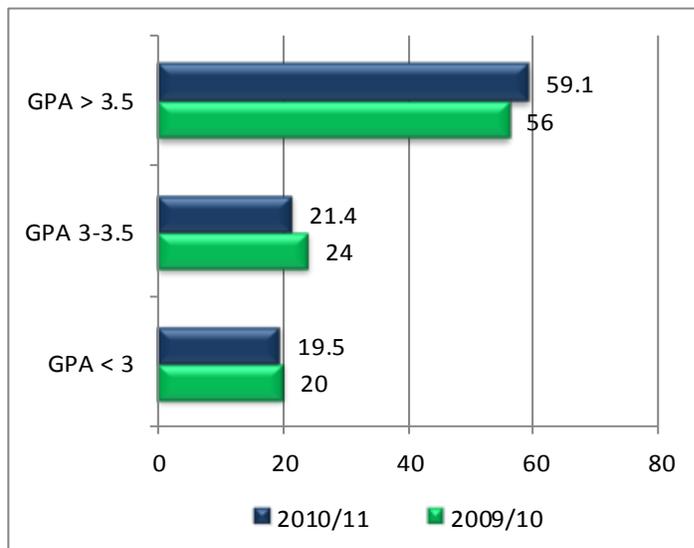
The GPA of the grantees has been continually followed throughout the school year through quarterly reports provided by the teachers mentors and tutors and the students themselves. While the student enters the scholarship scheme with the GPA from the previous school year, in case where there is a drastic reduction in the achievement (e.g. failing grade/s at the end of the school year and not passing the summer exam/s)⁵¹ and no signs that the situation is changing, the scholarship can be 'frozen' until the achievement is improved. While cases of severe decrease in the grades have been evidenced, the policy of temporarily terminating the scholarship has not been enforced. It was considered that the use of more supportive measures, such as providing tutors for additional assistance in the problematic subjects would be more beneficial for the students.⁵²

With regards to the aspect of increased GPA, the following indicator has been assessed:

Outcome 3: At least 90 % of the scholarship supported students will complete the school year with GPA 3.00 and above

It can be seen from figure 4.1.1 that about 80% of the grantees have achieved GPA above 3.00 during both project years, indicating that the outcome has not been fully achieved. The distribution of students within the three categories (GPA below 3.00, GPA between 3-3.5 and GPA above 3.5) within the two project years is relatively equal.

Figure 4.1.1. Percentage of grantees according to GPA at the end of school year



Specifically, during both project years, about one third of the students who entered with a GPA between 3-3.5, and about 14% who have entered with a GPA above 3.5 have reduced it during the school year they have been granted a scholarship. Still, significant number of students (26% in 2009/10 and 31.7% in 2010/11) have increased their GPA from 3-3.5 to above 3.5 (table 4.1.4) thus earning a possibility to receive a first category scholarship during the following year.

Base for calculations: 436 students in 2009/10 and 604 in 2010/11

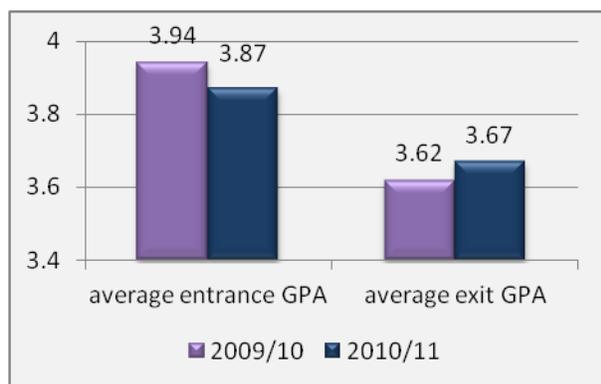
⁵¹ There are no formal guidelines on what should be considered as a severe reduction of the achievement, except for having one or more failing grades

⁵² Interview with the project team

Table. 4.1.4. Entrance GPA and GPA at the end of school year of scholarship recipients: distribution by categories of GPA

		GPA at the end of school year		
		GPA<3	GPA 3-3.5	GPA>3.5
2009/10 Entrance GPA	GPA 3-3.5	44 (33.8%)	52 (40%)	34 (26.2%)
	GPA>3.5	43 (14.1%)	53 (17.4%)	209 (68.5%)
2010/11 Entrance GPA	GPA 3-3.5	61 (32.8%)	66 (35.5%)	59 (31.7%)
	GPA>3.5	55 (13.2%)	63 (15.1%)	298 (71.6%)

Figure 4.1.2 GPA of scholarship recipients at the beginning and the end of school year⁵³



In average, the GPA of 2009/10 grantees dropped by 0.3, and by 0.2 for 2010/11 grantees compared to their GPA from the previous year (figure 2), which although appear as minor decrease are statistically significant and indicates an overall decrease in the achievement compared to the previous year achievement.

The achievement rate has also dropped slightly since the previous project implementation cycle (in 2007/08 it was 3.82, in 2008/09 3.71).⁵⁴

Base for calculations: 436 students in 2009/10 and 604 in 2010/11

However, one needs to bear in mind that retaining a minimum of 3.00 GPA was a prerequisite for continuation of the scholarship during the first project cycle, but not for the second cycle; and during the first cycle the lower number of grantees enabled closer monitoring of their achievement and more frequent interventions.⁵⁵

The factors for the reduced GPA have been explored with regards to their relation with the **year of schooling** and the **gender of grantees**. The regression analysis indicates that the decrease in GPA is significantly related to the former, but not to the latter variable (see figure 4.1.4 and figure 4.1.6). Specifically, first year students-grantees have significantly lower achievement compared to students from 2nd, 3rd and 4th year during both project years.

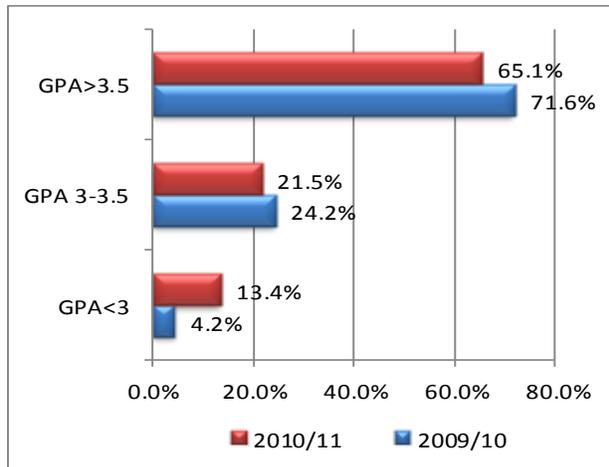
Therefore, if the same analysis as above, with regards to the GPA categories, is conducted with first year students factored out, the results are significantly better. Specifically, 95.8% of 2nd to 3rd year grantees in 2009/10 and 86.6% 2nd to 4th year grantees in 2010/11 had a GPA above 3 (see figure 4.1.3).

⁵³ Differences between the entrance and exit GPA are statistically significant at level 0.01

⁵⁴ External Evaluation Report of the MAC 001 Project, Zdenka Milivojevic 2009

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Figure 4.1.3. Percentage of grantees according to GPA at the end of school year (first year students factored out)



This indicates that the first year students are the most vulnerable when it comes to maintaining (and especially increasing) their GPA from primary school. This phenomenon is probably also related with the lower achievement criteria and lower expectations from these students in primary school. As one of the teachers interviewed for the aims of this evaluation stated:

'In primary school they are being told: Just come to school and you will pass the grade.'

Base for calculations: 190 students in 2009/10 and 235 in 2010/11

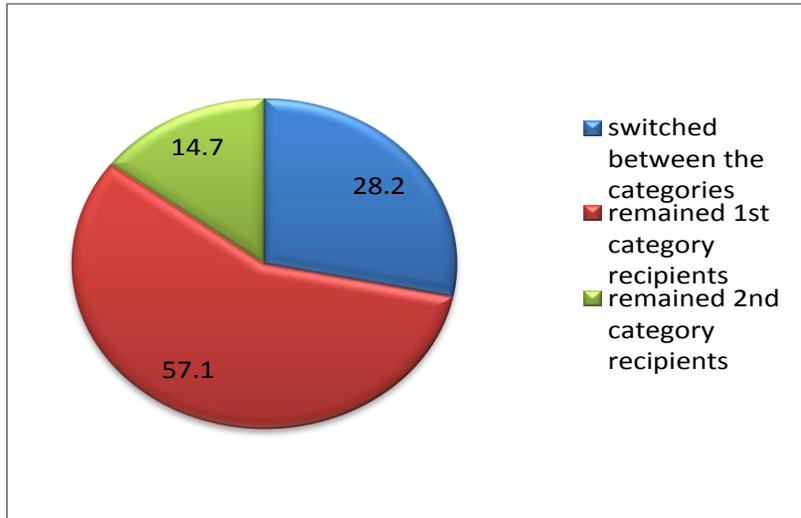
Hence, many of the students come to secondary school with the notion that very little knowledge is required in order to pass the grade. This reflects in their first year of secondary school where they are faced with new environment, new subjects and teachers and often stricter achievement criteria. Furthermore, they may be more reluctant to ask for assistance from teachers when needed, since they don't know the teacher as well and have not developed a relationship with them yet. While most teachers are aware of the shortages in students' knowledge from primary schools and are making effort to fill in the gaps, this process takes time and if the student is not motivated, does not always result in improvement. In contrast, students from higher years have already adjusted to the secondary school environment and their entrance GPA is expectedly better attuned to the criteria required in their school.

While expected for the GPA to be strongly linked to the **type of school attended**, the analysis indicated differences only for the first project year (2009/10). Namely, a significant difference was found with regards to the achievement of students from 3-year vocational schools and ones from grammar school and 4-year vocational schools, with the former achieving higher compared to the latter (see figure 4.1.6). This finding is somewhat surprising considering that students typically enrolled in 3-year vocational schools are the ones with lower achievement from primary school. Hence, the results can be explained either with the assumption that the achievement criteria in the 3-year vocational schools are lower compared to other schools which enables students to achieve higher; or with the assumption that the involvement in the scholarship/mentorship program motivates these students more than the rest of the students.

Finally, the analysis of the relationship between the GPA and the category of scholarship received in 2010/11 resulted in an interesting finding. While, on average, the second category grantees have maintained their entrance-GPA, the first category grantees have reduced it significantly (by 0.3 - see figure 4.1.5). This might be explained with the fact that the former were more engaged in maintaining their GPA

in order to be able to apply during the following year, while the latter had more space for decreasing their achievement believing that if reduced, they could still apply for the second category scholarship.⁵⁶

Figure 4.1.3.1 Mobility among the first and second category scholarship recipients



Base for calculations: 271 student - second-time grantees in 2010/11

While the scheme of two categories of scholarships was introduced in the second year of project implementation, in order to determine the mobility among the second-time scholarship recipients, first year project grantees were hypothetically (according to their GPA) considered as falling into one of the two categories of scholarship. It can be seen from figure 4.1.3.1. that the mobility among the two categories was only moderate and 71.8% of the second-time grantees remained in the category they were during the previous project year, while less than a third (28.2%) moved to a different category.

⁵⁶ Although data from Figure 4.1.5 and table4.1.4 appear contradictory, this is due to the different levels of statistical analysis employed. Specifically, in data in the table are presented through using cross-tabulations and frequencies (a lower level of analysis), while data in the figure are presented through using Arithmetic means (a higher level of analysis which also takes into account the dispersion (deviation) of data

Figure 4.1.4. GPA of grantees at the end of school year: breakdown by year of schooling

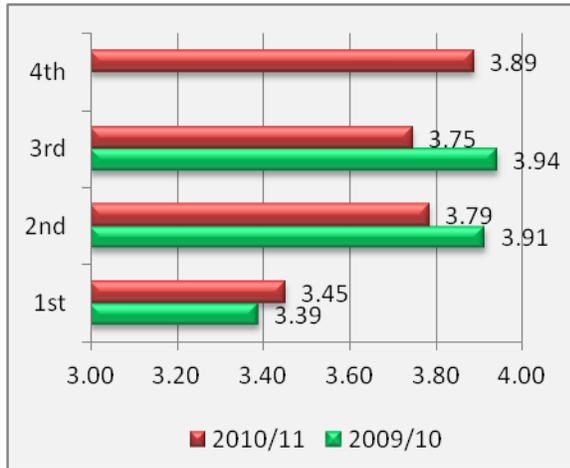


Figure 4.1.5 GPA of 1st and 2nd category scholarship recipients at the beginning and the end of school year 2010/2011



Figure 4.1.6. GPA of scholarship recipients at the end of school year: breakdown by type of school⁵⁷

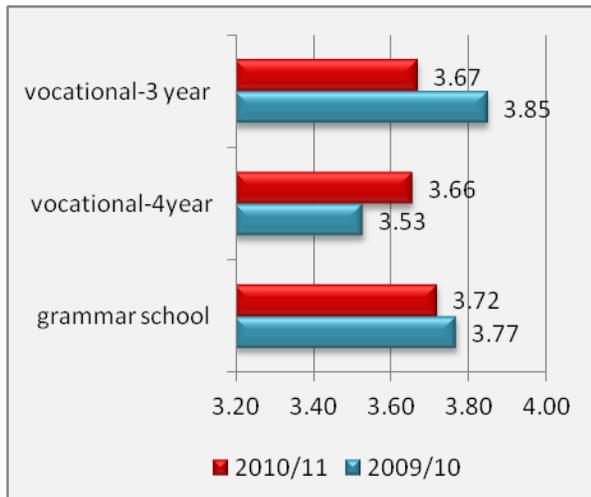
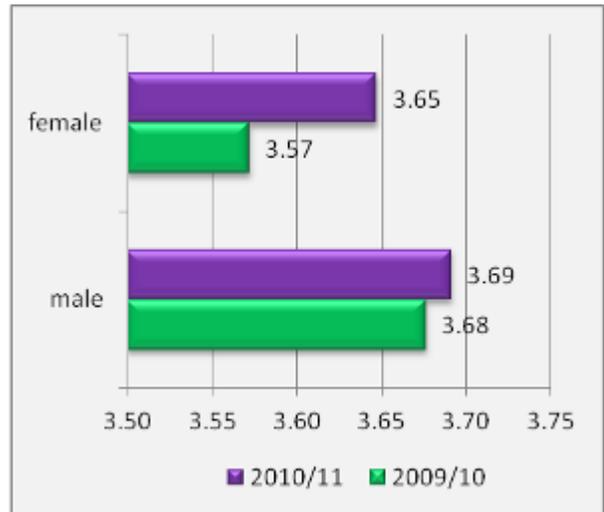


Figure 4.1.6. GPA of scholarship recipients at the end of school year: breakdown by gender⁵⁸



⁵⁷ Differences with regards to type of school attended are not statistically significant for both project years

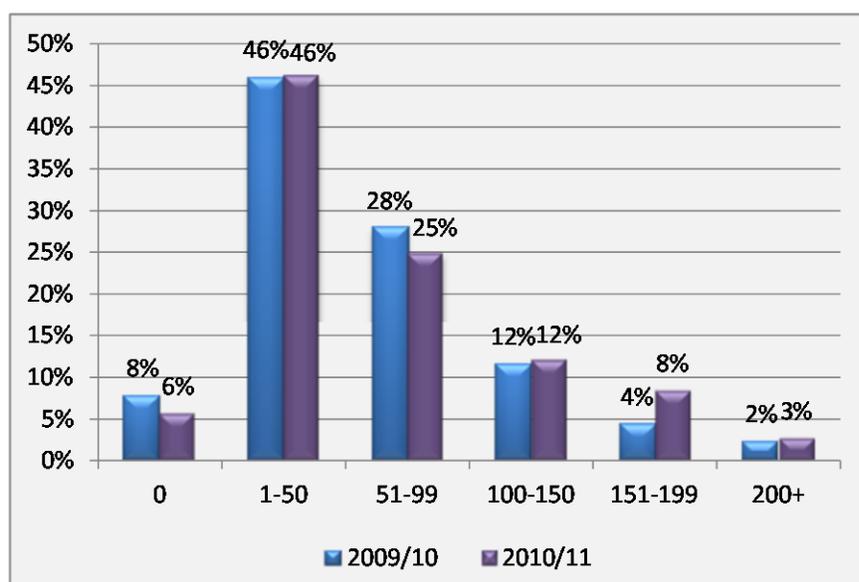
⁵⁸ Differences with regards to gender are not statistically significant for both project years

4.1.2. Outcomes related to the absenteeism rate

Outcome 4: Absenteeism rate of the granted students is 30% lower in comparison with the allowed school absenteeism rate according to the law requirements

According to the Law on Secondary Education⁵⁹, the maximum number of **allowed absences** (excused and unexcused) is 200, and over 200 absences imply exclusion from the school. The scholarship recipients in average have had from 50-60 absences, implying that the foreseen outcome has been achieved and even surpassed.

Figure 4.1.7 Percentage of scholarship recipients falling in different categories with regards to the number of absences (excused and unexcused) in 2009/10 and 2010/11⁶⁰



In general, the scholarship recipients in 2009/10 have had a significantly lower number⁶¹ of absences (51) from those in 2010/11 (63). This can be due to the fact that during the first year of project implementation the teacher-student ratio was smaller, which allows for the possibility of teachers to follow their mentees' attendance more closely and intervene when necessary.

It is clearly depicted from Figure 4.1.7 that the vast majority of scholarship recipients have had from 1-99 absences. While the percentage of students who have made over 151 absences is relatively small (6% in 2009/10 and 11% in 2010/11), it nevertheless signifies that a number of students are vulnerable of being excluded from school due to the large number of absences. While there are **no gender differences** with regards to the total number of absences (mean for female is 48 for 2009/10 and 63 for 2010/11, while for male 55 and 62 respectively); a concerning indicator is that female grantees in 2010/11 have had significantly higher number of absences compared to the previous year.

In addition, no differences in the number of absences were found with regards to the **year of schooling** attended, while differences between students from different types of school were evidenced. Specifically, differences with regard to total number of absences⁶² (in 2009/10) and unexcused absences between grammar school students and 4-year vocational school students⁶³ (during both project years) with the latter having more absences (see figure 4.1.8 and figure 4.1.9).

⁵⁹ Law on Secondary Education, Official Gazette of RM, 44/95

⁶⁰ Percentages are based on the students whose absences have been recorded in the data base

⁶¹ Differences are significant at level 0.01

⁶² On a level 0.05

⁶³ On a level 0.05

Figure 4.1.8. Average number of absences (excused and unexcused) according to type of school

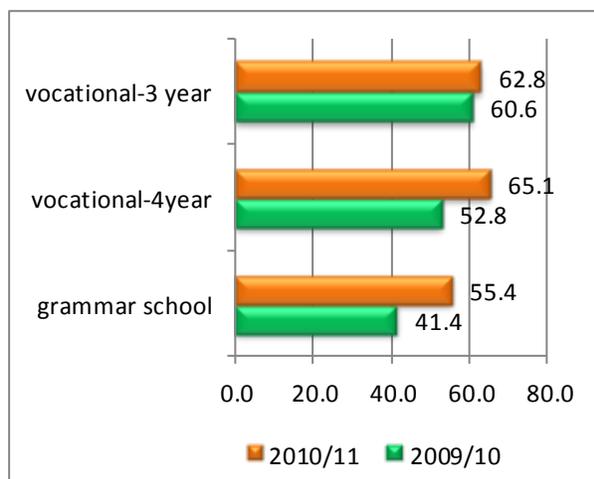
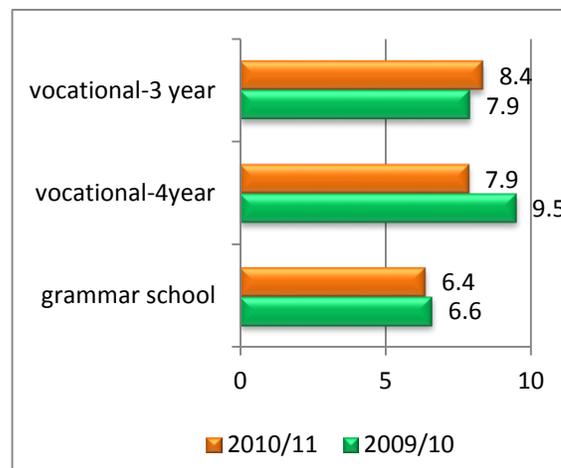


Figure 4.1.9. Average number of unexcused absences according to type of school



Related to this, during the focus group discussions, teachers from few vocational schools (with primarily 3-year vocations) from Skopje ('Lazar Tanev' and 'Dimitar Vlahov') reported to have problem with high number of absences which are being made from the beginning of the school year.

'A number of Roma students enrol into secondary school in order to avoid the fines for not attending.⁶⁴ They come to school for about one month and then they stop coming (...)The number of absences becomes too high for it to be regulated during the remaining of the school year.'

Teacher-mentor from the school Lazar Tanev-Skopje

While the maximum allowed number of **unexcused absences** is not legally determined, most secondary schools tolerate up to 25 unexcused absences before initiating a procedure for exclusion from the school.

Although there is a guide for pedagogic measures for the public secondary schools issued by the MoES⁶⁵ it does not contain specifications on the unexcused absences. Since schools have different, albeit similar, rules for the number of allowed unexcused absences an overarching indicator could not be developed. However, four categories were devised (see figure 4.1.10), based on information from documents from several secondary schools⁶⁶. Up to 10 unexcused absences are usually tolerated, although in some schools

⁶⁴ According to the amendments of the Law on Secondary Education which foresee fines for not attending

⁶⁵ Упатството за начинот на изрекување на педагошки мерки во јавните средни училишта Службен весник на Република Македонија бр.47/2005

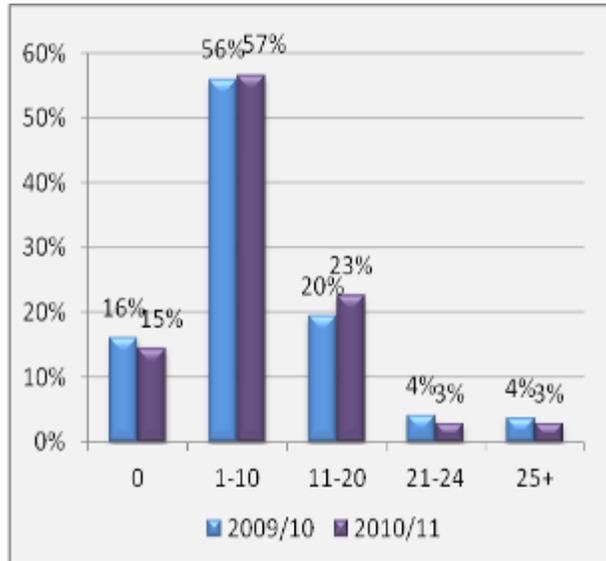
http://www.takidaskalo.edu.mk/TakiDaskalo/documents/Upatstvo_za_izrekuvanje_na_pedagoski_merki_vo_javnite_sredni_ucilista.pdf

⁶⁶ <http://www.medpk.edu.mk/Default.aspx?id=aabd10f7-a0a5-41a3-97fd-f34b4da0eac6;>

[http://marijakirisklodovska.mt.net.mk/down/statut_uciliste.pdf;](http://marijakirisklodovska.mt.net.mk/down/statut_uciliste.pdf)

they come with a notice from the class teacher; 11-20 absences typically are followed by a notice from the school principal, 21-24 imply a notice before removal from school and over 25 absences imply a removal from the school.

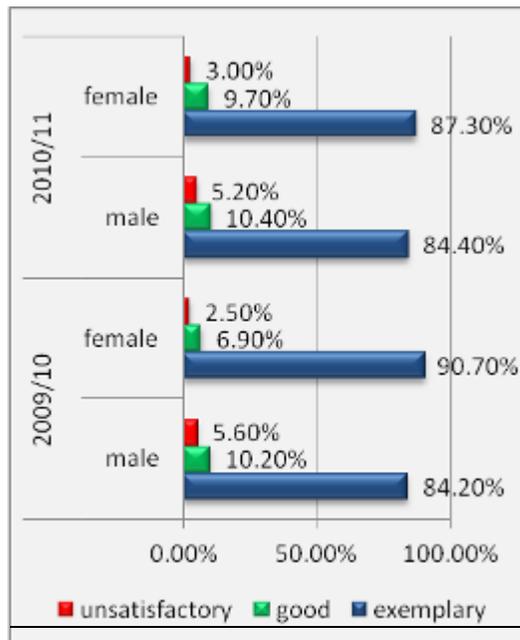
Figure 4.1.10. Percentage of scholarship recipients falling in different categories with regards to the number of unexcused absences in 2009/10 and 2010/11⁶⁷



Data indicates that the mean number of unexcused absences in 2009/10 and 2010/11 do not differ significantly, with the former being 8.6 and the latter 7.8, implying that the students have not increased the number of unexcused absences, but have also not reduced them. While their average number is not high and in most schools would not bear any implications, there are cases of students with high number of unexcused absences (see Figure 4.1.10) which would imply serious consequences in most secondary schools.

Specifically, the finding that almost a quarter of the students have made 11-20 unexcused absences is rather concerning, indicating that many have/should have received a notice/warning from the class teacher and/or the school administration.

Figure 4.1.11: Percentage of male and female grantees according to the assessment of behaviour



The number of unexcused absences is not related to the type of school attended, but is inversely related to the GPA at the end of the school year. The lower the GPA, the higher is the number of unexcused absences. While there are no gender differences with regards to the total number of absences, there are significant differences among male and female students when it comes to unexcused absences, with the former having significantly more unexcused absences (M=9.5) than the latter (M=7.8), which makes the male student more susceptible of being excluded from the school on the grounds of unsatisfactory behaviour.

However, though male students are seemingly more frequently assessed with unsatisfactory behaviour compared to female students (Figure 4.1.11), these differences were not found to be statistically significant.

http://www.takidaskalo.edu.mk/TakiDaskalo/documents/Pravilnik_za_pedagoski_merki.pdf;

<http://www.orcenikolov.edu.mk/pdf/miks.pdf>

⁶⁷ Percentages are based on the number of students whose absences have been recorded in the data base

4.2. Objectives related to the mentorship and tutorship scheme

Objective

2009/10: To provide all 1606 Roma secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class in the school year 2009/10, with school-based mentorship and tutorship support

Outcomes:

5.1. 100% of the scholarship recipients received school based mentorship support and 70 – 80% received tutorship support depending on their needs

5.2. 806 Roma secondary school students with GPA below 3.00 enrolled in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class receive individual and group school-based mentorship (100%) and tutorship support (70-80%) 2009/10

Objective

To provide all Roma secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th class in the school year 2010 - 2011, with school-based tutorship support according to their needs and interest

While efforts have been made to include all scholarship recipients in the mentoring process in 2009/10 and the tutoring process in 2010/11, the thresholds for this objective were somewhat idealistically set. One of the reasons is the fact that mentors for certain schools have not been selected, either because no teachers applied to the call or because the ones that applied did not fulfil the requested criteria. Specifically, during the first year of project implementation, no mentors from 5 schools applied⁶⁸ leaving a total of 9 (2% of the total) students without a direct mentorship support. In the second year, tutors from 10 schools⁶⁹ were not selected, thus leaving 19 students (3% of the total) without direct support.

Although students from these schools were advised to visit mentoring/tutoring classes in the nearest schools where mentors have been selected, this setup has not proved very convenient for students. However, since their number is relatively small, the absence of mentors/tutors did not imply a significant setback of the overall project objectives. Data for these students were being collected directly by the students-grantees. The project team has arranged with the schools administration to allow them entrance into their files, and the process has been proceeding without delays, due to the responsibility of the grantees.⁷⁰

Records from 2009/10 indicate that almost all (98%) scholarship recipients received mentorship support, while about 30% of the total number of 1st to 3rd year Roma students received tutorship support, which is significantly lower number in comparison to the set threshold of 70-80% recipients of tutorship support. More worrying is the fact that, as a number of grantees report in the reporting questionnaires for 2010/11, certain teachers do not setup the mandatory additional classes and are not being responsive to the students' needs. Data from a sample of reports available for 2010/11 which were analysed indicate that while about 64% of students⁷¹ report that they meet with the tutors, 9% reported that they do not have

⁶⁸ '8 mi Septemvri' – Tetovo, 'Kiril Pejcinovik' – Tetovo, 'St.Naum Ohridski' – Ohrid, 'Gjorgji Dimitrov'- Skopje and 'Nikola Karev' – Strumica, according to the Report to REF February-April 2010

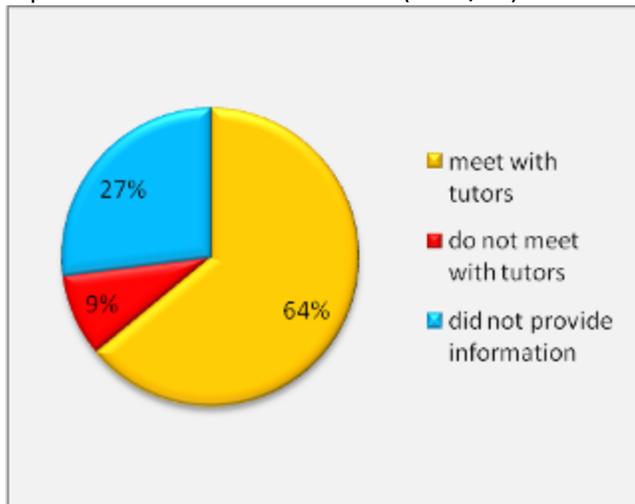
⁶⁹ Kiril Pejcinovik'-Tetovo, 'Orce Nikolov'-Skopje, 'Nikola Karev'-Skopje, '5 private gymnasium'-Skopje, 'Jahja Kemal'-Gostivar, 'Aco Ruskoski'-Pehcevo, 'Nikola Karev'-Strumica, 'Todor S. Tetoec'-Struga, 'Vlado Tasevski'-Skopje and 'SOU'-Gostivar, according to the Report to REF February-April 2011

⁷⁰ Interview with the project team (27.01.2012)

⁷¹ Calculated from a randomly selected sample of 86 student reporting forms

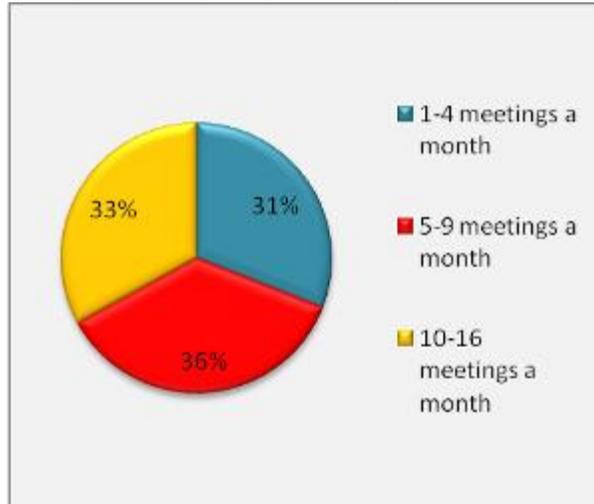
tutoring meetings at all (mainly because they do not have a tutor assigned), while the rest 27% did not provide information with regards to this issue (see figure 4.1.12). Out of the students who reported the frequency of meetings (38% in total), one third stated they meet 1 to 4 times a month, a second third - 5 to 9 times a month and another third - 10 to 16 times a month (see figure 4.1.13). The rest did not specify the frequency, but stated they meet 'often' or 'several times'.

Figure4.1.12. Percentage of students who reported to meet with the tutors (2010/11)



Base for calculations: sample of 87 students

Figure4.1.13. Percentage of students according to the reported frequency of meeting with the tutors



Base for calculations: 33 students

Finally, it should be noted that the inclusion of the Roma students who did not receive scholarship, in the mentoring and tutoring process has been rather challenging. According to the interviewed teachers, the vast majority of them did not feel obliged to come to the mentoring/tutoring classes, many did not perceive the potential benefit of coming to the classes, and hence the initial impulse for improved attendance and achievement was lacking. However, the students who self-willingly decided to visit the mentoring/tutoring classes, according to the teachers' statements can show increased motivation and achieve good results, which do not differ from the results of the scholarship recipients.

'There is improvement in the achievement among all mentored students, regardless of the fact if they receive or don't receive scholarship.'

Teacher from the school Cvetan Dimov-Skopje

'Students are becoming more active at the classes and are more interested to improve their achievement. This also refers to certain students who don't receive scholarship, but come to the additional classes.'

Teacher from the school Nikola shtejn-Tetovo

A teacher from the school Dimitar Vlahov from Skopje also comments on the benefits of tutoring for the non-scholarship recipients:

'Among the tutored students, one can notice a serious approach towards the teacher-student relationship. At first, they were confused by this activity, but quickly after, they have showed trust and satisfaction that someone cares for them.'

Still, some teachers also emphasise the setbacks when it comes to improving the achievement of these students. For example, a teacher from the special school Koco Racin from Skopje mentions that although *'the tutored students show interest for visiting the additional classes, the improvements in the achievement would be difficult to attain because of their lack of habits to work/practice independently at home.'*

On the other hand, the interest and inclusion of the scholarship recipients has been respectful, with minor exceptions they all regularly attended the additional classes and/or asked for assistance whenever they felt the need. The fact that they have been selected as scholarship recipients appears to have influenced their sense of responsibility and raised an awareness regarding the obligations they have towards upholding the expectations set for them.

Outcome 5.3. The progress achievement of 80% supported Roma students with GPA 3.00 and above follows the achievement rate of Non-Roma students supported with competitive scholarship programs and/or Non-Roma students with GPA above 3.00

The outcome 5.3 was the most difficult one to be assessed as a result of the lack of achievement data segregated by ethnic origin within the secondary schools, as well as on a national level. Hence, it was adjusted for the purpose of this evaluation to assessing the achievement of the Roma students – recipients of scholarship from the MAC 057 project and the average achievement of the specific school they are attending. In addition to this, another important aspect of the program – excused and unexcused absences of the scholarship recipients was assessed in comparison to the 'whole school' average. Data are analysed on the basis of the information provided by 6 schools with a larger number (at least 10) beneficiaries.

The comparison (table 4.1.5.) of the average GPA on the level of school and the average GPA of the scholarship recipients from the same school points out that the achievement of the granted students is within the average of the school they are attending. Moreover, in three of the schools the achievement of the granted students (marked in red in the table below) is higher compared to the schools' average.

Table 4.1.5. Comparison of the GPA and absences at the level of specific schools and the GPA and absences of scholarship recipients from the same schools

School	Gjorce Petrov-Kr. Palanka		Gjorce Petrov- Prilep		Mirko Mileski-Kicevo		Lazar Tanev-Skopje		Dimitar Vlahov-Skopje		Zdravko Cockovski-Debar	
	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11
School year												
GPA school	3.09	3.11	3.27	3.27	3.9	3.73	2.77	2.79	2.99	3.12	3.86	3.89
GPA grantees	3.64	3.19	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.57	3.07	3.23	2.92	3.08	3.69	3.54
Excused absences school	41.9	39.4	13	17	57	63	78.8	88.14	70	92	/	/
Excused absences grantees	19	33	73	89	69	57	57.3	55.3	44	65		
Unexcused absences school	15.5	12.1	4	4	9.6	8.6	15.41	17.66	14	14	/	/

Unexcused absences grantees	17	4	7.8	14	6.3	8.1	6	9.1	6.5	6.6		
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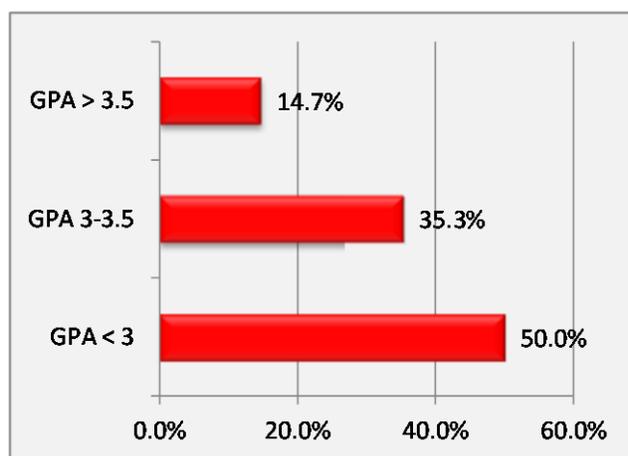
Regarding the number of absences, the situation is even better. The average number of absences (both excused and unexcused) of the project grantees in three (out of five schools) is lower from the schools' average. In only one of the schools the number of absences of the grantees is significantly higher compared to the school's average. This is a positive indicator that goes in favour of the beneficial effects of the program with regards to the regular school attendance.

Outcome 5.4. . Supported students with GPA below 3.00 have increased their GPA for 0.5 & Outcome 5.5. 5% - 10% of these students will complete the school year with GPA 3.00 and above

According to statements from teachers, students with lower achievement mainly come to the sessions when there is a need to improve a failing or low grade. Data for these students haven't been recorded in the project database in 2009/10⁷², while in 2010/11, 106 students have been identified and their records have been kept in the project's database. 40 (38%) of these students were male and 66 (63%) female. 42% were 1st year students, 37 - 2nd year, 13 - 3rd and 8 - 4th year students.

However, their grades have been recorded only after being identified as users of tutorship support, with no records for their achievement before this process. This impedes the possibility to assess whether there has been a progress in their achievement as a result of the mentoring/tutoring process and therefore precisely evaluating the achievement of Outcome 5.4. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that the vast majority of them have had a GPA below 3.00 (and hence did not fulfil the criteria for receiving a scholarship), we could analyse their GPA at the end of the school year and make provisional assessment on the successfulness of the tutorship.

Figure 4.1.14. Percentages of non-recipients of scholarship (but recipients of tutorship support): breakdown by categories of GPA at the end of school year (2010/11)
Base for calculations: 102 students



Data related to the end-of-year achievement of these students is presented in Figure 4.1.4 and indicates that while half of them had not reached a GPA over 3.00, the other half have. This opened a possibility for 51 student (50% of the total) – recipients of tutorship support to apply for a scholarship during the following school year (2011/12). 15 students (14.7%) have even fulfilled the criteria for being awarded a first category scholarship, provided they fulfil the rest of the criteria; and 10 of them which have repeated the previous year, have even completed the school year with a GPA of 5.00.⁷³

⁷² Apart from several students who have been initially awarded a scholarship, but because of different setbacks did not receive it

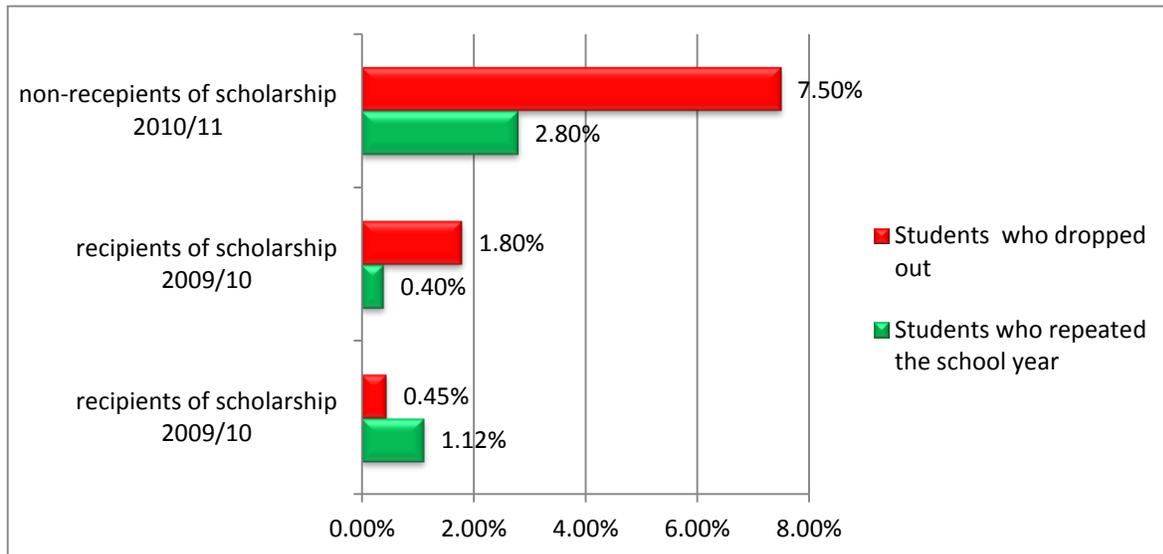
⁷³ Info letter on the project accomplishments

These data witness the power of the tutorship in cases where students are intrinsically motivated to improve their achievement and indicate an overachievement of the outcome which predicted only 5-10% of students to have GPA above 3.00.

Outcome 5.6. At least 80 – 85% of students with GPA below 3.00 will successfully complete the first, second and third year of their secondary education

In the absence of data for 2009/10 school year, only the achievement of this outcome in 2010/11 could be assessed. Results indicate that out of the 106 students identified as receivers of mentorship (but not financial support), 8 have terminated the school year early and 3 have repeated the year, which accounts to 10.4% of students that have failed to transition to the following year. While these rates are higher compared to the rates of scholarship recipients (see figure 4.1.15), they are below the set outcome of 80% which implies that the outcome has been achieved.

Figure 4.1.15. Transition and retention rate of scholarship recipients and non-recipients of scholarship (but recipients of tutorship support)

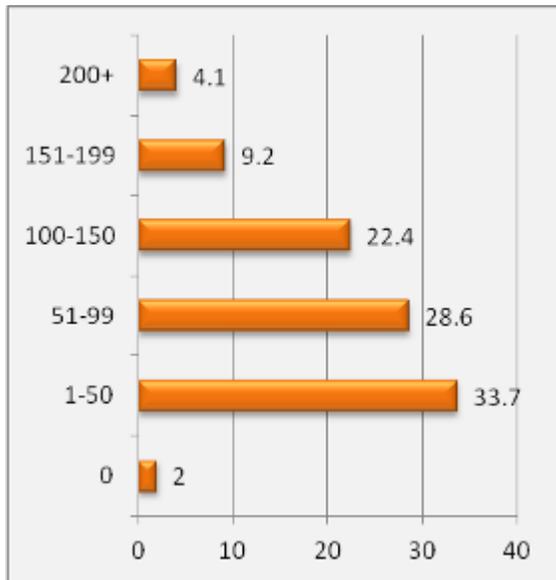


Base for calculations: 444 scholarship recipients in 2009/10, 611 in 2010/11; 106 non-recipients in 2010/11

Outcome 5.7. The absenteeism rate of 80% students with GPA below 3.00 is within the limit of secondary school allowed excused and/or unexcused classes

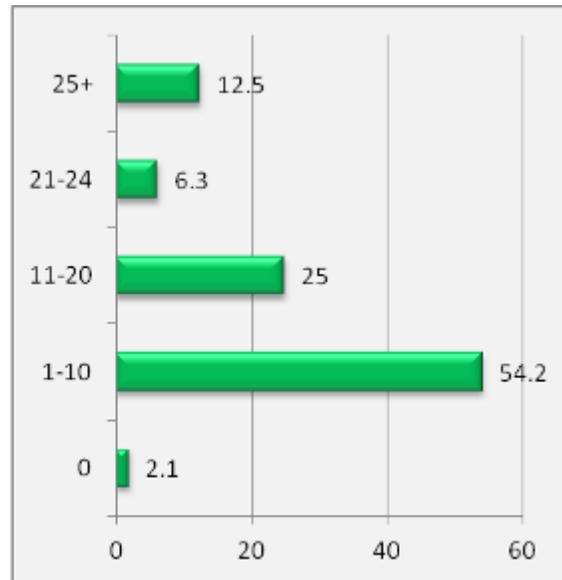
The supported students which did not receive financial support, had significantly higher total number of absences (75.7) compared to scholarship recipients (59.4), as well as significantly more unexcused absences (12.3 vs. 7.8). However, only 4.1% have crossed the threshold of having over 200 absences, bearing the risk of being excluded from school (see Figure 4.1.16), while 12.5% have crossed the limit of over 25 unexcused absences and 6.3% were approaching this threshold (see Figure 4.1.17). Nevertheless, considering the lower expectations set up for this group of students, it can be concluded that the outcome has been achieved.

Figure 4.1.16. Percentages of non-grantees supported with tutorship according to the number of absences⁷⁴



Base for calculations: 98 students

Figure 4.1.17. Percentages of non-grantees supported with tutorship according to the number of unexcused absences⁷⁵



Base for calculations: 96 students

⁷⁴ Data are missing for 7.5% of the sample. The percentages are calculated from the students for which data is provided

⁷⁵ Data are missing for 9.4% of the sample. The percentages are calculated from the students for which data is provided

Objective:**Recruit mentors and tutors and provide workshop support in mentorship and tutorship to secondary school teachers (mentors/tutors)**Outcome 6.1. Selected and recruited number of tutors in accordance with the students' needs and approved selection criteria

During the first project implementation year, 92 mentors, primarily mathematics teachers, were selected. The project team has been following the students' progress within different subjects and on the basis of the identified low grades in certain subjects opened a call for recruiting tutors with the aim to provide assistance in the 'problematic' subjects. 68 tutors were selected for this purpose. The following project implementation year only 157 tutors were selected. They varied with regards to the subjects taught, but attention was being paid to include as much possible teachers of mathematics.

The student-mentor/tutor ratio for the two project years is presented in the table 9 below, encompassing the general proportion, the proportion per town (considering the three cities with the largest number of project beneficiaries) and per school (considering the eight schools with the largest concentration of project beneficiaries).

Table 4.1.6. Student-mentor/tutor ratio

	2009/10	2010/11
General	1:3	1:4
Per city		
Skopje	1:3	1:4 (1:5 including non-grantees)
Gostivar	1:3	1:3
Shtip	1:2	1:4
Per school		
Arseni Jovkov-Skopje	1:4	1:7.6
Dimitar Vlahov-Skopje	1:2	1:6
Naum Ohridski-Skopje	1:7	1:3
Pance Karagjozov-Skopje	1:4	1:6.5
Lazar Tanev-Skopje	1:3	1:4.5
Mirko Mileski-Kicevo	1:2	1:6
Nikola Shtejn-Tetovo	1:17	1:9.5
Medical school-Gostivar	1:2	1:5

It can be concluded from the data presented above that in general and per city; the student-teacher ratio was quite favourable for students, especially during the 2009/10 school year. When analysed with regards to school, the data indicates a slightly different situation, especially with regards to certain schools where one teacher was responsible for over 6 students/grantees (Naum Ohridski-Skopje in 2009/10, Arseni Jovkov, Pance Karagjozov and Nikola Shtejn in 2010/11). Nevertheless, the ratio is still much lower compared to the maximum predicted number of students per teacher (20)⁷⁶, although one needs to consider the fact that the non-grantees are not included.

⁷⁶ Project Proposal, p.6; Project Monitoring Report, 2011

The problem occurs when there is small number of teachers for a certain subject and many students interested/in need of receiving additional classes in the subject. Specifically, in some schools where a large number of Roma students were enrolled certain mentors had a larger number of students compared to others, which became especially accentuated if the non-scholarship recipients are accounted for. While the majority of mentors did not object to the number of mentees they were responsible for, some have concerns that their numbers were too high in order to be able to realize an efficient tutoring class. Specifically, a mathematics teacher from the school Arseni Jovkov-Skopje stated:

'Last year there were 54 students that received scholarship from our school and only me and another teacher are teaching mathematics. When we organize group tutoring, we have 27 students per session, it is like teaching in front of a regular class and the effects are weak.'

While the project staff holds regular consultations with teachers who report such problems and instructs them on the possible methods for organizing the classes, situations such as this one need to be taken into account when devising the mentorship scheme in future and teachers who are burdened with a higher number of students should be jointly instructed on how to deliver the additional classes more effectively.

Outcome 6.2. 90 % of recruited secondary school teachers receive training on mentorship/tutorship program support

Although planned, the teachers did not receive a formal training on mentorship/tutorship support, mainly due to the late start-up of the program which did not allow for much preparatory activities. The first selected teachers were collected on an informative meeting in Skopje, with the aim to be provided insight into the project activities. While teachers have been instructed on these issues during the field visits of the project team, they report that a more extensive training on these aspects would be beneficial in order to develop their skills as mentors/tutors further, especially with regards to the methodology for working with the mentees.

In this regard, a number of teachers⁷⁷; which have been engaged as mentors during the previous project cycle have reported to have visited a number of trainings with relation to different topics: preparing syllabi for the mentoring sessions, motivation of students, stereotypes and prejudice, etc. and have found these trainings as very helpful in their work. In order to reduce the effects of the unrealized teacher training, during the selection process of mentors/tutors, the engagement in the first project implementation cycle was considered an advantage, since those teachers have already gone through a set of preparation trainings.

Objective:

Assure efficient monitoring system, procedures and mechanisms to influence the school achievement of supported Roma secondary school students

Outcome 7.1 School records on all participating students are regularly collected on a three months base

Teachers who fulfil the role of mentors/tutors are required to collect data on the achievement of their mentees (on every subject) on a three-month basis, i.e. for the first trimester, the half-year, the third trimester and the end-of-year grades and forward them to the project team. Data for each student has been regularly provided during the both school years, with more regular collection of the scholarship recipients' data in comparison to the non-scholarship recipients (but receivers of mentorship/tutorship support). While there have been minor delays in the provision of data on behalf of some teachers, the

⁷⁷ The exact number is not available. The information was collected through the focus group discussions

mechanism of paying the mentorship fee after the receipt of the data has been successful and records for all students have been collected in timely manner in order to allow analysis and making decisions on the further steps.

Teachers were also required to collect data on the excused and unexcused absences of these students. With regards to this, records are not as diligently collected. Specifically data for the half-year absences are missing for a quarter of students, while end-year absences are missing for about 12% of students since some teachers do not include the number of absences in the final evidence sheet or the certificate⁷⁸

Regarding the reporting on behalf of students, it can be assessed that it is a good practice which enables students to reflect on their personal achievements and critically assess their (lack of) achievement. In fact, many of them in the questionnaires have pinpointed themselves and their lack of engagement as responsible for their failure in a certain subject, which can be assessed as positive for their future greater engagement. The reports also represent a good way of cross-checking data that the mentors and tutors provide in their reports. Namely, on the basis of reported absence of mentoring/tutoring sessions, three tutors have been removed from the program on the ground of unfulfilling their roles.⁷⁹ However, many of the students provide only limited data or no data at all, even when the questions require straightforward information, such as the number of meetings with the mentors/tutors, the frequency of meeting between the mentor and their parent(s), etc. They may need to be instructed to fill them in more carefully in order not to miss certain important data.

Outcome 7.2. Roma students who receive no intervention support planned within the project activities are identified, their achievement is recorded and adequate measures are taken over accordingly

Since the project aims to include all Roma students enrolled in some form of mentorship/tutorship scheme, keeping records on the students which do not receive scholarship, but receive mentorship/tutorship support is considered as very important for assessing the changes in their achievement.

As previously mentioned, during 2009/10, these students were not followed from the beginning and the records were kept for only 9 such students who were initially pre-selected to receive scholarship but were afterwards removed from the list of grantees as a result of information that they have repeated certain school year. The project team nevertheless gathered information regarding the students who only used mentoring support, during the field visits to schools. However, since this information was not systematically collected and entered into the database, it isn't available for analysis.

This problem was partially surpassed during the 2010/11 project implementation period when students visiting tutoring classes have been identified from the beginning and teachers were advised to report on their progress on a three-month basis in addition to reporting on the scholarship recipients. Data for 106 such students has been regularly collected and entered into the database, with the exception of the data for the GPA in the year before entering the tutorship program, which impedes the possibility to assess the changes in their achievement.

⁷⁸ Information from the project staff

⁷⁹ Interview with the project team (27.01.2012)

4.3. Objectives related to passing the State Matura exam

Objective:

Providing support for 4th year Roma students on time to register and successfully pass the State Matura exam by providing academic help for final State Matura Exam to the scholarship recipients in the final year

Outcome 8: On time registered and successfully passed the State Matura exam of 90% of the registered Roma 4th year students in 2010/11

From the total number of 90 graduate students in 2010/11, 18 were with 3 year degree diplomas while 72 were with 4 year degree diploma. Each student was contacted by the project team for the purpose of defining which subject and which professors they would like to work with and were advised to invite the teachers to apply. 13 teachers have applied and all of them were selected for providing the needed assistance.

Out of the 72 4th year students, 41 (57%) passed the Matura exam, while 29 (40%) passed a Final Exam. One of the grantees did not complete the school year, and another had missed the deadline for applying.⁸⁰ 23 (22 scholarship recipients and 1 non recipient) have received assistance by mentors in the subjects: Macedonian language and literature (10 students), English language (7 students), Philosophy and Sociology (4 students) and Harmony (1 student). Out of them 7 took a Final Exam, while the rest 16 - State Matura Exam. According to the records, some of the teachers were working during June without being paid in order to help the students.⁸¹

According to the available records, 30 students (almost 40% of the total or 73% of the ones which passed the Matura exam) have enrolled into university. With the exception of 2 students, all have enrolled into the state Universities 'Ss. Cyril and Methodius' in Skopje and 'Goce Delcev' in Shtip. Project records offer information on the chosen vocations of only 19 students. They indicate that the most preferred vocations are: medicine (3 students enrolled), management (2 enrolled), philology (3 enrolled), and law (2 enrolled); faculty of philosophy (2 enrolled) followed by: engineering, insurance, pedagogy, literature, technical science, gender studies and finance with one student enrolled in each.⁸²

It can be concluded that the set outcome has been partially achieved, but the overall results are satisfying since although less than 60% of the students took the Matura exam, all of them were successful and all students which have used the additional tutorship support had successfully passed the exams. With regards to this, one has to bear in mind that while in the period when the project was being developed, the State Matura was obligatory for all the students but in 2010/11 the Law on Tertiary Education changed, enabling students to choose Matura or Final exam. Had these changes occurred during the time of project development, the set outcome would have probably been adjusted and hence completely accomplished.

⁸⁰ Interview with the project team

⁸¹ Report to REF: May-July 2011

⁸² Vocations/types of faculty selected are reported in the form they were entered into the project database

4.4. Objectives related to reporting and publicity of the project

Objective:

Assure regular production and dissemination of reports on the students achievement to the Ministry officials, school principals, Project Selection Committee, REF and public program promotion

Outcome 9. Relevant stakeholders are informed about mechanisms and procedures agreed to influence school achievements of targeted Roma students

The project team regularly prepares and disseminates information to stakeholders regarding the progress of the project and the achieved outcomes. The most detailed reports are sent quarterly to REF, while information is also being disseminated to the Coordinator for projects in the MoES (on 2-month basis), the Macedonian Government (on 3-month basis); the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, which is responsible for coordinating the activities in the frames of the Decade of Roma Inclusion; international organizations, etc.

Outcome 10. The project achievements are promoted and covered by various electronic, printed and/or other media

In order to assess the frequency and the manner in which media have presented information regarding the program, a press clipping was conducted on the basis of the following terms: Roma, secondary education, scholarships; which resulted with the following results. The information on the program is covered by various types of media (electronic and printed). They mostly reported during the period when the call for applications from students for the 2010/11 school year was announced, providing purely explanatory information on the program⁸³, with no specific details on the achievements of the previous year of project implementation. An absence of analytical articles was detected, as well as an absence of success stories illustrating concrete accomplishments of the project, and some of its beneficiaries in particular. The articles analyzing the situation with the education of Roma in Macedonia primarily focus on the negative aspects, thus only strengthening the detrimental stereotypes for the Roma population.⁸⁴

Since registering success stories is one of the responsibilities of the project team and some are even mentioned in the reports to REF⁸⁵, elaborating on them in a journalistic form (see for example Success story 1 and 2 bellow) for the purpose of presenting them as impact of the program can be beneficial for more efficient project promotion.

Success story 1: Whole-school intervention to return a student to school

A scholarship recipient from one of the schools in Gostivar, during her second-year inclusion as a project beneficiary and third year of studies, was about to get married. This would not have been considered as such a problem if it weren't the intention of her quitting school, as a result of the marriage. She started not attending or irregularly attending classes as soon as she got engaged. The school mentors noticed this and begun investigating the reasons. As she was a high achieving student, they were concerned she would not complete her schooling, despite her great potential.

⁸³ <http://daily.mk/Net-Pres/zgolemen-brojot-na-stipendii-za-srednoshkolcite-romi/513821>
<http://www.netpress.com.mk/mk/vest.asp?id=46811&kategorija=0>
<http://www.time.mk/cluster/529f4ed86f/konkurs-za-vkupno-700-stipendii-za-srednoskolci-od-romskata-zaednica.html>

⁸⁴ See for illustration: <http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/2029463.html-story>

⁸⁵ Report to REF May-July 2011

'We started asking her friends and classmates about what's going on with her and they were the main sources of information', explains one of the teachers-mentors.

They have also visited her in her home several times in order to discuss the issue with her parents and her future husband. This situation prolonged for several months during the second school trimester and the student has 'earned' a lot of absences. However, as she explained:

'I did not give up on the school, and continuously learned the lessons taught while I was absent. I did not want to fall behind.'

The intervention resulted with the student returning to school and successfully completing the school year. Although she had a high number of absences, the school administration was understanding of her situation and did not take disciplinary actions. She has continued to achieve highly and set ambitious plans for the future.

Success story 2. Enrolled to school with difficulties, but later went to an international competition

A student from the Music school in Shtip enrolled in secondary school in August, after being rejected for two enrolment periods. However, he has managed to get a scholarship. During the last project year he has achieved excellent results. He participated at two international and one national competition and won two first and one second place. In addition, he has managed to significantly improve his achievement and completed the year with a very good achievement.

5. Perceptions of project beneficiaries

This section presents the project as perceived by the project beneficiaries, in particular, the students, teachers and parents. Information was mainly provided during the focus group discussions, where experiences with the implemented activities, the best practices and the practices which need to be further developed were discussed.

5.1. Students

Students showed big interest for inclusion in the project. Most of them have been informed about the possibility through the media or the teachers in their school and have been regularly following the announcements on the MoES web page.

Initially, they have been attracted by the scholarship, but throughout their involvement many have found the mentoring/tutoring as even more beneficial. Asked if they would have to choose whether to keep the scholarship of the mentor(s), students from Skopje and Shtip reported they would prefer the mentorship support since it provides them actual assistance in the learning process and motivates them to improve, while the scholarship is only a reward for their achievement. The students from Gostivar, on the other hand emphasised they would prefer the scholarship, which is understandable considering they were all high achieving students who would perform well even without the mentorship/tutorship support. With the exception of students who have had a continuous high achievement in school, all others confirmed that they would have had problems keeping or increasing their GPA if they weren't supported by the mentors and the scholarship.

While the majority of students expressed their satisfaction with the mentoring/tutoring activities, big discrepancies were noticed in their statements regarding the frequency of meetings and the manner in which they were organized. While certain schools have a previously arranged schedule for the additional classes, which is known to all mentees and usually published at the school's bulletin board, other meet only when there is a need for that, i.e. when the students feel they need support with a certain subject/topic. Depending on the topic of the additional classes, students might prefer group or individual meetings. While individual meetings might lead to more efficient adoption of the subject knowledge, as a result of the methodology which is tailored to each student, the group meetings were found to foster better communication and cooperation with the rest of the students.

Students find the money from the scholarship useful for purchasing school material, as well as using it as a pocket-money. However, there is a general dissatisfaction with the late receipt of the scholarships, which often impedes them to cover their expenses when they are the highest.

'It would be good to receive it at the beginning of the school year, since the expenses are the greatest during this period.'

Student from the Economic School-Gostivar

While the money is transferred to the account of their parents, the vast number of them gives it to the students for spending and they are the ones with a priority of deciding who and how should they be used.

Asked whether they felt discriminated in any way by the teachers or the peers, considering they received a scholarship based on their ethnic belonging, the majority did not report to be treated differently. However, two students (one from the Medical school in Gostivar and another one which was previously enrolled in the Medical school in Skopje) complained on discrimination from certain teachers. Namely, they have witnessed negative remarks on behalf of teachers with regards to them being awarded scholarship only because they are Roma, while other better achieving students were left without such assistance. The second student emphasised that he has transferred to another school mainly because he felt discriminated against in the previous one.

All students who participated at the focus group discussions (with the exemption of few from Skopje) expressed **high hopes for their future**, which can be considered as an indicator of their positive self-perceptions and belief in their abilities. Almost all students from the groups in Gostivar and Shtip, and more than half of the participants from Skopje emphasised they would like to continue to tertiary education and several had very specific ideas on how they would like their career paths to progress.

5.2. Parents

While parents are considered to be important actors in the process, they appear **not to be sufficiently engaged in the program.** The majority of parents interviewed reported to discuss the school issues with their children, but only rare said they personally know the mentors/tutors their child was working with. With the exception of few of the interviewed parents, they rarely self-initiatively visit the school to discuss their child's progress, but mainly come when being called by the teachers, which usually implies there was a problem with the student.

Nevertheless, the parents express a **satisfaction with the project activities**, since they have witnessed the increased engagement on behalf of their children with regards to school tasks, improved attendance, and increased motivation. Their responses indicate that they perceive the scholarship primarily as a responsibility of the children, and allow them to make personal decisions regarding how the money is going to be spent.

5.3. Teachers

The role of the teachers in the program is of utmost importance for the students' progress. Teachers were assessed by the students as the primary factor responsible for the improved attendance and achievement in certain subjects. Hence, involving highly motivated teachers as mentors and tutors is the first step which should be taken in order for the program to be effective. While judging by the number of applications, the interest from teachers to be engaged as mentors/tutors was big, the Selection Committee chose on the basis of the predetermined criteria, as well as their motivation and understanding of the factors dependant for the achievement of Roma students.

Teachers which were interviewed reported the following reasons as **main motivators for their engagement in the program**:

- Overcoming the stereotypes that Roma students are low achievers through assisting them to achieve better results
- Increasing the number of students achieving highly and not only completing secondary school but also enrolling to university
- Improving themselves as teachers

As teachers expressed:

'Phase by phase the concept of what it means to be educated is changing within the scholarship recipients (...) I believe that the project has managed to change the general outlook and the sometimes negative influence of the tradition of early school termination.'

Teachers from the Economic school – Gostivar

'Our role is to teach and our pleasure is increased if we manage to change something.'

Teacher from the School for children with special needs Iskra-Shtip

Generally, teachers reported to **have received clear directions as to what is expected of them during their engagement**. Apart from the contract where their tasks are described, they all received an e-mail from the project team explaining their obligations, and had one consultative meeting each year at the beginning of both project years, where each potential question is being clarified. However, the analysis of their reports and the focus group discussions indicate that there are vast **differences with regards to the manner in which teachers understand their assignments**. This primarily concerns the number and organization of the mentoring/tutoring classes, but also the form and structure of these classes, as well as the topics elaborated.

While in some schools (e.g. Economic school-Gostivar, Arseni Jovkov-Skopje, etc.) the team of mentors/tutors in consultation with the students prepared a weekly/monthly plan of classes, which was available on the school's bulletin board and needed to be respected; in other schools (e.g. Technical school-Gostivar, Lazar Tanev-Skopje) the meetings occurred whenever the teachers or the students felt the need for them. As one teacher emphasised:

'We are at the school all the time and students can approach us whenever they feel they need assistance with a subject or another issue (...)It often happens that they come to us during the class break and we work on a mathematics task during the break.'

The second approach can be problematic since it does not keep the students as focused on the need for regular 'upgrade' of their knowledge and bears the risk of involving only students with higher achievement motivation, while overlooking the remaining of the students. On the other hand, the first approach also has

minor setbacks, mainly regarding the timing of the mentoring/tutoring classes, which are usually after the regular classes, and hence quite tiring for students.

Since teachers have the freedom to design the mentoring/tutoring classes, **different methodologies of work have been applied**-on the basis of the number of students mentored, as well as the nature of the subject. Certain teachers preferred working in groups and implementing differentiated teaching methodologies, such as having a group of higher achievers acting as 'team leaders' and assisting the lower achieving students. Others preferred working individually with the students since they feel that in this way they can attune better to the students' needs.

With regards to the topics treated, **the majority of teachers tend to put an emphasis on the subject knowledge, while others try to balance this with working various social topics** as well, explaining that sometimes these issues are more important for students.

'If I notice that student/s have some sort of social problem, I think it is better to address it at the mentoring classes rather than to work on some part of the subject material.'

Teacher from the school Slavco Stojmenski-Shtip

Hence, apart from the additional classes related to subject areas they teach, some teachers also include topics out of the range of the subjects. However, this most often refers to addressing problems of attendance or discussions about problems with other subjects. According to the reports analysed, it seldom incorporates discussions or workshops on topics related to students' everyday problems and experiences, learning techniques⁸⁶, planning the free time⁸⁷; although during the focus group discussions, teachers mentioned they incorporate different 'social' topics.

In a way, this is understandable since the majority of teachers haven't been trained in the possible forms of work with the students and the topics beneficial to be treated. Only few teachers which were involved as mentors during the first project cycle (2005-2009) reported to have gone through training with regards to specific teaching methodologies and social topics and they find the gained skills as very beneficial in their work.

As **best effects of the project activities**, teachers emphasize the following:

- **Increased achievement motivation** within students. While there are students which are lagging behind despite the intervention, teachers notice a slight increase in the motivation within the majority of students. They are aware that these types of changes take time, and show a realistic optimism that the motivation, followed by the achievement is going to increase even more in future.
- **Improved attendance.** The vast majority of teachers reported that the improved attendance is so far the biggest benefit of the project activities. Students are developing habits for regularly coming to school and hence an understanding of their roles as students in general.

'The students haven't missed a single class, which is something I find very satisfying(....)They felt responsible and knew that we have a class scheduled and are going to wait for them.'

Teacher from the Special school-Iskra-Shtip

- **Emotional closeness** between students and teachers. Several teachers emphasized that the additional classes often result in developing an emotional closeness between the teachers and the students, since apart from the assistance with certain school subjects, students also request help

⁸⁶ Noticed in the reports of following teachers: Zoran Gjorgjiev, Zaklina Atova, and Nada Trendova

⁸⁷ Noticed in the reports of following teachers:Nada Trendov,a Zoran Gjorgjiev, Zorica Tumanovska

and support with some personal issues. The increased psychological relationship with the teachers can influence positively the students' perception of the school and consequently have an effect on their achievement and attendance.

- **Developing a respect of authority** is another aspect which teachers stressed as positive, explaining that many students come to secondary school without a sense of respecting authority, which results with numerous behavior-related problems.
- **Breaking the stereotypes of Roma students as low achievers and school dropouts** was assessed as additional benefit of the program. Teachers believe that the project interventions have sensitized other teachers in the school to the needs of Roma students and informed their perceptions that these students can achieve highly if provided the adequate attention.

According to teachers, the positive aspects of the project outweigh the less successful ones. Nevertheless, they emphasised the following issues as areas which should be further improved:

- The **late opening of the calls** for students and mentors is perceived as a major impediment by teachers to influence the students' achievement and behaviour. This is especially significant for the first year students, since for them the beginning of the school year is the most difficult period.

'If students are being motivated from the first year, by the end of the schooling good results can be achieved. The teacher would have the possibility to assess the student from all aspects. It is important for this 'injection' to be introduced put from the beginning of the first year.'

Teacher from the Medical school – Gostivar

- Related to this, the **late selection of the mentors for the State Matura Exam** is considered as another setback, since they only have a month to work with the students, and often preparing for this exam can take the form of restructuring and building a completely new set of knowledge within the student.
- The **insufficient involvement of parents** was mentioned as another aspect which can cause a whole set of negative effects on the student's achievement and attendance.
- Finally, the **unequal distribution of responsibilities of different teachers**, on the basis of the number of students they are responsible for, though not explicitly stated by teachers was implied by some as a source of dissatisfaction.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

The table below provides an overview of the level of achievement of the outcomes set in the project log-frame. It can be observed that the vast majority of outcomes have been achieved, and some even beyond the expectations. The biggest success can be attributed to the effect the program had on reducing the absenteeism among the supported students and increasing the rates of completion of the school year. It had lesser effects on increasing the students' achievement, which calls for a need for more efficient delivery of the mentoring and tutoring activities during the following project implementation period.

Set outcomes	Achieved outcomes
<p>800 Roma secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd and 3rd class with GPA 3.00 and above receive scholarship support in 2009/10</p> <p>700 Roma secondary school students enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th class with GPA 3.00 and above receive scholarship support in 2010/11</p>	<p>Achieved, although with a delay Though a lower number of grantees were selected (444 in 2009/10 and 613 in 2010/11), the selection followed the predetermined criteria for receiving a scholarship</p>
<p>At least 90% of the scholarship supported students will successfully complete the school year</p>	<p>Achieved The retention rate in 2009/10 was 98.4% and in 2010/11 - 97.8%</p>
<p>At least 90 % of the scholarship supported students will complete the school year with GPA 3.00 and above</p>	<p>Not achieved 80% have achieved GPA above 3.00 in 2009/10, while 79.6% in 2010/11 The achievement of first year students decreases the GPA of the complete sample</p>
<p>Absenteeism rate of the granted students is 30% lower in comparison with the allowed school absenteeism rate according to the law requirements</p>	<p>Achieved Maximum allowed absences: 200 Average of 52 absences per student in 2009/10 and 63 in 2010/11 Maximum allowed unexcused absences: 25 Average of 8.6 per student in 2009/10 and 7.8 in 2010/11</p>
<p>100% of the scholarship recipients received school based mentorship support and 70 – 80% received tutoring support depending on their needs</p>	<p>Partially achieved There is absence of mentors in certain schools and some teachers did not organize sessions. The inclusion of students who did not receive scholarship has been difficult The bureaucratic burdens resulting in late start of the program added to the incomplete achievement of the outcome</p>
<p>Supported students with GPA below 3.00 have increased their GPA for 0.5 & 5% - 10% of these students will complete the school year with GPA 3.00 and above</p>	<p>Achieved While the first outcome could not be measured, the second shows that 51 student (50%) of the supported have had an end-of school GPA over 3.00</p>

At least 80 – 85% of these students will successfully complete the first, second and third year of their secondary education	Achieved 90% competition rate
The absenteeism rate of 80% supported students is of the limit of secondary school allowed excused and/or unexcused classes	Achieved 96% have less than the maximum allowed total number of absences, 13% have less than the maximum allowed unexcused absences
Selected and recruited number of tutors in accordance with the students' needs and approved selection criteria	Achieved , although with a delay Good student-teacher ratio in the majority of schools
90 % of recruited secondary school teachers receive training on mentorship/tutorship program support	Not achieved While teachers have been informed on different aspects of the mentorship/tutorship during an informative meeting and during the field visits, they haven't been involved in a systematic training
School records on all participating students are regularly collected on a three months base	Achieved
Roma students who receive no intervention support planned within the project activities are identified, their achievement is recorded and adequate measures are taken over accordingly	Achieved for 2010/11 - 106 were identified and their progress was reported Data for 2009/10 are not available
Relevant stakeholders are informed about mechanisms and procedures agreed to influence school achievements of targeted Roma students	Achieved Regular reporting to different stakeholders
On time registered and successfully passed the State Matura exam of 90% of the registered Roma 4th year students in 2010/11	Achieved 57% took and passed the Matura exam, while the rest passed the Final exam. However, considering the changes in the Law on Tertiary Education, according to which students could choose between taking a Matura or Final exam, the outcome can be assessed as achieved
The project achievements are promoted and covered by various electronic, printed and/or other media	Achieved , although information provided is technical and the achievements are not sufficiently promoted

Based on the analysis of the project objectives, specific recommendations for different beneficiaries and stakeholders are provided below.

Recommendations on the project database

With regards to the problems encountered with the database, primarily the inability to perform statistical operations on the whole sample of students, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Development of an overall data-base** (in Excel, SPSS or another statistics programme) where data for all students will be entered in order to ease the data analysis and allow continuous update. Though it may be difficult to include data on the grades per each subject, the following variables should be included: student name, name of school, type of school (grammar school, vocational 3-

year, vocational 4-year) and number of years of schooling for specific vocations in the schools⁸⁸, town, GPA (during the previous school year, at the end of school year), number of excused and unexcused absences, data on whether s/he is a first time or second/third time grantee

- Additionally, **database on the engaged mentors/tutors** would also be beneficial, where data from their reporting forms could be retrieved, such as type of meetings with students held, frequency of the meetings, frequency of the meetings with parents etc. This would make it easier to follow their work and conduct analyses if needed.
- It is highly recommended to start collecting data on GPA from the previous year of the non-scholarship recipients whose progress is being followed, in order to enable analyses on the effects of the mentorship/tutorship support on their progress.
- Finally, including information in the database on whether the student is first, second, third time grantee would enable following his/her achievement throughout the years

Recommendations related to teachers

Teachers in general appear to be motivated to assist the students, especially after evidencing their progress as a result of the work conducted. They are majorly focused on assisting the students with regards to the subject/s they teach, which is understandable considering that improving the school achievement is one of the main goals of the program. However, they sometimes appear to be overlooking the social issues of interest for the students, as well as issues such as methods of learning, which can contribute towards more efficient time-management and 'learning to learn' skills and hence indirectly resulting in improved achievement. Probably the lack of training on these issues is a setback for many teachers; which infers the following recommendations:

- Providing **training** for teacher mentors/tutors on the different **methodologies of work** with the students, with a focus on the differentiation of learning and training students to find the most suitable learning styles. In addition, since teachers emphasise the absence of initial motivation of students for improving their achievement (especially those not receiving scholarship), the training should encompass the issue of **motivation strategies**.
- Enabling **joint meetings of the mentors/tutors with the aim of exchanging experiences** regarding their work. This activity could take on the form of workshops, where teachers skilled in different topics can transfer their knowledge and experiences to other interested teachers
- Considering the vulnerability of **first year students** for reducing their achievement, a special training session should be devoted to the problems these students, and if possible, **more additional** classes should be provided to these students

In order to be able follow their work with the students throughout the year, teacher can be advised to **set goals** (with regards to their work with students, the communication with parents, etc.) from the beginning of the year as guiding principles according to which they are going to adjust the implemented activities.

Considering the lack of data on the students who visit the mentoring classes, but do not receive scholarship, teachers should be advised to **report in more detail about the non-grantees** as well in order for the project team to be able to follow their progress not only with regards to their grades, but also their motivation, potential problems, etc. and react accordingly. In this regard, adding questions concerning these students should be added in the reporting questionnaire.

⁸⁸ This would be beneficial since some of the schools offer different educational profiles (from general education to 3 and 4 year vocational profiles)

The obvious differences with regards to the number of students per teacher can be considered as a serious impediment by some teachers and result in their demotivation since they all receive the same fee. Hence, **different forms of organizing the mentoring/tutoring sessions should be developed in order to improve the efficiency of the work of teachers with large number of students in need of assistance.** Perhaps, the peer-mentoring method can be further developed with engaging higher achieving students helping the lower achieving and thus reducing some of the teacher's burden.

Finally, as teachers believe that their involvement of the program should be formally recognised in some way, since it is related to their further career advancement⁸⁹, giving out **certificates** for participation in the project should be considered.

Recommendations related to students

The program has encouraged students to be more aware of their school responsibilities, their personal responsibility for the school achievement and be more active in requesting assistance from teachers. It has also raised the intrinsic motivation of certain students which were not supported by scholarship.

However, in order to raise the general level of achievement, **additional motivation** can be provided to **higher achieving and talented students**, such as; summer camps, workshops, covering expenses for travel to competitions, etc.

With regards to the **student reporting forms** and the failure of many students to provide the needed data, some of the questions can be transformed into **multiple-alternative questions** (e.g. How often have you met with the tutor: none, 1-3 times, 4-6 times etc.). Additionally, in order to enable measuring the progress of students' motivation, a **scale for measuring motivation and/or self-esteem** could be added as part of the reporting form.

General recommendations related to the project management

The work of the project team, as well as the Selection Committee has been assessed as very efficient, evaluated on the basis of the timely and accurate realization of the activities. However, the fact that the project is managed by a state institution with strict hierarchical structures and administrative procedures adds a level of complexity in the realization of project activities and has reflected in delay of the activities during the two project years. Since the structure of the MoES and its manner of functioning cannot be changed, in order to overcome the problems resulting from delayed activities, it is recommended to **prepare and submit the project proposals** to REF **earlier** in the year, thus enabling the decision to be made before the beginning of the school year and the project to start with the start of the school year. This would solve several of the issues pointed out; namely the processes of selecting students and teachers would begin and finish earlier and **more time would be provided for the teachers to work with the students.**

In addition, **overcoming the administrative barriers which result in late payment of scholarships** is also required, since their late receipt may influence the students' trust in the program and result in reduced external motivation for improved achievement.

Considering that the absence of mentors/tutors in some schools is a serious setback for students, since the pure receipt of scholarship does not guarantee that the student will be able to self-motivate appropriately

⁸⁹ The participation in professional development activities is related with the progress to more advanced teacher positions

for better achievement, the team could start a process of head-hunting in order to identify potential teachers from those schools and invite them to apply.

With regards to **increasing the involvement of parents** in the project activities, organizing a short **training/informative session** for them on the importance of their participation in the child's schooling process and the methods of supporting the learning process at home could be beneficial for them.

Finally, **greater public promotion of the project success stories** is recommended, possibly through direct communication with media and/or TV shows in order to raise the awareness of the general public of the beneficial effects of the intervention.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Work plan

External evaluation of the MK scholarship program (REF)

Dates	Tasks
5-9 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review existing data, documents, reports- Develop methodology /research instruments)- Arrange interviews/focus groups
12-19 December	Preparation/adaptation of the MoES database for analysis
19 December-10 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Field data collection Location 1-Gostivar: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- focus group with students (7-10)- Focus group with teachers mentors/school staff (7-10)- Focus group with parents (7-10) Location 2-Shtip: (same type/number of participants as above) Location 3-Skopje: (same type/number of participants as above) Interviews with state actors, local project staff
11-17 January	Data analysis: transcripts of interviews and focus groups, processing and statistical data analysis, etc.
18 January-3 February	Report writing

Total: 25 working days

Appendix 2. Tables

Table 1. GPA of scholarship recipients at the end of school year (2009/10 and 2010/11)

			Exit GPA			Total
			GPA<3	GPA 3-3.5	GPA>3.5	
year	2009/10	No.	87	105	244	436
		%	20.0%	24.1%	56.0%	100.0%
	2010/11	No.	118	129	357	604
		%	19.5%	21.4%	59.1%	100.0%
Total		No.	205	234	601	1040
		%	19.7%	22.5%	57.8%	100.0%

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of entrance and exit GPA of scholarship recipients in 2009/10 and 2010/11

			Exit GPA			Total
			GPA<3	GPA 3-3.5	GPA>3.5	
Entrance GPA 2009/10	GPA 3-3.5	No.	44	52	34	130
		%	33.80%	40.00%	26.20%	100.00%
	GPA>3.5	No.	43	53	209	305
		%	14.10%	17.40%	68.50%	100.00%
Total		No.	87	105	243	435
		%	20.00%	24.10%	55.90%	100.00%
Entrance GPA 2010/11	GPA 3-3.5	No.	61	66	59	186
		%	32.80%	35.50%	31.70%	100.00%
	GPA>3.5	No.	55	63	298	416
		%	13.20%	15.10%	71.60%	100.00%
Total		No.	116	129	357	602
		%	19.30%	21.40%	59.30%	100.00%

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of type of school attended and GPA at the end of school year

			Type of school			Total
			Grammar school-4year	vocational- 4year	vocational- 3 year	
Exit GPA 2009/10	GPA<3.5	No.	10	63	14	87
		%	11.60%	22.10%	21.50%	20.00%
	GPA 3-3.5	No.	24	71	10	105
		%	27.90%	24.90%	15.40%	24.10%
	GPA>3.5	No.	52	151	41	244
		%	60.50%	53.00%	63.10%	56.00%
Total		No.	86	285	65	436

		%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Exit GPA 2010/11	GPA<3.5	No.	16	83	24	123
		%	14.40%	21.60%	22.60%	20.40%
	GPA 3-3.5	No.	26	82	21	129
		%	23.40%	21.30%	19.80%	21.40%
	GPA>3.5	No.	69	220	61	350
		%	62.20%	57.10%	57.50%	58.10%
Total		No.	111	385	106	602
		%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of year of schooling and GPA at the end of school year

			Year of schooling				Total
			1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Exit GPA 2009/10	GPA<3.5	No.	79	3	5		87
		%	32.10%	2.90%	5.70%		20.00%
	GPA 3-3.5	No.	59	28	18		105
		%	24.00%	26.50%	20.70%		24.10%
	GPA>3.5	No.	108	72	64		244
		%	43.90%	70.60%	73.60%		56.00%
Total		No.	246	103	87		436
		%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%
Exit GPA 2010/11	GPA<3.5	No.	69	28	16	10	123
		%	32.10%	14.90%	12.00%	14.10%	20.50%
	GPA 3-3.5	No.	45	38	33	12	128
		%	20.90%	21.00%	24.80%	16.90%	21.30%
	GPA>3.5	No.	101	116	84	49	350
		%	47.00%	64.10%	63.20%	69.00%	58.20%
Total		No.	215	182	133	71	601
		%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 5. Mobility among recipients of 1st and 2nd category scholarships

	number	%
remained 1st category recipients in 2010/11	140	51.7
remained 2nd category recipients 2010/11	36	13.3
switched between the categories 2010/11	69	25.5
no data	26	9.6
Total	271	100%

Table 6. Total number of absences of scholarship recipients in 2009/10 and 2010/11

			Categories						Total
			0	1-50	51-99	100-150	151-199	200+	
School year	2009/10	No.	35	178	108	46	17	9	393
		%	8.9%	45.3%	27.5%	11.7%	4.3%	2.3%	100.0%
	2010/11	No.	40	280	150	72	48	16	606
		%	6.6%	46.2%	24.8%	11.9%	7.9%	2.6%	100.0%
Total		No.	75	458	258	118	65	25	999
		%	7.5%	45.8%	25.8%	11.8%	6.5%	2.5%	100.0%

Table 7. Unexcused absences of scholarship recipients in 2009/10 and 2010/11

			Categories					Total
			0	1-10	11-20	21-24	25+	
School year	2009/10	No.	66	216	75	16	15	388
		%	17.0%	55.7%	19.3%	4.1%	3.9%	100.0%
	2010/11	No.	87	328	128	17	17	577
		%	15.1%	56.8%	22.2%	2.9%	2.9%	100.0%
Total		No.	153	544	203	33	32	965
		%	15.9%	56.4%	21.0%	3.4%	3.3%	100.0%

Table 8. Total number of absences of non-grantees in 2010/11

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	2	1.9
	1-50	33	31.1
	51-99	28	26.4
	100-150	22	20.8
	151-199	9	8.5
	200+	4	3.8
	Total	98	92.5
Missing	System	8	7.5
Total		106	100.0

Table 9. Total number of unexcused absences of non-grantees in 2010/11

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	2	1.9
	1-10	52	49.1
	11-20	24	22.6
	21-25	6	5.7
	25+	12	11.3
	Total	96	90.6
Missing	System	10	9.4
Total		106	100.0

Table 10. GPA at the end of school year of non-grantees in 2010/11

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	GPA<3	51	48.1
	GPA 3-3.5	36	34.0
	GPA>3.5	15	14.2
	Total	102	96.2
Missing	System	4	3.8
Total		106	100.0

Appendix 3. Scanned lists of participants at the focus groups

Арсени Јовков - Секретар

Листа на присутни учесници

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште	Година на образование
1.	Исмаил Курчишев	СУГС „Владо Биневски“	II
2.	Сибил Бајрам	СУГС „Никола Карев“	III
3.	Асел Адем	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	IV
4.	Александар Јешиев	СУГС „Владо Биневски“	II
5.	Женан Траир	СУГС „Јосип Броз Тито“	III
6.	Небоја Мухоморова	СУГС „Јосип Броз Тито“	IV
7.	Петар Сунџевски	СУГС „Лазар Танаев“	III
8.	Идриз Јуришич	СУГС „Никола Карев“	IV
9.	Јане Сулејман	СУГС „Лазар Танаев“	III
10.	Ситариќовски Ѓорѓе	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	II
11.	Усеин Јусеин	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	II
12.	Абоз Еми	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	III
13.	Анџелина Сора	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	III
14.	Али Шех	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	III
15.	Шамил Јулије	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“	II

СБОУ Госпитал

Листа на присутни учители

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште	Година на образование
1.	Тохир Сажида	С.Е.ОУ „Тосилвар“	IV - (северна)
2.	Мехмедова Санитурна	С.Е.ОУ „Тосилвар“	III - (северна)
3.	Тохир Абдул	С.Е.ОУ „Тосилвар“	II - (северна)
4.	Тохир Аман	О.С.П.У „Тосилвар“	II - (северна)
5.	Мухарем Рафие	С.Е.ОУ „Тосилвар“	III - (северна)
6.	Фирдес Тохир	С.О.У „Медицина“	II - (северна)
7.	Ширса Мухарем	СОУ „Тосилвар“ северна	IV - (северна)
8.	Аман Фидан	С.О.У „Тосилвар“	IV - (северна)
9.			
10.			
11.			

Салто Водостанци - Шкоп

Листа на присути: уторник

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште	Година на образование
1.	Јусупова Љемира	СОУ „Кочо Рацински“	2 година
2.	Љемина Јулија	СОУ „Салто Водостанци“	4 година
3.	Љемина Александра	СОУ „Кочо Рацински“	2 година
4.	Љемина Милош	2 МУУ „Салто Водостанци“	4 година
5.	Љемина Јулија	2 МУУ „Салто Водостанци“	2 година
6.	Љемина Рашида	СОУ „Јане Сандански“	2 година
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Служба Статистики - Шкоп

Листа на присутни на сесии

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште	Предмет
1.	БАНЕ КОСТАРИНОВ	1. М. У. 16, "Свети Кирил и Методиј"	Трџба
2.	Жанелина Ѓубева	СОУ "Јане Сандански"	мајкематика
3.	Марија Костова	ЗСУ "Мисир"	МАТЕМАТИКА
4.	Лазова Горана	ЗСУ "Мисир"	перфект
5.	Марјан Арсов	"ЗСУ "Мисир" - Шкоп	информатика
6.	Шанина Наумка	ЗСУ "Мисир" - Шкоп	информатика
7.	Нарјана Радосија	ЗСУ "Мисир" - Шкоп	информатика
8.	Трпиева Анастасија	СОУ "Јане Сандански"	МАТЕМАТИКА
9.	Емилија Арсениќ	СОУ "Јане Сандански"	МАТЕМАТИКА
10.	Милина Саванова	СОУ "Јане Сандански"	МАТЕМАТИКА
11.			

Село: Стразмански-Учили

Листа на присутни: Родители

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште во кое учи детето
1.	Јусифов Иевуџи	Селско Нискашко
2.	Елхир Рамаданов	— 11 —
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СБОУ Гостивар

Листа на присуни *present list*

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште	Предмет
1.	Љованка Станковиќа	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	Својата на математика Будинс II лет
2.	Ана Коцеска	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	МАТЕМАТИКА
3.	Рада Илиевска	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	Својата на право II Правнички науки II
4.	Владимир Милошевски	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	МАТЕМАТИКА II И ДИСКРЕТ
5.	Даниела Петровска	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	Својата на право II лет
6.	Елица Матеска	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	e.mateska@yahoo.com
7.	Марија Бишеска	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	МАТЕМАТИКА marija_biseska@yahoo.com
8.	Свида Милошевска	СБОУ „Гостивар“ - Гостивар	Хемичка
9.			
10.			
11.			

СООУ Гаспари

Листа на присути Родители

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште во кое учи детето
1.	Тамара Мундариќ	Бисопско
2.	Марија Мундариќ	Марија ⁶ и Бисопско ³
3.	Марија Мундариќ	Скопје (2 деца)
4.	Кристина Савиќ	Трнско
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
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11.		

Арсени Јовков - Скопје

Листа на присутни ^{настан 15.12.24}

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште	Предмет
1.	Сенка Јаќа	АСУИ, Б.Петровски	Јеница
2.	Снежана Емерла	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Слободан Ѓеѓос
3.	Алеја Јуева	СЕТС, Зоран Ангеловски	БУЗИС
4.	Марија Смиљовска	СУГС, Георги Вимпров	Англиски јазик
5.	Маја Јенковска	СУГС, Змицко Влахос	Математика, Информатика
6.	Зорница Шаниќи	СУГС, Змицко Влахос	Физика, Геометрија
7.	ПЕТРЕ СТОЈАНОВ	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	МАТЕМАТИКА
8.	Силвана Анѓелина Панова	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Математика за интегрална
9.	Алимонка Армићовска	СУГС, Лазар Ѓанев	Слободан Ѓеѓос
10.	Слободанка Ѓиселоска	СУГС, Зоран Ангеловски	МАТЕМАТИКА
11.	Јела Браќиќ	СУГС, Зоран Ангеловски	Слободан Ѓеѓос
12.	Ната Тошорова	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Слободан Ѓеѓос
13.	Тамара Јовановска	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Слободан Ѓеѓос
14.	БОГДАНОВСКА СУЗАНА	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Слободан Ѓеѓос
15.	Зоран Златковски	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Слободан Ѓеѓос
16.	БОГДАНОВСКИ БОСЈАН	СУГС, Арсени Јовков	Економски преглед

Арсени Јовков-Светоз

Листа на присутни: Родители

Бр.	Име и презиме	Училиште во кое учи детето
1.	Таме Ацеџ	
2.	Светозар Штан	
3.	Светозар Бојарки	СУГС „Никола Јарев“
4.	Мехур Али	СУГС „Арсени Јовков“
5.	Али Сераџ	
6.	Зашмер Шир (Кетан)	СУГС „Јосип Броз Тито“ - Св.
7.	Ѓурѓишева Звезда	
8.	Смиљановиќа Евѓенија	
9.	Усеин Искрија	
10.		
11.		