

Results 2010
Activities 2011
Objectives 2012

the Alex fund

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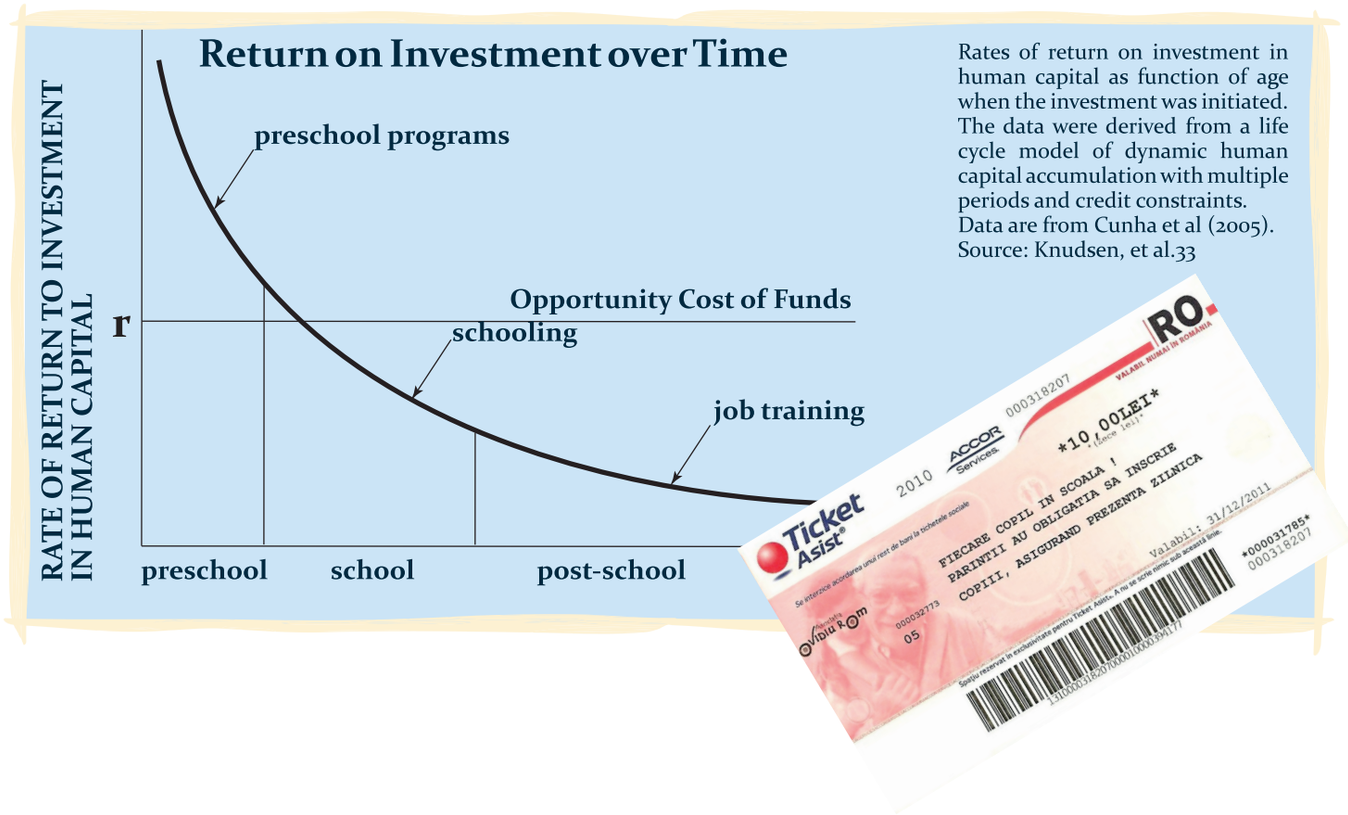


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IT'S NOW OR NEVER
WHY *GRĂDINIȚA*[1] IS SO IMPORTANT

The following is excerpted from
Ovidiu Rom's July 2011 Report to the Minister of Education on the first year results of ***Fiecare Copil în Grădiniță***.
The full report may be accessed online at http://www.ovid.ro/en/rezultate/2011-report/
or by contacting Ovidiu Rom for a printed copy.

- **Impoverished Early Experience Has Severe and Long-Lasting Detrimental Effects on Later Brain Capabilities**[2]
- **Preschool Education Reduces School Abandonment, Unemployment and Crime Rates**[3]
- **Early Childhood Education Programs Pay a Return of 4-10 Times the Investment**[4]



Rates of return on investment in human capital as function of age when the investment was initiated. The data were derived from a life cycle model of dynamic human capital accumulation with multiple periods and credit constraints. Data are from Cunha et al (2005). Source: Knudsen, et al.33

"Children whose minds are not stimulated by appropriate interaction with adults and their environment pay for these early deficits throughout their lives - *and so does society*.

Such children are far more likely than their more fortunate peers to do poorly in school, to drop out early, to be functionally illiterate and only marginally employable in today's world. These children affect labor productivity and national economic prosperity.

Yet none of this need happen... Early childhood programs enhance school readiness, foster beneficial social behavior, lessen social welfare costs, and promote community development.

Programs that remedy critical early childhood deficiencies are fundamental - not only to the success of each child in life, but also to the success of society as a whole."

Armeane Choksi,
The World Bank 1996

[1] Romania's inclusive term for preschool and kindergarten
[2] "The Timing and Quality of Early Experiences Combine to Shape Brain Architecture", Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
[3] "Preschool Education and Its Lasting Effects: Research and Policy Implications", W. Steven Barnett, Rutgers University, Sept 2008
[4] James Heckman, www.heckmanequation.org







COMPONENTS OF *FIECARE COPIL ÎN GRĂDINIȚĂ* ("EVERY CHILD IN PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN"):

1. **LEADERSHIP OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND A PROACTIVE LOCAL ACTION GROUP**
2. **DOOR-TO-DOOR RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN AT RISK FOR DROPPING OUT AFTER PRIMARY SCHOOL**
3. **TEACHER TRAINING IN MODERN METHODS AND STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN**
4. **PARENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INCENTIVES FOR CHILDREN'S (AGE 3-6) DAILY ATTENDANCE IN PRESCHOOL**

Many poor children in Romania, even if they are officially registered, do not attend preschool often enough to reap any benefit from it. Poor parents themselves have little or no education and are easily intimidated by the system, the authorities, and the "hidden costs" of education.[5]

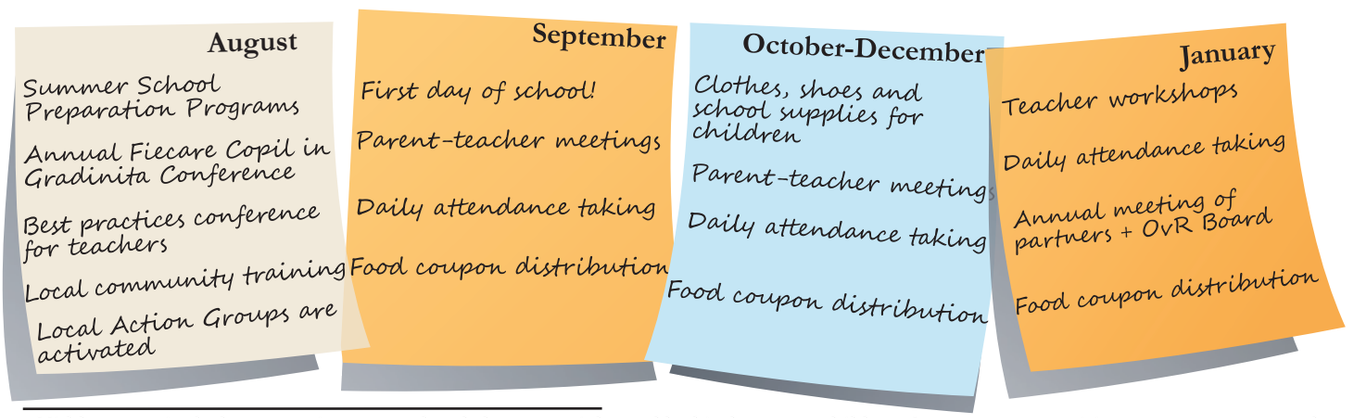
Poor parents DO send their children to "grădiniță" when they get modest incentives to do so.

After a decade of educating impoverished children, Ovidiu Rom's founders Maria Gheorghiu and Leslie Hawke concluded that their focus on primary school actually resulted in little long-term gain for disadvantaged children who had started school late. "Second Chance" programs were sadly ineffective in producing high school graduates or qualified workers. **But the children who started early, between 3 and 5, had much better results in the school system, both behaviorally and academically**.

In July 2010, Ovidiu Rom and the Ministry of Education invited Romanian mayors to apply for assistance in *getting every poor 3-6 year old child in their communities in "grădiniță"*. Ovidiu Rom allocated approximately €150 for each child whose family qualified for social benefits or met other poverty criteria. These funds covered monthly food coupons to the families whose children had perfect attendance and €15 per child for educational resources. OvR also provided training to the teachers and local parents to send their children to school every day. It worked.

IN OCTOBER 2010, 67% (817 CHILDREN) ATTENDED DAILY. IN MAY 2011, THE NUMBER HAD RISEN TO 83% (1087 CHILDREN).

Ovidiu Rom found that it was not difficult to get impoverished parents, even traditional Roma, to register their children for early education programs **but it was very difficult to get the children to attend on a daily basis**. With a small UNDP grant in 2007, OvR first tested *tichete sociale* (herein "food coupons") as an incentive to



[5] Hidden costs include appropriate apparel and class materials used by kindergarten children. In many communities parents are expected to furnish these items. For impoverished parents, it makes more economic sense to postpone introducing their children to formal education until the last possible moment, frequently as late as the age of 8.







implementation team plus program oversight and consultation.

The results were nothing less than remarkable. In all locations children's attendance increased every month of the fall term and was reported to be the highest in recent years. Many local coordinators noted that this is by far the highest attendance rate EVER observed in their kindergartens. Two communities observed that attendance of their primary school students also increased.

over the next two decades if the issue is not addressed in a national strategic way.

Public opinion places the blame for school dropouts on parents' indifference. Many activists place the blame on social barriers (culturally biased content and discriminatory attitudes). We disagree with both theories. Even the poorest parents are proud to send their children to school when the children meet with acceptance and success. As for teachers'

For most socially and economically disadvantaged children, first grade is too late to prevent their dropping out of school - because at the age of six, they are already too far behind their mainstream peers. Educated parents in Romania appreciate the importance of early education for their own children.

Public opinion and policy makers all too often conclude that when it comes to the rural poor and the Roma, early education is an impossible dream.

"We Registered The Highest Attendance Rate In The Past 10 Years.... We Simply Have To Do This!"

Cristina Linte, School director & coordinator, Altina, Sibiu

Romania's official dropout rate is 16.6%, meaning 16 % of Romanians age 18-24 have finished no more than eight grades. (The European Commission defines the dropout rate as the percentage of 18-24 year olds who have not completed the requisite number of years in school.) With 4.22 million children (0-18), we can predict that three quarters of a million Romanian citizens will drop out of school before 9th grade

negative observations such as "they can't stay focused for long", "they don't obey the conduct rules", "have poor command of language" – these are a direct result of early deprivation and can only be addressed through quality early education. No amount of cultural sensitivity can overcome the fact that the brains of children who spend their first formative years in extreme poverty never fully recover.

Ovidiu Rom is demonstrating that with the support of local authorities, there is a relatively simple and inexpensive method for gaining the immediate participation of impoverished children: **food coupons for perfect attendance**.

Local communities that want to get every child in kindergarten manage to do so. And with food coupons, they keep them coming. Early participation in the education system for children living in extreme poverty is the most effective way of lowering Romania's dropout rate.

February

Clothes, shoes and school supplies

Parent-teacher meetings

Daily attendance taking

Food coupon distribution

March - April

,,Scoala te face mare'' public awareness campaign launch

Parent-teacher meetings

Daily attendance taking

Food coupon distribution

May - June

Teacher workshops

Call for applications to start Fiecare Copil in Gradinita programs

Door-to-door kindergarten recruitment

Ovidiu Rom visits applicant communities

July

Summer School Preparation Programs

Site Visits to applicant communities

The European Commission has set a 2020 target for reducing the school drop-out rate to under 10% throughout Europe. That is nine years from now. Children who are 3 today will only be 12 in 2020. Thus, the results of early education programs cannot be reflected in the education attainment of 18-24 year olds until 2026. But they are absolutely vital to Romania's economic health in 2040.

In addressing school abandonment, Romania cannot afford to fixate on children who are already in school to the exclusion of pre-school age children. Nor can it afford to conciliate special interest groups by funding a myriad of scattered programs that do not address the fundamental issue: early intellectual deprivation.

If Romania is serious about reducing school abandonment and thereby raising school attainment and literacy rates, early education for ALL must be a cornerstone of our national education strategy – and we must continue these programs at full throttle for at least a generation.

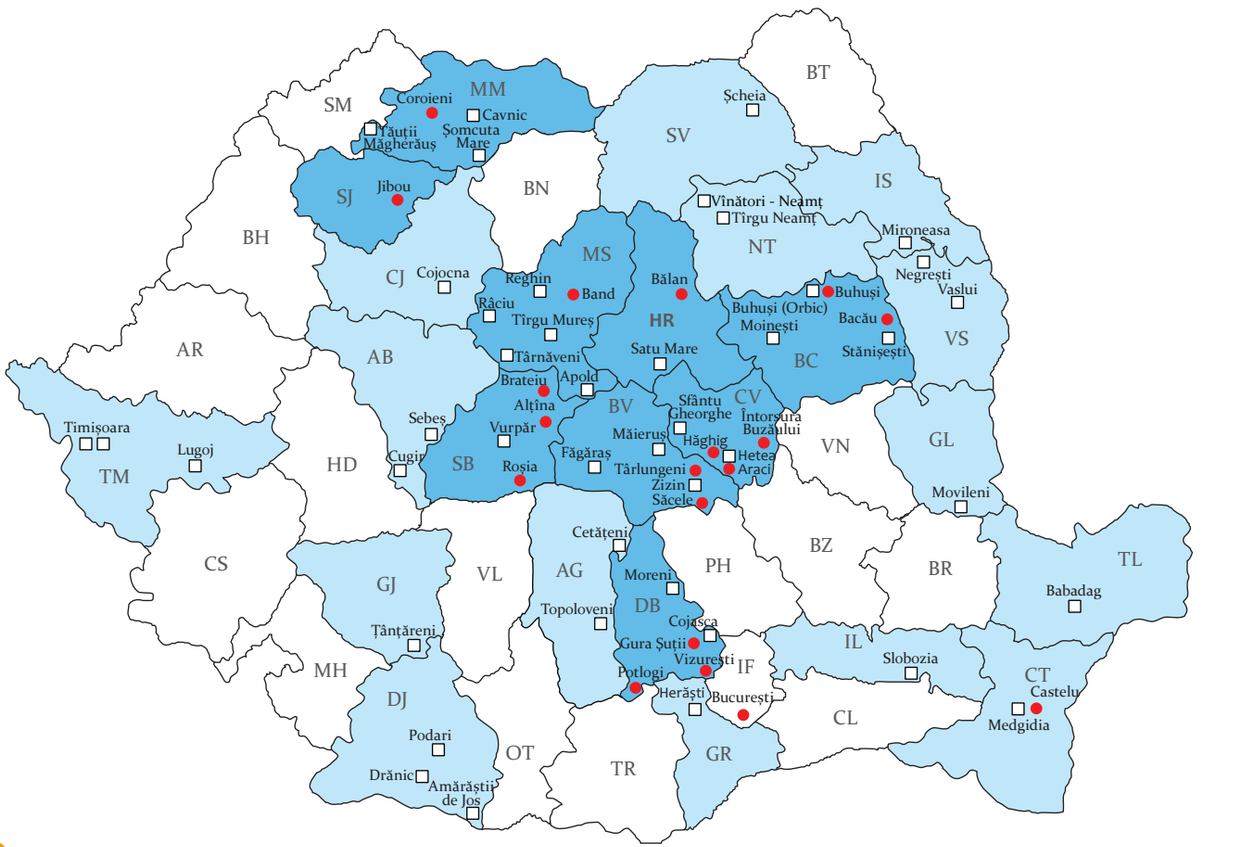
We know how to do it.

Ovidiu Rom's Basic Tenets

1. The Future of Romania Depends on Raising the Educational Attainment of its Poor.
2. Most Disadvantaged Children Cannot Succeed in School Without Early Education.
3. Parent Incentives Are Crucial to Change Habits & Induce Children's Daily Attendance.
4. Short-Term Projects Are a Waste of Everybody's Money. Only Sustained Interventions Make a Difference in Life Outcomes.

Fiecare copil în grădiniță

Expansion



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HURRY UP & WAIT!

Why Slow Beats Fast

When It Comes to Educating the Poor

When is the best time to plant a walnut tree? TWENTY YEARS AGO

When is the second best time to plant a walnut tree? NOW

The "Slow Movement" began in Italy in 1986. Fairly quickly, the Slow Food Movement spawned a profusion of related crusades: Slow gardening, slow parenting, slow travel, slow art, and slow on and slow forth.

Like lots of other over-committed folks, I find the notion of slowing down very attractive. But for some people slow has, ironically, become a shortcut. When they advocate slow, they mean taking it easy, lowering your expectations, placing fewer demands on yourself, keeping cool, chilling out. That's not slow, that's light. To my mind, the value of slow is in trading immediate gratification for future gain. Few of us go that route anymore. From our personal choices to our public works projects and our government institutions, we are always looking for a quick fix.

It takes a lot more time to plan a menu, go to the market, inspect the vegetables, deal with a dozen vendors, carry the goods home, wash and chop and cook and set the table than it does to call out for pizza - but oh, it is so worth it. And if you grew those vegetables yourself, well that's even better, and slower, but it's sure not easier, or cheaper. There's nothing light about it.

I hereby propose a Slow Movement in Economic Development and Poverty Reduction.

"Excuse me?" you ask. "Isn't economic progress for the poor already too slow?"

The problem is that it's too light. The reason there is so little progress among marginalized populations around the world is that everyone tries to do it FAST and on the cheap. International aid agencies make short-term commitments and demand quick, measurable outcomes. They want to hear about numbers of beneficiaries, rates of expansion, "success stories". They don't genuinely want to know about the problems or the "failure stories," which are often far more instructive than the successes. If you don't take the time to comprehend and address the problems, how can you improve the outcomes?

Ovidiu Rom's goal is to help raise the academic attainment of Romania's poorest children from 6 grades of schooling to 12. When it happens, that will be a success story. But getting a 10-year-old kid whose father makes him work in the market into first grade—that's not a success story, that's still a tragedy in the making. Because in most cases that kid will never finish school, will never reach the human potential he had when he was born.

I came to Romania on the fast track, as an American Peace Corps Volunteer, planning to take 24 months off from my frenetic New York life in a kind of grown-up cross-cultural exchange. Twenty-four months turned into eleven years when I discovered I actually did have something to contribute here, but that it would take a very long time to accomplish anything of lasting value.

In 2001, I started a project in Bacau with Maria Gheorghiu, a Romanian primary school teacher who had been trained by the Soros Foundation in the U.S. In the beginning, we were dedicated to getting children into, or back into, mainstream schools regardless of their age. But after a few years, we reviewed the progress of the children in our programs (which had grown to several communities and several hundred children) and we were forced to confront a disturbing fact. Although it had not been difficult to integrate 8- or even 10-year-olds into first grade or to get older children into "Second Chance" classes, these children rarely lasted more than three or four years in the system.





The outcomes for children who started formal education by age 5 were far better. The sociological reasons for this are obvious, but a review of brain development research makes it clear that the problem is not just "social". It is rooted in the cognitive development of the human brain. A child who does not receive early, appropriate mental stimulation is literally damaged for life:

> *"The availability of appropriate experiences at the right stages of development are crucial in determining the strength or weakness of the brain's architecture, which in turn, determines how well a child will be able to think and regulate emotions."*[5]

APPROPRIATE EXPERIENCES AT THE RIGHT STAGES ARE CRUCIAL IN DETERMINING HOW WELL A CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO THINK AND REGULATE EMOTIONS.

As a result of our own experience in the field, combined with the scientific evidence, we changed our focus from getting children "in school" to getting young children into early education programs and helping them to enter first grade with a skill-set comparable to their financially and socially better-off peers.

Economic development is like human development. It can't be sped up any more than the human gestation period can be shortened from nine months to three. Making a baby takes 40 weeks, rearing a child takes 20 years, closing the education gap in Romania will take two generations - *if we start now*.

We intuit this when it comes to our own children. From the moment they breathe their first breath, we give them the best that money, attention, education and our own drive and determination can muster. Nothing is too good for our children. But for the children of poor people, we give an evening or two a year at charity events, or SMS a bit of money when there's a telethon. Meanwhile, the government signs "children's rights" proclamations and issues press releases. These efforts raise awareness and they do raise money - they matter, but *they aren't enough unless they are combined with country-wide sustained, systemic efforts for change.*

Unfortunately, most public funders want to start *new* projects rather than nurturing, developing, and painstakingly expanding successful programs.

There is never enough money to carefully monitor, never enough time to seriously evaluate, never enough patience to reflect on outcomes on more than a superficial, cursory basis - and rarely the will to continue underwriting projects for more than two or three years.

The giver, having given, moves on. As a consequence, even the most effective projects die before they become a part of the root system of the community - and the wheel of development continues to reinvent itself, at enormous cost and minimal impact. This serves no one well - not the "beneficiaries", not the individual donors or taxpayers, and certainly not the future wellbeing of society, which was, I believe, the original intent.

The fact remains that if Romania wants to be able to pay pensions in 40 years, it has to raise the least educated quartile of the population from an average of 6 years' schooling to an average of 12 years. It has to give the poorest members of society a chance to work themselves out of poverty and into the middle class. That can't possibly happen unless we start by giving poor rural children at least as good an education as we give rich urban children. It will take concerted effort on the part of the central government, the local authorities, the private sector and *us*, civil society. And our efforts won't begin to bear fruit for a generation.

Do we have success stories?

I'll let you know in 20 years.



[5] "The Timing & Quality of Early Experience Combine to Shape Brain Architecture", Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University.



2010 Specific Results:

2010 Approximate Costs:

Community Development — € 60,000

- 19 communities implemented the project
- 35 local team members implemented the program
- 4 schools renovated to accommodate more children
- 150 local people participated without extra remuneration
- 7 new preschool groups created
- 4 teachers paid by Ovidiu Rom

Salaries	€ 30,000
School refurbishment	€ 13,000
Transportation	€ 17,000

Education Measures — € 126,000

- 220 teachers were trained in interactive teaching methods
- 250 teachers organized summer programs
- 1,300 children attended preschool
- 220 children received school lunches for 10 months
- 2,960 children participated in summer programs
- 1,400 children had workbooks for summer school
- 55 high school & college students received financial aid
- 70 toddlers attended weekly sessions with their mothers
- 150 children got extra help after school
- Daily attendance rates increased 40%

Salaries	€ 25,000
Teacher training	€ 16,000
Teacher guides	€ 2,000
Educational materials	€ 20,000
School lunches	€ 21,000
Summer schools & workbooks	€ 26,000
Scholarships	€ 11,000
Emergency interventions	€ 5,000

Parent Involvement — € 117,000

- 1,100 families received food coupons
- 50 persons benefited from transportation assistance
- 1,300 persons received school supplies & medicine
- Parents of 1,300 children began to understand why preschool is important

Salaries	€ 30,000
Food coupons	€ 78,000
Beneficiary transportation	€ 7,000
Hygiene	€ 2,000

Public Awareness — € 62,000

- 4 Public Service Announcements aired over 2000 times on 14 TV Stations
- Campaign received special award at the Bucharest Civil Society Gala
- 50 articles published
- 15 TV News Spots
- Video about the program shown 11 times on prime-time TVR
- 29,000 posters sent to schools and city halls

Salaries	€ 34,000
Printed materials	€ 28,000



2011 Activities:

2010 corporate and individual donors made it possible for Ovidiu Rom to:

- Publicize the importance of early education
- Assist 150 local government & school personnel to increase preschool attendance
- Introduce 2,000 children to the rewards of learning through early education and summer programs
- Motivate hundreds of illiterate parents to send their children to school every day
- Provide food coupons to parents of over 1000 children in exchange for their daily attendance in preschool
- Train 450 teachers in interactive methods
- Implement ***Fiecare Copil în Gradiniță*** in new communities
- Prepare to apply to expand the program with EU funds
- Monthly news stories on ProTV Evening News
- Monthly "Media Brunches" sponsored by Carrefour to inform journalists on issues related to education policy
- Awareness and Advocacy for universal early education

2012 Objectives:

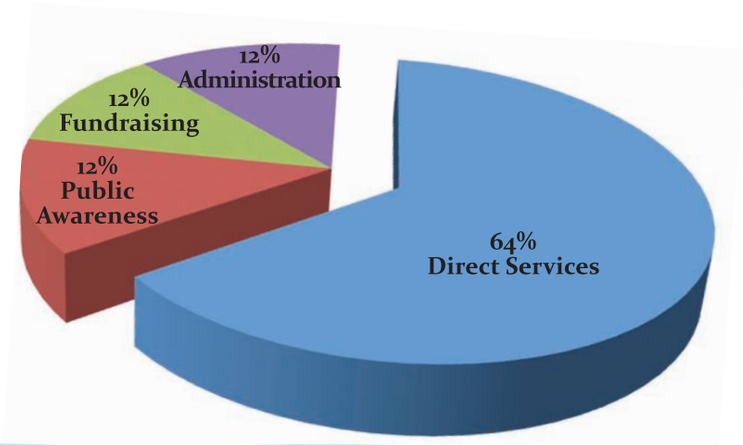
- Support ***Fiecare Copil in Gradinita*** in 21 communities
- Train 500 teachers in interactive teaching methods
- Enroll 400 new children in early education & summer programs
- Advocate for universal gradinita attendance at the age of 3
- Help 5 communities access EU funds to implement ***Fiecare Copil in Gradinita***
- Provide food coupons to parents of 1,700 children in exchange for children's perfect daily attendance in preschool
- Motivate hundreds of illiterate parents to send their children to school every day
- Air third season of "Scoala te face mare" public service announcements



A child's environment in the first 5 years affects her ability to function for the rest of her life.

Weekly ballet class taught by volunteer Adela Vrinceanu

Ovidiu Rom's mission is to get every poor child in Romania into the education system as early as possible so they have a chance to become active members of society.

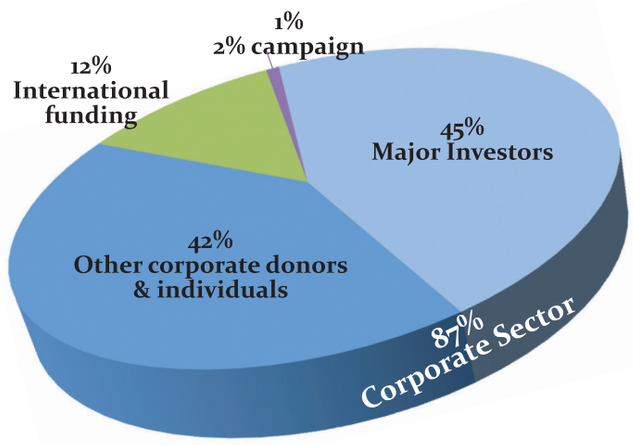


2010 EXPENSES

DIRECT SERVICES	FCG SITES	OFFICE	TOTAL €
Salaries	84,678		84,678
School lunches	21,431		21,431
Educational materials	19,919		19,919
Scholarships	10,251		10,251
Summer schools & camps	18,404		18,404
Teacher training	16,189	1,628	17,817
Student workbooks & teacher's guides	9,750		9,750
Refurbishment of 4 schools	13,188		13,188
Transportation: Beneficiaries	7,103		7,103
Transportation: Ovidiu Rom team	13,600	3,494	17,094
IDs, medicine, hygiene products for families	2,245		2,245
Meal coupons for perfect preschool attendance	78,267		78,267
Other emergency interventions (medical, heating etc.)	4,557		4,557
TOTAL DIRECT SERVICES	**299,582**	**5,122**	**304,704**
PUBLIC AWARENESS			
Salaries		34,659	34,659
Public awareness printed materials		28,450	28,450
TOTAL PUBLIC AWARENESS		**63,109**	**63,109**
FUNDRAISING			
Salaries		6,860	6,860
Halloween Ball		48,464	48,464
TOTAL FUNDRAISING		**55,324**	**55,324**
ADMINISTRATION			
Salaries		29,688	29,688
Utilities, office supplies, equipment	4,145	21,547	25,692
Other maintenance expenses		3,618	3,618
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	**4,145**	**54,853**	**58,998**
TOTAL €	**303,727**	**178,408**	**482,135**

2010 INCOME

Major Investors	**€ 268,702**
Other Halloween Ball Income, corporate donors & individuals	**€ 254,292**
International funders	**€ 70,560**
2% Campaign	**€ 4,809**
TOTAL €	**€ 598,363**



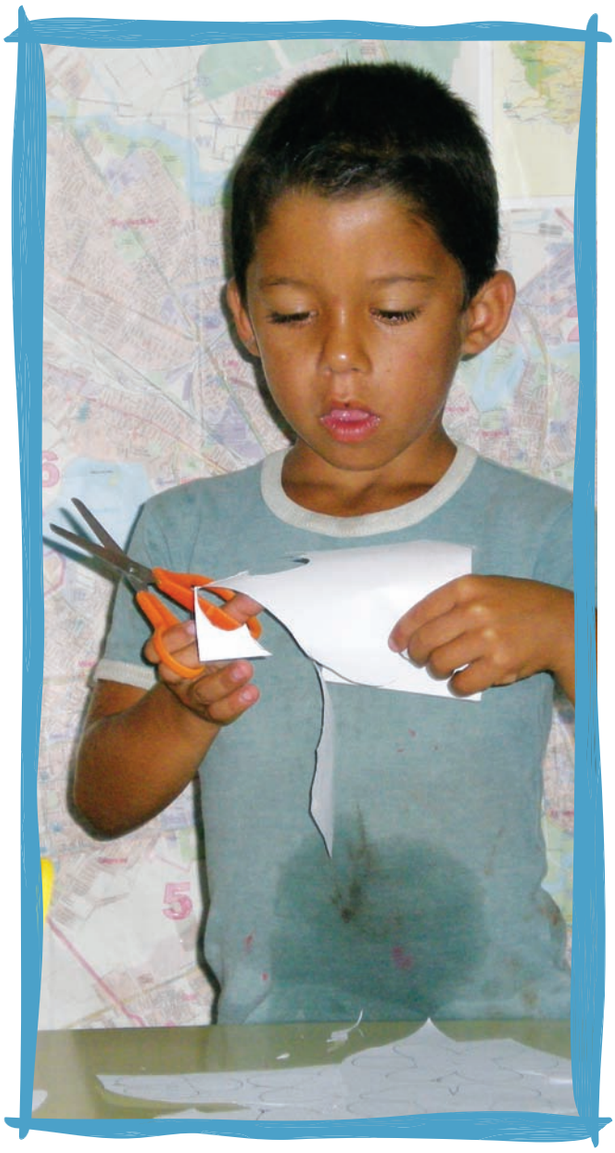
2010 DONORS

		In-kind
The Alex Fund	€ 63,160	✋
Porsche Romania	€ 60,000	
E.on	€ 46,060	
Pro TV	€ 44,987	✋
Enel	€ 30,000	
Pepsico	€ 30,000	✋
Athenee Palace Hilton	€ 20,000	✋
Rompetrol	€ 20,000	✋
Carrefour	€ 17,655	✋
Raiffeisen	€ 16,960*	
RMGC	€ 14,350	✋
Oracle	€ 14,000*	
OMV Petrom	€ 13,150	
BRD	€ 10,160	✋
Heineken	€ 10,000	✋
Fundatia Paul Precup	€ 9,560	
Class Living	€ 8,500*	
United Way	€ 7,400	
Habitat for Humanity	€ 7,198	
C&A	€ 7,000*	✋
UNICEF	€ 6,400	
Tomini Trading	€ 5,880	
Unirea Shopping Center	€ 5,500*	
BCR	€ 5,000	
Cargill	€ 5,000	
Fundatia Dinu Patriciu	€ 5,000	
Friedrich Niemann	€ 5,000	
Policy Center for Roma and Minorities	€ 4,000	
KPMG	€ 3,880	✋
Samsung	€ 3,500	✋
Don Café	€ 3,012	✋
Axa Life Insurance	€ 3,000	
Badea Clifford Chance	€ 3,000	
Baneasa Real Estate Investment	€ 3,000	
Cristian Nacu	€ 3,000	
Electrolux	€ 3,000*	✋
Crawford House Foundation	€ 3,000	
GlaxoSmithKlein	€ 3,000	
Niro Investments	€ 3,000	
TPA Horwath Quintus Serv	€ 3,000	
UPC	€ 3,000	✋
Wolf Theiss	€ 3,000	✋
Mercury 360 Communication	€ 2,336	
SOF Medica	€ 2,000*	
Mindy Mazie	€ 1,800	
Oblique	€ 1,800	✋
Net Brinel	€ 1,506	
Zenith Media	€ 1,500	✋
Stefan Freytag	€ 1,240	
World Class	€ 1,100	✋
Marcel Pavel	€ 1,000	✋
Honorius Prigoana	€ 1,000	
Provident Financial	€ 1,044	
Pedro Miguel Weiss	€ 1,000	
Reading Blue Coat School, UK	€ 1,000	✋
2% Campaign	€ 4,809	
Individual contributions < €1000	€ 22,620	
Corporate contributions < €1000	€ 17,296	
TOTAL EUR	**€ 598,363**	

*committed in 2010, received in 2011

2010 Major Investors

PRO TV
e·on România
BRD GROUPE SOCIETE GENERALE
the Alex fund
PORSCHE ROMANIA
Carrefour
Enel ENERGIA ÎN RITMUL TĂU.
ROMPETROL
pepsi
Athénée Palace Hilton Bucharest



Asociația OVIDIU ROM

A donation of **€110** has been made in honor of

Amanda Ryan

so a poor child
in the village of Gura Sutii,
county of Dambovita, Romania
will receive the gift of early education
through

Fiecare copil în grădiniță

Leslie Hawke
President

ASOCIAȚIA OVIDIU ROM
FIECARE COPIL ÎN ȘCOALĂ

Maria Gheorghiu
Executive Director

Donation made by Aude Harou on June 14, 2011

Asociația OVIDIU ROM

A donation of **€440** made by

Sorin Mindrutescu

will help a **poor child obtain**
the gift of early education in **2012**
through:

Fiecare copil în grădiniță

Leslie Hawke
President

ASOCIAȚIA OVIDIU ROM
FIECARE COPIL ÎN ȘCOALĂ

Maria Gheorghiu
Executive Director

Asociația OVIDIU ROM

A donation of €11,000 made by

Raiffeisen Bank

will help a **group of 25 poor children** obtain the gift of early education
for a whole year, through

Fiecare copil în grădiniță

Leslie Hawke
President

ASOCIAȚIA OVIDIU ROM
FIECARE COPIL ÎN ȘCOALĂ

Maria Gheorghiu
Executive Director



The Seventh Annual Halloween Charity Ball Begins at Home

and

The honor of your involvement is humbly requested!

When: **Now**

Where: **Wherever good people want to make a better world**

Why: **Because "Fiecare Copil in Gradinita este responsabilitatea fiecaruia dintre noi!"**

(Every child in school is everyone's responsibility)

Instead of one big bash at the People's Palace, think small scale elegance, community spirit, and Halloween costumes.

YOU can make it possible for:

One disadvantaged child to go to gradinita...

... for three months: **€ 110**

... for a whole year: **€ 440**

...for 25 children for a whole year: **€ 11,000**

Help our poorest children get an education when it can still make a difference - not only for them, but for the Romania that our children will inherit from us!

Donation details:

Contributions may be made by:

Electronic transfer to "Asociatia Ovidiu Rom" account at ING Bank, Romania,
swift code: INGBROBU

LEI: RO33 INGB 0008 0081 5133 8917
RO54 INGB 0008 0081 5133 8927
USD: RO25 INGB 0008 0081 5133 4017
EURO: RO79 INGB 0008 0081 5133 0717
GBP: RO29 INGB 0008 0081 5133 1617

Donate online: www.ovid.ro/how-to-help/donate

Check payable to "The Alex Fund", a 501(c)(3) US charity, mailed to:

the Alex fund

211 W. 106th St., Suite 4A
New York, NY 10025
212-865-7611 alex@alexfund.org

Donate online: www.alexfund.org/ how-to-help



To donate 2% of your payroll taxes:

Name: **Asociatia Ovidiu Rom**
Fiscal code: **16 40 50 35**
Account: **RO33 INGB 0008 0081 5133 8917**

Contact:

Bucharest: Str. Dr. Raureanu 4, Et. 3, 050048
tel/fax 021/315.88.06
Bacau: Str. I.S. Sturdza 80, 600269
tel/fax 0234/581.940

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www.ovid.ro

www.facebook.com: Asociatia Ovidiu Rom

Asociația OVIDIU ROM

Fiecare copil în grădiniță