



*Children studying at the Roma Education Center*

***“By investing in children you invest in their future” ~ Julijana Mileska***

**God’s love continues to be shown in word and deed through our Roma Children Project in Ohrid, N. Macedonia.** Like many things, the project report for last year was delayed due to COVID, but I have translated it and I want to share some of the exciting happenings at the center. Following are excerpts from the director, Julijana Mileska’s report on the educational activities in 2019. I will share highlights from the project for emotional support for Roma girls in a follow-up newsletter.

*From the report:* Weekend classes aimed at helping children with homework and preparing for regular education tests continued at the center from January to May. In May, the children had a one-day excursion to Skrebatno, near Ohrid. It was a wonderful experience for the children with beautiful nature, games and socializing.

During the summer, the classes were extended to five days a week from Monday to

Friday. Two teachers worked with twenty-two Roma children on: communication arts, mathematics, Macedonian and English language study, religious studies, having a healthy body and healthy spirit, fine arts, music, and handicrafts.

The teachers invited artist, Roza Mojsoska, to speak with the children. She paints pictures with a brush in her mouth because she has no hands. The children were delighted to meet her and her story is an example of how we should be diligent and fight in life to achieve something. The children were very attentive and compassionate towards her. They were surprised to meet someone who had such a disadvantage, and yet was happy and full of desire for life and work. One child, Burhan, said, "I liked the visit of Aunt Rosa the most in the summer...Even if I had ten hands, I could not paint like her, who has no hands. We should be ashamed whenever we say we can't do anything. If she can do it, we can too."

During the summer, many of the children made great progress in playing the guitar. The tradition of celebrating children's birthdays continued and like the previous years, they also had a day for antics in the aqua park in Struga.



Summer excursion!

In the fall, the children made an eco-visit to the treatment plant in Ohrid, where the waters of Lake Ohrid were previously purified. They learned what pollution can mean for us humans and for the wildlife in the lake. The children, who love to swim in the summer, were very concerned that the lake was not in good condition.

#### ***Testimonials from participants in the project:***

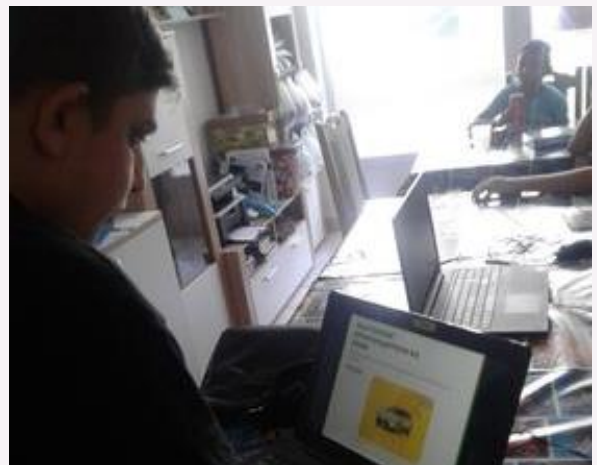
**Sibel:** "I enrolled in this project for the first time in June 2019. It helps me a lot in learning. It is also nice to hang out at the center. I am very bored at home and they constantly make me do something and say insulting words. At the project I feel like I am very important. I like singing and playing the most. I started learning guitar and I am very satisfied."

**Rubina** (a parent): "I have a third-grade son. My child is enrolled in the project. I really want him to go there. I do not want him to walk on the street and say bad words. I want him to be well-mannered and educated. I want the other children to be admitted to the project for another year. He is still small now. I know it is good for our kids."

### ***A Lasting Impact***

Hazir\* (name has been changed) is one of nine children and has been a participant of the project since the beginning. When he came, he could not read or write even though he was old enough to do so. At first everyone laughed at him because he could not even pronounce his name correctly. He quarreled regularly with other children in school and was considered a restless child. He had poor attendance for several reasons and therefore repeated grades for years.

Now Hazir is a full-time student trying to complete his compulsory education. He can read and write. But the most important thing for the teachers in the project is that he learned how important it is for a person to be educated and to work hard and honestly so that he can feed himself and take care of his family in the future. Hazir not only goes to school, but for almost a whole year he has studied a trade and works a few hours a day. He is very grateful for everything he has learned in the project. He says he is happy that despite his bad behavior, he has been received with love.



I hope this report has encouraged you. In Him,

*Jennifer Moore*



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