February - March 2015

Independent Impact Assessment of the Project "Every Student Can Be a Winner", Implemented by the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe" and Funded by the Trust for Social Achievement

List of Abbreviations:

EU – European Union

OEC - Obligatory Elective Class

MoES – Ministry of Education and Science

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NSI – National Statistical Institute

OP - Operational Project

HRDOP – *Human Resources Development* Operational Project

SESGOP - *Science and Education for Smart Growth* Operational Project

NOEC - Non-Obligatory Elective Class

TSA - Trust for Social Achievement

ABF – America for Bulgaria Foundation

Amalipe – Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe"

CEICSEM – Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from the Ethnic Minorities

Summary

Goals and Scope of the Assessment

This assessment evaluates the impact of the project "Every Student Can Be a Winner" which was implemented by the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe" (Amalipe). Amalipe is a partner and grantee of America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF), and, subsequently, since its inception, of the Trust for Social Achievement (TSA). The project, which is the subject of this assessment, is a continuation of a previous project implemented by Amalipe in over 200 schools from 2010-2013.

This assessment was requested by the TSA (the Assignor) whose terms of reference establishes the primary goals of answering to the following two main questions:

- Did the model implemented by Amalipe contribute towards reducing the dropout rate and absenteeism, as well as towards improving the learning outcomes of pupils in the schools where the model was implemented; was there a significant difference between the schools that participated and those that did not (both categories of schools were evaluated over the same period of time)?
- Is it possible, and, if so, under what conditions, for this model, as it is currently applied, to be replicated in more schools while maintaining the quality of its implementation?

The impact assessment of Amalipe's project will provide answers to these questions by testing hypotheses and analyzing the achieved outcomes in comparison to the expected outcomes of the project.

The results of the assessment have been prepared for the Assignor, Trust for Social Achievement, as well as for the following stakeholders:

- TSA's Board of Directors
- The Board of Directors of America for Bulgaria Foundation
- Amalipe
- The Ministry of Education and Science

Description of the Model

Amalipe's project "Every Child Can Be a Winner" focused on preventing Roma children of compulsory school age from dropping out. The project was funded by the **Trust for Social Achievement for the period 2013-2015**. The project's activities also aimed to improve regular attendance rates, boost the educational achievements of Roma pupils, increase the rate of Roma children who go on to continue their education in high school, as well as the number of Roma high school graduates, and to encourage the participation of Roma parents in school activities and in school governance. The project builds on Amalipe's wealth of experience which includes the introduction of Ethnic and Roma Folklore elective classes (NOEC), as well as the *Program for Reducing School Dropout Rates of Roma Children* that was

implemented over a period of three years in over 200 schools throughout Bulgaria. *It is important to note that the project primarily operated in elementary and middle schools (interventions were primarily focused on pupils in grades 1 - 8), while the share of participating high schools was significantly smaller.*

Amalipe firmly believes that every student is good at something. Therefore, everyone – parents and teachers – should help children find what they are good at and show them how to excel in these areas by developing their knowledge and skills.

The project focused on achieving the following **main goals**:

- Reducing the early school dropout rate of pupils;

- Improving school attendance of Roma pupils;

- Increasing the number of Roma students who continue on to and graduate from high school.

The project encompassed the following activities:

- Providing methodological assistance and pedagogical tools for working in a multicultural environment, including working with Roma children and parents;

- Offering methodological assistance for working with children who are at risk of dropping out and for the implementation of a school strategy for dropout prevention;

- Empowering Roma parents and encouraging their participation in school life;

- Sharing of experience and best practices among participating schools;

- Awarding small grants to support collaboration and teamwork among participating schools;

- Support for the implementation of school projects that are part of existing programs (CEICSEM);

- Opportunities for collaborative work with community centers (wherever these exist).

The main **components of the model are:**

1. **Working with Pupils**

- Support for active student parliaments;

- Organizing campaigns to promote continuing children's education in cooperation with youth clubs founded as a result of the project "Youth is Tolerance";

- Ethnic Folklore - Roma Folklore elective classes;

- Fostering student mentors who can offer assistance to their peers;

- Supporting pupils who are at risk of dropping out;

- Extracurricular and out-of-school activities aiming to stimulate pupils' interest and participation in school (e.g. Green Schools, Roma Festival for Children "Open Heart", etc.).

2. **Working with Parents**

- Building the capacity of parent clubs;

- Trainings for the chairpersons of the parent clubs;

- "Parents Teaching Parents" – on-site trainings facilitated by the chairpersons of the parent clubs;

- Including parents in school activities.

3. **Working with School Principals and Teachers**

- Increasing teachers' capacity through the model "Learning Through Experience Exchange";

- Sharing best practices from the work with Roma children (for principals and teachers);

- Organizing regional conferences, as well as a national conference, for sharing best practices;

- Teacher training programs for the Ethnic Folklore - Roma Folklore elective classes.

The goal of the project was to achieve systemic change and tangible improvements in the quality of education for Roma children. Extensive outreach, as well as public awareness campaigns were organized in order to ensure the sustainability and institutionalization of this model. For more information about the project go to: www.romaeducation.com

Methodology

In order to implement the goals and objectives of the assessment as identified by the Assignor, the assessor conducted quantitative and qualitative studies for the purpose of gathering data for analysis based on the key macro indicators determined by the Assignor; documentation and statistical information was collected using the resources available from the National Statistical Institute (NSI).

The quantitative and qualitative surveys were conducted among parents, pupils, teachers and principals. Two independent sample groups - an experimental and a control group – were created for the purpose of comparing the schools participating in the project with non-participating schools. The first sample group, **the experimental group**, included the participating schools. This group was formed from a random sample to ensure that all the schools in the program would be fairly represented. The second sample group, **the control group**, was similarly structured, but was comprised of schools that had not participated in the project. The two sample groups "mirrored" each other through the application of a set of key indicators of the educational system and basic demographic markers.

Results of the Assessment

Following an analysis of the gathered data from the experimental and control samples within the three target groups – teachers, pupils and parents – it can be stated that the outcomes and the achievements of the project "Every Student Can Be a Winner" met its goals and can serve as a working model that could transform the entire school environment, lead to a decrease in the dropout rate and could change the attitudes of the main stakeholders, namely, the teachers and the parents who are interested in and

have an immediate impact on the education of children. A very rough statistical summary indicates that between 5% and 10% of the target groups changed their attitudes and experienced other positive outcomes.

Main Results of the Assessment:

⇒ **Dropout Prevention.** The statistical data[1] available to the Assessor's team showed a considerable change in the rate of dropouts in the *schools that participated in the project*. The changes in the dropout rate in the experimental and control groups moved in opposite directions and took place in the context of minimal shifts on the national level during the period of 2008-2013. **The dropout rate in the experimental group (for pupils in grades 1-8) decreased by 0.9%, while for the control group (for pupils in grades 1-8) the rate increased by 6%**. Over the same time period the average dropout rate for the entire country decreased by 0.3%. For high school students (grades 9-12), the dropout rate in the experimental group **decreased** by 0.27%, while the rate of the control group **increased by 4.88%**, and countrywide the rate registered a decrease of 0.14%.

Table 1[2]

School Year	Dropouts - Grades 1-8			Total Dropouts - Grades 9-12			Total Dropouts - Grades 1-12		
	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country
2008-2009	4.5%	8.3%	2.74%	4.4%	9.1%	1.97%	4.5%	9%	2.45%
2009-2010	4.4%	8.5%	2.78%	3.9%	8.7%	2.02%	4.3%	9%	2.46%
2010-2011	4.1%	9.2%	2.65%	4.6%	8.9%	2.13%	4.2%	9%	2.40%
2011-2012	4.0%	10.0%	2.62%	6.5%	9.4%	2.10%	4.3%	10%	2.43%
2012-2013	3.6%	14.2%	2.48%	4.1%	14.0%	2.09%	3.6%	14%	2.34%
Change	-0.9%	6.0%	-0.26%	-0.27%	4.88%	0.14%	-0.87%	5.47%	-0.12%

High schools only made up a small part (about 17%) of the schools included in the project. The dropout rate in high schools also decreased slightly, but this decrease was not consistent from one year to the next. For example, in the school year 2011-2012 there was an increase in the dropout rate which was due to the fact that many of the high schools began participating in the project towards the end of the sample period (4 schools joined in 2011, 10 in 2012 and 5 in 2013). Despite the fact that the high schools joined the project at a later time, it can be noted that even for the short time that they

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[1] The available statistical data covers only a part of the preliminary indicators that the project team had planned to include in the scope of the assessment. This is data that is followed and maintained by the NSI and that was made available to us for the purpose of this analysis. The assessor's team had no access to data such as the average number of absences, the average GPA and the results from external assessments, as this information is available only to the staff of MoES and the Regional Inspectorate of Education.

[2] It must be noted that schools entered the program at various times.

participated in the project these schools demonstrated some good results. However, since elementary and middle schools began participating in the project earlier and due to the specifics of the interventions and the fact that working with students at a younger age is more effective, it can be summarized that the project had a larger effect on the elementary and middle school stages of education. High schools failed to show sustainable results and require a more consistent application of the program (three quarters of the high schools started participating in the project only in the past 2-3 years). However, in those cases it can be stated that the program played a major role in the prevention and mitigation of a large part of the at-risk students from dropping out of school. This helps to explain why the experimental group maintained a rate of 4% throughout the entire period that was analyzed.

Table 2

School Year	Dropouts - Grades 1-4			Total Dropouts - Grades 5-8		
	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country
2008-2009	3.9%	6.6%	2.28%	5.2%	9.8%	3.37%
2009-2010	3.6%	7.2%	2.19%	5.3%	9.7%	3.18%
2010-2011	3.9%	7.5%	2.25%	4.4%	10.9%	3.05%
2011-2012	3.5%	9.0%	2.08%	4.6%	11.0%	2.94%
2012-2013	3.2%	10.9%	2.09%	4.0%	17.2%	3.02%
Change	-0.70%	4.25%	-0.20%	-1.24%	7.43%	-0.35%

The most significant changes were observed among pupils between the 5th and 8th grades where the reduction in the dropout rate in the experimental group over the duration of the project was greater than the average. The differences were statistically significant for both educational levels (grades 1-4 and grades 5-8) and showed a faster pace of reduction in the dropout rate among the students in the experimental group compared with the average for the country.

The dropout rate in the control group showed a gradual increase of 4% over the five-year period due to the lack of interventions. This data leads to the conclusion that if Amalipe had not conducted interventions in the schools participating in the project, the pace and the direction of the changes in the experimental group would have been similar to those observed in the control group.

The end results showed a higher dropout rate in the control group. This means that in schools where the issue of dropping out due to the lack of interventions was much more serious than in the schools participating in the project, the dropout rate would markedly increase creating a domino effect where dropping out becomes the norm and the rate continues to increase. At the same time, as a result of the project's activities, the experimental group showed a decrease in the dropout rate; moreover, the focused efforts on the prevention of dropping out resulted in attitude changes and led to stabilizing or even slowing down the dropout rate.

⇒ **Effect of the duration of the interventions**. The duration of the interventions had an effect on the dropout rate although this correlation did not apply to all grades and school years. The difference in the dropout rate at the end of the period (2012-2013) compared to the beginning of the period (2008-2009) was much greater for those schools that began participating in the program in or before 2009 than for those schools that joined at a later time. Over the same period of time the dropout rate in the control group increased.

Table 3. Dropout Rate for the 2012-2013 School Year

Year in which the school began participating in the program	Dropouts Grades 1-4 2012-2013	Dropouts Grades 5-8 2012-2013	Dropouts Grades 9-12 2012-2013	Total Dropouts Grades 1-12 2012-2013
before 2009	1.8%	4.9%	0.7%	3.0%
2010	4.3%	4.7%	6.0%	4.6%
2011	2.3%	3.7%	2.4%	2.9%
2012	3.8%	4.1%	4.1%	4.0%
2013	1.8%	3.0%	4.7%	2.8%
AVERAGE FOR THE COUNTRY – ALL SCHOOLS	2.08%	3.02%	2.1%	2.34%

⇒ **Changes in Educational Outcomes.** Data about repeat students (pupils who repeat the same grade) from the NSI was used as an (indirect) indicator[3] of the educational outcomes. The differences in this indicator between the two groups clearly showed that after the introduction of the project there was a decrease in the number of repeat students **in the schools participating in the project** compared to similar schools that were not in the project. It is clear that the difference between the two groups was largely due to the interventions and other activities of the project. This difference was especially noticeable among students in the 5th grade and higher[4]. The number of repeat students in the experimental group decreased by 0.7%, but this was not enough to show a consistent trend. At the same time, the number in the control group marked a slight increase of 0.56%. Therefore, it can be concluded that the difference between the two groups can be attributed to the application of the interventions and other activities included in the project. If it were not for these activities the rate of the repeat students in the experimental group would have been approximately 2 percentage points higher.

A similar situation was observed with students in grades 9-12. Both sample groups joined the project in 2008 with very similar statistics, but their numbers significantly differed in 2013-2014, and the rates

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[3] The assessment team was not able to obtain data on the average GPA of the students in the experimental and control groups to serve as the basis for evaluating the changes in the educational outcomes in the two groups.
[4] Due to changes in the regulations affecting the time period of the assessment there was no precise data outlining the changes in the number of repeat students in elementary school (Grades 1-4).

were trending in opposite directions. The experimental group registered a decrease in the number of repeat students, while the control group had an increase.

Table 4

School Year	Grades 5-8, Repeat Students			Grades 9-12, Repeat Students		
	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country	Experimental Group	Control Group	Average for the Country
2008-2009	5.6%	6.2%	2.71%	1.7%	1.8%	0.18%
2009-2010	4.5%	5.8%	2.47%	1.3%	1.4%	0.16%
2010-2011	3.9%	5.7%	2.14%	1.3%	1.7%	0.18%
2011-2012	4.7%	5.5%	2.19%	0.6%	2.0%	0.19%
2012-2013	4.1%	6.3%	2.30%	0.9%	2.3%	0.16%
2013-2014	4.9%	6.7%		1.2%	2.3%	
Change	-0.70%	0.56%	-0.42%	-0.47%	0.53%	-0.02%

Source: NSI

⇒ **Graduation from middle and high school.** One very important component of the assessment was the rate of graduation from middle and high school. These results were obtained by comparing the number of students who graduated from middle school with the number of students who enrolled in the 5th grade four years prior. This indicator presents a summarized picture of the total number of the pupils who dropped out over the years and those who completed their school grade but did not pass the final examinations. The percentage of middle school graduates after this four year period increased in the experimental group, while the percentage in the control group remained unchanged.

Table 5

Middle School Graduates as a Share of the Students Enrolled in the 5th Grade Four Years Earlier	Experimental Group	Control Group
2011-2012	63.7%	61.1%
2012-2013	68.1%	61.0%
Based on the Number of Students Enrolled in the 5th Grade Four Years Earlier		

Source: NSI

At the same time it is important to note what went on during the final year before graduation. It was not possible to track the dropout rate grade by grade, but only as an average dropout rate for grades 5-8 as a group; this prevented us from analyzing the following data for the 8th grade about the total number of students who: 1. enrolled, 2. dropped out, 3. completed the grade but did not pass the final examinations, and 4. graduated. Nevertheless, if only students from the 8th grade are tracked it is clear that the graduation rate in the experimental group decreased slightly, most likely due to the larger number of students who completed the grade (i.e. they were prevented from dropping out), but did not graduate as they did not pass the final examinations. With the exception of the 2012-2013 school year

the data on the control group showed a decrease in the middle school graduation rate (as a percentage of those who were enrolled in the 8th grade).

Table 6

Middle School Graduates*	Experimental Group	Control Group
2008-2009	93.6%	97.0%
2009-2010	91.3%	96.4%
2010-2011	91.8%	87.8%
2011-2012	92.0%	86.1%
2012-2013	92.0%	93.4%
Based on the Number of Students Enrolled in the 8th Grade at the Start of the Corresponding School Year		

The following important conclusion can be drawn from this information: up to this moment the project has achieved results in the area of dropout prevention, but this has led to a slight increase in the number of students who completed the grade but did not graduate (due to insufficient training to pass the final exams or a lack of motivation to complete that level of education).

The trend for high school graduates was not as consistent because the project mostly focused on children up to the 8th grade; more time and data are needed to determine the effectiveness of the program for high schools.

Table 7

High School Graduates	Experimental Group	Control Group
2011-2012	64.7%	58.0%
2012-2013	62.9%	55.0%
Based on the Number of Students Enrolled in the 9th Grade Four Years Earlier		

Source: NSI

Additional Outcomes:

⇒ **A Complete Transformation of the Environment.** The project has contributed to the creation of a new quality model which has successfully transformed the educational environment. Even though similar measures were implemented in the schools in the control group (e.g. school parliament), their results, degree of impact and effect on the prevention of dropping out of school were significantly lower. The changes in the environment are evident from the responses of the students regarding what goes on in their school. Children from the **experimental group** shared that they felt better at and were more motivated to go to school (there is a difference of 10 percentage points compared to the control group); also the children from the experimental

group referred more often to interacting with and engaging in group activities with children from different ethnicities (a difference of 14 percentage points compared to the control group). The responses also showed that creative activities, as well as participation in competitions and performances, occurred more frequently in the experimental group.

⇒ **Changes in Teachers' Attitudes.** A real benefit of the project is the change in teachers' attitudes and in their recognition of the importance of the model of multicultural education that applies practical methods of work aimed at dropout prevention and transformation of the educational environment. There was a significant difference between the evaluations of the two groups of teachers (experimental and control): the number of evaluations receiving a maximum score of "helps to the utmost degree" **on various indicators was over twice as high** in the experimental group than in the control group.

⇒ **Changes in Students' Attitudes**. Another significant beneficial effect of the project is that it changed the attitudes of the students and their behaviors. The number of students in the experimental group who believe that it is important to attend school **increased by 6 percentage points**, and the rate of students who believe that it is important to graduate from high school **increased by 5 percentage points**; in comparison, 11%, or twice as many of the students in the **control group**, were undecided on the importance of or strongly against attending school (compared to 6% in the experimental group). There are similar differences in the responses regarding motivation, attitudes, and the frequency of absenteeism among students in the schools participating in the project. The percentage of the weekly and monthly absences was much lower in the experimental versus the control group.

⇒ **Parent Participation.** The results of the assessment demonstrate that the project has significantly impacted the participation and commitment of the parents of Roma children. There was a significant change in the level of engagement and participation of the parents of Roma children in parent-teacher conferences, extracurricular activities, involvement in their child's education, seeking the support of school staff and maintaining regular communication with teachers. **At the same time, in the teachers' opinion, the parents of the Roma children in the control group were significantly more passive.**

⇒ One interesting finding of the study was **the observed passiveness among the parents of children of Bulgarian ethnicity** in the participating schools. Parents of Bulgarian children in the experimental group demonstrated a lesser degree of involvement in the education of their children, parent-teacher conferences, and extra-curricular activities; they were more passive and did not seek interaction with and feedback from the teachers. **In contrast, parents of children of Bulgarian ethnicity in the control group were more active than the parents of Roma children.** This reversed situation regarding the involvement of the parents (of both Bulgarian and Roma children) can be entirely attributed to the interventions conducted as part of the project. By predominantly focusing on engaging and motivating the Roma parents the schools participating in the project were inadvertently leaving the parents of Bulgarian children out of the process, which resulted in Bulgarian parents not fully engaging in school-related activities.

⇒ **Amalipe's Role.** Based on the achievements to-date and the gradual expansion of the scope of the project, it is clear that Amalipe has the necessary capacity to ensure the day-to-day implementation of the project's activities. However, one significant drawback is that most of the success of the project revolved around the personal qualities of two key figures in the organization: Deyan Kolev and Teodora Krumova. Up to this point, they have been able to propel the project forward, but this may become difficult if the project scales up to encompass more schools. If the project continues it is extremely important that it expands gradually in order to maintain, as much as possible, the same level of personal commitment and involvement of the key figures as their presence acts as motivation for the staff of the schools participating in the project.

The **regional coordinators** are a key factor in creating effective collaboration with the school staff: they assist the staff in activities and events of various nature such as: establishing and maintaining relations with other institutions, working on individual cases regarding children at risk of dropping out, and creating relationships and facilitating the interaction among teachers, parents, students, etc. Moreover, **nearly half** of the interviewees stated that they had received assistance from Amalipe in designing projects related to multicultural education. In comparison, schools from the control group implemented similar activities but witnessed significantly fewer results and benefits (based on the comparison between the evaluations of teachers in both the experimental and control groups). This confirms that Amalipe's team has successfully created and adapted the concept and model of work in a multicultural environment, and, in addition, together with its partners and the school communities, has created the conditions for the successful practical application of this model. One great future challenge is to expand this model to encompass more schools.

⇒ **The Potential of Turning the Project into a National Program**. The results of the assessment showed that the project "Every Student Can Be a Winner" has the potential to become a national program by using its achievements to-date as a starting point and carefully selecting the specific format to apply the model. The issues that stand out as important within the multicultural educational environment are basically integrated into the philosophy of the model. For this reason the model will not encounter any resistance on the conceptual level among teachers in the schools that are not yet a part of the project. This conclusion is further reinforced by the fact that teachers **from the schools participating in the project** display a strong desire and readiness to continue working on the project which is indicative of their support and their belief in its effectiveness. They, themselves, expressed the opinion that it would be helpful for this model to expand to other schools around the country. The teachers from the **control group** showed more skepticism regarding the purpose and the effectiveness of such activities that are geared towards encouraging multicultural education.

One important outcome of the study is that 40-50% of the respondents displayed hesitation regarding the general questions about the project; however, the level of skepticism decreased when it came to specific measures and initiatives. For example, when evaluating specific project activities the teachers from the control group most strongly supported professional discussions

and conferences on subjects related to multicultural education (79%), followed by parent and teacher trainings (72%), the Ethnic Folklore elective classes (68%), and parent clubs (68%).

Recommendations

⇒ As mentioned above, the main challenge is expanding the model on an operational level. One possible way of doing this is by using the program as the basis for a national policy that would be operationally managed by MoES where all of the activities and processes would be coordinated by the Ministry. Such implementation could jeopardize the results and achievements of the project and could possibly be detrimental to the motivation of the school staff who are motivated to a large degree by the charismatic presence and professional demeanor of the key staff members of Amalipe. It would be best if Amalipe could preserve its leading role in the process and could remain the primary driving force of the project. If this is the case, then the question becomes whether or not the new schools that join the project would be able to invest their own energy into it so as to achieve similar results as the ones achieved by those schools that have generated some change ("generators of change"), as well as the ones that are currently being transformed by their participation in the project ("transitioning schools"). These risks are manageable with the appropriate modifications to the project precisely because the achievements of the project are visible and would simply need to be replicated.

Along these lines, it is necessary that the staff implementing the project maintain the same degree of commitment, personal contact and direct involvement with the schools and the school staff as they have demonstrated to date.

⇒ The administrative and organizational capacity of Amalipe would benefit from an analysis in view of future scaling up of the project. One possible route is through increasing the role of local coordinators by expanding their responsibilities and the range of their activities, including outreach, on-site visits, etc. It is important that these coordinators be visible and accessible to the participating schools and from time to time they may even get directly involved in some of the school activities (for example, the coordinators could visit a school once a week which would allow them to work with up to ten schools per week). Another possible route is to create a partnership network with other NGOs working on the local level.

⇒ Despite its undeniable achievements in the area of dropout prevention, the results regarding the number of students graduating from middle and high school show that there was a slight increase in the number of students who completed the grade but did not graduate (due to insufficient training to pass the final exams or a lack of motivation to complete that level of education). This means that it is necessary to consider offering additional educational activities for the students in their core educational courses (through OEC/NOEC classes in the core subjects, as well, and not just through activities geared towards developing the children's creative side) or to focus more on increasing their motivation to obtain the necessary educational degree, i.e. to earn a high school diploma. Since such students do not associate getting a degree with finding a job, they lack the motivation to officially graduate and to receive

a diploma. Reasons for not graduating include possible fear of exams, the inability to fulfill the requirements or not taking school seriously. In practice, the framework set by the independent assessment requires systematic efforts towards increasing the educational success of students, enhancing their motivation and achieving the educational standards.

⇒ One of the most valuable additional outcomes (and unintended effects) of the project was the creation of an informal network for support and consultation (in the form of meetings, trainings, experience exchanges, and maintaining a communication network with other teachers) to serve teachers and principals who encounter similar issues and challenges and teach similar types of students. This informal network should be used in attracting new schools to join the project. The successful expansion of the project depends on providing opportunities for experience exchanges, meetings, discussions and direct contact with the project team and the interscholastic teams. Personal contact, coordination, and the opportunity to receive help in resolving specific issues as they arise are some of the most important factors for the successful implementation of the project and must be guaranteed and enhanced in order to expand the project.

⇒ When planning the future funding for the replication of this model in new schools, it is important to analyze to the fullest extent possible the statistical data about the schools with multiethnic profiles that have not yet been included in the project, as well as to conduct a detailed study of their needs, specific requirements, teachers and principals as these are key factors for the success of such projects. This needs analysis is necessary for the planning of future interventions; for example, with what frequency should the combination of measures in the model be applied, to what degree should the participation of the local coordinator be planned, and with what type of school from the informal network of support should they partner. This decision can be made jointly with the donor.

⇒ The successful implementation of Amalipe's project, including the replication of its model, requires the compilation of a reliable statistical database that will be utilized to create profiles of the schools, including the predominant groups of students in those schools. This implies a partnership with MoES and the regional inspectorates for education. This will help improve the baseline indicators and their traceability which, in turn, will result in better planning of the measures that could have the largest impact in any particular situation.

⇒ On a micro level it would be beneficial to increase the number of parent trainings and sharing of best practices, as well as to plan activities for parents in multicultural environments that would include not only Roma parents but also mixed groups of parents. Working in mixed groups could help overcome the hesitation of the parents of children of Bulgarian ethnicity.

⇒ When planning the measures to be applied to specific schools it is best to seek interaction with and the complementary participation of other national or local programs, as well as of other projects that are implemented with EU structural funding (operational projects). This would prevent the duplication of similar interventions for the same group of beneficiaries (the same target group) and would promote synergy for a better end result. An example of such synergy is the involvement of the *USPEH* project and the *Inclusive Education* project which are currently being implemented with the support of the *Human Resources Development 2007-2013*

Operational Project and the European Social Fund, as well as with the future measures planned under the *Science and Education for Smart Growth* Operational Project.