

# Learning Centre

Roma Mahalla Mitrovicë/a

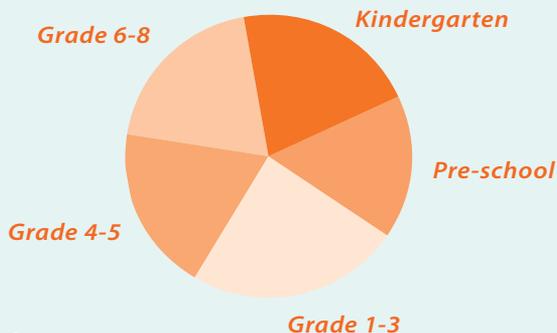


- Bridging the learning gap
- Knowing the community
- Empowering children - Involving parents

# Bridging the learning gap

Since 2009, Danish Refugee Council has supported its former implementing partner Caritas and current partner Roma and Ashkalia Documentation Center (RADC) to run the Learning Centre located in Roma Mahalla, Mitrovicë/a. The Centre is currently funded solely by Sida.

For the past three years, the Learning Centre has provided kindergarten, pre-school and homework support classes to the growing number of children and youth in Roma Mahalla.



Kindergarten and pre-school classes prepare children for enrolment in primary schools. Children who are of primary school age receive targeted homework support in order to increase the children's chances to successfully participate in the mainstream school system in Mitrovicë/a.

Years of displacement have resulted in many children enjoying a lower level of education in comparison to their peers and support is therefore still needed for them to catch up on acquiring necessary reading, writing and mathematics skills.

As long as a need for special support persists, the Learning Centre will continue to assist local education authorities in their effort to provide equal access to education opportunities to children from Roma Mahalla. Fortunately, Mitrovicë/a Municipality has committed itself to support the Centre. While budget constraints have so far prevented the Municipality to contribute financially, they remain supportive of the Centre's work.

# The Learning Centre



**258** registered children

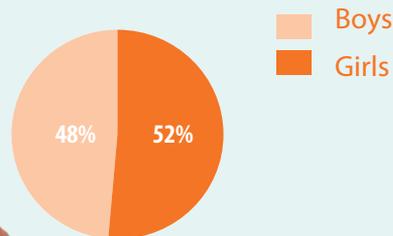
**3** teachers

**6** teacher assistants

**4** classrooms

There are 258 children from Roma Mahalla registered at the Learning Centre. The Centre localities include 4 classrooms and a library equipped with computers.

3 teachers from the Albanian and Serbian community and 6 teacher assistants from the community in Roma Mahalla teach the kindergarten and pre-school classes and provide homework support in Albanian and Serbian depending on where children attend primary school.



**Gender balance among children at the Learning Centre**

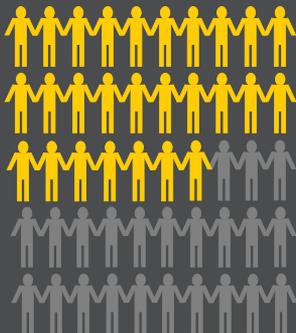
# Knowing the community

To better serve the community's educational needs, the Learning Centre organized a survey in October 2013 of Roma Mahalla families the majority of which are returnees from lead-contaminated camps in North Mitrovicë/a.

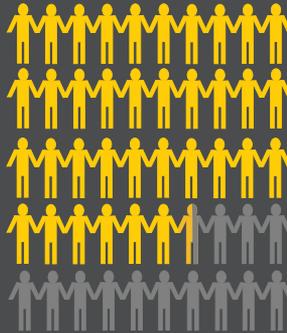
During data collection, teacher assistants and volunteers from the community visited 246 households and recorded 636 children under the age of 18. In



## STATISTICS



**55.4 %**  
*of children in Roma Mahalla between the ages of 3-15 are registered at the Learning Centre*



**73 %**  
*of children registered at the Learning Centre are enrolled in regular (pre-) schools as well*

this sample, 439 children fall within the Learning Centre age range of 3-15. Just over half of these children are registered at the Centre.

In terms of school enrolment at regular schools, out of 359 children of school age (5-15), 147 from the Learning Centre are registered in primary schools in either North Mitrovicë/a (96.3%) or South Mitrovicë/a (3.3%).

## **UNMET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**196** children between the ages of 3-15 do not yet attend the Learning Centre

**92** children between the ages of 5-15 attend neither school nor the Learning Centre

School enrolment among Centre children is 32 percentage points higher than among those who are not registered at the Centre.

## **FUTURE PRIORITIES**

- ✓ *Secure resources to accommodate 49 children who will reach kindergarten age in 2014*
- ✓ *Target 92 children who neither go to school nor the Centre and encourage parents to enrol them at school*
- ✓ *Focus on increasing attendance, monitor dropouts and intensify efforts to have them return to the Centre*
- ✓ *Work closely with schools in North and South Mitrovicë/a to track children's performance*
- ✓ *Keep records of special needs children and ensure they are referred to appropriate institutions*

# Empowering children

At the Learning Centre, children are also encouraged to express themselves through arts activities. Drawing, painting, singing and dancing stimulate creative and independent thinking and promote imagination.

Having children exhibit their work, perform in front of their parents and peers and receive praise for their efforts also helps build

confidence, the ability to speak up in class and participate actively in class work. Extra-curricular activities are organized regularly to give children the chance to be creative and enjoy themselves.

*Building self-esteem and confidence through art, song and dance*

## *Monthly extra-curricular activities*

- ✓ Performing songs and dances and reciting poems together with children from other schools for UN Children's Day
- ✓ Drawing and taking photographs to document pollution and taking part in filming a short documentary about environment protection in Roma Mahalla
- ✓ Going on field trips and excursions to learn about Kosovo's history by visiting museums and monuments





6.9



*Average family size of children enrolled at the Learning Centre*

## INVOLVING PARENTS

Creating a supportive environment at home is as important as providing quality education. Part of the Learning Centre's community outreach is therefore targeted at involving parents in school-related activities.

Parent and Teacher meetings as well as extracurricular activities where parents play and work with their children are ways in which the Centre tries to involve parents.

An ever larger number of parents, both mothers and fathers, accompany their children to these activities which is an observable improvement in the parent's involvement with school activities.

Along with positive changes in children's performance at school, parent's increasing commitment to their children's schooling is another indicator of positive change in Roma Mahalla.

For more information contact:

RADC

[www.radcenter.org](http://www.radcenter.org)

DRC Mitrovicë/a

[www.drc-kosovo-org](http://www.drc-kosovo-org)

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