

## CLUJ MEDIA DAY 11 FEBRUARY 2014

***"I only completed 4 grades and so did my daughter.  
This little guy better finish at least 10 grades!"***

Roma grandmother quoted in *Vocea Transilvaniei*

*Last month, Cluj became the first Romanian county to utilize 'tichete sociale' as an incentive to get poor parents to send their children to 'gradinita'.*

*At a press conference that drew 20 journalists, County Councilors Istvan Vakar and Ioan Oleleu announced that Cluj will cover the cost of food coupons for 100 impoverished children in four new communities: Bonțida, Călățele, Poieni, Săcuieu.*



The following are excerpts from a few of the 40 news items generated by the event:

### TIME 4 NEWS

"...OvidiuRo and the Cluj authorities have launched a partnership that will help get 100 impoverished children attending kindergarten in 2014..."

### NIN

"Families with a maximum income of 150 lei per month per family member will receive 50 lei food coupons each month, provided their children attend *gradinita* every day..."

"Having lived for many years with one foot in London and the other between Bucharest and New York, Princess Marina Sturdza didn't hesitate to tramp through the mud yesterday in Bontida in order to visit some of the families whose children started attending kindergarten through the "***Fiecare Copil in Gradinita***" program..."



*"Romania's dropout rate is alarming.... The way we deal with our children now will form the future Romania."* Marina Sturdza

### Transilvania Reporter

"...From teachers Viorica Miron and Anamaria Baboș we found that many of the children enrolled in the program came to kindergarten for the first time thanks to ***FCG***. Their first lessons were on hygiene..."

"...One mother named Maria said, "My boy has been coming to kindergarten since September. I had no money to send him before. Last night I borrowed an egg and I made him egg bread. I gave him a slice in the morning and one for lunch in *gradinita* today." Although she completed eight grades, Maria couldn't get a job because of her myopia. "I should have bought myself glasses, but I couldn't afford them."



*" Social integration costs are always lower than costs resulting from exclusion."* Peter Thomas, British Embassy

“...Early school abandonment primarily affects disadvantaged children. In Bontida almost all preschool age children are now enrolled in kindergarten.”

“...In Romania there are 4.11 million children under 18 years. With a dropout rate of 17.4 %, we can expect that 710,000 Romanian children will leave school before 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the next 20 years. Two thirds of at-risk children do not receive any formal education, while 77% of other children are enrolled in early education programs.

“Nobel Laureate in Economics James Heckman has asserted that ‘Early education programs has a payback of 4 to 10 times higher than any other anti -poverty intervention. According to the World Bank, Romania would gain one billion euros annually in productivity and tax revenues if the country’s poorest citizens were educated...”

## Vocea Transilvaniei

“...Roma people do not pay taxes because they have no money and do not work. They don’t work, not only because they don’t want to, but also because they are not educated. And they never attended school because their parents did not have money when they were young. If you do not pay taxes, the city can’t afford to repave your street. This vicious cycle could continue for a long time...”



Although Domnica realizes that school is a necessity and it’s worth the effort of waking her boy at 7 am, the lack of clothes and food made her give up. With the help of OvidiuRo, her son now comes to kindergarten every day.”



In a 45-minute interview with OvidiuRo’s Maria Gheorghiu and Princess Marina Sturdza, Gheorghiu explained the relevance of the **FCG** program and emphasized that although the project idea is simple, the program implementation is quite complex.

Sturdza commented that “Because this program starts when the child is very young, it forms the habit of going to school. This creates a routine and disciplines the whole family.”

“Town and county involvement is not a donation but a social investment in the future of communities.” Maria Gheorghiu, OvidiuRo cofounder



Two minute prime-time news spot in which the children’s mothers talk about how difficult it is to get their children to school every day.



“We simply couldn’t afford to send her to kindergarten before, we don’t have any income so this project helps us a lot.” Mihaela, Botida preschooler’s mother

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