

Call for Proposals: Pilot Slovakian Country Assessment

Introduction and background Information

The Roma Education Fund (REF) was founded by the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and the World Bank in the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005. Its mission and ultimate goal is to close the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. In order to achieve this goal, the organization supports policies and programs which ensure quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems.

Since 2009 Roma Education Fund has published Country Assessments, which had the purpose of collection and analyzing country level data to inform Roma Education Fund, partners, and other interested parties on the demographics of Roma, the educational system, the status of Roma in education, health, housing, and other socioeconomic indicators. In addition, past country assessments have documented government and donor commitments, as well as REFs historical commitments and future strategy.

The 2018 Slovakian Country Assessment is a pilot of a new format and methodology in obtaining information about status of Roma in the educational system. The pilot will combine general policy analysis present in the previous Country Assessment format and youth participatory action research methodology (YPAR) for the purpose to gain knowledge about educational status and inequalities that is held by those that are directly living and impacted by the inequalities in the educational system.

Purpose

The main purpose of this Slovakian Country Assessment is to capture the “organic intellectualism of those who are most affected by educational and social inequalities...collective investigation that rely on indigenous knowledge, combined with the desire to take individual and/or collective action.”¹ In combination with a broad assessment of the educational systems, policies, and overall environment in Slovakia using standard evaluation techniques and analysis.

The pilot country assessment will inform REF and other interested partners on the educational status and needs across the following themes; access, quality, aspirations, expectations, and discrimination and other obstacles. Further, the Slovakian Country Assessment aims to empower Roma youth to become advocates for educational equality and equity for Roma through capacity building in research, advocacy, and leadership.

¹ Carballo, L., Lozenski, B. D. “YPAR and Critical Epistemologies: Rethinking Education Research”

- Have holistic and genuine understanding of educational and employment barriers for Roma developed by the knowledge and experiences within the educational system of Roma children, parents, adolescent, and young adults.
- Provide an understanding of how REF and other groups can address the needs of the Roma community that will lead to successful education and employment.
- Empower and build the capacity of Roma youth in advocacy, leadership, and research.

Objectives and Goals

- Gather information and analyze the Slovakian educational system. Policies, education finance, demographics, educational indicators, political environment, and mapping of stakeholders (influencers).
- Leadership, advocacy, and skills development of Roma youth.
- Identify intervention strategies for further advancing community education and employment goals, improving the relevance, impact, and sustainability of REF operations, as well as other groups working to improve the lives of Roma in Slovakia.
- Improve the understanding of the mechanisms that maintain inequality, inequity, and discrimination within education and employment.
- Developing knowledge regarding the specific barriers and needs of Roma students, parents, and community to gain quality education and employment, as well as key elements in their success in the educational system and labor market.

Methodology

Educational System Overview and Policy Analysis

The Slovakian Country Assessment will continue to include aspects of the previous Country Assessment structure², with minor changes in format and focus. In previous Country Assessments general information and analysis was conducting on education, health, housing, demographics, and other socioeconomic characteristics. In the new format the Country Assessment will focus on educational systems, policies, and program. The education research expert will provide a description of the educational systems, policies, and practices that impact Roma pupils and families. Large scale surveys from international organization (FRA, UNESCO, PISA, World Bank), national surveys and data from the responsible government ministries will be analyzed and reported. In addition, any relevant descriptive educational outcome data gathered from recent reports. National and international policies, programs, and social characteristics will be described and analyzed.

If ethically disaggregated data is not available, the educational expert will include population level information. In Slovakian Country Assessment, the focus will not be on descriptive information,

² The original model for the Country Assessment series was developed by Tünde KovácsCerović, Roger Grawe and Alexandre Marc, who also edited the series through the end of 2007. The current Country Assessment follows the new format developed by Toby Linden, Mihai Surdu and Eben Friedman in early 2009.
<http://www.romaeducationfund.org/publications/country-assessments>

rather analysis. Thus, if there is not ethically disaggregated data the report will provide an analysis on how policies and laws on the topics of educational, health, housing, and other characteristics **impact** Roma educational outcomes.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

YPAR methodology is included in this pilot to build collective action within Roma youth in the educational system, while obtaining indigenous knowledge from Roma who are currently experiencing the inequities in the educational system. The information gathered through this methodology will provide the Roma perspective on educational issues and deliver an opportunity for Roma communities to speak for themselves concerning their educational needs.

The other main factor for using YPAR is to empower Roma communities and strengthen collective action among Roma youth, parents, individuals, organizations, and supporting government agencies. YPAR challenges the narrative that the Roma community and especially Roma youth do not hold the ability to translate and formulate their needs that can be digested by decision makers and initiate change. This pilot will have the Roma youth as the change agents for an improved educational system and outcomes. One of the main goals in the use of YPAR is “youth as intellectual being capable of engaging in the practice of critical investigation of community issues and the production of viable, usable knowledge”³.

Structure of the Report

The full structure of the report will contain the following six major sections:

1. **Executive Summary:** Brief content on the project, findings, highlights, and recommendation.
2. **Education Systems, Policies, and Programs:** The education research expert will provide a description of the educational systems, policies, and practices that impact Roma pupils and families. This section of the report will include large scale surveys from international organization (FRA, UNESCO, PISA, World Bank), national surveys and data from government responsible government ministries. In addition, provide any relevant descriptive educational outcome data gathered from recent reports. The section will provide a description and evaluation of international and national policies/programs that impact the education of Roma
3. **Roma Youth and Community Perspective:** The section will report the finding from the Participatory Action Research.
 - a. Description of the Project
 - b. Methodology
 - c. Findings
 - d. Youth Development
 - e. Youth Advocacy Goals

³ Carballo, L., Lozenski, B. D. “YPAR and Critical Epistemologies: Rethinking Education Research”

4. **Evaluation:** The report will conduct and analysis of the above two sections, identify educational gaps between the educational system and community needs. In addition, the section will evaluate how Roma Education Fund is contributing to closing those gaps.
5. **Recommendations:** The report will provide consolidated recommendation gathered from the educational systems, policies, and programs analysis, as well as from the Roma community and youth.
6. **Conclusion:** A comprehensive summary and impactful remarks.

Call for Proposals

Roma Education Fund invites proposals for leading a research project in Slovakia. It is expected that the leading organization is an accredited research institution. For instance, a university research department, independent research consultancies, think tank, or NGO with strong research activities.

This call is requesting a joint proposal that includes an “**Education Research Expert**” and an “**Implementing Organization**”. Therefore, eligible proposals will require the organizations to respond to the call jointly. In addition, it is preferred if the two entities have worked together on previous projects. In addition, both entities will work closely with the REF Slovakia office in targeting locations for research purposes, identifying policies, and other assistance and learning throughout the process.

Education Research Expert: The project requires expertise in managing education research, conducting analysis of educational systems, writing high quality reports in English, and database development and data analysis. The Education Research Expert will be the leading organization that develops the research methodology, develops and manages a project plan, ensures the completion of project milestones, and delegates responsibilities as needed to complete project objectives.

Implementing Organization: Organization and management of personnel and activities related to field work, youth researchers, and advocacy is required. Further, the implementing organization is the core of the research project as it pertains to the Youth Researcher capacity building, collection of data, and future advocacy efforts.

It is crucial that the implementing organization has strong connection and network within the Roma community. The Youth Researchers needs to feel comfortable with their staff and there must be a mutual trust relationship. While their will need to be supervisory and management roles, the implementing organizations must understand, accept, and incorporate the ideas, thoughts, and viewpoints of the Youth Researchers into the research project as their peers.

Roma Education Fund identified and proposes a group of secondary and tertiary Roma students who are in the process of establishing a Slovakian RomaVersitas as the **Youth Researchers**. The participation of these students as the Youth Researchers will build their capacity in research, advocacy, and leadership that will continue to be influential within the RomaVersitas organization. In the proposal please include details on how to include this group of students as the Youth

Researchers. If you want to propose another target group as the Youth Researcher, please provide details on the group and justification for their participation.

Responsibilities

Education Research Expert:

- Designs and manages activities related the research project
- Develop the YPAR methodology and interventions
- Design of an implantation plan
- Manages the implementing organization
- Designs data collection methods and tools
- Assures the correct application of the methodology and implementation plan are applied
- Draft final report
- Contributes to the drafting a plan and the implementation of dissemination and advocacy efforts

Implementing Organization:

- Implement the YPAR methodology and interventions
- Assist the Education Research Expert in the development of YPAR methodology
- Recruit Youth Researchers
- Organize and coordinate the Youth Research workshops and trainings
- Manage data collection activities
- Manage and supervise Youth Researchers, mentors, and trainers
- Build partnerships with local educational authorities
- Liaison with teachers, principals, and parent groups
- Develop a national dissemination and advocacy plan in partnership with Youth Researchers

Qualifications

Education Research Expert

- Experience in managing participatory action research or other participatory research methods
- Proven expertise and knowledge in the Slovakian educational system
- Proven expertise and knowledge on research topics related to Roma education
- Ability to write high level research and policy reports
- Strong research and administrative capacity

Implementing Organization

- Proven experience in participatory action research or other participatory research methods
- Experience in working with and access to Roma communities and NGOs

- Knowledge of country, regional, and local political and social context. Especially, in regard to the Roma community
- Capacity to organize, lead, and manage field research, trainings, and workshops with Roma communities
- Proven experience in advocacy and community organizing within Roma communities

Timeframe

Dates	Project Stage
October 29 th	Deadline for applications
November 2 nd	Selection of Candidates
November 14 th	Delivery of inception report
November 19 th through December 14 th	Field activities (trainings, data collection) & desk research activities
January 21 st	Continuation of field and research activities
February 8 th	Completion of data analysis
February 25 th	Delivery of draft report
April 5 th	Delivery of final draft which incorporates all parties feedback
April through June	Dissemination and advocacy efforts

** Timeline is tentative. Adjustments can be made based on applicants' proposals and the inception report.

How to apply

The proposal must include both the "Education Research Expert" and "Implementing Organization". Only applications that include both parties and all items described below will be considered for the position.

Roma NGOs and Roma research institutions are highly encouraged to apply.

Applications must be sent to:

Marko Pecak at: mpecak@romaeducationfund.org

The subject of the email must read: "Participatory Country Assessment: Slovakia"

A **complete submission** must include the following:

- A capability statement which describes both the "Education Research Expert" and the "Implementing Organization" ability to conduct the project and describes previous work which is related to the proposed project.
- Proposal including methodology, data collection techniques, project activities and milestones, and project timeline
- Financial proposal
- Term of reference
- Curriculum Vital of all individuals on the project team