

Project “Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in Western Balkans and Turkey”

Call for the selection of implementing partner organization

in the field of
Expanding access to quality early childhood education and primary school
In Albania

Call open until September 6, 2019



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1. Background

In 2018, Roma Education Fund (REF) started implementing the project ***Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in Western Balkans and Turkey***, funded by European Union (EU). The project aims to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma in the participation and completion of quality education, to improve Roma students' transition between education and employment, and promote durable systemic change and de-segregation within education systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The project objectives will be achieved through:

- supporting Roma children in pre-school education and enrolling them into integrated primary schools;
- awarding scholarships to Roma students in secondary and tertiary education;
- supporting transition between education and employment;
- building capacities of relevant authorities and their understanding of the specific challenges faced by the Roma community;
- supporting regional networking and exchanging experiences with the aim to contribute to the mainstreaming of Roma in national policies and, where relevant, changes in policies and legislation.

2. Cross cutting priorities, which will be targeted by the entire project

Partner organizations should, to the greatest extent possible, include in their project proposals how they plan to:

- Contribute to policy development in their project area and regional knowledge exchange and communication;
- Advocate for changes in policy development through their project-related activities, or how they plan to contribute to existing advocacy efforts in their area;
- Contribute to building an inclusive education system and its desegregation;
- Build common regional policy efforts among the seven countries;

Gender mainstreaming should be an integral component of all projects and its inclusion in the project proposal is mandatory.

3. Monitoring and evaluation

REF will conduct project monitoring and evaluation following the selection of the partner organizations to ensure that implementation is in line with the proposed project implementation and

monitoring plan. Each partner organization will have to collect baseline data and maintain databases of project beneficiaries. This information will be provided to REF on a regular basis.

During the project implementation, REF will conduct technical assistance visits to offer support to partner organizations and address issues that may occur during the implementation. As part of the project, REF will carry out mid-term and final evaluation and partner organizations are expected to take part in this process.

4. Assessment and selection of applications

4.1 Eligibility criteria

In order to apply for the grants, the following eligibility criteria apply:

- Legally registered non-governmental organization in the given country;
- Operational capacity: systems and processes for ensuring sound management of funds. At a minimum, an organization needs to have basic accounting and reporting systems;
- Proven relevant experience and indicating ability to fulfill the objectives of the action; and
- Core values in line with REF's values – tenacity, integrity, justice, accountability and inquisitiveness - and REF's commitment to integration and gender mainstreaming.

4.2 Selection criteria

- Track record of project implementation: priority will be given for organizations which have proven their management capabilities, commitment and effectiveness, according to satisfactory monitoring reports, as well as successful outcomes with REF as partner organizations. Additionally, organizations which have proven the closure of similar relevant projects will also be considered.
- Geographical operation of the organization: the project activities will be implemented in areas of the project countries which extend REF's geographical coverage and add new beneficiaries. Organizations with proven affiliation and work in the given territorial area will be a basic condition of funding.
- Experience with Roma community and target groups: REF will prioritize organizations that are rooted in their community and operate with community input, involvement, and investment.
- Roma involvement in planning and management project: REF prioritizes organizations in which Roma participation is encouraged and valued.

5. Criteria for determining the exact amounts of financial support

The criteria for determining the exact amounts of financial support to each sub-grantee will be based on the activities presented in their project proposals, the number of locations and beneficiaries to be included, the specific country contexts and the realistic and cost-effective budget.

The eligible costs will be those which are:

- necessary for the implementation of the project and properly estimated;
- incurred during the implementation of the project;
- in line with the supported entities' accounting practices;
- not used to make a profit;
- not already covered by other sources of funding;
- identifiable and verifiable;
- recorded in the accounting records of the sub-grantee and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the sub-grantee;
- compliant with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation, and
- reasonable, justified and in compliance with the requirements of sound financial management, regarding economy and efficiency.

In some of the target countries REF might select more than one partner organization, depending on the scale of intervention, in order to reach the project targets indicated in the specific calls.

6. Objective of the call

The objective of the call is to select the partner organization for the implementation of the **early childhood education and primary school activities** of project in Albania.

The objective of the financial support is to: improve Roma children's access to preschool education, facilitate access and enrollment of Roma children into mainstream primary schools and support the academic progress of children enrolled. Moreover, the activities will contribute to strengthening the link between parents and educational institutions.

Particular attention will be paid to ensure that partners are aware of a gender-sensitive approach and to apply it in the project implementation.

7. Description of activities receiving financial support

Since the early childhood activities are closely connected to transition to primary education, REF encourages proposals which cover both the 3.1 and 3.2 priorities, as described below.

7.1. Expanding access of Roma children to quality early childhood education (ECD)

Objectives: The objective of the financial support is to improve Roma children's access to preschool education and, subsequently, increase their early childhood development skills and school readiness. The target groups are Roma children 0-3 and 3-6. This set of activities will further be focused on increasing parenting skills in early childhood development and care, health and nutrition. Moreover, the activities will contribute to strengthening the link between parents and preschool institutions.

7.1.1. Eligible activities

Activities to be fully or partially covered by the submitted proposals:

- Visibility materials
 - Preparation of visibility materials (publications, ads, posters, awareness raising materials) for outreach and household visits in local language and/or Romani language, following EU guidelines.
- Outreach and enrollment
 - Home visits in selected target localities in each country – aiming to identify the number of children in the households aged 0-3 and 3-6, which can be enrolled to kindergarten, financial situation of the families, status of vaccination and health checks, identity documents, information about requirements for enrolment, assessment of children's educational development needs, and pre-natal assistance to mothers;
 - Assistance to parents in enrolment of children in kindergartens and preschools;
 - Regular outreach and communication with parents and institutions – counseling to improve parenting practices, parental preschool involvement, attendance monitoring, emphasize the need for regular medical check-ups and immunizations, arrange vaccination campaigns for the children.
- Developing and updating databases/records
 - Database of beneficiaries;
 - Database of kindergartens (early childhood development service providers);
 - Database of parents in the events and activities;
- Small-scale infrastructure investments where needed to expand access to quality ECD services – refurbishing rooms in line with identified needs;
- Establishment and operating of Toy Libraries and purchase of toys and didactic materials - Toy Libraries are community-based programs for children and their parents and aim to support early childhood education through playing with good quality toys.
 - Establishing the Toy Libraries;
 - Selection and training of toy librarians
 - Encouraging the renting of toys, organization 'play and stay' sessions for the families as well as for communities;
 - Reaching out of remoted area by the so called 'mobile' toy library, and
 - Hosting parental events and session.

- Support to children enrolled in kindergartens and development follow-up
 - Providing regular/daily support for children attending kindergartens;
 - Providing support for fees and meals for kindergarten children;
 - Providing need-based material support and transport of children to kindergartens and preschool facilities;
 - Monitoring attendance rates;
 - Conducting International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) – an early childhood development (ECD) assessment tool which enables determining the level of individual development and progress of a child.
- Home-School-Community Liaison
 - Involving Roma parents in pre-school activities;
 - Organizing Community Motivation Events for awareness raising on good parenting practices
 - Build trust between communities and early childhood institutions
 - Facilitating professional work with mothers on early childhood development, nutrition, health, etc.
 - Improvement of parenting skills and practices of parents, in particular mothers, through informal literacy training and lessons in storytelling to be utilized with their children.
- Enrolment of children to non-segregated primary schools
 - Direct facilitation of enrolment of Roma children in their final year of early childhood education into mainstream non-segregated primary education by ensuring that all required documentation is prepared and that administrative criteria for enrolling into integrated primary schools are met.

7.1.2. Time frame for the implementation of projects by partner organizations:

September 2019 – June 2021

Project proposals need to be submitted for this period; however the grants will be signed with the supported entities on a 1-year basis and renewed for every school year during the project period. The renewal of contracts will be subject to successful implementation which will be monitored by REF.

7.1.3. Geographical coverage

Eligible countries: **Albania, Tirana and Shkodra**

The applicant needs to take into consideration during the selection of specific locations that the proposed project activities cannot take place at those locations where there is currently an on-going REF supported project.

7.1.4. Budget:

The unit cost per children is 548 Euro/child/year including all activity and administration related costs. The maximum annual available budget for Albania for the period September 2019 - August 2020 is 60,500 Euro.

7.1.5. Target group:

Roma children of pre-primary age (0-6) and Roma parents. Distribution of final beneficiaries in Albania is defined as the following, however the size of target groups might be changed slightly:

Total number of children/years: 110

Total number of parents/ years: 167

7.2 Expanding access to quality primary school education

Objectives: The objective of this activity is to facilitate access and enrolment of Roma children into mainstream primary schools and on support of the academic progress of children enrolled. Moreover, the activities will contribute to strengthening the link between parents and schools.

7.2.1. Eligible activities:

The supported entities will conduct activities which will encompass the following:

- Outreach and enrolment
 - Home visits in target localities having been identified/selected through the community needs assessment described under Activity 1.4 to raise awareness of Roma parents on the importance of education;
 - Regular outreach and communication with parents and institutions – mediation between families and primary education institutions;
 - Providing enrolment assistance to parents with children who completed this project's ECD program (Activity 2)
 - support to Roma parents in making well-informed decisions about school choice, with the aim to prevent them from enrolling their children in segregated, low-quality schools or special schools. The activity will require intense communication with and among schools and parents.
- Support to children enrolled in primary school and development follow-up
 - Providing academic and mentoring support to the children enrolled to first and second grade
 - Providing regular/daily support for children attending primary schools
 - Monitoring attendance rates and academic achievements – monitoring of school attendance during project activities, identification of early school leavers, and reintegration of early school leavers. A diagnostic and formative assessment of students and development of student individual learning plans will be envisaged with all information being shared with the pupil's class teachers.
 - Providing material support such as, education materials, transportation: etc.
- Developing and updating databases – Databases will contain information on schools and beneficiaries of the project and will be regularly updated in order to effectively manage the beneficiary selection process and track students' academic progress, attendance rates, data about the students' personal and learning needs
 - Database of beneficiaries that will attend primary schools

- Database of non-segregated primary schools
- Home-School-Community Liaison
 - Organizing Parents/school meetings
 - Capacitating parents to participate in school councils
- Working with volunteers to make the school environment more inclusive for all children – this sub-activity will be optional for the supported entities and will be implemented in line with their abilities to introduce volunteers into activity implementation.
- Establishing network of primary schools and sharing of lessons learned – the aim of this activity is to ensure a platform for schools to support each other, share experiences but also to advocate for inclusive education:

7.2.2. Time frame of the project

September 2019 – June 2021

Project proposals need to be submitted for this period, however the grants will be signed with the supported entities on a 1-year basis and renewed for every school year during the project period. The renewal of contracts will be subject to successful implementation which will be monitored by REF.

7.2.3. Geographical coverage

Eligible countries: Albania, Tirana and Shkodra

The applicant needs to take into consideration during the selection of specific locations that the proposed project activities cannot take place at those locations where there is currently an on-going REF support project.

7.2.4. Budget

The maximum annual available budget for Albania for the period September 2019 - August 2020 is 14,600 Euro.

7.2.5. Target group:

Main target group of the activities are Roma children in the 1st and 2nd grade of primary education, having participated in one year of preschool education under the 3.1. *Expanding access of Roma children to quality early childhood education (ECD)* activity.

Total number of beneficiaries to be included in Albania is **40 children**, however size of target groups might be changed slightly due to local context and project needs. based on justified needs.

8. Application procedures

Applications should be submitted and received by September 6 at project.rare@romaeducationfund.org. Please include in the subject line the name of the specific call and country, e.g.

Expanding access to quality early childhood education and primary education, Albania

Annexes:

1. [Application form \(link\)](#)
2. [Budget template for 2019-2020 academic year \(link\)](#)
3. [Project Implementation Plan \(link\)](#)
4. [Questions for organizational eligibility assessment \(link\)](#)

In addition to the above documents the applicant should attach the following documents:

- Annual financial reports for the last three years and audit report, if available;
- Organizational statutes;
- Proof of registration.