

## Roma Education Fund

### Call for Innovative Proposals and Advocacy Grants

Deadline: February 29, 2020

## SECTION 1: CALL FOR INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS

### Notice

The Roma Education Fund provides two types of grants:

1. Solicited grants<sup>1</sup> to REF's strategic partners (Ministries, Central European University, RomaVersitas programs and REF's Toy Library Network) which serve to achieve mid-term goals of REF's strategy, institutionalization and policy ownership of REF branded models of intervention.
2. Unsolicited (competitive) grants aimed towards innovations, piloting and essential interventions in education.

This Call for Proposal is for **unsolicited pilot project proposals only** and interested applicants can apply for:

- **Innovative grant proposals between EUR 20,000-50,000** aligned with REF's Strategic Framework (2021-2030) (**Section 1**).
- **Advocacy grant proposals between EUR 20,000-50,000** aligned with REF's Strategic Framework (2021-2030) (**Section 2**)

Applicants can submit only one pilot project proposal within each category either as an applicant or a partner. The Roma Education Fund will automatically mark as ineligible all applications submitted by the applicants, if more than one is received. Please note that applicants are not restricted from submitting applications for the Advocacy Call (Section 2).

Current grantees of REF are eligible to apply for new funding only if their proposal entails new activities and new beneficiaries differing from their ongoing project. Please note that the innovative grant proposal should not replicate REF's models of intervention.<sup>2</sup>

Applications must include one applicant and may include one or more partners. The Roma Education Fund strongly encourages co-funding and collaboration between NGOs and Ministries or other institutions and thus it encourages the inclusion of partners; however, under this Call for Proposals such inclusion is not compulsory. This Call for Proposals is aimed for non-governmental organizations and institutions registered and located in the Western Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia and

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<sup>1</sup> These are non-competitive calls which require comprehensive advocacy, negotiations and joint funding. They are subject to quality assessment and cannot go through a regular Call for Proposals but rather through a special invitation communicated by REF at least five months before desired/envisioned start of the project.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.romaeducationfund.org/models/>

Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Cross-country cooperation with other non-Western Balkan countries will also be considered if it is in line with the Call for Proposals.

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## Background

The Roma Education Fund's (REF) mission and goal is to contribute to closing 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 through scholarships, grant making and advocacy activities.

The objectives of REF include:

- Expanding Roma children's access to quality early childhood education and care
- Improving primary education outcomes for Roma children aged six to fourteen
- Boosting academic performance and graduation rates from secondary education for Roma pupils
- Supporting access to tertiary education, improving graduation levels and strengthening identity of Roma university students
- Expanding employment opportunities for young Roma adults

The Roma Education Fund operates in close links with civil society and institutional partners in 16 countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe.

The proposed actions by the applicants are expected to contribute and be in line with at least one of the following three strategic goals of REF as described within [REF's Strategic Framework 2021-2030](#):

*Development of human capital of Roma (individuals):* REF interventions focus on the equal access of Roma children and youth to the public education system, and on their performance, as the basis for their transition into the labor market and public/political leadership. Beneficiaries will demonstrate commitment to the Roma cause and act as agents of change in or for their communities.

*Improving the quality and inclusiveness of education systems:* Education systems in REF-supported countries are becoming more inclusive and of higher quality.

*Establish REF as a recognized resource center/advocacy institution for the inclusion of Roma in the public education system:* REF builds the competence and organizational capacity to advocate for the establishment of inclusive education systems, providing both technical advice and the effective management of a growing program providing direct support.

## 1 Call for Proposal

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### 1.1 Objective of the call

REF's mission is to contribute to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma, including promoting quality, inclusive education and desegregated schools and classrooms. The objective of the call is to select partner organizations for the implementation of innovative pilot projects that would be in line with REF's strategic framework and contribute to closing the gap.

An innovative pilot project is considered one that has not been implemented in the geographic area before and one that encourages change in formal and/or informal education. It could also introduce new technologies, interactive teaching methods, improved resilience of Roma children, trends and

practices that would result in enhanced educational outcomes in early childhood, primary or secondary education.

The proposal should include any or all of the following target groups: parents, teachers, students and/or educational institutions. It must incorporate tools to measure the educational achievements and indicators proposed.

### **1.2 Cross-Cutting Priorities**

All pilot project proposals should include measurable and lasting improvements aligned with REF's Strategic Framework and shall:

- Advocate for changes in policy development in education and/or employment
- Contribute regional knowledge exchange and communication in education and/or employment
- Contribute to building an inclusive education system and its desegregation
- Integrate gender mainstreaming perspective into the preparation and design of all components of the project
- Set grounds for sustainability of the best practices and activities in the proposal
- Provide for measurable outcomes to improving educational achievements

### **1.3 Timeframe for the grant implementation**

June 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

The innovative pilot projects should be planned with a duration of maximum 7 months.

### **1.4 Available funds**

The overall amount of funding will be announced together with the list of selected pilot projects by the REF Governing Board by June 2020.

### **1.5 Co-funding**

Under this Call for Proposals co-financing is not compulsory but it is encouraged and will be prioritized. Voluntary work and in-kind contribution should be listed, and not calculated within the budget. Partner(s) participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant. Applicant and Partner(s) must sign and provide a signed Partnership Statement with the application package.

### **1.6 Geographical coverage**

This Call for Proposals calls upon non-governmental organizations and institutions registered and operating in the Western Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

## **2 Eligibility criteria**

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

- Legally registered non-governmental organization or institution 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 and to have been registered and working for at least 2 years.
- Proven relevant experience and indicating ability to fulfill the objectives of the action
- Core values in line with REF's values – tenacity, integrity, justice, accountability and inquisitiveness – including REF's commitment to integration and gender mainstreaming
- Pilot project proposal should entail innovative activities in the country in question and should not overlap with already existing interventions funded by REF<sup>3</sup>
- Pilot project proposals with school-related activities should be supported with partnership statement(s) between the school(s) and the implementing organization.

### 3 Selection criteria

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REF's Project Management Committee will use the following criteria in the process of reviewing and selecting project proposals, and rank each one by scores 1-5:

#### Innovation and alignment with REF Strategy

- Creative approach in the project design and methodology aimed at building resilience of Roma students through curricular or extracurricular activities
- Innovative approach in working with beneficiaries and implementation of project activities
- Gender-mainstreaming integrated in the implementation of all project activities
- Alignment with REF's strategic framework and priorities

#### Grass-roots involvement and participation

- Experience with Roma community and target groups: REF prioritizes organizations that are rooted in their community and operate with community input and investment
- Roma involvement in planning and management of project: REF prioritizes organizations in which Roma participation is encouraged and valued
- Geographical operation: project activities will be implemented in areas of the project countries which extend REF's geographical coverage and add new beneficiaries

#### Future impact

- Potential for scaling-up, replication by local and national institutions; stakeholders' engagement
- Potential to impact advocacy and policy actions aimed at influencing decisions and changing the discourse towards improved educational systems to benefit Roma
- REF encourages and prioritizes co-financing, voluntary work and in-kind contribution as part of the proposal. All costs should be stated clearly and separately for the whole project duration.

#### Monitoring

- Well-elaborated Project Implementation and Monitoring Plan to track and measure the progress and project indicators

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<sup>3</sup> Please find the list of active grants funded by REF [here](#) and the list of active grants funded by European Union and implemented by REF [here](#), to assure no overlapping of actions in the countries.

### 3.1 Grant amounts

The minimum requested funding for the innovative pilot projects is **EUR 20,000** and the maximum requested funding is **EUR 50,000**. REF reserves the right to change this amount (increase, decrease) depending on the outcomes of the Call for Proposals.

### 3.2 Costs

REF will consider **eligible** most of the usual operational costs, including:

- Costs for gross salaries for staff involved in implementing the proposed action. **Administration category within the budget template must include staff salaries and administration costs.** This category must not exceed 25% of the total budget requested from REF.
- Partial operational costs for the organizations' regular work (office rent, electricity/heating, phone bills, etc.) that are relevant to the proposed action
- Direct costs for the proposed action that will occur during its implementation period
- Small scale study visits limited to circumstance and justification
- Educational equipment with proper justification for the project activities and within reasonable amount and cost range

Grantees are obliged to open a separate bank account for their REF supported project.

REF will consider the following costs **not eligible**:

- Costs of activities that are completed before the date of signature of the grant contract
- Costs declared by the grantee that are financed by another donor
- Projects supporting individual political parties
- Purchase of vehicles, furniture and another inventory
- Purchase or renovation (fully or partially) of fixed assets (land, buildings, etc.)
- Loans to third parties
- Currency exchange losses
- Debts and debt service charges
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses
- Conferences and roundtables
- Re-granting

## 4 Application process

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### 4.1 Application Package

**Innovative Grant Proposal** between EUR 20,000-50,000:

1. [Application form for standard grant proposal](#)
2. [Budget table](#)
3. [Organizational eligibility criteria template](#)
4. [Project Implementation and Monitoring Plan](#)

Detailed instructions on how to fill the forms are provided in the documents. Please use the correct templates that are published as part of this Call for Proposals and do not change their content or format.

**Annexes containing required supporting documents** for this stage of the application process:

- Annex 1. Proof of registration
- Annex 2. Organizational statutes
- Annex 3. Annual financial reports for the last two years (2018, 2017) and audit report, if available
- Annex 4. [Signed Partnership statement](#)

All items of the Application Package, including Innovative Grant Proposal and Annexes, must be completed.

#### **4.2 Deadline**

The deadline for the submission of applications is **February 29, 2020** by midnight, CET time.

Applications must be submitted electronically at [grantproposals@romaeducationfund.org](mailto:grantproposals@romaeducationfund.org). Please note that all documents in the application package should be sent by email in the original format provided with this Call, and all annexes including Partnership statement should be sent in a true scan format (PDF) of the original version as evidenced by the presence of scanned signatures. Annexes with multiple pages should be placed in one pdf file.

Please include in the subject line: **Call for Innovative Proposals 2020, Country name** (please add the country name where the pilot project would be implemented)

#### **4.3 Information and FAQs**

REF encourages applicants to consult the Roma Education Fund [website](#) on a regular basis so that they are timely and adequately informed on project activities, calls and updates. If information needed cannot be found on the website, please send an email with your question to [grantproposals@romaeducationfund.org](mailto:grantproposals@romaeducationfund.org) no later than February 10, 2020. REF will provide answers to all questions no later than February 20 for this Call for Proposals.

Names of selected grantees shall be published on REF's website.

## **5 Tentative timetable for evaluation of applications**

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January 15-31, 2020	Information sessions in each country
February 10, 2020	Deadline to submit questions
February 20, 2020	FAQs posted on REF website
<b>February 29, 2020</b>	Deadline to submit application package
May 20, 2020	Selection of partners
<b>June 1, 2020</b>	Notification sent to selected partners
<b>August 20, 2020</b>	Contracting of the partner organizations

## SECTION 2: CALL FOR ADVOCACY PROPOSALS

### Notice

Applicants can submit only one project proposal within this call either as an applicant or a partner. The Roma Education Fund will automatically mark as ineligible all applications submitted by the applicants, if more than one.

Interested applicants should also be aware that, under the current Call for Proposals, those organizations and institutions that are currently grantees of REF and have ongoing project implementation funded by REF are eligible to apply for new funding only if the proposal submitted entails new activities and new beneficiaries in an area different from the one where their ongoing project is being implemented.

Applications must include one applicant and may or may not include one or more partners. The Roma Education Fund strongly encourages co-funding and collaboration between NGOs or other advocacy institutions and thus it encourages the inclusion of partners; however, under this Call for Proposals such inclusion is not compulsory.

### Background

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The Roma Education Fund's (REF) mission and 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 through scholarships, grant making and advocacy activities.

The objectives of REF include:

- Expanding Romani children's access to quality early childhood education and care;
- Improving primary education outcomes for Romani children aged six to fourteen;
- Boosting academic performance and graduation rates from secondary education for Romani pupils;
- Supporting access to tertiary education, improving graduation levels and strengthening identity of Romani university students, and
- Expanding employment opportunities for young Romani adults.

The Roma Education Fund operates in close links with civil society and institutional partners in 16 countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

The proposed actions by the applicants are expected to contribute and be in line with the following three strategic goals of REF as described within REF's Strategic Framework 2021-2030:

*Development of human capital of Roma (individuals):* REF interventions focus on the equal access of Roma children and youth to the public education system, and on their performance, as the basis for their transition into the labor market and public/political leadership. Beneficiaries will demonstrate commitment to the Roma cause and act as agents of change in or for their communities.

*Improving the quality and inclusiveness of education systems:* Education systems in REF-supported countries are becoming more inclusive and of higher quality.

*Establish REF as a recognized resource center/advocacy institution for the inclusion of Roma in the public education system:* REF builds the competence and organizational capacity to advocate for the establishment of inclusive education systems, providing both technical advice and the effective management of a growing program providing direct support.

Please also note that this call for proposal is a support for one grant in the maximum amount of 10,000 EUR in Hungary.

## 1. Call for Proposal

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### 1.1 Objective of the call

REF's vision is for a fair and inclusive society to bring educational equity to Roma. It is also pivotal to Roma students to have equal chance and opportunity to access quality education, to Roma successfully complete their studies acquiring profession, to have social and economic welfare through employment and communities to be empowered their voices, interests and needs to be heard. Cooperation between grantees and other advocacy institutions needs to be established to strengthen the capacity of available networks and to shape and build sustainable educational policies. Civil society organizations need to have the capacity to advocate and to address institutional biases towards Roma in order to ensure equal and just access and treatment of all in the education system.

The objective of the call is to select the partner organization for the implementation of advocacy project that will be in line with [REF's Strategic Framework 2021-2030](#) and contribute to achieve the vision of REF.

### 1.2 Main Priorities

All project proposals need to follow the application form, however the content itself should be designed by the applicant. Project proposals also need to include proposed measures leading to improvements aligned with REF's strategic goals objectives and advocacy vision. The project proposals should encompass some of the following:

- Build-up/strengthen advocacy network in the respective country along top three priorities being identified by the applicant
- Contribute to place Roma educational and employment challenges on political agendas and gain political and civic support for specific advocacy efforts
- Contribute to advocacy and policy development in 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, its desegregation and for inclusive employment policies/environment;
- Integrate gender mainstreaming perspective into the project implementation;
- Work on adding sustainability of the proposed actions and interventions in the proposal;
- Facilitate and foster dialogue between Roma, non-Roma communities, and school stakeholders and strengthen Roma communities to become active advocates for improved educational opportunities;
- Develop specific political and policy narratives that positions Roma on political agendas;
- Set up pathways for facilitation for Roma employment opportunities
- Contribute to the development of Roma leadership and civic education
- Increase the visibility of educational issues Roma face by providing publications, interviews, articles, statements, analyses etc. in media and respective journals

In addition to this, REF will prioritize measurable actions related to the following:

- Early school leaving of Roma;
- Institutional school segregation and quality of education;
- Improved resilience of Roma children and work with Roma parents;

### **1.3 Timeframe for the Advocacy project implementation**

June 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020

The advocacy projects should be planned with a duration of 7 months.

The renewal of contracts will be subject to available funds and successful implementation which will be monitored by REF. Although, the implementation period might vary according to the applicant's preferences upon reasonable agreement.

### **1.4 Available funds**

The overall amount of funding will be announced together with the list of selected projects by the REF Governing Board by June 2020.

The Roma Education Fund also reserves the right not to award any or all of the available funds and reallocate available funds to future Calls for Proposals.

### **1.5 Co-Financing**

Under this Call for Proposals co-financing is not compulsory but it is encouraged and will be prioritized as well as to build synergies with already ongoing advocacy efforts and initiatives in the country.

In-kind contribution should be listed, and not calculated within the budget. Partner(s) participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant. Applicant and Partner(s) must sign and provide a Partnership Statement.

### **1.6 Geographical coverage**

This Call for Proposals calls upon non-governmental organizations and institutions registered and located in the Western Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

## **2. Eligibility criteria**

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

- Legally registered non-governmental organization or institution 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 and to have been registered and working for at least 2 years;
- 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;
- Project proposal should not duplicate activities in ongoing project funded by REF in the country in question.

## **3. Selection criteria**

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REF will use the following criteria in the process of reviewing and selection of project proposals, and rank each one by scores 1-5:

- Alignment with REF's strategic framework and priorities within the project proposal;
- Track record of previous project implementation and experience with REF, if any;
- 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;
- Gender-mainstreaming integrated within all project activities planned in the project proposal and its implementation;

- Advocacy and policy actions developed and aimed at influencing decisions and changing the discourse towards improved educational systems in the country that would contribute to Roma;
- Co-financing and in-kind contribution. REF encourages and prioritizes co-financing and in-kind contribution as part of the proposal. All the costs should be stated clearly and separately for the whole project duration;

### **3.1 Grant amounts**

The funding for the innovative projects can be up to **EUR 25,000**. REF reserves the right to change this amount (increase, decrease) depending on the outcomes of the Call for Proposals.

### **3.2 Costs**

REF will consider **eligible** most of the usual operational costs, including:

- Costs for gross-salaries for involved staff in implementing the proposed action. Administration category within the budget template must include staff salaries and administration costs. This category must not exceed 25% of the total budget requested from REF.
- Partial operational costs for the NGOs regular work (office rents, electricity/heating, phone bills, etc.) that are relevant to the proposed action;
- Direct costs for the proposed action that will occur during its implementation period.

REF will consider the following costs **not eligible**:

- Costs of activities that are completed at the date of signature of the grant contract;
- Cost declared by the grantee that are financed by another donor;
- Projects supporting individual political parties;
- Purchase of vehicles, equipment, furniture and other inventory;
- Purchase or renovation (fully or partially) of fixed assets (land, buildings, etc.),
- Credits to third parties;
- Currency exchange losses;
- Debts and debt service charges;
- Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses.
- Re-granting

## **4. Application process**

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### **4.1 Application Form**

Applicants need to provide the application package consisting of:

1. [Application form for proposal](#)
2. [Budget table](#)

3. [Organizational eligibility criteria template](#)
4. [Project Implementation and Monitoring Plan](#)

*Detailed instructions on how to fill the forms are provided in the documents.*

Annexes containing required supporting documents for this stage of the application process:

- Annex 1. Proof of registration
- Annex 2. Organizational statutes
- Annex 3. Annual financial reports for the last two years (2018, 2019) and audit report, if available
- Annex 4. [Signed partnership statement](#), if any

## **4.2 Completing the Application Form**

All parts of the Application Form must be completed, as well as annexes. Please, use the correct templates that are published as part of this Call for Proposals and please do not change their content or format. The correct templates for this call for proposals, can be found on the following link:

## **4.3 Deadline**

The deadline for the submission of applications is **February 29, 2020** by midnight, CET time.

Applications must be submitted electronically at [advocacyproposals@romaeducationfund.org](mailto:advocacyproposals@romaeducationfund.org).

Please include in the subject line the following: REF Call for Advocacy Proposal 2020, Country name (Please add the country name where the project will be implemented)

*Please note that the electronic version must include a true scan (in PDF or other format) of the original version as evidenced by the presence of scanned signatures, as well as the electronic versions of the form and the annexes in word and excel files.*

## **4.4 Information and FAQ**

If information needed cannot be found on the website, please send an email with your question to the [advocacyproposals@romaeducationfund.org](mailto:advocacyproposals@romaeducationfund.org) not later than 10 calendar days before the deadline for this Call for Proposal. REF will provide answers to all questions not later than 5 calendar days before the deadline for this Call for Proposals.

## **5. Timetable for evaluation of applications**

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January 15 - 31, 2020	Information sessions in each country
February 10, 2020	Deadline to submit questions
February 20, 2020	FAQs posted on REF website
<b>February 29, 2020</b>	Deadline to submit application package
May 20, 2020	Selection of partners

**June 1, 2020**  
**August 20, 2020**

Notification sent to selected partners  
Contracting of the partner organizations