Project "EU Regional Action: Increased Education Opportunities for Roma Students in Western Balkans and Turkey"

Call for the selection of implementing partner organizations in Serbia and Turkey

in the field of

increasing access and participation of Roma students in tertiary education

Call open until August 16, 2020

Contents

1. Background

In 2018, Roma Education Fund (REF) started implementing the project *EU Regional Action: Increased Education Opportunities for Roma Students in Western Balkans and Turkey,* funded by EU DG NEAR. The project aims to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma in the participation and completion of quality education through gender-sensitive programming, to improve Roma students' transition between education and employment and to promote durable systemic change and desegregation of 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 levels 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. Objective of the call

The objective of the call is to select partner organizations for the implementation of activities related increasing access and participation of Roma students in tertiary education and transition to labor market. These activities will serve as a bridge for young Roma tertiary students and graduates towards employment and active citizenship, by providing tailored training in professional development, computer courses, foreign language competences, but should as well include support to Roma students in education in respect to needed mitigation of the negative consequences of COVID-19 and its potential reoccurring.

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

There will be one grant awarded in each country.

2.1   Geographical coverage

Eligible countries where the project should be realized are Turkey and Serbia.

Note: 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.

2.2   Target group

The target group are Roma students accepted to full time BA studies from the 2020/21 academic year and to be followed during one school year period. REF plans to increase the scale of interventions and number of new activities in countries where it has cultivated strong partnerships and solid implementation capacities, thus the size of target groups might be changed slightly due to this reason.

Note: The beneficiaries of this project cannot be persons who are beneficiaries of other REF's interventions in the countries of operations.

<u>Serbia:</u>
- Number of scholarship recipients 30/year
- Number of students participating in mentoring and tutoring 30/year
- Number of students in internship placement up to 30/year
- Number of students in professional development 30/year

<u>Turkey:</u>
- Number of scholarship recipients 16/year
- Number of students participating in mentoring and tutoring 16/year
- Number of students in internship placement up to 16/year
- Number of students in professional development 16 /year

2.3   Available funds

The available country-based budget which cannot be exceeded per country for the project period is:

- Serbia – 49,800 EUR
- Turkey – 28,597 EUR.

3. Eligible activities

The main purpose of the action is to create and consolidate a qualified pool of Roma with higher education degrees, to help inclusion by serving as role models and social capital for their communities, as well as maintain and improve performance and graduation levels of Roma tertiary education students and facilitate their transition to the labor market.

The activities aim to support 30 university students in Serbia and 16 university students in Turkey over the academic year 2020/2021 through merit-based scholarship support, academic support, and professional development. The support to be provided to the students in both countries is to be focused on increase of beneficiaries' graduation and employability as closely linked to each other. Therefore, the applicants are to plan to cover both objectives (3.1 and 3.2) in their proposals.

3.1 Activity set 1 – Increasing graduation rate of Roma at university level though implementation of Scholarship scheme

Objective:
The objective of the financial support is to increase access and participation of Roma students in tertiary education and transition to labor market.

Eligible activities:

- *Scholarship support for 30 students in Serbia and 16 students in Turkey in tertiary education* – The scholarships will be provided to students pursuing full-time Bachelor level degrees at state-accredited universities.

- *Mentorship, tutorship support to Roma tertiary students* in order to improve the academic performance and graduation levels and prevents drop-out of Roma tertiary education students. The mentorship and tutorship support will comprise:
  - Carrying out an assessment of the mentorship and tutorship needs;
  - Including an action plan for supporting Roma students in education in respect to needed mitigation of the negative consequences of COVID-19 and its potential reoccurring;
  - Developing an individual portfolio for each student that will include academic data, development plan, list of the duties and responsibilities of the tutors and tutees, and other relevant data;
  - Identifying tutors/mentors to provide individual/group tutoring/mentoring. The tutors/mentors will be drawn from tertiary graduates, senior tertiary students with outstanding academic achievements, and junior university professors;
  - Developing and submitting plan of activities and time frames: the tutees together with the tutors will schedule and submit a plan of topics and activities to the project staff;
  - Monitoring the implementation of the individual academic tutoring activity.

3.2 Activity set 2 – Facilitating transition to labor market

Objective:
The objective of the financial support is to facilitate the transition of tertiary Roma students to the labor market, by providing career guidance and trainings, and developing opportunities for internships placement. In complement to this, REF will support scholarship beneficiaries and graduates to access labor market by identifying and facilitating labor market entry with potential employers.

Eligible activities:

- Internship placement

- Professional development support – equip tertiary scholarship beneficiaries with skills which should facilitate the transition to the labor market. The activity will be delivered in cooperation with accredited schools and professional development companies that provide languages, communication and IT literacy courses.

- Tailored trainings on career guidance – During four thematic workshops per year in each country, students will acquire and improve their skills for writing CVs and motivational letter and preparing for interviews. The professional development and career guidance trainings will consist of:
    - identifying the needs for professional development of the tertiary scholarship beneficiaries;
    - identifying and recruiting trainers among schools and companies;
    - creating and implementing (by the trainers) of practical and interactive training programs;
    - developing and keeping students' (trainees') portfolios;
    - administering and monitoring the implementation of the professional development mentoring.

- Community work – engaging students in community work according to the needs if lockdown and strict measures are re-introduced to COVID-19 reoccurring.

3.3   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.

3.4   Time frame for the project implementation

The projects should be implemented in the period of September 2020 – June 2021.
The project is in its third, and last year of implementation. The grants will be signed with the selected partner organizations on a one-year basis.

3.5   Costs

The unit cost for scholarship is a unified amount across each country, while the unit cost of other activities is only indicative for planning and can be adjusted to the local needs.

- Unit cost for Scholarship: 1000 Euro /student/ academic year;
- Unit cost for mentoring/tutoring: 200 Euro/student/academic year;
- Unit cost for employability related activity: 300 Euro/student/ year;

- Unit cost for internship placement: 800 Euro/student/ year;

Note: In the 3. Annex, Budget template, please fill in only the first sheet named Budget details.

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. Eligible costs

The budget for the action has to be planned in realistic and cost-effective manner. 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.

6. 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.

7. Application submission

7.1 Submission deadline and format

The deadline for the submission of applications is August 16, 2020 by midnight, CET time.

Applications must be submitted electronically to the following address:

rareproposals@romaeducationfund.org.

The subject line of the e-mail should contain the following: *RARE - Call for Proposals 2020 – tertiary education – [country name]*

The application package must include all required annexes. Application form, Budget and Project Implementation Plan must be submitted in the original format (Word or Excel). In addition, the application package must include a true scan (in PDF) of the original version as evidenced by the presence of scanned signatures. Failure to submit a required annex or submission of the application documents in different formats that prescribed will result in rejection in the administrative check phase.

Annexes:

1. Glossary of Terms
2. Application form (link)

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3. Budget template (link)
4. Project Implementation and Monitoring Plan template (link)
5. Organizational eligibility assessment template (link)
6. Annex 4. Signed partnership statement (if applicable) (link)
7. List of Active Grants GRANT DPT
8. List of Active Grants DGN

In addition to the above documents the applicant should attach the following documents:
- Annex 1. Proof of registration
- Annex 2. Organizational statutes (of the main applicant and the partnering organization)
- Annex 3. Annual financial reports for the last two years (2019, 2018) and audit report, if available

7.2 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:

rareproposals@romaeducationfund.org

no later than August 8, 2020. REF will provide answers to all questions no later than August 12, 2020 for this Call for Proposals.

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

8. Tentative timetable for evaluating applications

16 August 2020	Deadline to submit full proposal including project proposal, budget and organizational capacity template and additional annexes listed below. In the proposal please select the program design activities and specify the size of target group and geographical coverage of your intervention.
1 September 2020	Selection of partner organizations
14 September 2020	Notification of selected partners
28 September 2020	Contracting of the partner organizations

www.romaeducationfund.org
info@romaeducationfund.org

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