

**Project “EU Regional Action for Roma Education:
Increased Education Support and Opportunities for Roma
Students in the Western Balkans and Turkey (RARE)”,
phase II**

**Call for the Selection of Implementing Partner Organizations
in the Western Balkans and Turkey**

in the field of

**Expanding Access to Quality Early Childhood Development (ECD)
and Primary School Education for Roma Children**

Call open until July 14, 2023

Contents

1. Background	3
2. Objective of the Call	4
2.1 Geographical Coverage	4
2.2 Target Group.....	5
2.3 Available Funds.....	6
3. Eligible Activities	7
3.1 Activity Set 1 – Expanding Access of Roma Children to Quality Early Childhood Education (ECD).....	7
3.2 Activity Set 2 – Expanding Access to Quality Primary School Education (PRI).....	8
3.3 Cross-Cutting Priorities, which will be targeted by the entire Project	9
3.4 Time Frame for the Project Implementation	10
4. Assessment and Selection of Applications	10
4.1 Eligibility Criteria.....	10
4.2 Selection Criteria.....	10
5. Eligible Costs	11
6. Monitoring and Evaluation	11
7. Application Submission	12
7.1 Submission Deadline and Format	12
7.2 Information and FAQs	13
8. Tentative Timetable for Evaluating Applications	13

1. Background

The project *EU Regional Action for Roma Education: Increased Education Support and Opportunities for Roma Students in the Western Balkans and Turkey (RARE), phase II* constitutes a second phase of the already-implemented project during 2018-2021 by REF. During the first phase of the project, the education services provided through the seven project countries (Albania – ALB; Bosnia and Herzegovina – BIH; Kosovo – KOS; Montenegro – MNE; North Macedonia – MAC; Serbia – SER; Turkey – TUR) amounted to involving more than 4500 Roma children and youth (from all educational levels) in education activities. The present project continues the gains and results of the initial project, while, at the same time, creating a well-founded base for children and youth inclusion and participation in education.

The project envisages three specific calls for implementing partner organizations in the fields of: 1. Early Childhood Development and primary school education (ECD and PRI), 2. Secondary Education (SEC) and 3. Tertiary Education (TER).

The project objectives will be achieved through:

- *Contribution to improving the educational outcomes of Roma children and youth.* Through the activities, the children and the students will benefit from pre-school education and enrolment into primary schools, scholarship provision for Roma students in secondary and tertiary education, including mentoring and support.
- *Generate support in the transition of Roma students from education to employment.* Secondary and tertiary students will benefit from an employability-aimed approach (training on soft skills, material support, internship opportunities and experience exchanges etc.).
- *Promote inclusive education within the education systems of the project countries.* The project will build capacities of relevant authorities and their understanding of the specific challenges faced by the Roma community, support regional networking and exchanging experiences with the aim to contribute to mainstreaming of Roma in the relevant policy domains.
- *Increase access and participation of Roma girls in the education and contribute to improved gender equality.*
In this sense, beneficiaries will be selected according to criteria that will support and promote gender equality in the sense that priority will be given to girls/women to be included in the project, thus ensuring gender inclusion throughout the entire period of the implementation of the project (related to all specific objectives).

The project is expected to run until December 2026. The potential implementing partner organizations will be covering activities for 3 academic years: 2023-2024 academic year; 2024-2025 academic year; 2025-2026 academic year.

2. Objective of the Call

The objective of the call is to select **one partner organization per assigned country** for the implementation of activities to **both** support the access of Roma children to quality **Early Childhood Development services (ECD)**, and **primary education (PRI)** and support their parents into a more active role in the education of their children. These activities are to be implemented through ensuring quality services, establishing relevant networks, child-focused education program, parenting programs etc.

The granted entities will be responsible for implementation of their proposed activities, as well as data collection (upon the supervision and coordination of REF), policy dialogue with local actors, participation in project-related professional trainings and events.

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 of the countries assigned in the Call, and the grant will include both levels of education (ECD and PRI).

Additionally, two specific calls for implementing partner organizations in the fields of Secondary Education (SEC) and Tertiary Education (TER) are published parallel to this call. Implementing partners in each of the assigned countries for each level of education will be responsible for the implementation of activities to:

- Support the graduation of Roma **secondary students** and to increase their employability potential in the labor market.
(The link of that call can be found in the respective section of the website of REF, together with the link to the present call)
- Improve retention, performance and graduation levels of Roma **tertiary students** through academic tutoring, mentoring, and other professional development services to increase their employability potential.
(The link of that call can be found in the respective section of the website of REF, together with the link to the present call)

2.1 Geographical Coverage

Eligible countries where the project should be realized are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

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

The potential grantees have to take into account several aspects when proposing locations within their applications. Preference would be given to applications who include locations where parents and/or community members have experience in project activity involvement and/or collective activities for positive change; presence of other initiatives relevant for the priorities of the Roma communities; locations with considerable number of Roma community members, along with Roma representation in the institutions (e.g. municipal councils,

municipalities, administration etc.). These aspects should be properly described and documented in the submitted applications.

2.2 Target Group

Distribution of final beneficiaries according to countries are indicated in the tables below. It is envisaged that proposals take into consideration, as target groups: children of ECD age (including parents); children of primary-school age (including parents), disaggregated by gender in all aspects of the application.

The size and the proportion of the target groups per country are detailed in the tables below per each of the 3 anticipated academic years of the proposals. In the first academic year of the project (Year 1), it is envisaged that potential grantees would involve only ECD-aged beneficiaries (together with their parents). Starting with the second year of the project (Year 2) and also during the third year of the project (Year 3), it is envisaged that interventions will cover both ECD-aged beneficiaries (together with their parents) and primary school-aged beneficiaries (together with their parents). Some of the ECD-aged children that are involved in the first year could transition to primary school education in the second year.

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 could change slightly due to this reason.

Countries	Total No. of <u>children/</u> year	Total No. of <u>parents/</u> year	Total No. of <u>children/</u> year	Total No. of <u>parents/</u> year	Total No. of <u>children/</u> year	Total No. of <u>parents/</u> year
	(Academic Year 1)	(Academic Year 1)	(Academic Year 2)	(Academic Year 2)	(Academic Year 3)	(Academic Year 3)
<i>Final beneficiaries ECD</i>						
Albania (ALB)	60	32	60	32	60	32
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH)	54	34	53	34	53	34
Kosovo (KOS)	47	26	47	26	46	26
North Macedonia (MAC)	87	38	87	38	86	38
Montenegro (MNE)	34	16	33	16	33	16
Serbia (SER)	87	38	87	38	86	38
Turkey (TUR)	34	16	33	16	33	16
Total	403	200	400	200	397	200

Countries	Total No. of children/ year	Total No. of parents/ year	Total No. of children/ year	Total No. of parents/ year	Total No. of children/ year	Total No. of parents/ year
	(Academic Year 1)	(Academic Year 1)	(Academic Year 2)	(Academic Year 2)	(Academic Year 3)	(Academic Year 3)
<i>Final beneficiaries PRI</i>						
Albania (ALB)	0	0	80	32	80	32
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH)	0	0	90	34	90	34
Kosovo (KOS)	0	0	75	26	75	26
North Macedonia (MAC)	0	0	110	38	110	38
Montenegro (MNE)	0	0	45	16	45	16
Serbia (SER)	0	0	110	38	110	38
Turkey (TUR)	0	0	40	16	40	16
Total	0	0	550	200	550	200

Note: It is mandatory to gender-disaggregate the beneficiaries in the application and annexes (min. 50% should be represented by Roma girls/women).

2.3 Available Funds

The unit costs per child involved in ECD activities is at approx. 510 Eur/child/year including all activity and administration-related costs (including all correlative parental support for the parents of the children). The unit costs per child involved in primary school-related activities is at approx. 360 Eur./child/year including all activity and administration-related costs (including all correlative parental support for the parents of the children).

The total available annual (i.e. academic year) country-based budget cannot exceed the limits highlighted below:

Countries	Maximum annual budget (Euro/year) (Academic Year 1)	Maximum annual budget (Euro/year) (Academic Year 2)**	Maximum annual budget (Euro/year) (Academic Year 3)**
<i>Allocation ECD and PRI (primary school)</i>			
Albania (ALB)	30,600.00	59,400.00	59,400.00
Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH)	27,540.00	59,430.00	59,430.00
Kosovo (KOS)	23,970.00	50,970.00	50,460.00
North Macedonia (MAC)	44,370.00	83,970.00	83,460.00
Montenegro (MNE)	17,340.00	33,030.00	33,030.00
Serbia (SER)	44,370.00	83,970.00	83,460.00

Turkey (TUR)	17,340.00	31,230.00	31,230.00
Total	205,530.00	402,000.00	400,470.00

*** The budgets allocated for academic years 2 and 3 are higher than for year 1 as it is expected that beneficiaries of primary-school related activities (including the correlative parental support for the parents of the children) are to be involved starting from year 2, whereas year 1 concerns solely children involved in ECD activities (including the correlative parental support for the parents of the children).

The breakdown per target group for all 3 years and for ECD and primary-school related activities is to be found in the tables above.

Note: It is recommended to thoroughly read all the instructions and recommendations contained in the Annex Budget form prior to elaborating the budget proposal. All budget sheets are mandatory to be filled in. Indirect costs must be in maximum value of 7% of the total direct justified costs of the budget proposal.

3. Eligible Activities

The main purpose of the action is to expand the access of Roma children of both genders to quality pre-school and primary education, and to increase the number of parents who will have an active role in the children's education.

The activities aim to support 1200 children aged 0-6 years, 1100 children of primary education age, and 1000 parents. The activities will be implemented in the assigned countries over the three academic years from 2023 to 2026 for ECD, and two years, 2024-2026 for children in primary education. This set of activities will further be focused on increasing parenting skills in early childhood development and care and will contribute to strengthening the link between parents and preschool institutions. Therefore, the applicants are expected to cover both objectives (see below 3.1 and 3.2) in their proposals.

3.1 Activity Set 1 – Expanding Access of Roma Children to Quality Early Childhood Education (ECD)

Objective:

The objective of the financial support is to expand the access of Roma children to at least one year of preschool education. In addition to that, it also aims to support parents about child development and early childhood education.

Eligible activities:

- Access to quality ECD services: to ensure that Roma children benefit at least a 1 year of quality preschool education activities. Potential actions might include enrolment assistance to children, home visits, health checkups of children, covering enrolment fee and school materials, including other types of financial/material support etc.
- Provide opportunities for outdoor activities and learning, including implementing appropriate tools and techniques for learning.
- Child-focused education programs (e.g. Toy Library/Education Houses, Roma language, identity and culture):

These programs of Roma Education Fund have crucial role in reaching out to Roma parents and children and provide for better early childhood development services. They are centered around community venues where children, their families and caregivers can meet to take part in education services, learn or improve Romani language, to explore the Roma culture and to consolidate their ethnic identity, overcoming the racial and prejudices internalization. As well, they can interact, borrow toys, puzzles and books that are designed to support children's early development and learning. Although each venue is different and adjusted to the local specificities, there are some core activities offered by them.

Main activities may include: establishing the venue – purchasing toys and furniture; selection and training of local staff, encouraging interactions among community members, organization of activities (as highlighted above).

- **Parenting programs:**
Activity to increase the parenting skills of parents related to early child development, through which they can better support and understand the development of their children and, thus, forming a community of parents.
Roma Education Fund has developed during the previous phase its parental programs consisting of 24 months of sessions for parents (1 session/month). Grantees are free to use REF's parenting program or any other in order to form communities of parents. Mains actions may include parents community clubs, community events etc.
- **Enrolment of children to primary schools:**
Direct facilitation of enrolment of Roma children in their final year of early childhood education into primary education, by ensuring that all required documentation is prepared and that administrative criteria for enrolling into integrated primary schools are met.
- **Digital learning:**
Enabling children, pupils and especially their parents to catch up with the learning opportunities of digitalization and consequently improve the quality of children and pupils' upbringing and education; actions aimed at offering digital learning opportunities for the beneficiaries (e.g. improving IT skills, learning opportunities, familiarization with digital tools, digital learning opportunities for teachers etc.);
- **Advocacy and policy actions:**
Planning local and national level advocacy actions in order to ensure a better position for young Roma children. Concrete advocacy objectives and activities will be defined. Actions might include policy events, round table discussions with policy makers, building of alliances, policy campaigns.

3.2 Activity Set 2 – Expanding Access to Quality Primary School Education (PRI)

Objective:

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

Eligible activities:

- **Outreach and enrolment:**
Home visits; regular outreach and communication with parents and institutions – Facilitate the process of communication of the community towards the school, facilitation processes of the families towards the primary education institutions; providing enrolment assistance to parents with children who completed this project's ECD program, enrollment into primary schools; providing material support such as: education materials, transportation, including other types of financial/material support, etc.
- **Support to children enrolled in primary school:**
Coordination with teachers and parents related to academic development of pupils; providing academic and mentoring support to the children enrolled to first and second grade of primary school; monitoring attendance rates and academic achievements, including quality indicators.
- **Working with volunteers:**
Ensuring that the school environment is more inclusive for all children.
- **Establishing a network of primary schools and sharing of lessons learned:**
The aim of this activity is to ensure a platform for schools in the region to support each other, share experiences but also to advocate for inclusive education.
- **Digital learning:**
Actions aimed at offering digital learning opportunities for the beneficiaries (e.g. improving IT skills, learning opportunities, familiarization with digital tools, digital learning opportunities for teachers etc.);
- **Advocacy and policy actions:**
Planning local and national level advocacy actions for young Roma children. Concrete advocacy objectives and activities will be defined by the grantees. Actions might include policy events, round table discussions with policy makers, building of alliances, policy campaigns.

All eligible activities listed above are expected to be included in the submitted proposals. Any other activities/actions that applicants consider valuable for the potential impact of their proposals are welcome (and will be considered beneficial).

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 learning or improving Romani language, to exploring the Roma culture and to consolidating ethnic identity;
- Contribute to policy development in their project area and to regional knowledge exchange and communication;
- Advocate for changes in policy development through their project-related activities, and/or contribute to existing advocacy efforts in their area;
- Contribute to building an inclusive education system;
- Build common regional policy efforts among the seven countries among the future grantees.

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 regarding ECD should be implemented in the period of September 2023 – June 2026.

The projects regarding Primary education should be implemented in the period of September 2024 – June 2026.

The grant-making project is in its first year of implementation and is part of the second phase of the funding program RARE. Applications submitted must cover three academic years, but the second and the third years will be contracted upon satisfactory monitoring of the implementation, quality performance and adequate reporting of the grantee in their first academic year of project implementation (thus, the continuation of the grant contract from one academic year to the other will be based on the implementation of the previous year, as assessed by REF). The grants will be signed with the selected partner organizations on a one-year basis.

4. Assessment and Selection of Applications

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

In order to be awarded a grant, the following eligibility criteria apply:

- The applicant is a 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 fulfil the objectives of the action.
- 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, grassroots activities, commitment to the call's objectives and effectiveness in using funds, according to satisfactory monitoring reports, as well as successful outcomes and closure of similar relevant projects.
- Geographical operation of the organization: Organization's previous 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 of the project: REF prioritizes organizations in which Roma leadership and/or participation/membership is encouraged and valued.

5. Eligible Costs

The budget for the action has to be planned in a 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;
- reasonable, justified and in compliance with the requirements of sound financial management, in particular 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 (grantee) will have to collect baseline data and maintain databases of project beneficiaries. This information will be provided to REF on a regular basis. The grantee will submit intermediary and final narrative and financial reports, as agreed in the grant contract.

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.

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning represent main components of the additional support provided by REF along with the grant offered. Through the implementation of the grant contracts, the potential grantees will be requested to regularly submit data and information regarding the results and impact of their action. The knowledge related to results of activities, the extent of the involvement of the beneficiaries, the results at the level of interventions would inform policy building on project impact and overall advocacy efforts. The data and information to be regularly submitted would come along with the reporting instruments on the project or during the project implementation.

At the same time, in addition to the project-based monitoring and evaluation purposes, the monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes would also be aimed at informing, contributing to, and aligning to the regional policy initiatives, on themes related to the grantees' activities and actions.

During the implementation, REF will be:

- Overseeing and supporting project implementation – regular field visits by Country Facilitators, periodical monitoring visits, reviewing supported entities' narrative and financial reports, advisory and technical support to supported entities in implementation and reporting.
- Reviewing supported entities' intermediary and final narrative and financial reports and closure of the projects – in line with REF grant scheme procedures, the reports submitted by supported entities will be reviewed by Country Facilitators, Project Officers, Grant Officer and Finance Manager. The projects will be closed only upon positive reviews and approval of narrative and financial reports.
- Providing professional trainings and capacity development.

7. Application Submission

7.1 Submission Deadline and Format

The deadline for the submission of applications is July 14, 2023 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 2023 – ECD&Primary education – [country name]

The application package must include all required annexes listed below. Application form, Budget and Logical Framework must be submitted in the original format of the template provided (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 than prescribed will result in rejection in the administrative check phase. A potential applicant may submit applications to more than one of the advertised calls for selection.

Annexes:

1. Application form, including its annexes (Logical Framework, Advocacy Plan, Communication and Visibility Plan), along with other optional annexes (such as: potential references, list of previous projects, etc.)
2. Budget form
3. Organizational eligibility assessment, including CVs of proposed management team
4. Signed partnership statement/s (if applicable)

(All formats from the above-mentioned annexes can be retrieved from the link of the announcement of the present call).

In addition to the above-mentioned 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 if applicable)
- Annex 3. Annual financial reports for the last two years (2021, 2022) 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 June 12, 2023. REF will provide answers to all questions no later than June 15, 2023 for this Call for Proposals.

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

8. Tentative Timetable for Evaluating Applications

July 14, 2023	Deadline to submit full proposal, including all annexes listed above
August 25, 2023	Selection of partner organizations
August 31, 2023	Notification of selected partners
September 14, 2023	Contracting of the partner organizations