Project “Employment Empowerment of Young Roma – Phase II”

Roma Education Fund

Call for Innovative Proposals

“Community Employment Hubs”

Deadline: May 31, 2020

The Project “Employment Empowerment of Young Roma - Phase II” is funded by the German Financial Cooperation implemented by KfW on behalf of the German Government – Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

**SECTION 1: CALL FOR INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS**

**Notice**

The Roma Education Fund provides two types of grants:

1. Solicited grants 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 and employment.

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

* Innovative proposals between EUR 20,000 – 50,000 aligned with REF’s Strategic Framework (2021-2030).

Applicants can submit only one project Proposal. Roma Education Fund will automatically mark as ineligible all applications submitted by the applicants if more than one is received.

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.

Applications must include one applicant and may include one or more partners. Roma Education Fund strongly encourages co-funding and collaboration between NGOs, state or international institutions, however, partnership with partners is not compulsory.

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# **Background**

The Roma Education Fund’s (REF) 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 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;
* Expanding employment opportunities for young Romani adults.

The Roma Education Fund Branch Office in Serbia implements the project “Employment Empowerment of Young Roma – phase II" funded by German Financial Cooperation implemented by KfW on behalf of the German Government – Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The overall Project objective is to support social inclusion of Roma (both domicile Roma and Roma failed asylum seekers/returnees) in Serbian society, through increased graduation rate of Roma secondary school and university students and their facilitation into the labor market. The project integrates practical assistance with effective and efficient mechanisms to combat discrimination and create conditions in which Roma can exercise all the minority rights, focusing on access to education system and employment.

# **1 Call for Proposal**



## **1.1 Objective of the Call**

Main objective of the Call is to empower Roma society in the field of employment and create sustainable mechanisms for improving employability of young Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia.

The goal of this Call is to identify and select partner organizations who will be able to act as employment advocate and support young unemployed Roma in overcoming the multiple inclusion barriers they face when entering the labour market. The community employment hubs are foreseen as supplementary employment program and support to the existing National Employment Service which will assist young unemployed people to enter the labour market and develop both their technical and personal skills which will further facilitate their entry in the labour market.

The role of the employment hubs will be to: a) serve as a bridge between the local branch office of the National Employment Service and Roma community, b) develop and implement employment support schemes tailored in accordance with local needs and demands, c) promote Roma youth in the labour market. Each community employment hub will serve to address the local (pressing) needs of the respective Roma community and act as the information service network for all interested youngsters in pursuit for employment.

The support scheme should encompass employment relevant information, as well as support and opportunities for education, professional training, internship and self-employment, providing support to Roma youth by offering workshops on professional orientation, CV writing, job application, job interview preparation and, most importantly, building their confidence and self-esteem through counselling, motivational examples, empowerment and support to take up (self)employment initiatives, find employment, proceed with their education and compete in the labour market.

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## **1.2 Cross-Cutting Priorities**

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

* Advocate for changes in policy development in employment and/or education;
* Contribute to knowledge exchange and communication in education and/or employment;
* Contribute to building an inclusive education to employment system;
* 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 employability and access to labor market;

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

June 1, 2020 – March 30, 2021

The innovative pilot projects should be planned with a duration of maximum 10 months.

Following the competition of the project, selected partner organizations will be tasked to present the key findings and examples of best practice for education to employment for Roma youth in Serbia.

## **Available funds**

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

## **Geographical coverage**

**Eligible country:** Republic of Serbia

This Call for Proposals calls upon civil society organizations registered and operating in the Republic of Serbia.

# **2 Eligibility Criteria**

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

* Legally registered non-governmental organizations in Serbia;
* 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 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;
* Project proposals should entail establishment of Community Employment Hubs, employment related activities and tailor-made approaches to increasing employability of Roma youth in Serbia.

# **3 Selection Criteria**

REF Selection Board 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 and tailored approach in the project design and methodology aimed at building resilience of Roma students through curricular and extracurricular activities;
* Innovative approach in working with project beneficiaries and implementation of project activities;
* Gender-mainstreaming integrated in the implementation of all project activities;

**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 enclosed is encouraged and valued;

**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 employment measures and support for 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;

## **3.1 Grant amounts**

The minimum requested funding for the innovative community employment hub is EUR **20,000 EUR** 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 (required to efficiently follow employment trends) with proper justification for the project activities and within reasonable amount and cost range.

Selected 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;
* Re-granting;

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# **4 Application process**

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## **4.1 Application Procedures**

Applications should be submitted by May 31st, 2020 at [jbojic@romaeducationfund.org](mailto:jbojic@romaeducationfund.org). Please indicate in the subject line the name of the specific Call for Proposals “Community Employment Hub”. REF will provide answers to all questions not later than 5 calendar days before the deadline for this Call for Proposals.

**Annexes:**

1. Application form for the grant proposal
2. Budget template
3. Organizational eligibility criteria template
4. Project Implementation and Monitoring Plan

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

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

* 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 applicable)

All parts of the Application Form must be completed, as well as annexes. Please, use the correct templates published as integral part of this Call for Proposals and please do not change their content or format.