

Call for experts for an assessment of children’s early learning and development within Early Childhood Development regional project intervention

The Roma Education Fund (REF) is looking for consultants (natural or legal persons) who can support REF in an assessment of children’s early development within an Early Childhood Development (ECD) intervention running in five countries. The engaged consultants will be responsible for assessing the International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) data of young kids with the purpose of following the development of children during the project implementation period. The expected deliverables are the following: design of the assessment methodology, analyse the data and draft the evaluation with support from the Foundation.

The frame of the assessment is the regional project “Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in Western Balkans and Turkey”, funded by European Union and Roma Education Fund. The ECD project’s component has been running since September/October 2018 in North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo¹, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey in different Roma communities and social context. The activities of the ECD project’s component are implemented in partnership with implementing partner organizations in each of the five countries.

Project background

The project “Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in Western Balkans and Turkey” is aiming to reduce the Roma/Non-Roma gap in participation to 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 actions of the project strive to:

1. Promote equal participation in quality education for Roma children and youth at all educational levels (pre-school, primary, secondary, university and vocational), and to improve educational outcomes (including preventing school drop-out) with a special focus on reducing the wide gap between male and female education levels;
2. Improve Roma youth employability, with a particular focus on gender-sensitive measures in employability, and smooth transition between end of studies and employment market;
3. Promote desegregation and systemic durable change for Roma in the education sector by producing a change of attitude towards Roma and Roma communities; by

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

strengthening the capacities of relevant central and local institutions through regional exchange of experiences; and by using Roma role models as actors of change.

The primary target group of the project includes up to 4,700 disadvantaged Roma children and their parents in the seven target countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (project's countries).

Project's Activities are:

- Expanding access to quality Early Childhood Education/ECD services;
- Expanding access to quality primary school education;
- Increasing performance and employability of Roma secondary school students;
- Increasing access and participation of Roma students in tertiary education and transition to labor market;
- Contributing to policy development and regional knowledge exchange and communication.

Objective of the assessment:

The requested assessment seeks to understand the gains in learning and development of Roma children who participate in the ECD project's activities in North Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina and Turkey. The assessment shall support REF and respective Ministries to understand the quality of education provided by the preschool education program by tracking the learning outcomes of beneficiaries, and furthermore, to evaluate the cumulative benefits of the parental activities (Toy Library and parenting program). Learning skills shall be measured by using Save the Children's International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA).

IDELA data will be collected three times during the project duration by end of each academic year. The engagement will start as soon as possible and will be completed by the end of the project, 2021.

Main research questions:

1. What is the contribution of the project's ECD activities towards Roma children's skills (Motor Development, Emergent Literacy and Language, Emergent Numeracy, Social-emotional Development, Execution Function, and Approaches to Learning)?
2. What is the contribution of the project's ECD activities at-home support services on children's learning and development?
3. Did the parental educational practices and skills (more broadly, the home learning environment) change due to the project intervention?
4. Can we observe a positive correlation between project's ECD activities impact and the degrees of involvement in the project's activities? In other words, are the

children/caregivers who participated more committed and involved in the activities, and is this translating into an increase in their skills and better educational practices?

Responsibilities and Tasks:

1. **Design of the assessment** methodology in collaboration with REF and Implementing Partner Organisations;
2. **Baseline report** – including the cleaning and analysis of IDELA data and preparing the baseline report;
3. **Midline report** – including an update report based on the monitoring data and baseline report;
4. **Endline report** –including cleaning and analysis of IDELA data by incorporating monitoring data as well as preparing the end line report.

The assignment may also consist of an in-person trip to Budapest and/or site visits in order to meet with key REF staff and stakeholders.

Required Experience:

- *Previous experience in evaluating Early Childhood Developmental program in the region;*
- Working experience with Roma communities and understanding of the educational challenges of Roma;
- *Experience with IDELA data collection and data assessment is a must;*
- The candidate has worked successfully on at least three assignments in the in the specific area of intervention i.e. early childhood education in the past three years

Skills required

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of the social context in the project countries,
- Ability to communicate ideas in a manner conducive to their practical application;
- Excellent organizational, analytical, communication and interpersonal skills;
- Fluency in written and spoken English, knowledge of Romanes and other languages spoken in the Western Balkans or Turkey will be an advantage;

Planned duration of the engagement: 2019 July – 2021 June

Application Process

Please send your application to the following email address **recruitment@romaeducationfund.org** and indicate in the subject line – *Assessment of children’s early learning and development.*

List of documents to be submitted:

1. Description of your experiences;
2. Proposed methodology and timetable including the main milestones;
3. CVs of the proposed consultants accompanied with relevant IDELA certificate;
4. Activity based financial offer, which shall contain the gross amount of the fee per day, in EUR

Application must be made in English and must be submitted at the latest by **24 June 2019.**

Individuals identifying themselves as Roma, Roma Education Fund scholarship recipients, and fulfilling the above-mentioned profile and requirements are particularly encouraged to apply. Qualified female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.