

Open Society Foundations, Early Childhood Program

Call for Proposals for the Establishment of National Roma Early Years Networks (REYN) in
Romania and Bulgaria

Open Society Foundations' Early Childhood Program

The Open Society Foundations' Early Childhood Program promotes the healthy development and wellbeing of young children, through initiatives that emphasize parent and community engagement, professional development and government accountability. Through the Early Childhood Program, the Open Society Foundations seek to increase the quality, access and comprehensiveness of early childhood services, prioritizing disadvantaged populations, with the aim of improving equity.

What are the ECP's Roma Initiatives?

The **Roma Initiatives of the Early Childhood Program** (ECP) seeks to protect, engage, and improve the lives of Roma children and their families by directly working with them in their homes and communities, and by promoting the creation of a favorable context across Europe, e.g. working with partners to advocate against discrimination and promote inclusion.

What is the Romani Early Years Network?

This is an initiative of the ECP aiming to develop the expertise of Roma and other early childhood practitioners working with Roma¹ communities across Europe and Eurasia, to increase the number of Roma early childhood professionals, and to advocate for policy changes in order to increase access for Roma children to quality services.

There are national networks active in particular countries (Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Slovakia). There is also the international Romani Early Years Network (see reyn.blog.issa.nl/) based in Leiden, the Netherlands, aiming to work as a European-wide leading advocacy network supporting Roma early childhood development, and a knowledge centre supporting practitioners and advocates working with young Roma children and their families.

The national Romani Early Years Networks (REYN) bring together professionals and support staff who work with young Roma children and their families on different levels.

The national REYNs aim to:

1. Create a network of Roma and non-Roma early years professionals;
2. Advocate for raising awareness about the situation of the early years services offered to Roma children in order to ensure more equitable and quality services, and to create a more inclusive systems;
3. Provide professional development and exchange opportunities to professionals and para-professionals (support staff) actively engaged in the early years services;
4. Increase the number of Roma professionals, and para-professionals (support staff) involved in the early years services.

¹ Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities

5. Provide internship opportunities for Roma interns; negotiate and find alternative ways to set up an internship scheme for this purpose.

It is not intended to provide financial support for interventions like setting up new services, covering the cost of fees for children, offering transportation, or material support, creating parents clubs, etc.

Purpose of the call for proposals

This call for proposal aims to set up and establish one national network (one REYN) in Romania and one national network (one REYN) in Bulgaria as a further step in



Advocating for quality early childhood education and care services to be provided for Roma children;



Improving the professional development opportunities for early childhood practitioners working with Roma children, while increasing the number of Roma professionals, and general support staff.

The new national REYN will develop a network according to local, country specific needs to initiate advocacy actions to facilitate improvements towards the quality of practice, and to initiate targeted actions and provide well-designed support for increasing the number of Romanes speaking early year's professionals and support staff. The new national REYN should also provide internship opportunities for Roma interns, or set up an internship scheme based on the involvement and willingness of other supporting organizations. It is expected that the implementer of REYN will have at least 100 REYN members during the first year of operation, and will be dedicated to boost the membership.

The overall goal is to increase the child development and health outcomes of Roma children and enable them to prepare for school.

The new national REYN will welcome all interested practitioners, professionals and early years support staff working in early childhood services (in all the connected areas including health, education, etc.) aimed to support young Roma children (birth to 8 years), their families and communities.

Applicants are expected to support Roma and other early childhood practitioners, professionals and additional involved staff in their work as pedagogues, pedagogical assistants, teacher assistants, mediators, facilitators, pediatricians, nurses, managers, policy-makers, decision-makers, etc., in line with the principle of "nothing about us without us." Another important aim of the call is the focus on the increase of the number of Roma early childhood professionals. Special attention and preference will be given to initiatives such as internships for Roma graduates, work placements, scholarships and others, and to advocacy initiatives with concrete, feasible actions, relevant timeline, and listed stakeholders.

Implementation period

The proposal to be submitted can cover the duration of up to 24 months, although proposals for projects lasting between 12-24 months will also be accepted. The budget should reflect the activities planned for the first 12 months (Year1), and the activities planned for the remaining time, maximum additional 12 months (Year2). It is intended that the grant implementation will start towards the second part of 2017, or beginning of 2018.

Budget and funding scheme

Financial resources will be available to support min 12 months, max 24 months long implementation period. It is requested to prepare a separate budget sheet for Year1 and for Year2. The planned budget should be presented in USD.

The budget planning should reflect the activities planned for the first 12 months (Year1), and the activities planned for the remaining time, maximum additional 12 months (Year2). Please use the attached project budget template prepared according to this principle.

The overall funding scheme planned to support REYNs is set up to cover costs up to three years; it has the following matching proportion:

Year 1 (12 month) – 80% funding from ECP and 20% co-funding from the applicant/s (in kind support **will** be accepted)

Year 2 (12 month) – 80% funding from ECP and 20% co-funding from the applicant/s, or other sources (in kind support **will not** be accepted)

Year 3 (12 month) – 50% funding from ECP and 50% co-funding from the applicant/s, or other sources (in kind support **will not** be accepted)

Applicants can apply for funds covering costs occur during Year 1 and Year 2, funds are conditioned to the fulfilment of the co-funding criteria. Year 3 activities and funds are subject to the submission and approval of a new proposal. Please contact us if you have questions about this.

Expectations

Applicants can be one organization, or several organizations creating a consortium and applying together with the leading role of the main applicant.

During the implementation it would be ideal to connect Roma NGOs, early childhood NGOs and other interested parties – e.g. health, education, rights NGOs – to work together to create and sustain a national network in Romania, or Bulgaria. If the applicant has experience in setting up and maintaining a network, or a group/team of experts active in a connected field, that would be an asset.

Developing and submitting a feasible funding strategy and plan for longer-term sustainability will be an advantage while selecting the successful candidates. It is intended that national REYN networks will operate on self-generated funding in future years, which can be raised locally, from national sources or through modest membership fees. Therefore, proposals to establish networks should address in the outline of their project how they will raise at least minimal funds needed to sustain basic operation for future years.

Proposals promoting partnerships between Roma and early childhood development organizations will be prioritized. Proposals that promote organizational partnerships must include proof of these partnerships in the form of signed agreements.

Grant and funding parameters

Project duration: The proposal to be submitted can cover the duration of 12 months (Year1), or 24 months (Year 1 and Year 2). There is no guarantee that funding will be automatically allocated in Year3 of the projects. The projects, following the second year will need to present that they have leveraged 50% co-funding and have been successful and sustainable.

Grant size: It is expected that ECP's funding will be up to a **maximum of \$25,000 for one year; \$50,000 for two years²**. Proposals for projects lasting from 12 to 24 months can apply for the corresponding budget; for example projects lasting 18 months can apply for a budget of up to \$37,500. Applicants may wish to apply for a smaller size funding, depending on their available matched contribution. *Example: A potential new REYN applying for a one year long grant cycle, the overall annual budget of their project is \$20,000 (100%), ECP will contribute \$16,000 (80%) and the applicant/s will contribute \$4,000 (20%), in kind support will be accepted in this case.*

All proposals will be reviewed by a panel of reviewers and applicants may be asked to submit additional information.

Submitting your proposal

Proposals should be submitted on or before the end of the working day CET on **June 12th, 2017 through the OSF portal at [this link](#)**. A user-guide for the portal can be accessed [here](#). All proposals must include the information listed in the project [application template](#) and in the project [budget template](#) and should be submitted in English.

Please address any questions to Katherine Street, Program Specialist at katherine.street@opensocietyfoundations.org.

² Administration costs (including items such drivers, cleaners, computer experts, auditors, office rent, communications bills and office costs) should not exceed more than 10% of the total budget costs.