

Call for Expression of Interest Promoting Youth Employability Through Internship

The purpose of the Call for Expression of Interest is to identify eligible Civil Society Organisations for prospective partnership with UNICEF Serbia. Eligible Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are invited to submit proposals for partnership to support achievement of results for children outlined in the Country Programme and section 1.3 below.

Organisations that wish to participate in this Call for Expression of Interest are requested to send or deliver their submission in a sealed envelope clearly marked "CSO Call for Expression of Interest" at the following address:

UNICEF Serbia, Svetozara Markovica 58, 11000 Belgrade or email address **belgrade@unicef.org**

By 1 December 2020.

Applications must be submitted in English language.

Any requests for additional information should be addressed in writing by **24 November 2020** at the latest to Natasa Markovic, e-mail: **nmarkovic@unicef.org**. UNICEF responses to any queries or clarification requests will be made available to all online <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/roba-i-usluge> before the deadline for submission of applications.

Applications will be assessed by an evaluation committee to identify CSOs that have the mandate, capacities and comparative advantage to support achievement of results for children using criteria outlined in section 3 below. It should be noted however that participation to this Call for Expression of Interest does not guarantee the CSO will be ultimately selected for partnership with UNICEF. Selected CSOs will be invited to review and finalise partnership agreements in accordance with criteria outlined in section 3.4 below and applicable policy and procedures on partnership with CSOs.

Applicant CSOs will be informed of the outcome of their submissions by communication sent out to the email/ postal address that is indicated in the CSO submission.

| Section 1: Background | |
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| 1.1 UNICEF mandate | UNICEF is the agency of the United Nations mandated to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. |
| 1.2 UNICEF Programme of Cooperation in Serbia | In Serbia UNICEF works with the government and other partners to contribute to national efforts to progressively fulfill the rights of all children in Serbia, especially the most disadvantaged and excluded, and enable them to develop to their full potential in an inclusive and protective society respectful of their voice. This programme component is aimed at contributing to the empowerment and resilience of young people, particularly the most disadvantaged. |

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| | <p>Combined with negative natural population growth, emigration from Serbia is influencing population dynamics, and the trend will continue in the future. Serbia is ranked 137th out of 138 countries in the 2016 "Global Competitiveness Index" for its capacity to retain talent. This has a significant negative influence on the Serbian economy – the estimated annual cost of the departure of young and educated people from Serbia abroad is up to EUR 1.2 billion, equivalent to the value of the exports of Serbia's IT sector.</p> <p>The emigration of young people is strongly linked and unabated due to high unemployment, lack of opportunities, and the overall situation in the country. In Serbia, the employment rate of young people (15-24 years) is very low, at 20.9 percent, almost 14 percent lower than in the EU (34.7 percent). The figures are slightly better in the age cohort 19 to 24 years, where the employment rate in 2018 was 32.2 percent. However, there is still a significant gender gap; the employment rate is almost 15 percent higher for males than females. There is also a significant disparity between urban and rural areas; young people in rural areas have an almost 15 percent higher unemployment rate. Regional disparities are also present; Vojvodina has the highest employment rate for young people (39.7 percent), while the lowest rate is in South and East Serbia (28.2 percent).</p> <p>The inability to find a job is compounded by the fact that there are limited opportunities to engage in further education and skills training. In the first quarter of 2018, around 122,000 young people aged 15-24 – or about 16.5% of the age group – were not in education, employment, or training (NEETs). In this respect, there are no significant differences between young males and females, but data show significantly higher rates of NEETs in rural than urban areas.</p> <p>The lack of employability among young people exposes shortcomings in the education system and quality offer of employment support and practice-based training. Combatting youth inactivity and unemployment requires capacity building and partnership of public, private, and civil society stakeholders to develop and implement youth initiatives and pathways to employment, including outreach resources targeting young people who are neither in employment, education, and training (NEET). A better skills-matching system is critical, because currently 54 percent of young people do not work in the occupation that they have been trained for, due to skills mismatch. In this regard, several industries are identified as key sectors for the creation of jobs and also for sustainable green growth, including Information Communication Technology (ICT), trade, tourism, accommodation, food, and renewable energy industries.</p> <p>The Government of Serbia has clearly prioritized investment in young people skills and digitalization as part of its 2025 National Investment Plan. "Improving employability and employment of young women and men" is also one of the key strategic goals of the National Youth Strategy 2015 – 2025 defined by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS).</p> <p>UNICEF CO will support young people to become more competitive in the job market and create a better skills-matching mechanism, to foster youth employment in Serbia.</p> |
| 1.3 Specific results | The main results are to: |

- increase the employability of around 2,000 young people in Serbia by enhancing their knowledge and skills by providing internship opportunities.
- mobilize around 500 employment providers from both private sector, NGOs, and other organizations for internship placement, facilitate the match-making process between interns and employers, and develop a blended learning approach and mentoring support.

Special focus will be on the NEET category of youth including other vulnerable groups, and activities will include the development of the key competencies such as digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative, entrepreneurship etc. in cooperation with academia and business sector. A mix of soft skills and key competencies in line with the private sector need will make young people more employable and qualified for working in the 21st-century labor market.

Work Assignments and Deliverables might include:

1. Preparation

- Partnership building

Prior to the project implementation, the implementing partner needs to establish partnerships with key stakeholders that can contribute to the improvement of youth employability and ensure the sustainability of the intervention, such as the Ministry for Youth and Sport, National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, Prime Minister's office, SIPRU team, academia/universities, local governments, etc. The MoU might be signed between UNICEF and the main stakeholders, if deemed purposeful.

- Selection of the geographic locations

The implementing partner needs to propose a methodology on location selection for the project implementation, taking into account the locations of providers and young people who belong to NEET categories, taking into consideration agreed vulnerability criteria.

- Demand and supply analysis in the labor market

The implementing partner will analyse "growing sectors/companies" with the biggest potential to hire young people, as well as the need for soft skills required by the providers. The implementing partners also expected to survey relevant young people to understand their career aspirations and their skill sets and competencies that need to be improved.

- Topics and content for training modules for interns

Based on the analysis, learning modules and topics relevant for internship preparation need to be decided by UNICEF and implementing partner. After that, the implementing partner is expected to prepare online training modules utilizing the existing distance learning platforms, such as Moodle or similar.

- Marketing and promotion strategies

Marketing and promotion strategies need to be defined to reach out to the vulnerable youth who belong to NEET categories. This will include promotional activities on both national and local/regional levels, as well as smaller outreach sessions with young people between 16-24 years of age.

2. Mobilization of young people to enroll in the internship programme

- Implementation of marketing and promotional plans

This will include face to face events in selected community locations to inform the relevant youth population about the internship programme, space for young people to talk with potential employers, as well as a variety of online promotional activities. The implementing partner is expected to establish cooperation with the media, portals,

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| | <p>representatives of local organizations and youth organizations, to effectively reach out to the target group of youth.</p> <p>3. Mobilization of 500 eligible providers of paid internships (private entities, NGOs, others)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership building with private sector representatives <p>The implementing partner will identify and partner with up to 500 eligible providers of paid internships for young people in line with ongoing developments within the regulatory framework in Serbia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of designated mentors for interns within the selected providers <p>Mentoring is an important learning and development activity for interns to make their internship experience fruitful. Mentors are expected to provide effective inputs to the interns through sharing their experience, challenges, and ways to overcome them, as well as specific knowledge and tips to develop their skills and competencies. The institutional contractor is responsible for the selection of the mentors together with the internship providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship methodology <p>The implementing partner needs to propose a methodology for matching providers with interns, as well as the type of the formal agreement and payment modalities between providers and interns. A mentoring methodology, including training for mentors, also needs to be proposed, together with other relevant guidance for providers, such as communications and reporting formats etc.</p> <p>4. Preparation of the blended learning approach to address identified skills` gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the blended training approach and contents <p>After the topics and modules for internship training are selected, the implementing partner is expected to create the learning content together with an instructional designer.</p> |
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| Section 2: Application requirements and timelines | | |
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| 2.1 Documentation required for the submission | <p>The expression of interest shall include the following documentation:</p> <p>Attachment I - Partner Declaration signed by authorised official</p> <p>Attachment II - CSO Identification and Profile signed by authorised official</p> <p>Attachment III – Project Proposal with following information included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall Response e.g. the understanding of the assignment by the proposer and the alignment of the proposal submitted with the project. 2. Organization and Personnel: range and depth of organizational experience with similar projects targeted to the employability of young people, connection with key stakeholders. 3. Proposed Methodology and Approach e.g. Work plan showing detailed research methods, project implementation plan in line with the project. Please note that the applicant can propose unique methodology that will lead to the accomplishment of the main results as defined under 1.3. 4. Monitoring and evaluation, quality control mechanism, innovative approach, support of monitoring and evaluation. 5. Price proposal – detailed budget proposal | |
| 2.1 Indicative timelines | Call for Expression of Interest issue date | 6 November 2020 |
| | Deadline for submissions of CSO proposals | 1 December 2020 |

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| | Deadline for requests of additional information/ clarifications | 24 November 2020 |
| | Review of CSO submissions | 10 December 2020 |
| | Notification of results communicated to CSO | 24 December 2020 |

| Section 3: Process and timelines | | | | | | | | |
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| 3.1 Review & evaluation of CSO submissions | <p>CSO submissions are assessed by the Partnership Review Committee in consultation with technical specialists, using criteria outlined in section 3.2 and 3.3 below. Only CSO submissions which comply with the requirements of the eligibility and exclusion criteria will be eligible for further evaluation. Results from the review will be used for purposes of mapping and selection of CSOs in relation to the specific results outlined in section 1.3 above. It should be noted that participation to this Call for Expression of Interest however, does not guarantee CSOs will be ultimately selected for a partnership agreement with UNICEF. UNICEF reserves the right to invite selected partners to review and finalise proposals for partnerships in line with criteria outlined in section 3.4 below and in accordance with applicable policy and procedures on partnership with CSOs.</p> | | | | | | | |
| 3.2 Eligibility & exclusion criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligibility criteria: CSO must:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) be registered in country of origin;b) not be an entity named on any of the UN Security Council targeted sanction lists.• Exclusion criteria CSO submission which:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) are not sent or delivered by hand to the UNICEF office before the specified deadline;b) do not include all required documents duly completed and signed or do not comply with specifications set in this Call for Expression of Interest;c) are not submitted in English; <p>will be excluded from the selection process.</p> | | | | | | | |
| 3.3 Selection criteria | <p>UNICEF office will review evidence provided by the CSO submission and assess applications based on the following criteria:</p> <table><tr><td>Proposal relevance, quality and coherence (60%)</td><td><p>Includes review of the proposed programme:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevance of proposal to achieving expected results;• Clarity of activities and expected results;• Innovative approach;• Sustainability of intervention;• Adequacy and clarity of proposed budget (including contribution by CSO)</td></tr><tr><td>Institutional capacity and sustainability (30%)</td><td><p>Includes a review of the CSO:</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise and experience in the sector/area ;• Local experience, presence and community relations;• Management ability;• Experience working with UN/UNICEF</td></tr><tr><td>Other [<i>as defined by Office</i>] (10%).</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes a review of: Access/security considerations;• Replicability/scalability;• Ability to leverage resources and partnerships for children and young people• Increasing alignment with national government priorities and plans</td></tr></table> | | Proposal relevance, quality and coherence (60%) | <p>Includes review of the proposed programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevance of proposal to achieving expected results;• Clarity of activities and expected results;• Innovative approach;• Sustainability of intervention;• Adequacy and clarity of proposed budget (including contribution by CSO) | Institutional capacity and sustainability (30%) | <p>Includes a review of the CSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise and experience in the sector/area ;• Local experience, presence and community relations;• Management ability;• Experience working with UN/UNICEF | Other [<i>as defined by Office</i>] (10%). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes a review of: Access/security considerations;• Replicability/scalability;• Ability to leverage resources and partnerships for children and young people• Increasing alignment with national government priorities and plans |
| Proposal relevance, quality and coherence (60%) | <p>Includes review of the proposed programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevance of proposal to achieving expected results;• Clarity of activities and expected results;• Innovative approach;• Sustainability of intervention;• Adequacy and clarity of proposed budget (including contribution by CSO) | | | | | | | |
| Institutional capacity and sustainability (30%) | <p>Includes a review of the CSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise and experience in the sector/area ;• Local experience, presence and community relations;• Management ability;• Experience working with UN/UNICEF | | | | | | | |
| Other [<i>as defined by Office</i>] (10%). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes a review of: Access/security considerations;• Replicability/scalability;• Ability to leverage resources and partnerships for children and young people• Increasing alignment with national government priorities and plans | | | | | | | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etc. |
| 3.4 Prospective partnership agreement | <p>All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their submissions by communication sent out to the email/ postal address that is indicated in the CSO submission.</p> <p>Applicants whose proposals are assessed as having a specific comparative advantage to achieve results for children outlined in 1.3 above may be invited to jointly review and finalise the partnership agreement based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation of proposed intervention in line with the work plan; • Availability of funding to support proposed intervention; • Complementarity or proposed action with ongoing interventions; <p>Upon finalisation at technical level, the proposal for partnership will be submitted to the Representative for review and approval. It should be noted however that the Representative has the final authority to approve or reject any proposed partnership agreement on behalf of UNICEF.</p> | |