



# GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

RYCO Superschools Exchange Scheme



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## About the programme

RYCO is presenting you a brand-new opportunity for schools, students, and teachers - the RYCO Superschools Western Balkans School Exchange Scheme. This newly initiated scheme aims at providing the ground for creating strong and sustainable bonds between secondary schools within the region and building long-term partnerships. Through this exchange scheme, schools, students and teachers will have a chance to travel, present themselves, their schools and customs to their hosts and learn new things about local communities in different parts of our region – and RYCO will help to make it happen.

RYCO Superschools is a programme for school exchanges in the Western Balkans that supports peacebuilding and reconciliation processes, intercultural learning and dialogue among schools, students and their communities. By participating in this programme, secondary schools will have a chance to apply and, if selected, implement school-to-school exchanges as well as to participate in the programme's activities dedicated to their capacity building, networking and cooperation. The proposed activities aim at making the Western Balkan societies more resilient to political challenges of the region by empowering their youth to take active participation in intercultural dialogue and regional cooperation. An important priority of youth exchange is to give all young people equal opportunities to access the exchange activities. The activities should be open to all young people regardless of their sex, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, etc.

The newly initiated RYCO Superschools Western Balkans School Exchange Scheme is part of a multi donor project co-financed by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) together with RYCO.

## Who can participate?

Every secondary school, public or private, from the Western Balkans can apply and implement school-to-school exchanges. RYCO Superschools gives you an opportunity to partner with another secondary school from the region and implement two student exchanges - host and guest one with students up to 17 years old. Each school is invited to apply together with one partner school from a different contracting party (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia or Serbia).

The two partner schools will act in an equal way and have equal roles and responsibilities throughout the exchange programme. The students participating in each exchange shall not

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\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with Security Council Resolution 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence



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have an age difference higher than two years among them so as to ensure fruitful and meaningful interaction among participants.

School teachers are also participants in the exchanges. They will be the ones accompanying the students and coordinating the overall activities of the programme, both as visitors and hosts. Selected teachers from the participating schools will be part of regional training sessions and develop their skills and they will participate in a regional annual school conference, too.

The implementation of the activities in this exchange scheme will strengthen the capacities of schools to provide meaningful exchange and other opportunities to their students in the long-term.

RYCO will pay special attention to the inclusion of usually excluded groups such as: young people with disabilities, marginalized groups based on ethnicity, religious identity, sexual orientation, etc. or youth with fewer opportunities (youth from rural/remote areas, youth with unprivileged educational and/or economic backgrounds, etc.). Significant involvement of the most excluded and vulnerable youth groups, particularly supporting their social inclusion and participation in decision-making, will be considered as an advantage, especially the involvement of youth who did not have any opportunity to travel and participate in any similar activities previously. Gender balance must also be ensured in the selection of your participants.

## What are the activities of RYCO Superschool exchanges?

Each partner school shall organise one exchange visit to the partnering one, with a group of 10 to 20 students and 1 to 2 teachers lasting between 6 and 10 days (including travel days).

Activities should address any of the topics of intercultural learning and dialogue, reconciliation and peacebuilding. The following types of the activities are considered eligible, but not limited to:

- trainings, workshops, camps, study visits, peer support groups, etc.,
- art, cultural and sports activities, use and development of ICT and media tools,
- activities ensuring long-term partnerships between schools,
- joint art and cultural performances, such as festivals, concerts, theatre plays, street performances, exhibitions, etc.,
- activities that support youth initiatives in local communities,
- other activities and innovative ideas in line with the programme's priorities and objectives.

All activities within the two exchanges are to be implemented in the local community of each partner school, according to the location stated in the profile registration form filled out online by the co-applicants.



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## What types of costs does RYCO cover?

Each partnership will be financed with approximately 11,000.00 EUR which will be managed jointly with RYCO. This means that some of the goods and services needed for the implementation of the exchanges will be managed by RYCO and some of purchases needed will be made by the accompanying teachers (and refunded by RYCO). The fund will be managed jointly by RYCO and the school representative (teacher) as described in the following table:

Types of costs	Description
<b>Travel costs;</b> <b>Insurance;</b> <b>Accommodation;</b> <b>Visa;</b> <b>Administrative costs;</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Travel costs</b> for students and teachers which are related exclusively for travelling via minibus/bus during the exchanges from and to each location of schools partnering together. This will be organised by RYCO in close cooperation with the school teachers in order to organise each trip in due time and with regard to the exchange plan.</li> <li>- <b>Insurance cost:</b> RYCO will cover travel health insurance costs for all participants.</li> <li>- <b>Accommodation:</b> Accommodation of participants will be covered and organised entirely by RYCO in respect to participants' necessities and preferences. However, when possible, the participants are also allowed and welcomed to organise home stays for the visiting students during the exchanges.</li> <li>- <b>Visa and administrative costs</b> for travelling within the region are eligible costs, as long as they are necessary for the realization of the exchange. Visa is an endorsement for pupils and teachers to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a place different from their own. Administrative costs include, for example, declarations to the notary public for parents' permission for the young people to take part in exchanges. Additional administrative costs are also eligible but will be further identified in cooperation with RYCO. Every cost included in this category is to be managed by RYCO.</li> </ul>
<b>Subsistence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers, when visiting the partner, will receive lump sums in</li> </ul>



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<b>costs</b>	the amount of 30 € per day, while students, when visiting the partner, will receive pocket money in the amount of 10 € per day.
<b>Equipment</b>	- Purchase costs for <b>equipment</b> and supplies dedicated to the purpose of the programme, provided that it is purchased in accordance with the applicable legislation practices. RYCO will advance the payment for such costs to the school teacher, who will need to submit to RYCO a fiscal invoice after the payment. The amount planned for equipment may not be more than 1,000 €.
<b>Activity costs</b>	- <b>Activity costs</b> are, for example, costs of the tickets to museums, cultural visits, closing events and other costs of services. RYCO will advance the payment for such costs to the school teacher, who will need to submit to RYCO an invoice and any other relevant documents after the payment.
<b>External expertise</b>	- In case it is necessary for the implementation of the exchanges, schools can request from RYCO involvement of <b>external expertise</b> . RYCO will organise the contracting and payment of the experts.

*\*The above-mentioned amounts can be subject to changes based on the exchange needs.*

## How to apply?

### A) Visit [www.superschools.net](http://www.superschools.net) and create an online profile of your school

Every school willing to apply has to visit the online platform [www.superschools.net](http://www.superschools.net). While creating the online profile, each school shall upload a registration document issued by a relevant local authority proving the school's working existence.

After successfully completing the profile and registration, each applicant will receive a confirmation email. The confirmation email for the activation of the online profile shall be expected within two working days. We strongly advise schools to create the online profiles as soon as the call is launched in order to avoid delays in the process to follow.

Once a school receives its confirmation email, it shall be able to look for a partner through the "Find partner" where already registered schools are listed.



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## **B) Find and match with your partner school**

After the school receives the confirmation of registration, it shall look for a partner through the “Find partner” option. This part of the platform contains information on the location of the school, the type of the school and its fields of interest which shall be used as the criteria for partner finding and matching.

Once a school finds the matching school, the school may send a partnership request along with a short description. The school receiving the request may either accept or reject it. Before accepting a partnership request, the two schools are highly encouraged to communicate with each other (email addresses and telephone contacts will be visible for each other) so as to discuss their exchange ideas and ensure a productive partnership.

Each school will have the possibility to send a partnership request to only one school from another Western Balkans Contracting Parties. A school reserves the right to withdraw a partnership request that has not been accepted by the other school. Once a partnership is confirmed, the two partners will be able to start the filling of the joint application form.

## **C) Fill out the joint application form**

The application process will be completed online through the platform by filling the joint application form where both schools will shortly explain their joint idea for two-way exchange.

Co-applicants are encouraged to have an active and equal role in answering the questions. The application can be submitted only after both partners have confirmed their agreement online.

For technical support, you can contact us at: [superschools@rycowb.org](mailto:superschools@rycowb.org)

## **What are the conditions for participation?**

To be able to participate in the programme, an applicant must be a secondary school (private or public), established and working within the Western Balkans contracting parties.

### **Number of applications:**

One partnership may only submit one (1) application under this call. The partnership is consisted from two high schools from different Western Balkans contracting parties and they will act in an equal way and have equal roles and responsibilities throughout the exchange programme.

### **Timeline:**



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The implementation of the exchanges shall take place from February to May 2022.

## What do we pay special attention to?

Additionally, to the eligibility criteria, there are elements that RYCO will consider important when assessing applications. We encourage schools to pay a special focus to and including the following in joint application:

- Interaction of diverse and intercultural groups within the exchange,
- Diversity of partnership and participants,
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups, minorities, marginalized groups, etc.,
- Inclusion of young people who are new to youth exchange programmes,
- Gender balance of participants,
- Activities promoting community engagement,
- Youth participation in project writing and implementation.

## How will the applications be evaluated?

The evaluation of the exchange proposals will be conducted as following:

All applications that pass the eligibility criteria check will go through a quality assessment by RYCO. A shortlist will be produced and further assessed by the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee consisting of RYCO Secretariat and donors' representatives will assess all shortlisted exchange proposals so as to ensure strategic relevance and geographical distribution of the proposed preliminary list.

The Selection Committee's assessment produces a preliminary list (top-scored applications for all Western Balkans 6 societies) based on the result of the quality and strategic assessment. The Preliminary List is established and endorsed by the RYCO Governing Board.

At the completion of the selection process, RYCO will notify all applicants of the final results in writing, as well as of the next steps to be undertaken.

The final list of approved proposals will be published on [www.superschools.net](http://www.superschools.net) and [RYCO's website](#) once the applicants have been selected.



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## What to expect if you are selected?

### Regional conference and mentorship support

In addition to the two school exchanges, teachers and (selected) students will also be able to take part in additional activities organised by RYCO such as the annual regional school conference which will take place after the selection process has been finalized and the participating schools have been selected. A teacher and a student of each of the selected schools will be invited to a 4 to 5 day event, and be offered the opportunities for networking, mentorship and capacity building. The mentorship sessions will start as soon as the schools are selected.

The mentorship sessions are an essential part of the process since the selected applicants will have the chance to work on their exchange idea, further elaborate it and finalize the full programme agenda together with the accompanying budget form with the help of mentors to be introduced by RYCO. The mentors will have expertise in the fields of reconciliation, peacebuilding and intercultural learning and dialogue as well as project writing. The goal of the mentorship sessions is to support selected schools in the process of finalizing the programme agenda, planification and increase their capacities in the implementation of the exchange activities.

### Contracting

Following the decision on the selection of the schools to be funded under RYCO Superschools Exchange Scheme, the schools will sign a partnership agreement with RYCO as a legal basis for participation in the programme.

Prior to the signing of the Partnership Agreement, the applicant must submit an additional document requested by RYCO in due time - the Legal Entity Form.

### Teacher's training

Selected teachers working at the selected schools, will be part of regional training sessions aimed at addressing skills necessary for improving cooperation such as facilitation/moderation skills, intercultural learning and dialogue, remembrance, reconciliation, peacebuilding, gender mainstreaming, youth participation, outreach (communications, social media, storytelling), digital tools in youth work, etc.

These trainings are to take place after the regional annual school conference and before the start of the exchange implementation.

Each participant will receive a certificate of participation.



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## Youth summer camp

The Youth Summer Camp, a specially designed activity, will take place after the end of all exchanges as an award for the most active students. The objective is to involve active young people in producing story-telling, digital and video materials by transforming their experiences from the exchanges into sustainable products.

## During implementation

### Monitoring and evaluation

During the implementation of the exchanges, RYCO will request the participants to support monitoring and evaluation processes.

The selected schools will be required to use online evaluation forms (for both teachers and students) for their activities. The online forms and additional information will be provided by RYCO after the successful selection of the schools that will participate in the RYCO Superschools Exchange Scheme. Moreover, mentors will assist the selected schools in this process.

### Safety and Protection

If supported, the beneficiaries will have to align their activities with the RYCO Safety and Protection Guidelines.

RYCO strongly believes that with quality safety procedures and responsible organisation of activities, risks can be mitigated and even neutralised. Being said, it is very important to emphasize the core principles of safety and protection for youth involved in any kind of RYCO-supported activities. Some young people could be more vulnerable to abuse and other forms of discrimination and marginalisation based on any of their characteristics. RYCO stands firmly against such violations and empowers its employees, associates and partners to prevent them, speak up against them, and when noticed, immediately report them to the respective authority.

All activities to be implemented within this call shall be conducted in line with the current COVID-19 related measures imposed by the relevant local authorities.

In case the COVID-19 pandemic further deteriorates, all activities envisaged within the Superschools programme, including the submitted proposals, are subject to revision, postponement or cancellation.



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## Reporting

The selected schools will be required to submit an exchange report, no later than 15 days after the completion of each exchange by using RYCO templates annexed to the partnership agreement. Each partner will be responsible for completing and submitting the exchange report after the completion of the exchange they are hosting. The visiting partner school shall support the reporting.

## Timeline

### For the application process

The deadline for submission of applications is **28 October 2021, 23.59 pm**. Applications sent after the deadline will be automatically rejected.

Activity	Deadline	Time
Launching of the Open Call for Project Proposals	29 September 2021	10.00
Deadline for requesting any clarifications from RYCO	18 October 2021	23.59
Deadline for submission of the applications	28 October 2021	23.59
Preliminary List published on the RYCO website	by end-November 2021	
Contracting, Final List published on the RYCO website	mid-December 2021	

## About RYCO

RYCO is an intergovernmental organisation that stewards and promotes regional and intercultural cooperation of young people within and among six Western Balkans contracting parties. RYCO's programmes focus on creating opportunities for young people to engage in activities that build mutual understanding and reconciliation in the civic, social, educational, cultural, and sports domains. RYCO initiates and participates in policy making and advocates for reform. It supports the development of a political and social environment that empowers and facilitates youth exchange.

RYCO puts young people at the centre of its work and believes that they should be creating a culture of mobility, intercultural exchange and reconciliation. Young people should also be active contributors to democratic development, social and economic prosperity, and European integration in an increasingly open Western Balkans region. The Western Balkans contracting parties should be providing proactive support to youth exchange and youth engagement within the WB6 and across the region.



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