

### **Funding call name**

Levelling the Field: Enabling women and girls to reach their full potential through sport

### **Theme**

Gender Justice

### **Deadline**

09.00 BST on Monday 14th September 2020

### **Funding Geography**

Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia

### **Funding available**

Funding is available for a minimum of 12 months to a maximum of 36 months. We will fund investments from £50,000 to £200,000 and we anticipate making approximately 10 investments.

### **The opportunity**

Levelling the Field invests in [Sport for Change](#) approaches that enable women and girls to reach their full potential. The fund supports work in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia.

This is the second phase of Levelling the Field funded by Comic Relief and the Scottish Government.

### **Background**

In 2017, the Scottish Government and Comic Relief launched a 3-year programme, Levelling the Field, which uses sport to address social issues experienced by the most minoritised women and girls in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia in order to develop essential life skills, foster confidence and improve their self-esteem.

We know that sport is a powerful tool for social change. It can be used to challenge harmful stereotypes and address a wide range of issues affecting women and girls. Levelling the Field aims to strengthen both the Sport for Change and Women and Girls sectors in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia.

This round of **Levelling the Field** will contribute to women and girls gaining the power they need to make decisions about their lives and challenge inequalities within their contexts. It will also build on the strengths and learning from the existing partnership to maximise the impact of our investments and will facilitate collaboration across the Sport for Change and Women and Girls sectors.

### **Who can apply?**

Please refer to Comic Relief's general [funding criteria](#). In addition:

- This funding call is open to both existing Comic Relief funded partners and new applicants. However, **applicants should be aware that Comic Relief will always prioritise applications led by organisations that are registered in the country where the work will take place.**
- Applicants are encouraged to include partners, including partners not registered in the delivery country, but must be able to clearly demonstrate the added value of all partners included in the proposal. For further guidance, please see our [funding criteria](#) and fund principles (below).

- Organisations can only submit one proposal as the lead partner (though they can be named as partners on any number of applications).
- Applicants must demonstrate a proven track record in delivering either Sport for Change and/or Women and Girls programming. Where this expertise is missing, we expect you to work in partnership with others.
- We particularly welcome applications from women-led organisations.

The lead applicant must not have an annual income of less than £75,000 or more than £10 million. Please also be aware that, in general, we will not award funding to organisations that is more than an average of two thirds of their annual income per year. For example, if an organisation has an annual income of £75K, they could apply for an average of £50K a year, and a three-year request would total £150K. We recognise organisations will need different amounts at different points in the work so will take this as an average across the time funding is being requested for.

Please take the [eligibility quiz](#) to check your eligibility

### **What is the Levelling the Field programme?**

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic some progress had been made towards gender equality. Nevertheless, women and girls around the world continued to suffer from discrimination, violence and a disproportionate burden of poverty. Negative social norms and attitudes, harmful traditional practices, lack of autonomy on sexual and reproductive rights and low political representation were just some of the factors undermining the ability to achieve equality.

These issues are now being further exacerbated by Covid-19 as women and girls bear the brunt of the social and economic effects of the pandemic. We are seeing a number of worrying trends, including the reallocation of health resources and priorities, increased burden of unpaid care work, increased incidences of gender-based violence and loss of income and employment<sup>1</sup>. Progress is being reversed and hard-won gains are being lost.

Against this backdrop, Levelling the Field reflects the joint commitment of Comic Relief and the Scottish Government towards Sustainable Development Goal 5 – to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls – in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia, and aligns with the Gender Justice pillar of Comic Relief's [Social Change Strategy](#). We are looking for creative solutions that work towards the overall outcome of **enabling women and girls to reach their full potential**.

### **Fund aims**

We have identified two interrelated aims for this round of Levelling the Field and are seeking proposals that use [Sport for Change](#) to work towards a minimum of one of the following:

#### **1. Ensuring women and girls are safe, equal and respected**

We are looking to fund projects that enable women and girls to live free from harm, and with access to crucial support.

We are interested in funding projects that:

- Increase positive gender roles

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[https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy\\_brief\\_on\\_covid\\_impact\\_on\\_women\\_9\\_apr\\_2020\\_updated.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_women_9_apr_2020_updated.pdf)

- Ensure healthy relationships are understood and promoted
- Challenge sociocultural norms that perpetuate violence against women and girls\*
- Integrate with existing services, referral pathways and access to justice mechanisms
- Create safe spaces for women and girls in vulnerable situations to access support and information
- Engage communities in advocacy and lobbying campaigns

*\* This aligns with 'Equally Safe' – Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls domestically. Any applicants proposing work which address violence against women and girls **must** demonstrate their track record of work in this space and be able link into appropriate support services and referral pathways.*

## **2. Promoting women and girls' decision-making power and inclusion**

We want to see women and girls with access to information, knowledge and services to increase their ability to make informed decisions about their futures, and better enable them to lead the lives they choose.

We are interested in funding approaches that:

- Address power imbalances and reduce gender stereotypes
- Increase opportunities for women and girls to access education, employment and training and lobby for more inclusive and accessible systems
- Increase social inclusion of women and girls (beyond the sporting activity)
- Promote sexual and reproductive health and family planning

### **Approaches**

Projects must use a Sport for Change approach:

- We know that taking part in sport leads to an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence for most people and for this initiative, this assumption underpins all programming. **However, we want proposals to go above and beyond confidence building and to demonstrate how sport can be used to achieve positive social change.** Proposals will need to demonstrate wider social outcomes and not just focus on increasing female participation in sport.
- For more information, we have developed a guide to applying for Sport for Change funding which you can view [here](#).

### **What work will Comic Relief support?**

- Projects must be need-led. Don't just be tempted to apply for the largest amount for the longest time – think strategically!
- We will fund project costs. To help organisations ensure they request the full cost of delivering a service or project, we encourage applicants to ensure proportional overhead and administrative costs are also included.
- We recognise that men and boys can, and should, be part of the solution. We welcome applications that include work with men and boys, however the focus of the work must be change by and for women and girls.
- We are more likely to prioritise applications which are targeting the most vulnerable and minoritised groups, rather than women and girls as a general cohort.

- We are looking to support projects across a range of geographies; including rural, peri-urban and urban. We recognise that the challenges faced by women and girls may vary according to context and projects should respond accordingly.
- Applicants should demonstrate awareness of the wider structural environment, and where possible support linkages to service providers and/or appropriate referral pathways which support sustainability of impact.
- We are encouraging a variety of different types of projects. This could be a pilot for an innovative piece of work or the continued development of a proven piece of work.
- Applicants should provide evidence of participatory needs assessment and design process in their application, including the involvement of the women and girls affected by the issue, or who will be part of the project.
- For existing grant holders, this is not simply an opportunity to extend your existing project for a further 1-3 years. We want partners to critically reflect on the work they are delivering and use the evidence and learning generated to identify which parts of your work are proving most effective in contributing to change.
- We will fund projects that contribute to sustained social outcomes for women and girls. We will not fund one-off interventions or one-off community events that do not form part of a wider programme.

Please note, that we are aware that we are launching this funding call during the Covid-19 crisis and that the situation across the three countries is changing rapidly. We advise applicants to apply on the assumption that projects will start from May 2021 and can be delivered as planned. However, we will continue to monitor the situation and explore Covid-19 contingency plans at Stage 2 and assessment, if appropriate.

### Fund principles

We have identified three key principles for the funding call which we encourage you to take into consideration:

1. We recognise that few organisations have expertise in both Sport for Change and Women and Girls programming. Partnership working is therefore encouraged to:
  - a. Foster greater collaboration between the Sport for Development and Women and Girls sectors
  - b. Ensure best practice programming and safeguarding within funded projects
  - c. Increase ability to influence at structural level
  - d. Facilitate learning and organisational development
2. As well as using [Sport for Change](#) approaches, proposals should clearly demonstrate how gender considerations have been made in the project design. This might include, but is not limited to:
  - a. The extent to which women and girls can access **time and resources** to participate in sport and project activities
  - b. **Perceptions** of the selected sport, by women and girls themselves and by the wider community, in the specific project context
  - c. The provision of appropriate **facilities** (e.g. a safe space to change, WASH etc.) and **equipment** and potential barriers to participation
  - d. The importance of appropriate and relevant **female role models and mentors** in both helping women and girls perceive possibilities for themselves and for challenging male perceptions

- e. The timing and location of activities on the **safety** of participants
  - f. **Mitigating the risk of negative consequences** for women and girls who deviate from existing gender norms by participating in project activities (including sport, education, leadership)
  - g. The **role men and boys** can play in addressing gender inequity and power inequalities
3. We want to work with organisations that share our commitment to learning. We will invest in organisations that can:
- a. Be self-reflective; considering which aspects of project delivery are working well, which aspects have been less successful and why.
  - b. Integrate learning and feedback into project delivery, with a desire for continual improvement.
  - c. Respond to changing contexts and emerging needs – the issues you are dealing with may change over time and your work may need to respond to that.
  - d. Engage with and participate in collective learning with other Comic Relief funded partners, where appropriate.
  - e. Commit to learning about the use of Sport for Change approaches in women and girls programming and reflect on the gendered impacts of their work.

### **Application process and key dates**

This is a two-stage application process.

- **Stage 1 applications open online:** 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020
- **Deadline for stage 1 applications:** 09.00 AM BST 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020
- **Invites for stage 2 applications sent:** Early October
- **Deadline for stage 2 applications:** 09.00 AM 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- **Funding starts:** May 2021

If your application is shortlisted, you will have a further 4 weeks to submit a full proposal. We will provide constructive feedback to all applicants invited to second stage.

### **Stage 1 application and further guidance**

Please follow this [link](#) to download stage 1 proposal guidance.

Further application guidance can be found [here](#) and eligibility [here](#).

If you have further questions, you can email [fundinginfo@comicroelief.com](mailto:fundinginfo@comicroelief.com). If we receive a significant number of FAQs, we will aim to publish them here.

### **Shortlisted applications at stage 2**

If you are invited to submit a full stage 2 application, we will ask you to expand on the information you have provided at stage 1. This will include:

- Full budget for the proposal
- Why you think this approach will be effective
- How you involved target group(s) in developing the initiative
- How you will listen and respond to them during its delivery
- Monitoring, evaluation and learning, including what you will track to show change is happening and how you will use the learning

- How you will manage risks for beneficiaries, staff or others in the community
- How your organisation manages safeguarding concerns
- More information about each partner organisation and their annual finances, key policies, and constitutional documents

Stage 2 proposals will be reviewed by Comic Relief, and a proportion of the strongest applications taken through for a full assessment to take place in January or February 2021.

Assessments will be arranged in advance with your organisation and will cover all aspects of your proposal, and your organisation's governance and financial health and management.

Once assessments are completed, funding decisions will be made in April 2021, with first payments made in May 2021. You must be able to submit a final report to us by the end of May 2024 at the latest.