Terms of Reference for Conducting a Research on the Novel Initiatives/Best Practices in ECCDs in Nepal

PR183007

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1. RESEARCH SUMMARY

Type of research	External
Name of the project	Research on the Novel Initiatives/Best Practices in ECCDs in Nepal
Project Start and End dates	January 2021 to December 2022
Project duration	3 months
Project locations:	Nepal,
Thematic areas	Education
Sub themes	ECCD
Donor	Sponsorship
Estimated beneficiaries	10 ECCD Centres
Overall objective of the project	To explore and document the best practices, initiatives, and innovations in ECCDs in Nepal.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Education is one of the key priorities of Save the Children (SC). Under education, Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) and Basic Education (BE) are the sub-thematic areas in which Save the Children has been investing its resources since long. Ensuring equitable access to quality basic education and ECCDs services is one of the mandates of educational intervention in both humanitarian and development context. Save the Children, a learning organization, also invests its resources innovating new spirations and solutions that best serve the felt needs and best interest of beneficiaries we work for. In the context of COVID-19, when all the academic institutions were closed, SC adapted some innovative solutions and took them forward to best address the learning and development needs of the children ultimately proven as the best practices of SC.

In context of Nepal, there are some ECCD centres developed as model ECCD centres and known for their excellent ECCD services for their children's overall learning and development. In this context, exploration, documentation and dissemination of those novel practices, measures and initiatives to impart quality ECCD services to the young people would be worth to inspire people working in the field of ECCDs and basic education. Therefore, SC intends to partner with a resource organization/research firm to conduct a qualitative study to dig out and document those good and innovative practices that could be contextual, replicable and adaptive to other contexts.

3. SCOPE OF STUDY

3.1 Purpose, Objectives and Scope

This study is being conducted for learning new, innovative and adaptative measures and instructional practices by ECCD centres and teachers that have resulted into greater learning and development gains of young people. The proven practices/models and innovations addressing the issues around learning and development crisis of young people will be explored in general and specific targeting to girls, children with disabilities and other most deprived and marginalized children. The consultant(s) have to develop the basis for the selection of model ECCD centres and proven practices/models that contributed to addressing the learning and development crisis of young children of 3-5 years of age.

Similarly, substantial information such as progressive trend on the learning and development of the children in ECCDs will be required to consider/validate as proven practices/models. In the COVID-19 context, if there is an unavailability of the overall learning achievement of the children, validation of the information is required through the qualitative information. The study will be carried out in some selected model ECCDs of all the provinces with special focus to Madhesh and Karnali Province. The primary purpose of this study is to prepare a resource document of proven practices and innovations so that these could be replicated and scaled up across the country in both humanitarian and development context.

The study main objectives are:

- To explore the proven practices/models, innovations, and new initiatives taken by the teachers and ECCDs proven in increased learning and developmental potentials of children of age 3-5 years in general and specific to girls, children with disabilities and other most deprived and marginalized children.

- To document the in-depth case study of proven practices/models, innovations, and new initiatives in general and specific to girls, children with disabilities and other most deprived and marginalized children.
- To recommend the practices those are adaptable and scalable in other location, and context.
- To prepare a high level external sharable research report including maximum of five pagers summary both in English and Nepali language.

3.2 Intended Audience and Use of the Study

The primary intended audience of the study is SCI and Nepal government. The study aims to generate evidences as a basis for advocacy to all three tiers of government in replicating the best practices in the larger context. Beside, it also provides insights to SCI country offices to learn and adapt the ideas based on their context and feasibility. Similarly, the Nepal Country Office will also use the findings to adapt the program based on the findings and recommendation of the study.

Stakeholder	Further information
Project donor	Sponsorship (SC Italy)
Primary implementing organisation	Save the Children
Implementing partners	TBD
Government stakeholders	NA
Community groups	All seven provinces with special focus to Madhesh and Karnali province.
Beneficiaries	Children and adults involved in the program/project/s and the study
International development/humanitarian research community	NA

3.3 Key Study Questions

The key research questions are as follows:

- Which innovations and new initiatives were found to be most effective in increasing learning and developmental domains of children in general and by gender and marginalized children including CWD? Why/ How?
- Can those adopted practices and approaches be replicable and scaled up in a different locations and contexts? What practices are recommendable for scaling up?

4. STUDY METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study Design

It is expected that this study will involve:

- Qualitative and in-depth case study

This is a general guideline for the research design. The respondents of the research are ECCD management committees, ECCD facilitators, HTs, parents and local government representatives. The research methods include ECCDs observations, KII, FGDs, case study and review of relevant literature. The consultancy firm can purpose elaborative study design based on this TOR and objectives of the study.

4.2 Sampling

The sampling method to be used for study will be non-probability sampling methods specifically purposive sampling. The consultation firm and SCI can decide the number of sample size and criteria for selecting the sample.

4.3 Data Sources and Data Collection Methods / Tools

The consultation firm can purpose data collection method based on the scenario and feasibility of the current situation. Separate data collection tools and guiding question should be developed by the consultant and approved by SCI for data collection. Therefore, adequate consultations should be done with SCI Education advisor, Senior MEAL Coordinator, and Education Specialist to finalize the data collection tools. Data analysis should be carried out using data analysis software.

The study team is required to adhere to the Save the Children Child Safeguarding; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying; and Data Protection and Privacy] policies throughout all project activities.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

It is expected that this study will be:

- **Child participatory**. Where appropriate and safe, children should be supported to participate in the evaluation process beyond simply being respondents. Opportunities for collaborative participation could include involving children in determining success criteria against which the project could be evaluated, supporting children to collect some of the data required for the evaluation themselves, or involving children in the validation of findings. Any child participation, whether consultative, collaborative or child-led, must abide by the 9 Basic Requirements for meaningful and ethical child participation.
- **Inclusive**. Ensure that children from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds have the chance to participate, as well as children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.
- **Ethical**: The study must be guided by the following ethical considerations:
    - Safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behaviour towards children and adults.
    - Sensitive – to child rights, gender, inclusion and cultural contexts.
    - Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties.

- Confidentiality and data protection - measures will be put in place to protect the identity of all participants and any other information that may put them or others at risk.[1]
- Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this
- Broad participation - the relevant parties should be involved where possible.
- Reliability and independence - the study should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

It is expected that:

- Data collection methods will be age and gender appropriate.
- Study activities will provide a safe, creative space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
- A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children, young people's, or adult's participation.
- A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
- Informed consent will be used where possible.

5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The study deliverables and tentative timeline (subject to the commencement date of the study) are outlined below. SCI and consultancy firm will agree on final milestones and deadlines at the inception phase.

Deliverables and Tentative Timeline

Deliverable / Milestones	**Timeline**
The study Team is contracted and commences work	
The study Team will facilitate a **workshop** with the relevant stakeholders at the commencement of the project to develop the inception report.	
The study Team will submit an **inception report*** in line with the provided template, including: ▪ Study objectives, scope and key study questions ▪ description of the methodology, including design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, data sources, and study matrix against the key study questions ▪ data analysis and reporting plan ▪ caveats and limitations of study ▪ risks and mitigation plan ▪ ethical considerations including details on consent ▪ stakeholder and children communication and engagement plan ▪ key deliverables, responsibilities, and timelines ▪ resource requirements	

[1] If any Consultancy Service Provider, Freelancer or Contingent worker will have direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and/or beneficiaries and/or have access to any sensitive data on safeguarding and/or children and/or beneficiaries, it is the responsibility of the person receiving the consulting service to contact the local HR team and child safeguarding focal point to ensure vetting checks and on-boarding are conducted in line with statutory requirements, local policies and best practices guidance.

▪ data collection tools (in line with the study matrix) Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluator/researcher study team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the study manager or the steering committee.	
Ethics submission (*if applicable*): Should approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee be required, an ethics submission should include: ▪ study protocols (participant recruitment, data security and storage, consent and confidentiality etc.) ▪ considerations for consulting with children and other vulnerable groups (if applicable) ▪ participant information statement and consent forms	
Final data collection tools (in the report language): ▪ Survey instrument ▪ Data collection mechanism	
An interim report and power point presentation including a summary of formative findings from the study. The focus will be on: ▪ Summary of interim findings ▪ Any emerging program issues or risks (if applicable) ▪ Any changes that have had to be made to the study design (if applicable) ▪ Key tasks for the next stage of the study and any proposed refinements or changes to methodology (if applicable)	
A Study **Report*** (Draft Version – template available if useful though external actors may want to use theirs) including the following elements: ▪ Executive summary ▪ Background description of the Program and context relevant to the Study ▪ Scope and focus of the study ▪ Overview of the study methodology and data collection methods, including a Study matrix ▪ Findings aligned to each of the key Study questions ▪ Specific caveats or methodological limitations of the evaluation ▪ Conclusions outlining implications of the findings or learnings ▪ Recommendations ▪ Annexes (Project logframe, study ToR, Inception Report, Study schedule, List of people involved) A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by Save The Children within one week of the submission of the draft report.	
Data and analyses including all encrypted raw data, databases and analysis outputs	
Final Study Report* incorporating feedback from consultation on the Draft Study Report	
Knowledge translation materials: ▪ PowerPoint presentation of Study findings ▪ Evidence to Action Brief**	

*All reports are to use the Save the Children Final Study Report template. Please also refer to Save the Children technical writing guide.

** The Evidence to Action Brief is a 2-4 pages summary of the full report and will be created using the Save the Children Management Response template.

All documents are to be produced in MS Word format and provided electronically by email to the SC Evaluation Project Manager. Copies of all PowerPoint presentations used to facilitate briefings for the project should also be provided to Save the Children in editable digital format.

6. REPORTING AND GOVERNANCE

The study team lead is to provide reporting against the project plan. The following regular reporting and quality review processes will also be used:

- Verbal reporting each week to the SCI team lead for the study by outlining progress made over the past month.
- A written Progress Report (1-page) by email to the Save the Children study Project Manager every fortnight, documenting progress, any emerging issues to be resolved and planned activities for the next month.

The study team will also attend a regular study Working Group (EWG) meeting. The EWG will meet every week.

7. STUDY MANAGEMENT

Study Tentative Timeline, with key deliverables in bold. The final timeline and deliverables will be agreed upon the inception phase.

What	Who is responsible	By when	Who else is involved
Study tender submissions due [if external]	Procurement team	7th November 2022	Procurement team
Tender review and selection of study team [if external]	SC tender review panel	11th November 2022	Selection Committee
Documentation review, desk research, **Inception report**	Study team	17th November 2022	
Review of inception report	SC Technical team (Education and MEAL)	20th November 2022	
Development of **Data collection tools**	[Study team]	20th November 2022	
Data collection	[Study team or SC study Project Manager]	15th December 2022	
Data analysis and First draft of the Final study report	Study team	20th December 2022	

Review of first draft report	SC study Project Manager and Technical team	25th December 2022	
Meeting with evaluators and evaluation team to finalize the report	SC study Project Manager and Technical team	30th December 2022	

8. STUDY TEAM AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Interested consultants will be required to submit an Expression of Interest in line with the provided template, which should demonstrate adherence to the following requirements.

Understanding of Requirements and Experience

To be considered, the study team members together must have demonstrated skills, expertise and experience in:

- Conducting studies in the field of education, particularly in Primary and Basic education.
- Designing and conducting research using standard research design method.
- Managing and coordinating a range of government, non-government, community groups and academic stakeholders
- Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving children and child participatory techniques
- Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving marginalised, deprived and/or vulnerable groups in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways
- Sound and proven experience in conducting evaluations based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, particularly utilisation and learning focused evaluations
- Strong written and verbal skills in communicating technical and/ or complex findings to non-specialist audiences (especially report writing and presentation skills)
- A track record of open, collaborative working with clients

There is a high expectation that:

- Members (or a proportion) of the study team have a track record of previously working together.
- A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex study projects, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
- The team has the ability to commit to the terms of the project and have adequate and available skilled resources to dedicate to this study over the period.
- The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the project is implemented.

Financial Proposal

Save the Children seeks value for money in its work. This does not necessarily mean "lowest cost", but quality of the service and reasonableness of the proposed costs. Proposals shall include personnel allocation (role / number of days / daily rates / taxes), as well as any other applicable costs.

Proposal Evaluation and scoring criteria

Criteria	Weightage	Sub Criteria
Essential	NA	• Firm Registration • Tax registration (PAN / VAT) • Tax clearance certificate of FY 2077/078
Commercial Criteria	40%	Proposed total cost (Budget)
Capability Criteria	60%	• Academic Qualification of Team Leader: 10% • Post Qualification Research Experience of Team Leader – 20% • Post Qualification Research Experience of Other Team Members – 20% • Understanding of TOR: 10%

9. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENT

The following payments will be made to the consultant using and agreed mode of payment

- Upon approval of inception report and tools: *[20%]*
- Upon submission of First Draft study Report: [50%]
- Upon approval of final study report: [30%]

10. HOW TO APPLY

Proposal Submission Guideline/Required Documents

- *Proposal Submission Deadline-* ***11th November 2022***
- *Required Documents-*
  - *Filled out Consultancy Proposal Form (enclosed with this ToR)*
  - *CV(s) of the proposed consultant(s) with full date of birth in dd/mm/yyyy format.*
  - *For firms: Copies of- Firm registration certificate, VAT registration certificate, tax clearance certificate of FY 2077/078.*

If an individual is a full-time staff member of another organization, a no objection/consent letter signed by the organization head must be submitted along with the proposal. This is not applicable for proposals sent through a firm.

Proposals should be submitted via email to eoiconsultant.nepal@savethechildren.org