

Terms of References

Mid - term project evaluation expert

External expert for mid-term evaluation of the project
“Towards inclusive education for all children in pre - school age in Albania”
Implemented in the municipalities of Korca and Elbasan

TORs ref. **2018-023**

Save the Children is pleased to invite qualified consultants/agencies to present their interest and application to assess the mid-term results of Save the Children’s Project “Towards Inclusive Education for all preschool age children in Albania” being implemented from July 2017 in municipality of Elbasan and Korca & funded by IMFA – AICS (Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo)

Project Background

Save the Children is the world’s leading independent organization for children. Its vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. Its mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. In Albania, it has established a high profile in the areas of Education, Child Protection, Child Rights Governance, Health and Child Poverty.

The goal of the project “Towards Inclusive Education for all pre-school age children in Albania” is that all children in preschool age in Albania develop their full potential and improve their learning outcomes including children with disabilities, and receive a quality and inclusive education, with a special focus in the municipalities of Korca and Elbasan.

The aim of the project is to reach the most disadvantaged children in two targeted regions (Korca and Elbasan) in order to benefit from inclusive learning opportunities and quality education. The project primarily targets children with disabilities and with special needs, but it also includes other vulnerable children, primarily those affected by poverty. Because of the activities organized with local authorities, the project focuses precisely on the relationship between poverty and lack of equal opportunities for all children. In fact, the concept of inclusive education is essentially based on the principle of equal opportunities for all children.

The project covers all three main components of Inclusive Education: Access, Quality Programming and Empowerment of Local Government Units (Municipalities).

Key stakeholders:

- Institutional level – Municipality of Korca & Elbasan and their subordinate institutions; Regional Health Directorates, Universities of Korca and Elbasan;
- Service Provision level – targeted crèches and kindergartens and Primary Health Care Centers in Elbasan and Korca

- Community-level – students, teachers, parents and civil society organizations working in the field of inclusion and Early Childhood, Care and Development.

The project is being implemented in partnership with MEDPAK, an Albanian Non-Profit Organization in the municipality of Korca and Elbasan. The implementation is focused respectively in 8 kindergartens and 3 nurseries, 2 municipalities and its respective departments responsible for the provision of services for children with special needs; 2 Universities, and 37 Primary Health care centers in both regions.

Area of Intervention	Target	Beneficiaries
Improving and ensuring access to early childhood education for all vulnerable children through early identification of their developmental problems, adequate educational facilities and increased awareness among families and local communities.	37 Centers of primary health care in Korca and Elbasan region. Community members and parents of children 0-6 years old	180 Health professionals 1000 Families of children with / without disabilities involved in education sessions, health and sensibilisation activities
Increasing the capacities of the municipalities of Elbasan and Korca to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families	The municipality of Korca and Elbasan and its subordinated institutions	15 municipal staff (division of education / services and management)
Supporting the education and development of preschool children, especially children with disabilities, by high-quality, child-focused, inclusive educational programmers	University of Korca and Elbasan 8 kindergartens; 3 chreches/nurseries	8 professors and researchers from universities 12 students of university / interns 130 educators in nurseries and kindergartens 3300 Children aged 0-6 years with or without disabilities

Purpose of the Assignment:

The Mid Term Evaluation will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Proposal and MEAL plan. It will assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results.

For the purpose of this midterm evaluation the criteria against which the program will be evaluated are based on OECD ones: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability (project risks to sustainability). It will also identify potential signs for long term impact.

Findings and recommendations drawn from the evaluation will help review activity level work plan and outcome/impact level indicators of achievement.

Some of the main questions to address during the evaluation process include but are not limited to the following.

1. Progress towards Results:

This will look at the outcome indicators and expected result indicators progress towards the end of the project targets.

Collect and report mid-line data for the project indicators to be compared with baseline data and target values (taking in consideration as well the indicators of the instruments of QLE, Index for Inclusion and IDELA).

2. Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and early signs of the impact of the program and its implemented activities.
3. Measure the extent to which the project has been accountable to the local stakeholders and the level of community/beneficiaries participation into the program.
4. Examine how the project has mainstreamed crosscutting issues such as child protection, education, health and children's rights (focus on the provision of services for children with special needs).
5. Review the quality of execution of the Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
6. Identify key successes and lessons learned from the project.
7. Provide concrete recommendations to be considered for project ongoing implementation, and/or relevant to future interventions/projects.

Evaluation Criteria

Some of the leading questions to address:

Relevance:

- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?
- To what extent has it taken into account beneficiaries' needs according to age, gender, vulnerability? How has the project adapted to meet those differing needs?
- What are the perceptions of the parents and general community concerning early childhood care and development, the importance of preschool education and inclusion of children with disabilities in the preschool education together with their own children?

Effectiveness:

- Are Save the Children and its partner implementing the project as planned and, if not, why not?
- To what extent were the objectives achieved during this period of project implementation?
- What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? What has been key challenges?
- To what extent has the project mitigated the challenges incurred during the implementation of the activities?

Efficiency:

- Are milestones achieved on time or activities implemented according to the plan?
- Are the project activities being implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative projects?
- How is SC coordinating with its partner to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps?
- How has knowledge been shared between SC and its implementing partner?

Impact:

- What is happening as a result of project activities during the implementation period?

- What real difference is the project contributing to make for the beneficiaries?
- What unintended impacts (positive and negative) is the project producing?
- External communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact on the public?
- How visible have the activities been to the public?

Sustainability (in terms of financial, socio-political, institutional risks):

- What is the likelihood of public financial resources available once the project ends to allocate funding for the running costs of the two newly built crèches?
- Is there sufficient public /stakeholders' awareness in support of the objectives of the project?
- What risks are identified by the project (social-political or policies/structures) that could jeopardize the sustainability of the outcomes? Are the risks mentioned in the project proposal consistent with the actual context of implementation? Is the project proactively mitigating these risks?
- What is the level of stakeholders' ownership to continue carrying out the provision of inclusive learning opportunities and subsidized services for the most vulnerable children including children with disabilities?

Methodology

The lead evaluator or team is expected to write an inception report following review of literature that explicitly propose an evaluation methodology. Such a methodology should define an appropriate sample size and specify mechanisms that will be adopted to avoid selection bias. The evaluation should meet the principles of participation involving children and adults and making sure that men and women are representative in the data collection. As a minimum, the evaluation process will include the following key steps:

1. Review of relevant literature related to the program
2. Review of each evaluation objectives, definition of data they require to be answered, and identification of the data collection methods and tools needed (interviews/FGDs or participatory impact assessment discussions, surveys, literature review, project M&E data collection tools), and define an expected analysis plan on the data to answer the questions (evaluation matrix).
3. Identification of sampling strategy, and appropriate data collection tools for interviews and discussions with stakeholders including Save the Children staff including the following:
 - Save the Children team.
 - The municipality of Korca & Elbasan.(social protection department and education)
 - Regional Health Directorate – Representatives of the department of health promotion
 - Health professionals (family doctors or nurses).
 - Management staff and educators from targeted kindergartens and nurseries.
 - Implementing Partner organization - MEDPAK including their field coordinators in Elbasan and Korce
 - End beneficiaries: Children, parents.
 - Universities of Korce & Elbasan (faculty staff & students in the area of ECCD).

The detailed methodology will be proposed by the consultant/s and discussed as per SCI best practices in the area (indicators from tools such as Index for Inclusion, QLE and IDEELA will be taken into consideration).

Responsibilities of the consultant

- The consultant/s hold the overall management responsibility of the evaluation, including designing and carrying out the evaluation, drafting the final report and debriefing the project team.
- The consultant/s will liaise with Save the Children staff throughout the process, providing regular updates and seeking their input and advice where necessary.

- The consultant/s will develop an inception report detailing the methodology, the tools to be developed, and the time-frame for the evaluation, which will be shared & consented by Save the Children (indicators from Index for Inclusion, QLE and &
- IDELA instruments will be taken into consideration).
- The consultant/s will develop checklists and tools for field interviews and data collection. The tools will be reviewed by Save the Children before finalization.
- The consultant/s will engage with data collection based on agreed workload.
- The consultant/s will present the draft evaluation results to Save the Children staff, integrate Save the Children's feedback into the final version of the document as appropriate and present the finalized report to Save the Children.
- The consultant/s will adhere to the timelines of the consultancy & ensure ethical child/parent participation.
- The consultant is expected to bring his/her own laptop computer, with the software Word, PowerPoint and Excel installed, telephone

Responsibilities of Save the Children

- Provide guidance on the purpose of the assignment & provide all required background materials to the consultant in a timely manner.
- Provide and consult the outline/structure of the inception report, draft report & final one.
- Coordinate with relevant beneficiaries/stakeholders for the data collection process.
- Oversee the service provider by managing the consultancy contract; monitor adherence to specified deadlines; facilitating access to required information.
- Perform quality control, as required of all deliverables.

Note: No reimbursement per diem, accommodation or transport will be provided.

Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required

- Extensive experience in conducting evaluations, including designing and employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and tools, which are participatory and sensitive to the needs of children from vulnerable groups.
- Solid experience with Results-Based Management and Evaluation Guidelines.
- At least 5 years' experience of engagement with child rights, preferably on issues of education (inclusive education, early childcare and development).
- Familiarity with the Albanian pre-school education development context, policies, strategies, and laws.
- Familiarity with inclusive education and proven management skills for evaluation tools such as IDELA, Index of Inclusion, International Classification of Functioning, Individual Development Plans and other useful tools or methodologies in the field of inclusion.
- Proficiency in crosscutting issues (protection, health, education and social resilience)
- Fluent in English – Alternatively if the consultant is not an Albanian speaker, s/he should be part of a team composed by at least one Albanian speaker to assist him/her during the evaluation.
- Be available to conduct the fieldwork of the evaluation during the months of November and provide the report by the end of January 2019.
- Ability to commit and respect deadlines as per agreed terms.

Duty station and timelines:

Tirana, with travels to the municipalities of Korca and Elbasan.

Timeline: The consultant is expected to finalize the final draft of the report in English by the end of January 2019.

Indicative assignment dates: 3 January – 15 February 2019.

Final submission should not be later than **15 February 2019**.

Deliverables – Outputs

The main outputs of the evaluation will be:

- Detailed action plan for the evaluation with the related timeframe and deadlines (English).
- Evaluation design, including sampling strategy, data collection methods and tools taking in consideration indicators from Index for Inclusion, QLE and IDELA instruments (Inception Report – English no later than 5 days from signing the contract).
- Draft report for comments and input from the project team (7 days prior to end of contract).
- Final draft following comments/feedback by SC.
- Final submitted report (in English and no longer than 30 pages, annexes included) - not later than 15 February, 2019.
- A database including all the data and the qualitative information (interviews registrations, FGDs transcription, etc.) collected and pictures taken during the evaluation process. All data deliver will be anonymous, so to avoid traceability of the respondents. These data sets should be provided at the time of submission of the final report. The data is property of Save the Children Albania and may not be distributed without its consent.

Refers to: Program Quality Officer with close involvement of Program Development & Quality Manager & Project Implementation Manager

Submission of application

Interested candidates/agencies should present the followings and should not exceed 7 pages:

- CV and References.
- Candidates should submit written evidence (e.g. evaluation reports attached) of previous works, meeting the requirements laid out in this Terms of Reference with their application (*previous work can be also sent via available hyperlinks/website links easy to download*).
- Proposed approach/methodology and outline design of the evaluation.
- Workplan reflecting the key outputs/deliverables, proposed timeframes to meet the final deadline.
- A statement of availability and commitment to undertake and complete the consultancy within the indicative assignment dates.
- Lump sum fee for conducting the mid-term evaluation including the fee of per diem, accommodation and/or transport.

(in a single e-mail) to

info.albania@savethechildren.org by close of business day, **19 DECEMBER 2018**.



APPLICATION MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ENGLISH

Please ensure that the subject line of the application states: **Mid-term External Evaluation of the project “Towards Inclusive Education of all preschool age children in Albania”**.

Applicants may also submit their application in hard copy to the following address:

Rruga "Komuna e Parisit"
Lagjia 8, Pallatet I Maji, Vila "Lami",
Tirana, Albania
P.O. Box 8185
Tel: +355 4 261840
Fax: +355 4 263 428
Email: info.albania@savethechildren.org
Website: albania.savethechildren.net

Evaluation Criteria:

Selection of the consultant/s will be based on:

- How well the application meets the requirements set out in the Terms of Reference. (max. 10 points)
- Relevant experience and knowledge of the instrument of Index for Inclusion, QLE,
- IDELA, International Classification of Functionality and Individual Education Plan (max. 25 points)
- Proposed Action Plan and Methodology (max. 30 points)
- Previous experience in issues of education and project evaluation (quality, inclusive or
- Early childhood care and development.) (max. 25 points)
- Value for money. (max. 10 points)

NOTE: ONLY SHORT-LISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE NOTIFIED.

