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**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Schools as Zones of Peace: *Assessment: the effects of conflict on education.***

**Save the Children International**

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children. With work in 120 countries, we save children's lives; we fight for their rights; we help them fulfil their potential. We work together, with our partners, to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. We have over two million supporters worldwide and raised 1.6 billion dollars last year to reach more children than ever before, through programs in health, nutrition, education, protection and child rights, also in times of humanitarian crises.

**Save the Children in NE Syria**

Save the Children is implementing a multi-sector programme focusing on education, child protection, food security and livelihoods (FSL), water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH), and provision of non-food items in NE Syria. SC is providing child protection and education services, through an integrated approach and has a solid relationship with the Ministry of Education.

**Program context**

Five years into the conflict, over 2 million children are no longer in school, 400,000 children are at risk of dropping out (primary and secondary) and Syria is now estimated to have one of the lowest enrolment rates in the world. A total of 5.7 million Syrian children and adolescents (in and out of school) and education personnel inside Syria are in need of educational assistance. Almost a quarter of all educational facilities are no longer functional having been damaged, destroyed, used for military purposes or occupied by displaced people. (Save the Children, 2014, ‘Futures Under Threat’).

Of the 2 million children in need, 322,545 are estimated to be in Al Hassakeh governorate. An SC assessment conducted in July 2015 in both host and IDP families identified that 44% of the children were not attending school, the main reasons being lack of income, lack of school materials, lack of access to schools, and teachers not being available. 44% of the HHs informed SC that the out of school children where either helping their families at home or working outside of the home. 27% of children and adolescents consulted expressed concerns regarding protection issues; the out of school children and adolescents who were working suggested rehabilitation of schools, psychosocial support and awareness raising on child protection issues as measures which can improve the current situation for children in Hassakeh. Agencies working on the ground inside Syria report an increase of physical abuse against children in their homes with parents and other family members under stress using negative forms of discipline. Agencies also report that children in informal settlements are suffering from psychological distress, manifested through displays of aggression, problems sleeping, bed-wetting, aggressive behaviour, isolation and agitation. These observations are also backed up by the data collected in the CP assessment conducted by the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG).

**Introduction of the Project: Schools as Zones of Peace**

The aim of the Schools as Zones of Peace project is to ensure access to safe learning environments during conflict/post-conflict, increase capacity of communities, schools and children, and build local and national level engagement to protect education. This includes using participatory tools and methods to engage children.

In order to address the aforementioned needs of the NE Syrian context, Save the Children will employ our ‘School Zones of Peace’ approach to secure safe learning environments, raise awareness among communities, school management and children, and collect in-depth and accurate information on the effects of the conflict on education in NE Syria, enabling us to develop programming that targets the most urgent needs. The project will be a pilot, testing new methodologies in the area of implementation, including community based mechanisms, risk reduction and resilience and linking child protection to community structures.

The **Specific objective** of the project is to ensure *conflict-affected children in Al Hassakeh Governorate of Syria have access to safe and protective education*

The project has **three outcome** areas designed to contribute to the overall objective:

**Outcome 1**: Produce an assessment report that will inform all education actors on the effects of the conflict on education in Al Hassakeh Governorate

**Outcome 2**: Improve access to a Protective and Safe Learning Environment for Children in Al Hassakeh Governorate

**Outcome 3**: Increase community awareness on the importance of access to safe education and protection for children

**Purpose of the Assessment**

The current lack of data and information available signify the need for a comprehensive assessment on the effect the conflict has had on the education system in NE Syria. The assessment will explore the current effects that the conflict in NE Syria has had on the education sector and how schools and the communities have coped during the conflict. The assessment will focus on 7 recently liberated sub-districts in Hassakeh: Tal Hamis, Al Wardeeyah, Al Hole, Al Hassakeh, Tal Tamer, Areesheh, and Ras Al Ain. All of the sub-districts have been affected by the conflict through the occupation of ISIS and eventually liberated by the Syrian Democratic Forces led by the People’s Protection Unit (YPG/J). Specifically, this assessment is expected to:

(a) Assess the impact of conflict on education in Al Hassakeh Governorate of NE Syria

(b) Inform the detailed project design which is based on a community driven approach and increased community engagement for mitigating child protection risks and risk to safe and quality education. Requires a mapping of existing child protection (or similar) networks

(c) Inform the subsequent advocacy workshop through identifying the issues, defining advocacy messages, target audiences, and community-based awareness activities

(c) Recommend improvements for longer-term strategies, through which SC will identify opportunities and assess risks to engage on the topic in future actions

This assessment will be shared with the donor, NMFA, relevant education partners and stakeholders (including MoE and local Humanitarian Affairs Office), and Save the Children.

**Assessment Methodology**

The assessment should be an analysis piece that encompasses baseline data information and also looks critically at the effects of the conflict. The following provides a guide on the methodological process expected for this research. A final methodology will be proposed by the selected researcher in the inception meeting and discussed/approved by the Program Manager/Technical Advisor.

The assessment methodology will combine child-friendly qualitative and quantitative approaches and be participatory where appropriate, including but not only limited to:

* Document Review: existing programme documents, reports, evaluations and other relevant documents (from NE Syria or from other conflict-affected countries where SC has a strong Education programme)
* Key informant interviews (semi-structured) with relevant government officials, UN agency staff and NGO staff where appropriate
* Child friendly participatory methods that covers both children in and out of school
* Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries and other members of communities, including parents and school staff
* Stakeholder and beneficiary debriefing on findings
* Coordinate effectively with other consultants already engaged in similar work with relevant sections in SC to arrive at a coherent and complementary approach that takes into consideration the inter-sectoral nature of peace- building work.
* Dissemination strategies including workshops and forums at different levels
* Should be conducted to the highest ethical standards
* Conduct interviews with a defined number of key education and other programme staff in SC country office

The research will be carried out in Arabic in-country. However, the final report and presentation will be produced in English for appropriate dissemination and advocacy purposes. Technical support will be provided mainly in English by Save the Children technical backstops and advocacy colleagues. Eventually, once approved by Save the Children, the final report will be translated into Arabic so as to be presented and discussed with Education partners in NE Syria.

**Deliverables**

1. Inception report including methodology, survey protocol and data collection tools
2. Draft report for SC technical teams to comment on
3. Final report with an executive summary including an overall narrative summary and targeted recommendations on advocacy and implementation
4. Workshop with PowerPoint presentation to present and validate findings and recommendations to SC and relevant education stakeholders including MoE
5. Debrief with program and management staff with handover of all data (in clean form)

**All material will be produced by the consultant in English and translated into Arabic.**

**Indicative Timeline**

This assignment is expected to be conducted from February 1 to 26 2017, (26 days). The specific timeline for the main milestones of the assignment include the following:

* Inception report with methodology finalized and agreed by all parties:( 3 days)
* Data collection and analysis, including hiring and training of enumerators:(13 days)
* Report Draft-1:(4 days)
* Workshop to present initial findings and inform project implementation, advocacy strategy and recommendations( 1 day)
* Feedback and revision of impact assessment report( 2 days)
* Final Evaluation Report (2 days)

**Management of the study**

The consultant will work on the ground in close collaboration with the Education Program Manager for SZOP (based in Derek), the MEAL team, as well as the Officers of the Education program in field base. The Education Program Manager will be the main contact person for the consultant. The Education Technical Advisor (based in Erbil) and other project stakeholders based in Oslo, via the Program Manager, will also provide technical input and support.

Save the Children will facilitate and provide all arrangements and support services/facilities for the work of the consultant including:

* Provision of background and reference documents
* Support for transport, accommodation and security in field locations
* Facilitating contacts and meetings with relevant stakeholders, which includes organising meetings with different community groups as required
* Enabling the relevant Save the Children staff to contribute to the assessment process

**Profile and skills of the consultant**

The study will be conducted by a consultant with expertise and / or experience in assessment of civic education, conflict resolution and/or peace-building programming. The consultant is required to have the following set of skills and competencies:

* Demonstrated experience in Education in Emergencies and at least 5 years of experience in conducting research and evaluations, including designing and employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and tools which are participatory and sensitive to the needs of children and youth.
* Excellent technical ability and experience in qualitative analysis, and in particular, demonstrated knowledge and proficiency in different methods of qualitative analysis.
* Proven experience working on Education in Emergencies, Child Protection, Child Participation and Child Rights themes (preferably in humanitarian contexts).
* Understanding of and experience in policy writing – including production of recommendations for different audiences.
* Respect for diversity and better understanding of local systems and culture of the communities
* Experience of working in a fragile context and sound knowledge of security risks and measures (previous experience in Syria is an asset)
* Demonstrated ability to produce compelling, concise and high-quality evaluation communications products (reports or otherwise)
* Strong speaking and writing capacities in English
* Capacity to work in team and respect for opinions of team members
* Ability to share samples of previous research/evaluations conducted
* Excellent interpersonal skills, and ability to promote collaboration and consensus building

**Ethical Considerations**

Study team will operate in full compliance with Save the Children’s Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. Study team will make clear to all participating stakeholders that they are under no obligation to participate in the evaluation study. All participants will be assured that there will be no negative consequences if they choose not to participate. Study team will obtain informed consent from the participants. In case if study team does not understand participants’ first language, they will be taking interpreter/s along. Team will have to receive prior permission/consent for taking and use of visual still/ moving images for specific purposes, i.e., ‘for evaluation report and presentations. Study team will assure the participants’ anonymity and confidentiality and will ensure the visual data is protected and used for agreed purpose only.

**Conditions of Submission**

Save the Children invites expressions of interest from individuals with the experience and skills described above. The consultant will have to submit a technical and financial offer.

The technical offer will include:

* A cover letter of no more than 2 pages introducing the evaluator and how the skills and competencies above are met, with concrete examples as appropriate.
* An outline project proposal (including proposed methodology, time schedule and work plan)
* A CV detailing relevant skills and experience, including contactable referees
* Proven record of experience in evaluation of education in emergencies -related projects
* One or two examples of a final report of a previous evaluation that the consultant has led.

The financial offer must be the most detailed and expressive possible. It will ideally be presented in matrix form (to facilitate the analysis), with lines organized around topics. At minimum, the following items should appear: Fees, Transportation, and accommodation

Applications should be submitted by 11th of January 2017. Applications will be reviewed in a rolling bases.