

Terms of Reference

for Technical services from a local research / evaluation agency in conducting programme evaluation of Getting Ready For School – A Child to Child Approach to be piloted in Tajikistan

Background:

Getting Ready for School – A Child to Child Approach is an innovative idea initiated jointly by UNICEF and Child to Child Trust, Institute of Education, University of London. It will be implemented by the Ministry of Education in Tajikistan. The over all goal of this initiative is to increase both the child's readiness for school as well as the school's readiness to receive and foster optimal learning environment for its youngest students. The initiative aims to ensure that children enter a school with a strong foundation in language, early literacy and numeracy. In order to achieve the goal, two interventions are planned targeting two groups of children: :

- (1) Children in the early years of primary school (1-5 years old);
- (2) Children in the upper primary school years with children during the year before they enroll in school (6 year old).

The interventions encourage school children to provide much needed support to younger children to help them develop early learning competencies and to start school at the right age.

The Child to Child Approach will be piloted in 6 countries of different regions. The countries are: Bangladesh, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Tajikistan and Yemen.

The Child to Child (C2C) pilot project has 3 main components: Materials and Training, Communication and Programme evaluation.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the Child-to-Child approach to increase school readiness, a programme evaluation is planned to address the issues related to programme outcome, impact and process. The C2C approach is unique in that the evaluation component of the programme is being developed as part of the programme design. A common research design and a shared set of instruments developed by the American Institutes of Research (AIR), Washington DC will enable the cross-country comparison and analysis.

It was planned to engage an expert agency in research/evaluations at the country level to support the implementation of the programme evaluation component of the pilot project.

The local research agency/organization will follow the guidelines, administer/apply the instruments and tools for data collection and recording purposes being developed centrally with adaptation in the country context.

The Scope of Work:

To implement the Child to Child approach in Tajikistan, two pilot districts are selected: Bokhtar and Rumi (Kolkhazabod), based on the factors like, lack of early learning opportunities and programmes and weak learning achievement in early years of primary schools in these districts. From each district 20 schools (total 40 schools) will be selected. In order to see the impact of the programme there will be 10 'Treatment' (where the programme will be implemented) schools

and 10 'Control' schools (where the programme will not be implemented and schools are selected for comparison reason) in each district.

The main population of the evaluation will be children of age 6 and their parents in the school catchments area, students of grade 4, teachers of grade 4, school principals and the community leaders (to be decided). It is planned to conduct initial baseline data collection and the impact data collection for both control and treatment schools.

Baseline survey will be conducted at the beginning of school calendar in September 2008 and the impact data may be collected in May-June 2009 (to be decided). Prior to the start of the work, orientation training is scheduled to adopt the instruments, identify the data collection methodology and pre-test of those items in June-July 2008.

Responsibilities:

1. Carry out the Programme Evaluation component activities according to the guidelines.
2. Coordinate and communicate and consult with local UNICEF office and if necessary with American Institutes of Research (AIR).
3. Recruit, hire and train local evaluation team members
4. Participate in the orientation training and pre-test the instruments
5. Manage the data collection and evaluation team members.
6. Administer the following instruments during baseline and follow up impact study phases vis-à-vis visits to children's homes and schools:
 - a. School readiness assessment battery
 - b. Survey for older children
 - c. Survey for families
 - d. Teacher and school administrator interviews
 - e. Community leader survey/or interviews
7. Meet high standards of quality and reliability when implementing all data collection activities as well as quality assurance procedures
8. Manage data entry process (using Microsoft Excel) including implementation of quality assurance procedures, responsible for delivery of data to AIR in consultation with UNICEF.

Qualifications:

The agency should have qualified persons with:

- a. Advance degree in education, sociology or a related field
- b. Familiarity with Microsoft Excel.
- c. Previous experience in research project management/conducting evaluation
- d. Ability to interact with programme participants, including young children, parents, teachers and school and community leaders.
- e. Ability to speak, read, and write both in English and Tajik fluently, Uzbek will be as an asset
- f. Ability to travel to rural areas in difficult conditions
- g. Exposure to and interest in Early Childhood Education and related research

- h. Familiarity with quantitative and qualitative research methodologies
- i. Previous experience in child cognitive assessments
- j. Previous experience in conducting qualitative interviews and focus group discussions.

Physical facilities and equipments:

The agency should have their own office, sufficient furniture, computer and other required equipments with proper electric connections.

Deliverables:

After administering the instruments and tools for data collection as per guidelines and check them for correctness and quality control. The completed instruments and tools will be preserved so long agreed to dispatch. Collected data will be processed in Excel as per guidelines and submitted to UNICEF. Besides the selected data collection instruments, other process documents in connection with the pilot project will be submitted to UNICEF.

Submission of proposals:

One technical proposal and one financial proposal indicating the cost should be submitted separately. Based on the understanding of the job, technical proposal should have details of implementation plan indicating activities, quality assurance, qualifications of the persons to be involved, physical facilities, equipment, profile of the organization, previous experience in research/evaluation work etc. The technical proposal will be assessed through certain criteria by UNICEF and only the responsive proposals will be considered for selection. In the financial proposal, the rate, quantity, unit cost, total cost in TJS of different activities should be clearly mentioned.

Ownership:

All collected data, information, reports will be owned by UNICEF. Information in any form cannot be shared without prior written permission of UNICEF.

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