

# CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON BARRIERS THAT AFFECT CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TO DEVELOP LITERACY SKILLS

## BACKGROUND

Mureke Dusome is a USAID-funded activity, which aims to foster partnerships between schools and the broader community to improve children's literacy outcomes. Save the Children (SC) leads implementation with extensive field support from its local partner organizations, Umuhuza and Uwezo Youth Empowerment (UWEZO). The goal of Mureke Dusome is to contribute to the Rwandan Education Sector under the Government of Rwanda's (GoR) national development priorities, whose strategic plan acknowledges the importance of developing lifelong reading habits and ensuring students develop the foundational skills necessary to support high literacy levels. Mureke Dusome is modelled on a theory of change that posits that children learn to read better when they are in supportive communities and home literacy environments, with the necessary time and materials outside of school to practice reading.

### **Mureke Dusome's Revised Results Framework has four Intermediate Results (IR):**

- IR 1: Sustain capacity strengthening for school leadership to promote school-community partnerships and improve student literacy.
- IR 2: Sustain increased effective community and parental involvement to improve literacy skills.
- IR 3: Sustain Improvements to the culture of reading.
- IR 4: Promote equity in literacy work, with a focus on gender empowerment and the inclusion of children with disabilities.

By 2018 and in collaboration with local authorities and communities, Mureke Dusome had established 2524 reading clubs across the country in each village where there is a public or government-aided school. Children aged 7 to 9 (P1-P3 children) attend reading clubs in their communities. The number of children with disabilities that attend reading clubs is very low: approximately 1% of all children attending the reading clubs. Mureke Dusome aims to ensure that the number of children with disabilities that attend reading clubs increases so that they get the opportunity to participate in reading activities and develop their literacy competences.

In order to implement Intermediate Result 4: ***“Promote equity in literacy work, with a focus on gender empowerment and the inclusion of children with disabilities,”*** Mureke Dusome, in collaboration with Uwezo Youth Empowerment (UWEZO) Uwezo, is planning to conduct awareness sessions among parents to support their children with disabilities to develop literacy skills. The Literacy Champions that support children in the reading clubs will also be trained on how to identify and support children with disabilities in reading clubs.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The consultant will support Mureke Dusome to design and conduct a context-specific purposive study exploring the barriers preventing children with disabilities in Rwanda from developing literacy skills.

The study will look at the most prevalent physical and sensory impairments in school-aged children and the associated challenges in terms of learning to read. The study is also expected to provide information on assistive strategies, formats or devices that could be used to address the challenges, including an exploration of cost-effective or low and high technology solutions to address the realities of rural and urban areas. It will also highlight practical and implementable recommendations to address the barriers that affect children with disabilities to develop literacy skills.

The main findings will be used to:

- Generate evidence from which to base advocacy for the investment in the implementation of the Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy. It will also raise the profile of the issues of children with disabilities and low literacy attainment with Rwanda Education Board, Ministry of Education, NCPD and government partners in education.
- Encourage the provision of accessible reading materials in mainstream and special schools for children with disabilities
- Advocate for specialized trainings in the use of accessible reading materials for teachers in mainstream schools
- Inform the design of inclusive activities in future early grade reading programs in Rwanda.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

- Conduct a literature review to identify existing information, practices, needs, and gaps in literacy promotion for children with disabilities in Rwanda and to identify any differences that may exist in how students with disabilities learn literacy and how they can be supported.
- Conduct stakeholder meetings with DPOs, NUDOR, MINEDUC, REB, special schools and centers for children with disabilities, INGOs working with PWDs in Rwanda, etc. to identify existing practices, challenges and successes in supporting children with disabilities to improve literacy skills
- Collaborate with in-country staff, UWEZO and global supervisors to develop research plan/tools
- Based on the literature review, stakeholder meetings, and collaboration with in-country staff and UWEZO, identify research question/research design for this study
- Collect and analyse data, and produce a study report
- Present the final findings internally and externally to the stakeholders and partners.
- Produce a study report incorporating comments from in-country staff, UWEZO and global staff.

## **Deliverables:**

- A literature review and stakeholder meeting report identifying the existing information/practice and gaps, as well as Research Questions for the study
- The inception report detailing methodology is produced
- Data collection tools developed (qualitative and quantitative)
- Submit the Dataset collected
- Progress reports on data collection on a weekly basis
- A complete clean report of the study submitted
- PowerPoint presentation of highlights of the study findings
- A four-page summary/briefer
- Support in dissemination of findings internally and externally at National level

## **REPORTING AND TIMELINE**

The consultant will work closely with the Save the Children Senior Research and Evaluation Specialist and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Specialist and reports to the Chief of Party of USAID Mureke Dusome Project during the duration of the assignment, not exceeding 33 working days. The study design to be submitted to Save the Children by February 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 and the final report will be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The consultant will submit regular progress reports and field reports throughout the data collection period and provide a final report. The final report should be in line with Save the Children evaluation standards and very focused on practical and implementable recommendations.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF CONSULTING FIRM & LEAD CONSULTANT**

### **ESSENTIAL CRITERIAS**

- A copy of company registration certificate from RDB.
- Company profile with physical address.
- Copy of minimum three Service completion Letters or certificates for similar work performed in the last 2 years.
- Detailed Financial and Technical proposal.

### **PREFERED CRITERIAS**

- Preferably, a Master's degree in Social Sciences or Development Studies with at least five years of experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies, and skills and experience in conducting evaluation and baseline studies, or developing programmes, strategies and policies.
- Proven experience in research, especially on disability issues. Prior experience with similar work in inclusion will be an added advantage;
- Experience working with people with disabilities and Government institutions, especially MINEDUC, MINALOC, MIGEPROF, NCPD and Organizations of People with Disabilities, is an added advantage;
- An understanding of the educational, political, economic, social and cultural context of Rwanda in particular, and Africa in general;
- Strong interpersonal, writing, presentation, and organizational skills are required;

- Understanding of approaches to communicate technical information to a non-technical audience is critical;
- Proven capacity to develop sound working relationships and to work effectively within a professional multi-disciplinary team;
- Demonstrated ability to deliver results to specified deadlines and quality standards;
- Proven experience and ability to lead focus group discussions in Kinyarwanda, especially with children, and key informant interviews taking into consideration those with hearing and speech difficulties.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills as well as verbal communication skills (in English).

### **CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY:**

Any employee, consultant, contractor or the supplier undertaking an activity on behalf of SCI must sign the Child Safeguarding - Declaration of Acceptance Form and comply with the SCIs Child Safeguarding Policy which is a statement of SCI's commitment to preventing abuse and protecting children with whom it comes into contact.

This extends not only to children with whom SCI and its partners work directly, but also includes children whom staff is responsible for. SCI believes that the situation of children must be improved through the promotion of their rights supported and demonstrated by all members of staff. Save the Children International's Code of Conduct sets out the standards which all staff members and contracted personnel and agencies must adhere to.

### **APPLICATION SPECIFICATIONS**

Interested candidates should submit their technical and financial proposals in one sealed envelope dropped in the tender Box at Save the Children offices in Nyarutarama, Plot 204, KG 28 AV, #23. Nyarutarama-Remera-Gasabo and sign on the Bid submission list available at the reception not later than **10<sup>th</sup> December 2019 @5:30PM**.

Envelope subject: **A study on barriers affecting children with disabilities to develop literacy skills.**

**Note: Only successful consultancy firms or individuals registered as businesses will be contacted.**