



Expression of Interest for the role of External Evaluator

Introduction

Link Community Development International are seeking Expressions of Interest from relevant parties to take on the role of External Evaluator for a DFID (Department for International Development) funded, 'Girls' Education Challenge' (GEC) initiative through the 'Leave No Girl Behind' (LNGB) funding window. Successful candidates will then be invited to tender a full proposal in line with the attached ToR.

The 5-year project, entitled '**Transformational Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls in Malawi**' or '**TEAM Girl Malawi**', will be implemented through Link Community Development International's partners in Malawi addressing the social, cultural, economic (and other) barriers to education.

The GEC-LNGB requirements for reliable and credible data collection, analysis and findings are technically challenging given the characteristics of the target group, the project operational environments and the type and standard of evidence (particularly evidence of *additional* impact) that projects are required to deliver. This type of evaluation work requires high quality, specialist evaluation, research expertise and experience.

The primary responsibilities of the external evaluator are to develop fieldwork plans and research tools, pilot and adapt those tools, collect and analyse data on outcomes and intermediate outcomes, and present these findings in a report to the Fund Manager with associated data.

Link Community Development International

Link Community Development International is a family of not for profit organisations working together to transform education for children and communities across impoverished rural areas of Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda.

Our **vision** is a world where every child in Sub-Saharan Africa attains the right to a quality basic education.

Our **mission** is to inspire sustainable innovations in education policy based on evidence-based grassroots experience of approaches which have the greatest positive impact on learner outcomes.

Since 1995 we have improved the learning and lives of over 2 million children in 3,000 schools. We guide governments and educators to adopt low-cost, evidence-based and sustainable solutions to improve learning and support for children, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, life skills and inclusion for the most marginalised. To ensure we support vulnerable learners without leading to segregation, we follow a 'twin track' approach to inclusive education - working towards systemic change in the equity and quality of education in schools whilst recognising the need for individualised support to learners with additional needs.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Link Community Development believes that a child, vulnerable adult or person at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to work in a way that promotes the welfare of all and protects them from harm. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any harm to or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult by any of our staff, representatives or partners. GEC LNGB grantees are expected to ensure safeguarding and child protection standards are upheld across all project partners and contractors, including external evaluators.

Project Background

Link Community Development has been working in Malawi since 2006 with funding from DfID, USAID, the Scottish Government, Comic Relief, amongst others. By sharing our learning, we have influenced government policy and practice and achieved significant impact through developing Malawi's first National Education Standards to be used in every primary and secondary school in the country. To strengthen accountability, we deliver a community engagement model that raises community awareness of the standard of education their children are entitled to whilst building opportunities to hold schools and government accountable for providing that standard.

The Transformational Empowerment of Adolescent Marginalised Girls in Malawi project or "TEAM Girl Malawi" will operate in 40 communities in two rural (Dedza and Mchinji) and one urban (Lilongwe) district in Malawi's Central region. It will improve learning and life chances for girls aged 10–19 who have never been to school or who dropped out of school without gaining functional literacy and numeracy.

Implementing partners are as follows: Link Community Development Malawi (LCDM) - Lead on Complimentary Basic Education; Theatre for a Change (TfaC) – Lead on Child Protection, Safeguarding, community and Girls' Club activities; Micro-Loan Foundation (MLF) – Lead on financial literacy training and business skills; Supreme – lead on vocational training; Charlie Goldsmith Associates (CGA) – Lead on internal M&E.

Background to the Girls' Education Fund (GEC) Programme

- The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty. DFID is tackling the global challenges of our time including poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity and conflict. DFID's work is building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries and in the UK too.
- DFID is working to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Progress on girls' education is critical to the achievement of these targets. SDGs 4 and 5 specifically relate to education and achieving gender parity. SDG 4 covers '*inclusive and quality education for all and lifelong learning*'.

- Globally 31 million primary age girls, have never been to school¹. The majority of these girls come from the poorest and most marginalised communities in the most disadvantaged locations, ethnic groups etc.² Over the last 20 years primary enrolments for girls have improved along with boys but completion rates are equally low for both sexes. At the secondary level the differences between boys' and girls' participation rates really start to show. Significant disparities exist within countries, with the poorest girls from rural areas most severely subject to educational disadvantage - even at the primary level³.
- The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) is helping the world's poorest girls improve their lives through education and supporting better ways of getting girls in school and ensuring they receive quality education to transform their future.
- PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) and alliance partners have been contracted as the dedicated Fund Manager (FM) and are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the GEC. This includes establishing the recipient tendering process, supporting bidders, sifting and scoring proposals, monitoring Value for Money (VfM) and making project funding recommendations for DFID approval. The FM also manages the relationships with the selected projects and oversees their Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning operations.
- Through the GEC, DFID provided £355m between 2012 and 2017 to the FM to disburse to 37 individual projects in 18 countries across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to help girl's education.
- The Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) window is a new funding window announced in July 2016 under DFID's Girls' Education Challenge (GEC). The LNGB window aims to support interventions for highly marginalised, adolescent girls who are out of school (either because they have never attended school or have dropped out without gaining a basic education).

Overview of the project implementation timescales:

The overall project will run from **August 2018 to 31 October 2023**. The approximate evaluation point reporting deadlines are as follows:

Baseline – May 2019

Midline 1 – July/August 2021 (tbc)

Midline 2 – July/August 2022 (tbc)

Endline – October 2023 (tbc)

The Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Framework is currently being developed and will provide details on the evaluation requirements and expectations for evaluators. Although this will not be finalised, further details may be shared with those candidates who are invited to tender a full proposal.

Rationale for the Evaluation

The findings from the evaluation will primarily be used:

- By the project management team, project partners and stakeholders to inform improvements in the delivery of the project during its lifetime;
- to demonstrate accountability for the funding received to DFID, other UK Government Departments, UK tax-payers, UK media;

¹ United Nations, 2015. *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. Sales No. E.15.XVII.8.

² Idem

³ Idem

- by the project management team to leverage additional resources from existing and new partners and stakeholders in order to scale-up and sustain the activities /benefits delivered by the project;
- by the project management team to support the on-going development and implementation of the project's sustainability and succession strategies;
- by partners, stakeholders and the Government to learn lessons from the project for the purpose of replicating what works elsewhere and/or taking up approaches and activities that have proven to work in order to scale up the project;
- by the Fund Manager to feed into and identify insights in order to inform programme level questions; and
- by other donors, academic institutions and education networks to inform the wider policy debate concerning the education of girls and marginalised girls.

The successful Evaluation Team will be required to develop an evaluation approach that answers the following overarching questions as a minimum:

- Process – Was the project successfully designed and implemented?
- Impact – What impact did the project have on the learning and transition of marginalised girls, including girls with disabilities? How and why was this impact achieved?
- Value for Money – Did the project demonstrate a good VfM approach?
- Effectiveness – What worked (and did not work) to increase the learning and transition of marginalised girls as defined by the project.
- Sustainability – How sustainable were the activities funded by the GEC and was the project successful in leveraging additional interest and investment?

Applicant Profile & Experience

The ideal candidate to undertake this evaluation will have:

- High-quality, specialist evaluation and research expertise and proven experience for projects of a similar scale
- Strong experience in rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis
- Experience in use of control / comparison groups in complex context.
- Experience in use of monitoring tools such as household surveys, FGDs, KIIs, Informal observations (specifically for qualitative data)
- Experience in design of complex sampling approaches
- Experience in designing digitised systems for data collection, collation and analysis
- Experience in rural sub-Saharan Africa; Malawian experience an advantage
- Experience working within the education sector.
- Experience using EGRA/EGMA, and other learning tests
- Experience of working with and designing MEL systems to work inclusively with vulnerable, marginalised target groups - having an appreciation of their complex needs and the sensitivities required in working with these individuals.
- Familiarity with UK Department for International Development (DFID) monitoring and reporting processes

- Knowledge and working experience with the ‘Washington Group Questions’ with young individuals considered an advantage
- Ability to work with whole staff team and variety of stakeholders
- Experience in high-quality report-writing based on accurate and precise analysis and findings.
- Excellent knowledge base, conceptual and analytical skills, and communication skills

Terms and Conditions

When tendering for this piece of work the following criteria should be adhered to:

- Adherence to strict child protection and safeguarding standards and procedures.
- Proposals must include sufficient detail to enable LCDI to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the proposal.
- Applicants intending to submit a proposal in response to this Invitation to Tender should ensure that their proposal addresses in full the requirements set out in this document and that all information requested is supplied.
- LCDI reserves the right not to award a contract in the event that no proposal is deemed suitable or in the event that funding for the strategic review is not approved.
- LCDI will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred in the preparation or presentation of tenders.
- It is expected that the successful bidder will be in a position to commence work shortly after the contract is awarded and that the work will be completed within the agreed specific time frame.
- Tenders should clearly and individually time/cost each element of the work outlined in the proposal and the sum should include all costs including VAT.

Criteria for Selection and Award of Contract

Eligibility will be determined in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 5 of page 35 of the attached GEC LNGB Recipient Handbook pertaining to evaluation criteria and weighting.

Confidentiality and Ownership

All documents provided and research outcomes are strictly private and confidential and will remain at all times the property of LCDI.

Selection of Consultant

Interested candidates should submit an Expression of Interest, for the attention of Graham Niven, TEAM Project Coordinator; E-mail Address: graham@lcd.org.uk

The EOI must include:

- Detailed description of how the applicant meets the above profile
- A detailed track record, including details of other organisations for whom work has been completed
- Two examples of relevant previous work
- And be **no more than 5 pages**

Comments on the proposed approach are welcome. Applicants may be requested to submit additional information.

Application Deadline

Proposals should be addressed “Expression of Interest for LCDI LNGB External Evaluator” and sent for the attention of Graham Niven, TEAM Project Coordinator, by latest **5pm on Wednesday 14th November 2018**. E-mail Address: **graham@lcd.org.uk**

We will review all Expressions of Interest and notify 5 successful candidates who will then be invited to tender a fully costed proposal in accordance with the attached ToR. Submission deadline for this will be **5pm on 3rd December**. These will be reviewed and further shortlisted to interviews before contracting in **mid-December 2018**.