



Terms of Reference – Baseline Study

Adolescent Girls' Education in Crisis Initiative (AGENCI) Project

1. Introduction

The Adolescent Girls' Education in Crisis Initiative (AGENCI) is a four-year (2019-2023), \$17.1 million project to enhance the empowerment of adolescent girls and female youth pursuing educational pathways in crisis-affected areas of South Sudan, Syria, and Uganda. It targets over 148,000 adolescent girls and female youth aged 10-24. It is a joint initiative of World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC), with financial support from Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

WUSC is one of Canada's leading non-profit international development organizations committed to building a more equitable and sustainable world. The organization works with a unique and powerful network of post-secondary institutions, private sector partners and volunteers to provide educational, employment and empowerment opportunities that improve the lives of millions of disadvantaged youth around the world. WUSC has opened a project office in Juba for this project, and has a newly-opened country program office in Kampala.

AKFC, leveraging resources from the wider Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), promotes development in Africa and Asia, tackling the root causes of poverty through a holistic and interconnected set of programs. These initiatives address people's most pressing needs and enable them to unlock their full potential, with a particular focus on marginalized groups like women and girls. AKFC has a country office in Kampala and a presence in Syria.

WUSC and AKFC have entered into a consortium for the implementation AGENCI, and WUSC is the project lead. Aligned with a consortium agreement, WUSC will solely implement the project in South Sudan and AKF will solely implement in Syria. For project activities in Uganda, WUSC and AKFC implement jointly.

2. Background of the AGENCI Project

AGENCI is designed to address gender, social, cultural and economic barriers it's targeted beneficiaries face in accessing education, and making life decisions. Rapid gender analyses were conducted in the three countries of study in 2020 to develop the AGENCI Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy and Project Implementation Plan. The rapid gender analysis reports will serve as key documents to inform the design of the baseline study. The project seeks to improve equitable learning outcomes for adolescent girls and female youth in formal and non-formal upper

primary school, secondary school, and in skills training programs. AGENCI responds to specific barriers and educational needs identified by adolescent girls, female youth, community members, and education stakeholders through gender analyses conducted in the three countries. AGENCI addresses the root causes of inequality by challenging and helping to transform structural barriers and entrenched social norms, attitudes, and power relations that impact girls' ability to access and benefit from education. The project's expected outputs, and immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes are presented in a Logic Model which is annexed to this Terms of Reference.

AGENCI will implement a range of innovative and tested interventions including media campaigns, community outreach, girls' and boys' clubs, flexible response funds, and girls' mentorship programs. Working with education stakeholders, AGENCI will provide training and support to ensure that teachers and educational leaders have the skills, resources, data and information they need to provide girls with safe, quality, gender responsive and inclusive learning environments. The project addresses two critical moments in girls' education when they are most at-risk of dropping out of the education system: adolescence (primary to secondary) and transition to adulthood (secondary to vocational training or employment). The specific interventions employed by WUSC and AKFC in South Sudan, Uganda, and Syria are based on the needs, priorities and realities of each context.

3. Purpose and Objectives of the Baseline Study

This baseline study is a contractual obligation included in the project's Contribution Agreement (CA) with Global Affairs Canada. The purpose of the AGENCI project's baseline study is to help key project stakeholders focus on achievement related to a set of expected outcomes; and to empower them to collaboratively measure progress towards them, as well as review them as needed and appropriate. Aligned with this purpose, the baseline study is designed to achieve four specific objectives:

- To support a better understanding of the implementation contexts for the AGENCI Project at the onset of the project;
- To establish starting points or baselines for all indicators in the PMF, suggesting revisions in their formulation if the need emerges;
- To help validate the assumptions in the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and define targets of the indicators in the project's Performance Measurement Framework (PMF); and
- To provide recommendations for the development, updating and implementation of the results-based monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) plan for the project.

Baseline data is intended to inform the establishment of realistic and achievable targets, provide a point of reference against which progress on or towards the achievement of outcomes can be monitored and evaluated, and provide suggestions for the review of indicators if and where necessary.

4. The Mandate of the Consultancy

The Consultant (or consultancy firm) will serve as the lead coordinator of this baseline study and will be responsible for its design, the development and use of appropriate data collection tools, analysis of collected data, the writing of a final report summarizing the findings and inserting the data in the Performance Measurement Framework. The Consultant will design and facilitate a plan in close collaboration with the WUSC and AKF project management teams based in Nairobi, Ottawa and Geneva, as well as in the three countries of the study. Specifically, the mandate of the consultancy is to:

- **Design** - Work with designated AKF and WUSC staff during an inception phase to finalize a detailed methodology and workplan for this study; and contingency planning for data collection in the COVID-19 context;
- **Lead and coordinate** the teams of enumerators in each country, and act as lead technical coordinator for the baseline study;
- **Support in-country collaboration** - Assure collaborative adaptation of the overall baseline design to the local context through the direct involvement of key project staff and identified implementing partner representatives;
- **Coordinate** with AKF and WUSC's GESI Advisors and teams leading the Qualitative Gender Analysis, to ensure that the methodology and tools will allow the baseline data collection to appropriately fulfill the informational need of the QGA that will be conducted in parallel;
- **Assure quality control** - Provide oversight and quality assurance during sampling, development of data collection tools, data collection and entry, analysis of the data collected, and report writing;
- **Provide meta-analysis** - Integrate the findings from the baseline data collections undertaken in three different countries to create a final consolidated and coherent baseline study report.

The baseline study will be jointly managed by WUSC and AKFC, with close collaboration between the two organization-specific HQ-based MERL Advisors, and with country teams in the three target countries. A more detailed consultative and decision-making management structure with clear roles and responsibilities will be determined during the inception phase of the study.

5. Scope and Methodology of the Baseline Study

The following elements should guide the design and implementation of this baseline study:

- The study should consciously apply qualitative and quantitative research methods that are gender and youth-sensitive, and engage as much as possible in participatory approaches;
- The geographic scope of the study will be aligned with the targeted areas, schools, households and individuals targeted by the project as laid out in the project description;
- The data collection approaches and specific tools used to establish indicator baselines should be adapted to the local contexts in the three countries, to assure the appropriateness and reliability of the data collected.

Outcome statements, indicators, sources and data collection methods for each indicator, are included in the project's draft PMF (available upon contracting). The Consultant will be expected to review this PMF with key project stakeholders, and provide suggestions for potential revision of indicators, focusing mostly on measurability issues. The baseline study is expected to collect data for these measures and for all other indicators in the PMF. The final, integrated baseline study report produced by the Consultant will be expected to provide specific suggestions on how the project's draft PMF could be improved, and how quantitative and qualitative indicators within the PMF might be adjusted.

While the Consultant, informed by discussions with field-based project teams is encouraged to suggest alternative methodologies that may be more appropriate, presently the PMF outlines the following data collection methods or evidence streams to establish a performance measurement baseline:

1. Literature and document review, including reference to rapid gender equality analyses conducted in the three countries and extraction of data points from education management information systems, whenever available and appropriate;

2. Key informant interviews;
3. Facilitated small group or focus group discussions
 - a. with a broad target group of girls, boys and adolescent youth, and
 - b. with narrower group of enrolled female and male learners;
4. Surveys, at school and household level.

The Consultant will be expected to propose a detailed methodology for collecting data on all AGENCI Project Indicators using a combination of the above mentioned as appropriate. However it needs to be ensured that it includes both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The Consultant will also be expected to adjust the overall methodology of the study, as well as each individual data collection tool, to the evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic in the three countries, in order to ensure that the whole study is timely and complete.

6. Key Activities and Deliverables of the Consultancy

The baseline study will include three key phases:

1. Contracting,
2. Inception phase,
3. Data collection, data analysis and report writing.

After successfully completing the contracting process, the Consultant will immediately organize an initial round of consultations with key stakeholders, as well as complete an initial document review to better understand the project, its contexts and its informational needs. The Consultant will use the inception phase to assure a consensus on the baseline study's design, outline the details of the methodology for the study, and develop the data collection tools.

Following approval of the inception report by AKF and WUSC, the Consultant will recruit and train the enumerators (with the support of the country team as appropriate and agreed upon during inception), carry out the data collection activities, and supervise data entry to ensure data quality.

Once data collection is completed, the Consultant will focus on the treatment and analysis of collected data, and drafting of the final report, which will include an updated PMF, as well as recommendations on targets whenever appropriate. During this phase, the Consultant will engage with AKF and WUSC Monitoring and Evaluation Advisors and Project Managers to refine the final report.

The **final** Baseline Study Report **must** be submitted to AKF and WUSC on **March 30th 2021**.

An overall timeline for the key deliverable of the three phases is laid out in the table below.

Contracting phase	Inception	Data collection, data analysis and report writing
Key Activities, Main Data Collection Tools, and Milestones		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess received proposals Select and contract consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inception meeting to confirm understanding of mandate Literature and document review Consultations with project teams (both in countries and at HQ) on the methodological details of the study as well as all the data collection tools Draft and submission of inception report Submission of the ethical protocols, as required by the relevant national authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification, recruitment and training of enumerators Data collection (and data entry as needed) in each country, supervised by the consultant to ensure data quality Data analysis, leading to the calculation of the baseline value for each of the outcome indicators in the PMF Draft and submission of baseline report Incorporation of feedback from AKFC and WUSC and submission of final report for approval
Phase-Specific Deliverables		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inception report, including: detailed methodology and its limitations, all data collection tools, detailed workplan in each country (with detailed scenarios of a contingency plan for Covid-19), development of enumerators training protocol and material, and delivery of enumerator training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final baseline report, including: updated PMF with baseline value for all outcome indicators, limitations to the methodology used for the study, recommendations on the measurability of the indicators and lessons learned during each phase of the data collection exercise.
Tentative deadline for deliverables		
1st November 2020	15th January 2021	March 30th 2021

7. Ethical Standards

The research for this baseline study must consciously abide AKFC and WUSC’s Codes of Conduct and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies¹, as well as by relevant recognized professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for individual researchers². The Consultant must also be sure to obtain the relevant research permits, as required, from all relevant national authorities (i.e. Mildmay Uganda research and Ethics Committee (MUREC). Codes of conduct must be specifically referenced and commitment confirmed in writing by each researcher involved in this study. The design of the study must clearly specify how data collection and use will be undertaken with integrity and honesty, respecting human rights and differences in culture, customs, religious beliefs and practices of all

¹ Both AKF and WUSC’s Codes of Conduct, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and all other relevant documents will be provided prior to contracting.

² For example: Tri-Council Policy Statement, Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, TCPS2 2018, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council <https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/documents/tcps2-2018-en-interactive-final.pdf>

stakeholders. The Consultant must explain how its researchers will be mindful of gender-related needs and roles, ethnicity, ability, age, language and other differences when designing and carrying out the study. The design and implementation of the study must strike an appropriate balance between recognition of the potential benefits of the research, and the protection of participants from potential research-related harms. Safeguarding principles to protect key informants from sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and bullying, including child protection, must be explicit.

The consultant will be required to adhere to all AKF and WUSC's protocols regarding Covid-19-related measures, as well as to national guidance and directives from the three countries' governments, to ensure safety and security of participants, as well as enumerators, staff and partners.

8. Qualifications of Consultant and his/her team

- Lead researcher/firm must demonstrate a minimum of 10 years of experience in administering studies, collecting data and producing quality baseline/end line study reports, preferably in education and for international non-profit organizations or multilateral agencies;
- Demonstrated experience in designing baseline and end line studies including proven experience in sound sampling, gender sensitive research methods, mixed methods approaches (quantitative and qualitative), data collection tool development, enumerator training, etc.;
- Excellent facilitation skills and ability to recruit and manage enumerators for both the quantitative and qualitative components, in the three countries of the study (either in person or remotely);
- Demonstrated experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis;
- Knowledge and experience with education policies in Syria, Uganda and/or South Sudan will be considered an asset;
- Knowledge and experience with livelihoods or skills training programs;
- Knowledge and experience in gender equality issues in the education sector is mandatory; specific experience in data collection on gender norms is desirable;
- Fluency in English is mandatory and other relevant languages (Arabic, Juba Arabic, Madi, Dinka and/or Azande) an asset;
- Demonstrated capacity to respect and safeguard vulnerable populations; and
- Ability to produce high quality work under tight timeframes.

9. Budget and Application Process

The overall level of effort contributed by the Consultant will need to be aligned with the total budget available for this mandate which is \$135,000 (Canadian dollars). This amount includes the cost of the enumerators, that will be identified within the project staff, due to their proximity to the communities and the need to fulfill Covid-19-related protocols in place. Additional details on this aspect of the process will be discussed during inception.

Qualified and interested parties are asked to submit the following:

1. Detailed **technical proposal** (8 to 9 pages maximum) clearly demonstrating a thorough understanding of this ToR and including the following:
 - i. Description of the Capacity and qualifications of the consulting firm, including previous

- relevant experience (1.5 to 2 pages)
 - ii. Description of the proposed approach and methodology, including sampling strategy, data analysis, integration of gender considerations and ethical standards, quality assurance (3.5 to 4 pages)
 - iii. A proposed schedule/work plan (i.e. a Gantt chart), including contingency planning for Covid-19 (1 page)
 - iv. Team composition and level of effort of each proposed team member (1 to 1.5 pages pages)
2. A **financial proposal** (in CAD) with a detailed breakdown of costs for the study:
 - i. Itemized consultancy fees/costs
 - ii. Itemized field data collection expenses
 - iii. Itemized administrative expenses
 - iv. Validity period of quotations
 - v. Expected payment plan and method
 3. Curriculum Vitae of all proposed team members outlining relevant experience (max 3 pages per CV)
 4. Names and contact information of three references who can be contacted regarding relevant experience
 5. A copy of a previous report of similar work undertaken

AKFC is committed to advancing gender equality and inclusion through our programming and operations in Canada and overseas. AKFC requires all consultants to review and abide by the AKFC Gender Equality Policy.

AKFC recognizes the importance of safeguarding and is committed to ensuring it manages a wide range of risks such that beneficiaries, staff, other associates, and the organization as a whole are kept safe from harm.

Complete applications should be submitted **electronically** to: jdonovan@wusc.ca with the subject line of: 'AGENCI Project Baseline Study Application'.

*Closing date for submission of the application package is October **13th 2020**.*

ANNEX - AGENCI Project Logic Model

LOGIC MODEL (Revised)

