



Job Description

Senior Specialist: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Duty Station: Dar es Salaam or Dodoma, Tanzania

Reports to: Senior Manager Programmes and Operations

Start Date: October 2021

Contract Type: Permanent

Background

Children in Crossfire is a registered charity in Ireland that facilitates International Development and Development Education (DE)/Public Engagement (PE) activities. Our vision is a compassionate world where every child can reach his or her potential. We work in partnership with local organisations in Tanzania and Ethiopia to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged young children, with a particular focus on Early Childhood Education (ECE). By improving childhood care we are changing lives and empowering young children and their communities to build a better future. In Ireland, we work through DE and PE to engage the public in issues of global justice, and through PE we also advocate for increased investment in ECE.

Children in Crossfire Tanzania is currently preparing its new 5-Year country strategy that aims to transform the school readiness of young children in Tanzania, as delivered by a programme of work spanning direct programming and policy advocacy in ECD with a particular focus on early years learning (ECE). Irish Aid, Dubai Cares, and UKAID funding has seen Children in Crossfire's programming in pre-primary education delivered together with local civil society organisation partners evolve to the point of demonstrating systemically scalable models for quality improved pre-primary education in Tanzania. Furthermore, Children in Crossfire has recently secured a major grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to deliver an ambitious project championing ECD policy and programming advocacy in partnership with the Tanzania ECD Network (TECDEN) and the Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC). The project will support the government of Tanzania and wider ECD stakeholder ecosystem to further raise the profile of ECD policy and programming in Tanzania, and specifically support the roll-out and coordinated monitoring of implementation of the landmark National Multisectoral ECD Programme (NM-ECDP) nationally and sub-nationally across Tanzania.

In the context of such ECD/E programming growth, Children in Crossfire is looking to substantially invest in our organisational capacity to implement high standards of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). This includes developing a MEL Framework for the new country strategy, digitalizing our MEL systems, effectively responding to new evaluation and research opportunities, and ensuring our ECD/E programming and policy engagement is continually developing based on action learning.

Context of the role

Reporting to Children in Crossfire Tanzania Senior Manager for Programmes and Operations, and with a direct line of technical support from the MEL and Research lead for Children in Crossfire International Programmes, the Senior Specialist for MEL will be based in either Dar es Salaam or Dodoma, and provide the technical and management leadership of digitalizing and transforming the MEL function of the Children in Crossfire Tanzania country programme across direct programming and national policy engagement. Building MEL capacities across the Children in Crossfire programmes team and our local civil society organisation implementing partners will be critical to this goal. Furthermore, the role will provide Children in Crossfire technical MEL leadership across consortia, advisory mechanisms, and in meeting all reporting requirements, both internally and externally to the government and project donors.

Major Responsibilities

- 1) Establish and provide lead oversight of Children in Crossfire Tanzania country programme systems for monitoring, evaluation and learning in line with the new 5-Yr Strategic Plan;
- 2) Develop critical capacity across Children in Crossfire Tanzania programmes team and local implementing partners to conduct high standard of MEL and action learning cycles;
- 3) Provide lead to commissioning and supervising Evaluation activities (internal and/or third party) across Children in Crossfire Tanzania major programming interventions;
- 4) Provide lead to Research activities including strategic partnerships for research on ECD/E programming;
- 5) Work closely with the wider Children in Crossfire team providing support as and when required.

Specific Responsibilities

1) **Establish and provide lead oversight of Children in Crossfire Tanzania country programme systems for monitoring, evaluation and learning in line with the new 5-Yr Strategic Plan:**

- Lead the development of a MEL Framework for the Children in Crossfire Tanzania country programme aligned to the new Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26, that clearly establishes a results framework, indicator reference, MEL tools, and MEL workplan;
- Work closely with Children in Crossfire Head Office and International Programmes to digitalise Children in Crossfire Tanzania MEL systems and enable results and action learning to be captured at scale and across different dimensions of enquiry. This will include maintaining and administering a digital data management system to analyze data and create user friendly dashboards for programme and country level outputs and outcomes, as well as to support external stakeholder needs;
- Work closely with Children in Crossfire Tanzania programmes team to develop results frameworks for respective programme interventions spanning direct delivery and advocacy, ensuring alignment to country MEL Framework, as well as adapting particular funder templates and strategic interests;
- Lead quantitative and qualitative data collection, processing, and analysis, including developing/adapting monitoring tools and surveys across Children in Crossfire Tanzania programmes;
- Remain engaged and up-to-date with external good practices in MEL for ECD/E programming that span both direct delivery and advocacy, and periodically review Children in Crossfire Tanzania MEL Framework and associated tools to reflect evolving good practices and learning;
- Ensure adherence to organisational safeguarding and related child protection policy, practice and procedure across all aspects of Children in Crossfire Tanzania MEL scope of work;
- Ensure adherence with Children in Crossfire finance policy, practices and procedures across all aspects of Children in Crossfire Tanzania MEL scope of work.

2) Develop critical capacity across Children in Crossfire Tanzania programmes team and local implementing partners to conduct high standard of MEL and action learning cycles:

- Ensure MEL planning, implementation, analysis and reflection are built into and effectively practiced across remits of all programming staff;
- Ensure programming staff are fully conversant with using MEL tools, and especially in optimizing the utility of digitalised MEL systems for data analysis, presentation and informing decision making;
- Work closely with the programme management team to facilitate structured progress reviews and action learning across Children in Crossfire Tanzania programming, including introducing quarterly country programme management meetings and periodic programme technical working group meetings;
- Work with programming staff to support the capacity building and supportive supervision of Children in Crossfire local civil society organisation implementing partners to effectively use MEL tools and controlled access to the MEL platform for informing localized programme management;
- Work closely with the Tanzania ECD Network (TECDEN) to develop and provide management support of a MEL programme package that enables consistent and effective reporting on ECD advocacy that can be efficiently aggregated and analysed for reporting on national ECD performance;
- Work closely with the Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) to develop and provide management support of a MEL programme package that enables consistent and effective reporting on media coverage of ECD agenda sub-nationally especially local accountability across demand and supply;
- Develop and implement strategies to implement beneficiary feedback mechanisms across Children in Crossfire programming;
- Take lead responsibility to ensure MEL findings are professionally reported internally within Children in Crossfire and externally across all reporting to donors and government.

3) Provide lead to commissioning and supervising Evaluation activities (internal and/or third party) across Children in Crossfire Tanzania major programming interventions:

- Provide technical lead of evaluation activities across major programming interventions including baselines and a range of evaluation studies such as learning assessments and impact surveys;
- Ensure technical sophistication of Children in Crossfire evaluation activities, including mixed method quantitative and qualitative approaches, and the scope to understand the levers of quality (and factors of quality loss) at different scales/stages of intervention;
- Ensure that Children in Crossfire evaluation activities learn from and draw on wider good practice for ECD/E evaluations spanning direct delivery and advocacy, and are positioned to generate important learnings for Children in Crossfire programming and the wider external use;
- Provide technical and management-lead of the semi-independent evaluation component to the Hilton funded project, establishing and coordinating a technical advisory group;
- Commission and work closely with consultancy to generate robust evaluation of project impact and transferable evidence for civil society and media engagement in national ECD policy implementation;

- Work closely with Children in Crossfire communications team to ensure that key results, learning and evidence generated by Children in Crossfire Tanzania programming is effectively packaged for communications targeting different audiences.

4) Provide lead to Research activities including strategic partnerships for research on ECD/E programming:

- Work closely with Children in Crossfire International Programmes to develop an organisational research strategy, rationalizing approaches, protocols, resources, and priorities for engaging in major research interventions;
- Work with Children in Crossfire Tanzania programmes management and International Programmes team to develop a portfolio of priority research asks for informing Children in Crossfire Tanzania ECD/E programming and to provide evidence to influence ECD/E sectoral developments;
- Position Children in Crossfire Tanzania to partner with leading research organisations for major research calls, and leading proposal inputs for Children in Crossfire;
- Identify and provide technical lead on smaller targeted research activities to inform Children in Crossfire Tanzania ECD/E programming and to provide learning for wider external use.

5) Work closely with the wider Children in Crossfire team providing support as and when required:

- Report to the Children in Crossfire Tanzania Senior Manager for Programmes and Operations on a monthly basis or as and when required and more specifically in relation to strategic performance objectives that are developed and signed off on annual basis;
- Maintain a close technical line of reporting and collaboration with the MEL and Research Lead for International Programmes to ensure coherence and alignment with wider organisational MEL processes, and to leverage the collective MEL capacity across the organisation;
- Be a strong team player for Children in Crossfire both internally and externally by motivating others to become actively involved to support the organisation;
- Attend and participate fully in organisational team meetings as and when required;
- Be flexible in terms of working hours, as the role may include working at weekends and in the evenings;
- Adhere to all organisational policies, practices and procedures and implement accordingly;
- Undertake any other duties to support the operations of the organisation as and when required.

Safeguarding Risk

This role is considered to present a **high-priority rating of safeguarding risk**. The role requires working directly with children/vulnerable adults on a regular basis. In regular contact directly with children/vulnerable adults.

Person Profile

- Educated to minimum of a Bachelor's degree level in relevant discipline (such as social sciences, development studies, other);
- Minimum of three years senior-level work experience in providing management of monitoring, evaluation and learning in development programmes, preferably in child development;
- Demonstrable track record of professional development in monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) specialization;
- Strong understanding of results-based management processes, including effectively linking Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning to informing ongoing project management and development;
- Demonstrable experience of providing technical lead to programme evaluations;
- Ability to use digital technologies for data collection and analysis (e.g. Kobo, ODK and QGIS) and to transform data into analytical reports for informing programming and wider field of evidence;
- Demonstrable experience of providing capacity-building support and supportive supervision in MEL to local civil society organisation implementing partners in delivery of development programmes;
- Experience in leading on MEL for advocacy-oriented programming;
- Experience in managing research studies;
- Strong understanding of early childhood development (ECD) programming;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English, and demonstrable experience of taking lead in presenting MEL to a high standard for donor reporting;
- Good understanding of key principles of safeguarding and child protection, including demonstrated practice of these in a professional context;
- Ability to work to deadlines, prioritise and take initiative;
- Committed to the aims and values of Children in Crossfire, and work as part of the team;
- Commitment to confidentiality;
- Carry out your work with integrity.