Terms of Reference

Consultancy to conduct an Independent Evaluation of Mtoto Kwanza Project in Tanzania

July 2022

1. Introduction to Children in Crossfire

Children in Crossfire is an Irish-based international NGO whose purpose is to respond to the rights and needs of young children caught in the crossfire of global poverty and injustice. Children in Crossfire Tanzania focuses on increasing access to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) supporting children’s developmental needs and giving them a chance to reach their fullest potential. More information about the organization can be found at: www.childrenincrossfire.org

2. Background

In December 2021, the government of Tanzania launched the National Multisectoral Early Childhood Development Programme (NMECDP) making it the first country in Eastern and Central Africa to launch such a programme. Inspired by the Nurturing Care Framework, the NMECDP will be implemented from 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 and promotes a multi-sectoral approach to young children’s nurturing care, which focusses on addressing the holistic developmental needs of children aged 0-8 years to ensure that: "All children in Tanzania are developmentally on track to develop to their full potential” (NMECDP 2021, pg.i).

To this end, the NMECDP directly invests in Tanzania’s human development capital through accelerating early childhood development gains by enhancing the multisector approach to young children’s nurturing care, considering the five components of: Good health of a child and caregiver; Adequate nutrition from pregnancy; Responsive caregiving; Opportunities for early learning; and the Security and safety of young children. The NMECDP is viewed as one comprehensive programme, with the combined effect of all interventions delivering a positive impact on nurturing care to be felt beyond the programme period.

The NMECDP supports a coordinated approach to putting into action various laws and policies relevant to ECD including calling upon all key government actors across their relevant sectors, development partners, and implementing partners to align with the prioritized activities and ensure the allocation of adequate resources, both financial and in human capital, for the successful implementation of the NMECDP, and ultimately to ensure all children (aged 0–8 years) in Tanzania experience nurturing care, thrive and achieve their developmental potential.

Working in partnership with the Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN) and the Union of Tanzanian Press Clubs (UTPC), Children in Crossfire aims to support moving from policy to practice and catalyze the implementation of the NMECDP through a project known as MTOTO KWANZA which is funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.
MTOTO KWANZA, is a **three-year project** (October 2021 to September 2024) to be implemented in all **26 regions** of Tanzania mainland. The project catalyzes implementation of the NMECDP through an innovative approach that leverages **Children in Crossfire**'s experience and position in the ECD sector and its existing strategic partnerships, contributing to address both supply and demand for the NMECDP by ensuring that civil society leaders and local community voices inform and shape delivery of the NMECDP nationally and sub-nationally across Tanzania.

Through our strategic partnership with the **Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN)**, the national network mandated to coordinate ECD implementing partners, NMECDP implementation is catalyzed by developing national and local capacities across civil society, and government actors, to enable them to engage and monitor implementation of the NMECDP at the National (macro), Regional/Sub-national (meso), and local community (micro) levels. Civil society participation in NMECDP implementation will ensure that it is informed by, and responds to, community priorities, and will also ensure that implementation is aligned with agreed timelines and targets. To this end, the project supports TECDEN and wider civil society participation in NMECDP national coordination and monitoring mechanisms, as well as to establish a network of Local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that will engage in NMECDP delivery and work closely with respective local governments across all 26 mainland regions of Tanzania through a phased approach.

On the other hand, through our strategic partnership with the **Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC)**, an umbrella body of press clubs in Tanzania, demand for implementation of the NMECDP is further catalyzed by local media amplifying local voices for demand-driven and context-specific delivery of ECD services both at national and sub-national levels. To this end, the project supports a network of journalists trained in ECD across all 26 mainland regions of Tanzania, reporting across print, broadcast and digital media.

As a result, this approach to activating supply through civil society advocacy and technical engagement and to generating demand through local CSO engagement and quality media coverage of local ECD experiences will strengthen the case for increased coverage and improved experience of ECD in the wider population, thus catalyzing the implementation of the NMECDP.

The project is structured around **3 levels of engagement in its implementation**, each responding to the objectives of the project as highlighted below.

a) **Macro**: Strengthen the capacity of CSOs and networks to participate in implementation and monitoring of NMECDP at the national level.

b) **Meso**: Build the capacity of Local CSOs to support regional-level advocacy and coordination of multisectoral ECD efforts in support of regional and local government within their respective regions.

b) **Micro**: Support the ability of Local media to amplify local community voices for demand-driven and context-specific delivery of ECD services both at sub-national and national levels.

**3. Objectives of the Evaluation**

Mtoto Kwanza presents an opportunity to produce relevant and important lessons and evidence for the process by which policies (and national programmes) are translated to practice on the ground. An independent evaluation will be conducted to assess the extent to which the project and its partnerships have contributed
towards making progress in NMECDP implementation, as well as the processes through which this occurs. This will inform learnings in Tanzania as well as other countries.

The evaluation will run semi-independently alongside the project. It will inform ongoing project implementation and provide insight into project results. It will provide learnings to determine if and how the project is impacting the implementation of the NMECDP; for example, if capacity improvement of participating organizations results in greater demand for quality ECD services and improved ability to hold government accountable for NMECDP implementation. It will further assess the processes by which civil society influences policy to practice, investigating the engagement with different levels of government systems and the amplification of community voices. In this way, the evaluation will contribute to national and international discourse on the role of civil society in influencing multisectoral ECD policy.

Through this evaluation, we specifically seek to:

a) NMECDP implementation is catalyzed by developing national and local capacities across civil society, and government actors, to enable them to engage and monitor implementation of the NMECDP at the National (macro), Regional/Sub-national (meso), and local community (micro) levels. This evaluation will assess the extent to which TECDEN, UTPC and local CSOs have higher capacity to collaborate with and influence government towards policy implementation.
   - Does TECDEN have a higher capacity to participate in implementation and monitoring of NMECDP at the national level? How and to what extent has CiC contributed to this?
   - How, and to what extent is TECDEN able to play a leading role in coordinating with and building the capacity of selected local CSOs?
   - Do local CSOs, and media partners have higher capacity, specifically related to multisectoral ECD coordination to facilitate regional/local advocacy in support of NMECDP implementation?
   - How and to what extent has CiC and TECDEN directly contributed to the capacity building of national and sub-national government counterparts in effectively coordinating NMECDP implementation?
   - What is the capacity building approach at various levels?
   - How and to what extent has CiC’s capacity improved, to be able to effectively support the capacity building required across different partners?

b) The NMECDP seeks to improve young children’s nurturing care, considering the five components of: Good health of a child and caregiver; adequate nutrition from pregnancy; responsive caregiving; opportunities for early learning; and the security and safety of young children. This evaluation seeks to understand the extent to which NMECDP has been implemented, and assess the contribution of the Mtoto Kwanza project in catalyzing improved provision of ECD services.
   - To what extent has the NMECDP been implemented in line with its workplan?
   - To what extent and in what ways has the Mtoto Kwanza project contributed to the implementation of the NMECDP nationally and sub-nationally? What are the processes through which Children in Crossfire, TECDEN and UTPC may have influenced national and subnational accountability structures and mechanisms?
   - Is there any collective influence of the partnership approach beyond the formal structure and systems of NMECDP implementation?
- Is there any observed spillover effects to NMECDP implementation that are catalyzed by Mtoto Kwanza project?

c) The Mtoto Kwanza project stimulates demand for the NMECDP by engaging civil society leaders and amplifying local community voices to inform and shape delivery of the NMECDP sub-nationally across Tanzania. This evaluation seeks to capture local voices, and understand the extent to which local CSOs and Media contribute to catalysing demand and amplifying community voices related to ECD services.
- How and in what ways have community voices (through local media and other outlets) made a difference in supporting ECD policy implementation?
- How and in what ways has active civil society and quality media coverage contributed to ECD policy implementation across all levels of government, sub-nationally?
- How and to what extent is demand for ECD services influenced when community voices support policy implementation?

d) The NMECDP requires a coordinated approach to putting into action various laws and policies relevant to ECD. This necessitates Multi-sector collaboration between different government departments and decentralised levels of government administration, civil society and implementing partners for ECD policy implementation. Mtoto Kwanza contributes to enable this collaboration where CSOs (and media) play a collaborative role to improve accountability of quality provision, and demand-generating value addition. This evaluation will assess whether, and to what extent, Government-CSO-media collaborations are able to facilitate multisector policy implementation in ECD.
- How, and to what extent has the Mtoto Kwanza project contributed to enable a coordinated multisector approach, towards ECD policy implementation at the national level?
- Are there variations in policy implementation progress and the role of TECDEN/UTPC/CSOs/other civil society sub-nationally? What are some of the different contexts and conditions that contribute to better outcomes?
- How, and to what extent has the Mtoto Kwanza collaborative approach to policy implementation address equity and enabled ECD services for vulnerable/underserved groups?
- What may be some of the unintended consequences of the project’s approach?

4. Rationale/Purpose of the Consultancy

Children in Crossfire is looking to commission a consultancy agency/academic institution with experience in the evaluation of advocacy projects and policy engagement, which will conduct the evaluation in parallel to the ongoing project implementation, spanning a period of two years from October 2022 to September 2024.

The consultant will be able to provide local expertise and apply their experience in evaluating and providing learnings while the Mtoto Kwanza project is being delivered.

The consultant will:

a) Propose an evaluation design and measurement approach, with reference to the brief of the project and the objectives of the evaluation; and in consultation with the project team. This will include co-development of a Theory of change, as a first step, followed by identification of key measures, such as
capacity strengthening, contribution to improved provision, inclusion of community voices, and others as may be relevant.

b) Build upon the evaluation questions in the ToR.

c) Carry out the evaluation of the Mtoto Kwanza project in parallel to the ongoing project implementation (for two years, from October 2022 to September 2024).

d) Provide periodic lessons resulting from the evaluation to inform the project’s progress and recommendations for improvement.

e) Develop learning products consisting of evaluation reports (midterm and end line) and supporting documents that provide evidence on lessons learned and key themes emerging from the project implementation. This may include specific methodology/ considerations for evaluating implementation of policy in practice in Early Childhood Development.

5. Methodological Approach

The consultant will develop an appropriate methodology, drawing from the evaluation needs of the project and with input from an Advisory Panel that will be formed by Children in Crossfire, so that a mixed methods evaluation combining elements of qualitative and quantitative data is used to meet the evaluation objectives.

Data and Information acquired during project implementation will be made available to the evaluator and may be used as data sources. This includes existing administrative data, existing NMECDP monitoring documents and Mtoto Kwanza project’s monitoring plans and data.

The consultant will review literature and develop an approach that will form part of the Inception Report to be presented to Children in Crossfire. Children in Crossfire and the Advisory Panel will input and provide approval of the methodology prior to the start of conducting the evaluation.

The evaluators should highlight the criteria that have guided their selected assessment methodology.

6. Expected Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected from the consultant:

a) Inception Report: The consultant shall submit an Inception Report detailing the process of the evaluation including but not limited to - a background section situating this evaluation in the context of the existing evidence base, proposed methodology/approach, tools, work plan, ethical approvals and timelines.

b) Midterm evaluation and Periodic Lessons sharing: The consultant will provide ongoing lessons, observations that arise from the evaluation, to strengthen the project implementation. This includes a midterm evaluation report submitted in September 2023.

c) Attending Advisory Panel meetings: Children in Crossfire will form an advisory panel that will have a range of expertise and experience. This panel will review progress and provide technical input over the course of the evaluation. The consultant will attend the biannual advisory meetings and share periodic reports as required.
d) An Impact Evaluation Report and Summary PPT: It is noted that within two years the actual transition of policy to practice will not be complete and that NMECDP implementation will be ongoing. However, the consultant is expected to produce a report, along with a summary PowerPoint presentation (PPT), which highlights the contribution of the project to attaining milestones in the progress of the NMECDP. A report that would highlight the relevance of Mtoto Kwanza project and provide evidence on what has been achieved in the given timeframe, resources, and partnership. This report will be submitted 2 months after the project life span ends i.e., End November 2024 (also coincides with the mid-point of NMECDP implementation and potential mid-term review).

7. Intended Users of the report(s)

The intended users of the report from this evaluation

i. Mtoto Kwanza Project Implementation partners (Children in Crossfire, TECDEN, UTPC): To capitalize on the learnings to track progress and improve project implementation;

ii. Hilton Foundation: To understand the contribution of the project to NMECDP implementation and key project outcomes and to inform learning;

iii. The Tanzania Government: To gather learnings from the project to use in ongoing implementation of the NMECDP and other national programme settings to support the move from policy to practice;

iv. Children in Crossfire and other NGOs/CSOs: To further contribute to the case for data driven advocacy;

v. The ECD sector: To understand the role of civil society in creating an enabling policy implementation environment.

8. Duration of the Consultancy/Evaluation

The evaluation will run concurrently with the project implementation for 26 months. It is expected to begin at the start of year two of the project, which is October 2022 through to the end of the project implementation in September 2024, with the Impact Evaluation report due end of November 2024.

9. Competencies and Expertise/Qualification

Children in Crossfire expect the following minimum competencies from interested bidders for this work:

Essential

- Proven track record (along with examples of previous work) in designing and conducting mixed methods evaluations for advocacy projects in social sciences.
- Demonstrated experience in evaluation of national [policy] programme implementation.
- Understanding of the government of Tanzania, administrative structures and systems, and multisectoral coordination.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience of the ECD sector in Tanzania.
- Demonstrate an understanding and experience of the ethical and research clearance processes in Tanzania.
- Ability to conduct risk assessment and mitigation plans for evaluations.
- Exceptional communication and organization skills.
- Ability to respond to comments and questions in a timely, appropriate manner.
• Experience in delivering outputs on time and on budget.
• Demonstrated understanding of Child Protection/ Safeguarding and ethical issues in evaluations
• Bilingual proficiency in English and Swahili, including ability to write clearly and concisely in English.
• Proven record of effectively managing relationships with research/evaluation partners.
• The expectation is that the consultant will be a Tanzanian registered agency. In the case where international partner is engaged, the Tanzanian agency must be the principal investigator.

Desired
• The reputation of the responding consultancy/Individual consultants, skills in mixed traditional and modern techniques and any previous experience in similar evaluation will also be considered.
• A consultancy that can demonstrate experience in evaluating media projects will be an added advantage.
• A consultancy that can demonstrate the ability and/or experience of working nationally at scale or in multiple regions simultaneously. The project is implemented in all 26 regions of Tanzania mainland, therefore a consultancy that can demonstrate understanding and bring the experience to ensure representation nationally will be an added advantage.

10. Timelines for the selection process

Timelines for the evaluation will be developed as part of the Inception Report from the consultant and agreed upon after input from Children in Crossfire and the Advisory Panel. However, below are timelines for the selection process of the consultancy:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application submission</td>
<td>August 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial applications review and shortlisting</td>
<td>August 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews for the selected applicants</td>
<td>August 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioning and Task Briefing</td>
<td>August 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of Inception report</td>
<td>September 2022</td>
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<td>Approval of Inception report</td>
<td>September 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracting</td>
<td>September 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation begins</td>
<td>October 2022</td>
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11. Ethics, Child Protection and Safeguarding Statements

Child protection is a term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or to stop children being abused or ill-treated. It is Children in Crossfire’s duty and responsibility to reduce the risks of abuse to the children who we have contact with and keep them safe from harm.

The consultancy firm/academic individual consultants should include statements in the proposal on how s/he will ensure ethics and child protection throughout the assignment and especially during the fieldwork. Consultants should also specify other ethical protocols and clearances to be followed during the due course of the evaluation.
Consultants are expected to take informed consent of the respondents before conducting data collection activities such as conducting interviews, focus group discussions, and taking of photographs, and ask if photographs, verbatim or case stories could be used in reports and for public dissemination. Such consent must be documented and submitted to Children in Crossfire along with the final report.

12. Budget

The budget will be according to Children in Crossfire’s payment schedule and the consultant’s offer.

Financial proposals should fall within an upper ceiling of USD 135,000 (one hundred and thirty five thousand US dollars) inclusive of all costs including research permit costs, consultancy fees and basic direct costs. Withholding tax as per statutory law shall be deducted from the consultancy fee.

Indicative payment schedule:

a) 25% of the total consultancy fee, and 50% of the direct costs on the sign-off of Inception Report
b) 35% of the total consultancy fee and 50% of the direct costs on the sign-off of mid-term evaluation progress report;
c) 40% of the total consultancy fee on the sign-off of Impact Evaluation Report.

13. Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals:

a) Quality and relevance of the proposed methodology - the proposal demonstrates an understanding of the requirements of the assignment, and the methods proposed are in conformity with the needs of Children in Crossfire as reflected in the Terms of Reference (10%)

b) Expertise and experience in relation to Evaluation Methodology and the use of mixed methods for evaluations especially in Policy implementation (20%)

c) Expertise and experience in relation to Evaluation of Advocacy programmes in social sciences (preferably in the Tanzania context) (20%)

d) Expertise and experience in relation to Early Childhood Development (preferably in the Tanzania context) (20%)

e) Evidence of analytical skills and report writing, and relevance and quality of samples of previous work (20%)

f) Cost competitiveness within the proposed budget ceiling (10%)

14. Tendering Procedure

Children in Crossfire invites eligible consultants to submit technical and financial proposals to undertake this work. Proposals should include a brief description of:

1. A section outlining an understanding of the assignment and Children in Crossfire’s requirements.
2. Description of the proposed methodology to be used for the Evaluation Design, highlight the evaluation criteria that will be used and also with particular emphasis on how the consultant will deliver against the full scope of work and deliverables set out in section 6.

3. A summary setting out consultant’s expertise and experience directly responding to the full range of experience and qualifications set out in section 9.

4. An overview of the individuals who will deliver the services including CVs that demonstrate only relevant experience (please don’t list unrelated experience). The proposal must provide clear details of the team composition in relation to key tasks.

5. A financial proposal for the evaluation.

6. One (best) example of similar work undertaken by the consultants. Please compress the documents to small file sizes.

7. Contacts for at least three reference(s) whom would be able to confirm and substantiate suitability of consultant for this type of remit.

8. Scan of valid business licence (for consultancy companies).

Proposals should not exceed 15 pages, excluding CVs, budget and evidence of written work.

15. Application process

Submissions should be made by email to the Country Director, Children in Crossfire Tanzania: jobstz@childrenincrossfire.org indicating in the subject line: “Proposal – Independent Evaluation of Mtoto Kwanza Project”

The closing time for receipts of applications is by end of Monday 8th August 2022.