Terms of Reference for Research and Evaluation

CHN\_Accenture-Transferable Life Skills

01 Sep 2019-31 Dec 2020

# Project Summary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of evaluation | Final Evaluation (external) |
| Name of the project | CHN\_Accenture-Transferable Life Skills |
| Project Start and End dates | 01 Sep 2019-31 Aug 2020 |
| Project duration | 12 months |
| Project locations: | The project is implemented in Shanghai, China, and evaluation will be conducted in Shanghai, China |
| Thematic areas | Child Poverty |
| Sub themes | Adolescents’ Skills for Successful Transition (ASST) |
| Donor | Accenture  |
| Estimated beneficiaries | 100 primary school students in migrant schools in Shanghai  |
| Overall objective of the project | The goal of this project is to provide human skills to the Next Gen and complement the training with digital and STEM skills |

# Introduction

This document provides Terms of Reference for Evaluation of Project CHN\_Accenture-Transferable Life Skills

The project CHN\_Accenture-Transferable Life Skills is supported by Accenture. The 12 months project starts on 01 Sep 2019 and ends by 31 Aug 2020. The project is implemented in Shanghai, China aiming at providing human skills to the 100 migrant primary school students and complement the training with digital skills.

Project evaluation is conducted to assess outcomes and outputs of migrant children caused by the project during a time frame of 12 months as well as to assess the effectiveness of key interventions in terms of supporting beneficiaries’ active involvement in digital future.

The project background, evaluation scope, key questions, intended methodology, reporting and governance, key deliverables and timeframes for its implementation are provided in the sections that follow.

# Background and context

The project reaches 100 migrant Next Gen aged 10-11 years old in urban Shanghai, providing them with human skill training. Digital approach will be identified that could be used to deliver human skills curricula which would expose them to new learning methods. This will further reinforce the learning of key digital skills that are essential to prepare girls and boys for the future labor market and life.

Migrant Next Gen receive limited support from their families and communities. Many of them will enter the workforce immediately after junior high school or high school, often without having received any training in either human or digital skills. Thus, by providing these skills when they are in primary school, the project helps ensure they have a solid foundation to build upon.

The project will also aim to increase interest in technology, as well as career paths that utilize digital skills, through gender-specific digital clubs. These clubs will use experiential learning to introduce the breadth of digital career options, the skills needed to obtain these careers and the concepts of digital protection and safety. As part of this intervention, the project will conduct a gender-based digital assessment to better tailor the activities of these clubs to adolescents of different genders. The pilot project will also engage directly with parents and schools about the value of digital skills, both for learning, as well as for future careers, to change perceptions that computers and other digital devices are merely tools for entertainment.

During this pilot, how children and adolescents of next generation (NextGen), who are going to enter in to labor market shaped by digital technology, were connected and improved will be measured, and identify what outcomes can be expected to transform in future projects. The following will be measured in accordance with Accenture’s NextGen strategy.

* Number of NextGen, teachers and parents trained (Connected)
* NextGen (50% female) show measurable gains in human skills mindsets (Improved)
* NextGen show measureable gains in STEM and digital mindsets (Improved)
* NextGen improve attitudes towards gender equality (Improved)
* NextGen, especially females, show measurable improvements in goals setting and confidence. (Improved)

Targets are only being established for connecting Next Gen, and through this pilot, how many teachers and parents being reached will be explored, as well as number of Next Gen who are improving (i.e. through skill acquisition, attitudes, etc.) to inform future target setting for these types of outcomes. Project logic frame will be provided as an Annex to the TOR

Implemented by Save the Children, the project involved technical services from Zaoke Culture Co., Ltd. (Zaoke)[[1]](#footnote-1), and Shanghai New York University.

* The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum and evaluation tool developed by Shanghai New York University is applied to 2 project schools.
* Zaoke provides weekly support to students of 2 classes of Grade 4. Digital club activities are conducted for 100 minutes to 120 minutes once a week for each school.

As an important component of this project, delivering SEL curriculum have been conducted before in Shanghai. Project aiming to improve SEL skills of migrant children were conducted in other primary schools in the past 3 years. Based on relevant psychology researches and the 5 core competencies given by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and collaborating with professional team from New York University Shanghai, the SEL curriculum was developed, and used in two primary schools for migrant children. There are different lessons for children in the 1st grade to 5th grade, focusing on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Over 70 teachers were trained with knowledge of SEL and teaching methodologies to deliver the curriculum. Parents were supported with positive parenting skills to build an appropriate family atmosphere for their children. Over 2900 children in total benefitted from the project.

The fast developing STEM technology is rapidly shaping the society and human life in the 21st century. The IT sector provides more and more decent job opportunities, but the market is dominated by males. Traditional social bias widely exist that digital skills are boys’ game. Therefore, the project aims to stimulate both girls and boys' interest in digital technology, and equip them with basic digital skills, with a view to ensuring that no girls will be lagged behind in the future of work.

 A gender based digital assessment has been done in December 2019 to assess girls’ and boys’ on-line behaviors and attitudes towards digital careers. Questioners and data are available for the consultant. SEL baseline has been conducted to 2 intervened classes and 2 classes as comparison. SEL baseline data has been sorted out and available for consultants’ use.

# Scope of evaluation

## Purpose and key questions

This evaluation is being conducted at the end of the project. It will build upon the baseline studies previously conducted.

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess if the indicators set in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan (see Annex 1) have been achieved or not and to answer the evaluation questions.

The evaluation should cover the following criteria and should answer the following key questions (**these are some example questions for the evaluation team’s reference and can be further defined with consultation of the evaluation team**):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Key evaluation question/s** |
| Relevance | 1. Are skills in Next Gen strategy those that will be required for future worker in China?
2. Are SEL & digital training meeting actual needs and interests of youth? If different, how can we align program with priorities of stakeholders given the context that the parents of the mobilized students are most concerned about the placement of middle school, future career path and development in digitals stay as a remote issue for the parents.
 |
| Effectiveness  | 1. Is the training mechanism appropriate & effective?
	1. Are teachers trained adequately?
	2. Do we have the right incentives to motivate the teachers?
2. Is the training delivery mechanism for SEL training and digital clubs appropriate and effective? If not, what are recommendations from stakeholders?
3. Is the online & in-person parental workshops appropriate and effective? If not, what are some recommendations?
4. Is the content of the SEL & digital club appropriate for students (i.e. too easy, too hard…)
5. What are other factors that may have an influence on the effectiveness of the program (e.g. engagement of parents)?
6. Has the program adequately involved the right stakeholders?
 |
| Impact/Outcome | 1. What were the outcomes/impact of the project activities?
2. Did the project achieve its intended outcomes including meeting MEAL plan targets?
 |
| Sustainability | 1. How will the school carry out the project after end of the project? What support would they need to do this effectively?
 |

In addition, the following specific questions should also be considered for summative evaluations:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Secondary Questions** |
| Gender sensitivity | 1. How has the project considered gender sensitivity both in the design and its implementation of activities?
2. Has the project incorporated different needs and accessibility of boys and girls, men and women, and non-binary individuals?
3. Has the project outcomes or results been equally represented?
4. What are gender based needs and barriers that affect boys’ and girls’ participation and success in the program?
 |
| Inclusion | 1. How did the project consider inclusion of vulnerable groups in the design and its implementation of activities?
 |
| Child participation | 1. How have the children, their needs and desires been consulted and accounted for in programme or project design and implementation?
2. How were children meaningfully involved in the project?
 |
| Child rights programming | 1. How has the project design and implementation considered a child rights approaches?
 |
| Child safe programming | 1. Has the project been designed, planned, implemented and monitored to ensure it is safe for children?
2. How has child safety been integrated into the project design and implementation of activities? What aspects of the project make children feel safe?
3. How has the project assessed the risks for children and do these risks still exist to date? Have they been reduced, controlled and managed by the minimising actions? Are there new risks? What further measures do we need to implement to reduce, remove and control these new emerging risks
 |
| Accountability | 1. How has the project approached accountability to children?
 |

## Scope

The whole project is being evaluated and the focus of the evaluation will be assessing if the project achieve its intended outcomes set in the MEAL plan as well as looking at the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the project.

For the first focus, the evaluation will review the tools used for assessing the outcomes in the MEAL plan and refine the tools accordingly. For the second, the evaluation will answer the key evaluation questions by using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The detailed study population and sample size are as bellows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Study Population | Location | Study Size |
| Young adolescents | Minhang & Jiading districts | Around 100 |
| Teachers | Minhang & Jiading districts | Around 4 |
| Parents | Minhang & Jiading districts | 20-24 |
| Principle | Minhang & Jiading districts | 2 |
| Save the Children staff | Shanghai Office | 2-3 |

## Stakeholders/audiences

The key stakeholders/audiences for this evaluation are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Further information** |
| Project donor | Accenture |
| Primary implementing organisation | Save the Children Shanghai Project team; Program Development, Quality Improvement team; |
| Implementing partners | Zaoke  |
| Government stakeholders | Min Hang Education Bureau, Jia Ding Education Bureau |
| Community groups | N/A |
| Beneficiaries | Children and adults involved in the program/project/s and the evaluation |
| International development/humanitarian research community | N/A |

The evaluation will generate evidence to continuously improve our programming and to learn and share what works best for our target group in specific contexts. More importantly, the findings of the evaluation will inform program design for the next grant targeting at NextGen. To be more specific, the findings will help program staff design the approach to teaching and the content of teaching materials in a way that is relevant and effective.

The Evaluation team will be required to propose how the evaluation findings will be shared with each of the different stakeholders in the table above, particularly outlining how reporting back to communities, beneficiaries and children will be conducted in an accessible and child friendly manner.

# Evaluation Methodology

## Research design and sampling

There is no specific expectations of this final evaluation in terms of research design and sampling. The final evaluation will follow a non-experimental design and mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) will be used. The detailed methods to be used are as below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Stakeholders | Evaluation Questions[[2]](#footnote-2) | Interviews/number |
| Youth | 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 15 | Interview x20 |
| Teachers | 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15 | Interview x4 |
| Parents | 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15 | Survey x 10Interview x20-24 |
| Save staff | 7, 11 | Interview x1-2 |
| Principal | 3, 4, 8, 9, 11 | Interview x1 |
| Desk Review | 1, 7, 15 |  |

## Data

All primary data collected during the course of the evaluation must allow for disaggregation of findings by gender, age and location.

Existing Save the Children data sources that can be drawn on in the evaluation include:

* Baseline data for gender-sensitive digital assessment (raw data as well as preliminary analysis)
* Baseline data for Social Emotional Learning assessment (raw data as well as preliminary analysis)

Project team will provide collected baseline data at the start of this evaluation.

Save the Children recommends existing data collection tools that can be drawn on in the evaluation. These include:

* Gender-sensitive digital assessment questionnaire for youth
* Gender-sensitive digital assessment focus group discussion guide for parents
* Social Emotional Learning assessment questionnaires for youth, parents and teachers

Save the Children will provide enumerators to assist with primary data collection. Data triangulation is expected for this evaluation. It will be a requirement of the Evaluation team to source additional external data sources to add value to the evaluation, such as government administrative data.

A range of project documentation will be made available to the Evaluation team that provides information about the design, implementation and operation of the project. Documents include (see Annex 2):

* Proposal of the project with milestones
* Accenture’s Next Gen strategy
* SEL evaluation tool
* SEL Code book for Evaluation

The Evaluation team is required to adhere to the Save the Children Child Safeguarding, Data protection and Privacy policies (see Annex 3) throughout all project activities.

## Ethical considerations

It is expected that this evaluation will be:

* **Child participatory**. Children should be meaningfully involved in the evaluation as a holistic process and not only as informants. Refer to the Practice Standards in Children’s Participation ([International Save the Children Alliance 2005](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/international-save-children-alliance-2005-annual-report)); and Global Indicator technical guidance (SCI M&E handouts Package, Volume 2).
* **Inclusive**. Ensure that children from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds have the chance to participate, as well as children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.
* **Ethical**: The evaluation must be guided by the following ethical considerations:
	+ Child safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behaviour towards children
	+ Sensitive – to child rights, gender, inclusion and cultural contexts
	+ Openness - of information given, to the highest possible degree to all involved parties
	+ Confidentiality and data protection - measures will be put in place to protect the identity of all participants and any other information that may put them or others at risk.
	+ Public access - to the results when there are not special considerations against this
	+ Broad participation - the relevant parties should be involved where possible
	+ Reliability and independence - the evaluation should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy

It is expected that:

* Data collection methods will be age and gender appropriate.
* Evaluation activities will provide a safe, creative space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
* A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children or young people’s participation.
* Informed consent will be used where possible.

The Evaluation team will be required to obtain approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee. Save the Children will provide assistance with this process.

# Expected Deliverables

The evaluation deliverables and due dates (subject to the commencement date of the evaluation) are outlined below. The Evaluation team lead will advise SC project manager and MEAL senior officer immediately of any risks or issues that may impact on their ability to provide the deliverables by these due dates.

**Deliverables and Due Dates**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable** | **Due Date** |
| The Evaluation Team is contracted and commences work | May 11th  |
| The Evaluation Team will facilitate a workshop with the relevant stakeholders at the commencement of the project to develop the **Inception report:** The inception report will include:* evaluation objectives and key evaluation questions
* description of the methodology, data sources, draft data collection tools (preferably against the key evaluation questions) and sampling considerations
* caveats and limitations of evaluation
* key deliverables, milestones and timelines
* risk and issue management plan
* a stakeholder communication and engagement plan
* consultation protocols for consulting with children and other vulnerable groups (if applicable)
* Logistical or other support required from Save the Children

Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluator/ evaluation team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the evaluation manager or the steering committee. | May 20th  |
| **Ethics submission:**Approval from a Human Research Ethics Committee is required, an ethics submission should include:* study protocols (participant recruitment, data security and storage, consent and confidentiality etc.)
* considerations for consulting with children and other vulnerable groups (if applicable)
* participant information statement and consent forms
 | June 10th |
| **Data collection tools:*** Refine human skill (SEL+ growth mindset) assessment tool after reviewing the existing SEL assessment tool
* Refine digital assessment tool after reviewing the existing gender-sensitive digital assessment tool
* Survey instrument
* Interview guide
* Focus group discussion guide
 | June 5th |
| An **Evaluation Report\*** (Draft Version) including the following elements: * Executive summary
* Background description of the Program and context relevant to the evaluation
* Scope and focus of the evaluation
* Overview of the evaluation methodology and data collection methods, including an evaluation matrix
* Findings aligned to each of the key evaluation questions
* Specific caveats or methodological limitations of the evaluation
* Conclusions outlining implications of the findings or learnings
* Recommendations
* Annexes (Project logframe, Evaluation TOR, Study schedule, List of people involved)

A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by Save The Children within two weeks of the submission of the draft report. | Aug. 14th |
| **Data and analyses** including all raw data, databases and analysis outputs | Sept. 11th |
| **Final Evaluation Report\*** incorporating feedback from consultation on the Draft Evaluation Report | Sept. 11th |
| **Knowledge translation materials:*** PowerPoint presentation of evaluation findings
* Evidence to Action Brief\*\*
 | Sept. 16th |

\*All reports are to use the Save the Children Evaluation report template (see Annex 4) and will be scored by SCI staff by using SCI Evaluation Report Scoring (see Annex 5). Please also refer to Save the Children technical writing guide.

\*\* The Evidence to Action Brief is a 2-4 pages summary of the full report and will be created using the Save the Children Evidence to Action Brief template (see Annex 6).

All documents are to be produced in MS Word format and provided electronically by email to the SC project manager. Copies of all PowerPoint presentations used to facilitate briefings for the project should also be provided to Save the Children in editable digital format.

# Reporting and governance

The Evaluation team lead is to provide reporting against the project plan. The following regular reporting and quality review processes will also be used:

* Verbal reporting each week to Save the Children MEAL senior officer by outlining progress made over the past week
* A written Progress Report (1-page) by email to Save the Children Thematic Leads and Project Manager every fortnight documenting progress, any emerging issues to be resolved and planned activities for the next month.

The PDQ Director will be accountable for approving the Final Evaluation Report.

# Evaluation Management

**Evaluation Timeline, with key deliverables in bold**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What | Who is responsible | By when | Who else is involved |
| Evaluation tender submissions due  | Program Manager | Apr. 12nd |  |
| Tender review and selection of evaluation team  | MEAL Focal | Apr. 22nd | Thematic lead, program manager |
| Documentation review, desk research | Evaluation consultant | May 15th  |  |
| Consultation | Evaluation consultant | May 15th  | Thematic lead, program manager, MEAL focal |
| Draft of inception report | Evaluation consultant | May 20th  |  |
| Review of inception report | MEAL Focal | May 22nd  | Thematic lead, program manager |
| Finalize inception report | Evaluation consultant | May 27th  |  |
| Development of draft data collection tools  | Evaluation consultant | June 3rd  |  |
| Review of data collection tools | MEAL Focal | June 5th  | Thematic lead, program manager |
| Finalization of data collection tools | Evaluation team | June 10th  |  |
| Ethics submission | Evaluation team | June 10th  | SCUS TA |
| Logistical arrangements | Program Manager | June 10th  | Program officer |
| Data collection | Evaluation team  | June 30th  |  |
| Data management and analysis (coding, transcriptions, data cleaning, integration and analysis) | Evaluation team | July 30th  |  |
| First draft of the Final evaluation report  | Evaluation team | Aug. 14th  |  |
| Review of first draft report | Thematic lead | Aug. 28th  | PDQ director, program manager, technical advisor |
| Meeting with evaluators and evaluation team to finalize the report | Evaluation team | Sept. 4th  |  |
| Validation of evaluation findings and recommendations  | Program Manager | Sept. 4th  | Thematic lead, MEAL focal |
| Final evaluation report and submission of data and analyses | Evaluation team | Sept. 11th  |  |
| Knowledge translation materials | Evaluation team | Sept. 16th  |  |
| Project team meeting to develop Evaluation Response Plan  | Program Manager |  | Thematic lead |
| Evaluation final report (together with response plan) posted on OneNet and reviewed  | MEAL Focal  | Sept. 15th  |  |
| Scoring final evaluation report | SC Peer reviewers | Sept. 21st  |  |

# Consultation

Key Save the Children stakeholders to be involved in the evaluation are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Title and Department** |
| Project Manager | Zhou Ji, Xu Xin’er |  |
| Technical Advisor | Xia Cuntao, Liu Ming |  |
| MEAL Focal | Cheng Mian |  |
| Logistical support | Zhou Ji, Han Yanfei |  |

Key external stakeholders for the evaluation are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Professor Cui | Shanghai New York University |
| Zheng Linxin | Zaoke Culture Co., Ltd. |
|  |  |

# Evaluation team

To be considered, the Evaluation team members together must have demonstrated knowledge, skills, expertise and experience in:

* Designing and conducting outcome evaluations
* Conducting research and/or evaluation in the field of child poverty, particularly in relation to adolescents’ skills for successful transition
* Social Emotional Learning, basic education and digital technology education
* Conducting ethical and inclusive research and/or evaluation involving children and child participatory techniques
* Managing and coordinating a range of government, non-government, community groups and academic stakeholders
* Sound and proven experience in conducting evaluations based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, particularly utilisation and learning focused evaluations
* Extensive experience of theories of change and how they can be used to carry out evaluations
* Report writing and presentation skills

There is a high expectation that:

* Members (or a proportion) of the evaluation team have a track record of working together.
* A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex evaluation projects, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
* The team has the ability to commit to the terms of the project, and have adequate and available skilled resources to dedicate to this evaluation over the period.
* The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the project is implemented.

# Annexes

Annex 1: Project MEAL Plan

Annex 2: List of project documents to be consulted

Annex 3: SCI Child safeguarding policy SCI

Annex 4: Evaluation report template

Annex 5: Evaluation Report Scoring

Annex 6: Evidence to Action Brief template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TOR prepared by: |  |
| TOR approved by: |  |
| Date of sign off: |  |

1. (Zaoke Culture Co., Ltd.)Zaoke, is the technical supplier of the project. Staff of Zaoke is responsible for facilitate digital club activities for 2 digital clubs in 2 project schools [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Refer to Evaluation questions in section 4.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)