Terms of Reference for

Baseline Assessment, Mid-term Assessment and Final Evaluation

Education for All: Achieving Quality Education for Children with Disabilities in Sichuan

[2022.4.1]

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# Project Summary

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| --- | --- |
| Type of evaluation | External Baseline Assessment, Mid-term Assessment and Final Evaluation |
| Name of the project | Education for All: Achieving Quality Education for Children with Disabilities in Sichuan |
| Project Start and End dates | 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2024 |
| Project duration | 36 months |
| Project locations: | Chengdu, Sichuan Province |
| Thematic areas | Education, Disability Inclusion (DI) |
| Sub themes | Education / Inclusive Education (IE) |
| Donor | Save the Children Hong Kong (SCHK); Knorr-Bremse Global Care Asia Pacific (KBGC) |
| Estimated beneficiaries | Approx. 12,210 beneficiaries, including 7,240 children and 4,970 adults |
| Overall objective of the project | This project aims to improve the quality of education for girls and boys with disabilities in Chengdu, so that they could fulfil their full potential. |

# Introduction

This document provides Terms of Reference for baseline assessment, mid-term assessment and final evaluation for the project “Education for All: Achieving Quality Education for Children with Disabilities in Sichuan”.

The project “Education for All: Achieving Quality Education for Children with Disabilities in Sichuan” supported by SCHK and KBGC is a 3-year project from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024. It aims at improving the quality of education for girls and boys with disabilities in Chengdu, so that they could fulfil their full potential. Two districts (Jinjiang and Longquanyi) and the Chengdu Municipal Child Welfare Organization (CWO) are selected as project sites. The number of direct and indirect beneficiaries is estimated to be 12,210, including 7,240 children and 4,970 adults.

The project team hopes to accomplish the following objectives through this study: 1) a baseline assessment in 2022 to provide more insights on the status quo and needs of education for children with disabilities (CWDs) in China and in selected project areas; 2) a mid-term assessment in 2023 using tools developed; and 3) a final evaluation in 2024 to see whether the project has achieved its outcome, and the impact in selected project areas and beyond.

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

# Background and Context

**Context**

The Chinese government has been increasing its investment in education for CWDs in recent years, featuring the establishment of Special Education Resource Centres (SERCs), the *Plans for the Promotion of Special Education* (2014-2016 and 2017-2020) and the *Revised Regulation on Education for Persons with Disabilities* in 2017.

On top of that, the government announced its ambitious *Plan for Protection and Development of People with Disabilities during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025)* in early 2022, in which the central government aims to reach a 97% compulsory education enrolment rate for CWDs (the current rate being 95%). The *Plan* was designed to tackle the existing challenges that keep CWDs from receiving quality education. The Save the Children (SC) project team has identified some nationwide challenges and gaps, which are briefly listed as follows:

* Many regions in China lack a well-developed support system of CWD education.
* Most regular and special education schools do not have enough capacity to provide quality disability-inclusive education, with imbalanced skill sets of teachers.
* The current enabling environment for CWDs to receive quality education is to be improved.

**Geographical location**

The major geographic region that the study is expected to cover is Chengdu, capital city of Sichuan Province. Jinjiang District, Longquanyi District, and the Chengdu Municipal CWO have been selected as the project sites with which the study is affiliated. Urbanization and economic and social development of Chengdu is advancing with a forward-looking, open, and diversified approach, which lays a good foundation for the DI project. Moreover, the current status of disability-inclusive education in Chengdu is promising. Chengdu Municipal SERC has conducted specialized supervision and evaluation on the implementation of the *Plan for the Promotion of Special Education Phase II (2017-2020)* – making Chengdu one of the few cities in China to do so.

Despite remarkable progress made in recent years, Chengdu still has a long way to go before a balanced and quality support system for CWDs is established. According to the above-mentioned specialized supervision and evaluation, all counties and districts in Chengdu have established SERCs, but few are functioning effectively, with gaps in teachers’ professional expertise. In regular schools, if without an educational background or in-service training on education for CWDs, teachers do not have the knowledge or skills to adapt class teaching to CWDs’ special learning needs. In consultations, the Chengdu Municipal CWO also listed a low sense of achievement as a challenge for teachers, as it usually takes too long for CWDs to show any progress.

The study is expected to identify needs and gaps to guide project interventions and implementation, through outlining the current situation, tracking the progress over time, and evaluating the impact of the project. All information and data can be provided by (or collected from) SC partners and other stakeholders.

**Previous projects**

SC is one of the pioneer organizations working on IE in China. At the national level, SC contributed to the development of the *Revised Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities* that came into force in May 2017. In Chengdu, SC also has a solid foundation in local partnerships and resources, thanks to its previous IE project experience in the city since 2008 (most recently 2017-2020). The project “Education for All: Achieving Quality Education for Children with Disabilities in Sichuan” is implemented directly by SC China Country Office’s Disability and Inclusion Programme.

**Gender and child participation**

The project team recognizes that gender may add an additional layer of inequality and discrimination for CWDs. Therefore, special attention will be paid to identify and address the differences between girls and boys with disabilities. Data will be sex-disaggregated throughout this study. The project team should make efforts to make sure girls and boys equally participate in project activities in gender-safe spaces. Moreover, in baseline assessment, mid-term assessment, and final evaluation, the project team will proactively seek opinions and feedback from children with and without disabilities to better understand their needs, challenges, and progress and to inform current and future project design and policy advocacy.

# Scope of Study

## Purpose and Scope

The study is expected to conduct throughout the “Education for All: Achieving Quality Education for Children with Disabilities in Sichuan” project cycle, including 1) a baseline assessment at beginning of project, providing an overall situation analysis based on project intervention framework, collecting baseline data for future comparison; 2) mid-term assessment at mid of project, monitoring project progress and providing timely adapting suggestion; and 3) a final evaluation by end of project, providing a comprehensive project evaluation based on OECD criteria.

**Purpose:**

The primary purposes of the study is to:

1. Conduct a baseline assessment: to understand the policies, regulations, development pattern and common practices regarding CWD education and inclusive education in China and Chengdu, Sichuan province; and to identify needs and gaps, and suggest possible solutions;
2. Conduct a mid-term assessment: to collect data regarding key indicators to monitor project progress and performance, and give suggestions on project adaptation;
3. Conduct a final evaluation by end of project: to understand the achievement of the project outcomes and impact, evaluate its sustainability, and provide recommendations for future project design and implementation.

**Scope:**

* Specific focus: The study involves three components: a baseline assessment, a mid-term assessment, and a final evaluation; the whole project should be studied.
* Timeframe: The study timeframe should be from 15 May 2022 (expected) to 31 December 2024, with the baseline assessment in 2022, the mid-term assessment in 2023, and the final evaluation in 2024.
* Target groups:
  + Children: Girls and boys aged 3-18 in project areas, especially those with disabilities or special education needs in special education schools, CWO, and regular schools/kindergartens in project areas;
  + Parents: Parents of the above-mentioned girls and boys;
  + Teachers: Special Education Resource Centre teachers (RCT), Resource Room Teachers (RRT), Key Regular Teachers (KRT) in regular schools/kindergartens, CWO, or special education school in selected counties/districts in Chengdu;
  + Others: Persons from other IE actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs), organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in Chengdu and nationwide, and community members in Chengdu.
* Geographical regions and sites: Chengdu, Sichuan Province, including but not limited to Jinjiang District, Longquanyi District, and the Chengdu Municipal CWO);
* Stakeholder groups: The Study Team is required to reach out to all stakeholder groups specified in “4.2 Intended Audience and Use of the Study” section, as well as target groups listed above.

## Intended Audience and Use of the Study

Primary intended audience includes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Further information** |
| Project donor | SCHK, KBGC |
| Primary implementing organisation | Save the Children China Country Office (Disability and Inclusion Programme team) |
| Implementing partners | Chengdu Municipal SERC, Jinjiang/Longquanyi District SERC, Chengdu Municipal CWO, and all project schools/kindergartens |
| Government stakeholders | Chengdu Municipal and District-level Education Bureau, Civil Affairs Bureau, etc. |
| Community groups | CSOs, OPDs, and target communities |

Key findings of the study will be used to improve the intervention design and implementation, suggest adaptation of activities, and evaluate the project outcomes and impact to guide future project design.

The Study Team will be required to propose how the primary audience will be involved throughout the study process and how 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.

## Key Study Questions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stages of study** | **Key Questions** |
| Baseline assessment | * What is the context under which the project takes place, in particular, the current situation of policy implementation related to CWD education in selected project areas? * How is the capacity of key stakeholders for CWD education? * What are the key challenges to achieve quality CWD education? * What would be an ideal set of tools to monitor key indicators based on the logical framework? * What are project indicators baseline value? |
| Mid-term assessment | * How well is the project going? Are there any problems emerging from project design and implementation? * Was the project appropriately adapted to the local context and target population? * Is the project reaching its intended target groups? Are project beneficiaries having a positive experience with the project? * How and why did the intervention make a difference? * Are there any suggestions for intervention adaptation and adjustment? |
| Final evaluation | * Did the project achieve its intended outcomes and on time? Were there any unintended outcomes? * Are project beneficiaries having a positive experience with the project? * What mechanisms worked and can explain the achievement or not achievement of the project results? Which did not work and why? * Will the project work in a different context? How can we transfer the knowledge learned from this project, combined with national policies, to other projects? * Are the positive effects or impacts sustainable? How is the sustainability or permanence of the intervention and its effects to be assessed? |

In addition, some cross-cutting dimensions will need to be considered throughout the study cycle, including but not limited to: child participation, safe programming, equity and equality, inclusion, and gender sensitivity.

# Study Methodology

## Study Design

The study is expected to design with mixed methodology for quantitative and qualitative design, including but not limited to:

1. Qualitative methods-literature review, in-depth interview and focus group discussion;
2. Quantitative methods-online or offline questionnaire survey.

Both methods should be designed with specific sampling methodology that is reasonable and appropriate, which should be elaborated in the Inception Report.

## Data Sources and Data Collection Methods / Tools

All primary data collected during the study must facilitate disaggregation by gender, age, and disability, according to SC’s requirement.

A range of project documentation will be made available to the Study Team that provides information about the project’s design and implementation. Examples of such tools and documentation are listed in Annex 2, and will be shared with the Study Team after the team is contracted.

Data triangulation is expected for the study. The Study Team should also indicate how data triangulation will be realised.

The Study Team is required to adhere to the [Save the Children Child Safeguarding; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying](mailto:https://www.savethechildren.net/about-us/our-commitment-safeguarding); and Data Protection and Privacy (see Annex 3) policies throughout all project activities.

## Ethical Considerations

It is expected that this study will be:

* **Ethical**: The study must be guided by the following ethical considerations:
  + Safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behaviour towards children and adults.
  + 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.[[1]](#footnote-2)
  + 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 study should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

The target groups of the study will include children with disabilities, and ethics review is required to be conducted through the Study Team or Save the Children International’s ethics review committee. The study is also expected to be:

* **Inclusive**: Ensure that children from different ethnic and social backgrounds have the chance to participate, as well as children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.
* **Child participatory**: Where appropriate and safe, children should be supported to participate in the evaluation process beyond simply being respondents. Opportunities for collaborative participation could include involving children in determining success criteria against which the project could be evaluated, supporting children to collect some of the data required for the evaluation themselves, or involving children in the validation of findings. Any child participation, whether consultative, collaborative or child-led, must abide by the [9 Basic Requirements for meaningful and ethical child participation](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/applying-9-basic-requirements-meaningful-and-ethical-child-participation-during-covid-19).

It is expected that:

* Data collection methods will be age, disability and gender appropriate.
* Study activities will provide a safe, creative, and accessible space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
* A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children with and without disabilities, young people, or adults’ participation.
* A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
* Informed consent will be used where possible, and indicate how the informed consent will be child-friendly.

# Expected Deliverables

Expected deliverables and tentative timeline (subject to the commencement date of the study) are outlined below. The Study Team lead and SC will agree on final milestones and deadlines at the inception phase.

**Deliverables and Tentative Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable / Milestones (all in Chinese unless otherwise specified)** | **Timeline** |
| The Study Team is contracted and commences work | Mid-May 2022 |
| **Inception Report (final version)**   * Save the Children will provide a template for inception report. * The Study team will facilitate a workshop with the relevant stakeholders to develop the draft Inception report.   Once the report is finalised and accepted, the Study Team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the Save the Children. | Baseline assessment:  Jun. 2022 |
| Mid-term assessment:  Jun. 2023 |
| Final evaluation:  Aug. 2024 |
| **Final data collection tools (in the report language)**:   * Survey instrument * Data collection mechanism * For mid-term assessment, only a simplified set of tools is needed | Baseline assessment:  Jun. 2022 |
| Mid-term assessment:  Jun. 2023 |
| Final evaluation:  Aug. 2024 |
| **Data collection** including qualitative and quantitative data collection  **Data and analyses** including all encrypted raw data, databases and analysis outputs   * For mid-term assessment, only a simplified data collection process is needed | Baseline assessment:  Jul.-Aug. 2022 |
| Mid-term assessment:  Jul.-Aug. 2023 |
| Final evaluation:  Sep.-Oct. 2024 |
| **Draft Report**   * Save the Children will provide a template for the report. * 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. | Baseline assessment:  Sep. 2022 |
| Mid-term assessment:  Sep. 2023 |
| Final evaluation:  Nov. 2024 |
| **Final Report (in both English and Chinese)**   * The final report is expected to incorporate feedback from consultation on the draft report. * For mid-term assessment, only the Chinese version is needed | Baseline assessment:  Oct. 2022 |
| Mid-term assessment:  Oct. 2023 |
| Final evaluation:  Dec. 2024 |
| **Knowledge translation materials**   * **PowerPoint presentation** of key findings (in both English and Chinese) * **Summary** of final reports (in both English and Chinese) * **A webinar/meeting** to share and validate the key findings to the Save the Children team and key partners | Baseline assessment:  Oct. 2022 |
| Mid-term assessment:  Oct. 2023 |
| Final evaluation:  Dec. 2024 |

All documents are to be produced in Microsoft Word format and provided electronically by email to the SC project team. 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 Study Team lead is to provide reporting against the project plan. The following regular reporting and quality review processes will also be used:

* Monthly verbal reporting (or as agreed upon) to the SC project team by outlining progress made over the past month.
* Written meeting minutes (1-page) by email to the SC project team after each reporting, documenting progress, any emerging issues to be resolved and planned activities for the next month.

# Study Management

Study Tentative Timeline, with key deliverables in bold. The final timeline and deliverables will be agreed upon the inception phase.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What | Who is responsible | By when | Who else is involved |
| Inception Report (final version) | Study Team | Baseline assessment: Jun. 2022 | Project team  Thematic Lead  MEAL focal point  SCHK |
| Mid-term assessment: Jun. 2023 |
| Final evaluation: Aug. 2024 |
| Final data collection tools | Study Team | Baseline assessment: Jun. 2022 | Same as above |
| Mid-term assessment: Jun. 2023 |
| Final evaluation: Aug. 2024 |
| Data collection and analyses | Study Team | Baseline assessment: Jul.-Aug. 2022 | Project team  Thematic Lead  MEAL focal point |
| Mid-term assessment: Jul.-Aug. 2023 |
| Final evaluation: Sep.-Oct. 2024 |
| Draft Report | Study Team | Baseline assessment: Sep. 2022 | Project team  Thematic Lead  MEAL focal point  SCHK |
| Mid-term assessment: Sep. 2023 |
| Final evaluation: Nov. 2024 |
| Final Report | Study Team | Baseline assessment: Oct. 2022 | Same as above |
| Mid-term assessment: Oct. 2023 |
| Final evaluation: Dec. 2024 |
| Knowledge translation materials | Study Team | Baseline assessment: Oct. 2022 | Project team  Thematic Lead  MEAL focal point |
| Mid-term assessment: Oct. 2023 |
| Final evaluation: Dec. 2024 |

# Study Team and Selection Criteria

Recruitment of the Study Team will follow the standard supply chain manual and relevant requirements of the SC China Country Office. Below is a draft of the selection criteria, and will be finalized as per the decision of the Bidding Committee.

### Understanding of Requirements and Experience

To be considered, the Study Team members together must have demonstrated skills, expertise and experience in:

* Designing and conducting disability and inclusion assessments and evaluations using quasi-experimental design
* Conducting studies in the field of disability and inclusion, particularly in relation to education for CWDs
* Leading socio-economic research, evaluations or consultancy work in China that is sensitive to the local context and culture, particularly child rights, gender equality, ethnicity, minority groups and/or other factors
* Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving children and child participatory techniques
* Conducting ethical and inclusive studies involving marginalised, deprived and/or vulnerable groups in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways
* Managing and coordinating a range of government, non-government, community groups and academic stakeholders
* Extensive experience of theories of change and how they can be used to carry out evaluations
* Strong written and verbal skills in communicating technical and/ or complex findings to non-specialist audiences (especially report writing and presentation skills)
* A track record of open, collaborative working with clients

There is a high expectation that:

* Members (or a proportion) of the Study Team have a track record of previously working together.
* A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex study 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 study over the period.
* The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the project is implemented.

### Financial Proposal

Save the Children seeks value for money in its work. This does not necessarily mean "lowest cost", but quality of the service and reasonableness of the proposed costs. Proposals shall include personnel allocation (role / number of days / daily rates / taxes), as well as any other applicable costs.

# Annexes

**Annex 1: Project Logframe**

To be shared after the Study Team is contracted.

**Annex 2: List of project documents to be consulted**

To be shared after the Study Team is contracted.

**Annex 3: Data Protection and Privacy**

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ToR prepared by: | Disability and Inclusion Programme |
| ToR approved by: |  |
| Date of sign off: |  |

1. If any Consultancy Service Provider, Freelancer or Contingent worker will have direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and/or beneficiaries and/or have access to any sensitive data on safeguarding and/or children and/or beneficiaries, it is the responsibility of the person receiving the consulting service to contact the local HR team and child safeguarding focal point to ensure vetting checks and on-boarding are conducted in line with statutory requirements, local policies and best practices guidance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)