

# External Consultancy to carry out participatory action research on Activity Based Learning (ABL), Child and Youth Led Community Development, and Group Mobilization for Community Transformation



UMN Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning Team

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the basis for the participatory action research of the Children, Youth, and Communities for Change (CYCC) project.

United Mission to Nepal, in support of Transform Aid International (TAI) Australia in partnership with Dalit Social Development Centre (DSDC), Kapilvastu, has been implementing the CYCC project since 2019. The project is designed based on the central theory that positive change for children arises out of complementary changes or outcomes at three levels: children as agents of change, enabled households, and empowered communities. The changes in each of these groups contribute to children's well-being in four key areas their development, protection, participation, and survival.

CYCC project uses a participatory development approach to improve child well-being and increase child rights and life opportunities for children in poor communities. In this project, UMN and its partner organisation work with children, families, and the whole community to create lasting change for all children in the target area. Child participation is key to all stages of the project cycle, and the intended positive impact on child well-being informs all decision-making on project activities.

The project would be designed in three phases, each lasting three years. Children and youth participated in a bottom-up planning process that produced the project concept and design before the project launch. The initiative is based on a right-based approach, particularly the four pillars of child rights. To improve the rights of children in this community, the project has created and mobilized eight youth clubs (one for each ward), 72 women-only Self-Reliance Groups for community awareness, and partnerships with 23 public schools for ABL.

The proposed research topics namely activity-based learning, child and youth led community development and group mobilisation for community transformation are built in within the CYCC project. The type of the research is action research within the CYCC communities aiming to seek transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research, which are linked together by critical reflection through a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives. Although the action research is undertaken by practitioner so that they may improve their practices, we are looking for a consultant having an academic background to technically lead and oversee this research initiatives supporting practitioners in an on-going basis.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The main purpose of this participatory action research is to seek transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research within the research topics areas of the project through:

- Examining the effectiveness of the project approaches, methodologies/interventions, and strategies
- Identifying good practices and learnings
- Identifying opportunities for improvement and revision of the project interventions by investigating key enablers and challenges.

The specific objectives of the research are:

- To explore the contributions of group mobilization such as self-help group (SHGs) to overall community transformation.
- To examine how child and youth led participatory community development is effective and alternative model to contribute for overall community-led development.
- To explore the contributions of activity-based learning led child friendly education in quality improvements of public-school education.

## 3. INTENDED USERS

The research is expected to draw on a “utilisation-focused” approach. The primary intended users are:

1. CYCC programme staff and partners use the findings of the research to improve the quality of the project approaches, strategies, and interventions.
2. Project participants, particularly the children and youth involved in the project, to better understand effective strategies for bringing about changes in their contexts.
3. TAI and UMN programme staff, especially in regard to what works in improving child well-being and increasing child rights and life opportunities for children in poor communities.

## 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To fulfill the purpose of this research, the following questions need to be assessed.

### **Activity Based Learning**

- Whether and how activity-based learning improves the learning achievements of public-school students?
- How does ABL contributes to school governance and management?
- How does ABL impacts the teachers in terms of their professional development and performance management?

### **Child and Youth Led Community Development**

- Whether and how child and youth led participatory community development is effective and alternative model to contribute for community-led development?

### **Group Mobilisation for community transformation**

- Whether and how does group mobilization contribute to community transformation?

These research questions may be updated or modified after having a chat with the consultant.

## 5. RESEARCH SCOPE AND DESIGN

The intention is to undertake a phased research approach that progressively tests and refines the programming of the project. Throughout these phases it is intended that a lead researcher helps to design the research, analyse and synthesize the data and produce reports. Their overall data collection role will be limited as this is intended to be done by the project staff.

The lead researcher is expected to propose suitable methods, tools and sample size as well as guidelines and their orientation to the enumerators (the staff) for data collection. The staff will treat this research tasks as their regular activities. The lead researcher may need to train staff for data collection, develop data collection templates and other relevant tasks. The consultant may need to have one to two field visits a year to work with the project staff.

The study will be implemented in Kapilvastu district. The research locations are the CYCC project locations in Mayadevi Rural Municipality.

The following are the key participants of this research:

- School teachers (ECD to grade three), students, and SMC
- Youth Club members, and its network, and
- Self-Reliance Group members (women)
- Others as relevant

## 6. TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

This is a long-term agreement for 3-4 years. The following process will be applied during the whole process of PAR.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>
June 2024	Inception report
Every six months	Data collection
Every six months	Data analysis
Once a year (preferably in March/April)	Learning document (can be called learning paper in each topic)
Once a year	Verbal presentation on key findings to UMN/TAI
When possible	Research articles to publish (consultant will also be an author of the paper) _
Towards the end of consultancy	Final research report on each research topic

*A detailed action plan will be developed after the selection of a consultant.*

## 7. ETHICS

This research approach follows the do-no-harm principles and strategy. TAI and partners child protection policy or safeguarding policies and guidelines will be strictly followed to protect children while undertaking this research. Any potential effects that might appear before, during and after the interview or FGD will be handled carefully. Participation to the research is purely voluntary and no pressure or force will be used to any participants to participate in the research. Prior signed consent to all activities such as interview, FGDs will also be taken.

## 8. QUALIFICATION OF THE LEAD RESEARCHER

- MPhil or PhD in any discipline with relevant experience.
- Knowledge and experience of social issues, particularly child rights and community development work.
- Knowledge and experience on participatory action research and participatory approach to research/evaluation.
- Have completed at least two qualitative research independently including at least one on participatory action research.
- Have knowledge, experience, skills and confidence to lead the research independently
- An academic who is currently teaching and doing research at university is preferable.

## 9. OWNERSHIP AND CONFIDNETIALITY

The research report and data will be the property of UMN. The Consultant agrees that the information obtained remains confidential, and any publication or citing needs prior written approval from UMN.

## 10. SUBMISSION OF INTEREST

Interested consultants are requested to submit an application (expression of interest) which includes:

- A cover letter (addressing the essential criteria)
- Technical and financial proposal
- CV
- Details of at least two referees

Closing deadline and contact details:

- Application should reach in the following email address by 17:00 hours of **15 May 2024**. The applications received after that will not be considered for further processing.
- Email address to send application: [consultants.meal@umn.org.np](mailto:consultants.meal@umn.org.np)

# ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

I declare that I have received and read the Terms of Reference and commit to conduct the evaluation as per its guidelines and agree to meet the requirements stated.

CONSULTANT
<b>Signature</b>
<b>Name</b>
<b>Company</b>
<b>Date</b>

UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL
<b>Signature</b>
<b>Name</b>
<b>Designation</b>
<b>Date</b>

# ANNEX 1: UMN'S CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

## **UMN staff, representatives and agents must:**

- Familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding Policy and indicate their acceptance of it by signing a copy of the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure they always work with children and vulnerable adults, where possible, with the knowledge and informed consent of those responsible for them.
- Report any allegations relating to potential breaches of this policy to the relevant Safeguarding Advocate.
- Co-operate with any investigation process formed under the relevant procedure within this policy.
- Not disclose the nature or details of an investigation to any unauthorised person.
- Abide by the Good Practice Guidelines in respect of electronic communication (see Appendix 2)

## **UMN staff, representatives and agents must not:**

- Threaten or use any form of physical punishment or hitting against a child or vulnerable adult.
- Use language or behaviour towards child or vulnerable adult that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults. Meetings with individual children should take place within the sight of others and such meetings must occur with the knowledge of UMN supervisors and those responsible for the child or vulnerable adult.
- Fondle, hold, kiss, cuddle, tickle or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way. Physical touch between adults and children can be healthy but should occur in public places. A general guideline is not to touch children in areas that are normally covered by shorts and t- shirt.
- Take or use images of children or vulnerable adults which are detrimental to their dignity. (See UMN Visual Images Policy and Guidelines.)
- Use resources such as telephone, mobile phones and/or other IT/electronic/digital resources to develop inappropriate relationships with children or vulnerable adult or to store or view explicit or degrading images.
- Fail to report when they have concerns about harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- Hire children or vulnerable adult for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or development stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at a significant risk of injury.
- I have read and understood this information. I understand that behaviour contravening these guidelines may be investigated by UMN and, if warranted, be reported to the appropriate legal authorities.

SIGNED
<b>Signature</b>
<b>Name</b>
<b>Date</b>

WITNESSED BY A UMN STAFF MEMBER
<b>Signature</b>
<b>Name</b>
<b>Designation</b>
<b>Date</b>



## Call For Expression of Interest (EOI) to Conduct Participatory Action Research on Activity Based Learning (ABL), Child and Youth Led Community Development, and Group Mobilisation for Community Transformation

United Mission to Nepal, in support of Transform Aid International (TAI,) Australia and in partnership with Dalit Social Development Centre (DSDC), Kapilvastu, has been implementing Children, Youth and Communities for Change (CYCC) project since 2019. The project is based on a rights-based approach, particularly the four pillars of child rights. The project works closely with youth clubs, women self-reliant groups and public schools.

UMN is currently in the process of selecting a consultant (must be affiliated to a VAT registered consulting firm) to undertake a participatory action research on the topics of ABL, Child and Youth Led Community Development, and Group Mobilisation for Community Transformation using a phased research approach over a period of three years. The study will be implemented in CYCC project locations in Mayadevi Rural Municipality of Kapilvastu district.

The prospective consultant or consulting firm should have a profile that includes, but is not limited to:

- MPhil or PhD in any discipline with relevant experience.
- Knowledge and experience of social issues, particularly child rights and community development work.
- Knowledge and experience on participatory action research and participatory approach to research/evaluation.
- Have completed at least two qualitative research independently including at least one on participatory action research.
- Have knowledge, experience, skills, and confidence to lead the research independently.
- An academic who is currently teaching and doing research at university is preferable.

Interested individuals or firms may send their EOI as per the details indicated in the ToR which can be downloaded from [www.umn.org.np/consultancy](http://www.umn.org.np/consultancy). The EOI can be submitted either at UMN Thapathali Office or through email as mentioned in the ToR to arrive no later than 5:00 pm on 15 May 2024.