Terms of Reference for Final Evaluation

Skills to Succeed

Youth Employability Skills Global Grant 7

October 2022

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# Project Summary

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| --- | --- |
| Type of evaluation | External |
| Name of the project | Youth Employability Skills Global Grant 7 |
| Project Start and End dates | Sep. 2020 – Aug. 2023 |
| Project duration | 3 years, 2 months, 29 days |
| Project locations: | Shanghai, China, Anhui Province, Zhejiang Province and Sichuan Province |
| Thematic areas | Education |
| Sub themes | SEL |
| Donor | Accenture |
| Estimated beneficiaries | 112,040 young vulnerable migrant children aged 8 -14;  3,484 adults including parents and guardians, teachers, facilitators and etc. |
| Overall objective of the project | This project will help young vulnerable migrant children aged 8-14 to develop essential human skills, elements of a growth mind-set and digital skills to develop the resilience, grit and appetite for learning they need to thrive in the 21st century. |

# Introduction

This document provides Terms of Reference for the final evaluation of the Youth Employability Skills Global Grant 7 (GG7) project.

As part of the global GG7 program, Save the Children (SC) China’s GG*7* project spans from September 2020 to August 2023, and plans to be implemented in Shanghai. The overall objective of the program is to equip young vulnerable migrant children, with essential human skills, elements of a growth mindset and digital skills to develop the resilience, grit and appetite for learning they need to thrive in the 21st century. The project will target youth aged 8 to 14 in abovementioned areas, including migrants and ethnic minorities. The project is sponsored by Accenture.

SC China would like to conduct an external study on final evaluation, covering all project locations, to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of the project interventions on building the resilience, grit and enthusiasm for learning for youth; (2) assess the effectiveness of the project approaches in fostering an enabling environment for youth to thrive; (3) study the effectiveness of the project approaches from schools’ perspective and sustainability; and (4) analyse the successes and lessons learned from implementation.

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

# Background and Context

According to the World Economic Forum, to thrive in the 21st century, students need more than traditional academic learning. They must be adept at collaboration, communication and problem-solving, which are some of the skills developed through social and emotional learning (SEL). Coupled with mastery of traditional skills, social and emotional proficiency will equip students to succeed in the swiftly evolving digital economy. In China, despite the substantial economic growth in recent decades, many are not able to fully participate in the digital economy. The country still has the fourth largest population of people living under the poverty line in the world. In particular, rural migrant workers in urban areas are among the most vulnerable population, as they lack urban resident status and have limited access to basic quality education, social services, employment opportunities and housing, as do their families.

Migrant children face additional challenges that prevent them from breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty, which includes:

* **Falling behind in acquiring human skills:** Students in Shanghai migrant schools and public schools shows that migrant children’s scores are significantly lower than their peers on several socio-emotional development measurements. We have also conducted a gender analysis to study the gender-specific differences of this issue.
* **Falling behind in acquiring digital skills:** Students from rural or migrant schools score lower on all Internet inequality indicators (digital access, autonomy of use, social support, Internet use and self-efficacy), and therefore do not have the same opportunities to access and use the Internet as their urban public school peers, and those in urban migrant schools are the most disadvantaged. Additionally, all Chinese children face significant digital protection risks, and inadequate acquisition of digital technologies in the classroom.
* **Facing gender inequalities:** By the time migrant and left-behind children reach high school or vocational education levels, the gender gap becomes clearer with regard to vocational education and career choices. We also identified a gender bias in society toward girls in technology fields. An equally important problem is that female students and their parents do not know what opportunities the technology industry can offer them that align with their interests and aspirations.

**SC in China**

Save the Children has worked in more than 10 provinces throughout China for more than 30 years. In 2018, our programs directly reached 896,000 children, and we are one of the only leading international organizations working in collaboration with the Chinese government, civil society organizations, private corporations, multilateral institutions and individuals to promote children's welfare and ensure that all children, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, receive quality services in China.

**Previous Projects**

The Save the Children started to provide social and emotional learning (SEL) to Shanghai’s most vulnerable children in primary schools in 2012, and then expanded to Xinjiang in 2014 and Yunnan’s rural areas in 2016. Our objective is to ensure children’s emotional, psychosocial and physical wellbeing, as defined in the Save the Children’s Quality Learning Framework.

Some highlights of our work include:

• A structured, participatory SEL activity manual for children in grades 1-6 in primary schools that references the Collaborative For Academic Social and Emotional Learning competency framework

• A teacher training manual on SEL and approaches to deliver SEL curriculum

• Classroom observation tool to monitor teachers’ SEL practices

• A cadre of local trainers trained to deliver training to teachers

• SEL training delivered to 22,000 children in project schools in Yunnan, Xinjiang and Shanghai

• Local education bureau in Xinjiang with integrated SEL teaching in the school curriculum

• Evaluation demonstrating improvement of socioemotional skills of Xinjiang and Shanghai’s children

We have collaborated with experts from the China Academy of Labour and Social Security, which is connected to the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Security (MoHRSS), to identify which key human skills China’s labor market requires and subsequently design human skills training for vulnerable adolescents to respond to those needs. In 2019, Save the Children trained 10,600 adolescents in China to strengthen their human skills and advocated to more than 8,000 adults to increase their awareness on the importance of human skills. Thanks to Accenture’s generous support, we are also currently working to pilot digital skills education in Shanghai’s migrant schools and have established digital clubs in various project schools.

The GG7 project objective is to help young vulnerable migrant children ages 8-14 develop essential human skills, elements of a growth mind-set and digital skills to develop the resilience, grit and appetite for learning children need to thrive in the 21st century. The project focuses on 1) training children on human skills and digital skills to develop a re-invigorated commitment to education; 2) develop an enabling environment by training parents and guardians, teachers, facilitators and government authorities with the information and skills they need to become champions for their children’s success.

The project has conducted various studies / learning activities to generate evidence and data for project improvement and sustainability. These studies / activities include:

* Gender and Power (“GAP”) analysis: A GAP analysis was conducted in year 1 to identify the key gender-based barrier to girls’ and/or boys’ access, participation, or success. Results were used develop a gender and social inclusion strategy, which has been implemented in our project.
* Research on Digital Skills for Rural Youth: the research studies the current level of children’s digital skills and the status quo of the enabling environment for rural children. Results show that the digital literacy level of rural children are generally low, especially in terms of their capacity to respond to online safety and to acquire advanced science and technology.
* Re-invigorated Commitment to Education (“RCE”) analysis: we have conducted baseline and follow-up studies of participating children to assess their commitment to education in every project year.
* Cost Effectiveness Analysis (“CEA”): the project is also conducting a cost effectiveness analysis to study the impact and costs of project interventions.
* Remote Learning: the project has also conducted a research on the impact of remote learning as part of a global research.
* Learning for Action: the project creates an annual learning goal and associated action plan every year.

The project logframe and other previous studies including GESI analysis and RCE analysis will be provided as Annex to this TOR.

# Scope of Study

## Purpose, Objectives and Scope

This study is being conducted at the end of the Youth Employability Skills Global Grant 7 project. It will build upon the baseline and other studies previously conducted.

**Purpose:**

The primary purpose of the study is: to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of the project interventions on building the resilience, grit and enthusiasm for learning for youth; (2) assess the effectiveness of the project approaches in fostering an enabling environment for youth to thrive; (3) study the effectiveness of the project approaches from schools’ perspective and sustainability; and (4) analyse the successes and lessons learned from implementation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Dimension** | **Key Questions** |
| Very Young Adolescents (VYAs) | * How effective was the program in building SEL, growth mindset, and digital skills? * How effective was the program in re-invigorating commitment to education? * How effective was the program in changing attitudes related to gender equality and social justice for VYAs? |
| Enabling Environment | * How effective was the approach to training teachers/facilitators? * How effective was the program in changing attitudes related to gender equality and social justice for parents, teachers, and other adults? |
| Systemic approaches and sustainability | * What is the opinion of the schools in terms of relevant and effectiveness of the programs? Which, if any, parts of the program will they continue even after the program ends? |
| Operational Learnings | * What were the lessons learned for implementation? What worked well? What should be done differently next time? |

**Scope:**

This final evaluation will study roughly 30 project schools in Shanghai (e.g. Jiading District, Songjiang District and Minhang District). All students/teachers and parents from 30 project schools will be evaluated. The specific focus of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the project implementation towards the improvement of children’s human skills and digital skills. To be specific, the evaluation will focus on 1) whether children demonstrate improved social-emotional skills, growth mind-set and digital skills; 2) to what extent teachers have confidence in teaching human skill lessons, and teacher’s capacity of delivering human skill training to students and whether and how teachers will be able to continue human skill teaching after project finished; 3) Whether the project support parents to improve their parenting skills towards the development of their children’s human skills and digital skills; and 4) the success and lessons learnt for implementation and suggestions for future improvement.

## Intended Audience and Use of the Study

Intended audience:

Primary intended audience of the study are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Further information** |
| Project donor | Accenture |
| Primary implementing organisation | Save the Children Project Team |
| Implementing Partners | Project schools in Shanghai |
| Government stakeholders | Local Education Bureau |
| Beneficiaries | Children and adults involved in the project and the study |

The results of Final Evaluation expected be shared to different stakeholders through various key findings, such as after action review for internal staff, coordination conference with government stakeholders, summary meeting with local NGO partners or activities with community beneficiaries etc.

# 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 – In-depth interview and focus group discussion;
2. Quantitative methods – Online or offline questionnaire survey.

Both methods should be with specific sampling methodology which reasonable and appropriate, and elaborated in the Final Report.

## Data Sources and Data Collection Methods / Tools

Below lists a guidance for data collection and suggested methodology for each key research question. Data collection should consider gender representation, including Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview. If FGD are online, it is suggested to have maximum of 5 participants per group. If FGD are in person, it is suggested to have maximum of 8 participants per group.

As mentioned above, the project team has conducted several studies already and some of the suggested tools are ready to use. SC will share the available data of completed and ongoing research with the external evaluation team for final evaluation.

| **Key Research Questions** | **Population** | **Objective** | **Suggested Methodology** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tools** | **Methodology** |
| How effective was the program in building SEL, growth mindset, and digital skills? | Youth | Measure changes in SEL, GM and Digital skills of youth, before and after the program. | SEL GM, Digital Assessment Tool, ISELA | Quantitative\* |
| Qualitative |
| Parents | Measure changes perception from the parents and teachers about VYA acquisition of new skills | Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups | Qualitative |
| Teachers/  Facilitators |
| How effective was the program in re-invigorating commitment to education? | Youth | Measure changes in the RCE dimension of youth after the program. | RCE Tool (baseline/  endline) | Quantitative\* |
| How effective was the program in changing attitudes related to gender equality and social justice for VYAs? | Youth | Obtain information on changes in attitude and ways of thinking on gender equality and social justice from the youth population | GAP Data | Quantitative\* |
| Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups | Qualitative |
| How effective was the approach to training teachers/facilitators? | Teachers, Facilitators | Get information on whether the teachers were able to understand and remember the concepts of the trainings in order to deliver them effectively to the youth through their trainings. | Survey for Content Knowledge | Quantitative\* |
| Youth | Gather information about the perception of youths on whether the teacher did a good job in delivering the course/training for SEL and digital skills | Focus Groups | Qualitative |
| How effective was the program in changing attitudes related to gender equality and social justice for parents, teachers, and other adults? | Parents/  Teachers, Facilitators | Obtain information on changes in attitude and ways of thinking on gender equality and social justice from adult population. | Focus Groups | Qualitative |
| What is the opinion of the schools and implementing partners in terms of relevant and effectiveness of the programs? Which, if any, parts of the program will they continue even after the program ends? | Schools | Obtain perceptions of implementing partners about the effectiveness of the program and its sustainability by specifying which activities can be institutionalized | Semi-structured Interviews | Qualitative |
| What were the lessons learned for implementation? What worked well? What should be done differently next time? | STC Staff/  Teachers, Facilitators/  Youth | Define what have worked and what have not during the implementation of the program as well as gather information to provide recommendations in order to enhance the program in the future | Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups | Qualitative |

\*: external consultant will be provided available data collected from project activities for analysis.

## Ethical Considerations

It is expected that this study will be:

* **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).
* **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 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.

It is expected that:

* Data collection methods will be age and gender appropriate.
* Study 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, young people’s, or adult’s participation.
* A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
* Informed consent will be used where possible.

The study team will be required to obtain approval from Save the Children US Ethic Review Committees. SC China will provide assistance with this process.

# Expected Deliverables

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

**Deliverables and Tentative Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable / Milestones** | **Timeline** |
| The study Team is contracted and commences work | Jan. 2023 |
| The study Team will submit an **inception report\* (English)**:   * Save the Children will provide a template for inception report. * Once the report is finalised and accepted, the evaluation team must submit a request for any change in strategy or approach to the evaluation manager. * Informed Consent forms and data collection tools should be included. | Feb. 2023 |
| **Ethics submission:**   * SC will assist the evaluation team to submit the application for Ethics Review | Mar. 2023 |
| **Final data collection tools (Chinese)**:   * Survey instrument * Data collection mechanism | Mar. 2023 |
| **Data and analyses** including all encrypted raw data, databases and analysis outputs | Mar. – May. 2023 |
| A Study **Report\* (Draft version in English)** including the following elements:   * Save the Children will provide a template for evaluation report. * A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by Save the Children within 2 weeks of the submission of the draft report. * Data analysis methodology should be presented in Final Evaluation Report | Jun. 2023 |
| **Final Study Report\* (English and Chinese)** incorporating feedback from consultation on the Draft Study Report | Jul. 2023 |
| **Knowledge translation materials:**   * PowerPoint presentation for summary of Final Evaluation, such as key findings, recommendations, lessons learned and etc. * Evidence to Action Brief\*\* | Aug. 2023 |

\*All reports are to use the Save the Children Final Study Report template. 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 Management Response template.

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

* Verbal reporting each month to the Save the Children project team by outlining progress made over the past month.
* All data collection tools need to be approved by Save the Children project team. All key documents (incl. Inception report, Data Collection Tools, Consent Forms, Final Study Report and etc.) should be in English.

Save the Children US will be accountable for approving the Final Evaluation Report.

# 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 |
| Evaluation TOR submissions | MEAL | Nov. 20th 2022 | Project Manager  SCUS |
| Study tender submissions | Project Manager | Dec. 2nd 2022 | MEAL |
| Tender review and selection of study team | Bid Review Committee | Dec. 30th 2022 | Supply Chain  Finance |
| Contract with study team | Project Manager | Jan. 2023 | MEAL  Procurement Team |
| Inception report (English) | Study Team | Feb. 2023 | MEAL  Project Manager  SCUS |
| Development of Data collection tools (Chinese and English) | Study Team | Mar. 2023 | MEAL  Project Manager  SCUS |
| Ethics submission | MEAL / SCUS | Mar. 2023 | Project Manager |
| Data collection | Study Team | Mar. – May. 2023 | MEAL  Project Manager |
| Data management and analysis (coding, transcriptions, data cleaning, integration and analysis) | Study team | May. – Jun. 2023 |  |
| First draft of the Final study report (English) | Study team | Jun. 2023 | MEAL  Project Manager |
| Final study report and submission of data and analyses (English) | Study team | Jul. 2023 | MEAL  Project Manager |
| Knowledge translation materials (English) | Study team | Aug. 2023 | MEAL  Project Manager |
| Evaluation Final Report Archive   * Scoring * Upload on SCI Report Repository | MEAL | Sept. 2023 | Project Team |

# Study Team and Selection Criteria

Interested consultants will be required to submit an Expression of Interest in line with the provided template, which should demonstrate adherence to the following requirements.

### Understanding of Requirements and Experience

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

* Conducting relevant evaluations in the field of child education, particularly in relation to Social Emotional Learning
* Sound and proven experience in conducting evaluations based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, particularly utilisation and learning focused evaluations for development projects of NGO
* Leading socio-economic research, evaluations or consultancy work in China that is sensitive to the local context and culture, particularly young vulnerable migrant children
* 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
* 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.

# Annexes

**Annex 1: List of project documents to be consulted**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Annex 1: Project Logframe** | **Annex 2.1: Previous Studies – RCE Tool** | **Annex 2.2: Previous Studies – GAP Analysis** |
|  |  |  |
| **Annex 3 : Save the Children Data Protection Policy** | **Annex 4: Save the Children Child Safeguarding Policy** |  |
|  |  |  |

**Annex 4: SCI Evaluation Scoring for perspective consultants**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Evaluation Quality Criteria** (used for internal scoring after completion) |
| **Purpose, Design and Methods** | 1. Does the evaluation report clearly identify the evaluation's purpose (including its key objectives, questions and criteria) as set out in the evaluation's Terms of Reference (ToR)? |
| 2. Are the data collection and analysis methods a clearly justified approach to addressing the evaluation's purpose and questions? (Do they provide valid, reliable and ethical data?) |
| 3. Is the methodology suitably tailored to the context and population groups to which the evaluation questions relate (e.g. re gender, disability, socio-economic status, geographic location, cultural context, ethnicity)? |
| 4. Is the size and composition of the sample in proportion to the conclusions sought by the evaluation? |
| 5. Does the evaluation build on what is already known, for example existing tried and tested frameworks and tools, existing data/evidence, and previous lessons learned? |
| 6. Are the methods used to collect and analyse data and any limitations of the quality of the data and collection methodology explained and justified? |
| 7. Has any personal and professional influence or potential bias among those collecting or analysing data been recorded and addressed or mitigated ethically? |
| **Analysis and Findings** | 8. If evaluating impact, is a point of comparison used to show that change has happened (eg. a baseline, a counterfactual, comparison with a similar group)? |
| 9. Is the explanation of how (e.g. theory of change, logframe, activities) the intervention contributes to change explored? |
| 10. Is the data well triangulated, such as by using different data collection methods, types of data and stakeholder perspectives? |
| 11. Are alternative factors (eg. the contribution of other actors) considered to explain the observed result alongside an intervention’s contribution? |
| 12. Are unintended and unexpected changes (positive or negative) identified and explained? |
| 13. Are the perspectives of children & communities included in the evidence, including the most deprived and marginalised? Note: For evaluations focused on young children, caregiver perspectives are adequate instead. |
| 14. Are the findings disaggregated according to sex, disability and other relevant social differences? |
| 15. Is there a clear logical link between the data that was collected and analysed, and the conclusions and recommendations presented? |
| 16. Are conflicting findings and divergent perspectives presented and explained in the analysis and conclusions? |
| 17. Are the findings and conclusions of the assessment shared with and validated by a range of key stakeholders (eg. communities, partners, Save the Children staff)? |
| **Communication and Use** | 18. Is the analysis and interpretation of the data well communicated through accessible language and helpful visuals (diagrams, graphs, tables as needed)? |
| 19. Are references, annexes and links included that provide additional relevant data, analysis or references (including key documents and which individuals/stakeholders were involved)? |
| 20. Is there a clear plan for how to use the results, including recommendations that are 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound) and directed toward the appropriate 'end users', a dissemination plan, and specific actions for implementing these recommendations? |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ToR prepared by: | Shicong Su |
| 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)