

Endline Impact Evaluation of an Entrepreneurship-focused Socioemotional Skills Development Intervention¹ in Rural Mongolia

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy Services to Conduct an Endline Impact Evaluation

I. Background and Project Description

The Entrepreneurship-focused Socioemotional Skills for the Most Vulnerable Youth in Rural Mongolia Project aims to train vulnerable, disadvantaged youth in 25 of Mongolia's poorest rural soums across 5 provinces for improved entrepreneurship-focused socioemotional knowledge and skills. This objective will be achieved through a school-based, community-driven program targeting 6,000 school-enrolled and out-of-school youth to support the acquisition of entrepreneurship-focused socioemotional skills that are not only linked to success in school but are also highly valued in the labor market. The project addresses the largely unmet need for socioemotional and entrepreneurship skills stemming from extremely limited labor market opportunities that lead to high inactivity among youth in these locations, and a job profile dominated by traditional herding, unpaid work, and self-employment in the informal sector. Since the project became effective in November 2019, it has been implemented by the Save the Children Japan Mongolia Office (SCJM) and managed by the WB, with the financing support of a Japan Social Development Fund grant of US\$2.75 million.

The project consists of three components:

Component I is designed to support the development and introduction of a community-driven, locally-tailored, innovative socioemotional skills program for the vulnerable rural youth. In support of the aforementioned project development objective (PDO), Entrepreneurship-focused Socioemotional Learning (ESEL) training program was developed, and over 400 teachers were trained as ToT for this training program. Since spring 2021, the program has been delivered to over 5,000 children and youth through a total of four training sessions: *ESEL 1-Spring 2021*, *ESEL 2-Autumn 2021*, *ESEL 3-Spring 2022* and *ESEL 4-Autumn 2022*. In addition to the target secondary schools and Lifelong Learning Education Centers (LLECs) in the project soums, the training program has been extended to include youth enrolled in non-project secondary schools and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the soums and aimag centers.

The primary modality of the ESEL training program is classroom-based. However, in response to the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, and the learning needs of out-of-school youth and those enrolled in LLECs, a new training modality, which combines both in-class and distance learning, was introduced in October 2022 in selected 10 soums of 5 target aimags.

¹ The term 'Intervention' specifically refers to the Entrepreneurship-focused Socioemotional Learning (ESEL) training program within the scope of this endline impact evaluation. This classroom-based training was developed under the Entrepreneurship-focused Socioemotional Skills for the Most Vulnerable Youth in Rural Mongolia Project and has been delivered to the target children and youth since March 2021. For this reason, the term 'intervention' does not denote other activities implemented under the project, including the blended ESEL training and School-Based Enterprises (SBEs) (both of which are being piloted only in a selected number of soums) and the sub-grant scheme for which only those who have successfully completed the ESEL training are eligible to apply through a competitive selection process.

Component II aims to establish mechanisms for the target youth to gain experience in applying their learnings from the ESEL training program to meet the local market needs and business opportunities. Pitch events are organized at the soum-level and provide the opportunity for children and youth who have successfully completed the training program to present their business ideas by exercising their newly acquired ESEL knowledge and skills. To date, four pitch events have been held, involving over 1,000 children and youth. Of those who pitched their business ideas, more than half of them have been awarded with small grants (a financial support of US\$1,000 per team) and implementing their projects.

Moreover, the component II of the project supports the establishment and the implementation of school-based enterprises (SBEs) with objectives to leverage untapped resources available in schools, and help advance economic opportunities amongst the participating youth within the project. It is expected that through their involvement in the operation of SBE, school children will be provided with a possibility to hone their ESEL skills and knowledge that they can utilize when doing a business as well as entering the labour market upon their graduation.

Component III is intended to enhance the policy environment in support of entrepreneurship education through evidence-based advocacy and public outreach campaigns, and provide support for participatory M&E and project management. Under the Component III, a baseline survey was conducted to: (i) determine the pre-project conditions against which the project's progress and achievement of development objectives will be measured, and (ii) prepare and build evidence that can be used as a basis for further project evaluations.

The baseline survey was conducted twice: the first survey administered in March 2020 to 996 survey respondents, and the second one in February 2022 to 1,008 respondents. The initial baseline survey had some shortcomings due to the selection process employed in the first round of the ESEL training session. To facilitate a more rigorous assessment to measure how the project outcomes were attributable to the ESEL training, shortlisted applicants who expressed their interest to attend the ESEL training program were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups in the subsequent baseline survey. It should be noted that the second baseline survey was administered to secondary students only and did not include those attending LLECs.

II. Objective of Consultancy

These Terms of Reference are for a firm/company ("Survey Firm") to develop and implement all aspects of the endline impact evaluation survey as a part of the Project evaluation. This survey will act as a key study to measure the project's impact on the project's target beneficiaries.

The endline impact evaluation will assess the improvement in a set of entrepreneurship and socioemotional knowledge and skills (ESEL) among the target children and youth that can be attributed to the ESEL training program. The overarching research question of the endline impact evaluation is how and to what extent the ESEL training program contributed to improved skills development outcomes among the target youth. The findings of the endline impact evaluation, particularly the quantitative survey, will be used for measuring the key project performance indicators—namely, *PDO Indicator 2: Share of beneficiaries with improved ESEL knowledge and skills*; and *PDO Indicator 2.1: Share of female beneficiaries with improved ESEL knowledge and skills*.

In support of this objective, the Survey Firm will perform the following: administer the endline impact evaluation consisting of quantitative and qualitative surveys to a total of 2,000 children and youth in 25 soums of 5 target aimags²:

- (i) The quantitative survey will be guided by the overarching research question of to what extent the training program contributed to improved skills development outcomes among the target youth, and will be conducted for the following groups: (i) a total of 2,000 children and youth—including those surveyed in the baseline studies (i.e., the cohorts of ESEL 1 [400 survey participants] and ESEL 3 [1,000 survey participants]) and those who participated in ESEL 4 (600 survey participants); and (ii) their class teachers.
- (ii) The qualitative survey will aim to answer the overarching research question of how the ESEL training program contributed to improved skills development outcomes among the target youth, containing two sub-questions: (i) what are the key contributing factors to the improvement of their ESEL knowledge and skills, and (ii) how are the youth applying what they have learnt through the ESEL training program in their school/work and life. The qualitative survey includes Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) targeting 2 groups: (i) children and youth from the 25 target soums who have completed only the ESEL training, as well as those who have participated in the ESEL training program and have also received small grants³; and (ii) ESEL teachers/counsellors who delivered the ESEL training.

It is expected that the endline data collection will be completed by the end of February 2023, followed by the data analysis and reporting by June 2023.

III. Scope of Work

A. Duties and Responsibilities

The Survey Firm will be expected to conduct the project's endline impact evaluation survey by collecting all necessary data via quantitative and qualitative surveys, working closely with the SCJM and the WB teams. The SCJM and the WB teams will prepare and develop the first drafts of the English version of the survey tools for quantitative survey, and the survey firm will develop the survey tools and instruments for the qualitative survey. All survey tools and instruments will be developed in collaboration with national and international psychometric consultants who will be recruited under the project. The survey firm will refine and finalize the survey tools and instruments both in English and Mongolian languages, and supervise all survey collection activities and data entry, analysis and reporting. SCJM and WB will monitor the overall survey implementation.

The responsibilities of the Survey Firm include the followings:

Stage 1: Signing of Contract

² 25 soums of 5 target aimags are as follows: Bayandelger, Munkhkhaan, Ongon and Erdenetsagaan soums of Sukhbaatar aimag, Sumber and Shiveegobi soums of Gobisumber aimag, Bat-Ulzii, Bogd, Guchin-Us, Kharkhorin, Khujirt, Sant and Uyanga soums of Uvurkhangai aimag, Altai, Bulgan, Mankhan, Must, Uyenich and Zereg soums of Khovd aimag, Bayantes, Ikh-Uul, Telmen, Tes, Tudevtei and Tosontsengel soums of Zavkhan aimag.

³ Each FGD will include 5-8 participants consisting of mixed groups of youth (i.e., those who have participated in both the ESEL training and the sub-grant activity, and those who have completed the ESEL training only). Children and youth for the FGDs will be selected from the same cohorts of the quantitative survey respondents (i.e., the cohorts of ESEL 1, ESEL 3, and ESEL 4).

Stage 2: Preparatory Work and Piloting

(1) Survey design

- a. Submission of Inception report
- b. Development, refinement and finalization of the survey instruments for both quantitative and qualitative surveys: With the consultation of SCJM and the WB teams, and national and international Psychometric consultants, survey firm will refine and finalize all survey instruments to be used for quantitative and qualitative surveys under the endline impact evaluation. SCJM and the WB team will review the finalized survey tools and instruments.
- c. Development of interview guides: Develop interview guides in compliance with the SCJM's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and other relevant policies for field enumerators who will conduct the surveys in target soums;
- d. Fieldwork planning: Develop a field survey implementation plan which consists of the following: Fieldwork agenda; team composition and structure; field protocols (including protocols for interviews, focus group discussions [FDGs], logistical arrangements and necessary permissions); and data management plan (including data storage, backup, and security);
- e. Preparation of a training plan for field enumerators who will conduct the survey in the fields;
- f. Field-testing of the survey questionnaires (see Sections B and C for details on survey methods and instruments);
- g. Designing data-entry program with adequate consistency checking (e.g., double-entry);
- h. Printing and photocopying of all survey questionnaires and other tools.

(2) Personnel management

- a. Hiring, training, supervising, and payment of survey qualified researchers, enumerators, data-entry clerks and supervisors;
- b. Deployment of a team that consists of field enumerators and supervisors (who will oversee the field surveys) to implement the pilot and full-scale fieldwork and data collection;
- c. Appointment of a team leader who will be responsible for the overall implementation of the endline impact evaluation conduction and report writing.

(3) Piloting

- a. Piloting the survey instruments in February 2023 at an initial set of sampled schools to assess the reliability and validity of survey instruments;
- b. Upon piloting, survey instruments will be refined and finalized in consultation with the SCJM and WB teams.

Stage 3: Data Collection and Management

- a. Following informed consent procedures for each survey respondent, conducting the quantitative and qualitative surveys;
- b. Providing quality assurance in the data collection process by overseeing data collection activities and ensuring that the field enumerators/researchers have a good understanding of the survey questions and be advised on how to address any problems that might arise;
- c. Cross-checking and verification of the collected data to ensure its quality and accuracy and addressing any course missing data;
- d. Monitoring the consistency and quality of data coming in from the survey enumerators and interviewers on a daily basis, and compiling routine reports on data collection;
- e. Managing survey logistics, including transport and other support to enumerators and interviewers, supply of materials, and other required goods and services;

- f. Implementing back-up plans for conducting surveys at soum-level (as required), including travel arrangements and other logistics;
- g. Developing a robust data entry program with a user-interface in English. This program should generate or assign variable names that correspond clearly and logically to the question labels used in the questionnaire;
- h. Entering data in a thorough and accurate manner, using a system of double-entry for consistency checking;
- i. Providing copies of both raw and cleaned datasets in a timely manner including completed questionnaires, plain and coded interview transcripts, compiled list of survey participants with all necessary background information and a list of coding queries to run and explore and analyse the data with the definition of each code;
- j. Providing periodic updates to the SCJM and the WB teams on data entry progress.
- k. Ensuring data confidentiality, for example, by maintaining paper questionnaires in locked file cabinets.

Stage 4: Data analysis and reporting

- a. Based on the data collected through both quantitative and qualitative research, draft an endline impact evaluation report both in English and Mongolian that presents the collected data evidence by generating findings and providing analysis to determine the project's impact on improvement of the ESEL knowledge and skills among the target children and youth. Overall, the endline impact evaluation is designed to respond to the research question set out in the section II of this ToR: How and to what extent the ESEL training program contributed to the target youth's skills development outcomes.
- b. The report shall distil information to be captured in relation to the survey objectives that help evaluate the overall impact of the project intervention.
- c. The survey firm will submit the draft outline of the report, and the draft report to the SCJM and WB teams for feedback and comments.
- d. After receiving comments and feedback from the SCJM and WB teams, revise the draft report and submit the final report. The final report should also be submitted in Mongolian after finalizing the English version of the survey report.

B. Methodology

A mixed methods approach will be employed for the endline impact evaluation. The survey firm will work closely with the SCJM and WB teams in the preparation and implementation of the qualitative and quantitative research. In the preparation of the survey instruments, the survey firm shall collaborate with the National and International Psychometric Consultants hired under the project. The final methodology should be approved by the SCJM and WB teams.

The endline impact evaluation will utilize two major methods of research - quantitative and qualitative:

a. Quantitative survey:

- Aimed at forming new knowledge by collecting information from the children and youth and their class teachers through questionnaire;

b. Qualitative survey:

- FGDs with project target beneficiaries (children and youth) and their ESEL teachers/counsellors

The Survey Instruments

The Survey Firm will finalize all the survey instruments with the assistance and support of the SCJM and WB teams. The survey instruments are designed to assess how and what extent to which the target children and youth have improved ESEL knowledge and skills as a result of their participation in the ESEL training program. All the survey instruments used for both qualitative and quantitative research will be developed and refined in close consultation with the national and international Psychometric Consultants and the SCJM and WB teams.

C. Schedule of Expected Tasks and Deliverables

The survey firm is expected to fulfill the following tasks and deliverables:

Task 1: Preparatory work (December 2022 – January 2023)

- a. Inception report
- b. Survey implementation plan including the following: Pilot and full-scale plans, pre-data collection training for enumerators/researchers; and data collection, management and assurance plan;
- c. Survey methodology and instruments for quantitative and qualitative surveys developed in consultation with the national and international psychometric consultants, the SCJM and the WB, and finalized after the piloting;
- d. Field Procedure plan for data collection acceptable to the Research Team, including details on composition of each field survey team; roles and responsibilities of enumerators, field supervisors, and other staff; travel logistics; and how completed questionnaires will be transferred to data entry staff.
- e. Roster of recruited enumerators with their corresponding qualifications;
- f. Training for enumerators/researchers and data-entry clerks

Deliverable 1: Inception report inclusive of *d*, *e* and *f* of the Task 1.

Deliverable 2: Finalized survey methodology and instruments in English and Mongolian for quantitative and qualitative surveys.

Task 2: Data collection and Management (February – March 2023)

- a. Submission of weekly reports on field survey;
- b. Data verification for quality checks and any course corrections in the collected data;
- c. Clean database that has information from all survey participants of 2,000 children and youths including those surveyed in the baseline in a format readable by common statistical software (e.g., SPSS, Stata);
- d. Coding strategy describing a coding method and a robust coding system used for the qualitative data analysis (including a codebook, the list of codes created for data analysis, and the definition of each code)

Deliverable 3: Weekly reports, Submitted raw data, and Clean database

Task 3: Data analysis and reporting (April–June 2023)

- a. Final report both in Mongolian and English covering findings and analysis of the endline impact evaluation after incorporating inputs, comments and feedback from the SCJM and WB teams;
- b. Presentation of the endline impact evaluation findings at the project closing workshop

Deliverable 4: Final Endline Impact Evaluation report in English and Mongolian languages, and Presentation of the endline impact evaluation findings.

D. Ethical Considerations

The project is interviewing human subjects aged 14–25 years old. This may raise a number of ethical as well as practical concerns, which will be the responsibility of the Survey Firm.

- (1) Interviewers must be able to assure the participants that their answers will be completely confidential.
- (2) Interviewers must be able to assure participants that they will not be forced to answer any question, and that their participation in the project does not depend on their willingness to answer questions or on the answers they give.
- (3) Interviewers must be able to discuss sensitive issues with care and objectivity.

IV. Reporting Obligations

The Survey Firm shall report to the SCJM and WB. Draft outline of the report should be submitted by March 15th, 2023. Dataset will be the property of the SCJM and WB. The first draft of the report will be submitted by April 15th, 2023 for SCJM and WB teams' review, feedback and comments. The final report should be submitted by June 30th, 2023. The field report should be of quality acceptable to the Research team and the SCJM and WB teams.

V. Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel

The selected firm will have considerable experience (at least of 10 years) in managing both qualitative and quantitative surveys including administering panel surveys (involving repeated interviews with individuals over time). This includes the preparation of survey and training materials, training and supervising interviewers, data entry, maintaining records, and ensuring confidentiality of records. The firm will have sufficient experience and capacity to manage survey logistics, including equipment, materials, and personnel. It is preferable that the firm has experience handling sensitive materials and information, and conducting interviews concerning potentially difficult topics among vulnerable groups.

The Survey Firm should, at a minimum, assign the following staff with corresponding qualifications and competencies:

1. Team leader (60 working days)

- o Doctorate or master's degree in a relevant field with at least 10 years of experience;
- o Proven experience in conducting high quality surveys employing both quantitative and qualitative methods;
- o At least 10 years of professional experience in Project Monitoring and Evaluation, preferably in education and in other relevant areas;
- o Experience managing the administration of baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations for at least 10 projects;
- o Solid understanding of soft skills;
- o Familiarity with the local areas and its context and the education system;
- o Knowledge of evaluation methodologies;
- o Experience of working with international consultants and organizations;
- o Proven ability to facilitate communication among different stakeholders, including local government, community members and academic institutions;

- o Excellent written and verbal English communication skills

2. Researcher (40 working days)

- o Master's Degree in an area relevant to the assignment, such as Sociology, Education, Anthropology, Social Sciences; or a related field;
- o At least 10 years of experience in designing and conducting researches and field surveys with a strong focus on mixed methods research including semi-structured interviews and FDGs;
- o At least 7 years of experience conducting baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations;
- o Proven experience using qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo, ATLAS. Ti);
- o Experience in the usage of statistical, data analysis software (e.g., SPSS, Stata, R) desirable;
- o Proven capacity to deliver accurate, clean quantitative and qualitative data collection;
- o Strong background in research and analysis in the areas of education or other relevant fields;
- o Understanding of soft skills and knowledge of varying local contexts;
- o Ability to work well with children and youth and different stakeholders;
- o Experience of working with international consultants and organizations;
- o Excellent written and verbal English communication skills

3. Data analyst (30 working days)

- o Master's degree in an area relevant to the assignment, such as Sociology, Psychology, Information systems, Data science, Statistics or any other related field;
- o At least 10 years of experience in data analysis, versed in mixed methods research, and delivering evidence-based reporting;
- o At least 7 years of experience conducting baseline, mid-term and endline evaluations;
- o Proven experience in the usage of statistical, data analysis software (e.g., SPSS, Stata, R);
- o Strong background in research and analysis in the areas of education or other relevant fields;
- o Understanding of soft skills and knowledge of varying local contexts;
- o Experience of working with international consultants and organizations;
- o Excellent written and verbal English communication skills

4. **Data collection team leader/supervisor:** 4 (or an appropriate number) field supervisors for enumerators with previous experience in survey-taking and a university degree.
5. **Enumerators:** 25 (or an appropriate number) enumerators (survey takers) with at least completed high school (some university education preferred).
6. **Data entry team leader:** An undergraduate degree and at least 5 years of research experience.
7. **Data entry-clerks:** 3 (or an appropriate number) Data entry specialists with at least completed high school (some university education preferred); these may be drawn from the enumeration staff.

The precise numbers and staff requirements will be agreed upon during contract negotiations. The survey firm should submit resumes for all of the above staff, with the exception of the enumerators and data entry clerks. For the enumerators, the firm should submit 3-5 resumes of "typical" enumerators who will be used.

VI. Duration and Payment of the Consultancy

The payment for this consultancy will be through a lump-sum contract. This will cover costs for all activities described above.

Table 2. The payment of the Consultancy will be as follows:

Payment	% of the Contract Sum	Activity/Deliverable
1	10%	Signing of the contract
2	30%	Upon satisfactory completion of Deliverables 1 & 2
3	30%	Upon satisfactory completion of Deliverable 3
4	30%	Upon submission of Deliverable 4

Duties and Taxes

Duties and Taxes will be implied as per prevailing rules of the Government of Mongolia which will be mentioned in the agreement.

The final report shall be submitted to: SCJM and WB

VII. The submission of proposal:

The required documents for the submission of proposal should include:

- An Official Letter of Interest together with a Copy of Company/Firm Registration Certificate
- Samples of similar evaluations and surveys performed in the past
- Technical proposal inclusive of CVs of key personnel: Team leader, Researcher and Data analyst
- Financial proposal

VIII. ANNEX: SAMPLES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Annex 1: Questionnaire utilized under the second baseline survey for children and youth in Mongolian

Annex 2: Questionnaire utilized under the second baseline survey for children and youth in English

Annex 3: Questionnaire utilized under the second baseline survey for class teachers in Mongolian

Annex 4: Questionnaire utilized under the second baseline survey for class teachers in English