



LITERACY AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (LABE)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR

A Long-term Consultancy to design and carry out a research for testing theories in families' involvement in children's basic education and produce knowledge generalisable to wide population.

1. BACKGROUND:

Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) is an indigenous organization established in 1989. It's a registered NGO under registration number S.591/4/192.

LABE exists to promote literacy practices and increase access to information particularly among women and children in local communities in order to actively demand and protect their rights. We are currently implementing educational projects focusing on children and parents in districts of; Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, Adjumani, Yumbe, Moyo, Koboko and Arua.

LABE works with and through partnerships to innovate, implement and influence educational policies. One of our innovations that the Ministry of Education and sports is considering for scale up is the Family Basic Education approach. The approach improves parental involvement in children's education and parents' literacy skills.

2. ABOUT THE PROJECT (RARE)

Supporting Children's school readiness and retention (RARE) project is a five year project (1st July 2012-30th June 2017), funded by Comic Relief and being implemented by Literacy and basic Education (LABE) in Uganda.

The project overall aim is to contribute towards the realization of MDG2 in 8 conflict-affected districts of Northern Uganda by ensuring that school – ready children enroll, stay in school and achieve better literacy and numeracy outcomes by the end of primary three

It also seeks to change societal belief that learner achievement occurs only within formal schools by creating links between school-based Universal Primary Education with home-based Early Childhood Education and Family Basic Education. The project will create literacy-rich home environments in low-income families where many children come from to join primary schools, thus compensating for educational disadvantages such children face at school.

Home-based learning experiences linked to school activities will support children learning wherever they are, greatly ease home-primary school transition and ensure children stay and succeed in school.

Main project activities are; establishing 800 home-learning centres equipped with local learning materials, training 1600 parent educators and 480 teachers, supporting 1,560 SMCs to offer community sensitization and advocating for increased family engagement in children's education.

Children's increased school readiness and retention will lead to improved literacy achievement and increased numbers accessing post-primary education, useful for increasing Uganda's workforce. And participation in family education will lead to increased parents' self-esteem and commitment to education-related activities.

The project will address the following outcomes;

- 80% of the 24,000 pre-primary children – under 6 years (5% with disabilities and 40% girls) in home –based ECD centres in the 8 districts demonstrating improved social, cognitive, language and motor skills prior to enrolling in primary one at the age of 6 by 2016.
- 70% of 63,840 primary one to primary three children (5 % with disabilities and 40% girls) in the 8 districts attending school regularly meet Uganda's National literacy and numeracy standards by P.3 (NAPE)
- At least 28,000 (55% female) of the targeted 40,000 parents (18+ years) in the 8 districts demonstrate improved literacy, numeracy and parenting skills resulting into their increased support and commitment to their children's education.
- The capacity of at least 80% (384 out of 480) P1 – P3 teachers enhanced to strengthen supportive school learning environments for early grade children in the 120 schools
- Improved capacity of 1,600 Parent Educators (45 % female) in providing good quality ECCE and family learning in the 8 districts by 2015
- Government's increased recognition and funding for parental/family involvement in ECD as a low- cost intervention that helps prepare children for UPE by 2017
- LABE's initiated education interventions (home based ECCE and F&BE) started, adapted and sustained by others within and outside the 8 focal districts in Uganda by 2016.

The project is based on theory of change, herewith annexed. Further background on this project be can found in the full project proposal available at LABE.

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

A unique feature of this project is the requirement that there should be a substantial research component linked with project implementation. An independent researcher supported by LABE staff is being sought to effect this. The primary aim is to design research that will be used to test theories in families' involvement in children's basic education so that the knowledge produced is generalisable to a wider population.

Additionally, the purpose of the research study is to generate evidence about what

works and what does not on parental involvement in children's education.

To this end, the research proposed to answer the following learning questions;

- What factors facilitate or limit effective parental involvement in children's education at school level?
- In what circumstances does improved parental literacy and parenting skills contribute to better learning outcomes for children?
- How do the learning outcomes of children who have gone through informal home –based and formal centre – based ECD differ by P.3?

The above questions will however need refining prior to the commencement of this task.

4. SUGGESTED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods research methodology involving the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods is preferred for this assignment.

These will further be supplemented with literature reviews from government documents such as UPE guidelines on ECD policy, and family involvement in basic education practices elsewhere among others

5. SPECIFIC TASKS/SCOPE OF WORK

- Redefine the LABE's proposed learning questions and realign them to the Theory of Change
- Develop and present a research proposal to LABE
- Propose a complete implementation/work plan with time frame and key outputs at each stage. Prepare a resource list and estimated implementation budget.
- Undertake a comprehensive study of the above mentioned learning questions and document findings
- Prepare plans for dissemination of research findings to specific key actors as they emerge and present these findings to different actors.
- Generate 1 article from the research findings and have it publicized in a peer-reviewed international education journal.

6. KEY OUT PUTS:

The consultant will be expected to produce;

- A research proposal
- A research report (maximum length 50-60pages) detailing the ;
 - Executive summary
 - Introduction
 - Methodology
 - Findings of the study in relation to the learning questions, theory of Change and other areas emerging.
 - Conclusions and recommendations.
 - Appendix- list of documents reviewed, people and organizations interviewed , final agreed TOR.
- An abridged version (10-15 pages).
- One research paper published in international education journals.

7. TIME FRAME

The whole research process including data collection, analysis and sharing findings will be spread throughout the entire period of project implementation. Actual data collection will start at the beginning of year 3, and concluded in year 4.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

The lead consultant must have:

- A minimum of a Masters degree in a related field and five (5) years of relevant research work experience.
- She/He must have had experience in education research both in and outside Uganda.
- Experience in disseminating research findings to national level decision makers.
- A proven track record of undertaking similar research and communication of findings related to educational research in an international education journal.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and communication skills, both written and verbal

8. NEGOTIATIONS MEETING

The Lead Consultant will, with the LABE team (including the Executive Director, Head of Programmes and Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Manager) to agree and finalize the ToRs for the consultancy. This will be concluded with the signing of the Contract.

9. NEXT STEPS:

- LABE welcomes a response to these Terms of Reference including;
 - the consultant's suggested approach
 - an outline of costs and timeframe

Responses should be sent to:

The Executive Director, LABE not later than 15th March 2014.

Email address: Labe@labeuganda.org, or hand delivered to:
LABE Head Office, Plot 18 Tagore Crescent, Kamwokya, Kampala.