



Caritas
RWANDA

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TERMS OF REFERENCE TO HIRE A CONSULTANCY FIRM TO CARRY OUT A COMPARATIVE AND IMPACT EVALUATION OF CARITAS RWANDA'S ECD PROJECT

I. Background

Caritas Rwanda, in partnership with Plan International Rwanda, has been implementing an Early Childhood Development (ECD) project since July 2022 in **Bugesera, Gatsibo, and Nyaruguru Districts**. The project aims to create a conducive environment for the holistic development of young children by strengthening caregiver capacity, promoting positive parenting and male engagement, improving nutrition and WASH practices, supporting inclusive early learning, and strengthening child protection mechanisms.

The project currently supports a total of 59 Home-Based ECDs distributed as follows: 18 in Rwimbogo, 17 in Kiziguro, 17 in Murambi, and 7 in Kabarore sectors of Gatsibo District; 4 in Muganza, 11 in Rusenge, and 11 in Munini sectors of Nyaruguru District; and 14 in Kamabuye and 16 in Ngeruka sectors of Bugesera District.

As the project progresses, Caritas Rwanda seeks to:

- I. Compare the performance of children who attended supported ECD centers with those who did not attend ECD before primary school.
- II. Compare supported ECD centers with non-supported ECD centers within the same geographical locations.
- III. Assess whether observed improvements can be attributed to the ECD intervention.
- IV. Determine scalability potential and strategic expansion needs.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness, impact, and added value of Caritas Rwanda-supported ECD interventions, using national ECD minimum standards and the six pillars of ECD as benchmarks, and to provide evidence-based recommendations for scaling, strengthening, or adapting the intervention model.

3. Study Objectives

3.1 Overall Objective

To evaluate the impact of Caritas Rwanda's ECD intervention on children's school readiness, primary school performance, caregiver practices, and the quality of ECD centers.

3.2 Specific Objectives

1. Child-Level Comparison

- Compare academic performance, school readiness, attendance, behavior, and social-emotional outcomes of:
 - Children who attended supported ECD centers
 - Children who attended non-supported ECD centers
 - Children who did not attend any ECD

2. HBECDs-Level Comparison

- Compare supported vs non-supported ECDs using:
 - NCDA Minimum Requirements
 - The Six ECD Pillars framework

3. Caregiver & Parent-Level Assessment

- Assess changes in knowledge and practices in:
 - Positive parenting
 - Nutrition and balanced diet preparation
 - WASH practices
 - Child protection
 - Health
 - School readiness and inclusive learning

4. Violence Prevention & Protection

- Assess changes in attitudes and practices related to violence against children and IPV.

5. Cost-Effectiveness & Scalability

- Assess whether the supported model demonstrates sufficient effectiveness to justify scale-up.
- Identify sustainability factors, resource requirements, and potential replication pathways.

4. Evaluation Framework

The study must assess the impact of the ECD project using the Six Pillars of ECD, including male engagement and inclusiveness, by employing the Savings and Lending Groups model. In addition, the assessment will capture the NCDA Minimum Requirements, infrastructure and safety standards, caregiver qualifications, child-to-caregiver ratio, hygiene and sanitation compliance, availability of play and learning materials, and child safeguarding mechanisms.

5. Description of the assignment

The survey will be conducted by the contractor, with assistance from the project's team, at both the headquarters and field levels.

These will be some key evaluation questions.

Impact on Children

- Do children who attended supported ECDs demonstrate improved literacy, numeracy, social-emotional skills, and attendance in primary school?
- Are there differences in behavior, retention, and participation?

Impact on HBECDs

- Do supported ECDs score higher on quality standards than non-supported centers?
- Which pillars show the greatest improvement?

Impact on Households

- Have parenting practices improved?
- Has male involvement increased?
- Have WASH and nutrition behaviors improved?
- Has social acceptance of violence in families decreased?

Attribution and Scalability

- To what extent can observed outcomes be attributed to Caritas Rwanda's ECD intervention?
- Is the model replicable?
- What are the cost implications?
- What contextual factors affect expansion?

6. Scope of work

The consultant firm will:

- I. Design the evaluation methodology.
- II. Conduct comparative field research in:

- a. Supported ECDs
 - b. Non-supported ECDs in the same sectors, cells, and villages
 - c. Primary schools receiving children from both groups
- III. Collect quantitative and qualitative data by physically meeting the project beneficiaries.
 - IV. Analyze child-level, ECD-level, and household-level data.
 - V. Assess scalability feasibility.
 - VI. Produce a comprehensive evaluation report that will be presented in a high-level meeting with varied stakeholders, under the budget of Caritas Rwanda

7. Coverage of the assignment:

The consulting firm must propose a robust mixed-methods design, ensuring a representative sample from:

- Supported ECDs
- Non-supported ECDs in the same areas
- Primary schools
- Parents/caregivers
- Fathers' clubs
- VSLA groups

8. Data Collection Methods

Quantitative:

- Structured surveys (parents, caregivers)
- Child development and school readiness assessments
- Primary school performance records review
- ECD center quality assessment checklist (aligned to NCDA standards)
- Knowledge tests for caregivers

Qualitative:

- Focus group discussions (parents, fathers' clubs, teachers)
- Key informant interviews (sector leaders, head teachers, religious leaders)
- Classroom observation
- Case studies
- Community dialogue assessment

9. Expected Outputs - Deliverables

- I. **Inception Report** (methodology, tools, sampling, timeline). The inception report will also include a detailed action plan with a timeline to accomplish all assigned tasks. The approved inception report should be submitted within 5 calendar days after signing the contract.
- II. **Validated Data Collection Tools**
- III. **Clean Dataset**
- IV. **Draft Evaluation Report**

- V. **Validation Workshop Presentation**
- VI. **Final Evaluation Report**

10. Expected Outcomes

- I. Evidence of impact on child development and school performance
- II. Clear comparison between supported and non-supported ECDs
- III. Evidence-based scalability recommendations
- IV. Strategic guidance for policy advocacy and national replication

11. Duration

The assignment is expected to take 30 calendar days from contract signing.

12. Required Qualifications of the Consultant Firm

Team leader (essential):

- A university degree in economics, social sciences, statistics, or a related discipline, plus a minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience or a post-graduate degree plus a minimum of 3 years of relevant professional experience in livelihoods-related areas, socioeconomic research, and evaluation studies is required.
- A minimum of 3 years of experience in quantitative and qualitative analysis and synthesis of community engagement and capacity-building interventions in development and education settings is required.
- Proven experience leading baseline/end-of-line/evaluation survey teams and managing fieldwork in complex environments.
- Extensive experience in developing useful and actionable recommendations for management and programming.
- a track record of producing professional, clear, and concise statistical reports in English

Team member – statistician/data analyst (essential)

- A university degree in statistics (statistical analysis) and/or data science, as well as at least 5 years of relevant experience in quantitative data analysis, are required.
- Proven data analysis and R coding experience
- Experience with complex survey design, development, testing, and implementation, as well as analysis.
- Knowledge and experience with quantitative survey design methodologies, sampling design procedures, sample size calculations, variance estimation, compound weights, and simulation studies are required.
- Experience with data quality assurance protocols and data collection in the domains of sampling and measurement error, non-response, and coverage bias is required to ensure reliable data collection.

13. Ethical Considerations

The consultant must:

- Obtain ethical clearance where required
- Ensure child safeguarding protocols
- Obtain informed consent
- Ensure confidentiality and data protection
- Apply gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive approaches

14. About the proposal preparation

Technical proposal

The applicant is required to prepare a technical proposal outlining the methodology for conducting the survey, including the general approach and specific strategies for addressing anticipated challenges. The proposal should detail the data collection methods, analysis tools, and measures to ensure the high quality of collected data, which is crucial for the success of the survey.

Additionally, the proposal should provide information on the staffing and organizational structure of the firm, along with proposed activity timelines. Plans for piloting data generation tools and training enumerators should also be included. The applicant must summarize their qualifications and experience, supported by at least three completion certificates from similar surveys.

Any additional technical or administrative details that could enhance the consultant/firm's chances of winning the bid should also be included in the proposal.

Financial proposal

The financial proposal must provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed budget by major activities, along with a narrative explaining the reasoning behind these activities, as well as a timeline and budget breakdown. Additionally, the proposal should outline the fieldwork model, including team size, composition, transportation methods, and underlying assumptions that inform the budget. The budget needs to specify unit costs and quantities for each activity to ensure clarity and accuracy.

N.B: The financial proposal should be precise regarding whether all taxes are included or excluded.

15. Milestones Payment

Payments shall be made according to the following deliverables:

1. Submission and approval of the Inception Report – 20%
Payment will be made upon submission and formal approval of the Inception Report by Caritas Rwanda.

2. Submission of the Draft Report (including research findings) – 50%
Payment will be made upon submission of the full draft report, including complete research findings, subject to the following conditions:
 - Data quality and analysis meet the required standards.
 - The entire targeted population has been covered as agreed.
 - Caritas Rwanda confirms that the data and report meet the expected standards.
3. Submission of the Final Report – 30%
Payment will be made upon submission of the final report incorporating recommendations and inputs from the validation meeting, and formal acceptance by Caritas Rwanda.

17. Evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed based on cost reasonableness (30%) and technical competence (70%).

The Application file must be comprised of;

a. For the consultancy firm:

- Letter expressing interest in carrying out the consultancy service required addressed to Caritas Rwanda's Secretary General;
- A technical proposal written in English describing the background, methodology, and timeline;
- Financial proposal (Price quotations).
- A copy of RDB registration certificates;
- A copy of the RRA (VAT) Registration certificate;
- A copy of Proof of EBM Possession;
- A copy of a valid RRA Tax clearance certificate;
- Certificate by the Data Protection and Privacy Office as Data Controller and Processor

N.B: Submission of all administrative documents listed above is mandatory, and non-submission of one of the said documents may cause a rejection of the offer.

b. For the Tema members/Consultants

- CV (s) of the consultant(s);
- Notarized copies of Academic and Professional certificates of the Consultant (s);
Good completion certificates/recommendation letters from the previous surveys conducted around socio-sciences (at least 3 certificates of successful similar work in the last 5 years for each team member);

Evaluation of technical proposal

The submitted technical proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Overall response

10 pts

- Understanding of the terms of reference and responsiveness to requirements
- Understanding of scope, objectives, and completeness of response

- Overall concord between Caritas Rwanda's requirements and the proposal

Methodology and approach

30 pts

- Quality of the proposed approach and methodology
- **Suitability:** To what extent the methodology is designed in response to the needs of the TOR
- **Quality of proposed implementation plan**, i.e., how will the applicant undertake each task to meet the deadline?

Risk management

20 pts

Risk assessment and risk management plan - recognition of the risks/peripheral problems and methods to prevent and manage risks/peripheral problems, and troubleshoot issues in the field.

Capacity of the proposed team

40 pts

- Professional expertise of the team members. Detailed CVs and how their experience relates to the assignment
- Organization of the team and roles & responsibilities:
 - Team leader: Relevant experience and qualifications;
 - Key Team members (especially a data analyst – should have studied statistics or Economics with Relevant experience, skills & and competencies);
- Timelines proposed must be detailed and be based on the ToRs;

The Technical Proposal has a total score of 100 points. Applicants must score at least 60 points to be considered technically compliant and for the Financial Proposals to be opened.

Evaluation of financial proposal

A financial proposal has a total score of **30 points**. The financial proposal will be judged against the overall proposed budget, but also based on the proposed unit costs and the feasibility of underlying similar surveys conducted before. The final selection of the applicant will be based on a quality and cost basis.

18. How to apply

Interested applicants with the required skills and competencies must submit their technical and financial proposals through the email tenders@caritasrwanda.org no later than Monday 2nd March 2026 (by 3:00 p.m. Kigali Time). Late applications will be rejected.

Done at Kigali on February 10, 2026

Prepared by

Approved by

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