

Terms of Reference for Consultancy to develop Save the Children's Approach to Group Activities for Children's Protection, Wellbeing and Learning in Humanitarian Crises

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Background

Save the Children has a long history of creating and supporting safe spaces for children in humanitarian crises. Safe spaces can take a variety of forms according to needs in context (eg. static, mobile, community or home-based) and can be associated with different interventions in humanitarian responses, but the main purpose is to create a designated space for children with activities and supervision that supports children's protection, wellbeing and learning¹. Between 2011 and 2015, Save the Children participated in the inter-agency study on the [evaluation of Child Friendly Spaces](#) led by World Vision and Columbia University. This demonstrated that CFS have a greater impact on supporting the wellbeing of younger children. The impact on protection was minimal but stronger for girls. Impact was greatly mediated by the quality of programming and the context in which the CFS operate.

Since this research, the emphasis in the humanitarian sector has shifted from a focus solely on spaces to a primary focus on the activities that are conducted within spaces and promoting the inclusion and participation of the most marginalised children. A number of inter-agency standards guide this area of work:

- The [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) (CPMS) define Child-friendly spaces (CFS) as "*safe spaces where communities create nurturing environments in which children can access free and structured play, recreation, leisure and learning activities*"². The CPMS emphasises the importance of developing group activities to promote child wellbeing in accordance with needs in context and in close collaboration with children and communities, with an emphasis on identifying existing spaces that promote community ownership and can safely be used for these activities.
- The [Inter-agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies](#) identify safe spaces for women and girls as vital for providing them with the information, services and referrals necessary to both prevent GBV and respond to the needs of survivors³. They are also spaces to support social inclusion, wellbeing and empowerment⁴.
- In the Education sector, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies ([INEE](#)) [Minimum Standards](#) also include standards and guidance relating to temporary and permanent safe spaces that provide learning opportunities and serve as an entry-point for other essential sectors including protection and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services. The Global Education Cluster (GEC) and CP Area of Responsibility (AoR) have created a [CP-EiE Collaboration Framework](#), which provides guidance to CP and EiE actors to better meet the holistic and interconnected needs of children during humanitarian crises.

Despite the wide range of standards, a number of challenges remain in implementing group activities for

¹ Learning for this TOR is defined as - social, emotional, physical, creative and academic outcomes and will be referred as Learning throughout the TOR but to infer the definition provided.

² CPMS (2019) Pg 302.

³ The GBVIE Minimum Standards distinguish Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) which have a specific focus on gender-based violence, from CFS which have a broader protection and psychosocial well-being component for both boys and girls.

⁴ Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies (2019) Standard.

integrated outcomes across protection, learning and wellbeing. These include:

- Defining and implementing activities that promote integration across protection, learning and wellbeing outcomes from the early stages of a response. Interventions are frequently developed and implemented in silos, targeting similar groups of children with overlapping outcomes.
- Ensuring that the children who are most in need of protection, learning and wellbeing support are reached and able to access group activities. This includes children of different ages and genders, those with disabilities and those from poorer households.

Programming principles are therefore required to turn standards into practice and support integration and inclusion. **Guidance is also needed on integrated foundational activities** that can be implemented from the start of a humanitarian response whilst the crisis stabilises and facilitator capacities are built.

Save the Children has developed and tested a number of approaches that can be used with children to support their protection, wellbeing and learning outcomes as the crisis stabilises and during subsequent phases. These include:

- [Healing and Education Through the Arts](#)
- [Return to Learning](#)
- [I Support My Friends](#) (PFA package) (PFA package)
- [Child / Youth Resilience Package](#) and as part of the [Safe Families](#) Common Approach
- [Team Up](#)
- Guidance on [Adolescent Girl Friendly Spaces](#)
- [Girls Decide](#)
- [Life-skills for Success Common Approach](#)
- [My Sexual Health and Rights](#)
- [Sesame Workshop](#)

These packages require varying conditions and technical competencies to deliver, focus on a number of different outcomes, and are targeted at different groups of children, sometimes posing challenges to those implementing. Save has also identified external content that can be used for supporting these outcomes for children. Although we have ample content identified, **further guidance is needed on how to navigate, identify and adapt the right approach** to address specific needs in context.

This consultancy aims to develop this guidance, in line with several cross-cutting policies:

- Our [Gender Equality Policy](#) establishes that all our work should be gender sensitive at a minimum, and strive to be gender transformative whenever possible. This entails both ensuring equitable access and meaningful participation, particularly for girls, and transforming the root causes behind existing gender inequalities.
- Our [Disability Inclusion Policy](#), which guides us to take measures to promote equitable access to safe spaces and participation in activities for children with disabilities. This may mean taking steps to ensure that spaces are accessible, that children with disabilities are supported to access them and that steps are taken to ensure that other children are aware of their additional needs and how to support them.
- Our [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression \(SOGIE\) Policy](#) outlines how we support the rights of all children, whatever their SOGIE, to protection and participation and to be free from

discrimination, persecution and violence. This means taking proactive steps to promote inclusion in our services and to address violence and discrimination that may occur based on SOGIE.

Objective

The objective of this work is to develop an approach to implementing group activities to support children's protection, learning and wellbeing during the initial stages of a humanitarian crisis and to support transition to more in-depth activities during subsequent phases. The approach should aim to be gender sensitive and disability inclusive, with a primary focus on children aged between four and 17.

The approach developed must:

- Build on Save the Children's existing approaches and define where and how to integrate them.
- Be child-centred and playful⁵, built around the interconnected protection, wellbeing and learning needs of children in emergencies.
- Be gender sensitive at a minimum and gender transformative whenever possible, taking into account the specific needs of adolescent girls and boys in particular and promoting gender equality, as a fundamental human right for children.
- Promote inclusion and address access barriers, for children with disabilities, LGBTQI+ children as well as other relevant groups of children.
- Be fit for purpose for use in the initial phase of a sudden onset emergency with light-touch contextualisation and provide guidance and framework for transition and/or phase out in the later phases of a crises.
- Integrate field testing feedback into approach.
- Promote community ownership and children's participation.
- Be easy to contextualise and adapt in accordance with needs in context.

Outputs

1. **Programme Principles** to guide this work and concise guidance on how to turn principles into practice.
2. **A Manual of foundational group activities** that support protection, learning and wellbeing outcomes adaptable to context. This should be accompanied by the identification of necessary competencies and a capacity building package for facilitators.
3. **Navigation to existing approaches** and how to transition from initial to subsequent phases of an emergency, guiding to what is suitable for what purpose, with whom and in what context. This should also outline the time, training and resources needed to implement.
4. **Guidance on monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning**, that cuts across this entire work, with a focus on existing tools, including elements of impact measurement.
5. **Training and piloting of the approach** in three humanitarian responses, with learning used to update and finalise the tools.

These outputs should be translated into French, Spanish and Arabic at a minimum and made available on the Resource Centre.

Process and Timeframe

Developing these tools will require a Steering Group of Save the Children staff who represent Child Protection, MHPSS, Education, Gender, Disability and MEAL. The process will be jointly managed by Centre Humanitarian Child Protection, Education and MHPSS Advisors. The overall timeframe for the

⁵ Save the Children is in the process of finalising a guidance note around Play (learning through play, right to play, play for healing/ MHPSS). It builds on existing Save the Children and external evidence and resources. It will be made available to the consultant.

work will be 18 months from Q3 2023. It will require a consultant to work for 92 days over the course of 12+ months.

The consultant will reach out to selected country offices to understand current practice, learning and support needs in relation to this work. Findings will support the design of the deliverables. The consultant will also conduct a thorough review of existing approaches available to country offices.

The consultant will then draft the guidance, manual, navigation tool and associated materials for review by the Steering Group. Once the draft is final, they will provide online training for teams in 3 humanitarian locations in order to facilitate piloting of the approach. Feedback on the approach will be gathered after six months. The consultant will then use the feedback to finalise the guidance and tools, which will be submitted for endorsement and sign-off, then translated into French, Spanish and Arabic.

The following steps and timeframe are indicative:

<i>Task</i>	<i># Days</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Pre-consultancy		2 months
Convene Steering Group		2 weeks
Outreach to Regions and Country Offices to identify current practice, learning and support needs.		4 weeks
Recruit consultant (concurrent to above)		6 weeks
Consultancy		12 months
Review of relevant global standards, policies, guidance and approaches	10	2 weeks
Key informant interviews	10	2 weeks
Drafting of programme principles and guidance	5	1 week
Review of programme principles and guidance		2 weeks
Update of programme principles and guidance	3	1 week
Drafting of manual of foundational activities	15	3 weeks
Review of manual of foundational activities		2 weeks
Update of manual of foundational activities	4	1 week
Drafting of navigation tools	10	2 weeks
Review of navigation tools		2 weeks
Update of navigation tools	3	1 week
Develop and conduct online ToT in 3 locations	8	2 weeks
Piloting in 3 locations		25 weeks
Feedback from pilot locations	9	2 weeks
Update based on feedback from piloting	15	4 weeks
	92	
Post-consultancy		4 months
Sign-off and finalisation process		8 weeks
Translation into French, Spanish & Arabic and publication		6 weeks
Launch		2 weeks