# FACILITATING CHILD-LED RESEARCH STUDIES IN SOMALIA AND SUDAN

# Terms of Reference

## Introduction

Save the Children (SC) is the world's leading independent organization for children. As part of the organisation’s contribution towards ensuring every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation, Save the Children has been working with armed forces in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1998 and with the African Union (AU) for the last 10 years to promote the rights of children in conflicts, post-conflict, and protracted political emergency situations. With support from SIDA, Save the Children has worked towards strengthening child protection in African Union peace support operations since 2013. The engagement has borne results including the development and adoption of a harmonized and standardized curriculum and standards on child protection and child rights which is currently being rolled out by the East African Standby Force (EASF), and troop contributing countries such as Uganda, Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire.

Save the Children in collaboration with partners continues to augment efforts that protect girls and boys in conflict settings. These interventions aim at strengthening the capacity of peace support operations actors to deliver their protection mandate and ensure girls and boys affected by armed conflicts and protracted political disputes enjoy their rights.

The ‘Integrating Child Protection within the African Peace and Security Architecture’ (ICPAPSA) project focuses on four key objectives:

1. To enhance the commitment and capacity to prevent and respond to violence against girls and boys within the AU Peace and Security Department (AU PSD), East Africa Standby Force (EASF), ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), and Member States.
2. To institute and monitor a functional accountability framework on child protection within the AU PSD, EASF, ESF, and troop contributing countries.
3. To increase knowledge, evidence and collective understanding on child rights and child protection issues within peace support operations.
4. To improve participation among girls and boys affected by armed conflict to contribute to decisions and processes of the AU, Regional Mechanisms/Bodies, and Member States.

To achieve this, Save the Children collaborates with stakeholders within the AU, Regional Bodies and Regional Mechanisms in East and West Africa, and National Armed Forces.

## Context

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) entered into force in 1999. This was after AU Member States took a unanimous stance on the applicability of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to children in Africa on various socio-economic, cultural and developmental diversities.

Like the UNCRC, the ACRWC defines the full spectrum of children’s civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the obligations of duty bearers to uphold those rights, the principal duty bearer being the State. The Charter makes it possible for girls and boys to assert their rights through domestic judicial or administrative proceedings. The Charter’s articles are applicable in all contexts including situations of conflict. Article 22 of the Charter is specific to conflicts in stating that no child should participate in armed conflict. The Charter establishes the African Committee for the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) as the body responsible for monitoring its implementation and ensuring the protection of the rights contained in it. On the definition of a child, the UNCRC defines a child as every human being below the age of 18 years ‘unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier’[[1]](#footnote-1), where the law referred to in the CRC includes international treaties and domestic legislations specific to children. The ACRWC defines a child more concisely as ‘every human being below the age of 18 years’.[[2]](#footnote-2) This has a significant difference when discussing the age of conscription or engagement in armed forces.

Despite this framework, girls and boys caught in conflict on the continent continue to be subject to rights violations including violence that is both incidental and targeted. As highlighted in the *Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in Africa* commissioned by the ACERWC[[3]](#footnote-3), girls and boys living in conflict contexts are more likely to be separated from their families, sexually assaulted, subject to early marriage, maimed, killed, recruited by force, or die early as a result of disease or malnutrition. At the same time, they are less likely to attend school. Girls and boys not only have to live with the physical and psychological scars from their experience but often with social alienation particularly those who have been associated with armed groups or those who have survived sexual violence. Conflict often has different effects on girls and boys. For example, boys are often more vulnerable to recruitment as combatants by armed groups whilst girls are often more vulnerable to sexual violence.

Despite widespread condemnation and mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable, such grave violations of children’s rights continue. In the annex to the UN Secretary General’s 2014 Report on Children and Armed Conflict[[4]](#footnote-4) listing parties responsible for grave violations against children, armed groups on the continent are overrepresented. 15 of the 28 groups listed are located in Africa, 5 of which are national armed forces.

There is growing intolerance globally and on the continent against acts of violence committed against children in conflict situations and in particular against violence committed by peacekeepers. The UN Secretary General is vociferous in his condemnation and he is exploring ways to end impunity through, for example, naming and shaming countries that fail to take action.[[5]](#footnote-5) His dismissal of the Head of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic following repeated allegations of violations by peacekeepers sent a clear signal. In 2015, the UN Security Council demonstrated its continued engagement on the issue by adopting Resolution 2225.[[6]](#footnote-6) The resolution requested the Secretary General to include in the annexes to his report on children and armed conflict those parties to armed conflict that engage, in contravention of applicable international law, in patterns of abduction of children in situations of armed conflict. In line with the priorities of this Swedish funded project, it also called for mandatory pre-deployment training of peacekeepers on child protection and sexual violence. This will need high-level political commitment that is driven by evidence from grassroots action, which this project would endeavour to undertake.

The AU has taken the issue seriously with the appointment of a Special Envoy to the Chairperson of the AU Commission for Women, Peace and Security. A Special Envoy on Children and Armed Conflict is to be appointed as well following endorsement by the Heads of State and Government during the AU Assembly. The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) has to date held five open sessions focusing on children associated with armed conflict. It is cooperating with the ACERWC to make Member States more accountable for their implementation of the African Charter.

African troops already form the bulk of peace support troops currently engaged in the UN missions on the African continent, and in one AU mandated mission (AMISOM in Somalia) and two AU authorised missions (the fight against the Lord’s Resistance Army in central Africa and Boko Haram in Nigeria and surrounding countries). By the weight of their numbers and their engagements, they clearly have a significant effect on the lives of girls and boys in the contexts in which they operate. As peacekeepers, they are mandated to protect children from violence in conformity with Security Council resolutions on children in armed conflict, country specific resolutions and the respective mandates. Ensuring that they have the necessary capacity and resources to implement this mandate effectively has a large potential impact on protecting children from violence in the continent’s ongoing and future conflicts.

## Background to the child participation component

It is encouraging that children and armed conflict are on the African political agenda and various mechanisms are in place to prevent and respond to violence against children affected by armed conflict. However, the reality is that the children whom they are designed to protect rarely inform such mechanisms. Consequently, decisions, policies and processes that do not involve children in their design can have gaps. In worst cases, these policies can actually work against the best interests of the child, further exposing girls and boys to violations especially where they do not consider the intricate differences in dimensions of impact on girls and boys. Simply put, decisions, policies and processes affecting children are more likely to be effective in their intent if children are involved in their design, implementation and monitoring.

Currently when children are engaged in processes it is often tokenistic without clear mechanisms for them to influence decisions, policy and practice. Such engagement is often not in line with best practice in ensuring that children are properly informed, that they are willing participants, and that the experience of different groups of children differentiated by for example sex, ability, age etc. are considered. Paternalistic attitudes and lack of knowledge on how to engage children effectively contribute to this.

Save the Children’s vast and diverse experience on child participation shows that girls and boys bring alternative perspectives to issues affecting them that have not been considered by adults. Their participation leads to better decision making, policies and practice that more effectively address their experience. The child participation work under the ICPAPSA project aims at improving decision making policy and practice by strengthening the ability of peace support actors to engage children and strengthening the capacity of children to effectively engage with peace support actors. For 2019, the work will focus on advocacy processes and activities on children affected by armed conflict in various target countries, research studies to be conducted in collaboration with children on specific issues affecting children living in conflict contexts, as well as capacity building of various stakeholders on child participation following development and adoption of the Child Participation Guidelines.

In recent years, Save the Children has been at the forefront of promoting child participation in its programing to improve program quality and enhance accountability. In this mission, Save the Children has given children an opportunity to take part in the various stages of programming such as designing, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning. To better understand the lives of children and the problems they face, Save the Children has invested in child-led research. With directional support from technical staff, children carry out a research activity of their own choosing. The program team then utilizes findings from such activities to design interventions that are aimed at making children’s lives better.

Child-led research is a participatory project that aims to engage with children and young people to conduct pieces of research on related issues that matter to them. This methodology provides opportunities for children and young people to raise their voices and contribute their views and results of their research. Child-led research also provides children and young people with new avenues to influence decision-making by using their findings to put pressure on stakeholders and decision-makers on issues that are relevant to them. This model promotes a shift and change of focus as children and young people undertake their own research projects rather than being the subjects of the research. Throughout this process, young researchers are able to collect specific data on any particular issue that they want to explore by using the basic research questions: what, why and how. Experiences from the field have shown that this methodology is a feasible approach to bringing children and young people’s views to the public debate in order to contribute to addressing the issues that they want to raise.

For the children in Somalia and Sudan (focus countries for the child-led research), this is to enable them to bring out pertinent issues affecting their wellbeing, especially whilst living in conflict contexts. Through the project, children will be able to speak for themselves and explicitly share what they perceive to have a negative influence on their lives. It will give them the opportunity to clearly express their feelings and share the opportunities and challenges that prevent them from attaining their full potential. The initiative prepares the children as tomorrow’s researchers and community leaders by establishing networks among themselves and interacting with each other to share ideas while also giving them the opportunity to develop their capacity in involving research for reporting child wellbeing issues. This work is envisaged to build on existing initiatives of working with children as researchers, especially in the Somalia country office which has been implementing a community child researcher project since 2017.

## Objectives of the consultancy

The purpose of the consultancy is to facilitate child-led research studies with children in Somalia and Sudan using participatory research approaches appropriate for children, and produce narrative reports based on the findings and experiences collected and shared by the children. The research studies will focus on education under attack, and the effect this has had on children and their schooling. The research will be conducted in 2 selected areas of Somalia and Sudan (to be determined in collaboration with the country offices).

Through the use of various tools and methodologies, the consultancy firm should be able to facilitate the child researchers varying by age, sex, ability, and other factors with ease, ensure maximum and effective participation of the child researchers, as well as extract and analyse key findings and recommendations from the research studies which can be used for advocacy and campaigning purposes.

**The specific results are:**

* Comprehensive and detailed views and opinions gathered from children by the child researchers through the use of various tools and methodologies.
* Analysis of findings from the research studies.
* Narrative reports are developed based on the findings and recommendations from the research studies, packaged for advocacy and campaigning purposes.

**Key Tasks**

* Undertake a desk review of education under attack in Somalia and Sudan, how schools have been affected by armed conflict, and how this has affected children’s schooling cycle. Relevant documents shall be shared by the project team.
* Travel to Somalia and Sudan with the project team.
* Assist in training of child researchers identified by the country offices on qualitative research skills, data collection, documentation, and psychosocial first aid – the project team will develop training materials and share with the consultant for their review.
* Facilitate child-led research studies with the child researchers in collaboration with the project team, through using various tools and methods to ensure maximum participation.
* Supervise documentation of detailed views and opinions gathered during the research studies capturing the key experiences, needs and desires of children.
* Analyse findings from the research studies.
* Extract key messages that can be used for advocacy and campaigning purposes.

**Key Deliverables**

Expected deliverables will include narrative reports produced in English and Arabic, targeted mainly at national governments, the AU, ACERWC and other regional bodies to highlight the voices of children affected by armed conflict on education under attack, the key challenges children face regarding this issue, and key recommendations that they would highlight.

1. **Timeframe**

**Research in Somalia – June 2019:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverables**  | **No. of Working days** |
| Undertake a desk review of education under attack in Somalia | 10  |
| Training of child researchers on qualitative research skills, data collection, and documentation | 5 |
| Facilitate child-led research with child researchers in two selected areas of Somalia – collation and documentation of findings  | 15  |
| Analyse findings gathered during the research  | 5 |
| Develop narrative report based on findings and recommendations | 15 |
| **Total Number of Days** | **50** |

**Research in Sudan – July 2019:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverables**  | **No. of Working days** |
| Undertake a desk review of education under attack in Sudan | 10  |
| Training of child researchers on qualitative research skills, data collection, and documentation | 5 |
| Facilitate child-led research with child researchers in two selected areas of Somalia – collation and documentation of findings  | 15  |
| Analyse findings gathered during the research  | 5 |
| Develop narrative report based on findings and recommendations | 15 |
| **Total Number of Days** | **50** |

## Consultant profile

The consultant or firm must demonstrate substantial knowledge and experience in child rights and participatory approaches used with children in armed conflict contexts. He/she must have experience in designing and conducting research and participatory processes in humanitarian settings.

The consultant or firm must have experience in all aspects of carrying out research including planning research, outlining and writing reports, reviewing documents, facilitating child researchers, analysing large amounts of material and data, and extracting key messages which can be used for advocacy and campaigning purposes.

This consultancy is open to individuals and firms who possess the following requirements:

* Substantial working experience in participatory research with children especially in conflict contexts, using child participation approaches and methodologies.
* Capacity to gather and critically analyse large amounts of material and data.
* Extensive knowledge of the political and humanitarian context in the Horn of Africa region (specific working experience in Somalia and Sudan an added advantage).
* Ability and willingness to travel within the Horn of Africa region.
* Demonstrated experience in carrying out research and/or similar assessments, especially on issues of education under attack and children’s rights issues more broadly.
* Experience of writing reports of similar assignments characterised by ease of readability across mixed audiences.
* Excellent writing skills in both English and Arabic would be an asset.

The consultant will be commissioned by the Regional Programming Unit (RPU) which is based in the East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) in Nairobi, and will work with the project team to the successful completion of this assignment.

# Remuneration

Daily rates will be determined after discussions with the consultant. Save the Children ESARO will cover for the consultant’s air tickets on economy class to relevant field sites, accommodation, airport transfers, and other incidentals incurred in the field. All other costs shall be borne directly by the consultant. Remuneration will be based on submission of deliverables. Payment will be made as per the agreed schedule. Taxation laws for Kenya will apply on the overall consultancy fee.

# Ethics, Safeguarding and Code of Conduct

As the consultant or firm will be working on behalf of Save the Children, they will be required to sign and adhere to the Child Safeguarding Policy and ethical guidelines. Note that background checks will be undertaken on all applicants.

As regards the documentation, the title rights, copyrights and all other rights of whatever nature in any materials used or generated under the provisions of these services will exclusively be vested with Save the Children International East and Southern Africa Regional Office.

## Submitting expressions of interest

Interested individuals or firms must submit a technical and financial proposal including:

* A cover letter introducing the consultant and how the skills and competencies above are met, with concrete examples as appropriate.
* An expression of interest including interpretation of the TOR, proposed methodology, time schedule and work plan for carrying out the consultancy.
* A CV detailing relevant skills and experience, including 3 contactable referees
* Reasonable budget breakdown and cost consideration commensurate to expected deliverables.

Applicants should be available for immediate engagement

**Applications** should be submitted to: esaro.procurement@savethechildren.org

Save the Children East and Southern Africa Regional Office by **Friday, 17th May 2019**

1. Article 1, CRC [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Article 2, ACRWC. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ACERWC, June 2015, *Inception Report - A Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in Africa* commissioned by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. UN Secretary General Report on ‘Children and Armed Conflict’. A/68/878–S /2014/339 of 15 May 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Guardian, *Ban Ki-moon says sexual abuse in UN peacekeeping is 'a cancer in our system*', 14 August 2015, online at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/14/ban-ki-moon-says-sexual-abuse-in-un-peacekeeping-is-a-cancer-in-our-system [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. UNSC Resolution 2225 available online at: <http://watchlist.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/UNSC-2225-2015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)