

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Consultancy - Gender and Disability Assessment

NRC is looking for a consultant to conduct a Gender and Disability assessment.

1. Background

1.1 NRC in Syria

In the middle East NRC has over 3000 staff dedicated to assisting people affected by conflict in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine. Its humanitarian interventions are based upon its programming expertise in the Core Competencies of Shelter, Education, Water and Sanitation Hygiene, Food security along with information Counselling and legal Assistance (ICLA) to forcibly displaced people.

The NRC Syria Response is operating since 2013 and currently employs 49 international and 335 national staff. With regard to education, we ensure education for children and youth is prioritised, even in the most difficult circumstances. We work alongside communities to:

- create opportunities for children to reconnect with learning through formal education pathways and self-learning initiatives
- offer emergency education recreation and psycho- social activities
- support the professional development of teachers
- provide skills training for Syrian youth

1.2 The Syrian crisis – impact on education

Around 2.45 million children (aged five to 17 years) are out of school and 1.3 million are at risk of dropping out.¹ More than one in three schools are damaged or destroyed, while others are used for purposes not related to education such as shelter for displaced persons. Schools in IDP/returnee receiving communities have limited absorption capacity for newly arriving students, causing overcrowding, while costs, psychological stress and shortage of personnel are further drivers of out of school rates. Early marriage, particularly of adolescent girls, frequently leads to withdrawal from education and increased isolation. Boys often drop out of school to become breadwinners and face exploitative child labour, as well as recruitment into parties to the conflict.

Teaching capacity remains overstretched. Over 140,000 teachers and education personnel are no longer in their teaching posts. The remaining are overwhelmed, resulting in an overall poor quality of education. Quality of teaching is key to students' performance, and teachers' capacity is fundamental to children's experience of a quality education. Reliance on unskilled and unspecialized teachers with limited financial remuneration is impeding learning outcomes of students in public schools, with important disparities among regions and between IDPs and host communities.

Distances travelled to access learning are increasing. Many communities do not have functioning transportation services and most families do not have the resources to access the services that are available. Children face multiple

¹ OCHA (2020) 'Humanitarian Needs Overview'

risks whilst walking to school, including gender-based violence and recruitment. Barriers to accessing quality education have led young Syrians to lack foundational learning and vocational, life and employability skills required for transition to livelihoods. The learning gap of children and youth, if not addressed, is expected to have a long-term impact on their income potential, exacerbating a cycle of poverty for households and communities. Protection risks faced by children and youth in Syria include family-based violence, conscription and recruitment into armed groups, early marriage, abuse and neglect. Disruption of social networks, combined with lack of dedicated youth services, has left young people without opportunities to build relations with their peers, express themselves, or access psychosocial support services. In a system that is stretched and under resourced, the most vulnerable children are those with disabilities. Previously available specialised education opportunities and personnel have dramatically or even disappeared in some areas, resulting in increased isolation and discrimination.

2. Objectives

The consultant will be engaged by the NRC Syria Response Office (SRO) to conduct a Gender and Disability assessment that will inform NRC programmes targeting secondary school age students and youth in non-government controlled areas of Syria. In particular the objectives of the assessment are:

- Identify barriers facing children, adolescents and youth with disabilities when accessing education
- Identify barriers facing girls and women when secondary and youth education (physical barriers, cultural and social)
- Identify areas where NRC interventions can contribute to eliminating barriers

3. Deliverables

- Inception report detailing proposed methodology and overview of secondary data review
- Development and translation of data collection tools
- Supervision and coordination of data collection
- Final report detailing analyzed findings and recommendations

4. Methodology

A mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative) that maximizes the use of secondary data is recommended. Where direct data collection is needed, access to communities directly by the consultant should be prioritized where possible and depending on mobility and network of consultant, minimizing reliance on NRC teams for data collection. The consultant needs to detail whether they have their own teams/partners within Syria to implement this work or how these methodologies will be put in place. Experience in training and monitoring teams remotely is recommended with an ability to travel and work in the Middle East Region, including Syria. Possible methodologies would include but not be limited to focus groups, surveys, community mapping, and key informant interviews. Data collection tools should include qualitative data focused on perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that highlight community and household dynamics. Classification of men and women with disabilities should utilize the Washington Group Questions, with support from NRC in identifying community members where possible.

5. Criteria

- Master Degree in International Development/Social Science/Education/Inclusive Education
- Demonstrated writing skills
- Experience in needs assessment design and reporting
- Experience in education related research, including assessments
- Knowledge of and experience working with NRC Education programs in the Middle East
- Experience working with teams in complex, volatile and remotely managed contexts
- Fluency in English and Arabic written and verbal
- Knowledge of the Syrian context

- Ability to work under pressure, independently and with limited supervision
- Experience using Microsoft, Mobenzi, Kobo programs and other software applications

6. Timeline

The exercise will take place between August and September 2020, anticipating a minimum of 25 working days.

7. Application

The application should include:

- Motivation letter
- Profile/CV highlighting the consultant's qualifications and relevant experience
- One examples of similar 1) tools and 2)reports developed under previous assignments
- A detailed workplan based on the deliverables listed in the TOR
- Two references who can be contacted if the application proceeds to the final selection stage
- Price quote for the daily rate in USD

8. Travel

See specifications in the methodology chapter above.