

RFP: Feasibility study for providing education to out of school orphaned girls and girls with disabilities in Afghanistan

About Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) Fund

The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) was launched by the UK Government (DFID) in 2012 as a 12-year commitment to reach the most marginalised girls in the world, and is the largest global fund dedicated to girls' education. DFID is committed to ensuring millions of girls in some of the poorest countries, including girls who have disabilities or are at risk of being left behind, receive a quality education. Through the GEC, DFID aims to transform the lives of over one million of the world's most marginalised girls through quality education and learning. Access to a good quality education and learning opportunities will empower these girls to secure a better future for themselves, their families and their communities. Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) is a new initiative that was announced in July 2016 as part of the GEC. This initiative supports interventions providing literacy, numeracy and skills relevant for life and work to highly marginalised, adolescent girls who have never attended or have already dropped out of school.

About World University Service of Canada (WUSC)

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a leading Canadian international development organisation focusing in three programmatic areas: Economic Opportunities, Education, and Empowerment. Our vision is a better world for youth - a world where all young people, especially women, are empowered to secure a good quality of life for stronger families and communities. WUSC currently works in 25 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, with an annual budget of approximately CAD \$45 million. We have a staff of over 90 people in our Ottawa office, and over 200 people overseas implementing 16 development projects in collaboration with donors such as Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the African Development Bank. Globally, we work with a network of higher education institutions, civil society organisations, private sector partners, professionals, students, volunteers, faculty and community leaders that work with us to achieve our mission.

Purpose of the Study

With funding from the LNGB Window, WUSC seeks to procure a research and consulting firm to conduct a feasibility study to better understand the demographics, catchment area, needs and challenges of orphaned and unattended or marginalized girls in Afghanistan, including those with disabilities, particularly with respect to having access to and receiving a quality education. A secondary focus of this study will be to include an estimate of the prevalence of out of school girls, in selected provinces, in alignment with the LNGB Level 3 marginalisation criteria [See *attached LNGB definition document*]. This includes girls facing multiple forms of discrimination that are at high risk of dropping out of school / have dropped out of school and are unlikely to transition forward in their education, skills development or employment without intensive support. The results of this study will assist the Government of Afghanistan and DFID to develop a program to support these marginalised girls.

Background

LNGB beneficiaries include 10 to 19 year old out of school girls (OOSGs) who have never been to school or have dropped out of school and do not have a functional level of literacy and numeracy (Level 2 or 3 - Defined as harder or hardest to reach and facing complex, persistent, social and economic barriers to education that may require bespoke solutions). It also supports projects that are working with girls who are classified as level 3 marginalisation. This includes girls facing multiple forms of discrimination who are unlikely to transition forward in their education, skills development or employment without intensive support. The focus of this study will include orphan and unattended girls. This should also include a sub-group of girls with disabilities.

Need to educate and support highly marginalized girls

Currently, no large-scale project is addressing the needs of highly vulnerable girls in Afghanistan. In addition, large data gaps exist in the demographics, spread and concentration of orphaned and unattended girls, especially girls with disabilities. Furthermore, the specific barriers and pathways to success in attaining a quality education have not been studied closely. This study will address this challenge and better position LNGB fund grantees to address the needs of this target group and to develop a sustainable approach for relevant line ministries, facilitating sustainability beyond the project.

Alarming high number of girls out of school

Existing data shows that an estimated 3.7 million children in Afghanistan are out of school, and 60% of these are girls¹. Government statistics also indicate that in some provinces, the percentage of out of school girls is as high as 93%². Some factors that contribute to this include: the poor security situation in some provinces; lack of girls-only schools; lack of sanitation facilities and boundary walls in schools; poor knowledge of inclusive education and student centered learning approaches; prevailing socio-cultural norms and expectations; and forced and early marriages.

Lack of data on orphans and unattended girls in the country

In Afghanistan, an orphan is defined as a child without a father. By that grouping, estimates of orphans in the country are above 250,000³. Of this, at least 60,000 orphans live in Kabul alone. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) estimates only 9,500 children in orphanages, of which only 3,000 are girls. Official data on the number of orphans with disabilities attending these orphanages is unknown, as well as the services provided for them. Currently, there are over 63 orphanages operating across 23 provinces, 22 are operated by the government while the rest are privately run.⁴ In the coming year the government intends to build 13 new orphanages. Typically, these orphanages either provide education on-site or facilitate education for the orphan children by connecting them to neighboring schools. Where orphanages are managed privately, they will have an MoU with MoLSA, which will in turn have an MoU with the

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education>

² Afghanistan living conditions survey 2012 - 2013

³ Directorate of Orphanage, MoLSAMD

⁴ Directorate of Orphanage, MoLSAMD

Ministry of Education (MoE), so that the orphanages deliver government curriculum and therefore graduates leave with MoE endorsed qualifications.

Lack of data on girls with disabilities

Additionally, data from the National Afghan Disability Survey 2005 show that at least 5% of people in the country live with a disability and approximately 73% of children with disabilities are out of school in Afghanistan.

Intended Outcomes

The data from this study will be used to:

- 1) Build the overall body of knowledge related to orphaned and out of school, orphaned unattended and marginalized girls, including girls with disabilities in Afghanistan;
- 2) Guide the development of initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education, learning outcomes, and transition to higher education and employment opportunities for orphaned girls, including those with disabilities;
- 3) Strengthen coordination between key actors at the government level - MoE, MoLSA, and Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled, to ensure that Government of Afghanistan is increasingly equipped to safeguard and support these highly marginalized children, and girls in particular.

Key Questions

- What national and stakeholder-level data exists around districts/provinces with potentially large concentrations of orphans and unattended children not currently in school, owing to conflict, migration, internal displacement, or other factors?
- What is the current nationwide status of private and government-run orphanages with respect to a) accessibility; b) appropriate learning environments for adolescent girls; c) absorption capacity and demand; d) teacher capacities and institutional needs?
- What are the current and primary pathways and barriers to OOS orphan and unattended girls' access to accredited education? Diagram potential pathways (successful and unsuccessful) to this particular group's enhanced learning, and transition to higher academic levels, or employment (including access to civil documentation).
- What are possible and appropriate mechanisms for ethical transition of out of school orphan and unattended girls into accredited education, and the major challenges within these different transition possibilities - including orphanages' schooling, CBE schools, ALP programs or government schools providing inclusive education? Comparing different approaches, e.g. direct government intervention, NGO partnerships, or private sector program delivery, what are the costs of reaching adolescent orphan and unattended girls, providing them with quality education and achieving high learning

outcomes and future transitions? What are the trade-offs of the different approaches in terms of costs, enrollment, learning, transitions and long-term sustainability?

- What evidence around effective education strategies for orphans and unattended girls is available from in-country implementers, specifically with regards to a) supports needed for the enrollment and retention of adolescent or pre-adolescent orphan girls in school; b) supports needed for their academic progression and learning, including support needed to address current curriculum strengths and gaps for this target group?
- Following from the above, and to address in an annex to the main study: What are strategy ideas for systemic supports needed to increase this target group's access, retention, and transition in the current education system? What are the practical recommendations of sustainable and feasible approaches for the inclusion of orphans and unattended girls in government schools, orphanages and/or CBEs? What are areas for further data and research needed to support future project implementation?

Expected Tasks

1) The contracted firm will be expected to conduct a review of contextual and global evidence on supporting orphans, unattended children and children with disabilities (particularly girls) to access formal education and transition forward. High-level best practices as well as specific recommendations tailored to Afghanistan must be presented. This will include a review of all current and recent programming in the country specifically focused on educating these children. This should include a broad comparative analysis of the costs of different projects that aim to reach orphans including government-run initiatives, NGO-run initiatives and private sector delivery. It is expected that this review will include some analysis of the trade-offs concerned with different modalities in terms of costs, education delivery, education access for marginalized girls as well as transition to higher education and / or employment.

2- The contracted firm will be expected to conduct a geographical mapping exercise of orphans and unattended children in Afghanistan - all level 3 marginalisation. This should include a broad national-level mapping of the target girls. This could include engagement with ministries, Afghan Red Crescent Society with respect to benefits and housing of orphans with mothers, NGOs, community organisations and private partners on all available data as well as desk reviews of available data. It is expected that most or all government and private orphanages will be engaged as part of this mapping to assess absorption capacity, accessibility and further needs. WUSC recommends a quantitative mapping of these issues. In addition, the study should identify the most high need provinces with respect to OOSC orphans and conduct a more detailed mapping in 5 of them, with the approval of WUSC and the Government of Afghanistan. This will include a deeper engagement at the community level and with provincial ministries, NGOs and private organisations. No household survey is expected at this stage, however, some community engagement and data gathering exercises would be preferred. Throughout the mapping process the contracted firm will be expected to coordinate with the MoE and the MoLSA in order to ensure alignment with relevant mapping standards and existing evidence.

3) The contracted firm will be expected to provide data on the specific barriers preventing OOS orphans and unattended girls, including those girls with disabilities and other level 3 marginalized girls from enrolling in formal / non-formal schooling, regularly attending and transitioning to higher education or decent employment. Recommendations on possible pathways to improve education and transitions for these girls should also be provided, including policy changes, infrastructure improvement, coordination and community engagement strategies, and changes in curriculum and pedagogical styles. WUSC recommends a qualitative mapping of barriers to education access and achievement for orphan and disabled girls, and other level 3 marginalized children.

4) The contracted firm will be expected to conduct a brief policy review of MoE and MoLSA policies around safeguarding, inclusive education, and education programming. In addition this high-level policy analysis should include how the findings of the study and current context should shape sustainability plans for future implementers and improve strategic planning and governance around education for OOS orphan and unattended girls.

5) The contracted firm will conduct a broad desk review and rapid assessment on the use of the Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP) curriculum within Community Based Education (CBE) in Afghanistan. This review on existing ALP curriculum packages (some used within CBE, some withn EiE, and others, within informal education modalities) should include identification of specific gaps that must be addressed when using ALP curriculum for OOS and unattended girls, and highlight any pedagogical and curriculum adaptations considered important in the current context and keeping in mind global best practices with this target group. The firm would encourage more specific feedback on how to improve the current ALP curriculum and programming to further facilitate learning, inclusion and transition for OOS orphan and unattended girls.

6) The contracted firm will produce a detailed report including the above and provide key recommendations on how best to enroll, educate and transition this target group, including key stakeholder involvement and roles.

Deliverable Timelines

No.	Deliverable	Timeline
1	Inception report, inclusive of approach to working with vulnerable adults and children, risk mitigations matrix, ethical considerations, intended outcomes of desk review, and the study design, tools and questionnaires, and activities timeline	Week 1 [Duration: 1 Week]
2	Inception Report Revised and Submitted	Week 1 - 2 [Duration: 1 Week]
3	Initial desk review - best practices in education for out of	Week 2 - 5

	school, marginalized, orphan girls and girls with disabilities	[Duration: 2 Weeks]
4	National-level mapping and key recommendations - Initial Findings, Key Data and Demographics Presented	Week 5 - 7 [Duration: 3 Weeks]
5	Provincial-level mapping and key recommendations - Initial Findings, Key Data and Demographics Presented	Week 8 - 10 [Duration: 3 Weeks]
6	ALP & CBE Curriculum Review and key recommendations - Final Report Submitted	Week 9 - 11 [Duration: 3 Weeks]
7	Policy paper annex, inclusive of executive summary of above study, geographical and visual key findings summaries, then study-based recommendations to donors, implementers, and government on system level sustainability potentials and modalities for OOSC orphans' and unattended girls learning and transition (after main report finalized)	Week 8 - 12 [Duration: 5 Weeks]
8	Information sharing workshop with Government of Afghanistan for final study stakeholder inputs, followed by Power-point presentation that outlines key finding and recommendations from the study to be presented to the Government of Afghanistan and DFID Afghanistan. Recommendations from this session to be drafted into a report and submitted to WUSC.	Week 12 [Duration: 1 Week]

Suggested Study Methodology

The suggested methodology for this study is presented below. It should be noted that WUSC expects the all submitted bids will include necessary amendments to this methodology as deemed appropriate by the supplier.

WUSC recommends that a mixed methods approach using triangulation of existing data sources and stakeholder data around orphans' concentrations, and geographical mapping should be attempted insofar as possible at all levels of the feasibility study. Where appropriate, geographical mapping with a quantitative approach should be used to include sample demographics as well as key trends, barriers and pathways for success for the girls.

A strong qualitative component is also highly recommended including engagement with key stakeholders such as 1) MoLSA; 2) MoE; 3) NGOs working with orphans; 4) Out of school children and in-school orphans; 5) educators working with orphans or unattended children; 6) orphanage administrators, public and private; 7) Afghan Red Crescent Society with respect to benefits and housing of orphans with mothers 8) in-country experts on ALP curriculum.

Eligibility criteria

All firms must meet the mandatory eligibility criteria to bid for this contract. Interested bidders will be requested to submit proof of eligibility prior to being invited to apply. Furthermore, further shortlisting may be conducted on the basis of the additional eligibility criteria to limit the number of invited bidders.

Eligibility Assessment			
No.	Evaluation Criteria	Met	Not Met
Mandatory Criteria			
1	The firm is required to have at least 2 years of successfully completed research experience in Afghanistan. The firm must have an office and staff presence in Afghanistan. Global experience and team is an asset.		
2	Must have conducted reviews, research, analysis on the education sector in Afghanistan. Experience with evaluations or research on the local education context is mandatory, especially with Out of School Girls. At least one dedicated education expert on team is required. Global experience and team is an asset.		
3	Must have a local safeguarding policy and research ethics framework in line with global practices and local context of Afghanistan. At least one dedicated safeguarding expert on staff is required. Global experience and team is an asset. [Submission and broad review of policies will qualify candidates for eligibility. Further extensive due diligence will determine weighted score].		
4	Must have conducted gender analyses, research or drafted reports on Afghanistan as understanding of local gender context is mandatory. Experience with research on adolescent girls is an asset. At least one dedicated gender expert on team is required. Global experience and team is an asset.		
Additional Eligibility Criteria			
5	Must demonstrate a national presence or ability to conduct research nationally, such as multiple offices, enumerator resource pools at province level, or large staff or partnership agreements with other research firms.		
6	Asset to have local experience working with research or evaluation on vulnerable and marginalized groups including but not limited to girls, people with disabilities and children in Afghanistan.		

Scoring Criteria

Technical Proposal		
No.	Evaluation Criteria	Score
1	The firm must demonstrate between 3 to 15 years of research experience and relevant team qualifications in Afghanistan. This should include details on successfully completed research projects; qualifications of lead team members and consultants; national reach; and details of local country offices. Global experience and teams are an asset.	10%
2	The firm must demonstrate experience conducting research and reviews on education issues in Afghanistan. This may include research on education particularly for girls, out of school children, ALP in Afghanistan, Education in emergencies and Afghan education curriculum. Research experience must go beyond simple desk reviews, and must include primary research experience such as surveys, mappings or evaluations. Global experience and teams are an asset.	15%
3	The firm must demonstrate expertise in gender and disability inclusion in the context of Afghanistan. This could include gender and disability analysis and reporting, staff with relevant expertise, and successfully completed research on issues related to inclusion.	10%
4	The firm must demonstrate that sufficient safeguarding policies are in place to protect vulnerable children during the research study. As a minimum, this should include evidence that the organisation has 1) adequate policies for safeguarding of children and adults at risk; 2) safe recruitment practices; 3) clear investigation and disciplinary procedures and procedures for supporting survivors; 4) that staff have received mandatory safeguarding training; 5) and that the organisation has in place a senior level designated safeguarding officer with the capacity to manage cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, and harassment and bullying. <i>[See GEC 14 Minimum Safeguards Document attached].</i>	10%
5	The firm must demonstrate a clear methodology and realistic timelines for achieving the tasks set out in the ToRs. This should include details on the approach to be used and rationale, the number of staff, a weekly workplan and contingency plans in case of security related challenges.	35%
Financial Proposal		
6	Cost of Proposal. This should reflect justifiable local costs, include all taxes and should represent good value for money.	20%
Total		100%

Budget

The contract has a budget ceiling of 165,000 GBP. Any bid exceeding this limit will be disqualified. It should be noted that bids within this amount must demonstrate a high value for money and should include all taxes and local fees.

Format

An eligibility criteria questionnaire, technical bid template and commercial bid template with selected headings has been provided for use by intended bidders. Please only use this template to submit your application. Please note that full proposal length should not exceed 22 pages (single sides) excluding annexes, contents page and cover page. All parties must submit an eligibility criteria questionnaire, technical bid and a financial bid as separate documents to be eligible for consideration. No financial information must be included in the technical bid, this will lead to disqualification.

To Apply

All interested suppliers should email an Expression of Interest to procurement@wusc.ca latest by **27th March 2019** in order to receive the detailed Tender Pack.

Interested bidders may also submit queries to procurement@wusc.ca at any time and responses will be mailed out collectively to all interested suppliers.

Proposals must be emailed to procurement@wusc.ca by **9AM EST on 10th April 2019**. Late submissions will be disqualified. All parties must submit an eligibility criteria questionnaire, technical bid and a financial bid as separate documents to be eligible for consideration. No financial information must be included in the technical bid, this will lead to disqualification.