**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Situation Analysis on the active drivers, and trends of child recruitment and assessing prevention and response measures of child recruitment in Blue Nile State**

# **Project Summary**

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| Type of evaluation | Situational Analysis |
| Name of the project | Improving access to and utilization of integrated, life-saving health, nutrition, disaster preparedness, protection, basic needs, and livelihoods services for the most vulnerable IDPs, refugees and host communities (24600214) |
| Project Start and End dates | Start date: 01 May 2022  End date: 31 August 2024 |
| Project duration | 28 months |
| Project locations: | South Kordofan, West and Central Darfur, Blue Nile, and Khartoum |
| Thematic areas | Health, Nutrition, Food security and livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction / Disaster Preparedness, Protection |
| Donor | ECHO – European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (European Commission) |
| Key stakeholders | Government officials  Civil societies  Community members (across ages, gender and physical ability)  Humanitarian community (national and international)  Public service workers based in affected communities (teachers, nurses etc)  Relevant authority staff at locality and state level |
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| Estimated beneficiaries | 251 295 refugees, IDPs and host community members |
| Overall objective of the project | Crisis-affected vulnerable children and their families, including persons with disabilities, have improved access to lifesaving and life sustaining health, nutrition and protection services as well as basic needs assistance and disaster preparedness through integrated interventions in South Kordofan, West and Central Darfur, Blue Nile, and Khartoum |

1. **Context information**

Save the Children (SC) has been working in Sudan since 1984 to deliver programs to respond to the enormous needs of children, their families and communities. SC currently has an operational presence across ten states of Khartoum, Blue Nile, South, West, and North Kordofan, North, West & Central Darfur, Sennar, and Red Sea states in Sudan and enjoys a good working relationship with communities and other stakeholders. SC has demonstrated experience in responding to emergencies, including disease outbreaks, natural disasters and conflict-induced crises in 2023 in core thematic areas. The violence and power struggle broke out on 15 April 2023 in Sudan’s capital of Khartoum between the two main factions of the ruling military: the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), which acts as the official Sudanese Army, and a paramilitary force, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). It has further deteriorated the humanitarian situation all over Sudan where 6,036,176 people are displaced according to the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) shared by IOM on 9th January 2024, particularly in Khartoum, Darfur, Kordofan and Gazira States, making it inaccessible amid a worsening humanitarian situation. The conflict has resulted in the mass displacement of civilians into what are perceived as safe areas all over the country, as well as cross-border movements to surrounding countries.

In child protection, the project provides and strengthens preventive and responsive child protection services through case management and psychosocial support, including caring for child survivors, as well as recreational activities for children at risk. The ongoing conflict that started on 15th April 2023 led to re-programming the West and Central Darfur interventions to top-up on the other ongoing parts in Blue Nile and South Kordofan and all the child protection interventions were moved to Blue Nile and had to start from scratch.

Joining armed/military forces is like “a norm” in Blue Nile and it seems that there is a military person in each house. According to the State Council for Child Welfare (SCCW) in Blue Nile Region, and after the Juba Peace Agreement (2020), lists of child soldiers affiliated with the SPLM were handed to the DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration) Admission but lists were not verified due to the outbreak of war. The number reached a total of 273 children affected by recruitment, including 147 under SPLM-North movement, 17 under Rapid Support Forces, 86 under Popular Resistance Forces that was established to defeat the rebels, and 23 are those children who arrived at military training camps for recruitment but were rejected due to age. Efforts have been made by relevant authorities mainly SCCW and DDR to obtain these lists with children’s names. But it became clear to us after the war started, and after the investigation process by the State Council for Child Welfare, that the children moved to all localities in the state without integration or reunification procedures with their families. This means that a plan to search for them in the concerned localities needs to be developed through assistance from civil administrations and community leaders to reach them and reconcile their situations.

In addition, SCCW coordinated with military intelligence regarding the release of 17 child soldiers under Rapid Support Forces along with other 86 children who were absorbed into the Popular Resistance Forces. According to reliable sources, there is a need for shelter centers for children of both sexes who were affected by recruitment indirectly. This indicates no action was made on the children being released and no integration process took place. Meanwhile, more mobilizations of child soldiers have been ongoing by the government and SPLM-N after the recent conflict started, and it is likely that there are more children who are associated with the armed forces and armed groups as the militarization gives opportunities for quick income and children are used to getting fake birth certificates by upgrading their age to be accepted in the military and in the SPLM North training centers.

1. **Purpose of the situation analysis**

A situation analysis will be conducted to examine the context, characteristics, and dynamics of conflict and how the conflict impacts children, their families and communities. The situation analysis is also intended to provide an in-depth understanding of needs perpetuated by the conflicts, existing services and gaps, the risks on CAAC (Children and Armed Conflict) including CAAFAG (Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups) and the prevention and response service available in order to inform SC response.

*Specific Objectives*

1. Identify and analyze key conflict dynamics, drivers, context, and impact on children, families, and communities in relation to protection, health, education, human rights and livelihoods in Blue Nile.
2. To identify major risk factors and causes of child recruitment, and which children are most at risk of being recruited and what are the specific vulnerabilities/status (ethnicity, UASC, IDP/refugee) of the individual children at risk of recruitment.
3. Identify strategies for prevention and release, rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with armed forces, and armed groups in BN state.
4. To understand how the humanitarian community can leverage effective family, community or government practices and systems to prevent recruitment of children and facilitate the safe and successful reintegration of boys and girls, considering safety and care, social reintegration, health and mental well-being, and economic reintegration.
5. Provide context-specific recommendations which can be applied to future programming and policy formulations to reduce recruitment and use of children in armed forces/groups in Blue Nile.
6. **Scope of the Analysis**

The consultancy work will be focused on an in-depth examination of children affected by armed conflict, causes and dynamics as well as the effect of the problem, the interventions and responses currently being offered to these children, the gaps in service provision and recommended strategies for intervening in the short- and long-term. The study will use a **gender lens** in all the analysis and recommendations.

1. **Study Design**

This assessment will utilize qualitative methodologies including key informant interviews (KIIs), with caregivers, children of recruitment age, children who fled from recruitment and traditional/religious leaders. Focus group discussions (FGD) will be held with community members, parents and children. The methodology needs to be gender sensitive and child-friendly tools must be used with children.

The study shall adopt qualitative methods to collect information from both primary and secondary sources. It is envisaged that the following methods will be applied:

* **Literature review**: The consultant(s) will carry out a desk review before primary data collection.
* **Primary data collection tools, and data analysis level**: The consultant(s) will develop data collection tools in collaboration with SC staff. The study should use qualitative approaches.
  1. **Data Sources and Data Collection Methods / Tools**

Consultant(s) are expected to produce a clear methodology section explaining the data sources and data collection tools and methods. SC has some existing draft tools that will be shared with the consultant for him/her to review, propose edits, and consider using in this assignment.

* 1. **Sampling**

The sampling will be outlined by the consultant in the proposal and will utilize proper sampling for qualitative survey. The consultant is expected to share how many focus group discussions and key informant interviews they intend to conduct to meet all research questions.

* 1. **Data collection**

All research tools will be submitted to HAC offices in the targeted state before any data collection commences. Once the approval is out, the data collection will be carried out immediately. A gender-balanced team of enumerators will be recruited, trained, supervised and guided by SC MEAL staff in the targeted state. Before field data collection, all the enumerators will be trained on the basics of data collection, including the objectives of the study, the structure of the questionnaires, observation forms, checklists, and how to collect data using tablets/ODK. This will be followed by field pre-testing to familiarize the enumerators with the eventual fieldwork. Any scripting errors and/or unclear questions will be corrected at this point. The consultant and/or MEAL officer in Blue Nile will supervise the entire data collection and help resolve minor field difficulties.

* 1. **Data analysis and reporting**

The desk reviews will also be analyzed using MS Excel and will be triangulated with all other information gathered. The qualitative survey will be analyzed using MS Excel or any other appropriate qualitative data software. A draft situation analysis report will be produced, shared and reviewed by SC Sudan. The final report will be disseminated at the regional and global level.

1. **Ethical procedures**

All data collection will adhere to ethical research procedures and processes. Consent will be sought from all participants before data collection. Tools will be translated into Arabic to ensure all respondents can participate in the study. Enumerators will be trained in how to collect sensitive data and how to conduct research ethically with children. The Safeguarding Manager will be involved in providing guidance on how to ensure ethical involvement of children in the situation analysis.

In addition, this study will consider:

* ***Child participation****. Children will be supported to participate in the study beyond simply being respondents. If appropriate and safe, children will be supported to collect some of the data required for the study themselves or involving children in the validation of findings.*
* ***Inclusive****. Children from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds will have the chance to participate, children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.*
* ***Ethical****: The study will be guided by ethical considerations such as informed consent, safeguarding, sensitivity, openness, confidentiality and data protection, public access, broad participation, reliability and independence.*
* ***Conflict sensitivity:*** *the study will be guided by conflict sensitivity principles such as openness and transparency, considering the power relation and influencing forces operating in the targeted communities, inclusion, implementing multi-stockholders multi-level meaningful consultation process*

1. **Expected Deliverables**

The study deliverables and tentative timeline are outlined below.

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| **Deliverable / Milestones** |
| An Inception Report (including initial desk review, study design with proposed study questions, proposed methodology, sample framework, intended instruments, data collection plan; overall work plan on GANTT chart); and data quality assurance plan as well as roles and responsibilities. |
| Review of the Inception Report by all |
| Submission of a revised Inception Report |
| Study and data collection tools approvals from HAC |
| **Data collection**   * Desk review. * Training of data collectors * Conduct key informant interviews and FGDs |
| A Draft Report |
| Review of the Draft Report by all and conduct data validation meeting to present the findings |
| A Final StudyReport |

1. **Code of conduct**

Save the Children’s work is based on deeply held values and principles of child safeguarding, and it is essential that our commitment to children’s rights and humanitarian principles is supported and demonstrated by all members of staff and other people working for and with Save the Children. Save the Children’s Code of Conduct sets out the standards which all staff members must adhere to, and the consultant is bound to sign and abide by the Save the Children’s Code of Conduct.

A contract will be signed by the consultant before the commencement of the action. The contract will detail terms and conditions of service, aspects of inputs and deliverables. The Consultant will be expected to treat as private and confidential any information disclosed to her/him or with which she/he may come into contact during her/his service. The Consultant will not therefore disclose the same or any particulars thereof to any third party or publish it in any paper without the prior written consent of Save the Children. Any sensitive information (particularly concerning individual children) should be treated as confidential. An agreement with a consultant will be rendered void if Save the Children discovers any corrupt activities have taken place either during the sourcing, preparation and implementation of the consultancy agreement.

1. **Qualifications**

* Bachelor’s degree in social sciences, social work, psychology or human services field required/preferred.
* Have experience in carrying out M&E activities E.g. At least 6 years’ experience in research, monitoring and evaluation with proven experience in conducting qualitative research and analysis.
* Experience in assessing sensitive protection related topics.
* 2+ years relevant experience in NGO or government experience is an important asset; strong willingness to develop training competencies.
* Excellent communication skills in English and Arabic, including public speaking, and presentation skills.
* Excellent computer skills and other relevant electronics like use of projector, etc.

1. **Knowledge/Skills/Abilities**

* Experience in team leadership and management.
* Must possess a sincere interest in children, maturity, self-control, and sound judgment.
* Must have working knowledge of positive child development and positive behavior management skills. Particularly knowledge of children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) and experience in responding to them is an asset.
* Must have the energy, initiative and ability to get things done within specific time frames.
* Possess skills for communicating clearly and knowledgeably.
* Demonstrated ability to make objective decisions and fairly disciplined.
* Ability to manage groups in an efficient and friendly manner.
* Highly motivated individual with the desire to make a difference.
* Must uphold the policies and procedures of Save the Children's Child safeguarding policy.

1. **Save the Children’s Child Safeguarding Policy**

Save the Children is committed to safeguarding children through the following means:

* **Awareness:** Ensuring that all staff and those who work with Save the Children are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children.
* **Prevention:** Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and those who work with Save the Children minimize the risks to children.
* **Reporting:** Ensuring that you are clear on what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of children.
* **Responding:** Ensuring that action is taken to support and protect children where concerns arise regarding possible abuse.

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1. **Payment Schedule**

The payment shall be **30%** upon submission of a satisfactory inception report, **30%** upon submission of a first draft report and **40%** upon submission of a satisfactory final report. **PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO CONSULTANT CURRENTLY BASED IN BLUE NILE STATE, SUDAN. Please indicate in the proposal where the consultant is based.**

**APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

The offer, comprising of the **Bidder response Document (BRD),** **Technical** and **Financial** **Proposal**, should be submitted and addressed to [Sudan.Bids@savethechildren.org](mailto:Sudan.Bids@savethechildren.org)

For any questions/query relating to the proposal, please email [**Shahd.Sabir@savethechildren.org**](mailto:Shahd.Sabir@savethechildren.org)

Bidders are required to prepare and submit the following documents:

* **Completed Bidder Reponses Document (BRD)**
* **Technical Proposal:** 1. Company/Organization profile and expertise; 2. Proposed Implementation Plan 3. Management Structure and Key Personnel (CVs)
* **Financial Proposa**l (Detailed budget in **USD**)