



Save the Children

SECTION NO.1

LETTER OF INVITATION



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Dear Sir/ Madam,

LETTER OF INVITATION TO CONDUCT A LITERACY MARKET SURVERY - SAVE THE CHILDREN

(Promoting Autonomy, Literacy, and Attentiveness through Market Alliances (PALAM/A) Project)

Save the Children has been working in Sri Lanka since 1974. We have been contributing to both humanitarian and development needs in Sri Lanka and have a strong engagement with government stakeholders, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Save the Children currently works in collaboration with both national and subnational level partners to ensure child rights in the areas of the education, child protection, health and nutrition, vocational training, and child rights governance programs including humanitarian response initiatives.

The Government of the United States of America via the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offered its support to GoSL to implement the "Promoting Autonomy, Literacy, and Attentiveness through Market Alliances (PALAM/A) Project" in Sri Lanka. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and planning, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Save the Children, governed by a four-party MoU.

The project goal is to improve literacy and nutrition while reducing hunger of school-age children, by improving student attendance, improving the quality of literacy instruction, improving student attentiveness, and improving the use of health and dietary practices. The project is implemented across 07 districts (Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Monaragala, Rathnapura, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee) in approximately 851 'Type 03' primary schools which are currently benefitted by the national school nutrition programme.

From the project design stage to implementation, there is close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to carry out proposed project activities in selected areas. As per the key components of the project, initiatives to enhance early grade literacy in primary grades are also being implemented in 20 selected schools per district.

As core part of the literacy enhancement workstream is to enhance the print rich environment in and out of the class, and for this purpose, the need to conduct a Literacy Market Survey has been identified. The objective is to increase the availability of early grade reading materials to inculcate a love for learning whilst also reading with comprehension skills of children.

At present both government and development partners provide supplementary reading materials to schools but there are gaps in the relevance and age appropriateness of these materials. Furthermore, there is lack of the genres available in both the local languages in categories including fantasy, fiction, non-fictions, folk stories etc. Less attention is paid to the



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variety of topics and themes of the books available including books that promote social cohesion, health, nutrition and hygiene practices, and gender equality and inclusivity.

Considering above factors, Save the Children Sri Lanka is seeking a suitable team led by a consultant to conduct Literacy Market Survey in both Sinhala and Tamil languages to understand the availability of books relevant for primary grade children. The findings of the LMS will support the development of supplementary texts that give students targeted, fun fluency and reading comprehension skills practice, while simultaneously promoting social cohesion, positive gender norms, and improved health/nutrition knowledge and attitudes.

Post this survey, the consultant will facilitate a dissemination of findings to sector partners, book publishers and authors to increase the awareness of gaps. If this assignment would interest you and you have a passion for reading, we invite you to kindly submit a proposal to Save the Children within 5 days. Terms of References (TOR) for this assignment is attached for your reference.

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SECTION NO.2

TERMS OF REFERENCE



Literacy Market Survey

A) Background Information

Sri Lanka has a well-developed education system that delivers services through 10,194 schools. These schools are classified according to the facilities provided and their location. The services cover a student population of 4,165,964 from three sectors of living-rural, urban and estate.¹ Enrolment and retention in primary grades are at a net enrolment rate of 97.1% for boys and 95.6% for girls in the primary education cycle. The achievements gained over 80 years of investment in free, rights-based education has resulted in equal access to education. Girls have achieved near parity status with boys in access as well as performance. However, the country now faces challenges in making education relevant so that young people acquire the analytical and creative skills required to thrive in the modern economy. The goal is to reach these aims while maintaining an education system that is equitable.

Despite high enrollment and attendance rates at the primary level in Sri Lanka, many children are still falling behind in learning, which is a contributing factor for drop-out rates, that begin to rise in secondary school. For example, on a national literacy exam administered in 2015, a significant portion of 4th graders scored below 50 out of 100 in both Sinhala (20%) and Tamil (30%). In addition, Save the Children's PALAM/A *baseline assessment (December 2021)* in Rathnapaura, Badulla, Moneragala, Nuwara Eliya, Trincomalee, Mulathivu and Killinochchi, found that only 24% of grade 2 children are able to read and understand grade 02 text (Only 24% children displayed age-appropriate reading with comprehension skills). However, children showcased good lower order skills, letter knowledge, word recognition and oral vocabulary skills.

Save the Children's literacy interventions includes a comprehensive reading toolkit called Literacy Boost (LB). LB has a four-pronged approach which includes the importance of using assessments to aid in learning, teacher training, materials development, and community action to improve children's core reading and writing skills. The literacy promotion interventions that come under Save the Children's Promoting Autonomy, Literacy, and Attentiveness through Market Alliances (PALAM/A) project will address the gaps in achieving educational outcomes for primary school-aged children. The program fosters vocabulary expansion, bolsters reading confidence and expression, and expands opportunities to practice reading both inside and outside the classroom. Literacy Boost focuses on the six core skills that research shows are central to learning to read: letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading fluency, comprehension and writing.

Included in the four-pronged approach are materials developed to enrich the literacy environment for children in and out of school. Luckily, Sri Lanka already has a solid foundation of materials in teacher guidebooks, and students' textbooks and workbooks, all of which are provided by the State. Furthermore, students and teachers receive new books at the beginning of each academic year. The Ministry of Education and development partners, including Save the Children, are committed to going a step further to analyze and provide supplementary reading materials to children.

¹ Ministry of Education, (2020) School Census Report, 2020, Ministry of Education.



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There are highly recognized and competent children's storywriters and amateur writers in the country. Individually, they write supplementary reading books (storybooks) for children, and publish them under the names of private sector publishers. These writers have great language expertise and they use their imagination skills to draw back on their childhood and create stories. However, sometimes these writers pay little attention to how these books can be relevant to help develop comprehension and reading skills in primary grade children, and they pay little attention to help develop age-appropriate levels of reading in their books. Most of the recognized authors submit their books to the publication department of the Ministry of Education for their certifications, but it is not mandatory. Authors can obtain International Standard Book Number (ISBN) from the National Library and Documentation Services Board by submitting two copies of the book. In addition to that, Sri Lanka Book Publishers' Association also exists in the country, including 170 memberships. This association has been setup to organize the annual International Book Fair in Sri Lanka.

B) Objectives of the Assignment

1. The overall objective of this assignment is to review the available books and supplementary reading materials that are relevant to the primary grade key stages (1,2 and 3) in both Sinhala and Tamil language in the local market, developed by INGOs/NGOs, and hosted in open-source libraries, and provide an analysis on the relevance, appropriateness and breath of topics/themes of these resource materials. (Review at least 1,000 supplementary reading materials in each language across different genres and themes/topics including translations).
2. Develop a comprehensive list of supplementary texts that will enable students to develop targeted, fun fluency and reading comprehension skills practice, while simultaneously promoting social cohesion and justice, positive gender and inclusion norms, and positive health, hygiene and nutrition facts and practice.
3. Identify gaps in the availability of reading resources in each level, by genre and topics/themes that require to be developed/published to enhance the print richness
4. Compile a report on the findings of the survey and develop a one-page summary, including a presentation for key stake holders for dissemination.

C) Expertise required:

- Sound understanding on primary education in Sri Lanka.
- Technical expertise on primary grade children's language development process.
- Sound understanding and knowledge of the primary grade first language (both Sinhala and Tamil)
- Understanding of existing primary grade language development stages in accordance with existing primary grade curricular.



D) LMS TEAM COMPOSITION

- 1). Save the Children is looking for lead consultant who would form 02 groups for each language with a minimum of 06 members per group.
- 2). All the team members should have similar experiences in reviewing books/reading materials. The expertise set out in section C would be an added advantage.

Methodology:

Literacy Market Survey should include the following;

- A. Reading materials in both local language: Sinhala and Tamil
- B. Reading material appropriate for primary grades/Books under different categories/genres (fiction, non-fiction, folk stories, fantasy, big books and picture books etc.)
- C. During the screening of books, key thematic areas should also be considered, including; promoting social cohesion and inclusion, creating awareness on gender sensitization, and health hygiene and nutrition related messages, including aspects that promote reading with comprehension skills
- D. Review reading materials at different levels: such as emergent, beginning, independent, and experienced
- E. Consider reading materials/books that promote inclusivity: positively depicts characters or individuals with different physical, mental, and emotional abilities; positively depicts characters of different ethnic/language groups
- F. Consider reading material available in leading book shops in the country to identify newly published books (in addition to reading materials provided by NLS, MoE and SCI) as well as reviewing local language reading materials available on open-source platforms relevant to primary grades and any supplementary reading materials developed by other INGO's/Institutions.

Summary of key deliverables:

Timescale	Activities	Person responsible
25/12/2022	Submission of the proposal	Consultant
30/12/22 to 30/01/23	Completion of reviewing the reading materials/books	Consultant
15/02/2023	Present initial finding to already established technical committee.	Consultant and Save the Children
25/02/2023	Develop draft report on findings and recommendations	Consultant
05/03/2023	Finalize the report with the inputs of the technical team.	Consultant
15/03/2023	Presenting findings at the dissemination workshop for government and non-government institutes/stake holders, authors, book publishers and sector partners.	Consultant, Save the Children and MoE



Save the Children’s Responsibilities:

- SCI will make payments based on the agreement
- SCI will share already developed book screening tool to consultant/ consulting team.
- SCI will share materials and guidelines developed by government institutions and other partners which have been collected by the Education team.
- SCI will introduce already established technical committee to the consultant/ team.
- SCI will facilitate review of books available at NLS and MOE for review process.
- SCI will organize and bear the costs of the dissemination workshop.
- SCI will share the baseline findings relevant to this assignment as applicable with consultant/team

Schedule of Payments:

25% of advance payment after signing the consultancy agreement.

Balance payment will be made after completion of the assignment.

Budget Codes:

SoF: 84005396 Project code: 1440039 DEA: 487138.

SCI Responsible officer / Budget Holder

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Read, understood and agreed by the Service Provider –

Name:

Signature:

Date: