**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

**Consultancy Services for a Longitudinal Study on Gender Empowerment through Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education in Laos (A 2.2.1)**

Project “Gender Equality through Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (GEVEE)”

1. **Introduction**

**Action Education (AE) is an international NGO with headquarters in Paris, France. Action Education International has been active since 1981 and has projects in 19 countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia. With the vision “Changing the world through education”, AE uses a lifelong approach to education for vulnerable youths and children. For over 40 years, it has provided access to quality education for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, particularly children, girls and women. For nearly two decades, Action Education has been committed to building pathways to quality education and lifelong learning for Lao communities. Recognizing the crucial role of gender equality in fostering individual and societal development, AE consistently integrates GEWE considerations into its initiatives.**

**In line with this commitment, Action Education partnered with the National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mother-Children (NCAWMC) and the Provincial for the Advancement of Women and Mother-Children (PCAWMC) from Oudomxay and Khammouan Province to launch the GEVEE project in March 2023. The aim was to transform the lives of young women and youth through gender awareness training and entrepreneurial skills development, empowering them to become independent and successful drivers of local economic development.**

**Aligned with the project's objectives, the longitudinal study will assess and track changes in the impact of the GEVEE project on gender empowerment, entrepreneurial skills, and vocational education outcomes in 25 communities and 5 secondary schools in Oudomxay and Khammoune provinces, Laos. The study will generate evidence-based recommendations to strengthen project interventions and promote gender equality. It will include on Gender-base-violence (GBV) situations and gender challenges in the scope of the GEVEE project.**

Action Education in Laos is seeking a qualified consultant to lead a study in close collaboration with Action Education and its local gender-specializing partners. The study aims to critically evaluate the effectiveness of project interventions implemented in these areas and provide actionable recommendations for improvement. The findings and recommendations will be invaluable for both Action Education and its government partners, as well as for the young women and youth who directly benefit from these programs.

**II. Objectives**

The overall objective of this consultancy is to conduct a longitudinal study that examines the changes in gender empowerment, entrepreneurial skills, and vocational education outcomes among the project beneficiaries over the project period.

Specifically, the consultant will:

* Develop a comprehensive longitudinal study design, including data collection methodologies, sampling strategy, and data analysis plan.
* Conduct baseline data collection and analysis in the target communities and schools.
* Produce a comprehensive report with key findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
* Present the study findings to stakeholders.
* Build capacity for Train AE and the project counterparts staff on how to conduct a longitudinal study by themselves, including data collection, and monitoring procedures, analysis, and reporting for the longitudinal study in a feasible manner.

**III. Scope**

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

**Phase 1:** Study Design and Preparation (5 days)

* Review existing project documentation and relevant literature on gender, entrepreneurship, and vocational education in Laos.
* Develop a detailed longitudinal study design, including:
	+ Clear research questions and hypotheses.
	+ A robust sampling methodology for selecting participants in the 25 communities and 5 schools.
	+ Data collection instruments (e.g., surveys, focus group discussion guides, interview protocols) tailored to the Lao context and translated into Lao language.
	+ A comprehensive data analysis plan.
	+ A detailed timeline for the study.
	+ A report frame
* Develop a training plan for AE staff on data collection and monitoring procedures.

**Phase 2:** Data Collection and Training (10 days)

* Conduct a training workshop for AE staff on data collection methods, ethical considerations, and data management.
* Oversee and support the AE team in conducting baseline data collection in the selected communities and schools. This may involve direct participation in data collection.
* Ensure the quality and integrity of the collected data.

**Phase 3:** Data Analysis and Reporting (5 days)

* Analyze the collected data using appropriate statistical methods.
* Prepare a comprehensive report that includes:
	+ An executive summary.
	+ A detailed description of the study methodology.
	+ Presentation of key findings, including quantitative and qualitative data.
	+ Conclusions and recommendations for the project and future interventions.
* Develop a presentation summarizing the key findings and recommendations for stakeholders.

Phase 4: Build capacity and transfer of study knowledge and skills to AE and partners staff

* Build capacity for AE and the project counterparts staff on how to conduct a longitudinal study by themselves, including data collection tools, study method, monitoring procedures, analysis, and reporting for the longitudinal study in a feasible manner.

**V. Methodology**

To achieve a comprehensive understanding, the research will employ a mixed-methods approach:

* Desk review - Analyzing reports, data, and other relevant documents.
* Qualitative data collection - Conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.
* Quantitative data analysis - Examining trends and patterns in collected data.
* Participatory workshops - Engaging with communities and beneficiaries to gather feedback and insights.
* This study is to examine how gender roles, identities, and relations evolve over the GEVEE project period. It involves repeated observations of the same individuals or groups, allowing researchers to track changes and patterns related to gender. These studies can provide insights into various aspects of gender, such as, the project's impact on gender dynamics, entrepreneurial skills, and social communications over time.
* It will utilize quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews, conducted by trained AE staff and local partners, communities.

**VI. Deliverables**

The consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables within the agreed timeframe:

* Inception Report outlining the study design, methodology, and timeline.
* Training materials for AE staff.
* Raw data collected during the baseline assessment.
* Comprehensive study report in English and Lao (or with a comprehensive Lao summary).
* Presentation summarizing the study findings and recommendations.

**VII. REPORTING AND COMMUNICATION**

* The consultant will regularly update progress to the project team through weekly updates, bi-weekly meetings. The consultant will inform Action Education in a timely manner if any unexpected issues happen.
* AE will assess the effectiveness and impact of the research, both in terms of meeting the objectives and providing valuable insights for gender equality, gender empowerment, and gender-based violence interventions.

**VIII. Qualifications and Experience**

The consultant team should possess the following qualifications and experience:

* At least 5 years of continuous professional experience in conducting researches / surveys / evaluations.
* Master's degree or equivalent in gender studies, development studies, social sciences, or a related field.
* Proven experience in designing and conducting longitudinal studies, particularly in the context of gender and development.
* Strong expertise in quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods.
* Familiarity with the Lao context and experience working in Lao PDR.
* Excellent written and oral communication skills in English. Proficiency in Lao language is highly desirable.
* Experience in training and capacity building.
* Ability to work independently and manage time effectively.

**IX. Budget**

The consultant should submit a detailed budget proposal outlining the costs associated with conducting the review. This should include fees for the consultant(s) and any other relevant costs.

**X. Application Process**

Interested candidates are requested to submit the following documents:

* A cover letter outlining their qualifications and experience relevant to the assignment.
* A detailed CV.
* A technical proposal outlining their proposed approach to the study, including a proposed methodology, timeline, and budget.
* Examples of previous work related to longitudinal studies or gender assessments.

The deadline for applications is February 10, 2025. Applications should be submitted to maisone.sonesavanh@action-education.org

**XI. Selection Criteria**

The consultant will be selected based on the following criteria:

* Qualifications and experience of the consultant(s).
* Technical proposal, including the proposed methodology and work plan.
* Financial proposal.

**XII. Timeline**

The consultancy will be conducted over a period of 20 days between February and March 2025. A detailed timeline will be developed in consultation with the selected consultant.