

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
FOR CONDUCTING A FINAL EVALUATION  
ON BEHALF OF SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES SERBIA  
FOR THE PROJECT "Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects (YEPP)"**

*December 2022*

## **1. Introduction**

These Terms of Reference (ToR) serve as a request for proposals from individual consultants (or consortiums) who are interested in conducting an impact evaluation of the regional project *Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects (YEPP)*.

Details regarding contents of proposals and submission procedures are explained herein.

The Foundation SOS Children's Villages Serbia (SOS Serbia) is a nongovernmental, non-political and non-profit organization established in 2012 as a member of the SOS Children's Villages International Federation (SOS CVI). Established in Austria in 1949, the SOS CVI has expanded its programming over the last 65 years to now have a presence in 134 countries around the world. SOS Serbia works on creating and empowering families for children without parental care and children in risk of family separation, helps children and youth to develop their potentials for independent life, helps families in crisis and contributes to development of the communities these children and families live in.

SOS Serbia has a task to support integration, consolidation, improvement and development in activities of all SOS and partnership programs in Serbia, promote the vision, mission and values of the organization and develop fundraising, advocacy and PR activities.

The MA SOS Children's Village Serbia began its work from 2004, when the SOS Children's Village (SOS DS) was founded in Kraljevo - Centre for support for children and families. The Foundation SOS Children's Village Serbia was registered on 2012 and its National Office is located in Belgrade.

SOS Children's Village Serbia is profiled as a civil society organization with experience in development and providing social protection services, implementing a large number of initiatives, projects, and multi-year support programs for children and youth from alternative care as well as families at risk of child separation.

## **2. Background and rationale**

The project area comprises the five Western Balkan states of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia. The Balkan countries participating in the programme are characterised by high poverty and unemployment rates and a low level of economic development.

In particular, the high youth unemployment rates are a major challenge for the sustainable development of the region. The lack of prospects for young people in the countries leads, among other things, to extremely high migration figures to (western) foreign countries. The situation is particularly serious for vulnerable young people from (alternative) care institutions / without parental care and young people with complex socio-economic problems. They often have no access to the labour market due to a lack of qualifications and employability and are trapped in long-term unemployment and excluded from society by aggravating factors such as stigmatisation, low self-esteem, lack of social competence, lack of social network, etc. At the same time, local state actors and civil society organisations lack sufficient skills and efficient methods to successfully support these young people in their labour market integration. They do not use a comprehensive, holistic and effective methodology for the socio-economic integration of vulnerable young people. Political decision-makers also lack awareness and knowledge to effectively address the socio-economic exclusion of vulnerable young people.

SOS-Kinderdörfer weltweit Hermann-Gmeiner Fonds Deutschland (HGFD) and SOS Children's Villages International (SOS CVI ) and the five project partners "the national associations of SOS Children's Villages in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia" since August 2019 are successfully implementing the regional project *Youth Empowerment Enabling Prospects YEEP* funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project is **focused on the sustainable improvement of the living conditions of 1600 vulnerable young people** (16-35 years) from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia (**40% young women**).

The direct target group consists of socially excluded young people with low incomes and no opportunity to improve their economic status on their own. The participants come from formal and alternative care institutions or belong to the group of marginalised youths due to difficult family circumstances.

The institutional target group consists of **230 local representatives** of administration, business and civil society, including social service providers, local government, employment offices, etc.

A special role as multipliers is played by **15 local civil society organisations**, whose capacities are built up and who then assume a co-implementation role in the project.

The indirect target group comprises at least 3,500 other vulnerable young people.

The overall intervention logic of the project includes the following:

**Overall objective (Impact):** The living conditions of vulnerable young people in five Balkan countries have improved sustainably.

**Specific Objective:** Effective support measures provided by capacitated and coordinated stakeholders in AL, BIH, KOS, MAC and RS contributed to vulnerable youth being able to socially integrate and to actively participate in the labour market.

**Expected results from the project:**

- 1) Local actors with strengthened capacities apply a training curriculum based on holistic methodology for the socio-economic integration of young people at risk.

- 2) Vulnerable youth have improved their social-economic integration
- 3) Local decision-makers have increased their knowledge about situation of vulnerable youth and are aware of potential strategies and practices to improve the situation for the target group.

As the implementation of the project is coming to an end on 30 April 2023, an **external independent, participatory evaluation** is planned that will cover the whole project region. The evaluation findings should determine the extent of the implementation outcomes and sustainability of the project, as well as performance of national SOS Children's Villages in all five Western Balkan countries.. It will lead to recommendations for improvement of the approach and services for supporting vulnerable youth reaching social and financial sustainability. In addition, the evaluation results will serve as base for further joint activities and cooperation between national SOS Children's Villages and HGFD as implementing partners. The evaluation should assess strengths and weaknesses of the project and its impact on the target group and potential improvements and/or new developments for further continuation of the project. Moreover, the evaluation should assess the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the work with vulnerable youth that was carried out on a local level by the 15 local grant-receiving CSOs.

### 3. Purpose, Objectives and Use

The overall objective of the evaluation will be to determine the impact of the project by assessing its **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability**, as well as assess how the project has followed gender sensitive issues. It will generate **lessons learnt and recommendations** for future projects and programmes implemented by the project partners. The evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of project partners and the donor.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- To assess the impact and effectiveness of the activities implemented in YEEP.
- To evaluate the efficiency of the project in relation to beneficiaries, cost and timeframe of the project.
- To assess the current figures of the Objectively Verifiable Indicators as found in the impact matrix
- To assess the sustainability of the project (institutional, social, financial, etc.)
- To make recommendations for improving future interventions.

The desired results of the evaluation are:

- To document the impact of the project with special emphasis on the impact the project has had on young women.
- To provide commentary on the overall project design, the intervention logic and an analysis of the strategy and methodology used in YEEP project.

- To critically examine the impact matrix and verifiable indicators found in the original proposal and provide post-project figures along with a narrative explaining the reasons for under/over performance achievement.
- To provide commentary on the current political, social and cultural factors influencing the implementation of the project.
- To document the communities' attitude towards the project
- To draw conclusions, make recommendations and state lessons learnt for future strategy and improvements in implementation of the project.

Key persons to be targeted during the evaluation:

- Young people participating in the project as beneficiaries.
- Young people and other individuals who are not participating but might be affected by the project (e.g. from neighborhood, friends, family).
- CSOs that had co-implementation role and act as multipliers
- Main stakeholders from local and national institutions, other CSOs who were involved in some project activities or who are implementing similar projects, academia, etc.
- Project team
- Programme management at national level
- International Office Region CEE/CIS/ME
- HGFD (as needed)

Key users of evaluations results in each project country:

- Project level: Project team and implementing partners.
- Management level: National Director, Head of the National Programme Development Department, National Finance Director, National Programme Advisors, etc.
- SOS-Kinderdörfer weltweit Hermann-Gmeiner Fonds Deutschland (HGFD)
- Regional level: SOS international Office Region (IOR).
- Global level: SOS Children's Villages international (IO)
- Donor: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

#### **4. Scope of work**

The External evaluator will conduct field evaluation in five project countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia. The time line for the final evaluation will be from 25 January until 10 April 2023, including delivery of the final report.

The evaluation questions should be revolved around the following criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, and Project Management and Coordination, including to document lessons learned and to provide practical recommendations for follow-up actions as given in the ToR. On the basis of the above-mentioned evaluation criteria, instruments /questionnaires for the field mission should be prepared for stakeholders.

The evaluation should assess the following:

Evaluation issue	Key guiding questions
<p><b>Relevance</b> The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent was the project focused on the intended target group?</li> <li>• What were the specific criteria for the selection of beneficiaries?</li> <li>• To what extent did project participants meet the selection criteria?</li> <li>• To what extent did the project respond to the needs of the community?</li> <li>• To what extent did the project interventions respond to the needs and priorities of the project participants?</li> <li>• To what extent have the project adjustments made so far been relevant?</li> <li>• (Relevance in relation to SOS strategic goals/mission/vision)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effectiveness</b> A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have the project objectives been achieved?</li> <li>• To what extent have the project strategies, methodologies, tools and processes contributed to the achievement of the planned results?</li> <li>• To what extent were the project objectives and activities in compliance with the target group needs?</li> <li>• To what extent were the beneficiaries aware of the project and the services it provided? Did all the targeted beneficiaries receive services by the project?</li> <li>• To what extent were beneficiaries satisfied with the project interventions?</li> <li>• Does the support system built in the target communities effectively respond to the situation of the target group?</li> <li>• To what extent did the SOS Children’s Villages contribute to the capacity building of the public / private partners and main duty bearers to respond to the situation of the target group?</li> <li>• To what extent were the local authorities involved and provided support to the project?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Efficiency</b> An economic term, which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were activities cost-efficient?</li> <li>• Were objectives achieved on time?</li> <li>• Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact</b> The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the quality of support improved the lives of the beneficiaries?</li> <li>• What was the impact against the planned results of the project, in terms of changes brought about in the living circumstances of beneficiaries and communities?</li> <li>• What was the impact beyond the planned results of the project, in terms of changes brought about in the living circumstances of beneficiaries and communities? (positive and/or negative)</li> <li>• Is the intervention transformative – does it create enduring changes in norms and systems, whether intended or not?</li> <li>• Is the intervention leading to other changes, including “scalable” or “replicable” results?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Sustainability</b> Concept concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many beneficiaries left the project since the beginning and became self-reliant? To what extent are the results which they have reached sustainable and are the results effective after the beneficiaries leave the project?</li> <li>• To what extent can activities, results and effects be expected to continue after the project financing (BMZ/HGFD) has ended?</li> <li>• Have the capacities of the implementation partner been developed? If so, in what areas and how?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project management and coordination</b> Evaluation of the role of the project management and coordination in ensuring quality implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the project have appropriate management and coordination structures and organisation of the process? Were these structures aimed at the quality of the project implementation?</li> <li>• Which other local implementing partners were involved in the process of management and coordination and how did this affect the quality of implementation?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender mainstreaming</b> Extent to which gender was considered in planning and implementation of activities to achieve equality and equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project responsive to gender needs, social and cultural values, conditions and practices?</li> <li>• Has gender been considered in the development and implementation of relevant project activities</li> </ul>

## 5. Methodology and approach

The External Evaluation should be based on a participatory approach involving and engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. Stakeholders' participation is necessary for accountability, promoting ownership and sustainability, facilitating, and further use of the evaluation recommendations. According to this, the participatory approach is very useful in engaging stakeholders and gaining their insights, experiences with the programmes and the benefits accrued to them as a result of the programmes.

In general, the evaluation methodology is concentrated on the objective observation, description and explanation of changes that have happened in beneficiaries lives due to their participation in the project. The evaluation approach should be results-oriented to provide evidence of both quantitative and qualitative achievements as well as the outputs and outcomes obtained by the programmes (or not). Hence, both primary and secondary data should be used in the evaluation and be collected from a wide and diverse range of primary and secondary sources.

Overall, the methodology of the evaluation will include the following:

- Document review, including analysis on key reference documents listed in Terms of Reference;
- Case study of randomly selected beneficiaries files (present and those who exited the project)
- Interviews (structured and/or semi-structured; in person and/or by telephone) with key

- informants listed in Terms of Reference
- Focus groups with selected key informants
- Other methods relevant to evaluation objectives and scope

Data collection process includes:

- Reviewing the project documentation and other sources of information at project level;
- Identification of the major stakeholders who are associated with the project to be interviewed, such as the direct participants of the project, implementation partners, key local government representatives, and other service providers.
- Agreeing on the type of information to be collected.
- Develop methodological tools for data collection and consult with project staff on project/national/regional level.
- To fill in questionnaires and conduct interviews with co-workers, beneficiaries, representatives of partners, local authorities and community, focus groups and analysis of data.

## 6. Timing and deliverables

The anticipated work plan and time schedule to be based on the analysis of the issues and presented in the form of the table below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Expert A</b>	<b>Expert B</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Preparatory work •		[..] day(s) [..] day(s)			
Desk review •		[..] day(s) [..] day(s)			
Field visits •		[..] day(s)			
Data analysis and final report •		[..] day(s)			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>[..] days</b>			

The evaluation is planned to be conducted starting from **25 January 2023** and the final evaluation report should be presented by **10 April 2023**.

External evaluator should prepare the following key deliverables:

- Evaluation design – contains the evaluation framework; detailed evaluation methodology; work plan and budget.
- Developed evaluation tools.
- Inception Report - with proposed work plan, methodology/tools

- Draft evaluation report – draft report will be prepared in line with the proposed structure bellow and should be submitted to national project management, electronically via e-mail, in English.
- Final evaluation report - findings of the external evaluation shall be presented in a written report following the proposed outline.
- Attachments – templates of applied evaluation tools, questionnaires; main areas for focus groups, list of people interviewed, key documents consulted, etc.
- Evaluation report should be submitted to National Director in English in electronic format for final approval.

## 7. Evaluation report structure

Maximum length excluding appendices: 30 pages

The evaluation report should be structured in the following way:

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Table of contents
- Figures and tables
- Acronyms

### SUMMARY

- Background and project context
- Findings and conclusions
- Recommendations and lessons learned

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. SCOPE OF EVALUATION

- Brief project description

### 1.2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

- Reason and justification for evaluation
- Aim and purpose of evaluation
- Key guiding questions

### 1.3. EVALUATION MISSION

- Time span and process of evaluation
- Profile, composition and independence (non bias) of evaluation team
- Participation of partners and target group in evaluation
- External factors influencing the evaluation process and respective consequences

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- Methodology and instruments
- Measures ensuring the protection of the stakeholders involved

### 2.2 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

- Suitability and limits of the methodical approach

## 3. CONDITIONS FOR EVALUATION

- Local context, problem statement, project's initial potential and potential changes



- throughout the project period, through e.g. political / social / environmental developments
- Presence and actions of other stakeholders
- Risk factors for achieving project objectives

#### 4. PERFORMANCE OF GERMAN AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

- Staff qualification
- Changes at German and implementing partner organisation

#### 5. DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTIVENESS

##### 5.1. RELEVANCE

- Consistency of project objectives with the needs of the target group and the objectives of the donor (BMZ), the German partner (HGFD) and the implementing partners
- Adequate developmental approach and conceptualisation

##### 5.2. EFFECTIVENESS

- Quality of project planning
- Quality of system of indicators and objectives
- Quality of project implementation
- Motivation, ownership and legitimacy of implementing partner
- Quality of project management
- Achievement of project objectives
- Other effects on output and outcome level (incl. negative, if any)

##### 5.3. EFFICIENCY

- Cost effectiveness of the project

##### 5.4. IMPACT

- Achievement of overall objective
- Model character, establishment of structures and broad impact
- Other effects of overall, developmental impact (incl. negative, if any)

##### 5.5. SUSTAINABILITY

- Durability of positive impact (after project completion); also considering potential changes in the project context
- Risks for and potential of sustainable impact on the level of the organisation and the target group

#### 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- Cross-cutting topics of development cooperation (e.g. gender equality, human rights, inclusion, environmental sustainability)
- Contribution to organisational goals

#### 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 7.1 CONCLUSIONS

##### 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 7.3 LESSONS LEARNED

#### ANNEXES

- Terms of Reference
- Composition and independence (non bias) of evaluation team
- Evaluation matrix

- Evaluation plan and time diagram
- List of stakeholders consulted
- Bibliography/reference
- Questionnaires/other data collection instruments
- Debriefing Protocol
- System of objectives and indicators
- Others if necessary

## 8. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The criteria that will be used for selection are as follows:

**Method:** The proposed methodology to conduct the evaluation.

**Timetable/work plan:** The timetable/work plan is realistic and meets the needs of the project.

**Cost:** The cost of the proposal given the availability of data, analysis, method, and other aspects of the proposal are reasonable and feasible.

**Qualifications and experience:**

- The leading expert(s) should possess at least a Master's degree in Social Sciences, Public Policy, International Development, Development, Economics/Planning, Public Administration, and Management and in any other related field.
- Proven competency in monitoring and evaluation of the projects.
- Proven experience with quantitative and qualitative research, participatory processes, database management and statistical data analysis.
- Strong analytical skills.
- Good understanding of development work, child rights and issues affecting vulnerable children.
- Very good oral and written communication skills in English.
- Ideally experience and credibility in providing evaluating services to BMZ financed projects
- Experience in providing in organizing research processes with/for SOS Children's Villages is an asset.

In case of a team of evaluators, roles and responsibilities should be distributed among team members in accordance with their competence and level of expertise and meet the requirements of this Terms of Reference (ToR). A leader of evaluation team would be responsible for:

- Quality and timely fulfillment of the ToR with expected results of the evaluation.
- Overall evaluation design of the process.
- Elaborated evaluation plan indicating each step of the process.
- Effective distribution of the responsibilities among evaluation team members.
- Quality and timely implementation of the evaluation plan.
- Effective and quality data collection.
- Data compilation and analyzing aimed at reaching goal of the evaluation.
- Preparation and submission of high quality and consistent evaluation report in due course.

External evaluator(s) should not be biased and have any reason for conflict of interests. The evaluator(s) must respect participating communities' culture, social norms, values, and behaviour; maintain appropriate relationships with participants to this evaluation and keep private information

about beneficiaries, acquired during the evaluation, strictly confidential.

## **9. Management arrangements**

The logistics cost include the travel expenses (airfare, ground transportation and accommodation) to be included into financial part of the proposal (Evaluation budget). The contact person for the logistical and other support issues will be Mr. Milos Pejovic, Administrative and Finance Coordinator of the project – [milos.pejovic@sos-kd.org](mailto:milos.pejovic@sos-kd.org)

## **10. Budget and payment**

Payment will be made in instalments:

- A pre-payment of of the costs stated under financial part of the proposal will be paid at the time of signing the contract.
- Final payment will be made after the acceptance of the final evaluation report (incl. incorporation of feedback received from various stakeholders).

## **11. Proposal submission**

Deadline for questions regarding project or questions regarding application procedure is 20 January 2023. Please refer your questions to Milos Pejovic on email [milos.pejovic@sos-kd.org](mailto:milos.pejovic@sos-kd.org) . Deadline for submission of technical and financial proposals is 23 January 2023 to [milos.pejovic@sos-kd.org](mailto:milos.pejovic@sos-kd.org)