

Consultant to assist in the creation of a set of tools to monitor the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

Terms of Reference

Overview

The UN welcomed the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in 2009 to promote, facilitate and guide the progressive implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for children at risk of being separated from their family or without family care. The Guidelines provide guidance and policy orientations to ensure that children do not find themselves separated from their family unnecessarily and, when separated, appropriate individualized high-quality alternative care is provided. The guidelines address not only governments, but also international bodies and organizations, civil society, professionals, and voluntary organizations. To support governments and civil society in their implementation and monitoring, the newly released handbook entitled 'Moving Forward: Implementing the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'¹ was developed to provide practical guidance for policy-making as well as links to what is already being effectively done on the ground.

The Guidelines complement the CRC and, as such are not ratified. In the absence of a formal/mandated monitoring and reporting process, there is a critical need to systematically monitor their implementation at the country level. The gap in monitoring means it is difficult to hold countries accountable for implementation or observance of the Guidelines and to ensure that the results of monitoring are systematically included in reporting on the CRC or other mechanisms. Effective monitoring of the use of the Guidelines will allow for the identification of both progress and gaps in policy and practice that can inform improvements in services and support evidence-based advocacy. Promising practices identified in monitoring can then be shared for replication and contextualisation with others. In these ways systematic monitoring will help to ensure full implementation of the Guidelines, improving the quality of care for children and above all creating positive change for children and their families.

The availability of a well designed and tested inter-agency methodology is critical to provide stakeholders with a common set of practical tools to measure progress in strengthening families, promote family reintegration, and ensure the provision of a range of appropriate alternative care for children when separation is unavoidable. The use of a common set of tools will also enable comparisons between countries that can encourage greater effort from countries seen to be lagging in implementation. *Moving Forward*, the implementation handbook mentioned above, is structured around fifteen key focus areas² in alternative care that can inform how to structure the monitoring of the implementation of the Guidelines, with the best interests of the child a key aspect across all focus areas.

Overall Objectives and Activities of the Project:

The overall goal of this consultancy will be to facilitate an interagency process and support the development of a set of tools to monitoring and track the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children. This inter-agency initiative will be conducted in close collaboration with the Children Without Appropriate Parental Care Working Group in New York and Geneva. It will be co-

¹ In association with International Social Service, Oak Foundation, SOS Children's Village, and UNICEF.

² Including the following 15 focus areas: 1. Participation of Children and Young People in Care Decisions, 2) Placement of children under three, 3) Strategies for deinstitutionalization, 4) Protection and support for child-headed households, 5) Supporting families to prevent abandonment and relinquishment, 6) Care of children whose primary caregiver is in custody, 7) Promoting reintegration of children into their family, 8) Gatekeeping, 9) State involvement in informal care arrangements, 10) Supporting appropriate traditional care responses, 11) Developing family-based alternative care settings, 12) Leaving care and after care support, 13) Financing care to avoid unwarranted placements, 14) Developing reliable and accountable licensing and inspection systems, 15) Alternative care in emergencies.

facilitated by the Better Care Network and Save the Children UK over a 10 month period. Both individuals and institutions are encouraged to apply.

The project includes the following activities:

1. Review of existing methodologies and consultations with regional and global bodies.
2. The core group steering this initiative will meet to develop initial options on:
 - ways the implementation of the main aspects and provisions of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children should be monitored (potentially based on the sections of the implementation handbook);
 - ensuring relevancy for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and other regional and global reporting mechanisms and other tools collected;
 - identifying and proposing key elements for the tools and possible approaches to be used for discussion with the broader advisory group
 - a selection of 2 pilot countries. Countries will be selected as part of the planning stage.
3. A follow-up advisory group meeting, including child care and M&E experts will be organized to discuss, validate, and shape the methodology and tool or set of tools.
4. A draft version of the proposed methodology and tool or set of tools, with a qualitative focus aimed at informing monitoring reports will be developed following suitable for consultation and field testing.
5. The tool or set of tools will be field tested in two selected countries. This will include the translation of the tool(s) and the setup of national advisory group of key stakeholders (combination of policy makers, practitioners and academics) to help contextualize and pilot the tool or set of tools.
6. In collaboration with an IT expert, a proposal will be developed to identify the best way forward for the creation of a simple online database to compile country results as well as regional and global recommendations as agreed through the design process of the methodology and tool. The tools will be shared through existing online platforms to support the guidelines such as the: www.alternativecareguidelines.org ; the Better Care Network: <http://www.bettercarenetwork.org> and RELAF: www.relaf.org.

Key Responsibilities of Consultancy:

- Review existing methodologies for situation analysis and needs assessment to establish a qualitative baseline and for tracking progress in implementation at a national level as well as local level where appropriate. Consult with and collect recommendations from regional and global bodies on these topics.
- Participate in a global core group meeting to develop initial options on:
 - the main aspects and provisions of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children that should be monitored (potentially based on the sections of the implementation handbook);
 - ensuring relevancy for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and other regional and global reporting mechanisms and other tools collected; a selection of 2 pilot countries.
- Draft initial recommendations for the approach and methodology to inform the advisory group meeting based on discussions with the global core group
- Participate in the advisory group meeting

- Draft methodology and tool or set of tools, with a qualitative focus aimed at informing monitoring reports for consultation and field testing.
- Consolidate feedback received from broad consultation and the field testing and finalise a set methodology and tool or set of tools.
- Liaise with IT expert to inform the development of the specifications by an IT consultant identifying best way forward for the creation of a simple online database to compile country results as well as regional and global recommendations as agreed through the design process of the methodology and tool.

Key Deliverables:

- Summary and presentation of existing methodologies and recommendations for potential methodology tool.
- Participate in two meetings: first with the Core Group (set for mid-January) and then with the broader Expert group.
- Final version of proposed methodology and tool or set of qualitative tools going forward.
- Inform specifications for the online database to compile country and regional results.

Requirements:

- Extensive experience in social work, social science, social policy or related field or a Bachelor's degree with substantial training, knowledge, skills and experience obtained through other routes.
- International work experience including working with Governments on specific child protection related laws and policies
- Demonstrated understanding of alternative care and child care reforms at the country and global levels
- Significant experience in research and monitoring and evaluation related to child protection.
- Experience leading and facilitating inter-agency collaborations and initiatives
- **Significant expertise and understanding on the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children**
- Excellent writing skills in English and in summarizing complex papers. Additional language(s) would be an asset.

The consultancy is open to consultant(s) working on an individual basis or as part of academic institutions or consulting group.

Additional considerations

- **Fluency in either French, or Spanish**

Timeframe: 35 days over a 6 months period.

How to Apply:

Expressions of interest, including a 1-2 page outline the approach you would take in designing the tool, likely components, and key aspects to consider in development. Please send these together with an accompanying curriculum vitae to both Rebecca Smith at R.Smith2@savethechildren.org.uk and Florence Martin at florence.martin@bettercarenetwork.org by 06 December, 2013.