TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy Assignment: The state of buzz (debate/communication) about Education in Uwezo participating districts in Kenya

1. Introduction/Background

Twaweza means “we can make it happen” in Swahili. Twaweza works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Our flagship programs include Uwezo, Africa’s largest annual citizen assessment to assess children’s learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and Sauti za Wananchi, Africa’s first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership.

Since 2009, Uwezo has been conducting nationwide assessments on learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy involving children aged 7-16 both in and out of school. The results of these assessments have consistently revealed an appalling picture in which only a small proportion of children demonstrate mastery of basic learning competencies. Additionally, it seems that our communication of the performance of education system does not reach all the key players in education, which partly explains the apparent gap in the understanding of benchmarks for assessing performance in an education system. This may limit citizens’ engagement, which is at the centre of Twaweza’s work. There is therefore a need to enhance communication with key players of Uwezo’s work and in particular the broad implications of the assessment results on the future of children’s learning and development opportunities.

2. Purpose and objectives of the consultancy assignment

In light of the above background, Twaweza communications team has been working to design appropriate strategy including mass communication mechanisms that would spur discussion and debate and raise key players’ awareness of learning outcomes so that they can prioritise them as an important benchmark for assessing the performance of the Kenyan education system. The strategy includes production of communication materials which will be distributed during assessment, involvement of media, regional launches, district partners and government officials to generate awareness of learning outcomes among key actors and to ensure learning outcomes are a policy priority. While some of these processes have begun in 20 pilot districts across Kenya, it has become important to in these early stages to understand the current status of communication about education. Thus, the purpose of this consultancy assignment is to explore the state of buzz (debate/communication) about education among selected key actors in a sample of 10 Uwezo participating districts. More specifically, the assignment intends to:
I. Identify and describe key sources of information among key education policy makers and influencers in the sampled districts (Gatundu, Kakamega East, Kuria East, Loitokitok, Marsabit, Teso South, Turkana South, Mwala, Trans Nzoia West and Mbere, Trans Nzoia West and Mwala)

II. Examine the status and place of education in the public discourse in the sampled districts

III. Investigate the extent to which the education agenda feature in the key decision making processes.

IV. Investigate the level of awareness of key players about learning assessments and Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment in particular.

V. Examine the extent to which learning outcomes are prioritised and form a part of the education agenda and public debate in the sampled districts.

VI. Explore key players’ understanding of their role and support in improving children’s learning outcomes.

VII. Investigate resource allocation/expenditure on education generally and on learning outcomes specifically.

VIII. Examine key players’ perspectives regarding challenges associated with promoting learning outcomes in their respective districts.

3. Scope of Work

Activities and outputs

The consultant will undertake a qualitative research to address the above mentioned objectives. More specifically, the consultant is expected to undertake the following tasks:

i) Conduct an extensive literature review about the state of buzz (debate/communication) about education in Kenya and the place of learning outcomes in public discourse

ii) Design the methodology of the study, including formulating research questions, methods, data collection tools, sampling processes, ethical guidelines

iii) Conduct observations and Interviews of key stakeholder (at least 10 per district) at two levels;

   o At County level, at least 3 of the following: (County Education Boards Chairperson, County Director of Education, County Executive Committee in charge of education, County Education Officer, County Teachers Service Commission Director, ).

   o At District/Sub-county level (at least two public primary school Head teachers, any (but no less than three) Policy actors; District quality Assurance Officer, District Education Officer, Zonal education officers), and at least two Media practitioners/Journalists.

iv) Carry out data analysis, report writing and dissemination of the results to Twaweza team.
4. **Time frame**

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<tr>
<th>Output</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submission of proposal(s)</td>
<td>By October 27, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of proposal and contracting</td>
<td>By October 30, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>By November 09, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission and review of 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; draft report;</td>
<td>By November 27, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review and incorporation of Twaweza feedback – submission of final draft</td>
<td>By December 4, 2015</td>
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5. **Cost/budget**

The consultant shall propose a cost for the assignment based on key factors like number of working days for the assignment, market rates and any other relevant expenses.

6. **Request for Proposals**

We are seeking the services of individual consultants (ideally two consultants working together with one as the lead) or a firm with a relevant experience in conducting field based qualitative research in a similar or related assignment. Must have proven excellent qualitative research, analysis, interpretation and writing skills. Postgraduate qualification preferably in communication, education, psychology, sociology or related fields.

Interested persons should submit a proposal (not exceeding 10 pages) indicating clearly their understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology and approach, a cost-effective budget and a curriculum Vitae showing experience with similar work, should be submitted by e-mail to: jobs@twaweza.org and cc sotieno@twaweza.org so as to reach not later than Tuesday October 27, 2015.