**Terms of Reference for Research Under the Supporting Adolescent Girls’ Education (SAGE)-TEACH Project.**

**Research Topic:**

**Exploring the Experiences of SAGE-TEACH learners with Disabilities: An Investigation of their Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP), Learning and Skill Acquisition, and Agency Empowerment**

1. **About Plan International**

We strive for a just world that advances girls rights and equality for girls. Our Ambition to 2027 is to see All Girls Standing Strong Creating Global Change. Working together we will create:

* A world where all girls know and exercise their rights and live the life they choose.
* A network of supporters, communities, staff, partners, and donors, all supporting girls and young women to stand strong as they learn, lead, decide, and thrive.
* Global change through breaking down the barriers and discrimination girls and young women currently face every minute, every hour, every day.

We aim to improve the lives of 200 million girls by 2027. When girls thrive in a more equal world, we are all stronger for it. Our objectives are Increased Impact, Strengthened Legitimacy, and Improved Sustainability. Our values create a mind-set which aligns with our work, brings them to life. Plan International’s global values are, we work well together, we are open and accountable, we strive for lasting impact and we are inclusive and empowering.

1. **About the Commissioning Office**

Plan International started operating in Zimbabwe in 1986 with the opening up of Mutare Program Area (PA). Over the years, the organization expanded operations and is now covering 5 PAs. These PAs are Manicaland, Chiredzi, Kwekwe, Harare and Bulawayo.

PIZ’s current 5-year country strategy lays out Plan Zimbabwe’s strategic choices in order to respond, influence outcomes and deliver impact on key priorities that face the children in the country. The overall CSP’s country goal is to ‘***Contribute to the reduction of child and unplanned youth pregnancies and child marriages in Zimbabwe to enable girls, boys and young people to develop into responsible and engaged citizens’***

The goal will be achieved through the implementation of the following Strategic Choices:

* **Sexual Reproductive Heath:** Young people access comprehensive ASRH and HIV information for informed choices and access to services for reduced teen pregnancies and HIV infection.
* **Gender Sensitive Child Protection:** Children and young people particularly girls grow up in an environment where they are protected from violence (sexual, GBV, physical, neglect and emotional).
* **Youth economic empowerment:** Socio economic empowerment of young people particularly girls and young women, for resilient and diversified livelihood opportunities in rural and urban settings.
* **Quality and Inclusive education:** Children especially girls’ access and complete quality and inclusive basic education.

1. **Background on the topic/ issue**

The SAGE-TEACH project, implemented by Plan International in Zimbabwe across 11 districts, focuses on empowering 5,027 highly marginalised out-of-school adolescent girls aged 10-19, including those living with disabilities. Running from August 2023 to March 2026, the project aims to enhance foundational literacy and numeracy skills up to Grade 5 (Module 2C), facilitate transitions into education, vocational training, or employment, and build resilience to health, economic, or climate-related challenges. The project’s core outcomes are structured around three pillars**: Learning,** ensuring girls complete the Accelerated Teaching and Learning (ATL) cycle with measurable improvements in literacy and numeracy; **Transition,** supporting successful progression into vocational skills training; and **Sustainability**, influencing Zimbabwe’s education system by strengthening the implementation of the Non-Formal Education (NFE) policy.

Building on insights from SAGE Phase I, the SAGE-TEACH project has enhanced its focus on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services, particularly for adolescent girls with disabilities—a previously under-addressed area. The initiative incorporates Guidance and Counselling Teachers, Peer Leaders, and Community Child Care Workers to deliver SRHR information within learning hubs. Disability training for volunteers has also been conducted to promote inclusivity and ensure meaningful engagement of learners with disabilities. To further refine its approach, the project seeks to evaluate whether learners with disabilities are adequately engaged as envisioned and to identify any unintended consequences they may face. This investigation will provide evidence-based insights into unique SRHR challenges and inform the development of inclusive, effective solutions tailored to their needs.

**4.Research focus**

* 1. **Research Purpose**

This study aims to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among learners with disabilities in the SAGE TEACH Project. By identifying gaps and variations in SRHR KAP, it seeks to evaluate their access to SRHR services and information, as well as uncover factors that facilitate or hinder SRHR education and empowerment. The findings are intended to guide evidence-based improvements to existing programs, making them more inclusive and responsive to the unique needs of learners with disabilities. Ultimately, the research aims to enhance SRHR outcomes, foster equity, and empower individuals with disabilities to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

The following are some of the research objectives: -

1. Evaluate the current level of SRHR knowledge, attitudes, and practices among SAGE-TEACH learners with disabilities.

2. Assess the impact of SAGE-TEACH SRHR education on learners' knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to sexual and reproductive health.

3. Determine the specific challenges and barriers hindering SAGE-TEACH learners with disabilities' access to and utilization of SRHR services and information.

4. Examine the impact of socioeconomic factors on SAGE-TEACH learners with disabilities' access to and utilization of SRHR services and information.

5.Assess the effectiveness of the SAGE-TEACH program in promoting SRHR learning, skill acquisition, and empowerment among learners with disabilities

By gathering data driven insights, the above research objectives will unveil SRHR knowledge and empowerment, barriers and facilitators and how the SAGE TEACH project can improve going forth.

* 1. **Research Questions**

The following overarching research questions in thematic categories will guide the study:

1. **Primary Questions**

* What is the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) regarding Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) among SAGE-TEACH learners with disability?
* To what extent do SAGE-TEACH learners with disability enhance SRHR-related skills and increase knowledge?
* To what extent do SAGE-TEACH learners with disability demonstrate agency in the exercise of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the ability to make informed decisions, advocate for themselves, and access appropriate SRHR services?

1. **Barriers and Challenges**

* What specific challenges and barriers hinder SAGE-TEACH learners with disability access to and utilization of SRHR services and information?
* How do factors such as socio-economic, disability, gender, culture, religion, climate change and disasters influence SAGE-TEACH learners with disability access to and utilization of SRHR services and information?

1. **Facilitating Factors**

* What socio-economic, gender and climate change factors facilitate or hinder the development of SRHR KAP among SAGE-TEACH learners with disability?

1. **Program Improvement:**

* What program adaptations can enhance support for SAGE-TEACH learners with disability SRHR learning, skill acquisition, and empowerment?

### Users of the research

The findings of this study will serve as a critical resource for a wide range of stakeholders, including education policymakers, school administrators, curriculum developers, teachers, community leaders, and organizations operating in the education and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) sectors. By identifying and analysing the factors that influence the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of girls with disabilities regarding SRHR services, the research aims to inform targeted strategies and interventions that enhance accessibility and empowerment for this marginalized group. The study emphasizes the importance of fostering inclusivity and equity within communities by addressing the unique challenges faced by girls with disabilities. Through this research, participants will have the opportunity to voice their needs and contribute directly to the development of initiatives that prioritize their empowerment and improve health outcomes. This participatory approach ensures that interventions are both relevant and impactful. Furthermore, Plan International will leverage the insights gained from this research to refine and optimize its SRHR programming. By integrating evidence-based findings, the organization aims to strengthen its efforts in promoting inclusive access to essential services and advancing the well-being of girls with disabilities. Ultimately, this work contributes to building more equitable systems that support the rights and health of all individuals.

### Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

The research proposal should embrace a data collection approach that will include a mixed method design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection in order to inform the research. This will allow for a complete and more synergistic utilisation and triangulation of data. The researcher will develop appropriate disability inclusive child friendly and age-appropriate tools and approaches for data collection with different stakeholders as outlined in these ToR. The researcher will adhere to Plan International’s research and evaluation safeguarding and child protection ethics and protocols. The data collection process will include the use of several approaches, including participatory research, to gather comprehensive data and insights on SAGE-TEACH learners with disability SRHR experiences and needs. All research instruments will be in accessible format considering individual disability needs

At a minimum, the researcher should utilize the following data collection methods:

* In-depth interviews with program participants, teachers, and other stakeholders to gather information about their experiences and perceptions of the program’s SRHR interventions.
* Focus Group Discussions with program participants, teachers, and other stakeholders to gather information about their experiences and perceptions of the program’s SRHR interventions.
* Surveys distributed to program participants, teachers, and other stakeholders to gather information about their experiences and perceptions on SHRH knowledge and services and their perspectives on rights of people with disabilities
* Participatory, creative and girl centred research methods which will be key as this method ensures equitable inclusion of girls especially those from the Apostolic Community who shy away from SRHR related conversations.

**6.1 Sample**

The study will involve a carefully selected sample of 102 learners aged 15 years and older, representing approximately 25% of the total population of learners with disabilities enrolled in the hubs. These participants will be drawn from five districts: Bulilima, Imbizo, Mutare Rural, Chimanimani, Mutoko, and Harare South. These districts were chosen due to their high concentration of learners with disabilities and their representation of diverse subgroups within the population. The selected districts encompass a range of demographic groups, including young mothers, married girls, apostolic girls, girls who have never attended school, girls from ethnic minorities, and those engaged in child labour. By including participants from both rural and urban communities, the study aims to ensure a representative sample that reflects the varied experiences and perspectives of learners with disabilities. This approach will allow the research to provide meaningful insights into the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) experiences of SAGE-TEACH learners with disabilities. The diverse composition of the sample is expected to enhance the depth and relevance of the findings while maintaining a manageable scope for data collection and analysis.

**6.2 Participant Selection and Recruitment**

The purposive sampling approach outlined focuses on ensuring a diverse and comprehensive representation of learners with disabilities within the SAGE-TEACH program. By prioritizing maximum variation, the methodology aims to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences. The selected sample will reflect diversity across key dimensions, including:

1. SRHR Knowledge and Experience; Participants will include individuals with varying levels of knowledge and experience related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), ensuring insights from both those highly informed and those with limited exposure.

2. Socio-Economic Status; The sample will encompass learners from different economic backgrounds to account for the influence of socio-economic factors on access and engagement.

3. Geographic Location; Representation from urban, rural, and remote areas will be prioritized to understand geographic disparities in program access and outcomes.

4. Cultural and Religious Background; Participants will be selected to reflect the cultural and religious diversity within the SAGE-TEACH population, recognizing the role these factors play in shaping perceptions and experiences.

5. Level of Engagement with SAGE-TEACH Programs; The sample will include both highly engaged participants and those with minimal interaction to explore varying levels of program impact.

6. Disability Type; A range of disability types will be represented to ensure the findings address the unique needs and challenges faced by different groups.

This targeted sampling strategy is designed to generate rich, nuanced data that will inform program improvements and ensure inclusivity in addressing the needs of learners with disabilities. Consent forms will be designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. In cases where written consent is not feasible, verbal consent will be recorded as an alternative. It will be explicitly communicated to all potential participants that audio recording during group discussions is a mandatory aspect of the study. Participants will be informed that they have the right to decline participation if they are not comfortable with being recorded. The privacy and rights of participants will be prioritized and clearly outlined in a manner that is accessible and understandable, including child-friendly explanations where necessary. This will encompass their right to withdraw from the study at any time, request the deletion of their data, and receive detailed information regarding the storage, distribution, and eventual deletion of their data.

### Ethics and Child Protection

Plan International is committed to ensuring that the rights of those participating in data collection or analysis are respected and protected, in accordance with Ethical MERL Framework and our Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy. All applicants should include details in their proposal on how they will ensure ethics and child protection in the data collection process. Specifically, the consultant(s) shall explain how appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders will be ensured and how special attention will be paid to the needs of children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The consultant shall also explain how confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed.

Applicants must read and understand the Plan International Child Protection, Safeguarding Children and Young People policy and Disability Inclusive Safeguarding in Programming Guidance and acknowledge receipt by submitting signed copies. The consultant must follow Ethical Principles for involving human subjects in research and obtain written/ verbal consent from the human subjects. Permission from legal guardians must be sought if the children under 18 years are involved as subjects. Signed informed consent of each child and his/her parents need to be in place and retained for evidence when needed after explaining the purpose of the study and its usage, data distribution, storage and deletion This will be part of mandatory training provided for the research team.

In this assignment, the consultant is expected to apply a child rights, gender transformative and inclusion lens and raise insights that are not only limited to the project’s aspirations towards addressing gender norms, strengthening girls' and young women's agency, advancing girls' and women's condition and position, working with boys and men to embrace gender equality, responding to the needs and interest of girls and boys in all their diversity including those with disabilities, and fostering an environment that enables gender equality and girls' rights. To ensure cultural sensitivity in research, the consultant should familiarize themselves with the customs and traditions of the SAGE TEACH communities they will collect data from, use language that is respectful and appropriate.

### Key Deliverables

### Key deliverables expected from the researchers during the initiative should include:

-Inception Report or Research Protocol including:

* an overview of available literature on the topic / a literature review
* an updated timeline;
* detailed methodology, including draft sampling methodology and size;
* draft data collection tools;
* ethical consideration;
* consent forms for any primary data collection;
* (draft) methods for data analysis;
* brief justification of the methods and techniques used (including relevant underlying values and assumptions/ theories) with a justification of the selections made (e.g. of persons interviewed).
* Draft Research Report
* Final Research Report (including Executive Summary)
* Final Data Collection Tools
* Final Sampling methodology (including unit of sampling and sampling frame) and size
* Cleaned Data (including data files (e.g. Excel, SPSS), transcripts of qualitative data, syntax/ code books etc.)
* Completed Consent Forms (including for children and their caregivers and adults)
* Other Communication Products for Dissemination, as required

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### Timeline

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Time** | **Days of Work** | **Responsible** | **Individuals Involved** |
| Tendering/Advertising | 28th January – 6th February | 10 working days | Procurement/MERL | Procurement/ MERL Manager, Project Manger |
| Adjudication, Background Checks and Contracting; | 7th – 11th February | 3 working days | Procurement/MERL | Procurement/ MERL Manager, Project Manager |
| Inception Call/ Inception Workshop | 12th February | 1 day | Consultant/ MERL | MERL Manager, MERL Specialist, PAM, TL, Project Manager |
| Submission of Inception Report with proposed draft data collection tools | 17th February | 2 days | Consultant/ MERL | MERL Specialist, Project Manager |
| Review, finalisation of inception report, data collection tools and Preparations for data collection. | 18th – 20th February | 3 days | Consultant/ MERL | Consultant/ MERL Specialist, Project Manager |
| Enumerator training  Field piloting and finalisation of tools and setting up of mobile data collection system. | 21st – 24th February | 2 days | Consultant | Consultant/ MERL Specialist, Project Manager, Safeguarding lead |
| Field Data Collection | 25th February – 7th March | 9 working days | Consultant | Consultant/ MERL Specialist, Project Manager |
| Data Analysis and report writing | 10th – 14th March | 5 working days | Consultant | Consultant |
| Submission of Draft 1 report | 17th March | 1 day | Consultant | Consultant |
| Presentation of report | 18th March | 1 day | Consultant | Consultant/Plan |
| Validation/review of Draft 1 report & feedback to Consultant by Plan | 19th – 20th March | 2 days | MERL/  Consultant | MERL Manager, MERL Specialist, PAM, TL, Project Manager |
| Review of Draft 1 report and attending to comments | 21st - 24th March | 2 days | Consultant | MERL Specialist, Project Manager |
| Validation/review of Draft 2 report & feedback to Consultant by Plan | 25th - 26th March | 2 days | MERL/  Consultant | MERL Manager, MERL Specialist, PAMs, TL, Project Manager |
| Review of Draft 2 report and attending to comments | 27th – 28th March | 2 days | Consultant | MERL Specialist, Project Manager |
| Validation/review of Draft 2 report & feedback to Consultant by Plan | 29th – 30th March | 2 days | MERL/  Consultant | MERL Manager, MERL Specialist, PAMs, TL, Project Manager |
| Submission of Final Report and 10 paged abridged version/summary and all other deliverables | 31st March | 1 day | Consultant | MERL Manager, MERL Specialist, PAMs, TL, Project Manager |
| Management Response and Action Plan |  | 4 days | Programs | MERL Manager, MERL Specialist, PAMs, HOO, TL, Project Manager |
| Submission of final report to UKNO |  | 1 day | MERL | MERL Manager |

### Budget

There will be an agreement on the budget between the consultant and Plan International. Payments will be made in batches as shown below:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Milestones** | **Detail** | **Amount to be paid by %** | **Expected Time Frame** |
| Inception Report | Agreed inception report | 40% | 17th February |
| Draft Report | A feedback meeting will be held at district level where the first draft report will be presented to all stakeholders in a one-day workshop | 30% | 17th March 2025 |
| Final Report | After incorporating comments from the district stakeholder’s feedback meeting and Program Leadership Team members and UKNO, a final report will be produced. | 30% | 31st March 2025 |

### Expected Qualifications

The consultant or the consulting firm must have a varied mix of skills and competences and they must have undertaken similar works in Zimbabwe in the last four years. The following competencies are mandatory;

* Postgraduate degree in social sciences or any related field
* Minimum of five years of experience in coordinating and administering SRHR related research including data collection and entry, data management and storage, preferably for international non-international non-profit organizations or multilateral agencies and multi-country studies
* Demonstrated experience in facilitation and supervising data collectors/enumerators and data entry clerks to collect and enter data as per high quality standards.
* Demonstrated experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis.
* Knowledge and experience in SRHR programming, particularly working with young girls and women with disability of various marginalisation in Zimbabwe.
* Knowledge and experience in gender issues as well as a gender balanced research team are highly preferred.
* Fluency in English, Shona and Ndebele.
* Ability to produce high quality work under tight timeframes

### Applications

Interested applicants should provide a proposal covering the following aspects:

Detailed **technical proposal** clearly demonstrating a thorough understanding of this ToR and including the following:

* Proposed methodology
* Ethics and Child safeguarding approaches including any identified risks and associated mitigation measures
* Proposed plan for enumerator training, data collection, data entry and management.
* A proposed timeframe detailing activity and a schedule/work plan (including a Gantt chart).
* Team composition and level of effort of each proposed team member, if applicable.
* Previous experience/mandates similar in nature including type of study, sector, organization.
* Outline the major activities involved and specify/link consultancy team members to be involved in each.
* A **financial proposal** with a detailed breakdown of costs for the study
* Itemized consultancy fees/costs.
* Field data collection expenses should be itemised, including transport and accommodation.
* Itemized administrative expenses.
* Validity period of quotations.
* Expected payment plan and method.
* 3 recommendation letters including contact details from previous organisation where similar work was conducted.
* Demonstrated previous experience in coordinating and administering studies of a similar nature.
* A copy of a previous reports of similar work undertaken
* A profile of Consultant’s CVs. In the case of a firm, full names, physical addresses, telephone numbers, and contact person of the firm/company; date of registration, registration number, copy of registration certificate and VAT certificate; names of directors/proprietors.

The technical and financial proposals have to be submitted separately in sealed envelopes or electronically clearly marked “**Supporting Adolescent Girls’ Education SAGE-TEACH Project Research: Exploring the Experiences of SAGE-TEACH learners with Disabilities: An Investigation of their Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP), Learning and Skill Acquisition, and Agency Empowerment”** and addressed to:

The Purchasing Committee

Plan Zimbabwe

No 15 Lezard Avenue,

Milton Park, Harare

**Annex 1: Global Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People**

**Annex 2: Full Report Structure**

**Annex 3: Ethical MERL Framework**