



## Global Impact Study- Terms of Reference (TOR)

### Background

Global Fund for Children (GFC) helps bold leaders build organizations with innovative programs that empower children and youth. In the world of small community organizations that assert the rights of children and youth, GFC is, in many cases, the only external funder that finds, funds and advises grassroots organizations that have never received such support before. Our flexible funding approach means that we fund our partners' life-changing programs for children and youth, as well as their organizational development. GFC's actions of scouting, granting, and providing capacity development support to our grassroots partners is guided by our commitment to recognizing the knowledge and experiences of local community organizations, and uplifting the agency of children and youth to have an active voice in the spaces that shape their lives. By combining flexible funding with expert assistance, access to networks, and support from our program staff, GFC is facilitating transformative local solutions to address the challenges facing marginalized youth around the world.

Since its founding nearly 25 years ago, GFC has invested nearly \$56 million in more than 1,000 grassroots organizations around the world, strengthening thousands of communities and improving the lives of more than 11 million children and youth. On average, our partners' budgets triple during their relationship with GFC, allowing them to expand and enhance their programs. Our partners also become national leaders on children's rights, influencing government policy to defend and protect hundreds of thousands of children around the world.

GFC promotes the rights of children and young people in four general focus areas—education, freedom from violence and exploitation, gender equality, and youth empowerment—and in four geographic regions—the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe and Eurasia. Often, our partners work on the intersection of several of the focus areas.

GFC seeks an experienced Research partner to lead the design and support the implementation of a Global Impact Study (GIS) to understand the long-term effect that GFC's trust-based model of flexible funding has on local community organizations and the indirect impact of this model on children, young people, and communities they are part of. GFC appreciates the challenges inherent in directly attributing changes in the complex environments our partners work in, and we aim to tell a nuanced story of our contribution to change.

### Purpose of Study and Key Questions

GFC's Five-Year Vision (2022 – 2026) outlines two guiding stars: i. Community-Driven Systems Change and ii. Children and Youth as Leaders and Changemakers. We focus on partners who seek to understand the root causes of issues and collaborate with peers and others to work toward transformative long-term

change. They are both working towards changing individual lives and contributing to change on a larger scale. As children and young people are an integral part of their communities and society at large, we see an urgent need to engage them in intergenerational dialogue and to amplify their voices. We make an effort to listen deeply to the youth-led organizations we work with and seek out opportunities for young people to influence our work.

Keeping the guiding stars at the center, the primary objective of this assignment is to design a Research Study to examine the medium- to long-term impact of GFC's model on local community organizations and the children, young people, and communities they serve in the four regions around the world where GFC works.

- Document the changes that children, young people, and their communities experience as a result of their engagements with GFC partners and, indirectly, GFC.
- Understand how GFC partners are using funds and assess the extent to which GFC's flexible funding is making a difference on the partners' organizational development.
- Examine the role that GFC's trust-based approach and non-financial support plays in partners' development and their programming.
- Identify successes and critical gaps in the GFC model to provide recommendations for improvement

The research team will explore impact through a lens of curiosity and openness and will go well beyond traditional approaches of measuring change. The researchers will play a key role in furthering the scope of and co-designing the Study. They will also assist in selecting and training the appropriate research consultants in the four regions where the Study will take place and will explore options for incorporating participatory aspects, ideally including young people, into the research process.

The following is a draft list of overarching questions that the Study should focus on. During the design phase, the research team, together with GFC, will refine the questions based on the interest, priorities, and possibilities that emerge:

1. How are children, young people, and the communities partners serve changed as a result of engaging with partners that work with GFC? Are partners observing changes in behavior and confidence levels? Are children, young people, and community members reporting changes in their communities as a result of their engagement with local community partners (and, if applicable, GFC)? Are partners seeing evidence of communities taking up their own development initiatives? Are partners witnessing young people in their communities taking on more leadership roles, exercising their voice, and participating in decisions on important matters relating to their communities?
2. What difference does flexible funding make for local community organizations in their organizational development and programming? What do partners choose to focus GFC grants on? How does the freedom to make their own decisions regarding the grants affect other areas of their work?
3. How do partners perceive and experience GFC's trust-based approach? To what extent do partners experience the relationship with GFC differently from other funder relationships they engage in?
4. What role does the non-financial support (capacity development support, building connections and strengthening networks, focus on collective and individual wellbeing, etc.) play in partners'

development on an organizational, programmatic, and personal level? Are partners able to more clearly define their vision and what success means to them? How is partners' confidence to negotiate with other funders affected as a result of their relationship with GFC?

### Usage and Audiences

GFC was founded in 1993. Across much of its long history, GFC's model and approach stayed relatively consistent. A turning point was marked in 2017 when GFC began experimenting with variations on its model, resulting in significant programmatic changes across the subsequent years. The GIS will help GFC understand the longer-term impact of its work with grantee partners and, tangentially, the changes that children and young people, as well as the communities they are part of experience. The learnings will allow GFC to celebrate the successes of the last six years and to identify areas for improvement in its programs, strategy, and approach. The GIS will inform future initiatives and GFC's overall approach to working with partners. The Study will also be useful for peers in the philanthropic ecosystem in understanding the nuances of funding local community organizations in a trusting and flexible way to achieve lasting social change. The Study will also be used as an opportunity to influence funders and the international development spaces at large to examine the possible benefits of investing in local community organizations.

### Methodology and Sample

Specific methodologies to be applied in the Study will be determined together by the research team and GFC. However, GFC expects the research team to suggest an approach and overall research methods in their proposal, which will serve as the kick-off point for the design conversation with the successful candidate. GFC values mixed methods approaches, combining the use of quantitative and qualitative data, and applying participatory evaluation techniques where relevant and beneficial. GFC is keen to work with a team composed at least in part of young researchers who consider engaging young people in the Study if and when it is relevant. A research plan will be used to demonstrate a clear understanding and realistic plan of work for the Study, checking that the research plan is in agreement with the TOR and the overall GFC vision for the Study.

The specific sample of partners to participate in the Study will depend on the scope of study co-designed by the research team and GFC but should include a group of partners from each of the four regions where GFC works – Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe and Eurasia. In its learning and evaluation approach, GFC values engaging partners in learning processes in a collaborative way and would expect the appropriate research partner to share this view and practice this approach.

### Deliverables

The Study will result in a final report that is utilization-focused and will likely include briefs on several topics that can be used both independently and as part of the complete final report. The final report will also require a presentation (or separate presentations) to GFC staff, partners who participated in the Study, and, possibly, external audiences.

### Timeline

The timeline of the study is to be determined together with the Research team. Ideally:

- GFC selects the Research partner by October 2023

- Research partner completes desk research, familiarizes themselves with all relevant documentation, and engages with relevant GFC staff to understand the full scope of the project by November 2023
- Research partner and GFC complete the design of the GIS by end of January 2024
- Research partner, in consultation with GFC, vets and selects local researchers in the 4 regions of the GIS by April 2024
- Research partner, in consultation with GFC, trains research team by June 2024
- GIS begins in June 2024 and concludes by October 2024
- Research partner consolidates data, working with local research teams and presents initial high-level findings to GFC by November 2024
- Research partner concludes the final report by December 2024

### Profile of Research Team

The Research partner should have:

- Proven practical experience in research design and project/program evaluation, particularly in participatory evaluation. Working through an ethnographic/anthropological lens to research is highly preferred.
- Experience working with local community-led organizations in rural areas.
- Understanding of and experience with concepts such as trust-based philanthropy, community-driven systems change, participatory grantmaking, etc.
- Experience with and understanding of children’s issues, youth programs, and civil society issues is necessary.
- Advanced degree (preferred) in Anthropology, Sociology, Ethnography, International Development, or related field reflected on the research team.
- Minimum 5 years of experience with quantitative and qualitative research and experience.
- Ability to analyze, synthesize and to write clear reports in English.
- Experience vetting, selecting, and training researchers of different backgrounds.
- Good knowledge of philanthropy, non-profit spaces in general and familiarity with organizational development.
- Enough awareness of the global context as it relates to political, civil, and socio-economic issues.
- An ability to design ways to engage children and young people in research in a fun and creative manner.
- Familiarity with concepts of safeguarding and willingness to undergo GFC’s safeguarding training and commit to GFC’s safeguarding policy.
- Beaming with curiosity and ideas.

### How to Apply

Interested applicants are asked to submit a **CV and a proposal of the suggested approach of no more than 4-5 pages (not including the CV) to [sphillips-corwin@globalfundforchildren.org](mailto:sphillips-corwin@globalfundforchildren.org). If applying as a team, please include the CV of the lead researcher.** The proposal should outline specifically how the applicant would approach the design of this Global Impact Study. In your proposal you may want to include a sample methodology, proposed team composition, a couple of sample research questions, approach for selecting a sample of GFC’s partners, recruiting and training local researchers in the different regions, etc.

In addition to the proposal, please provide 2 client references, ideally for related projects. The references should include contact information and a brief description of the work conducted. Applicants should have experience in one or more regions where GFC works. Preference will be given to applicants who can prove that their approach to evaluation is founded in trusting, engaging, and empowering the participants of the programs they are evaluating.

Applicants are also asked to submit a detailed budget for the work. Please note that the overall budget for the Learning Journey is USD 200,000 – 225,000. This will include the design of the GIS, accompaniment by the research partner throughout the lifespan of the study, finding, hiring, and training local researchers in the various locations where GFC and the research partner identify GFC’s partners to participate in the study, travel, costs associated with producing the report and disseminating the materials, possible stipends for participating partners, etc. The sample of countries where partners are located will be determined together during the design of the Study, but here are a few examples of possible countries in the different regions where we work that could be considered for budgeting purposes: Bangladesh, Guatemala, India Mexico, Moldova, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Uganda.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis **until September 30, 2023.**