

**Terms of Reference (ToR)
for the Final External Evaluation
of the Project**

“P.A.C.E. - Partnership for a new Approach to early Childhood Education”

PALESTINE

funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)

[AID 011.424]

Volontari nel Mondo RTM NGO (RTM) is searching for an in-country external consultant/company to undertake the final evaluation of the three-years Project called “P.A.C.E.” (1 June 2018 – 31 December 2021).

1. General information

Consultant Report to:

- RTM Country Representative to Palestine and PACE Project Coordinator
- RTM Programme Manager for Western Balkans & Middle East

Overall project budget: 1.800.000 EUR (100%)

Overall amount of the grant: 1.530.000 EUR (85%)

Overall cofunding from RTM and partners: 270.000 EUR (15%)

Main Project Donor: AICS – Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Project implementation period: June 1st 2018 – December 31st 2021

Evaluation Period: November 29th 2021 - January 28th 2022

Location: Palestine, West Bank

OCSE/DAC sector and sub-sector of intervention: 110 – Education, 11240 – Early Childhood Education

Relevant SDG (Sustainable Development Goal): SDG 4 – Providing quality, fair, and inclusive education and learning opportunities for all children.

Budget: the maximum available budget for this consultancy is 5.000 EUR (gross amount), all costs and taxes included.

2. Introduction to RTM

RTM is a non-governmental organization for international volunteering. Our mission is to promote the dignity of the person, protect fundamental rights, and accompany communities in sustainable development processes. We operate through medium- and long-term interventions with the active participation of local partners and beneficiaries and the involvement of local communities. Our cornerstone are the volunteers engaged both abroad in development projects and in Italy in awareness-raising and fundraising activities. Since 1973 it has promoted international cooperation and solidarity projects in Africa, the Balkans, Latin America, and the Middle East and information, awareness-raising, and development education activities in Italy.

For more information on RTM, please refer to our Annual Report 2019:

<https://rtm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/report-rtm-2019-eng.pdf>

RTM's presence in the Palestine started as part of the twinning that binds the Province of Reggio Emilia to the Governorate of Bethlehem and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia with the Municipality of Beit Jala. At the level of civil society, RTM has launched partnerships with local entities on the issues of disability and childhood. Since 2015, RTM has been present in the country with operational headquarters and pre-school interventions in support of Early Childhood Education.

For more information on RTM activities in the country, please refer to:

<https://www.rtm.org/en/progetti-rtm/palestine/>

3. Background to the Project

Lead partner: RTM

Local partners:

- Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE)
- Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (LP)
- Greek – Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Education (GOP)
- IbdAA' Cultural Association, Dheisheh Refugee Camp (IBDAA)
- Greek Catholic Patriarchate of Jerusalem (GCP)

Italian partners:

- Municipality of Reggio Emilia – Institution for Preschools and Infant Toddler Centres (Reggio Emilia)
- Reggio Children Foundation (Reggio Emilia)

Other entities involved:

- Reggio Children srl (service provider)
- Al Quds University (associate)
- Bethlehem Multidisciplinary Industrial Park (associate)
- Joint Council for Solid Waste Management – Bethlehem (associate)

Intervention strategy:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

Supporting the MOEHE and the private education institutions of Palestine in implementing the new Law on Public Education (n.575 of April 2017), the Strategic Plan for the Education Sector 2017-2022, and the National Strategy for Early Childhood Development 2017-2022 as concerns early childhood education services in the West Bank.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

Increasing the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of the early childhood education system in the West Bank by fostering public-private partnership.

RESULTS

1 – QUALITY AND TRAINING

Increasing the professional competences of ministry and university staff [30 units] in terms of pedagogy and management of early childhood education services and of staff in 60 public and private pre-school institutions in terms of lesson planning, learning environment, and family participation.

2 – ACCESS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Ensuring access to early childhood education services to children and families living in marginalised areas of the West Bank by opening 30 new public pre-school classes and expanding and/or reorganising 15 already existing private schools.

3 – SUSTAINABILITY AND PARTNERSHIP

Starting 1 Pilot Centre for Creative Reuse of waste materials with mixed management (public-private) in Bethlehem, to supply schools across the Governorate and promote creative reuse in the West Bank.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 1

A1.1 Study and exchange visits in Italy for MOEHE staff (27) and University staff (3) at Reggio Children – International Centre "Loris Malaguzzi" and the kindergartens of the municipality of Reggio Emilia

A1.2 Technical assistance to the MOEHE on integrated management (public-private) of pre-school services, vetting and supervision of pre-school institutions, and staff training

A1.3 Training for 10 teachers-trainers of local counterparts (public and private)

A1.4 Training of staff in 60 pre-school institutions (public and private) in planning teaching, learning environments, and family participation

A1.5 Consultancy and monitoring of target schools (R1.4) in collaboration with the MOEHE

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 2

A2.1 Training of staff in 30 new public pre-school classes and 15 private pre-school institutions on planning and using learning environments, supplies, and materials

A2.2 Study and exchange days for staff of 30 new public pre-school classes and 15 private pre-school institutions at the local public and private counterparts

A2.3 Technical and financial support for the creation and start-up of 30 new public pre-school classes

A2.4 Technical and financial support for the expansion and/or reorganisation of premises in 15 private pre-school institutions in marginalised areas

A2.5 Creation and implementation of an information campaign on new education services and the importance of early childhood education in the 45 target communities

ACTIVITY CLUSTER 3

A3.1 Study and exchange visits in Italy for the staff (8) and the bodies involved in the creation of the Pilot Centre for Reuse in Bethlehem at “REMIDA – Creative Recycling Centre” (Reggio Emilia)

A3.2 Setting up the pilot Centre for Creative Reuse in Bethlehem

A3.3 Technical assistance to the staff and the bodies involved in the creation of the Pilot Centre for Creative Reuse in Bethlehem for the organisation of the collecting, management, and pick-up services of waste materials from industries and businesses

A3.4 Creation and implementation of a promotional campaign for the Centre for Creative Reuse in Bethlehem across the West Bank

For more information on the PACE Project, please visit:

<https://www.rtm.org/en/portfolio/partnership-approach-early-childhood-education/>

4. Evaluation objectives

The main purpose of the external consultancy is to make an evaluation, as systematic and objective as possible, of the above mentioned project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned and scaling up strategies.

Principles underpinning the approach to the evaluation are:

- Impartiality and independence of the evaluation process from the programming and implementation functions;

- Credibility of the evaluation, through use of appropriately skilled and independent experts and the transparency of the evaluation process, including dissemination of results;
- Participation of stakeholders in the evaluation process, to ensure different perspectives and views are taken into account;
- Usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, through timely presentation of relevant, clear and concise information to decision makers.

The final evaluation report shall provide conclusions and recommendations on the lessons learned and concrete opportunities for the extension of the initiative.

5. Evaluation criteria

- A) **Relevance.** The appropriateness of project objectives to the problems that it was supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operated. It should include an assessment of the quality of project preparation and design – i.e. the logic and completeness of the project planning process, and the internal logic and coherence of the project design.
- B) **Efficiency.** The fact that the project results have been achieved at reasonable cost, i.e. how well inputs/means have been converted into activities, in terms of quality, quantity and time, and the quality of the results achieved. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same results, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.
- C) **Effectiveness.** An assessment of the contribution made by results to achievement of the project purpose, and how assumptions have affected project achievements. This should include specific assessment of the benefits accruing to target groups, including women, children and families.
- D) **Impact.** The effect of the project on its wider environment, and its contribution to the wider policy or sector objectives (as summarized in the project's overall objective).
- E) **Sustainability.** An assessment of the likelihood of benefits produced by the project to continue to flow after external funding has ended, and with particular reference to factors of ownership by beneficiaries, policy support, economic and financial factors, socio-cultural aspects, gender equality, appropriate technology, environmental aspects, and institutional and management capacity.

6. Methodology

The consultancy should adopt an evaluation methodology coherent with the participatory approach of the project. The consultant/s is expected to conduct a participatory evaluation providing for meaningful involvement by the project partner, its beneficiaries and other interested parties. Stakeholder participation is to be an integral component of the evaluation design and planning, data gathering, drafting of findings, evaluation reporting and results dissemination. The evaluation should therefore focus not only on quantifiable results but it shall also analyze processes and dynamics generated by the project, their scope (in terms of people and other actors involved) and their sustainability. This implies moving away from a mere technical approach and to assess the support brought to the sector and its stakeholders by this project.

7. Duties and deliverables

The external evaluator is expected to conduct a participatory evaluation that shall involve site visits to a sample of project locations and meetings with project implementers, target beneficiaries and other key stakeholders.

Key project documentation will be shared in English with the evaluator to facilitate the process of evaluation, which will include:

- Project Proposal (concept note, full project document)
- Interim Donor Reports (narrative)
- Other key project documents (e.g. partnership agreements, MoUs, experts' reports, visibility & dissemination materials, previous RTM projects in Palestine)

The duties of the evaluator and the methodology used will include the following:

- Design of comprehensive qualitative evaluation tools
- Use of participatory methods
- Comprehensive review of project data and related documents
- Meetings with the project staff based in West Bank and project partners
- Visits to a selection of target groups
- A debriefing meeting with the project team and, possibly, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Jerusalem Office
- Provision of a written Evaluation Report and Executive Summary Report with consideration of the following deliverables:
 - 1) the report should be clear and simply written in English;
 - 2) the main body of the report should not exceed 15 pages and should include an executive summary (not exceeding 1 page) and conclusions and recommendations (no less than 3 pages);
 - 3) technical details should be included to appendices e.g. list of informants and the evaluation team's work schedule;
 - 4) background information should only be included when it is directly relevant to the report's analysis/conclusions;
 - 5) all analysis of achievements must be supported with relevant data and the data source must be included;
 - 6) recommendations should include suggestions of how they can be achieved;
 - 7) the Evaluation Report is to be submitted in a signed soft copy to RTM.

The final evaluation report will be structured as follows:

0. Executive summary

1. Main section: a. Introduction: i. Project description ii. Evaluation objectives and methodology b. Analysis of the findings according to the evaluation criteria

2. Conclusions and recommendations, including Lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up

3. Annexes: a. ToR Evaluation b. Names and CV of the evaluator(s) c. Logical framework of the project d. Map of the project area e. List of actors consulted f. Literature and documentation consulted g. Other technical annexes.

All deliverables are to be submitted electronically to:

- RTM Country Representative to Palestine and PACE Project Coordinator
- RTM Programme Manager for Western Balkans & Middle East

8. Evaluation duration and period

The consultancy is expected to be carried out during the period November 29th 2021 – January 28th 2022.
The tentative schedule is as follows:

- Week 1: desk review of core documents; initial meetings with RTM staff.
- Weeks 2-4: field visits to project sites, interviews with project partners, target groups and relevant stakeholders, meetings with management staff, participation into project final events.
- Weeks 5-6: evaluation report drafting, draft version to be submitted no later than January 9th 2022.
- Week 7: debriefing meeting with RTM and collection of feedbacks from relevant stakeholders.
- Week 8: final report writing, final version to be submitted no later than January 28th 2022.

9. Budget and payment arrangements

The total maximum amount available for the external evaluation (consultancy fee) is 5.000 EUR (gross amount, VAT and/or any type of other taxes included). This amount also includes travel/local transports costs, insurance, meals and accommodation for the field activities.

The amount will be transferred in a sole bank payment by RTM by 10 working days from the receipt of the final version of the report and the invoice.

10. Confidentiality

All the outputs (report, other documents, information) produced by this evaluation will be treated as RTM and its partners' property and consequently confidential. So the above mentioned outputs or any part of it cannot be sold, used or reproduced in any manner by the assigned evaluator without prior permission from RTM.

11. Evaluator' skills

The Evaluator is expected to:

- Be currently resident/working in Palestine
- Have documented experience on similar evaluations of civil society projects in the field of early childhood education in the MENA region, particularly in Palestine;
- Have extensive experience in conducting external evaluations in the context of cooperation for development and a proven record delivering professional results;
- Have sound knowledge of evaluation and data-collection methods;
- Be able to communicate and draft reports effectively in Arabic and English;
- Have previous proven working experience in Palestine;
- Relevant academic background;
- Demonstrated experience and expertise in the design and undertaking of programme evaluations using participatory M&E methodologies;
- Knowledge and expertise in the early childhood education sector;
- Excellent analytical, interpersonal, facilitation and communication skills;
- Willingness and ability to work in the relatively remote and rural location;
- Understanding of the realities of data collection in remote and resource poor setting.

12. How to apply

Interested candidates are requested to submit by email an electronic copy of their expression of interest/proposal by November 21st 2021 with the subject "Final Evaluation PACE" to middleeast@rtm.ngo

Candidates must forward:

- 3 pages (max) motivation letter indicating:
 - The consultants' suitability for the assignment and match with previous work experience, qualifications etc.;
 - If the applicant is a team, specify how the team will be composed and the division of work between team members;
 - Proposal of the work methodology to be used;
 - Draft work plan and suggested timetable;
 - Economic offer and budget broke down (in EUR);
 - Provisional availability to fulfill the consultancy as per the timeframes indicated in these Terms of Reference.
- CV / Professional profile of the expert/evaluating team/company (CVs of all individuals included in the consultancy team).

Enquiries regarding the expression of interest/proposal process may be directed by November 17th 2021 to:
middleeast@rtm.ngo