



Terms of Reference for a Consultancy to Conduct LABE's Family Basic Education (FABE) Program Baseline Study

1. Background

Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) is an indigenous organization established in 1989. We are a registered NGO under registration number INDP10721197NB. LABE exists to promote literacy practices and increase access to information particularly among women and children in local communities in order to actively demand and protect their rights. Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) promotes literacy, basic education and inclusive family learning. Through its Family Basic Education (FABE) approach, LABE works with children, parents, caregivers, schools, communities and local authorities to improve access to quality learning and strengthen family and community capacity. We are currently implementing family-based interventions focusing on children and parents in districts of; Gulu, Nwoya, Koboko, Obongi, Adjumani, Yumbe and Terego. LABE works with and through partnerships to innovate, implement and influence educational policies. One of our innovations that the Ministry of Education and Sports is considering for scale up is the multi-generational Family Basic Education (FABE) approach. The approach promotes direct parental involvement in children's education and parents' literacy skills.

2. About LABE's FABE Program

LABE's Family Basic Education (FABE) program is a community-led, home-based and two-generation education model designed to improve children's early learning and development while strengthening the parents, caregivers, households and community systems that support them. The model emerged from LABE's long-standing work in literacy, family learning and early childhood development, in response to limited access to affordable, inclusive and quality early childhood education for children in marginalised and resource-constrained communities. Its current formulation strengthens the model's two-generation focus, household linkages, childcare for younger children and livelihood-based sustainability mechanisms.

The program serves children aged 0-3 and 3-6 years, together with parents and primary caregivers, Parent Educators, Childcare Givers, Young Facilitators, HLC Management Committees, VSLAs, micro-enterprise groups, local leaders, district officials and other partners. Its education model is delivered mainly through Home Learning Centres (HLCs), homes and other

complementary home-based learning spaces. The main education strands for 3-6 years are: *Parent Educator-led strand*, where trained community facilitators i.e., Parent Educators provide structured, play-based and child-centred ECD sessions for children aged 3-6; the *parent-led strand*, which supports parents and caregivers to provide nurturing care, early stimulation and home-based learning; and the *child-to-child strand*, where trained Young Facilitators support peer learning and enrichment for younger children. The program also includes a dedicated 0-3 childcare and early stimulation component, alongside training, coaching and competency development for Parent Educators and Childcare Givers. Learning is culturally relevant, inclusive and primarily delivered in local or mother tongue languages.

FAFE's two-generation nature lies in the deliberate connection between children's learning and the wellbeing and capacity of adults and households. Alongside early learning, the program addresses responsive caregiving, parenting practices, caregiver psychosocial wellbeing, household livelihoods, financial resilience and community ownership. Parents and caregivers may participate in VSLAs, micro-enterprises and other livelihood activities that can improve household income while also contributing to the sustainability of HLCs. VSLAs, education funds and HLC-linked enterprises such as farming, catering and other locally viable businesses provide a financial and organisational bridge between household economic strengthening and continued community-based education. HLC Management Committees lead local mobilisation, facilitator support, resource mobilisation, quality oversight, safeguarding and sustainability.

In this way, FAFE is not simply an early learning provision or an HLC intervention. It is an integrated family and community education model that connects child development, parenting, home learning, peer learning, ECD quality, household livelihoods, community governance and sustainability. The model has evolved through implementation learning and changing community needs, including childcare for children aged 0-3, stronger household-level linkages, revised learning materials, clearer livelihood-to-HLC connections and consolidation under the FAFE program.

3. Measure of Impact

The FAFE baseline will therefore measure the starting situation of children, caregivers, facilitators, households and Home Learning Centres. It will assess children's development, early learning and school readiness; the competency of Parent Educators, Childcare Givers and Young Facilitators; and the quality, safety and functionality of HLCs. It will also examine responsive caregiving, caregiver psychosocial wellbeing, access to integrated ECD services, HLC governance, participation in FAFE activities, micro-enterprise performance and household income. These baseline findings will provide the reference point for setting targets, guiding implementation, strengthening accountability and assessing progress over the life of the FAFE program.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this consultancy is to jointly design and conduct a rigorous mixed-methods baseline study for the FABE program 2026-2030. The study will establish baseline values, describe the starting conditions of participating children, households and program structures, assess implementation readiness and generate practical recommendations for program delivery and MEL.

5. Objectives

- Establish baseline values for relevant indicators in the FABE MEL Results Framework.
- Assess the developmental, early learning, growth and school-readiness status of eligible children aged 0-3, 3-6 and, where applicable, 5-6 years.
- Assess the competency, knowledge, and practical delivery skills of trained Parent Educators and Childcare Givers.
- Assess parenting practices, responsive caregiving, caregiver psychosocial wellbeing, parenting stress and participation in home-learning activities.
- Assess household livelihoods, income, financial resilience, VSLA participation and micro-enterprise performance.
- Assess the quality, accessibility, inclusion, safety and functionality of HLCs and other relevant learning spaces.
- Assess Young Facilitator academic performance leadership, ECD facilitation and life-skill competencies.
- Assess HLC Management Committee capacity, governance, action-plan implementation and sustainability.
- Document actual beneficiary exposure, frequency, and duration across all FABE intervention components. Examine the relationship between parent/caregiver participation, household wellbeing, caregiving practices, and child outcomes within the two-generation model.
- Provide evidence-based, actionable recommendations for implementation, targeting, capacity strengthening, monitoring, and future evaluations.

6. Two-Generation Approach and Household Linkage

FABE is a two-generation program: it works with children while strengthening the parents, caregivers and household systems that support their development. The baseline must therefore assess child outcomes and adult/household outcomes separately, while also examining how they are connected. The study will include household listing and participant linkage as part of the baseline data collection process, not as a separate study. This process will link eligible children aged 0-3 and 3-6 years to their parents or primary caregivers and record participation in parenting, HLC, childcare, VSLA, micro-enterprise and other FABE interventions.

Unique identification codes should be used for households, parents/caregivers, children, HLCs and relevant groups. The analysis should distinguish actual exposure, frequency, duration and quality of participation. It should not assume that every child enrolled in an HLC has a parent participating in a VSLA, micro-enterprise or parenting intervention.

7. Key Study Questions

Children

- What proportion of children are developmentally on track, demonstrating early learning outcomes or ready for primary school?
- What differences exist by age, sex, disability, location, household characteristics and program exposure?

ECD facilitators

- What proportion of trained Parent Educators and Childcare Givers meet the agreed competency threshold?

Parents and households

- What are current parenting, caregiving, wellbeing and parenting-stress levels?
- What are the main baseline household income streams, primary livelihood sources, saving capacities, and financial constraints?

What is the performance, membership status of program supported households and VSLA group in terms of incomes, income conditions, and financial growth path, and how do they link with HLCs?

HLCs and community systems

- How functional, inclusive, safe and child-friendly are HLCs?
- How effectively do HLC Management Committees implement action plans and support sustainability?

Two-generation pathway

- How are caregiver participation, household wellbeing, parenting practices and child outcomes related?
- How do different combinations and levels of FABE exposure relate to outcomes?

8. Scope

Geographical Scope

The baseline study will be conducted across all seven districts where LABE implements the FABE Program, covering the program's Home Learning Centres (HLCs) and childcare centres. The geographical scope will include:

- **West Nile:** Koboko, Terego, Adjumani, Obongi and Yumbe
- **Northern Uganda:** Gulu and Nwoya

Given that the LABE implementation environments is so diverse, including refugee-hosting settlements across West Nile and rural setups in Northern Uganda, the consultant must explicitly explain how they will manage access barriers in specific contexts, operational dynamics, and translation needs in different local language within their sampling, translation of tools, and field execution plans.

The geographical and site coverage will be confirmed with LABE. The study shall also include, as relevant:

- Children aged 0-3, 3-6 years;
- Parents and primary caregivers;
- Parent Educators and Childcare Givers;
- Young Facilitators;
- HLC Management Committees;
- VSLAs and micro-enterprise participants;
- HLCs, childcare spaces and other learning sites;
- Model Adopters and other partners
- Community leaders, government officials, service providers, LABE staff and partners.
- Other relevant program stakeholders across these locations.

9. Methodology

The consultant shall propose a mixed-methods design appropriate to the FABE model, MEL Results Framework, available resources and intended future evaluation. The design should combine the following:

- Household and caregiver survey;
- Direct child development assessments (educational and growth);
- ECD facilitator competency assessment and session observation;
- HLC and learning-environment assessment;
- Young Facilitator Capacity assessments;
- HLC Management Committee and community-systems assessment;
- VSLA, micro-enterprise and livelihood assessment;
- Key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observations and case studies;
- Review of program records and administrative data.

10.Required Measurement Areas

Area	Minimum Coverage
Household and caregiver survey	Household composition; parent/caregiver characteristics; assets and living conditions; income and expenditure; livelihoods; VSLA and micro-enterprise participation; parenting practices; responsive caregiving; psychosocial wellbeing; parenting stress; access to ECD, health, nutrition and protection services; program exposure and participation.
Child assessments	Age-appropriate measures of development, early learning, growth, health and school readiness. The consultant should propose and justify tools such as CREDI, IDELA, ECDI 2030, growth monitoring and school-readiness measures.
ECD facilitator competency	Knowledge and practical application of child development, play-based learning, responsive interaction, communication, inclusion, positive discipline, safeguarding, session planning, use of materials, observation of children and basic childcare, health and hygiene.
HLC and learning environment	Functionality, attendance, learning and play materials, safety, WASH, inclusion, accessibility, session frequency, quality, facilitator availability, referral linkages, governance and sustainability.
Young Facilitators	Academic performance, leadership, ECD facilitation, life skills, communication, safeguarding, frequency of facilitation and support received.
HLC Management Committees	Composition, roles, meetings, community participation, resource mobilisation, HLC monitoring, child protection, action-plan implementation and sustainability.
VSLA, micro-enterprise and livelihoods	Membership, savings and lending, governance, enterprise ownership, productivity, revenue, income, profitability, constraints, resilience and links to HLC/community sustainability.

11.Sampling

The consultant shall develop and justify the sampling strategy and sample size in consultation with LBE. The proposal should specify the study population, sampling frame, units of analysis, selection of sites and households, treatment of households with multiple eligible children, any comparison group, replacement procedures and the approach to clustering and disaggregation. Where feasible, results should be disaggregated by age, sex, disability status, location, socioeconomic status, program exposure, HLC attendance, parent/caregiver participation, VSLA participation and micro-enterprise participation.

12.Data Collection, Quality Assurance and Analysis

- Develop, translate, digitise and pilot all tools using KoboToolbox, ODK or an agreed platform.

- Recruit and train field teams, including standardisation of child and other beneficiary assessments.
- Use daily data checks, back-checks, spot checks, range and consistency checks, duplicate checks and documented data cleaning.
- Maintain secure, confidential and well-documented datasets with unique IDs and a data dictionary.
- Calculate indicator numerators, denominators, disaggregation, missing-data treatment and limitations.
- Analyse associations between household, caregiver, livelihood, program exposure and child outcomes without making unsupported causal claims.
- Triangulate quantitative findings with qualitative evidence and program records.

13.Ethics, Safeguarding and Data Protection

The consultant must comply with applicable ethical, safeguarding and data-protection requirements. This includes informed consent, parental/caregiver consent for children, child assent where appropriate, confidentiality, anonymisation or pseudonymisation, secure data storage, safeguarding and referral procedures, PSEA, gender and disability inclusion, and safe engagement with vulnerable participants.

14.Deliverables

No.	Deliverable	Minimum Content
1	Inception report	Study design, key questions, sampling, tools, two-generation linkage and analysis plan, ethics plan, risks, management arrangements and workplan.
2	Draft data collection tools	Household, caregiver, child, ECD facilitator, HLC, Young Facilitator, HLC Management Committee, livelihood and qualitative tools.
3	Pilot report	Pilot results, tool performance, field lessons and revisions.
4	Fieldwork completion report	Coverage, response, deviations, challenges and mitigation measures.
5	Completed FABE MEL Results Framework	Updated results framework showing with baseline figures. The consultant will work jointly with LBE to ensure that the framework is complete, practical and aligned with the baseline findings and future monitoring requirements.
6	Excel-based MEL dashboard	A user-friendly and up-to-date Excel or preferably PowerBI dashboard presenting baseline results against the FABE MEL Results Framework. The dashboard should include relevant summaries, tables, charts, disaggregation and filters where appropriate, and be structured for routine updating during implementation. Where feasible, the consultant should also provide a Power BI-ready version or advise on how the dashboard can be migrated and maintained in Power BI.

No.	Deliverable	Minimum Content
7	Clean datasets and documentation	Clean datasets, codebook, data dictionary, cleaning log, linkage file, indicator calculation sheets and analysis syntax/scripts.
8	Draft baseline report	Methods, sample, indicator results, two-generation analysis, qualitative findings, conclusions and recommendations.
9	Validation presentation	Presentation of findings and facilitated validation with LBE and relevant stakeholders, including review of the results framework and dashboard.
10	Final baseline report and handover package	Revised report incorporating feedback, final datasets, completed MEL Results Framework, functional Excel dashboard, Power BI-ready files or guidance where applicable, and all relevant technical documentation.

15. Indicative Workplan

Stage	Activities
1	Contracting, briefing and document review
2	Inception and methodology refinement
3	Tool development, review and translation
4	Programming and pilot testing
5	Training of field teams and assessors
6	Household listing and baseline data collection
7	Data cleaning, analysis and interpretation
8	Draft report, validation and finalisation

16. Required Qualifications and Experience

- Demonstrated experience in baseline studies, evaluations and MEL system development.
- Strong experience in ECD, child development assessment and education programming.
- Experience in household surveys, parenting, livelihoods, VSLAs and micro-enterprises.
- Strong quantitative and qualitative research and analysis skills.
- Experience with digital data collection and secure data management.
- Experience in Uganda and in community-based or two-generation programming is desirable.
- Demonstrated understanding of safeguarding, gender, disability and inclusion.

17. Proposal Requirements

- Technical proposal and understanding of the assignment.
- Proposed methodology, sampling and analysis plan.
- Approach to ECD learner competency assessment.
- Approach to household listing, parent-child linkage and two-generation analysis.
- Proposed team structure and CVs.
- Relevant experience and references.

- Detailed workplan.
- Safeguarding, ethics and data-protection approach.
- Financial proposal with clear cost assumptions and deliverables.

18. Evaluation and Rating Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria. LBE may apply a minimum technical score before financial proposals are considered.

Criterion	Weight	Assessment focus
Understanding of the assignment and FBE context	10%	Clear understanding of FBE, the two-generation approach, MEL Results Framework and intended use of findings.
Technical methodology and study design including ECD and child assessment expertise and Team qualifications and experience	60%	Sound mixed-methods design, sampling, measurement, analysis and quality assurance, Relevant experience with child development, school readiness and ECD facilitator competency assessment, Relevant expertise, roles, availability and demonstrated performance of proposed team.
Workplan and deliverable management	10%	Realistic schedule, coordination and risk management.
Safeguarding, ethics and data protection	5%	Practical procedures for consent, child protection, confidentiality, referrals and secure data.
Relevant organisational experience and references	5%	Evidence of comparable assignments and satisfactory client references.
Financial proposal and value for money	10%	Clear, realistic and cost-effective budget aligned to the methodology and deliverables.

The evaluation criteria and scoring system set out in these Terms of Reference are intended to guide a fair and structured assessment of proposals and do not constitute an automatic commitment to award the assignment to the highest-scoring bidder. LBE may consider the overall suitability of the proposed consultant/firm, including technical capacity, relevant experience, proposed team, methodology, availability, safeguarding and ethical considerations, financial proposal and other relevant factors, in accordance with its applicable policies and procedures.

The submission of a proposal, participation in the evaluation process, shortlisting or recommendation by an evaluation team shall not create any entitlement to appointment or contract award. The final decision to select and contract the successful consultant/firm rests with LBE, subject to LBE's internal procurement and approval procedures. Therefore, LBE shall retain the sole discretion and final authority to determine the successful consultant/consulting firm following the evaluation process.

19. Management and Reporting

The study is broad and includes several interconnected components. It will therefore be co-managed by LABE and the consultant through a collaborative and clearly agreed management arrangement. The consultant will work jointly with LABE's designated program and MEL focal person(s) to refine the study design, coordinate field activities, oversee data quality, review emerging findings and agree on key decisions throughout the assignment.

The consultant will also work with a wider network of personnel, including:

- LABE staff based in the respective districts;
- Relevant district officials, including personnel from the health and education departments;
- Teachers, Parent Educators, Childcare Givers and other relevant program personnel;
- Field supervisors and enumerators; and
- Other stakeholders identified and agreed during inception.

LABE will facilitate access to relevant program documents, the MEL Results Framework, site and participant records, district stakeholders and other required information. LABE will also support stakeholder coordination, field mobilisation and review of deliverables. The consultant will provide technical leadership for the study methodology, tools, training, data collection, analysis and reporting, while ensuring that the work remains participatory, independent and technically sound.

The consultant will be responsible for the technical quality, accuracy, ethical conduct, confidentiality and timely completion of the assignment. Regular planning and review meetings will be held between the consultant and LABE to track progress, address challenges, confirm responsibilities and ensure that the study remains aligned with the FABE program and its MEL requirements.

20. Proposed Team

Lead: Independent Consultant/Firm

Evaluation Coordinator: LABE's MEL Manager

21. Required Response to the Terms of Reference

Interested consulting firms or individuals should submit a technical and financial proposal based on the terms of reference.

- a) Technical profile of the firm/consultant. (Not more than 2 pages - other information can be included as annexes including sample copies of relevant work)
- b) Understanding of the terms of reference as advertised by LABE
- c) Recommendations for changes or adaptations in the TORs (if any)
- d) The proposed methodology and approach for data collection and analysis

- e) Detailed implementation plan for the exercise and clearly indicating the fieldwork including the staff-days required.
- f) The proposed composition and roles of the team members. Share the CVs for the consultants as annexes.
- g) Detailed budget with justification. The external evaluation proposal should include a reasonable detailed budget to cover all costs associated with the evaluation. The detailed budget should include a breakdown of the lead investigator and research assistants' wages and allowances, data collection and field work costs, data transcription and analysis costs, transport, and accommodation for the duration of the evaluation, etc.
- h) Additionally, provide a list of projects completed in the last 5 years, a minimum of two projects (project name, client, budget and sample report).

Note: The technical proposal carries the largest weight i.e., 90% of the proposal. Therefore, only proposals that meet this threshold will proceed to the final evaluation stage which will constitute 10% of the overall score. Submission of a proposal does not guarantee selection or appointment. LABE reserves the right to select the consultant/firm that it determines best meets the requirements of the assignment, in accordance with its applicable policies and procedures.

22. Qualifications And Skills Required for Consultants

The preferred lead consultant must have:

- i. A minimum of a Master's degree in ECD, Social Sciences, Community Development, Population studies or related field.
- ii. Preference will be given to a consultancy or team that presents an excellent balance of expertise in Early Childhood Development and Community Livelihood programming.
- iii. Broad understanding of the education practice in Uganda and worldwide
- iv. A minimum of 7 years of relevant research work experience Strong quantitative and qualitative research skills with strong experience in applying mixed research approaches and statistical software.
- v. Relevance background knowledge on early childhood and inclusive education
- vi. Experience in conducting similar studies and evaluations for interventions in refugee populations in Uganda is highly preferred
- vii. Robust understanding of national, regional and international developments in relation to learning studies
- viii. At least 7 years of experience and use of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods (collection and analysis).
- ix. Sound analytical skills to make observations, draw interpretations and identify lessons and recommendations.
- x. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, both written.

- xi. Share sample work done by the firm/consultant in the areas highlighted.

23. Budget and Logistics

The consultant is required to provide a holistic budget in both Uganda Shillings (UGX) and US Dollars (USD) considering (though not limited to) professional fees, daily fees, travel and transportation, communication, and other logistics as needed, as well as WHT or related taxes

24. Program Documents and Submission Details

Submission of Technical and Financial Proposals are due **16th October 2026**. Bids received after this deadline will not be considered. Please submit proposals to labe@labeuganda.org using subject Line (Re): **LBE FABE Program Baseline Study Consultancy**.

The Terms of Reference are publicly available to all interested parties. Interested bidders who require additional supporting documents for purposes of preparing their proposals may request access from LBE. Such documents will be provided subject to the bidder signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with LBE prior to access. Only applications accompanied by a duly signed NDA will be eligible for consideration under this procurement process.

Requests for access to the supporting documents and the NDA should be directed to jackie@labeuganda.org

25. List of Acronyms

CGs	Childcare Giver
CREDI	Caregiver Reported Early Development Instruments
CWDs	Children with Disabilities
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FABE	Family Basic Education
GM	Growth Monitoring
HLC	Home Learning Centre
HLCMC	Home Learning Centre Management Committee
IDELA	International Development and Early Learning Assessment
LBE	Literacy and Adult Basic Education
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
PEs	Parent Educators
ToRs	Terms of Reference
VSLAs	VSLAs
YF	Young Facilitator