



TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR): Consultancy to Conduct a Baseline Survey for the Addressing Barriers to Education Empowerment (ABEE) Project in Buyende and Kaliro Districts, Uganda

1.0 Overview

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Uganda Chapter is implementing the **Addressing Barriers to Education Empowerment (ABEE) Project** in Buyende and Kaliro Districts with the goal of **increasing enrolment in secondary education through re-entry and retention of 4,000 marginalized girls and child mothers**. The project addresses the multiple barriers to girls' education, including child labour, harmful social and gender norms, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, poverty, and limited institutional capacity to support girls' education. Against this background, FAWE Uganda seeks to engage a qualified consultant or consultancy firm to undertake a comprehensive baseline survey that will establish benchmark values for all project indicators and generate evidence on the educational, socio-economic, institutional and social norms context within the project area. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach to assess the status of girls' education, school re-entry, learner retention, child labour, gender-responsive school environments, household resilience, parenting practices, and community attitudes towards girls' education. The findings will inform project implementation, establish benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation, validate the project's Theory of Change, and provide a basis for measuring project performance and impact throughout the implementation period.

2.0 Organizational Background

Forum for African Women Educationalists Uganda Chapter is a national Non-Governmental organization dedicated to promoting gender equality and equity in education. Established in 1997, FAWE Uganda is one of the National Chapters of Forum for African Women Educationalists, a Pan-African organization founded in 1992 by five African women Ministers of Education to advocate for increased access to quality education for girls and women across Africa.

For more than twenty-eight years, FAWE Uganda has worked closely with Government, development partners, civil society organizations, local governments, communities and educational institutions to improve access, retention, completion and transition of girls at all levels of education.

FAWE Uganda's programming focuses on four mutually reinforcing areas: Education and skills development opportunities, social protection, research and advocacy

The organization has successfully implemented numerous donor-funded projects across Uganda focusing on girls' education, violence prevention, school re-entry, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, community action to end violence against children, economic empowerment, and institutional capacity strengthening.

2.1 Project Background

The **Addressing Barriers to Education Empowerment (ABEE) Project** is a comprehensive three-year initiative designed to contribute to increased enrolment, school re-entry, retention and completion of education among marginalized adolescent girls and young women in Buyende and Kaliro Districts.

The project responds to persistent educational inequalities affecting girls within the Busoga sub-region, where widespread poverty, child labour, harmful gender norms, teenage pregnancy, child marriage and limited institutional support continue to prevent girls from accessing and completing quality education.

Busoga remains one of Uganda's regions with the highest levels of multidimensional poverty despite its significant contribution to national agricultural production. The expansion of sugarcane farming has created a demand for cheap labour, resulting in increased involvement of children, particularly girls, in hazardous agricultural work. Many households prioritize immediate income from plantation labour over long-term educational investments, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty, low educational attainment and social exclusion.

The educational challenges are further compounded by entrenched social and gender norms that normalize child labour, early marriage and teenage pregnancy while discouraging school re-entry for adolescent mothers. These norms continue to undermine girls' educational aspirations, reduce transition from primary to secondary education, and increase vulnerability to violence, exploitation and economic dependency.

The ABEE Project seeks to address these interconnected barriers through an integrated package of interventions that combines community-based learning hubs, the TUSEME ("Speak Out") model, Gender Responsive Pedagogy, parenting education, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), school re-entry support, social norms transformation, and evidence-based advocacy.

The project aims to reach approximately **4,000 marginalized adolescent girls and young women aged 10–24 years**, including child mothers and girls at risk of dropping out of school. Interventions will target learners, parents and caregivers, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, cultural and religious institutions, district local governments, and other key stakeholders responsible for creating an enabling environment for girls' education.

Implementation of the project is anchored on the premise that sustainable educational outcomes require simultaneous action at individual, household, community and institutional levels. Consequently, the project integrates educational support, social protection, economic strengthening, gender-transformative approaches and institutional capacity development to create protective environments that enable girls to enroll, remain in school and successfully complete their education.

3.0 Purpose of the Consultancy

The overall purpose of this consultancy is to undertake a comprehensive baseline survey that establishes benchmark values for all indicators contained in the ABEE Project Results Framework and provides a detailed understanding of the educational, institutional, socio-economic and social norms context within which the project will be implemented.

Specifically, the baseline survey will generate high-quality quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform project planning, implementation, monitoring, adaptive learning and evaluation. The study will identify key

barriers, opportunities and contextual factors influencing girls' enrolment, school re-entry, retention and completion while providing recommendations for strengthening project implementation throughout the project lifecycle.

The consultant will also develop a comprehensive baseline database that will serve as the reference point for subsequent project monitoring, periodic reviews, learning activities and the final evaluation.

4.0 Objectives of the Consultancy

4.1 Overall Objective

To establish comprehensive baseline information on educational access, school re-entry, learner retention, harmful social norms, institutional preparedness and household resilience for the ABEE Project in Buyende and Kaliro Districts.

4.2 Specific Objectives

The consultant shall undertake the following:

1. Establish baseline values for all project outcome, output and process indicators contained within the ABEE Project Results Framework.
2. Assess the magnitude and drivers of school dropout, child labour, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and other barriers affecting girls' education in the target districts.
3. Assess the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices of parents, learners, teachers, community leaders and other stakeholders regarding girls' education, child labour, school re-entry and gender equality.
4. Examine prevailing social and gender norms that influence educational participation, learner retention and school re-entry among adolescent girls and young women.
5. Assess the level of agency, self-efficacy, leadership and decision-making capacity among adolescent girls and young women, including their ability to advocate for their rights through the TUSEME model.
6. Assess household resilience, parenting practices, economic strengthening initiatives and utilization of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in supporting girls' education.
7. Assess the preparedness of schools to implement Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP), school re-entry guidelines, child safeguarding mechanisms, safe learning environments and referral pathways for vulnerable learners.
8. Identify existing community structures, stakeholders, service providers and institutional mechanisms that can support implementation of the ABEE Project.
9. Validate the project's Theory of Change, assumptions and implementation strategies based on the prevailing context within the target districts.
10. Generate evidence-based recommendations to strengthen project implementation, monitoring, learning and adaptive management.

5.0 Scope of the Assessment

The baseline survey will be conducted in **Buyende and Kaliro Districts**, the two implementation districts of the Addressing Barriers to Education Empowerment Project. The assessment will establish baseline values for all project outcome, output, and selected process indicators contained in the project's Results Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework.

The assessment will examine the educational, social, economic, institutional and cultural factors influencing girls' enrolment, school re-entry, retention and completion of education, with particular emphasis on marginalized adolescent girls and young women, including child mothers.

Specifically, the assessment shall cover, but not be limited to, the following areas:

5.1 Education and School Participation

- Status of school enrolment, attendance, retention, completion and transition among adolescent girls and young women.
- Magnitude and causes of school dropout and barriers to school re-entry.
- Existing support systems for girls returning to school, including child mothers.

5.2 Child Labour and Economic Vulnerability

- Prevalence and forms of child labour affecting school participation, particularly within the sugarcane-growing communities.
- Household socio-economic conditions and their influence on girls' education.
- Household livelihood strategies and the role of economic strengthening initiatives in supporting education.

5.3 Gender and Social Norms

- Community attitudes, beliefs and practices regarding girls' education, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and child labour.
- Existing social norms that either hinder or promote girls' education.
- Influence of cultural, religious and community leaders on education-related decisions.
- Reference groups and community structures that shape social norms and behaviours.

5.4 Girls' Agency and Empowerment

- Girls' confidence, leadership, self-efficacy and decision-making capacity.
- Knowledge and practice of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).
- Opportunities for girls to participate in leadership, advocacy and the TUSEME ("Speak Out") model.

5.5 Parenting and Household Resilience

- Parenting practices that support or hinder girls' education.
- Household capacity to provide educational needs for children.
- Participation in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and utilization of savings to support education.
- Household decision-making regarding investment in girls' education.

5.6 School Environment and Institutional Capacity

- Schools' readiness to support the re-entry and retention of adolescent girls and child mothers.
- Availability and application of Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP).
- Availability and functionality of safe spaces, referral pathways and child safeguarding mechanisms.

- Teachers' and school administrators' knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding gender equality, positive discipline and inclusive education.

5.7 Community and Stakeholder Capacity

- Capacity of community structures, Community Learning Groups (CLGs), local governments and other stakeholders to support girls' education and protection.
- Existing coordination mechanisms, referral systems and partnerships that can contribute to project implementation.

5.8 Monitoring, Learning and Evidence

- Availability of baseline data for all project indicators.
- Existing information systems, reporting mechanisms and data sources that will support project monitoring, learning and adaptive management.

Geographical Coverage

The assessment shall be undertaken in all project-supported in 20 communities and schools within **Buyende and Kaliro Districts**, covering the project's target schools, Community Learning Groups (CLGs), Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and other intervention sites.

6.0 Evaluation Framework

Project Outcome	Assessment Indicators
Outcome 1: Marginalized girls and child mothers successfully re-enter and complete the school cycle	- % of girls demonstrating involvement in leadership because of the TUSEME intervention. - % of girls initiating or starting enterprises - # of participants supported to transition to formal education entrepreneurship. - % of adolescent girls and teen mothers demonstrating, and report increased confidence to speak out on issues affecting them and manage their ASRHR (self-efficacy index). - % of CLGs integrating TUSEME approaches into their routine engagements (e.g., guidance sessions). - Proportion of parents reporting the use of savings from VSLA to support the education needs of their children and reporting improved financial independence. - 1.7. Percent change in the number of girls who report that their parents are now able to provide basic needs for school - # of learners in the project schools reporting that their education needs are met by their parents/guardians. - % increase in the number of girls accessing school because of their parents attending parenting sessions.
Outcome 2.0 Transformed social norms that promote school re-entry among girls at risk of violence	- A shift in social norms that perpetuate violence against girls in target schools and communities. - % of mothers that got married when they were young, who believe that their own daughters should not get married before finishing school

	- % of parents who report that those who matter to them including clan leaders, their wives and peers now value education than dowry - % of teachers who report that those who matter to them expect them to use positive disciplining practices when dealing with children. - % of school administrators demonstrating positive attitudes towards re-entry of pregnant girls. - % of parents/caregivers supporting re-enrolment of pregnant/parenting girls % of girls who report a cessation or significant reduction in experiences of child labour and other forms of abuse following the intervention.
Outcome 3.0 Improved retention and academic completion for re-entered child mothers and girls at risk of violence through the creation of a supportive and gender-responsive school environment.	- % of trained teachers demonstrating application of gender-responsive pedagogy in classroom observations - % of girls reporting increased confidence to speak out on issues affecting them (self-efficacy index). - % of schools integrating TUSEME approaches into school routines (e.g., assemblies, guidance sessions). - % of identified reference group members who actively transition from 'bystanders' to 'positive norms champions' within 12 months of the intervention.
Outcome 4: Improved evidence-based programming for the Barriers to Education Empowerment Project through systematic learning from practice	- % or proportion of learning outcomes producing positive results in addressing VAC&YW. - # of forums to learn and share best practices on VAC&YW conducted to improve programming. - # of best practices on VAC&YW documented and shared with stakeholders at local, national and international level and the number of changes made to improve programming. - % of project activities that are assessed as being highly relevant to addressing the priority VAC&YW-related norms and practices identified in the needs assessments. - # of project school meeting the minimum School standards by MoES

The baseline assessment will establish an initial benchmark for the indicators outlined in the project's results framework, which will be evaluated throughout the project cycle. These indicators are derived from the project's Theory of Change and Logical Framework, focusing on the key outcomes highlighted in the project proposal. The following table provides a summary of the key indicators that will be assessed during the baseline study (this list is not exhaustive).

7.0 Expected Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to submit the following deliverables according to the agreed-upon timeline:

- **Inception Report (10 pages maximum):** This report, due one week after contract signing, will detail the consultant's understanding of the ToR, proposed methodology, detailed work plan with a clear timeline, and draft data collection instruments (including questionnaires, interview guides, and focus

group discussion guides). The inception report will be presented and discussed with FAWE Uganda before data collection begins.

- **Training Materials:** The consultant will develop training materials for data collectors, including a manual outlining data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and quality control measures. These materials are due one week before the training of data collectors.
- **Validated Data Collection Instruments:** Finalized and validated data collection instruments, incorporating feedback from FAWE Uganda, are due three days before data collection commences.
- **Cleaned Dataset:** The consultant will provide FAWE Uganda with a cleaned and coded dataset (both quantitative and qualitative) within one week of completing data collection. This dataset should be in a usable format (e.g., SPSS for quantitative data, transcribed and coded transcripts for qualitative data).
- **Draft Baseline Report (30 pages maximum, excluding annexes):** The draft report, due two weeks after the completion of data collection, will present the findings of the baseline assessment, including a detailed analysis of all indicators, key challenges and opportunities identified, and preliminary recommendations for project implementation. The draft report will be presented and discussed with FAWE Uganda and key stakeholders in a validation workshop.
- **Final Baseline Report (30 pages maximum, excluding annexes):** The final report, incorporating feedback from the validation workshop, is due one week after the workshop. The final report should include an executive summary (maximum 2 pages) highlighting key findings and recommendations. Annexes will include the detailed data collection instruments, data analysis plan, and a list of key informants.
- **Presentation of Findings:** The consultant will present the key findings and recommendations of the baseline assessment to FAWE Uganda and relevant stakeholders in a validation workshop and a separate dissemination meeting.

All deliverables should be submitted in electronic format (Word and Excel or SPSS) and in English.

8.0 Desired Qualifications and Experience

Consultant Competencies.

The consultant is expected to meet the following specifications:

- The team leader with a minimum of a master's degree in either Social Work & Social Administration, Demography, statistics, or other related fields. The Team Leader (s) must demonstrate experience and competence in the areas of program design and measurement.
- Track record in developing and conducting various types of evaluation including qualitative and quantitative data collection.
- Experience in managing and coordinating VAC evaluation/research exercises, delivering agreed outputs on time and on budget.
- Experience in data collection and analysis using participatory methodologies.
- Previous experience working with communities using participatory approaches.
- Excellent and demonstrated understanding of ethical issues in research, including child protection.
- Ability to work with communities in relevant local languages would be an advantage

- Strong quantitative data entry and analysis skills and previous experience using statistical analysis software.
- Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality, credible reports in English.
- Demonstrated expertise in evaluating social norms VAC interventions/programs.

9.0 Timeframe

The actual assignment is expected to start on 17th July – 11th September 2026. See timelines for each evaluation activity.

Key Activities	Expected deadline
Call for bids of technical and financial proposals in non-editable formats	17 th July 2026
Submission of detailed technical and financial proposals from respective interested consultants	24 th July 2026
Review of the application and short-listing of the candidates	31 st July 2026
The signing of the contract	3 rd August 2026
Consultant submits detailed data collection tools to be applied in the survey	4 th August 2026
FAWE Uganda reviews and approves tools to be used for baseline survey	6 th August 2026
Training of enumerators and pre-testing of the tools	10 th August 2026
Data collection	11 th – 21 st August 2026
Data analysis and report writing	24 th August – 28 th August 2026
Submission of the draft report	31 st August
FAWE Uganda reviews the draft report and provides feedback	3 rd September 2026
The consultant works on the comments and shares the final report	8 th September 2026
Final Report	11 th September 2026

10.0 Compliance

Firms that show interest will be assessed if they have submitted all the following requirements. Certificates of registration (evidence of legal status), CVs for at least three key personnel including the Team Leader, Evidence of the firm's previous work and complete and signed bid submission forms.

11. Evaluation criteria

Technical evaluation will be based on the following criteria.

1.	Professional experience of the staff that will be employed on the project proving demonstrated expertise in evaluation and related processes (CVs, etc.)
a)	Team leader with a minimum of a master's degree in either Social Work & Social Administration, Demography, statistics, or other related fields. The Team Leader(s) must demonstrate experience and competence in the areas of program design and measurement.
b)	The team leader should demonstrate strong facilitative and team leadership experience and history of delivering consultancy assignments within the stipulated timeframe
2.	A Technical approach, methodology and level of understanding of the objectives of the evaluation.
a)	Clear understanding of the requested tasks, as articulated in the objective of the assignment and a description of how the offeror proposes to undertake the assignment.
b)	A clear description of how the Consultants propose to undertake the assignment, including sampling method; data analysis plan, including Quality Assurance Plan
c)	Appropriateness of the study approach in relation to the objectives of the assessment
3.	Work plan/time scales given in the proposal and its adequacy to meet the evaluation objectives and questions.
4.	Prior experience of handling projects of this nature (examples of similar services provided, references, etc.)
5.	A reputable track record of conducting programme baseline surveys and mapping studies at multi-country, national (Uganda) or sub-national levels.
a)	Experience in conducting programmatic social research studies and demonstrating experience in applying qualitative and quantitative research methodology.
b)	Good knowledge and proven experience in qualitative and quantitative research design with bias on outcome harvesting, management of process evaluation and data analysis.

Expression Of Interest (EOI)

i) Consultancy firms or consultants are invited to express interest in facilitating the above processes at FAWE Uganda. Submit a Technical and Financial Proposal, expressing their interest in undertaking the evaluation detailing the choice of appropriate methodologies for the endline evaluation.

ii) Submit the EOI to the Chairperson, Procurement Committee, FAWE Uganda by email, via procurement@faweuganda.org

iii) **Submission Deadline for EOI: 24th July 2026**