

# **Terms of Reference**

## **Research Study for Project**

### **“Empower Children with Autism or Intellectual Disabilities” (ECAID)**

#### **1. Introduction**

World Vision (WV) is a child focus and development organization working to create lasting change in the lives of children, families and communities living in poverty. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender. As a child-focused organization, WV’s work focuses on children, ensuring they are protected and their basic needs are met. World Vision International in Vietnam (WVI-V) has received funding from 14 support countries in Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australia. The strategic focuses of WVV include: children protection from all forms of abuse, exploitation, violence and injury; reduction of malnutrition rate of children under 5 through integrated approach; sustainable livelihood for poor households to support sustainable well-being of children.

In this regard, WVI-V with financial support from European Union implements project “Empower Children with Autism or Intellectual Disabilities (ECAID)” from January 2025 to December 2027. The project takes place in 2 districts (Lien Chieu and Son Tra) of Da Nang city. The Project would like to conduct a research study that seeks to understand the lived experience of children with autism or intellectual disabilities in Da Nang, including a review of existing policies that support these children and their caregiver/family members. In addition, during the proposal development stage, the logical framework had been developed with a set of performance indicators and target. The research, therefore, will also contribute to identify current status and the values of project indicators, as well as to document experiences of children with autism or intellectual disabilities and their family.

The research is expected to start in May 2025.

#### **1.1. Project background**

According to the National Survey on People with Disabilities 2016, the disability prevalence rate for children in Vietnam was 2.79% in 2016 and the most common type of disability among children is psychosocial disability.<sup>1</sup> The Government of Vietnam ratified the UNCRDP in 2015 and passed The Vietnamese Law on Persons with Disabilities in 2010, establishing a legal framework for the protection of their rights, including access to education, employment, healthcare, and social services. Recently, the Vietnamese Government issued decision No. 1190/QĐ-TTg in 2020 "Approving support program for person with disabilities in 2021 – 2030" to promote implementation of UNCRDP and Law on Persons with Disabilities to improve life quality of persons with disabilities; enable persons with disabilities to participate in social activities equally; develop an unrestricted environment in order to protect legal rights of persons with disabilities and assist persons with disabilities in utilizing their potentials. Despite significant progress in legislation in recent years, children with disabilities in general, and children with autism or intellectual disabilities in particular and their families in Vietnam continue to face significant challenges in participation and access to services, particularly education, social protection, and healthcare.

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<sup>1</sup> GSO. 2016. The National Survey on People with Disabilities 2016 (VDS2016), Final Report. Ha Noi, Viet Nam: General Statistics Office, retrieved from [\\*Baocao-nguoiikhuyet-tat.pdf](http://*Baocao-nguoiikhuyet-tat.pdf) ([gso.gov.vn](http://gso.gov.vn))

Vietnamese cultural beliefs regarding disability, for example, viewing disability as a failure of parents and ancestors to protect the vulnerable new born from spirits or embodiment of ancestors' wrong doings, create profound and culturally specific feelings of shame and marginalization,<sup>2</sup> leading to self-stigma, stigmatization, isolation and reduced social and familial support.<sup>3</sup> Children with disabilities face attitudinal and environmental barriers that impede their full and effective participation in society and school on an equal basis with others. In 2016, only 42.7% of respondents in the national survey said that children with disabilities should attend school with other children without disabilities and gross school attendance rate of children with disabilities decreases as the education level ascends. For children with autism and intellectual disabilities, many are remaining out of the classroom due to failure to claim their rights to an inclusive education.<sup>4</sup> For those who have the chance to be placed in a classroom, the lack of proper support and accommodation is concerning. The national survey indicated that only 14.1% of schools with pupils with disabilities have trained teachers to support these children. Only 16.8% of children with disabilities from 2-15 years have a disability certificate. There is a lack of detailed policy, guidance and capacity building for specialized child protection service providers, including alternative care, respite care and psychological support for families of children with disabilities and other support services for children with disabilities.<sup>5</sup>

In Da Nang, the target location of the Action, there is a dearth of reliable data on children with disability, especially children with autism or intellectual disabilities. With the establishment of an Inclusive Education Resource Center, Da Nang City's authority has made strides in the gradual integration of students with disabilities from special needs institutions into normal schools. Unfortunately, such education setting is not commonplace. A majority of schools in Da Nang City do not provide proper support for students with disabilities without trained professionals to mainstream inclusive education. Similar to the national situation, students with disabilities tend not to pursue postsecondary education and many lack the opportunity to pursue vocational training and explore employment prospects.

In this context, the project "Empower Children with Autism or Intellectual Disabilities" aims to enhance equal rights of children with autism or intellectual disabilities in Viet Nam through empowering rights of children with autism or intellectual disabilities, their caregivers and family members, enabling an inclusive environment for these children through transforming social norms and attitudes, and advocating for effective policy implementation to support equal rights and participation of children with autism or intellectual disabilities in schools and communities.

## **2. Purpose of the research study**

The research study aims at following objectives:

Assess Awareness, Knowledge, and Attitudes Toward the Rights of Children with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities

- Measure the level of awareness among children, including children with autism and intellectual disabilities, parents, caregivers, educators, and community members regarding the rights of children with autism and intellectual disabilities.
- Understand the knowledge, skills, and coping mechanisms of children with autism and intellectual disabilities, and of parents and caregivers in supporting their children.

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<sup>2</sup> Rachel Burr, Vietnam's children's experiences of being visually or hearing impaired, retrieved from [dgs-02-02-02.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Stigma and restriction on the social life of families of children with intellectual disabilities in Vietnam. Singapore Medical Journal, 2012

<sup>4</sup> [Children with disabilities survey findings.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Viet Nam's progresses on SDGs on Children.pdf](#)

- Assess the availability and accessibility of family support services, such as counseling, financial assistance, and training programs.
- Evaluate the availability and actual practice of schools and communities to include children with autism or intellectual disabilities.

#### Evaluate the Availability and Accessibility of Public and Social Services

- Gather data on early intervention and support services available for children with autism and intellectual disabilities and their families.
- Assess the current level of access to education, healthcare, and social services for these children.
- Measure the readiness of schools to accommodate children with autism and intellectual disabilities (e.g., presence of trained teachers, adapted curricula, assistive technologies).
- Identify barriers to participation in schools and communities, such as lack of inclusive education, discrimination, and accessibility issues.

#### Understand the Experiences and Perceptions of Children with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities

- Explore children’s experiences in accessing community services, including education, healthcare, and social activities.
- Assess how children with autism and intellectual disabilities perceive their relationships, friendships, and emotional well-being.
- Gather insights from children to inform recommendations for adjusting project strategies and activities where applicable.

#### Mapping of Existing Dialogue Spaces for Children with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities and their Family Members

- Conduct a mapping of available dialogue spaces or platform where children with autism and intellectual disabilities and their family members could engage and raise their voices.
- Provide recommendations for government stakeholders to meaningfully engage children with autism and intellectual disabilities and their family members.
- Suggest capacity building roadmap for children with autism and intellectual disabilities and their family members so they can actively participate.

#### Suggest Child-Friendly and Adaptive Engagement Tools

- Provide Utilize visual aids, communication boards, and sensory-friendly environments to engage children in project activities.
- Provide a principles and guidelines for media when they are engaged in project’s activities.

#### Review Existing Law and Policies Related to Children with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities

- Identify strengths and gaps in the national and local law and policies related to children with autism and intellectual disabilities.
- Inform relevant government agencies of those gaps identified and recommendations.

### **3. Methodology**

The consultant(s) will propose an appropriate methodology to gather comprehensive information and data to meet the research objectives. This will involve utilizing a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, while leveraging primary and secondary data sources.

The consultant(s) is expected to outline their proposed methodology for the research, which should include, but is not limited to, a description of the overall evaluation design, the data sources to be utilized, methods for data collection and analysis, and the sample size and sampling techniques.

Data collection methods should be participatory, actively engaging contributions from children with autism or intellectual disabilities and their caregivers/parents, as well as the project team, local partners, and other stakeholders. The proposed methodologies must align with and meet World Vision's DMEAL standards.

#### **4. Deliverables**

- A full research report in English and Vietnamese to present the findings of the research, including data analysis and interpretations.
- A concise summary (one page analysis and PowerPoint presentation in both Vietnamese and English) highlight key findings, insights, and recommendations from the baseline survey, tailored for stakeholders and decision-makers.
- A presentation summarizing the findings and recommendations, to be shared with stakeholders, including project partners, government agencies, and community organizations, to promote dialogue and collaboration.
- Data Sets: Raw and processed data sets collected during the survey, including quantitative data from structured surveys and qualitative data from interviews and focus groups, stored in a user-friendly format for future analysis.
- Child-Friendly Feedback Materials: Adapted materials summarizing key findings in a child-friendly format, using visual aids to ensure that children with autism and intellectual disabilities can engage with the results.
- Recommendations for Program Adjustments: A set of actionable recommendations based on the survey findings for refining project strategies and activities, particularly concerning community engagement and service delivery for children with autism and intellectual disabilities.
- Provide training for project staff on principle and skills to work with children with autism and intellectual disabilities and on how to effectively use the research findings to enhance community services and support for these children.
- Principles and Guidelines for Media: A one-page material for project staff and partners to briefly orient for journalists on principles and guidelines for interviewing and reporting children with autism and intellectual disabilities when media are engaged in project's activities.

#### **5. Confidentiality and copyright**

All papers shared with the research team are confidential to World Vision International in Vietnam and should not be used outside of WVI-V without permission. The final report will be owned by WVI-V and disseminated to authorities as the organization sees fit.

#### **6. Qualifications for consultant**

## 6.1 Qualifications and Experience Required of External Consultant

The consultant(s) should meet following requirements:

- A Master’s or Ph.D. in a relevant field such as Public Health, Social Work, Special Education, Psychology, or Disability Studies.
- Additional certifications or training in research methodologies, data analysis, and inclusive practices related to autism and intellectual disabilities.
- At least 5+ years of experience in conducting research or program evaluations, specifically in the field of disability rights, inclusive education, or child welfare.
- At least 5 years of experiences in working with children with autism or intellectual disabilities, including knowledge of their unique needs and challenges.
- Strong expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including survey design, data collection, and statistical analysis.
- Ability to analyze and interpret complex data sets to derive meaningful insights and recommendations.
- In-depth understanding of national and international policies related to the rights of children with disabilities, inclusive education, and community support services.
- Familiarity with local contexts and cultural considerations affecting the lives of children with autism and intellectual disabilities in Vietnam.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills to effectively present findings and recommendations to diverse audiences, including children, families, and policymakers.
- Ability to create child-friendly materials and facilitate inclusive discussions with children and families.
- Awareness and understanding of cultural nuances related to disability and inclusion in Vietnam.

## 6.2 Timeframe

The period performance for the evaluation is expected to start in May 2025.

An indicative timeframe is as follows but this can be adjusted after discussion based on the successful consultant’s proposal.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated number of days</b>
Development of and consensus on methodologies and timeframe	2
Desk review and analysis of available project documents	4
Tools and data collection protocols developed and refined; Training for interviewers;	8
Field data collection	10
Reporting until final report finalized	20
Dissemination of findings	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

### **6.3 Budget**

The consultant is requested to proposed a financial plan including a) consultant fee including meals, personal income tax, and b) other related fees/services such as transportation and accommodation, at a reasonable rate.

The consultant can work independently or form a team to complete this task.

The field survey will be completed in Year 1 while the reports will need several levels of reviewing. The payment will be in tranche and based on tasked finished. Final payment may extend to first quarter of Project Year 2 (Jan-Mar 2026).

### **6.4 Application requirements**

Institutions and individuals interested in this job are invited to submit your applications via email to World Vision Vietnam Procurement.

Applications should include:

- i) CVs demonstrating relevant capacity and experience including 2 references;
- ii) A technical proposal including proposed methods and a work plan, and indicative budget with daily rate breakdown.
- iii) A financial proposal with detail breakdown on daily rate for consultancy fee and transportation, accommodation, meals for each trip as well as PIT;
- iv) Two examples of baseline /assessment/ evaluation reports of similar programs (e.g., Social Inclusion, Children Health, or Child Protection themes) written by the applicants.

Deadline for submission: **April 24<sup>th</sup> 2025.**