

Terms of Reference – Baseline Study for “Sustainable and Participatory Community Development” Project (Armenia, 2025–2028)

1. Background and Rationale

The World Council of Churches Armenia Round Table Foundation (ART), together with local partners, has launched the “**Sustainable and Participatory Community Development**” project (2025–2028). This three-year initiative aims to improve the living conditions and resilience of vulnerable groups across multiple regions of Armenia through an integrated approach. **Project objectives include:**

- **Livelihoods Improvement:** Enhance income-generation and employment for disadvantaged women and men. *Target:* At least **35%** of targeted beneficiaries secure jobs or self-employment (for ≥ 6 months) by project end, with a focus on women ($\geq 80\%$ of beneficiaries) and conflict-affected families.
- **Youth Civic Engagement:** Empower youth (ages 15–35) to actively participate in community development and local governance. *Targets:* Local authorities adopt ≥ 10 community decisions based on youth input (incl. at least 2 addressing women’s issues), and ≥ 12 youth-led initiatives receive support or co-funding from local government (with at least 5 led by young women/girls).
- **Out-of-School Education:** Expand non-formal education opportunities for children and improve positive parenting practices. *Targets:* Approximately **1,000** children (7–17 years) engage in project-supported after-school programs and **500** parents/caregivers participate in parenting skills training. Indicators include the percentage of children who demonstrate improved personal skills (communication, confidence, etc.) and the percentage of parents reporting increased involvement in their child’s education.

2. Objectives of the Baseline Study

The baseline study will establish a critical reference point against which the project’s outcomes and impact can be measured. Specifically, the baseline study will:

- **Establish Baseline Values:** Collect credible quantitative and qualitative data to determine the starting values for all key performance indicators in the project logframe. This includes metrics related to livelihoods (income levels, employment/self-employment rates), youth civic engagement (current youth participation and influence), and children’s education and wellbeing (baseline competencies of children and baseline parenting practices).
- **Inform Project Implementation:** Identify needs, gaps, and context-specific nuances in the target communities. Baseline findings will help refine project strategies and targets,

validate assumptions, and ensure interventions are tailored to beneficiaries' actual conditions and capacities.

- **Enable Impact Measurement:** Provide a foundation for ongoing monitoring, mid-term review, and final evaluation. The baseline will allow project stakeholders (ART, partners, donors) to track progress towards the stated objectives and outcome targets, facilitate accountability for results, and make evidence-based adjustments during implementation.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant or team will carry out the following tasks to achieve the baseline study objectives:

- **Review Project Documentation:** Examine all relevant project materials – including the project proposal, logical framework (logframe) with defined indicators and targets, monitoring and evaluation plan, and any existing data or reports on the target communities.
- **Design the Baseline Methodology:** Develop a detailed study methodology and work plan. This will include defining the performance indicators to be measured, sampling strategy for data collection, and appropriate tools for data gathering (e.g. structured questionnaires for surveys, interview guides for qualitative inquiry). The methodology should cover all three thematic components and ensure data disaggregation by sex, age, and other relevant factors.
- **Data Collection:** Conduct field data-gathering in all project target areas
This will involve:
 - **Quantitative Surveys:** Administer baseline surveys to representative samples of project beneficiaries and community members, such as:
 - *Livelihoods survey:* among disadvantaged adult women and men (including conflict-affected individuals) to capture employment status, income sources, and economic challenges.
 - *Youth survey:* among youth (15–35) in the communities to assess current civic engagement levels, volunteer activities, and interaction with local governance.
 - *Children and Parents survey/assessment:* among children (7–17) participating in or eligible for out-of-school programs, and their parents/caregivers, to gauge children's baseline skills and confidence, as well as parenting practices and involvement in education.
 - **Qualitative Research:** Carry out interviews and group discussions to complement the surveys. This may include Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with youth groups, parents, or livelihood support participants, and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with community leaders, local officials, or project staff. Qualitative methods will explore perceptions of changes needed, barriers to employment or civic participation, and cultural factors (e.g. gender norms affecting youth or women's involvement).

- **Observation and Case Studies (if applicable):** Observe ongoing community activities or existing non-formal education sessions, and document a few illustrative case studies of individuals/families to provide contextual depth to the baseline data.
- **Data Analysis:** Consolidate and analyze the information collected.
- **Reporting of Findings:** Prepare and deliver a Baseline Study report (in English) that clearly presents the results and insights from the study. The report should include:
 - **Methodology section:** Description of methods used, sampling, and any limitations.
 - **Findings:** Organized by project objective or thematic area (livelihoods, youth civic engagement, out-of-school education). Present baseline values for each indicator alongside narrative analysis. Use tables or charts to summarize key quantitative findings (e.g. income levels, employment rates, counts of youth groups, etc.), and include qualitative observations to contextualize these numbers.
 - **Conclusions and Recommendations:** Highlight critical implications of the baseline findings for the project. This may include recommendations for fine-tuning project activities or targeting (for instance, if certain regions or groups show significantly different baseline conditions, or if unexpected barriers are identified).
 - **Annexes:** Provide technical details such as data collection tools used (questionnaires, interview guides), a table of all baseline indicator values, lists of data sources or references, and any raw data summaries as needed. Raw datasets (quantitative data files) should be submitted separately alongside the report.

4. Methodology

The baseline study will employ a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to capture a holistic picture of the baseline situation:

- **Quantitative Approach:** Structured surveys will generate measurable baseline indicators. Statistical analysis will be used to summarize key metrics such as income levels, employment rates, number of civic activities by youth, and children's skill assessment scores. The quantitative data will provide the primary values for tracking progress over time.
- **Qualitative Approach:** FGDs, KIIs, and observations will gather in-depth information on attitudes, behaviors, and contextual factors. For example, discussions with youth may reveal barriers to engagement (like lack of trust or opportunities), and interviews with parents can highlight prevailing parenting practices. These qualitative insights will help explain the “why” behind the numbers and ensure that the baseline assessment captures nuances that numbers alone might miss.
- **Sampling Strategy:** A careful sampling strategy will be employed to ensure representativeness across all target groups and project areas *as a whole*. The consultant will define sample sizes sufficient to yield reliable data for:
 - Adult beneficiaries (for livelihoods) – ensuring a strong representation of women and inclusion of conflict-affected individuals.

- Youth population in target communities – possibly stratified by gender and location.
- Children in the program (or from beneficiary families) and their parents. The sampling may use stratified random sampling for surveys (to cover various regions or demographic categories) and purposive sampling for qualitative interviews (to include key stakeholders and diverse perspectives).

All data will be disaggregated by relevant variables (gender, age group, etc.) to allow analysis of sub-groups where needed.

- **Indicator Alignment:** The baseline tools and analysis will align directly with the project's **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**. For each outcome area, specific indicators to be measured include, for example:
 - Average monthly income and % employed among target adults (for livelihoods outcome).
 - Number of youth groups/initiatives active and baseline count of local decisions influenced by youth (for civic engagement outcome).
 - % of children demonstrating specific competencies (communication, teamwork, etc.) and % of parents with positive engagement practices (for education outcome). By aligning with these indicators, the baseline ensures that all future outcome targets (e.g., 35% employed, 10 decisions, 1000 children reached, etc.) have a clearly documented starting point.

The final methodology will be approved by ART during the inception phase.

5. Deliverables and Timeline

The baseline study will begin in October 2025 and must be fully completed by **December 20, 2025**. Within this timeframe, the consultant/team is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- **Inception Report (approx. 1 week)** – Submitted within the first week after contract signing. The report should present the refined study design, methodology, sampling plan, and draft data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides), together with a detailed work plan. ART will review and approve the inception report and tools before fieldwork begins.
- **Data Collection Phase (approx. 5 weeks)** – Conducted immediately after approval of the inception report and upon launch project activities per objective. This will include field surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other agreed methods across the project's target communities.
- **Draft Baseline Report (approx. 2 weeks)** – Submitted within two weeks after completing data collection. The draft will present initial findings and baseline values for all indicators, organized by project objectives, and include preliminary analysis supported by tables and graphs. Feedback from ART and stakeholders will follow.
- **Final Baseline Report (approx. 2 weeks)** – Submitted within one week after receiving feedback on the draft. The final version must incorporate all comments and corrections and be delivered as a professional, publication-ready document. It should include an executive summary, methodology, findings, conclusions, annexes (tools, data summaries, etc.), and cleaned datasets with an indicator tracking table.

- **Presentation of Results** (*1 week, overlaps with final report*) – Upon submission of the final report, the consultant will prepare a concise presentation (PowerPoint or similar) highlighting key findings and baseline values. This will be shared with ART, partners, and potentially donors in a meeting or webinar format.

All deliverables will be reviewed by ART for quality and completeness. The consultant is expected to remain responsive to feedback and adhere strictly to the agreed schedule, ensuring the final report and data are submitted no later than **December 20, 2025**. The final report and datasets will remain the property of ART and may be shared with donors and stakeholders for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

6. Required Qualifications

ART is looking for an **independent consultant or a team** with the following qualifications to undertake this baseline study:

- **Proven M&E Expertise:** At least 3 years of experience in conducting baseline studies, evaluations, or similar research in the international development context. Demonstrated ability to design and implement quantitative surveys and qualitative research, and to analyze data rigorously. Familiarity with logframe (results-based) evaluation approaches and establishing baseline indicators is essential.
- **Sector Knowledge:** Strong understanding of one or more of the project's thematic areas – livelihoods and economic empowerment, youth civic engagement/participation, and non-formal education/child development. Experience evaluating or working on community development projects focusing on women's economic empowerment, youth leadership, and/or educational programs for children will be a significant asset.
- **Mixed-Methods Skills:** Excellent skills in both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- **Project Management and Logistics:** Capacity to manage the logistics of a multi-region field study.
- **Reporting Skills:** Ability to produce clear, structured, and well-written reports in English.

7. Reporting and Management

The contracted consultant or team will work under the supervision of ART's management. The reporting line will be to the ART programme director, with day-to-day coordination by the assigned project officer.

8. Budget

The budget will be determined based on the proposed methodology and team composition. Consultants should submit a financial proposal outlining their approach and expected costs. The consultant will be responsible for managing their own logistics (transportation, accommodation, enumerator payments, etc.) within the agreed budget. ART can provide guidance and available

contacts in target regions, but will not cover additional costs beyond the agreed budget without prior approval.

9. How to Apply

Interested consultants or teams are invited to apply to this assignment. The application should include:

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** of the lead consultant and key team members, highlighting relevant experience and qualifications, 2 references from previous assignments.
- **Technical Proposal** (maximum 5–7 pages) outlining your understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology (including sampling approach and tools), tentative work plan, and any insights into how you will tackle the three thematic components of the baseline.
- **Financial Proposal** in AMD, detailing all expected costs, including consultant daily rates, travel and accommodation, enumerator fees (if applicable), and any other expenses.

Please send the above documents via email to info@roundtable-act.am with the subject line “Baseline Study ” by **October 15, 2025**. Early submission is encouraged. **Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted** for further discussion or an interview.