

Terms of Reference (TOR)

For

The final evaluation of project “Labour-market inclusion for disadvantaged young adults in Romania” (Project 942.403)

Made (internally / independently / externally)

Externally

Of (start / mid-term / final / ex-post / other)

Final

In (country)

Romania

ToR for EVALUATION were reviewed by M&E team?

Signature of M&E: _____

1 DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Between 2013-2019, HEKS/EPER implemented a Roma Inclusion Project as Part of the Swiss Contribution to the new member states of the EU, which was also supported by the Medicor Foundation. The focus of that project was on educational assistance for vulnerable children, mainly through Afterschool Classes. At the same time, that project established a structure for job mediation in three counties with the aim of attracting more job seekers from vulnerable groups, especially Roma, to the formal labour market.

However, transition from education to employment remained very problematic for young adults from disadvantaged groups. With the capacities built in the previous project, HEKS/EPER and its partners FAER and Diakonia Covasna aimed to link measures to increase the attendance of professional schools with job mediation, thus supporting a successful transition from education to employment for young adults from vulnerable and excluded groups.

While job mediation has been previously implemented by HEKS/EPER and its partners, career counselling and orientation for the 8th grade students was a new line of intervention. An important step in the transition from education to employment is happening in 8th grade, when students enrol for professional schools. In addition to emphasising the value of a professional education and the perspectives it opens, systematic career orientation also enables students with Roma and other vulnerable backgrounds to consciously choose a career path according to their talents and interests.

As an overall objective, the project works towards a situation where vulnerable young adults, including those from Roma communities, have better access to decent work.

Outcome 1: Increased employability of young adults with disadvantaged backgrounds through career orientation and support to complete professional schools.

Outcome 2: Increased integration of young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds into the labor market

The target groups / final beneficiaries are students and young adults from vulnerable groups, with a special focus on Roma, from Covasna and Mures counties:

- 8th grade students as target group for school and career counselling. Target: 520 vulnerable students (2022 revised logframe: 840 students).
- Teachers, school directors and/or other school staff (e.g. psychologists, school counselors) of professional schools as a target group for trainings about inclusive education and providing

- mentoring/tutoring support to disadvantaged students. Target: 24 teachers and other school staff trained until the end of the project (2022 revised logframe: 80 teachers).
- 11th and 12th grade students seeking a job as target group for information, counselling and job mediation. Target: 720 young adults informed, counselled and mediated until the end of the project (2022 revised logframe: 1000 students).
 - New employees from vulnerable groups as target group for post-employment support and mentoring. Target: 140 employees until the end of the project.
 - Employers/HR persons as target group of job mediation, sensitization and trainings on diversity and anti-discrimination. Target: minimum 8 companies involved in trainings.

2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Before the project comes to an end in December 2022, after 3 years of implementation, HEKS/EPER wants to see on the one hand, what results have been achieved (summative evaluation) and on the other hand to capitalize the experiences and findings (formative evaluation), in order to get recommendations, which are contributing to future projects of HEKS/EPER in the field of education (career counselling) and employment (job mediation).

Besides HEKSE/EPER, this evaluation will also be made available to Medicor Foundation, which funded the project. It will be presented to and discussed with the implementing organisations as well as with the target groups and stakeholders like schools, companies etc.

The focus of the evaluation will be on the formative side, as with the project valuable first steps towards a better transition to the 9th grade, respectively to the labour market have been done. Those will be – based on the experiences and resulting findings – developed further, in order to achieve sustainable results. The summative part of the evaluation shall summarize in a comprehensive way the reported results in the different annual reports.

Both implementing partners as well as HEKS/EPER (HO of HEKS/EPER Romania and HQ in Switzerland) will be involved in the evaluation, offering support in terms of providing documents and information, making contacts, reviewing the outputs of the evaluation, organising the focus groups (inviting participants, providing the location) and participating at the focus groups. Where needed also other stakeholders like representatives from schools, employers, target groups will be involved. The backstopping reports will provide an external view for the evaluation.

The evaluation will cover the education (career counselling) and employment (information, counselling and job mediation) component.

The evaluation has 3 pillars: i) Desk research (annual project reports and backstopping reports); ii) Questionnaires to be answered by selected stakeholders; iii) focus group discussions in Romania to analyse findings of i) and ii).

3 CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

a. All project components

Effectiveness

- Have the outcomes and outputs been achieved according to the target values stated by the indicators?
- What are the actual compared to the expected achievements at time of evaluation?

Partners' staff capacities

- Was it easy/hard to find the staff for the project team?
- Did the team members have relevant studies and previous experience? Were they able to work independently?
- Was it easy/hard to work with the implementing/coordination team? Which were the challenges? What could improve?

b. Education (career counselling)

Relevance

- How does career counselling and orientation contribute to a better transition of 8th grade students with disadvantaged backgrounds in the 9th grade?
- Do schools (directors, teachers, school counsellors and/or psychologists) consider career counselling and orientation of students with disadvantaged backgrounds as relevant for a better transition in the 9th grade?

Results

- Does career counselling and orientation result in better motivation of the target group to continue education?
- What is the effect of career counselling and orientation for students with disadvantaged backgrounds from the perspective of a local school?
- What are the factors and the processes which explain the project progress or the lack of any progress? Did the target group manage the pandemic situation better than their peers?

Sustainability

- Which collaborating schools will continue career counselling and orientation (including using Cognitrom Career Planner platform) after the end of the project? What are the factors of success?
- Which collaborating schools will not continue career counselling and orientation after the end of the project? What are the obstacles for not being able to continue?

c. Employment (information, counselling and job mediation)

Results

- To what extent did the information and counselling improve the chances to get a job?
- To what extent did job mediation improve the chances to be invited to a job interview? What are the success factors? What are the obstacles, when people have not been invited?
- To what extent did job interviews, arranged by job mediation, lead to an employment? What are the success factors? What are the obstacles, when people have not been employed?
- To what extent did mediated workers stay in their job for more than three months? What are the success factors? What are the obstacles, when people discontinued the job early?
- To what extent did mediated workers stay in their job for more than one year? What are the success factors? What are the obstacles, when people discontinued the job or left the job for another company?

Sustainability

- Which collaborating schools will continue information, counselling and job mediation activities after the end of the project? What are the factors of success?
- Which collaborating schools will not continue information, counselling and job mediation activities after the end of the project? What are the obstacles for not being able to continue?
- How far can job mediation for disadvantaged young people be structured as a business model, where employers pay (part of) the mediation services? What are the factors for employers to contribute or not to mediation services?

4 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Approach, Design, Sampling

Evidence will be gathered using a non-experimental approach, relying on the one hand on readily available data from monitoring and annual reports. On the other hand, qualitative data will be collected and generated throughout focus group discussions. A detailed overview on the pieces of evidence,

corresponding sources and underlying sampling / choice of sources will be provided in the evaluation matrix (annex).

As part of the inception report, the evaluator may propose alternative and/or additional methods.

Data collection and Data analysis

Desk research

The following data will be provided to the evaluator(s):

- The data from the project annual reports (including logframe/ follow-up matrix), to have an overview on the (mainly) quantitative results of the project.
- The findings of backstopping visits, to provide an external view for the evaluation.

Questionnaires

Key Questions on sustainability to be answered by collaborating schools.

Focus group discussion

Representatives of the implementing organizations as well as representatives from the target groups and other stakeholders involved in the process shall discuss and capitalize their experiences and findings in focus groups and define recommendation for futures projects. Base of the discussions are the findings of the desk research and the questionnaires. The focus group discussions shall be facilitated by the evaluator(s).

Education (career counselling)

1 focus group discussion of each partner on local level with the project coordinator of the implementing partners, parents, career counsellors and representatives from the collaborating schools

Employment (information, counselling and job mediation)

2 focus group discussion of each partner on local level with the project coordinator of the implementing partners, job mediators, mediated graduates, representatives from companies (one focus group with mediated graduates and one with representatives from companies)

Analysis

Quantitative data will be processed to produce descriptive statistics of the *status quo* at the end of the project phase; qualitative data will be synthesized where possible to find trends in perceptions, divergent opinions and noteworthy remarks.

Triangulation, Cross-cutting issues

As will be shown in the evaluation matrix, the answers to key evaluation questions will frequently draw on both quantitative and qualitative data from different sources, providing means of triangulating the evidence. Where possible, data will be disaggregated by gender and other relevant factors.

5 DELIVERABLES

- 1) Inception Report, including any deviations from the evaluation design, method and tools described in this ToR
- 2) Comments, if applicable, on the evaluation matrix
- 3) Data collection tools
- 4) The evaluation will result in the drawing up of a **report** written in a straightforward manner, in English.
 - a) Cover page
 - b) Table of the content
 - c) Abbreviations
 - d) Acknowledgements

- e) Executive summary
 - Brief description of the evaluated action, objectives, methods and duration of the evaluation.
 - Main conclusions: The conclusions must refer to the main evaluation criteria.
 - Main recommendations and suggestions for improvement: The recommendations and suggestions must be directly and logically related to the conclusions.
- f) Introduction
 - Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation
- g) Description of the development intervention
- h) Evaluation criteria and questions
- i) Methodology and procedure
- j) Findings

This chapter will provide the background to the points listed in the Executive Summary. It will contain a description of the findings and an analysis or interpretation of the action in terms of the main evaluation criteria, focusing particularly on the main issues that were to be studied.

- k) Conclusions
- l) Recommendations
- m) Annexes
 - TOR
 - Evaluation matrix
 - List of consulted stakeholders
 - Table with the achieved results based on the logframe

2) Summary of evaluation in brief – comprehensive and suitable for dissemination towards partner organizations, project stakeholders and participants, external communication (4 pages max., attractive layout).

6 SCHEDULE AND BUDGET

Schedule

Date	Item	Responsible	Days
Until June 30, 2022	ToR, including evaluation matrix	Ioana Ardelean Emanuel Tapu Angela Elmiger Annika Klotz	3
August 5, 2022	Evaluator(s) selection	Ioana Ardelean Emanuel Tapu Annika Klotz	1
August 2022	Inception report and data collection tools	Evaluator(s)	2
August 2022	Table with the achieved results based on the logframe	Evaluator(s)	3
August/ September 2022	Preparation of the evaluation - Briefing partners	Ioana Ardelean	1
September/ October 2022	Preparation and execution of the focus groups	Implementing partners HEKS RO Evaluator(s)	Preparation: 2d Execution: Mures 2d Covasna 2d Reporting: 4d

			Total 10 days
Until October 2022	Draft of the final report	Evaluator(s)	5
November 11, 2022	Final version of the evaluation report	Evaluator(s)	1

Budget

The evaluator(s)' financial offer is expected to include detailed costs for the evaluation, travel and accommodation.

Tasks/costs	Days	Evaluator(s) budget
Inception report and data collection tools	2	
Desk research and table with the results	3	
Preparation of the focus groups, 2d Execution of focus groups, 4d (2d Mures and 2d Covasna) Reporting, 4d	10*	
Travel and accommodation costs for the evaluator(s) Participation at and facilitation of focus groups, 4d	4*	
Draft of the final report	5	
Final evaluation report, 5d	1	
Total	25*	

* There might be more days if a second evaluator/facilitator is needed for the focus groups (one facilitating the discussions and one taking notes). If the evaluator will record and transcript the data, the costs for data transcription should be included in the financial offer.

7 MANAGEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Angela Elmiger, Head of Program Europe/Middle East/Church Cooperation HEKS/EPER: Monitoring the process
- Annika Klotz, MEL Officer HEKS/EPER: Supporting the process
- Emanuel Tapu, director HEKS/EPER Romania and Ioana Ardelean, project coordinator: Responsible for the process in Romania
- Evaluator(s): desk research, participating at and facilitating the focus group discussions (incl. reporting) and responsible for the final report
- Coordinators of the implementing organizations: responsible for organizing the local focus group discussion, for sending and collecting the surveys from collaborating schools

8 FOLLOW UP OF THE ASSESSMENT

The findings and recommendation will be discussed in HEKS/EPER as well as with the partner organisations and result in a management response by the HoP & CD Romania. The results of the discussion will contribute to structure future projects of HEKS/EPER in the field of career counselling and job mediation for students/young people from disadvantaged groups in Romania. Beside of HEKSE/EPER this evaluation will also be made available to Medicor Foundation.

9 LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- Project proposal, including 2022 revised budget and revised logframe
- Annual reports 2020 and 2021, semi-annual report 2022 (available in August 2022)
- Backstopping reports

10 ASSESSMENT TEAM / QUALIFICATIONS

Evaluator(s):

- Prior evaluation experience of minimum 3 years;
- Excellent facilitation and coordination skills (experienced in facilitating evaluation workshops/focus groups with NGOs);
- In-depth knowledge of the context: educational field in Romania and its challenges, access to labor market in Romania for professional school graduates and its challenges;
- Romanian and English language skills: fluency in Romanian and proficiency in writing in English;
- Experienced with qualitative data collection and analysis and with quantitative data analysis, in particular to establish why/how changes happened (finding causal pathways, enabling and hindering factors);
- Strong analytical skills;
- Ability to deliver quality reports/ analysis and results in line with established deadlines.

The application should include:

a) a cover letter indicating how the candidate(s) meets the required qualifications (max. 2 pages);

b) a CV (max. 3 pages);

c) the proposed causal approach/design, methodology, and sequence of activities (max. 1 page). First drafts of data evaluation tools (survey, focus group discussions) and evaluation matrix have been prepared and were sent with this ToR.

d) at least one example of previous, similar work;

e) two references;

f) a financial offer.