



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Engagement of Mentors for On-site Childcare Support and Capacity Strengthening at YARID and SSC Centers**

Ace Policy Research Institute (APRI)

Application Deadline: Friday, 30th April 2026 at 11:00am

April 2026

## **1. Introduction**

Ace Policy Research Institute (APRI) is implementing a research project examining the combined effects of a two-generation model involving childcare and financial support interventions among vulnerable businesswomen in urban refugee and host communities in Kampala.

The project, under implementation since September 2025, has established and operationalized two community-based childcare centers at YARID and St. Stephen's Church (SSC). These centers support women with children aged 8 months to 3 years by reducing childcare burden and enabling participation in livelihood activities.

In addition to providing childcare services, the project is explicitly designed to promote the healthy growth and development of children enrolled at the centers, recognizing early childhood as a critical stage for cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development.

Currently, the YARID center serves 66 children while the SSC center serves 39 children, with each center staffed by 8 personnel responsible for daily operations, care, and safety of the children.

## **2. Justification for Mentorship Support**

While the childcare staff at both centers are trained and experienced, the nature of childcare services particularly for young children requires continuous capacity strengthening, reinforcement of standards, and quality assurance.

All staff, regardless of role (child minders, cooks, askaris, and supervisors), play a critical role in ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and holistic development of children. Given this shared responsibility, it is essential that staff receive routine mentorship and refresher support to:

- Maintain high standards of childcare and safety
- Strengthen practical caregiving and early childhood development practices
- Ensure consistency in service delivery across the centers

Furthermore, to achieve the intended child development outcomes, caregivers must be equipped not only to provide basic care but also to actively support children's growth across cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional domains.

This mentorship will therefore play a critical role in strengthening caregivers' ability to contribute to children's growth and development by enhancing their skills in responsive caregiving, early stimulation, nutrition, and child-centered engagement.

On-site mentorship is particularly preferred as it enables the mentor to:

- Observe real-time operations within the natural childcare environment
- Identify practical gaps and context-specific challenges
- Provide immediate, tailored feedback
- Allows staff to continue operating normally with very minimal or even no interruptions

- Conduct debrief sessions with staff to reinforce learning and continuous improvement

This approach also allows mentors to directly observe child–caregiver interactions and assess how daily practices contribute to or hinder optimal child growth and development. This is in addition to ensuring that the childcare environment remains safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate for all children enrolled in the centers.

### **3. Objective of the Assignment**

- To provide on-site mentorship and capacity strengthening to childcare staff at YARID and SSC centers in order to enhance the quality of care, improve child safety standards, and strengthen operational efficiency of the centers.
- To strengthen caregivers’ competencies in promoting early childhood growth and development, enabling them to support children in achieving age-appropriate cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional developmental outcomes.

### **4. Scope of Work**

The selected mentor(s) will be expected to:

- Conduct on-site mentorship sessions at both childcare centers
- Observe day-to-day operations and caregiving practices
- Identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement in service delivery
- Provide hands-on guidance and coaching to all categories of staff
- Facilitate structured debrief sessions with staff following observations
- Support strengthening of systems related to:
  - Child safety and safeguarding practices
  - Hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition
  - Early childhood stimulation and development
  - Daily routines and caregiving practices
  - Emergency preparedness and response
- Assess and strengthen caregivers’ practices related to child growth monitoring, early learning, play-based stimulation, and responsive caregiving
- Provide practical guidance on how daily center activities can intentionally support children’s cognitive, emotional, and physical development
- Provide practical recommendations for improving center operations

The mentor(s) are also expected to propose additional focus areas based on their professional experience.

### **5. Deliverables**

The mentor(s) will be required to deliver:

- i. Inception Brief outlining the mentorship approach, key focus areas, and proposed schedule of visits
- ii. On-site Mentorship Sessions and Debrief Reports documenting observations, feedback provided, and immediate actions agreed with staff
- iii. Final Mentorship Report summarizing:
  - Key findings and gaps identified
  - Improvements observed over the mentorship period
  - Practical recommendations for sustained quality improvement
  - A matrix showing agreed action points with staff for improvement and timelines
- iv. Assessment of improvements in caregiving practices related to child growth and development

## **6. Duration and Level of Effort**

The assignment is expected to be conducted over a period to be determined by the mentor(s).

Applicants are required to:

- Propose the number of days required to effectively deliver the assignment
- Provide a clear schedule of site visits across the two centers

## **7. Required Qualifications**

The mentor(s) should possess:

- Proven experience in early childhood development (ECD), childcare management, or related fields
- Demonstrated experience in training, coaching, or mentorship of childcare providers
- Strong understanding of child safeguarding, nutrition, hygiene, and early learning practices
- Experience working in community-based or resource-constrained settings
- Excellent facilitation, observation, and interpersonal skills
- Experience working with refugee and host communities will be an added advantage.

## **8. Proposal Requirements**

Interested consultants are required to submit:

- i. Technical Proposal (maximum 3 pages) including:
  - Proposed mentorship approach and methodology
  - Key focus areas
  - Proposed duration and workplan
- ii. Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- iii. Financial Proposal

**Submission Instructions**

All applications should be submitted electronically to: Email: [snyangoma@apriug.org](mailto:snyangoma@apriug.org) and copy [pbengana@apriug.org](mailto:pbengana@apriug.org) and [jacklyn@apriug.org](mailto:jacklyn@apriug.org)

**Deadline for submission:**

Friday, 30th April 2026, 11:00 AM EAT

Late submissions will not be considered.