



TERMS OF REFERENCE

TRANAC Project End-of-Project Evaluation

1. Background and Context

The Transnational Networks Advocacy Capacity (TRANAC) Project is a regional civil society initiative designed to strengthen the capacity of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) coalitions in six Southern Africa countries (Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, Eswatini and Mozambique) to influence education policy processes, promote accountability, and advance equitable access to quality early learning services. The project has supported national and regional advocacy platforms through coordinated research, policy engagement, media outreach, evidence generation, and structured learning exchanges among coalition partners. By linking national advocacy processes with regional dialogue mechanisms, TRANAC has aimed to elevate ECDE as a strategic priority within the education sector, planning frameworks, while strengthening the role of civil society as a legitimate policy actor.

Implemented across Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Eswatini and Zambia through national ECDE coalition structures (Zimbabwe Network of Early Childhood Development Actors, Network of Early Childhood Development of Lesotho, Early Childhood Development Coalition Malawi, RDPI Mozambique, Zambia National Education Coalition and Swaziland Network of Early Childhood Development) and regional coordination platforms, the project has contributed to strengthening collaboration between civil society organisations, government institutions, regional policy actors, and regional governance bodies. The initiative has also sought to improve the use of locally generated evidence to influence ECDE policy frameworks, financing commitments, and accountability mechanisms, aligning with continental and global commitments such as Sustainable Development Goal 4.2 and regional education cooperation priorities. As the project approaches completion, an independent end-of-project evaluation is planned to assess the extent to which TRANAC has achieved its intended objectives, strengthened coalition advocacy capacity, generated data which contributed to policy influence processes, consolidated sustainable regional collaboration mechanisms capable of continuing beyond the project lifecycle, including identification of conflict sensitivity dimensions in the operating context

2. Objectives of the TRANAC Project

- a) To strengthen the capacity of national ECDE coalitions in areas of internal governance, policy analysis, advocacy and research to effectively hold governments and regional bodies in Southern Africa transparent and accountable in the implementation of ECD legislation, policies and strategies related to SDG 4.2 and GPE at the national and transnational level by September 2026.
- b) To increase the availability and use of ECDE data at national and transnational levels by decision makers and policymakers for policy analysis, evidence-based advocacy, learning, leadership strengthening, and decision making for the attainment of SDG 4.2 and GPE targets of ECDE in six Southern African countries by September 2026.
- c) To influence governments and regional bodies to effect comprehensive, gender-sensitive and inclusive ECDE legislation, policies and systems to improve the policy environment and quality of ECDE services provision at national and transnational levels in six Southern African countries by September 2026.

3.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, contribution, sustainability, and transnational value addition of the TRANAC project (based on the OECD DAC evaluation standards as adapted for advocacy programming). The evaluation will examine the extent to which the project strengthened civil society advocacy capacity at both national and regional levels and contributed to improved visibility, prioritization, and accountability for ECDE within education systems across participating countries.

In addition to assessing results achieved, the evaluation is expected to generate strategic learning that can inform future regional advocacy programming, strengthen coalition-based engagement models, and contribute to evidence-based planning for subsequent investments in transnational education advocacy initiatives. The evaluation will also document good practices emerging from coalition collaboration and identify pathways through which regional learning platforms enhance national advocacy effectiveness.

3.2 Evaluation use and key intended users

The primary intended users of this evaluation include: (1) the TRANAC Alliance and National coalition coordinators, who will use the findings for adaptive management and future programme design; (2) donor partners, specifically Education Out Loud, to inform funding decisions; and (3) civil society actors across the six countries, who will draw on the evaluation for learning purposes. The evaluation is expected to directly inform strategic planning for the 2027–2030 period, and evaluators are required to propose a dissemination and uptake plan as part of the inception report to ensure these users can effectively access and apply the results.

4.1 Overall evaluation objective

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the TRANAC project achieved its intended outcomes in strengthening civil society advocacy capacity and influencing ECDE policy processes at national and regional levels, while generating evidence-based learning on the effectiveness, added value, and sustainability of transnational coalition-based advocacy approaches.

4.2 Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation seeks:

- i. To assess progress made toward achieving the intended outcomes of the TRANAC project while examining the effectiveness of the strategies used to strengthen coalition capacity and influence ECDE policy environments in six Southern African countries.
- ii. To examine how far the project contributed to strengthening civil society participation in early childhood education dialogue processes and whether it enhanced collaboration between national coalitions and regional policy platforms.
- iii. To assess the extent to which the project supported evidence-informed advocacy approaches, strengthened accountability mechanisms within ECDE systems, and facilitated meaningful participation of marginalised groups to be locally defined in consultation with coalitions in education policy processes.
- iv. To analyse how regional collaboration generated added value beyond national-level interventions and how lessons emerging from transnational engagement contributed to influencing policy outcomes, and whether any unintended negative effects (e.g. elite capture of regional platforms) occurred.
- v. To establish whether the TRANAC project has had a multiplier effect on other projects implemented by the TRANAC Alliance and its country Alliance Partners or contributed to building new networks or campaigns.

5. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will cover the full implementation period of the TRANAC project (October 2023-September 2026) and will include all participating countries supported through national coalition platforms as well as regional learning and advocacy coordination mechanisms established under the initiative. The assessment will consider both national-level outcomes and regional processes that contributed to strengthening ECDE advocacy environments in Southern Africa. The evaluation will examine the project's contribution to strengthening coalition institutional capacity, improving the quality and uptake of advocacy evidence products, supporting engagement with government policy processes, and enhancing coordination between civil society actors working on ECDE within the region. It will also assess the effectiveness of regional knowledge-sharing platforms in supporting peer learning and strengthening the collective voice of civil society actors advocating for early childhood development across Southern Africa. Cross-cutting themes, including gender equality, inclusion of marginalised populations, human rights-based approaches to advocacy, social accountability, conflict sensitivity and sustainability of coalition-led advocacy platforms, will be integrated throughout the evaluation.

6. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will apply internationally recognized evaluation criteria while incorporating additional dimensions relevant to transnational civil society advocacy initiatives.

i. Relevance

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the TRANAC project responded to national early childhood development and education (ECDE) priorities, regional education commitments, and the capacity needs of civil society coalitions operating across participating countries. It will analyse how regional collaboration generated added value beyond national-level interventions, and how lessons emerging from transnational engagement contributed to influencing policy outcomes, while also identifying any unintended negative effects. The evaluation will further examine whether the project design appropriately addressed policy gaps and whether the transnational approach provided a suitable mechanism for strengthening advocacy effectiveness across multiple national contexts. Key sub-questions guiding this analysis include: to what extent did the project design adapt to different national policy windows, and was the regional approach equally relevant for fragile versus stable contexts?

ii. Effectiveness

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project achieved its intended results in strengthening coalition advocacy capacity, improving engagement with education policy processes, and increasing the visibility of ECDE within national and regional education agendas. It will examine whether the project design appropriately addressed policy gaps and whether the transnational approach provided a suitable mechanism for strengthening advocacy effectiveness across multiple national contexts, with key sub-questions including the extent to which the project design adapted to different national policy windows, and whether the regional approach was equally relevant for fragile versus stable contexts.

iii. Efficiency

The evaluation will examine how efficiently project resources were utilised in delivering results and whether implementation arrangements supported the timely delivery of activities. Attention will be given to coordination mechanisms between national coalitions and regional platforms and the extent to which adaptive management approaches enabled the project to respond to emerging advocacy opportunities.

iv. Contribution to change

Recognising the complexity of advocacy, the evaluation will use contribution analysis or outcome harvesting to identify plausible causal pathways between TRANAC interventions and observed changes in policy dialogue processes, financing discussions, accountability mechanisms, and recognition of ECDE within education sector planning frameworks. The

evaluator shall explicitly distinguish between direct contributions, enabling factors and external influences.

v. Sustainability

The evaluation will assess whether the capacities strengthened through the TRANAC project are likely to be maintained beyond the project lifecycle. It will examine whether coalition coordination platforms remain functional, whether partnerships established with government institutions are likely to continue, and whether regional collaboration mechanisms created under the project can support ongoing ECDE advocacy efforts, including identification of any exit strategy gaps or unintended dependency on external funding.

vi. Gender Equality, Inclusion, Social Accountability and Human Rights-Based Approaches

The evaluation will examine how effectively the project integrated gender equality, inclusion, and social accountability considerations and promoted participation of marginalized communities in advocacy processes. It will also assess whether project strategies reflect principles of participation, transparency, and non-discrimination consistent with rights-based approaches to ECDE advocacy.

vii. Transnational Value Addition

Given the regional nature of the initiative, the evaluation will specifically assess how cross-country collaboration strengthened national advocacy outcomes. It will examine whether regional learning platforms improved advocacy strategies, supported knowledge exchange between coalitions, and enhanced the collective visibility of ECDE priorities within regional policy dialogue spaces.

7. Learning Questions

- 1. How has the TRANAC Alliance's implementation of the OC3 grant project contributed to the outcomes of the project?**
 - To what extent did the alliance members already have an established working relationship when applying for the EOL grant? Or was the alliance formed specifically to apply?
 - To what effect has the composition of the alliance made a difference in enabling advocacy in regional and/or global policy spaces, while influencing change at the national level?
 - To what extent would the TRANA alliance do things differently in terms of the alliance composition, lead organisation or others, if it were to undertake similar transnational advocacy opportunities in the future?

2. How have the learning efforts of Education Out Loud made a difference to the TRANAC Alliance?

- To what extent have EOL learning initiatives (such as learning collaboratives, online or in-person training, action research, learning events, learning communities) been effective and useful for OC3 alliances - whether these have been carried out by EOL staff, the Global Campaign for Education, learning partners or the alliance lead itself?
- To what extent are there changed practices, approaches, or systems in the OC3 alliance organisations that can be attributed to participation in the EOL learning initiatives?

8. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to ensure the triangulation of findings and the credibility of conclusions. The methodology is expected to include a comprehensive review of project documentation, including progress reports, advocacy products, research outputs, coalition-strengthening tools, and records from the regional learning platform. Interviews with key stakeholders will be conducted to capture perspectives from coalition members, government representatives, development partners, media actors, national and regional policy stakeholders engaged through the TRANAC project.

The evaluation will also draw on outcome-harvesting or contribution analysis approaches to identify pathways through which advocacy interventions influenced policy processes and strengthened accountability environments. Selected country-level case studies will be developed to illustrate examples of policy engagement outcomes or coalition-strengthening achievements emerging from the project. The evaluation team will be expected to ensure gender-responsive and inclusive data collection approaches throughout the assignment. The inception report must include: a stakeholder mapping matrix, a limitations sections including recall bias, attribution and access constraints, a plan for remote data collection in insecure areas.

9. Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to produce the following deliverables:

- a. Inception report confirming understanding of the assignment and presenting the refined methodology, evaluation matrix, stakeholder consultation plan, data-collection tools, risk mitigation plan and detailed workplan for approval before fieldwork.
- b. Draft evaluation report presenting preliminary findings across all evaluation criteria, including analysis of results achieved, coalition strengthening outcomes, transnational value addition, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations for stakeholder review.
- c. A validation workshop presentation will be conducted virtually, supported by national-level feedback sessions, to summarise key findings,

conclusions, and recommendations, thereby enabling stakeholders to validate the evaluation results, confirm their accuracy, and foster a sense of shared ownership over the outcomes.

- d. A revised final report incorporating stakeholder feedback and presenting final evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations aligned with the objectives of the TRANAC project.
- e. Up to three country case study briefs will be developed, documenting country-level examples of policy engagement outcomes, coalition strengthening progress, or advocacy influence pathways to illustrate how the TRANAC project contributed to change at the national level and how regional collaboration supported these results; countries will be selected in consultation with the contracting agency based on variation in outcomes.
- f. Annex package including the evaluation matrix, data-collection tools, list of stakeholders consulted, and references to documents reviewed.
- g. Two-page executive summary and separate three-page learning brief for civil society audiences.

10. Duration of the Assignment

The evaluation is expected to be conducted over a period of forty-five working days, including time allocated for inception, data collection, analysis, reporting, and validation processes. The consultant will propose a detailed timeline as part of the inception phase.

11. Management Arrangements

The evaluation will be commissioned and managed by the ZINECDA Alliance through the coordination mechanism hosted by ZINECDA. The alliance will facilitate access to project documentation and support coordination with national coalition partners to enable stakeholder consultations across participating countries. Technical oversight of the evaluation process will be provided through alliance representatives and key project stakeholders to ensure the credibility and usefulness of the evaluation findings.

12. Ethical Considerations

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with internationally recognised ethical standards for development evaluations. The evaluation team will ensure confidentiality of respondents, obtain informed consent before interviews, and apply gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches during stakeholder engagement processes. Where engagement with vulnerable populations is required, appropriate safeguarding procedures will be applied, including protocols for data protection and secure storage.

13. Use of Evaluation Findings

Findings from the evaluation will be used to strengthen future regional ECDE advocacy strategies, inform coalition strengthening investments across Southern Africa, and contribute to learning on effective transnational civil society engagement in education policy processes. The evaluation will also support partners in identifying sustainability pathways for regional collaboration mechanisms established under the TRANAC project

and will contribute to broader sector learning on strengthening civil society participation in education sector governance processes. A dissemination plan will be co-developed with ZINECDA to ensure findings reach national-level policymakers and community-based ECDE practitioners.

14. Qualifications and competencies

- A master's degree in education, development studies, public policy, or a related field is required, with a PhD considered an asset.
- Candidates must have a minimum of seven to ten years of evaluation experience, including at least three evaluations of regional or transnational civil society programmes.
- Strong experience in the evaluation of advocacy projects and programmes is essential.
- Experience with OECD DAC criteria and contribution analysis methods is required.
- Familiarity with Education Out Loud or GPE programming is considered an added advantage.
- Experience working within Southern African education systems and familiarity with early childhood development programme and policy environments will be considered an advantage, with a preference for a team that includes at least one Southern Africa-based evaluator.

15. Submission Requirements

To apply, please submit a package containing the following:

1. A cover letter expressing interest and detailing relevant experience (not more than 1 page).
2. An updated CV of key personnel, if team-based: CVs of all proposed members, highlighting qualifications and skills that are relevant to the research study.
3. A technical proposal outlining the understanding of the TOR, proposed methodology, and detailed work plan.
4. A financial proposal outlining the anticipated budget.
5. The application package should not exceed 10 pages in total. Please email your response to zinecdanetwork@gmail.com by 31 May 2026.