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EVALUATION OF THE AKELIUS LANGUAGE PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

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1. Introduction

About SOS Children's Villages

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SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental organization dedicated to supporting children and young people without parental care or at risk of losing it. Founded in 1949 in Austria, the organization operates in over 130 countries and territories, providing tailored care solutions that prioritize the best interests of each child.

The organization's mission is to ensure that every child grows up with the care, relationships, and support they need to become their strongest selves. This is achieved through a combination of family-like care, family strengthening programmes, education, health care, and emergency relief efforts.

SOS Children's Villages works in partnership with communities, governments, and other organizations to advocate for children's rights and to influence policies that affect their well-being. The organization's approach is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, while its Humanitarian Mandate steers the organization's work in emergency settings, where it seeks to prevent family separation, protect children and youth, and ensure care for unaccompanied or separated children. In 2025, the organization carried out 119 humanitarian projects in 41 countries, reaching more than 2.7 million individuals, most of them children.

SOS Children's Villages Sweden, the Swedish member association, supports international programmes through fundraising, advocacy, and technical assistance. It is one of the main funders of humanitarian programmes in the Federation and currently funds emergency interventions in the Middle East, East Africa, and Latin America, with a significant share of the funding used in education in emergencies projects.

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SOS Children’s Villages Colombia is part of the global SOS Children’s Villages Federation and has been present in the country for more than 50 years, working in partnership with communities, public institutions, and other stakeholders to protect and promote the rights of children, adolescents, and young people who have lost parental care or are at risk of losing it. Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Federation’s Humanitarian Mandate, the organization provides 4 core services: i) family and community strengthening; ii) alternative care; iii) advocacy for legislative reforms; and iv) humanitarian support in contexts of vulnerability, crisis, and displacement. In 2024, SOS Children’s Villages Colombia reached 55,284 children, adolescents, young people, and families, including 14,731 who received direct support across 12 departments of the country.

2. Background

SOS Children’s Villages Sweden has had a long-standing partnership with Akelius Foundation for international programme support. Since 2024, SOS Children’s Villages Sweden (SOS Barnbyar) has supported SOS partner associations in implementing the Akelius digital learning platform, developed by Akelius Foundation, to enhance language acquisition and digital skills development among children and youth, particularly in fragile, low-resource, and crisis-affected settings. These partnerships strengthen SOS Children’s Villages Sweden’s positioning in humanitarian programming, particularly within Education in Emergencies (EiE).

SOS Barnbyar currently partners with 10 national associations for implementation of Akelius Language projects: Colombia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Lebanon. In eight of these associations, the programmatic framework is Education in Emergencies, as the projects seek to

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address critical gaps in language and digital literacy resulting mainly from conflict and forced migration. The duration of the projects varies between one and five years, with an average length of two years. Funding is mainly provided for ICT equipment, refurbishment of ICT rooms, classrooms or child-friendly spaces, solar panels and supporting equipment, training and incentives for teachers, community sensitization or enrolment sessions, and SOS project staff. Although Akelius Learning also includes a maths component, humanitarian projects have so far implemented only the language learning programme.

The Akelius Language projects seek to improve inclusive and equitable language learning outcomes for children and youth aged 6 to 18 in vulnerable and crisis-affected contexts through the effective integration of digital learning technologies using a self-paced learning approach. The project's main outcomes can be summarized as follows:

1. Improved access to quality digital learning environments: children and youth have increased access to safe, inclusive, and well-equipped ICT-enabled learning spaces that support self-paced language acquisition.
2. Strengthened capacity of teachers and education systems: teachers, facilitators, and education stakeholders enhance their digital, pedagogical, and blended learning competencies to effectively deliver language education.
3. Enhanced language proficiency and engagement among learners: children and youth demonstrate improved language skills, digital literacy, and sustained engagement in learning, supported by family, community, and institutional uptake of digital education approaches.

The projects use different Results Frameworks as well as a consolidated monitoring tool that gathers the following anonymized data on a monthly basis:

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- Students: new students, active students, students who discontinued, and number of students progressing to the next level (between A1 and B2), disaggregated by gender, age, and disability status.
- Teachers: teachers trained in the Akelius Language Course (ALC), new teachers teaching ALC, number of teachers using ALC, average teaching hours per week, and lesson duration.
- Hardware purchased.
- Type of analogue material received.
- Classrooms built or renovated.
- PV panels.

In 2025, 6,893 students were enrolled in SOS-supported Akelius Language projects in six countries, while four countries had not yet begun implementation.

3. Objectives of the Evaluation

The objective of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the Akelius Programme in crisis settings, in line with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The evaluation will generate evidence for accountability and learning, supporting the strategic progression of SOS Children's Villages Sweden as an enabler of education in emergencies projects within the SOS Children's Villages Federation.

The evaluation aims to inform:

- Akelius Foundation's understanding of the projects' impact on equitable, inclusive, and safe access to education and digital literacy for children and youth in crisis settings.

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- SOS Children's Villages Sweden's alignment with, and further support of, education in emergencies initiatives across the Federation.
- SOS national associations' assessment of their capacity, limitations, and impact in ensuring measurable outcomes in challenging operational contexts.

The evaluation will assess three programmatic objectives:

Part 1. Impact of the project on digital language learning:

- Evaluate whether the project enhances children's and youth's language learning.
- Conduct a deeper assessment of the effectiveness of the digital platform for language acquisition gains among different groups of children, including those disaggregated in the monitoring tool (gender/age), refugee or displaced children, children with at least one reported disability, and children from the host community.
- Identify patterns of exclusion, lower engagement, or systematically lower gains for specific sub-groups, and their underlying causes.

Part 2. Contribution to local system strengthening:

- Contribution to teacher and facilitator digital and pedagogical capacity development.
- Strengthening of a safe educational environment, including training and awareness on child and youth safeguarding.
- Engagement of community structures supporting education access.

Part 3. Framing of the project in the crisis-response strategy:

- Assess the relevance of the Akelius approach to address educational needs, including those of children living with disabilities.

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- Evaluate the criteria used to select learners and geographical areas, in line with international humanitarian standards adopted by the SOS Children's Villages Federation.
- Assess how programme participants, caregivers, and other key stakeholders were identified and engaged in the evaluated projects, including in their design and implementation.
- Reflect on the project's added value in the overall emergency response framework, both locally and within the SOS partner organization.
- Explore the integration and adoption of data protection, safeguarding measures, and Accountability to Affected Populations.

Specific objectives of the evaluation:

The evaluation will respond to the following specific objectives, aligned with the OECD-DAC criteria. For each criterion, evaluators are encouraged to explore both qualitative and quantitative evidence and consider leading questions that help frame their analysis.

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right things?

- Does the project enhance language learning for children living in crisis settings?
- Are there significant disparities in language acquisition among different groups of learners?
- How does the project and learning method address the needs of children living with disabilities?

Coherence: how well does the intervention fit?

- To what extent does the Akelius Language project fit within the national association's emergency or humanitarian response strategy?

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- Is the project aligned with globally recognized humanitarian and EiE standards?
- Does the project enhance the partner organization's role as a humanitarian actor?
- Is the project complementary to other interventions within child protection, mental health, health care, nutrition, or education in emergencies?

Effectiveness: is the intervention achieving its objectives?

- To what extent does the Akelius Language project achieve its intended outcomes in improving language proficiency, strengthening teacher capacity, and increasing engagement from key stakeholders such as governmental institutions, parents, and community leaders?

Efficiency: how well are resources being used?

- How has the project used available resources to achieve its main outcomes, and how have outcomes been affected by operating in low-resource settings, migrant routes, or conflict areas?

Impact: What difference does the intervention make?

- Does the project enhance learners' language and digital skills?
- Does the project contribute to improvements in academic performance?
- Have key stakeholders such as parents, school staff, and community members changed their attitudes regarding support to children on language acquisition through digital learning?
- Has the project had any effects on teachers' perspectives regarding children's rights to education and child and youth safeguarding?

Sustainability: will the benefits last?

- Does the project address sustainability issues related to digital infrastructure in low-income settings?

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- Has the partner association undertaken risk assessments and demonstrated risk management capacities in relation to the project?
- Does the partner association have an exit strategy?
- Has the partner association ensured responsible management of technical equipment after the project ends?

4. Scope of the Evaluation

- Geographic scope: Somalia (Mogadishu and Baidoa), Ethiopia (Midega Tola), and Colombia (Maicao and Riohacha).
- Timeframe covered: July to October 2026.
- Thematic areas: Education in Emergencies, Core Humanitarian Standards, and child protection in humanitarian action.
- Stakeholders: children and youth, teaching staff and school staff, families, CBOs, community leaders, local authorities, and SOS partner organizations.

5. Evaluation Team Setup

As the evaluation will be conducted in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Colombia, one evaluator, referred to as the Lead Evaluator, will be based in Somalia and will be responsible for evaluating the programme in Somalia and Ethiopia. **A second evaluator, referred to as the Associate Evaluator, will be based in Colombia and will be responsible for evaluating the programme in Colombia.**

The Lead Evaluator will be responsible for all the deliverables described in the Timeline section, and the Associate Evaluator will ensure that deliverables related to the

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evaluation implemented in Colombia are duly shared with the Lead Evaluator. The team will work collaboratively to ensure a refined and solid analysis of the multi-country evaluation.

The evaluation team is not required to have worked together previously. However, excellent collaboration between the evaluators is expected to ensure high-quality deliverables. Fees will be paid separately, or jointly if so requested by the evaluators and if they work under the same company.

6. Expertise Required for the Associate Evaluator (Colombia)

- Proven experience in evaluating multi-country, rights-based development programmes, especially in Latin America.
- Advanced academic background in social sciences, child rights, international development, or a related field.
- Strong methodological expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research.
- Demonstrated experience in participatory and ethical research involving children and vulnerable groups.
- Good understanding of child rights and issues affecting vulnerable children and their families.
- Fluency in English and Spanish.
- Excellent analytical, writing, and facilitation skills.

7. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

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The evaluation will be structured in three distinct phases, each with specific deliverables:

Inception Phase

- Review of programme documentation, including SOS monitoring tools, humanitarian and Education in Emergencies standards, Core Humanitarian Standards, UNICEF-Akelius digital learning evaluations and reports, SOS Humanitarian Mandate, SOS Companion Handbook, SOS partner organizations' humanitarian strategies, and the humanitarian contexts where the projects take place.
- Development of an inception report including an evaluation matrix, refined methodology, sampling approach, and draft data collection tools.
- Presentation of the methodology and work plan to the coordination group for validation.

Fieldwork Phase

- Field visits to selected sites in Somalia and Ethiopia by the Lead Evaluator and in Colombia by the Associate Evaluator.
- Key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory methods involving children, caregivers, teachers, CBOs, and local and school authorities.
- Debrief sessions with SOS partners and stakeholders to share preliminary findings.

Synthesis and Feedback Phase

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- Data triangulation and final analysis, including evidence-based and actionable recommendations.
- Formulation of minimum implementation standards for digital language learning impact across contexts.
- Identification of monitoring requirements for SOS-supported Akelius projects.
- Submission of the draft report and integration of feedback.
- Finalization of deliverables and dissemination of findings.

Throughout all phases, evaluators are expected to apply ethical standards in line with SOS Children's Villages' Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and international guidelines for research involving children.

The evaluator(s) should propose a mixed-methods approach tailored to the programme's complexity and multi-country context. The methodology must be participatory and rights-based; include a theory-based evaluation lens, such as theory of change; rely on both primary data collection and document review; and apply the highest standards of child protection and research ethics, especially when working with children and youth.

Triangulation across data sources is expected to ensure validity. The Lead Evaluator must ensure methodological consistency across countries and propose minimum data collection and data management standards for multi-country evaluations.

8. Supervision and Management

The evaluation will be commissioned by SOS Barnbyar Sverige and managed in coordination with SOS partner organizations and the SOS Humanitarian Action Team.

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A core evaluation coordination group will be established, including representatives from these constellations.

This group will:

- Provide guidance and feedback during inception, data collection, and reporting.
- Facilitate access to key documents and stakeholders.
- Ensure alignment with SOS Children's Villages Sweden's expectations and support ethical compliance.

9. Contracting Requirements and Terms

9.1 Contracting requirements and documentary compliance

Once selected, and as a condition prior to contract signature and implementation, the consultant or consulting firm shall submit the documents required by SOS Children's Villages Colombia, according to its legal nature and tax status. These may include, as applicable:

- Copy of the national ID document of the legal representative or individual consultant.
- Updated Tax Registration Certificate (RUT).
- Judicial, disciplinary, and fiscal background certificates for the legal entity and/or legal representative, as applicable.
- Verification of disqualifications related to sexual offences committed against persons under 18 years of age for any personnel involved in the assignment.
- Certificate of compliance with social security and parafiscal contributions, as applicable.
- Updated financial statements or equivalent financial information, where applicable.

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- Any licenses, registrations, or permits required for the execution of the contract.

9.2 Insurance requirements and Guarantees

Within five (5) calendar days following the execution of the contract, THE CONTRACTOR shall obtain, in favor of ALDEAS INFANTILES SOS COLOMBIA, an insurance policy issued by an insurance company duly incorporated and supervised by the Financial Superintendence of Colombia (Superintendencia Financiera de Colombia), covering the following risks:

- General contract performance: For an amount equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the contract value, valid for a term equal to the execution period plus four (4) additional months, counted from the date of issuance of the policy.
- Quality of services rendered: For an amount equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the contract value, valid for a term equal to the execution period plus four (4) additional months, counted from the date of issuance of the policy.
- Guarantee of payment of wages, social benefits, and severance payments to personnel (applicable only when the proposal is submitted by a consulting firm/legal entity, i.e., not applicable to individual consultants): For an amount equivalent to fifteen percent (15%) of the contract value, valid for the term of the contract plus three (3) additional years

9.3 Payment terms

Payments will be made against delivery and approval of the agreed deliverables, upon submission of the corresponding invoice or payment request and all required supporting documentation. The estimated payment term shall be up to thirty (30) calendar days from the date on which the invoice or payment request is duly submitted with complete and correct supporting documents, in accordance with the administrative and financial

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procedures of SOS Children's Villages Colombia. Payments will be made by bank transfer.

The payment schedule shall be defined in the contract in line with the final approved work plan and deliverables. All payments shall be subject to technical approval by SOS Children's Villages Colombia and to the consultant's full compliance with contractual, administrative, financial, and tax documentation requirements.

Applicable Taxes: The Supplier shall include all taxes applicable under Colombian law in its pricing. Additionally, the Contractor, due to its legal status as a non-governmental organization (NGO), shall apply the corresponding withholding taxes in accordance with applicable regulations.

9.4 Contract value

The financial proposal must be submitted in COP and include all costs associated with the assignment, including professional fees, travel, accommodation, local transportation, communications, insurance, taxes, and any other costs required for the satisfactory completion of the consultancy.

The final contract value will be agreed with the selected consultant or firm based on the approved financial proposal and the applicable contracting procedures of SOS Children's Villages Colombia and SOS Children's Villages Sweden.

9.5 Duration of the contract

The consultancy is expected to take place between September and November 2026, in line with the timeline presented in this ToR. The contract duration shall correspond to the approved work plan and the agreed period for delivery of all products.

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9.6 Place of performance

The consultancy will be carried out primarily in Colombia, including fieldwork in the project locations defined for the evaluation. The assignment may combine desk review, remote work, virtual coordination meetings, and in-person activities, including field visits and stakeholder consultations, as required by the methodology and approved work plan.

9.7 Compliance with SOS policies

The selected consultant or firm shall maintain high technical quality standards and comply with all contractual obligations. In addition, the consultant shall observe and comply with the policies, codes, and guidelines of SOS Children's Villages Colombia and SOS Children's Villages Sweden, including but not limited to:

- Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy.
- Code of Conduct.
- Prevention of Sexual Harrassment, Explotation and Abuse (PSHEA) Policy.
- Data protection and confidentiality requirements.
- Anti-fraud and anti-corruption guidelines.
- Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF in Spanish) Code of Ethics
- Any safeguarding protocols applicable to the assignment.

The consultant or consulting firm shall ensure that all team members are aware of and comply with these provisions before having any direct or indirect contact with children, adolescents, families, communities, or project stakeholders.

10. Application Requirements

Interested consultants or firms are invited to submit:

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- A technical proposal in English outlining the methodology, work plan, and understanding of the assignment (maximum 5 pages).
- CVs of all proposed team members.
- A financial proposal in COP, inclusive of all costs.
- Two references from recent, relevant evaluations or reports.
- A sample of a similar evaluation or report, if available.

Proposals must be submitted electronically to dpi@aldeasinfantiles.org.co by July 24th 2026. Please use the subject line “Evaluation Proposal – Akelius Language”. **Applications with only a CV will not be considered unless the application package includes the technical evaluation proposal, the financial proposal, and the required certifications and experience.**

11. Evaluation Criteria for Selection

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Methodology and approach: suitability, clarity, and rigour of the proposed methods.
- Experience and expertise: relevance of past evaluations and team qualifications.
- Feasibility and work plan: realistic and coherent timeline and resource use.
- Cost-effectiveness: value for money within the available budget ceiling.

12. Timeline

The consultancy is expected to take place between **September and December 2026** (a total of 3.5 months).

Phase	Deliverable	Timeframe
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Inception	Inception Report (methodology, tools, work plan)		Early September 2026

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Preparation	Minimum data standards, translated tools, logistics	Late September 2026
Fieldwork	Data collection	October-November 2026
Initial Analysis	Early findings and debrief with stakeholders	Late November 2026
Drafting	Draft Evaluation Report	Early December 2026
Finalization	Final Report and Summary Brief, Presentation of findings	Mid-December 2026

13. Eligibility and Verification Requirements

Proposals may be submitted by national or foreign legal entities, as well as by consortia or temporary joint ventures, provided they meet the following requirements:

1. The bidder's corporate purpose must include the relevant **CIIU / economic activity codes**, namely:
 - o **7020** – Management consultancy activities
 - o **7120** – Technical testing and analysis
2. The bidder must not be under dissolution or liquidation proceedings.
3. The bidder must have no disciplinary, fiscal, or criminal records.

13.1. Legal Capacity

The following supporting documents must be submitted:

1. Copy of the ID document of the legal representative or duly authorized proxy.

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2. Background certificates of the legal entity, issued no more than thirty (30) days prior to submission:

- **4.1** Judicial background check (available at: <https://antecedentes.policia.gov.co:7005/WebJudicial/index.xhtml>)
- **4.2** Disciplinary background certificate issued by the Office of the Inspector General (available at: <https://www.procuraduria.gov.co/Pages/Generacion-de-antecedentes.aspx>)
- **4.3** Fiscal liability certificate issued by the Office of the Comptroller General (available at: <https://www.contraloria.gov.co/web/guest/persona-juridica>)

3. Background certificates of the legal representative, issued no more than thirty (30) days prior to submission:

- **5.1** Judicial background check (available at: <https://antecedentes.policia.gov.co:7005/WebJudicial/index.xhtml>)
- **5.2** Disciplinary background certificate issued by the Office of the Inspector General (available at: <https://www.procuraduria.gov.co/Pages/Generacion-de-antecedentes.aspx>)
- **5.3** Fiscal liability certificate issued by the Office of the Comptroller General (available at: <https://www.contraloria.gov.co/web/guest/persona-natural>)
- **5.4** Verification of disqualifications related to sexual offences committed against persons under 18 years of age (available at: <https://inhabilidades.policia.gov.co:8080/>)
- For proposals submitted by legal entities: Certificate of Existence and Legal Representation, issued by the Chamber of Commerce, no more than thirty (30) days prior to the submission of the proposal.

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4. Certificate evidencing compliance with social security and parafiscal contribution payments for the six (6) months prior to proposal submission, signed by the legal representative and/or statutory auditor, as applicable.
5. Professional license, ID document, and disciplinary background certificates of the accountant and/or statutory auditor, as applicable.
6. Updated Tax Registration Certificate (**RUT**).
7. Updated financial information for fiscal year 2025.
8. Operating licenses and any other permits required for the execution of the contract.

14. Experience Requirement

Interested bidders must demonstrate certified experience in the provision of similar services by submitting certificates issued by the respective contracting entities, evidencing satisfactory performance. Taken together, such certificates must demonstrate a total contracted amount equal to or greater than the estimated total value of this contract.

At a minimum, each certificate must include the following information:

- Corporate name or legal name of the contracting entity
- Subject matter of the contract
- Executed contract value, including any amendments or additions, where applicable
- Contract duration, including start and end dates
- Statement of satisfactory performance
- Address and telephone number of the contracting entity

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15. Financial Information

The bidder must submit financial statements or equivalent supporting documents sufficient to verify its financial capacity, where applicable. SOS Children's Villages Colombia may request clarifications or additional supporting documentation during the evaluation process.

16. Anti-Corruption Reporting Channel

Interested parties may use the organization's **Anti-Corruption Reporting Channel** to report any conduct they consider to constitute corruption in connection with the activities carried out by SOS Children's Villages Colombia.

Reports may be submitted through the following web address: <https://aldhttps://tinyurl.com/y3x4t4gh>