

# Taksvärkki ry's Development Cooperation Program 2022–2025: Meaningful Youth Participation in Sustainable Development

## Terms of Reference for an Evaluation on Taksvärkki ry's Development Cooperation Program

### 1. Background of the evaluation

Taksvärkki ry (Taksvärkki) is a Finnish civil society organization (CSO) promoting the rights of children and young people by strengthening meaningful youth participation through development projects in the Global South and Global Citizenship Education in Finland. Taksvärkki's key objectives are to empower young people to become active citizens with knowledge, skills and capacity to act as change makers for socially and environmentally sustainable societies; to create enabling environments and platforms for youth participation at different levels; and to support different civil society actors to build their capacity as human rights defenders. The development cooperation projects supported by Taksvärkki are implemented by local CSOs. This requires close cooperation with partner organizations, support for organizational learning and development initiatives as well as shared values and goals.

Taksvärkki's development cooperation program 2022–2025, [Meaningful Youth Participation in Sustainable Development](#), is funded by the program-based support granted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The program includes global citizenship education activities in Finland, and development cooperation projects with local youth work organizations in Guatemala, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Mozambique. The program is human rights based, with foundations on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The central rights promoted in Taksvärkki program are the right to education, right to participation, right to self-determination and integrity, as well as the right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse.

Taksvärkki's main principle and operation model, "*From Youth to Youth*", is present in all activities: fundraising, communications, exchange of experiences between youth from different contexts as well as young people acting as peer-to-peer educators and role models for other youth. The main actors of the program are the right-holders, the young people themselves, supported and encouraged by the project staff and local duty bearers. At the same time, the focus is on advocating for their rights and providing an enabling environment for youth participation by adult duty-bearers, such as parents, teachers, and community leaders.

The program's PMEL system is based on Outcome Mapping approach. The participatory PMEL processes are an integral element of the program enhancing transformative change in the social systems of the program context. The local youth in their diversity, together with other relevant actors, have an active role in claiming for the fulfilment of their human rights, and in developing their communities, including in monitoring and analysing their context and the changes already happening, and the changes that could be brought about. Right to non-discrimination and gender equality are central cross-cutting objectives of the work. Both gender equality and disability inclusion are being mainstreamed at different levels of the program.

**In Nepal**, the cooperation project managed by ECCA (Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness) cooperates with local schools in Morang, Dhankuta and Jhapa districts in East Nepal. The project aims to promote positive change in school education and management through stakeholder capacity building and

awareness on environmental and social sustainability. The main objectives of the project are 1) to sustain and improve the functionality of the Child Clubs in the project schools through the implementation of various school and community programs for a better school environment, health, and well-being, and 2) to improve the relationship between the project school stakeholders and local government line agencies to enhance the quality of education in schools. This also benefits the Child Clubs and helps to address school environment issues.

The project creates awareness and involves different stakeholders in improving the school environments based on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), inclusive education, gender equality, basic rights, and environmental education, ensuring transparency, accountability, social justice, and social governance while empowering the school stakeholders. It creates platforms for communication between schools and communities to understand the concepts of human rights, gender equality, inclusiveness, and overall human values. The project also aims to create a network of child clubs in the area, to share experiences and good practices with other schools, raise awareness about social issues, climate mitigation and support students with disabilities access schools. Teachers, youth and child clubs establish relationships with local education units and local stakeholders to share information about school and government initiatives.

## 2. Rationale and purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is:

- to **provide evidence and enhance understanding on the extent and significance of the outcomes achieved** with contribution from the Taksvärkki program in different contexts, especially from human rights and equity perspective, and in strengthening the local civil societies through partnership and mutual learning.
- to **highlight the significant, intended and non-intended outcomes and the best practices of the program** in order to further **strengthen the success factors** in the future program design.
- to **identify main gaps, weaknesses and negative outcomes** in order to **address the challenges for improved strategies** in the future program design.
- in the spirit of shifting the power in development cooperation, to **increase Taksvärkki's understanding on its role and position as a partner and donor organization** cooperating with the local organizations, and **on the potential of the program work** in strengthening the local civil societies.

The learnings of the evaluation process will guide Taksvärkki and the project partners in defining the future priorities of their work, including the areas and strategies for mutual learning with and between the partners. These decisions will be concretized in Taksvärkki's development cooperation program to be implemented from 2026 onwards.

The evaluation will be a utilization-focused, participatory process placing the program actors, such as partner organizations and local youth group representatives, at the centre, enhancing their capacity to collect and analyse data. The preferred methodological approach to be applied is Outcome Harvesting that can be complemented with other methods. One objective of the process is to strengthen the capacity of Taksvärkki and its partners to apply Outcome Harvesting in order to improve the existing project and program level monitoring tools and practices.

Field work with local actors in Nepal should be conducted in Nepal to review the project "Supporting Youth and School Stakeholders for Making Child and Environmentally Friendly Schools and Strengthening the

Sustainability of School Programs”. In the context of this program evaluation, the cooperation project with ECCA Nepal is considered as an example of a long-term partnership with Taksvärkki. In Nepal, the evaluation is expected to focus on sustainability, to identify appropriate interventions, elements of sustainability to be strengthened and issues to be addressed during the remaining time of the project implementation until the end of 2025.

### 3. Scope of the evaluation

This evaluation is to provide external insights on the performance and strategies of Taksvärkki Finland’s development cooperation program 2022–2025 “Meaningful Youth Participation in Sustainable Development”. The evaluation will cover the present program cycle but since most of the cooperation projects have started before 2022, the evaluation should also consider the program contribution during the earlier years to the extent that is feasible.

The main focus of the process is on relevance and sustainability while questions related to effectiveness and impact are also included. The priorities in the process are identifying, substantiating and validating project and program outcomes and facilitating space for collective sense-making, thus efficiency is not to be assessed. Coherence is considered to be indirectly covered by the evaluation questions under other criteria so there are no specific evaluation questions related to coherence.

The overall program work will be evaluated based on desk work and complemented with online workshops or interviews with selected Taksvärkki partner organizations from Guatemala, Nepal, Malawi, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Mozambique. In addition to the relevant program documents and selected project level documents, the following evaluation reports will be reviewed:

- Final evaluation of the previous project phase in Sierra Leone (2021)
- Mid-term project evaluation in Kenya (2023)
- Final self-assessment of the Zambia project (2024)
- Review on Taksvärkki program’s PMEL system (2023)
- Review on disability inclusion in Taksvärkki program, especially in Malawi (ongoing, report to be available in May 2024)

A field work process will be conducted in Nepal to explore the project “Supporting Youth and School Stakeholders for Making Child and Environmentally Friendly Schools and Strengthening the Sustainability of School Programs”. This requires visits to selected project sites in Morang, Dhankuta and/or Jhapa districts, involving representatives of the relevant project stakeholders e.g. youth groups, teachers and local level officials and civil society actors.

Parallel to this process, a mid-term evaluation on the project “Entre Amigos Construimos la Ciudadanía Política” will be conducted in Guatemala with a separate Terms of Reference. The evaluator(s) conducting this program evaluation are encouraged to communicate with the Guatemala project evaluator(s) during the process. The key findings of the evaluation in Guatemala, if available, should be considered in the conclusions of this program level process. It is also possible to include both assignments in one proposal involving a local expert based in Guatemala/Central America in the team (the separate ToR in Spanish will be shared upon request).

This program evaluation only covers Taksvärkki’s development cooperation projects with partner organizations in the Global South, thus excluding Taksvärkki’s work on Global Citizenship Education in Finland. However, through the questions related to partnership and mutual learning Taksvärkki expects to

get new ideas for integrating the international work with Taksvärkki’s Global Citizenship Education in Finland, and for increasing joint advocacy with the project partners.

#### 4. Issues to be addressed and evaluation questions

The evaluation questions presented below are tentative. The questions will be framed and specified together with the evaluator/team during the inception phase.

##### **Relevance:**

- How successful has the program been in addressing the rights, needs, priorities and engagement of the youth, especially those in vulnerable or marginalized position?
- In the light of the outcomes observed, to what extent has the program been successful in identifying and involving the relevant duty bearers and in contributing to their expected behaviour change in terms of fulfilling the rights of all children and young people?
- What is the added value and synergies of the partnership with Taksvärkki, and of the Taksvärkki development cooperation program framework for the partner organizations?

##### **Effectiveness:**

- To what extent do the outcomes observed in the project contexts contribute, or are likely to contribute, to the program level objectives as per the program’s Theory of Change?
- To what extent has Taksvärkki program been able to support the organizational development, especially in terms of social inclusion and participatory PMEL practices of the partner organizations?

##### **Impact**

- From a systems perspective, are the observed program outcomes relevant and contributing to structural changes for equity and social sustainability?

##### **Sustainability**

- To what extent does the Taksvärkki development cooperation program create sustainable structures that are likely to continue and develop also after the program support has ended?

#### 5. Methodology, contents and timeline of the assignment

The evaluation is expected to apply Outcome Harvesting that can be combined with other methods. A brief description of the proposed methodological approach should be included in the proposal, but the details will be agreed in the inception meeting.

The assignment will be conducted between May and October 2024. The tentative outline of the process is as follows:

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Kick-off meeting	Going through all practicalities with Taksvärkki staff	Flexible: between May-June 2024

Desk work	Agreed materials available for the evaluator(s) after the kick-off meeting, to be complemented after the inception meeting	flexible
Inception report	Document presenting the detailed methodology, work plan and instruments	flexible
Inception meeting	To present and approve the inception report	One week after submitting the inception report
Consultancies with Taksvärkki partner organizations	Online workshops or Focus Group Discussions	flexible
Data collecting in Nepal	According to the proposed methodology and tools	During the second half of August 2024
Sensemaking workshop(s) in Nepal	Brief presentation on the key findings to be discussed with project actors after the field work in Nepal	End of August 2024
Reviewing the key findings of the project evaluation in Guatemala	To be considered (if available)	August-September
Draft evaluation report	Draft version of the report to be shared prior to the debriefing session	By the end of October 2024
Presentation on the evaluation findings and recommendations	Debriefing workshop(s) to discuss the evaluation findings with Taksvärkki and partners	After submitting the draft report
Final evaluation report	Final evaluation report will be published online.	October-November 2024

## 6. Quality assurance

Special attention must be paid to quality assurance throughout the evaluation process. The proposal should clearly indicate how the evaluator or team will assure the quality of their work, including the methodology, tools and the evaluation outputs.

## 7. Expertise required

The required qualifications:

- Proved experience in conducting participatory evaluation processes especially applying Outcome Harvesting
- Strong facilitation skills, including organizational capacity development and youth engagement in participatory processes
- Experience on working with civil society organizations and understanding the realities of small CSOs
- Expertise on rights-based approach to development (HRBA), gender and equity, non-discrimination and inclusion of persons with disabilities

We also appreciate:

- Thematic expertise on education, meaningful youth participation and active citizenship
- Expertise on actor-focused and complexity-aware approaches like outcome mapping
- Understanding of the education context, school improvement tools and child club concept in Nepal

- Ability to read documents in Finnish, Spanish or Portuguese is considered as an asset (some of the related documents are only in these languages but summarized translations can be provided as needed)
- Understanding of the Finnish MFA [program-based support instrument](#), [Finnish development policy priorities](#), and the [MFA approach/criteria for Results Based Management](#)
- Experience on integrating the [cross-cutting objectives of the Finnish Development Policy](#) (gender equality, non-discrimination, climate resilience, low-emission development and safeguarding biodiversity) in project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

## 8. Mandate

The evaluator/evaluation team is entitled and expected to discuss matters relevant to this evaluation with pertinent persons and organizations. However, they are not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of Taksvärkki or its partner organisations.

## 9. Budget

The maximum total budget available for this evaluation process is 20 000 EUR including VAT and possible travel costs to Nepal.

## 10. Submission of the proposals

The proposals to be submitted due 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

The proposals should include at least the following:

- Description of the approach and motivation to this assignment
- CV(s) of the consultant(s)
- Brief description of the proposed contents and methodology of the process
- A tentative outline of the process including preferred schedules and division of work (in case of a team)
- Detailed financial proposal including VAT and other related costs

The selection is based on an assessment of the proposal as a whole.

More information and submission of proposals: [veera.blomster@taksvarkki.fi](mailto:veera.blomster@taksvarkki.fi)