



Terms of Reference for development of a management case study and a learning brief on Ilifa Labantwana: An organisation driving ECD system for scale

Background

About Ilifa Labantwana:

Ilifa Labantwana is a South African early childhood development initiative founded in 2009. Its goal over the past 5 years was to enable an additional 1 million poor children, aged zero to five, to access quality subsidised ECD services by end-2021. Today, only 25% of poor children access funded ECD services. Ilifa has just finalised its strategy for 2022-2027. Our aspirational goal is to build a more prosperous and equitable South Africa by ensuring that every child has access to early childhood development (ECD) that also expands livelihoods for women, enriches local economies and supports caregivers. This goal supports the South Africa National Development Plan and National Integrated ECD policy of 2015, which commits to universal coverage of the full range of ECD services by 2030.

The transition of the ECD function from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education in 2022 and the introduction of a Grade RR are part of Government's commitment to ECD. However, while there has been recent progress both politically and on a policy level, there continues to be significant gaps and challenges in policy implementation. These challenges include unlocking public finances, complex regulatory environment, inadequate workforce and general poor systems to enable ECD service delivery at the scale required. These challenges have been amplified by the Covid pandemic showing how fragile the delivery system is and causing major disruption to the provision of ECD services.

In this role, Ilifa Labantwana has contributed to the expansion of early learning services for young children. This contribution includes defining an essential package of ECD; collaborating with government and non-government stakeholders to build the financial, human resource and other management systems and capabilities required for expansion of ECD services; and conceptualizing and supporting, together with other partners, communications campaigns, ECD programmes and other initiatives in support of its aim and the overall goals of universal access to ECD in SA.

Ilifa Labantwana was established in 2009 by a collaboration of donors, and was housed within one of the founding donors, the DG Murray Trust until 2020, when it transitioned into an independent non-profit company. From its body of work, other initiatives have also emerged, including the Innovation Edge, SmartStart, an early learning social franchise, and the Grow Great zero-stunting campaign. Ilifa is also positioning itself as driving a coordinated vision for ECD amongst core partners, thus drawing the interest of international funders.

About ELMA Philanthropies Pty Ltd

From locations in New York, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Kampala, ELMA Philanthropies develops and manages strategies, investments and partnerships for The ELMA Group of Foundations. ELMA invests globally, with an emphasis on improving the lives of children in Africa. The ELMA Foundation's mission is to improve the lives of African children and youth through support of sustainable efforts to relieve poverty, advance education, and promote health. It is primarily active across eastern and southern Africa. Its current focus areas include: building the workforce for children; maternal and newborn care; early childhood development; pediatric HIV; neglected tropical diseases; and private sector solutions to health and education.

Physical Address

Douglas Murray House • 1 Wodin Road, Claremont

Postal Address

PO Box 23893 • Claremont 7735 • South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)21 670 9848 • **Fax:** +27 (0)21 670 9850 • **NPO** 236-330
PBO 930067641 • **email:** info@ilifalabantwana.co.za

 @ilifa.sa •  @IlifaLabantwana

The ELMA Foundation has been a core funder of Ilifa from 2009, and is supporting the development of this case study as part of its commitment towards documenting and making available learnings and insights on systems-change initiatives from its portfolio. With early childhood development emerging as a national priority in South Africa, attracting a range of stakeholders towards investing and innovating in the sector; this management case study will be specifically geared towards instructional use (and self-study) by policy makers, academic institutions, other philanthropic funders focused on creating systemic shifts within the early childhood space. The case study should also be able to contribute towards a wider understanding of how an early childhood development system can be built.

Deliverable: Ilifa Labantwana Case Study:

Objective: The main objective of the case study will be to identify whether and how Ilifa has succeeded in shaping and driving forward ECD policy, systems and practice towards expanding early learning services. Among others, we would like to understand the specific insights Ilifa can offer on the following themes, both for Ilifa internally and externally: adaptive management; long term, flexible funding; balancing relationships with government and civil society; the iterative cycle between policy and implementation; and setting agendas and creating coalitions and champions.

The case study analysis should be framed around the two key overarching themes of the role of public-private partnerships and the role of collective action in achieving systems change. While the Case Study will use Ilifa's experience in the SA context as the primary unit of analysis, it also needs to consider whether the unique Ilifa 'intermediary' model¹ has relevance to other developing countries who are also looking at scaling up ECD services.

Audience: The Ilifa Labantwana key stakeholders (including the donor partners and the implementing partners), South African government partners and other local and global ECD stakeholders (including funders who could be convinced to support similar initiatives in South Africa and other countries)

Key Questions: Specific areas we would like to focus on include the following (to be expanded jointly with the case study provider):

1. Mission and context:
 - a. Why and how was Ilifa started? What was its vision, the context and need (including the scale of the problem, the number and range of ECD service providers, and the relevant policies) that it arose out of?
 - b. How was Ilifa set-up operationally? What were the chief considerations while determining staffing, governance, and innovation delivery mechanisms? How was this changed over time?
 - c. How has Ilifa's strategy changed/iterated/responded to its context over its existence?
 - d. What were critical inflexion points/pivots in the strategy and key dilemmas faced?
 - e. Who have been the key stakeholders and leaders?
2. Ilifa Model and Strategy:
 - a. What were the core components of the Ilifa strategy and Theory of Change and what are the current ones?

¹ As defined in MSI's "Scaling Up – From Vision to Large-scale Change" framework authored by Larry Cooley and others.

- b. How does Ilifa navigate relationships with government, with civil society, with academics and other ECD stakeholders?
 - c. How does the Ilifa model align with the idea of an intermediary function in the process of systems change and scale?
3. Results and Accomplishments:
- a. What have been some of the successes, and what were the factors that led to those successes (early failures, organisational approach/culture, community involvement, financing strategy etc?)
 - b. How does Ilifa track its progress? How does Ilifa communicate results and learnings to the wider sector?
 - c. Has Ilifa played a disruptive role in the ECD sector in South Africa? If so, what has the impact been on the sector? What have been some of the unexpected results from the Ilifa interventions?
 - d. What are some of the lessons learnt from Ilifa's 2017 - 2021 strategy?
4. What is in the future for Ilifa?
- a. What are the highest comparative value strategies and roles Ilifa should employ to reach its ambitious goals?
 - b. What lessons should Ilifa draw on when refining and expanding its current strategy and approach to systemic change?
 - c. Is Ilifa positioned to drive big systems change in the future and what makes it positioned to do so?
 - d. What role can Ilifa play in driving forward a coordinated vision for ECD and lead a coalition forward?
 - e. Should Ilifa's role be understood as part of a change strategy or as a permanent part of the ECD ecosystem?
5. Analytical questions (can be cross-cutting)
- a. What makes Ilifa's set-up unique? Does it have a comparative advantage within South Africa and globally?
 - b. What can be learned from the Ilifa experience for other countries? Is the intermediary model relevant in other contexts? If so, what kinds of arguments need to be made to funders to support such initiatives?
 - c. What strategies has Ilifa used to engage with government, and what have these engagements resulted in? Have they created systemic buy-in? In hind-sight, would Ilifa make alternate decisions on strategic approaches?
 - d. What are the key cost-drivers of Ilifa? What are the cost implications of establishing and running an initiative like Ilifa?

Methodology and Main Deliverables

The methodology for the case study will be deliberated on and co-developed with the contract holder and Ilifa Labantwana. However, it is expected that the underlying principle of the methodology will be participative and collaborative, and will involve all major stakeholders in the critical steps of the case-study development process. It will be likely to involve the following steps:

Phase I activities & deliverables:

- Desk review of existing documents and in-depth familiarization with the main features of the programme, including costing and other data (where available).
- Briefing sessions with ELMA and Ilifa teams.

- Identification & agreement of key stakeholders to be interviewed and involved in the process + interviews with people outside the immediate project but who would know the context (academics, journalists etc.).
- The development of initial insights and a detailed interview questionnaire.
- Develop a proposed approach to the learning brief.

Phase I deliverables to ELMA and Ilifa:

- A detailed interview questionnaire.
- Interviewee list.
- Proposed approach to the learning brief.

Phase II activities & deliverables:

- Documented interviews with partners, field visits and reflection with key stakeholders (1:1 interviews and/or focus groups).
- Gather available data for analysis for learning brief.
- Development of initial insights and draft narrative.
- Development of case study.
- Development of learning brief focused on pulling out the lessons learnt from the case study that could inform other system change initiatives.
- Development a current situation analysis document that describes current challenges and unmet needs without suggesting how to respond.
- Possible follow-up phone conversations / interviews, as required.
- This can also include the development on a teaching case embedded in an academic institution/course that advances the work of Ilifa Labantwana.

Phase II deliverables to ELMA and Ilifa:

- If available, notes of conversations with interviewees (names, designations not required).
- First, second and final draft of case study (max [20 pages]) – ideally making good use of the Guidelines for Delivery of Case Studies produced by the World Bank. Please note that the case study is intended to be an open document, share-able with the wider ECD and philanthropic sector.
- First, second and final draft of the learning brief (**max** [10 pages]).
- First, second and final draft of the current situation analysis (max [10 pages]).
- Summary case study (max [2-3 pages]).
- Summary learning brief (max [2-3 pages]).
- Summary current situation analysis (max [2-3 pages]).
- Summary PPT slides with case study highlights and ideally also incorporating a visual diagram of the system underlying the program & key connections (max 5 slides).
- Detailed teaching notes & discussion questions to help potential instructors gain any further critical insights into the case thereby maximizing its potential learning value.
- An appendix document outlining (1) any specific recommendations to ELMA that may have emerged throughout the process or further follow-on questions as well as (2) any further detail on the specific role that ELMA has played in the process as a funder.

Selection Criteria

The qualifying contract holder must fulfil the following requirements regarding experience and qualifications:

- Solid experience with producing successful (widely used) case studies, ideally within the field of early childhood development or implementation of service delivery/behaviour change

programmes at scale and/or experience documenting government interventions.

- The contract holder (researcher or research team) must be affiliated to an academic or research institution.
- Masters or PhD in the social sciences and at least 10 years of relevant experience.
- Extensive professional international work experience.
- Good analytical, communication and writing skills.
- Language proficiency: English (required). Understanding of other local South African languages will be an advantage.

Timeline

To be discussed.

Budget

A high-level budget to be submitted with further discussion based on agreed scope and scale of the case study.

Proposal Submission

Proposals to be submitted by 21st July 2022

Please submit all proposals to:

1. Tressa Johnson, Director of Education, The ELMA Philanthropies Services (U.S.) Inc. at: tjohnson@elmaphilanthropies.org,
2. Carley Furness-Symms, Director of Programmes, The ELMA Philanthropies Services (Africa) (Pty.) Ltd. at: csymms@elmaphilanthropies.org.
3. Zaheera Mohamed, CEO, Ilifa Labantwana, at: zaheera@ilifalabantwana.co.za

Please note the following in the email subject heading: **PROPOSAL FOR ILIFA case study.**