

## JOB OVERVIEW

<b>POST TITLE</b>	Consultancy: Design and Implementation of ACSL Impact Studies
<b>HOURS OF WORK</b>	N/A
<b>PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT</b>	2026 - 2030
<b>LOCATION</b>	Countries within sub-Saharan Africa
<b>TRAVEL</b>	None
<b>REPORTING TO</b>	Senior Research Evaluation and Impact Manager
<b>DIRECT REPORTS</b>	None
<b>SALARY</b>	Competitive - dependent on experience

## ABOUT ESSA

Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA) improves education using evidence and data from Africa in research, advocacy and programme design.

We take a systems approach by identifying challenges and co-designing solutions in partnership with local education researchers, education leaders, policymakers, funders and employers to improve education outcomes for young people. Our research generates actionable insights that inform decisions, policies and practice and strengthen education systems.

ESSA's values are at the heart of everything we do, and they are:

- Evidence-driven: We are driven by data and evidence to find what works best, building an evidence alliance for education in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Solutions-focused: We seek the highest impact for young people and educators in sub-Saharan Africa with the cost-effective funds we invest.
- Strengthening Trust: We strive to create supportive environments, building trust with the communities we work with.
- Always learning: Everyone's opinion is valuable; we develop solutions through teamwork.

To find out more about ESSA, visit [essa-africa.org](https://essa-africa.org).

## ABOUT THE ROLE

### Background & Context

The African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) was established in 2021 to transform school leadership systems across Africa. The Centre's mission is to collaborate with governments and regional institutions to provide high-quality, contextualised professional development services, conduct research, and offer policy advice to enhance school leadership, teaching, and student outcomes. By developing school leaders and improving educational practices, ACSL seeks to foster positive changes in the education sector, enhancing learning environments, student well-being, and overall academic quality at national and Pan-African levels. Further details about ACSL can be found on the ACSL website ([African Centre for School Leadership](#)).

ACSL functions as a coalition of regional and in-country partners implementing donor-funded projects, and four key Pan-African organisations coordinate it: the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA), the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), and VVOB – Education for Development. In partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, ACSL launched the Foundation Phase Project (2023-2024), which spanned Rwanda, Kenya, and Ghana. This initiative focused on two central themes: the intersection of gender and school leadership and the emerging Ubuntu leadership model. These areas guided the Centre's work in promoting inclusive, innovative, and collaborative school leadership practices across the continent.

ACSL is actively engaged in implementing the Leaders in Teaching (LIT) LEAD pillar across Tanzania, Malawi, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This initiative focuses on strengthening the leadership capacities of secondary school leaders to foster more effective teaching and learning environments. By 2030, the programme aims to benefit over 14,493 secondary schools, including both public and non-state institutions, in LIT expansion countries and throughout the Pan-African region.

Through targeted School Leadership Professional Development (SLPD), school leaders will be better equipped to support teachers and drive improvements in student learning outcomes. The initiative is expected to affect approximately 4,853,564 students enrolled in secondary education.

The initiatives of ACSL-LIT-Lead concentrate on four key areas:

1. Supporting the development and reform of evidence-based policies and frameworks for school leadership.
2. Supporting the delivery of professional development programmes for school leaders.
3. Researching to generate insights on school leadership effectiveness.
4. Promoting communication and advocacy to disseminate lessons and enhance sector coordination.

ACSL aims to improve learning outcomes and reduce gender and equity disparities in education through enhanced school leadership practices.

## The Purpose of the Consultancy

The Centre seeks to engage an African-led **consortium of institutions** to provide coordinated technical leadership, methodological rigour, and independent analysis to support the design, implementation, synthesis, and cross-study learning across six potential studies. Further details on the studies can be found: [ACSL Impact Studies - Concept Note](#).

The purpose of this engagement is for the consortium of institutions to:

- Provide independent technical lead to the design and implementation of the ACSL's six impact studies.
- Ensure methodological coherence, quality assurance, and alignment with ACSL's Theory of Change and the outcomes of the ADEA Triennale in 2025 (See the detailed concept note referenced above for more information; page 35 to 44).
- Apply contribution-focused, mixed-methods, and Afrocentric analytical approaches across the portfolio.
- Generate high-quality evidence products to inform learning, policy influence, and the sustainability of the Centre.

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATION AND EXPECTATION

Given the multi-country scope, cross-cutting thematic focus, and technical complexity of the six interrelated studies, ACSL strongly encourages applications from qualified **consortia of organisations** rather than single entities. Applicants are therefore encouraged to form consortia that strategically combine complementary expertise.

ACSL requires the consortium to be **African-led**. The lead institution must be legally registered and headquartered in Africa, with demonstrated experience leading multi-country evaluation portfolios on the continent.

The consortium model should clearly demonstrate:

- Defined and complementary roles among partners.
- Clear governance and coordination arrangements.
- Mechanisms for quality assurance and methodological coherence across studies.
- Efficient financial management and accountability structures.
- Designation of a lead institution responsible for overall portfolio coordination and primary contractual engagement.

Additionally, the consortium team collectively should demonstrate:

- Proven experience in school leadership and/or education systems evaluation, preferably in Africa.
- Strong expertise in school leadership, professional development, and policy reform.
- Demonstrated use of mixed-methods, contribution analysis, and systems evaluation.
- Experience with gender-transformative and equity-focused research.
- Strong understanding of Afrocentric and contextually grounded leadership models.
- Ability to manage multi-country, multi-study evaluation portfolios.
- Excellent analytical writing and knowledge translation skills.

## SCOPE OF WORK AND KEY TASKS

ACSL expects the consortium of institutions to possess complementary expertise, where each member leads or co-leads specific studies aligned with its demonstrated core strengths. The consortium must collectively demonstrate the capacity to deliver all six studies and present a clear framework for executing them as a coherent portfolio, including defined approaches to sequencing, methodological alignment, cross-study learning integration, and quality assurance.

Applicants are advised that the methodology presented in the concept note is indicative and may be used as a guiding framework.

### Study Coverage:

1. Study 1: School leadership practice, data use, and learner outcomes (Tanzania).
2. Study 2: Gender, equity, and social inclusion in school leadership (Pan Africa & Tanzania).
3. Study 3: Policy and institutionalisation of school leadership professional development (Pan African & Tanzania).
4. Study 4: Effectiveness of school leadership professional development (Pan Africa & Tanzania).
5. Study 5: Research capacity, blended learning trajectories, and evidence use (Pan Africa & Tanzania).
6. Study 6: Collaboration, networks, and formative assessment for ACSL Centre establishment (Pan Africa & Tanzania).

### Key Tasks and Responsibilities

The consortium will be expected to undertake the following tasks:

#### 1 Inception and Design

- Review ACSL programme documentation, Theories of Change, and study concept notes.
- Review evaluation questions and contribution pathways across the six studies.
- Develop and/or validate study designs, sampling strategies, and data collection tools.
- Ensure Afrocentric, gender-responsive, and context-sensitive frameworks are embedded across studies.
- Define clear leadership and technical responsibilities among consortium members for specific studies, while establishing mechanisms for portfolio-level coordination and coherence.

#### 2 Methodological Implementation Support

- Lead the longitudinal, mixed-methods, and contribution-based evaluation approaches through designated lead institutions within the consortium.
- Embark on network mapping, policy analysis, institutional readiness assessment, and professional development effectiveness analysis.
- Ensure ethical standards, data protection, and safeguarding protocols are applied.
- Provide technical oversight to fieldwork coordination (working with partners).

### 3 Data Analysis and Synthesis

- Analyse quantitative and qualitative data across studies under coordinated leadership arrangements within the consortium.
- Conduct cross-study triangulation and synthesis.
- Generate contribution narratives explaining how ACSL interventions influence observed outcomes.
- Support intersectional analysis (gender, location, disability etc.).
- Establish internal quality assurance processes to ensure methodological consistency across consortium-led studies.

### 4 Learning, Adaptation, and Knowledge Translation

- Produce learning briefs and adaptive management insights.
- Support policy dialogue processes and learning convenings.
- Collaborate with ACSL to translate findings into policy briefs, practice notes, and advocacy-ready products.
- Ensure structured cross-learning between consortium members to inform adaptive programme refinement.

### 5 Portfolio-Level Integration

- Ensure coherence and complementarity across the six studies.
- Produce an integrated impact and learning synthesis.
- Share how the six study outputs will feed into unified portfolio-wide evidence and learning framework to inform ACSL learning, policy dialogue, and programme adaptation.

#### KEY DELIVERABLES

The institution/firm/consortium will be responsible for delivering, at minimum, the following deliverables:

- Inception and Integrated Portfolio Evaluation Design Report covering all six studies, including the overarching evaluation framework, cross-study analytical approach, and synthesis strategy.
- Study-Specific Technical Reports and Case Studies (as per agreed scope).
- Mid-term Learning and Adaptive Management briefs.
- Final Integrated Impact, Learning, and Contribution Synthesis Report.
- Policy, Practice, and Centre Products, including briefs and a roadmap for the ACSL Centre.

#### DURATION AND LEVEL OF EFFORT

- The consultancy is expected to run over a multi-year period (2026–2030), aligned with the timing of the six studies (as indicated in the ACSL Impact Study Concept Note).
- Level of effort will be phased and agreed during inception, with peaks during design, midline reviews, and final synthesis with clear allocation of responsibilities across consortium members.

## REPORTING AND COORDINATION

- The institution/firm/consortium that is awarded the contract will report to the Senior Research Evaluation and Impact Manager at ESSA, with a dotted line to the ACSL Head of Research.
- Work will be coordinated closely with ACSL partners (ADEA, ESSA, FAWE, VVOB – Education for Development) and national stakeholders.
- Agreed timelines for progress updates and learning check-ins will be required.
- The consortium must demonstrate a clear internal governance structure to ensure effective coordination and accountability.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The consortium must:

- Adhere to ethical research standards.
- Ensure informed consent and confidentiality.
- Apply safeguarding and data protection protocols.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to power dynamics and institutional contexts.

## APPLICATION & SELECTION CRITERIA

Interested consortia / firms should submit:

- Technical proposal outlining approach, methodology, and workplan.
- Team composition and CVs.
- Relevant organisational and team experience.
- Financial proposal (must be submitted using the provided ACSL Budget Template: [ACSL Impact Studies - Budget Template](#)). Proposals not aligned with the template may be considered non-responsive. *Please consult the Budget Guidance Note for guidance on completing the budget template: [ACSL Impact Studies - Budget Guidance Note](#).*
- Samples of similar assignments.

Selection will be based on technical quality, relevance of experience, methodological robustness, and value for money.

## ACSL PRE-APPLICATION INFORMATION WEBINAR

Interested institutions/consortium/firms are requested to carefully review all the provided documents, including the Frequently Asked Questions ([FAQs](#)). If, after reviewing the documents, you require further clarification, please submit your queries: [ACSL Impact Studies - Enquiries Form](#). All questions must be submitted by 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 0900 hrs GMT.

ACSL will host an information webinar to provide additional clarification on the Impact Study and respond to submitted queries. Details of the webinar are provided below.

- **Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026
- **Time:** 1000hrs – 1200hrs GMT | 1300hrs – 1500hrs EAT

To attend, please register via [this link](#):

### HOW TO APPLY

Applicants may begin preparing their application documents in advance but are strongly encouraged to submit their applications **after the pre-application information session**. To apply, please complete the form by clicking [on this link](#).

Please ensure that all your application documents are saved using your given name and surname. For example, Firstname.Surname Technical Proposal. The closing date for applications is **20th July 2026 at 0900hrs GMT**

### EXPECTED START DATE

The consortium engagement is expected to commence in October 2026, subject to contracting and finalisation of scope.

### EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) underpins our mission and values at ACSL. We prioritise inclusion and celebrate the breadth of knowledge and experience that working across different cultures brings to the organisation.