**UNICEF China**

**Terms of Reference**

**For International Consultant Recruitment**

**Job Title of Consultancy:**Developing the 21st century Skills for Education System in China

**Requesting Section:** Education section

**Name of Supervisor and Job Title:** Sanaullah Panezai, Chief of Education

**Background:**

China has the task of educating the second-largest population of children globally, with an estimated 271 million children aged 0-17 years[[1]](#footnote-1). Over the past two decades, access to education in China has increased dramatically. In different ways, China is emerging as a global leader, with rapid expansion in access and corresponding growth in enrolment. China is topping the global OECD PISA rankings; however, these scores represent a small and relatively advantaged portion of the population and other research sources indicate that significant challenges remain in ensuring equitable quality and learning, especially amongst the most disadvantaged groups.

Limited empirical data exists in relation to the skills gap in China, however its evident that societal and environmental changes, rapid technological development, innovation and market developments are changing the nature of work and life and the skills needed, and necessitate an education system that can prepare children and young people to meet new and future challenges. Foundational and transferable skills are of growing importance, essential for navigating the 21st century, but still not evident to be embodied in the Chinese education system. Without developing both foundational and transferable skills, young people cannot access further training and employment that requires higher order thinking, they are more likely to be excluded from future work opportunities. Holistic skills development is needed in all levels of the education, is most effective the earlier it starts and built upon over the life course.

The education system also faces new and emerging challenges, such as keeping pace with the technological advancements, China’s transitioning economy and dynamic labour market needs, the skills required now and, in the future, and the environmental and climate change realities.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) plays a significant role in supporting learning and skills of adolescents and young people in China. In 2017, enrolment in vocational schools accounted for 40 per cent of senior secondary enrolment, comparable to the 42 per cent OECD average[[2]](#footnote-2), with female enrolment proportionally lower in vocational compared to regular senior secondary (42.8 per cent and 50.8 per cent respectively)[[3]](#footnote-3). The Chinese education system has traditionally focused on regular secondary education and on preparing students for university attendance. The government’s 2019 National Vocational Education Reform (TVET Reform) announcement recognizes the need to improve the usefulness and quality of TVET, acknowledging the disconnect from labour market requirements and importance of improving skills development for success in life and work. This reform is a significant task, requiring retraining of teachers and administrators, along with curriculum changes, including alignment with employers’ needs, new technologies, and the changing labour market and nature of work.

The importance of skills development is emphasized strongly in the SDG4, particularly target 4.7 : “ *By 2030, ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development,including through education for development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and 'appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development'*.

UNICEF China has history of forty-year working relationship with the Government of China, during this period it has acted as a close partner to support programming, bring in the new knowledge and global experience and achieve significant results. For future program cooperation, UNICEF and its partners have prioritized to address issues of inequitable access and quality of early childhood care and education, disparities in compulsory education learning and skills development, and inadequate adolescent skills acquisition for life and work. UNICEF has been and will continue working with Ministry of Education of government of China as its one of main partners as well as with technical agencies including universities, research institutes and professional associations.

To realize the SDG 4 and support the ambitious plan of the government of China, particularly in relation to the Education Modernization Plan 2035 and the TVET reforms, UNICEF seeks to keep pace with rapid education progress in China and capitalize on its influence and the opportunities to continue providing technical assistance, including as a lead partner in holistic skills development and second decade education.

**Purpose of the Assignment:**

The long-term objective is to integrate the 21st skills into TVET education system. An international consultant will provide technical assistance in evidence generation for the 21st skills and its integration into the education system. The consultant will focus on providing technical assistance in developing the skills framework and entry points for integration in line with the Chines Education policy, reforms and commitment to realizing the rights of every child and adolescents to high quality education and achieving SDG4.

**Major Tasks, Deliverables & Timeframe:**

|  | **Deliverables** | **Specifics** | **Duration**  **(Estimated # of days)** | **Timeline** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Inception** | | |  | |
| 1. | **Inception Report** | Develop and submit inception report, highlighting methodological note, tool(s) and research plan to guide the mapping and framework development process. | 05 | (*Within 10 days of the contract agreement)* |
| **Analytical mapping** | | |  | |
| 2. | **Mapping Report** and PowerPoint presentation to UNICEF and key stakeholders of MoE. | Analytical mapping of the 21st century skills through desk research/focus groups/ interviews Mapping would include:   1. Mapping of 21st century skills definition, life types and thematic areas through which it is applies at national level and in different provinces. 2. Mapping the systems approach to \ programming, in terms of national/regional policy frameworks, strategies and plans; coordination/partnership frameworks in the country; budgeting and financing; human resources and capacity development; and Monitoring and evaluation frameworks. 3. Mapping of programs and resources including, curricula both in general and TVET (curriculum competencies and conceptual frameworks) and teaching resources,   Mapping the multiple pathway approach to, in terms of channels of delivery, and modalities of delivery.  The consultant will develop a guidance note for key stakeholders consultations and informant interviews, especially the key MoE official, experts from Universities, technical institutes and practitioners of the SEL and life-skills programs. | 30 |  |
| **Development of skills framework and entry points:** | | |  | |
| 3. | **First report on the 21st century skills framework for China (draft) and strategies for integration**. | Based on results of mapping and the comparative analysis:   1. Facilitate stakeholder engagement opportunities ( forums, interviews, etc) to discuss integration of 21st century skills, identify bottlenecks and opportunities for China, and develop conceptual framework for 21st century skills. 2. Develop/Identify potential entry points (curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, policy, etc) for integration of 21st century skills for Chinese Education system, mainly TVET. | 55 |  |
| 4 | **Final report and the PPT**. | The final report and will be based on the above. In addition, the report will include executive summary, a bibliography and list of interviews. | 10 |  |

**Methodology & Expected Output:**

**Analytical Mapping of the 21st century skills:**

Socialize key MOE stakeholders on the evidence base of the 21st century skills integration into the Education system. Bring in successful examples through comparative study of China vs other selected HMI/HI countries in terms of 21st century skills integration.(*it will seek to build on, but not limited to, the available / published papers on country examples of Education shifts in 21st century skills (ACER), especially countries include, not limited to, Australia, Chile, Finland and Singapore)*

**Draft a broad framework for 21st century skills for Chinese Education System:**

*(The draft framework is envisaged to define a holistic life-course framework that can be unpacked at each age level, ensuring coherence and clarity across the life cycle. The operationalization based upon entry points and age group can come in as a next step in terms of working with specific education streams such as pre-primary, basic Education and TVET.)*

* **Develop/Identify potential entry points:**

(curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, policy, etc) for integration of 21st century skills for Chinese Education system, especially TVET.

*(TVET is the primary focus for this assignment, however as the process evolves other streams of Education may also join including the Teachers Affairs, Basic Education and CAST with specific entry points as relevant such as pedagogy, assessment and alternative learning/skills pathway for out-of-school adolescents.)*

**Start Date:** 01 March 2021

**End Date:** 30 September 2021

**Total Working Days:** 100

**Location:**

Home-based: The Consultant will be virtually connected with UNICEF China and MoE.

The Consultant is expected to undertake at least two missions to China if possible, preferably at the stage of analytical mapping and development of the 21st century framework to engage with face to face meetings with UNICEF and key stakeholders. The cost will be reimbursed on actuals based on UNICEF travel policy and financial system/procedures.

**Reporting and Administration:**

* The consultant will be supervised by the Chief of Education, UNICEF China and will be supported by a national consultant and UNICEF national Education officers to help collect documents, do translation and arrange meetings etc.
* The consultant is required to draw the most relevant material from his/her own sources, while UNICEF office will connect him/her with the MoE and TVET institute of training and other departments if required to gain a greater insight into some of the required information.
* The research and strategy documents will be provided to UNICEF, including the information gathered during the interviews, discussions, meetings and visits, where possible. Reports, PPTs and briefing notes will be submitted in print and digital version in English, which UNICEF will translate in Chines language.
* UNICEF will be responsible for the technical follow-up of the consultation with the TVET and other departments of the MoE. UNICEF will also work with MoE to establish a working/ advisory commitee and UNICEF will serve as the secretariat of the committee and share relevant information, including minutes of meetings and other important communications with its members.
* UNICEF will also work with the MoE to establish a technical reference group including members from MoE (TVET, Teachers Affairs, universities, partners including UNESCO, WB and ADB).

**Consultancy Requirements:**

* Advanced University degree in education or Social Sciences;
* At least 10 years relevant experience and proven track record of applying research and evidence-driven program designs in the field of learning and skills.
* Research experience in the area of Early Learning and Language & Education will be an asset.
* Proven analytical skills, knowledge of the subject experience in managing large rounds of data including digital data are highly desirable.
* Strong interpersonal and communications skills to work effectively with a team that is geographically dispersed.
* Self-directed/self-motivating personality, with proven ability to manage demands from multiple stakeholders while adhering to program deadlines and priorities.
* Quick to learn, motivated to self-teach and capable of independently translating new knowledge into practice, and willingness to meet the emerging demands of the programme.
* Excellent attention to detail and fluency and strong writing skills in English are required.
* Knowledge and work experience in China and South East Asia is an asset.

**Note**:

* Applicants are requested to submit a sample of written work that includes details of a minimum of 2 similar assignments undertaken in last 5 years in their online application.
* Applicants are also required to indicate availability and daily/monthly rate (in US$) to undertake the terms of reference above.

1. UNICEF, 2018, Children in China: An Atlas of Social Indicators 2018, UNICEF China, Beijing. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2018. *Education at a Glance 2018*OECD, 2019, Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators, OECD, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/3f9499e4-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/3f9499e4-en> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNICEF, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)