

TERMS OF REFERENCE

School Safety Consultant (National)

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	Juba, South Sudan (Home based)
DURATION OF CONTRACT	14 Months

Purpose of Assignment

South South Sudan has demonstrated high-level commitment to protecting education in situations of conflict and crisis. In June 2015, the country became one of the first governments to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, showing its commitment to safeguarding schools and learners from the effects of armed conflict. In 2022, a user-friendly guide was developed to support dissemination and operational understanding of the Declaration. These efforts have contributed to positive developments, including the vacation of schools previously occupied by armed groups.

Despite this progress, schools across South Sudan continue to operate within a highly fragile environment characterized by protracted conflict, climate-related shocks, displacement, poverty, protection risks and constrained education systems. School safety risks vary significantly across states and counties, with many schools exposed to armed violence, intercommunal tensions, seasonal flooding, and infrastructure limitations. Challenges such as inadequate learning spaces, insufficient WASH facilities, and limited protective infrastructure further heighten risks for learners and education personnel.

The broader policy landscape also reveals important gaps. While various policies and strategies address child protection, gender equality, and education in emergencies, they do not consistently provide a comprehensive or operational framework to address the multifaceted barriers affecting learners. Persistent gender inequality, early marriage, school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), corporal punishment, bullying, and high dropout rates continue to impede educational access and retention. Existing policies are often fragmented, insufficiently resourced, or not systematically operationalized at school level. Comprehensive strategies aimed at transforming harmful social norms and advancing gender equality are not consistently emphasized, and school-level mechanisms to support re-entry, wellbeing, and protection of vulnerable learners remain limited.

Rates of gender-based violence (GBV) are among the highest globally, with more than 75 per cent of women aged 15 – 64 years having experienced at least one form of violence in their lifetime. GBV, including sexual violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and harmful practices such as child marriage, remain pervasive across the country. South Sudan has the world's fifth-highest prevalence of child marriage, with more than 52 per cent of girls married before the age of 18, driven by deeply rooted gender inequality, harmful social norms, and the widespread practice of bride price, which commodifies girls and reinforces discrimination under customary law. As a result, women and girls in South Sudan experience some of the poorest outcomes globally, including extremely high maternal, infant, and under-five mortality rates, low female literacy, and widespread school dropout among girls due to marriage and pregnancy. Deep-rooted gender inequalities in education, economic opportunities, decision-making, patriarchal and discriminatory socio-cultural norms and practices, and weakened social and community support systems perpetuate vulnerability and marginalisation, disempowering women and girls. Women and girls in South Sudan have some of the lowest education and health outcomes in the world.

To address these challenges, UNICEF and MoGEI will develop National Safe Schools Guidelines as a comprehensive framework with practical operational guidance for authorities at national, state, county, and school levels. Building on the Safe Schools Declaration and its related guide, this initiative will expand the scope of school safety to include

school preparedness plans linked to context-specific risks (including climate- and conflict-related hazards), positive discipline approaches, prevention and response to violence in schools, and strengthened SRGBV prevention, mitigation and response mechanisms.

The development process will include a situational analysis of general and gender-specific school safety concerns and a participatory consultation process engaging stakeholders at school, county, state, and national levels. The guidelines will be developed, validated, and disseminated in close collaboration with the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI), relevant line ministries, and education stakeholders, with high-level leadership and guidance from MoGEI. At school level, operationalization of the guidelines will be linked to inspection and supervision tools to ensure safe, child-friendly, inclusive, and gender-responsive learning environments.

UNICEF is seeking one international consultant to support MoGEI in the development of the National Safe Schools Guidelines. The national consultant will work with an international consultant who will lead on the development of the guidelines and who will be recruited by UNICEF separately. These Guidelines will serve as a practical and harmonized framework to strengthen prevention, preparedness, response, and accountability mechanisms across all public, private, faith-based, and community basic and secondary schools in South Sudan.

Scope of Work

The purpose of this assignment is to develop comprehensive, practical, and nationally endorsed Safe Schools Guidelines that will guide education authorities, school leaders, teachers, learners, parents, and communities in establishing and sustaining safe, inclusive, gender-responsive, and child-centered learning environments.

The National Consultant will lead national coordination, field consultations, contextual analysis, and operational inputs to ensure the Guidelines are relevant and applicable to the South Sudan's context.

1. National Coordination and Stakeholder Engagement

- Coordinate closely with MoGEI, relevant line ministries, state education authorities, and partners.
- Support establishment and coordination of the Technical Working Group (TWG).
- Facilitate communication between national and sub-national stakeholders throughout the assignment.

2. Preparation and Facilitation of Workshops

- Co-facilitation of the National Inception Workshop (5 days) and National Validation Workshop (5 days) in Juba.
- Plan and facilitate consultation workshops (3 days each) across all 13 States and Administrative Areas.
- Prepare workshop materials, agendas, participant lists, and documentation.
- Document discussions, key findings, and recommendations from each workshop.

3. Data Collection and Consolidation

- Collect qualitative inputs from school leaders, teachers, learners, parents, county and state officials and other service providers GBV, Child Protection, Health etc.
- Compile and synthesize findings from state-level consultations.
- Identify context-specific safety risks, operational constraints, and implementation challenges and

gendered needs and threats affecting boys and girls.

- Compile existing GBV and Child Protection referral pathways and service mappings across states.
- Provide consolidated field-based inputs to inform the national situational analysis.

4. Contextual Analysis and Technical Inputs

- Provide contextual expertise on education system governance and management, school operations, and protection risks in South Sudan.
- Support adaptation of international standards to local realities and contexts.
- Contribute to drafting sections of the Guidelines, particularly those requiring contextual operationalization at school and state levels.

5. Documentation and Reporting

- Prepare workshop reports and consultation summaries.
- Support consolidation and summarization of findings as inputs to Guidelines.

6. Operationalization and Systems Alignment

- Provide technical inputs to ensure the Guidelines are aligned with school inspection, supervision, and accountability tools.
- Support identification of capacity-building and roll-out needs at national and state levels.

7. Revisions and Finalization

- Review and provide feedback on draft and final documents.
- Support incorporation of stakeholder feedback.
- Assist in preparation of dissemination materials and presentations.

The assignment will use a participatory, inclusive, and evidence-based approach, including:

- Desk review of policies and existing guidance
- Review of international and regional best practices
- Stakeholder consultations and workshops
- Iterative drafting and validation with the Technical Working Group

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline (in weeks/months) and input days to complete the deliverable
Inception phase: Inception Report including methodology and detailed workplan.	Deliverable 1 – Inception Report including methodology and detailed workplan.	Within 2 weeks of contract signature
National Inception Workshop (5 days, Juba): Preparation, facilitation and documentation.	Deliverable 2 – National Inception Workshop Report	Within 6 weeks
Desk review and policy analysis (national & international frameworks) and service mappings	Deliverable 3 – Desk Review Report	Within 12 weeks
Nationwide consultation workshops – 13 States/Administrative Areas (3 days each)	Deliverable 4 – Nationwide consultation workshops Report – 13 States/Administrative Areas (3 days each)	Within 22 weeks
Consolidated Situational Analysis	Deliverable 5 – Consolidated Situational Analysis Report	Within 26 weeks
Draft National Safe Schools Guidelines (Framework, standards, SOPs, tools).	Deliverable 6 – Draft National Safe Schools Guidelines	Within 34 weeks
National Validation Workshop (5 days, Juba) – preparation, facilitation, documentation	Deliverable 7 – Validation Workshop Report	Within 36 weeks
Finalization of Guidelines incorporating feedback	Deliverable 8 – Final Safe School Guidelines	Within 40 weeks
Implementation & Roll-out Framework (linked to inspection/supervision tools)	Deliverable 9 – Implementation & Roll-out Plan	Within 44 weeks
Final editing, formatting, and submission package	Deliverable 10 – Final Safe School Guidelines package	Within 48 weeks

Payment Schedule:

Payment will be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Important Notes

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the health insurance (and visa if applicable) required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.
- UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES (CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

- **Minimum requirements:**
- **Education:** Master`s degree in Education/ Economics/ Social Sciences/ or related field
- **Work Experience:**
- At least 8 years of progressively responsible and relevant professional work experience in school safety, child protection, safeguarding, education in emergencies, and/or development of national education policies and frameworks.
- National work experience, including engagement with government institutions, development partners, civil society, and/or private sector actors; expertise in international development and humanitarian response contexts is a strong asset.
- Prior experience working with UNICEF, Ministries of Education, or UN agencies on children’s rights, safeguarding, gender equality, and inclusive education is an advantage.
- **Skills:**
- Demonstrated excellent writing skills, with specific experience drafting national guidelines, policy documents, technical frameworks, and knowledge products related to education, protection, or gender-responsive programming.

- Ability to work independently as well as collaboratively within international, multicultural, and interdisciplinary teams, and to establish effective and professional working relationships with government counterparts and stakeholders.
 - Experience working within international organizations, UN agencies, or similar institutions is desirable; familiarity with UNICEF systems and procedures is an asset.
 - Experience in fragile, conflict-affected, or developing country contexts, with a strong understanding of field-level education and protection challenges, is desirable.
 - Knowledge of UN/UNICEF systems, safeguarding standards, and education sector coordination mechanisms is an asset.
 - Strong communication and facilitation skills, with the ability to engage sensitively and effectively with diverse audiences, including government officials, educators, communities, and development partners.
 - Proven ability to work under tight deadlines and manage deliverables efficiently.
 - **Language requirements:** Fluency in English (written and verbal) is required.
 - **Technical requirements:** Submission of a sample report or policy document demonstrating excellent analytical and writing skills, with specific experience drafting national guidelines, frameworks, or technical knowledge products related to education, protection, safeguarding, or gender-responsive programming
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