I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE


As Jamaica tries to navigate this period of uncertainty, it is important that avenues are found to promote the psychosocial well-being of parents and provide them with the support and guidance they need to manage the additional demands of parenting due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This is particularly important as in Jamaica, children ages 2 to 14 are violently disciplined by their parents on a regular basis. Much of this happens when parents are angry, stressed and frustrated and do not know alternate ways to curb their child’s unwanted behavior. Specific stressors particular to the COVID-19 outbreak (helplessness, social isolation, fear of losing livelihoods) will most likely exacerbate this situation and this is why urgent action is required to support parents and promote positive, non-violent, parenting practices. With the restrictions on the movement of people, establishing parenting support telephone helplines has been prioritized by the Government of Jamaica as a tool to give tailored advice and support to parents, both mothers and fathers.

Parenting Support Helplines

On April 6, 2020, the National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC) established Parenting Support Helplines in partnership with UNICEF, Victoria Mutual Foundation and Fight for Peace. There are currently 36 helplines – 2 per parish as well as additional lines for Kingston, St. James, St. Ann, St. Catherine and Clarendon – which all seek to provide tailored advice and psychosocial support to parents, who have parenting-related questions and/or are experiencing parenting challenges during the COVID-19 outbreak. Emphasis is placed on supporting parents to create safe and positive living and learning environments for children at home. In this regard, special consideration is given to addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

1 Includes the birth parent, foster or adoptive parent, or legal guardian or other person having care or custody of a child (Section 2, National Parenting Support Commission Act).
3 Jamaica – A Pathfinder Country: 2018 Road Map for Ending Violence Against Children.
Helplines are manned by 36 trained NPSC Parent Mentor Leaders4, who were selected due to their extensive training and experience working with parents and children across various age groups. These helpline volunteers also received additional training on the provision of Psychological First Aid within the context of COVID-19.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the consultancy assignment is to technically assist the NPSC in overseeing the delivery, coordination and monitoring and reporting of fully resourced and high-quality parenting helpline services, tailored to meet the needs of parents with children from various age groups.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

This assignment requires the consultant to be familiar with parenting support programming in Jamaica and to have strong organizational, communication and monitoring and reporting skills. Under the guidance and direction of the UNICEF Child Protection Specialist and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NPSC, the consultant will be responsible for undertaking tasks and achieve the deliverables specified below:

A) Support the effective coordination and day-to-day operation of helpline services

- Review existing project documents - including the Project Proposal and Parenting Helpline Communication Plan - and analyze and determine programme needs to inform the development of one comprehensive up-to-date Parenting Helpline Operational Plan.
- Identify and organize ongoing training for helpline volunteers in response to demand and/or new emerging themes, including specific training around parenting children with disabilities.
- Work closely with the NPSC CEO to ensure that helpline volunteers are adequately supported through ongoing coaching and supervision.
- Provide support for multi-sectoral coordination and build and maintain partnerships with government and governmental actors to achieve programmatic coherence and strengthen helpline services.
- Work collaboratively with other key stakeholders to create seamless and standardized referral pathways between parenting helpline and other available services.
- Support work across all forms of media (mass media, social media and printed media) to gain visibility for helpline services and ensure that they are effectively promoted among the general public and specific hard-to-reach groups, including adolescent mothers and fathers. This work will also include developing content and protecting and maintaining the quality, integrity and consistency of information and resources contained on the NPSC website.
- Perform any other relevant tasks assigned by the supervisor.

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4 Parent Mentor Leaders are part of the NPSC Parent Mentorship Programme. Parent Mentors are adult volunteers who go through 13 weeks of training in 10 modules in effective parenting. At the end of the training, they execute a practicum in which they apply their newly-gained knowledge and skills, after which they graduate and are certified to give peer-to-peer support to parents in home, school and community settings. Once certified, these mentors continue to receive ongoing capacity-building exercises and supervision from the NPSC. As of April 2020, there were 220 certified Parent Mentors in Jamaica, including 40 Parent Mentor Leaders.
B) Support the monitoring and reporting of helpline services

- Review existing helpline data collection tools to inform the development of a comprehensive and up-to-date Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, which should include quality checklists to monitor the quality of helpline services. Liaise with the UNICEF M&E Specialist to finalize the M&E Framework.
- Conduct quality assessments in accordance with the quality checklists and produce related reports.
- Collate and maintain project data and prepare regular monitoring reports, which should include clear analysis of progress made and related recommendations for dissemination to relevant stakeholders. The consultant will also be expected to collect and share information to report on internal and external COVID-19 Situation Reports.

C) Contribute to the long-term sustainability of parenting helpline services

- Support efforts to sustain parenting helpline services over time (i.e. post-COVID-19 outbreak) by documenting lessons learned and recommendations to inform future planning.
- Develop a Strategic Plan towards the establishment of one national parenting support helpline in Jamaica, with realistic and time-bound targets, accurate costing and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

IV. DELIVERABLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Tasks are not chronological and will at times require simultaneous management. The consultant will be required to produce a workplan covering the period of the consultancy and provide monthly reports with updates describing their contribution to the achievement of key assignments described in this TOR, as well as other activities assigned during the contract. The workplan must be approved in writing by the NPSC CEO and the UNICEF Child Protection Specialist.

The consultant will be required to work full time and on-site in the NPSC Kingston Office. Depending on COVID-19 developments, the consultant may also be required to work from home. The consultant will use her/his own equipment.

V. QUALIFICATIONS

- Education: An advanced university degree in one of the following fields is required: social and behavioral science, psychology, education, communication, or another relevant technical field.
- A minimum of five (5) years relevant professional experience, preferably in the area of parenting support programming, communication for social/behavioral change and/or violence prevention.
- Languages: Fluency in English is required.
- Experience of working in close collaboration with government institutions and UN agencies preferred.
- Demonstrated experience in the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- Demonstrated ability to research, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information.
- Ability to express clearly and concisely, ideas and concepts in written and oral form.
VI. HOW TO APPLY

To apply, **click** on the apply link. Submit a cover letter, CV that includes three (3) relevant references and the fee requested for this consultancy (monthly rate) **in Jamaican dollars**. For queries, please contact Charlene Buckley by email: cbuckley@unicef.org, at least three (3) working days before the deadline.