

United Nations Children's Fund

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS**

Title:	Funding Code:	Type of engagement	Duty Station:
Individual International Consultancy to develop a parenting curriculum to support early childhood development and learning	<b>WBS:</b> 4360/A0/06/884/001 /002  <b>Funds:</b> SC229904	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultant	Remotely with one in-country visit to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

**Purpose of Activity/Assignment:**

The international consultant is expected to develop a parenting curriculum (manual for kindergarten teachers and toolkit for parents), deliver training of trainers (ToT) to a selected group of kindergarten teachers and provide further supervision during the period when the trained kindergarten teachers conduct sessions with parents.

**BACKGROUND:**

The care that parents provide to their children in their first few years shapes the children's cognitive ability and physical and mental health over the course of their lifetime. Despite the widespread recognition and scientific evidence on significant influence of parents to their children's development, data shows a lack of support for parents during their children's critical formative years. Therefore, in 2024, UNICEF developed a *Parenting Support Framework for Early Years* that identifies key entry points, strategies and delivery platforms across different sectors, including levels of parenting support services in education, health and social protection, and what parenting support interventions should be considered in terms of parenting behavior ([UNICEF, 2024](#)).

In Turkmenistan, the level of participation in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age (SDG 4.2.2 target) has dropped to 44% (2024) from 50% in 2019. In 2022, the percentage of 5-year-olds attending preschool institutions was 41% according to Population Census of Turkmenistan ([2022](#)). Currently, 57% of girls and 55% of boys, who are one year younger than the official primary school age, do not participate in early learning programs or do not attend primary level of education. 2019 MICS revealed that the major reason for low uptake of existing services is the lack of information and understanding among parents regarding the importance of early childhood education programmes. Of those not attending preschool institutions, the findings showed that 82% of children aged 3 to 5 do not attend early childhood education programmes due to parental attitudes, while 29% do not attend due to problems with access. Moreover, despite the overall ECDI score of 95%, which includes literacy-numeracy, physical, social-emotional, and learning for children aged 3-4 years, the lowest score was for the literacy-numeracy – about 20% (MICS, 2019), which shows the importance of parental involvement as equal partners in early childhood education.

As early years shape the children's cognitive ability and physical and mental health over the course of their lifetime, it is important that children receive comprehensive support to succeed during the school age years, including parental support for early learning. MICS 7 showed that 14% of children aged 7-14 could not demonstrate foundational reading skills, while 28% failed fundamental numeracy skills. Most of the differences in fundamental and numeracy skills are observed by region of residence and wealth quintile. For example, in Dashoguz velayat only 54% of children aged 7-14 could demonstrate fundamental and numeracy skills (MICS 7).

Finally, as per MICS 7, about 67% of children aged 1–14 years were subjected to violent disciplining during the last month. 42% were subjected to physical punishment, while 2% were subjected to severe physical punishment, and 62% of children were susceptible to psychological aggression which also highlights the

importance of more awareness raising on adverse effects of violence on children and importance of promoting positive parenting to support children's development and learning.

To strengthen the quality of pre-primary education services, particularly the work of kindergarten teachers with parents in terms of information provision and guidance, UNICEF Turkmenistan in partnership with Ministry of Education (MoE) and National Institute of Education of Turkmenistan (NIET), aims to develop a parenting curriculum, i.e. manual for kindergarten teachers, toolkit for parents, and deliver capacity building trainings with subsequent supervision in selected pilot pre-primary educational establishments.

- *Aim of the manual for kindergarten teachers:* To support kindergarten teachers with resources to provide information and guidance to parents, promote positive parenting and early learning, nurturing care and development, which will strengthen parenting support through the existing education platforms.
- *Aim of the toolkit for parents:* To provide step-by-step guidance to parents to support early learning, building important life skills through play, better preparedness of children to primary education and promote the use of positive child rearing methods.
- *Aim of the ToT and supervision:* To build capacity of kindergarten teachers to design and facilitate parenting workshops, sessions on how to establish a rich and stimulating learning environment at home that complements learning and development in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings and establishing platforms where parents can share ideas with teachers and other parents, receive information and build communities of support; To provide supervision to kindergarten teachers during the period when they conduct sessions with parents and analyze the outcome to develop recommendations for a nationwide scale up.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

UNICEF in Turkmenistan is seeking an international consultant to develop a parenting curriculum, i.e. a manual for kindergarten teachers and a toolkit for parents, conduct ToT and provide follow-up supervision with the aim of increasing capacity of specialists of the pre-primary education establishments to provide information and guidance to parents, promote positive parenting roles (caregiving, support-seeking, self-care, [UNICEF](#)) and support parents in providing responsive care and early learning opportunities at home. Based on developed parenting curriculum, the international consultant delivers a ToT on designing and facilitating parenting sessions, supporting parents to establish a rich and stimulating learning environment for children at home that complements learning and development in early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings, establishing platforms where parents can share ideas with teachers and other parents, and receive information and build communities of support. Further, this group of kindergarten teachers are provided with supervision when they conduct sessions with parents. The international consultant analyzes the outcome and develops recommendations for a nationwide scale up.

The international consultant works under the supervision of the ECD Specialist of the UNICEF and in consultation with specialists of the Preschool Department of the MoE and Preschool and Primary Education Department of the NIET.

#### **Specific Tasks**

The international consultant's tasks include the following:

- 1) Develop outline of parenting curriculum: a manual for kindergarten teachers and a toolkit for parents.**
  - a) Desk review of the best practices in parenting support through existing routine services in education sector and identify parenting competencies to be strengthened.
  - b) With support of UNICEF in Turkmenistan, conduct online consultations with specialists of the Preschool Department of the MoE and Preschool and Primary Education Department of the NIET to understand the target audience and draft outline of the manual and toolkit.

- c) Incorporate the best international practices and national priorities as indicated in the National Strategy on Early Childhood Development (ECD) for 2020-2025, NAP for Realization of Children's Rights in Turkmenistan for 2023-2028, Program for Improving the Activities of Preschool Institutions in the Field of Early Development and Improving the Preparation of Children for School in Turkmenistan for 2020-2025, core messages and guidance of the UNICEF's Strategic Note on Vision for Elevating Parenting ([2021](#)) and UNICEF Parenting Support Framework for Early Years ([2024](#)).
- d) Training sessions in the parenting curriculum are clearly defined, and content is agreed with UNICEF, MoE, NIET, a reference list (list of materials to be used) is present.
- e) Pre-final outlines of the manual and toolkit are agreed with UNICEF, MoE and NIET.

**Note:** A national consultant will provide support to the international consultant (data collection for desk review, meeting with national partners, understand local context and needs, etc.).

**2) Draft of the parenting curriculum (manual and toolkit).**

- a) Develop a draft manual and a toolkit in English or Russian (based on convenience of consultant) and submit to be reviewed by the UNICEF. The parenting curriculum:
  - incorporates national priorities and best international practices;
  - provides kindergarten teachers with session-by-session guidance on how to conduct group sessions for parents of children aged 2-5 yrs. to support children's development and early learning;
  - includes tables, graphics, shareable handouts, videos, etc.
  - aligns to early learning and pertinent to child and family well-being;
  - presented at a level understandable to families and reflect the population served;
  - includes/encourages activities that are implemented by using common household objects;
  - includes tips for how to respect and value families with diverse beliefs, needs, and cultures;
  - flexible to adapt to the needs of families.
- b) Share the draft manual and toolkit in English or Russian to be reviewed by the UNICEF, MoE and NIET and all input and comments are incorporated.

**3) Design, develop training materials and conducts training of trainers (ToT) to develop and strengthen a core set of technical and relational competencies (Annex II, [UNICEF](#)).**

- a) Training materials are developed based on parenting curriculum and prepare participants to work further with parents as parent support facilitators and be ready to conduct sessions for parents.
- b) Tools are developed to measure knowledge and competencies of kindergarten teachers and parents
- c) Ensure that training is tailored to the exact needs of participants
- d) Training materials are developed in English or Russian to deliver 3-day training to kindergarten teachers (approx. 25 people) as per agreed schedule by UNICEF.
- e) Training materials include, but not limited to, handouts, power point presentations, videos, which are to be reviewed by the UNICEF at least 2 weeks ahead of training. (UNICEF will support with written translation and interpretation).

**Note:** ToT should serve as a platform to test the parenting curriculum (manual and toolkit). Therefore, some adjustments can be done to the manual and toolkit during ToT.

**4) Supervision to parent support facilitators:**

- a) Supervision plan is developed, and online supervision is provided to 25 kindergarten teachers during the period when they deliver 10 parenting sessions based on developed parenting curriculum (manual and toolkit).

- b) Checklists is available to systematically reflect and measure the impact.
- c) Conduct pre- and post-survey to evaluate the impact of parenting support programme implemented at selected kindergartens.

**Note:** Parenting sessions will also be used as a platform to test the parenting curriculum.

**5) Final version of parenting curriculum**

- Print ready versions of manual and toolkit are submitted in English or Russian and Turkmen (UNICEF provides support with translation and design of the products).
- Final report with findings, lessons learned and recommendations for nationwide scale-up is submitted.

**Included in Annual Workplan:**  Yes  No, please justify:

**Consultant sourcing:**

National  International  Both

**Competitive Selection:**

Advertisement  Roster

**Request for:**

**New SSA** – Individual Contract

<b>If Extension, Justification for extension:</b>			
<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Start Date:</b>	<b>End Date:</b>	<b>Number of Working Days:</b>
<i>ECD Specialist</i>	<i>3 March 2025</i>	<i>31 October 2025</i>	<i>63 Days</i>
<p>The duration of the consultancy is 63 days. The assignment should be carried out during Q1 – Q3 2025. The deliverables for the assignment will include:</p>			
<b>Work Assignments Overview:</b>	<b>Deliverables/Outputs</b>	<b>Delivery deadline</b>	
<p>1. Outline of a parenting curriculum: a manual for kindergarten teachers and a toolkit for parents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desk review is completed on best practices in parenting support through existing routine services in education sector and parenting competencies to be strengthened are identified.</li> <li>- Online consultations with national partners are conducted.</li> <li>- The best international practices and national priorities are incorporated.</li> <li>- Training sessions in the parenting curriculum are clearly defined, and content is agreed with UNICEF, MoE, NIET, a reference list (list of materials to be used) is present.</li> <li>- Pre-final outlines of the manual and toolkit are agreed with UNICEF, MoE and NIET</li> </ul> <p><i>Implementation report is submitted with supporting documents.</i></p>	<p>3 March 2025 – 14 March 2025 (Home-based) <b>10 days</b></p>	
<p>2. Draft of the parenting curriculum (manual and toolkit)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft parenting curriculum (manual and toolkit) is developed in English or Russian and shared for review of UNICEF, MoE and NIET (see Scope of Work for more details).</li> <li>- All inputs and comments from UNICEF, MoE and NIET are incorporated, and pre-final draft version is shared.</li> </ul> <p><i>Implementation report is submitted with supporting documents.</i></p>	<p>14 March – 1 May 2025 (Home-based) <b>30 days</b></p>	

<p>3. Design, develop training materials and conducts training of trainers (ToT) to develop and strengthen a core set of technical and relational competencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on parenting curriculum, training materials are developed in English or Russian.</li> <li>- Training materials (handouts, power point presentations, videos, etc.), are reviewed and approved by the UNICEF at least 2 weeks ahead of training.</li> <li>- Tools are developed to measure knowledge and competencies of kindergarten teachers and parents.</li> <li>- 3-day ToT is delivered in Ashgabat.</li> </ul> <p><i>Implementation report is submitted with supporting documents.</i></p>	<p>1 May 2025 – 29 May</p> <p><b>8 days</b> (Home-based - 3 days; Travel to Ashgabat - 5 days)</p>
<p>4. Supervision to parent support facilitators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervision plan is developed and approved by UNICEF.</li> <li>- Online supervision is provided to 25 kindergarten teachers during the period when they deliver 10 parenting sessions based on developed parenting curriculum (manual and toolkit).</li> <li>- Checklists is available to systematically reflect and measure the impact.</li> <li>- Pre- and post-surveys are conducted to evaluate the impact of parenting support programme implemented at pilot kindergartens.</li> </ul> <p><i>Implementation report is submitted with supporting documents.</i></p>	<p>1 September 2025 – 17 October 2025</p> <p>(Home-based)</p> <p><b>10 days</b></p>
<p>5. Final version of parenting curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Print ready versions of manual and toolkit are submitted in English or Russian and Turkmen.</li> <li>- Final report with findings, lessons learned and recommendations for nationwide scale-up is submitted.</li> </ul>	<p>October 31, 2025 (Home-based)</p> <p><b>5 days</b></p>

**Note:** Timeline may vary based on consultations with national partners, which will be agreed with the consultant. UNICEF provides support with translation and design of the products.

**Administrative and Payment Arrangements:**

The assignment timeframe is 63 working days from March 3, 2025 to October 31, 2025. The method of payment is output-based lump-sum scheme. The total amount quoted shall be **all-inclusive lump sum** and include all costs required to perform the deliverables identified in the TOR, including professional fee, travel costs and any other applicable cost that may be incurred by the consultant in completing the assignment. The contract price will be fixed output-based price regardless of extension of the herein specified duration. The payments shall be released upon submitting the required deliverables/outputs with satisfactory feedback and the approval the Supervisor as per agreement for each deliverable in accordance with a set time schedule to be agreed in the contract. Time schedule can be changed based on consultations with national partners and agreed with the consultant. The payment will be made in instalments, according to the following schedule:

- 1st instalment: 14/03/2025, upon satisfactory implementation of the Task #1 as per deliverables in the above table. The instalment will include 10 consultancy days – 10% of the all-inclusive lump sum.
- 2nd instalment: 1/05/2025, upon satisfactory implementation of the Task # 2 as per deliverables in the above table. The instalment will include 30 consultancy days – 40% of the all-inclusive lump sum.
- 3rd instalment: 29/05/2025, upon satisfactory implementation of the Task # 3 as per deliverables in the above table. The instalment will include 8 consultancy days – 20% of the all-inclusive lump sum.
- 4<sup>th</sup> instalment: 17/10/2025, upon satisfactory implementation of the Task #4 as per deliverables in the above table. The instalment will include 10 consultancy days – 15% of the all-inclusive lump sum.
- 5<sup>th</sup> instalment: 31/10/2025, upon satisfactory implementation of the Tasks # 5 as per deliverables in the above table. The instalment will include 5 consultancy days – 15% of the all-inclusive lump sum.

**Submission of application:**

- A cover letter, including
  - o Assessment of suitability vis-à-vis the requirements of this TOR.
  - o A summary of experience in similar assignments.
  - o Links to/attachments of examples of similar work (files can be stored in Google Drive and link shared with access).
- CV of the candidate and P11 form
- Methodology (in English), describing an approach to be taken to implement all deliverables.
- Contacts of 3 References

**Work arrangements:**

The international consultant works under the direct supervision of the ECD Specialist of the UNICEF Turkmenistan Country Office. Education Specialist of UNICEF may provide consultations.

The international consultant should have his/her own personal computer and access to internet. UNICEF will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide formats for reports, feedback and guidance on performance and all other necessary support to achieve objectives of the exercise, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to expert’s performance and quality of work. UNICEF will also provide support for organization of meetings with national partners. A travel to Ashgabat is envisioned as part of this consultancy. The consultant is responsible for making his/her own travel arrangements to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan to deliver the planned activities.

<p><b>Minimum Qualifications required:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PhD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p><b>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</b></p> <p><b>Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master’s degree in early childhood education, education, pedagogy, psychology, or other relevant fields is compulsory / PhD. degree in these areas will be an advantage (15 pts)</li> </ul> <p><b>Work Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum of 7 years of professional work experience in pre-primary and/or primary education system, early childhood education and care areas (10 pts)</li> <li>• Proven experience in capacity building of pre-primary education professionals, developing relevant materials and conducting trainings (10 pts)</li> <li>• Experience in working for relevant projects of UN agencies will be an advantage (10 pts).</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge of early learning and parenting support priorities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of early childhood education and care in Central Asia will be an advantage. Knowledge of teaching methods in accordance with age-specific features of the child’s early learning and development is required. (10 pts)</li> <li>• Knowledge of priorities and trends in parental support (5 pts)</li> </ul> <p><b>Languages and writing skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluency in written and spoken English or Russian. (5 pts)</li> <li>• Proven analytical and report writing skills in English or Russian (5 pts)</li> </ul>								
<p><b>Technical Proposal</b></p>	<p><b>Technical evaluation – 70 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education – 15 points</li> <li>• Work experience – 30 points</li> <li>• Knowledge of early learning and parenting support priorities – 15 points</li> <li>• Languages and writing skills – 10 points</li> </ul>								
<p><b>Financial Proposal</b></p>	<p><u>Financial Proposal:</u> Candidates <u>MUST</u> submit a financial proposal as a separate attachment to complete the entire assignment based on the Terms of Reference. An applicant must factor in all possible costs in his/her “<b>All-Inclusive Lump Sum Fee</b>” including consultancy and professional fee, travels, subsistence costs. Payments should be broken down to show the detail for the following:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Items</th> <th>Quantity</th> <th>% of the total sum</th> <th>Total in USD</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Items	Quantity	% of the total sum	Total in USD				
Items	Quantity	% of the total sum	Total in USD						



	Task 1 - Outline of a manual for kindergarten teachers and a toolkit for parents are developed and approved by UNICEF, MoE, NIET.	10 working days	10%	_____ USD
	Task 2 - Draft of the manual and toolkit is submitted in Turkmen and Russian	30 working days	40%	_____ USD
	Task 3 - Design and deliver training of trainers	8 working days (Include travel costs related to conducting 3-day in-person ToT in Ashgabat)	20%	_____ USD
	Task 4 - Supervision to parent support facilitators	10 working days	15%	
	Task 5 - Final print ready version of manual and toolkit is submitted. Final report with lessons learned, challenges and recommendations for scale up is submitted.	5 working days	15%	_____ USD
<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<p><b><u>Competitive Selection Criteria</u></b> (for clarification see <a href="#">Guidance</a>)</p> <p>Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects to ensure the best value for money. The Evaluation Team will first review the technical aspects of the offer (based on the above qualifications), if necessary, conduct interviews for the shortlisted candidates, followed by a review of the financial offers of the technically compliant candidates.</p> <p>The proposal obtaining the highest overall score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals together, that offers the best value for money will be recommended for award of the contract, subject to a positive result of the reference check. A cumulative analysis will be used to evaluate and award proposals.</p> <p>The evaluation criteria associated with this TOR is split between technical and financial as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 70 % Technical</li> <li>▪ 30 % Financial</li> </ul> <p>1. <u>Technical proposals</u> will be evaluated against the technical evaluation criteria. The total amount of points allocated for the technical component is 70. Technical proposals failing to reach a score of 50 in total will not be considered for the Financial Evaluation.</p>			

	<p>2. <u>Financial proposal evaluation</u> criteria (30%). The consultancy fee request shall be considered together with the evaluation of technical criteria.</p> <p>The applicants should ensure that all pricing information is provided in USD. Invoicing will be in the currency of the proposal. For evaluation, UNICEF shall use US Dollars to evaluate all financial proposals.</p>
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**Remarks:** Individuals engaged under a consultancy 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. Consultants 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 consultant is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected consultant is 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. The vaccine mandate, 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.

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