

**UNICEF Pacific**

**Terms of reference for consultant to support ministries of education in Solomon Islands in identifying and supporting children at risk of dropping out**

**Requesting Section:** Education

**Date/Updated date:** December 2017

**Programme Area and Specific Project involved:** Outputs 4.3 and 4.5:By 2017 children in Solomon Islands including those living with disabilities in targeted areas benefit from increased enrolment and retention rates as well as from improved literacy & numeracy outcomes.

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**Background/Rationale:**

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 as well as national education and human resource development strategic priorities outlined in the national development plan of Solomon Islands (SI), UNICEF supports the SI Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MEHRD) in strengthening inclusive, equitable quality education in SI.

The issue of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out in SI remains a major challenge. According to Knoema[[1]](#footnote-1) 28.5% of primary school-age children in SI were not enrolled in 2013. In 2016, the highest number of out-of-school children were in the Guadalcanal province especially at early childhood and primary level.[[2]](#footnote-2) While the primary net enrolment rate (NER) for Solomon Islands is 92% (2016), the NER for junior secondary education is only 40% with girls at disadvantage. To achieve SDG 4, there is a need to identify who are the out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out and why they are not enrolled or are at risk of dropping out or lagging behind.

Students don’t drop out of school for any one reason. In 2011 Barriers to Education study conducted in Solomon Islands, found that illness is a major reason children missed school, but lack of interest in school is the main reason children drop out of school. A reason for leaving school before Year 6 according to the study is ‘lack of interest and financial issues’. One reason for refusing to go to school is the fact that many children are ‘overage and too embarrassed to attend school’ -- Solomon Islands, has one of the highest numbers of overaged students.

**Solomon Islands Barriers to Education study: Reasons for absenteeism from school in the last two weeks**

**Solomon Islands Barriers to Education study Reasons for drop out**

N = 42

Many researchers believe children exhibit clear warning signs early on that can help identify those at risk of lagging behind and dropping out.  Once these students are identified, schools must have intervention plans to address the students’ needs and help them get back on track.

In both the Solomon Islands, teachers refer to children who are lagging behind as “slow learners”. Very few have any tools to find out the cause of lagging behind and providing support to these children and hence preventing their dropping out. In the absence of truancy policy, teachers need to be equipped with skills to help them identify children at risk of dropping out and ways to support them in classrooms to prevent drop outs.

In the 2017 performance assessment report (PAR) of the ministry of education and human resource development (MEHRD), it was reported that 3,119 (1.7%) students in primary and secondary levels were identified as having a disability. The largest category as recorded was “Learning Disability” where 1,049 students (30% of total) were being classified by their teachers in this category. There was no standard nor

diagnosis tool used. However, no formal assessment protocols were used to gather this data.

According to the Dropout Screening & Early Warning brief in the Building and Sustaining School Engagement series (<http://k12engagement.unl.edu/DropoutScreening&EarlyWarning3-27-15.pdf>) attendance, behaviour and class performance are three signs of potential dropout. There are a variety of strategies and specific programmes to prevent students from dropping out of school. While the specific interventions designed to assist high risk students may vary considerably from school to school, they often would include a combination of:

* Identification of children with learning difficulties
* providing extra academic support and assistance;
* improving relationships with adults within the school, such as teachers;
* developing school relationships and communication with parents and family;
* providing positive reinforcement to the student for appropriate behavior;
* offering adult mentoring;
* establishing efforts to diminish truancy;
* assisting with transitions from primary to junior secondary school; and
* monitoring of progress on academic achievement and behavior.

In view of the above and in line with the UNICEF Pacific multi-country education programme (2018-2022) where support to at risk children has been prioritised, UNICEF Pacific in partnership with the MEHRD would like to build capacity of ministries of education and schools in targeted areas to develop key interventions that would help support children who are lagging behind in their learning and are at risk of dropping out.

**Purpose of Assignment:**

The purpose of this assignment is to develop a self-learning module for teachers in Solomon Islands (20 hours self-study) based on rapid assessment conducted so that it will help teachers identify at risk students (particularly those with learning difficulties) in their classrooms and implement strategies and interventions that can support children with learning difficulties and or make recommendations for further support to be provided for cases beyond the capacity of the classroom teacher.

**Scope of Work:**

Under the supervision of the UNICEF Pacific Chief of Education and with support from the Education Specialist based in Suva as well as the education teams in Honiara, the consultant will work in close collaboration with MEHRD staff to:

1. Develop an inception report detailing the approach to conducting rapid assessment, developing key indicators for identification of children at risk and proposing appropriate interventions, and developing the self-learning module.
2. Conduct a rapid assessment of the situation of children at risk of drop out (who are they, why are they at risk, what to date interventions have the ministry and schools taken to address the issue of children who are lagging behind and are at risk of dropping out). The assessment should also look at reasons children have been absent for more than five days per month and/or have dropped out of the education system all together. Discussions with ministry of education, provincial school authorities, teachers and families will need to be carried out to include their perspectives.
3. Hold in-depth consultations and discussion with the ministry of education to identify potential policy directions that would help schools developing key indicators and practical interventions that would support children who are lagging behind and are at risk of dropping out of school.
4. Hold a 5-day workshop with selected schools in targeted province to develop school specific indicators and interventions to reduce absenteeism and potential drop out, which could be included in their school improvement plans.
5. Hold at least 2 workshops (5 days each) with teachers on identifying learning difficulties among children and practical tips that they can actually do in the classroom to support the children with learning difficulties. Second workshop should be deciding on the content of the self-learning module and how it should be designed to best support teachers.
6. Design the first draft self-learning module for teachers with proposed suggested illustrations/pictures that would help teachers better study the module.
7. Jointly with ministry of education and targeted schools develop indicators and a mechanism whereby children at risk of dropping-out are identified and provided support to stay in school until completion of Year 6 (end primary).
8. Provide a final report outlining findings and tools developed along with policy recommendations that can inform MEHRD in Solomon Islands in making policy decisions regarding early school leavers, truancy and drop outs.

**Work Schedule:**

The duration of consultancy is 60 working days with 45 working days in country and 15 days from own base spread between 15 January to May 2018.

**Payment Schedule**

1st Payment (5%): Upon signing of the contract

2nd Payment (15%): Upon delivery of the inception report (two weeks after signing the contract)

3rd Payment (20%) Upon delivery of report with key indicators and proposed interventions (based on rapid assessment) that schools in Solomon Islands can apply to support children at risk of dropping out by 6th week

4th Payment (30%) Upon delivery of the draft self-learning modules by 10th week

5th Payment (30%): Upon delivery of the final report with key policy recommendation and final modules with UNICEF comments incorporated by 11th week

**Deliverables/End Products**

The following deliverables have to be submitted:

1. Inception report outlining in detail the approach to carry out the tasks outlined in this TOR and methodology to be applied.
2. Draft report outlining the proposed key indicators and interventions that ministries of education have identified to support at risk children (at policy level), and specific targeted indicators used by schools and teachers to identify children at risk and with mitigation strategy and interventions to
3. Final drafts of the self-learning modules for teachers on identifying and supporting children with learning difficulties.
4. Final report that includes key indicators developed jointly with ministries of education and schools in Solomon Islands (includes workshop report), key policy direction recommendations that would guide ministries of education with future policy development especially truancy policy.

Note: All reports and module need to be submitted to UNICEF electronically and the contractor is responsible for ensuring that the reports are edited and proofread.

**Supervisor Name and Type of Supervision that will be provided:**

The consultancy will be supervised by the UNICEF Pacific Chief of Education and supported by the Education Specialist based in Suva.

**Consultant’s Work Plan and Official Travel Involved:**

The consultant’s work plan is in line with the above work schedule and a detailed plan will be developed by the consultant in close consultation with UNICEF.

*In-country travel will need to be arranged by the consultant and included in the lumpsum financial proposal. The In Solomon Islands, the travel will be by road to Guadalcanal province and can hire a car.*

*The consultant has to make own arrangements for international travel from place of recruitment to Solomon Islands and return.*

**Consultant’s Work Place:**

While in country the consultant will work from UNICEF office or at times from ministry. The consultant is required to use his/her own laptop and telephone for this assignment.

In-country workshops will be organized and paid by UNICEF.

**Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required:**

Qualifications:

Advance degree in Education or Social Sciences with minimum of 8 years of demonstrable experience in teaching or teacher education field with focus on at risk and vulnerable children. Degree in special education would be an asset.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

* Strong background in education policy and addressing learning needs of children at risk of dropping out
* Proven experience in developing teaching and learning materials.
* Experience in participatory facilitation and training
* Similar experience in designing interventions for at risk children
* Experience of coordinating diverse teams and communicating with individuals/groups at all levels

Personal Competencies

* Excellent communication skills; ability to explain complex concepts in a simple manner;
* Strong analytical, presentation and excellent report writing skills in English;
* Able to work effectively in a multi-cultural environment and a high sense of integrity.

Languages

* Fluency in English, verbal and written.
* Knowledge of French and Pidjin/Bislama is considered an advantage.
* Ability to use computer - Microsoft Word, Excel, Internet.

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**General Conditions** **of Contracts for the Services of Consultants / Individual Contractors**

**1. Legal Status**

The individual engaged by UNICEF under this contract as a consultant or individual contractors (the “Contractor”) is engaged in a personal capacity and not as representatives of a Government or of any other entity external to the United Nations. The Contractor is neither a "staff member" under the Staff Regulations of the United Nations and UNICEF policies and procedures nor an "official" for the purpose of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, 1946. The Contractor may, however, be afforded the status of "Experts on Mission" in the sense of Section 22 of Article VI of the Convention and the Contractor is required by UNICEF to travel in order to fulfill the requirements of this contract, the Contractor may be issued a United Nations Certificate in accordance with Section 26 of Article VII of the Convention.

**2. Obligations**

The Contractor shall complete the assignment set out in the Terms of Reference for this contract with due diligence, efficiency and economy, in accordance with generally accepted professional techniques and practices.

The Contractor must respect the impartiality and independence of UNICEF and the United Nations and in connection with this contract must neither seek nor accept instructions from anyone other than UNICEF. During the term of this contract the Contractor must refrain from any conduct that would adversely reflect on UNICEF or the United Nations and must not engage in any activity that is incompatible with the administrative instructions and policies and procedures of UNICEF. The Contractor must exercise the utmost discretion in all matters relating to this contract.

In particular, but without limiting the foregoing, the Contractor (a) will conduct him- or herself in a manner consistent with the Standards of Conduct in the International Civil Service; and (b) will comply with the administrative instructions and policies and procedures of UNICE relating to fraud and corruption; information disclosure; use of electronic communication assets; harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority; and the requirements set forth in the Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

Unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate official in the office concerned, the Contractor must not communicate at any time to the media or to any institution, person, Government or other entity external to UNICEF any information that has not been made public and which has become known to the Contractor by reason of his or her association with UNICEF or the United Nations. The Contractor may not use such information without the written authorization of UNICEF, and shall under no circumstances use such information for his or her private advantage or that of others. These obligations do not lapse upon termination of this contact.

**3. Title rights**

UNICEF shall be entitled to all property rights, including but not limited to patents, copyrights and trademarks, with regard to material created by the Contractor which bears a direct relation to, or is made in order to perform, this contract. At the request of UNICEF, the Contractor shall assist in securing such property rights and transferring them to UNICEF in compliance with the requirements of the law governing such rights.

**4. Travel**

If UNICEF determines that the Contractor needs to travel in order to perform this contract, that travel shall be specified in the contract and the Contractor’s travel costs shall be set out in the contract, on the following basis:

1. UNICEF will pay for travel in economy class via the most direct and economical route; provided however that in exceptional circumstances, such as for medical reasons, travel in business class may be approved by UNICEF on a case-by-case basis.
2. UNICEF will reimburse the Contractor for out-of-pocket expenses associated with such travel by paying an amount equivalent to the daily subsistence allowance that would be paid to staff members undertaking similar travel for official purposes.

**5. Statement of good health**

Before commencing work, the Contractor must deliver to UNICEF a certified self-statement of good health and to take full responsibility for the accuracy of that statement. In addition, the Contractor must include in this statement of good health (a) confirmation that he or she has been informed regarding inoculations required for him or her to receive, at his or her own cost and from his or her own medical practitioner or other party, for travel to the country or countries to which travel is authorized; and (b) a statement he or she is covered by medical/health insurance and that, if required to travel beyond commuting distance from his or her usual place or residence to UNICEF (other than to duty station(s) with hardship ratings “H” and “A”, a list of which has been provided to the Contractor) the Contractor’s medical/health insurance covers medical evacuations. The Contractor will be responsible for assuming all costs that may be occurred in relation to the statement of good health.

**6. Insurance**

The Contractor is fully responsible for arranging, at his or her own expense, such life, health and other forms of insurance covering the term of this contract as he or she considers appropriate taking into account, among other things, the requirements of paragraph 5 above. The Contractor is not eligible to participate in the life or health insurance schemes available to UNICEF and United Nations staff members. The responsibility of UNICEF and the United Nations is limited solely to the payment of compensation under the conditions described in paragraph 7 below.

**7. Service incurred death, injury or illness**

If the Contractor is travelling with UNICEF’s prior approval and at UNICEF's expense in order to perform his or her obligations under this contract, or is performing his or her obligations under this contract in a UNICEF or United Nations office with UNICEF’s approval, the Contractor (or his or her dependents as appropriate), shall be entitled to compensation from UNICEF in the event of death, injury or illness attributable to the fact that the Contractor was travelling with UNICEF’s prior approval and at UNICEF's expense in order to perform his or her obligations under this contractor, or was performing his or her obligations under this contract in a UNICEF or United Nations office with UNICEF’s approval. Such compensation will be paid through a third party insurance provider retained by UNICEF and shall be capped at the amounts set out in the Administrative Instruction on Individual Consultants and Contractors. Under no circumstances will UNICEF be liable for any other or greater payments to the Contractor (or his or her dependents as appropriate).

**8. Arbitration**

1. Any dispute arising out of or, in connection with, this contract shall be resolved through amicable negotiation between the parties.
2. If the parties are not able to reach agreement after attempting amicable negotiation for a period of thirty (30) days after one party has notified the other of such a dispute, either party may submit the matter to arbitration in accordance with the UNCITRAL procedures within fifteen (15) days thereafter. If neither party submits the matter for arbitration within the specified time the dispute will be deemed resolved to the full satisfaction of both parties. Such arbitration shall take place in New York before a single arbitrator agreed to by both parties; provided however that should the parties be unable to agree on a single arbitrator within thirty days of the request for arbitration, the arbitrator shall be designated by the United Nations Legal Counsel. The decision rendered in the arbitration shall constitute final adjudication of the dispute.

**9. Penalties for Underperformance**

Payment of fees to the Contractor under this contractor, including each installment or periodic payment (if any), is subject to the Contractor’s full and complete performance of his or her obligations under this contract with regard to such payment to UNICEF’s satisfaction, and UNICEF’s certification to that effect.

**10. Termination of Contract**

This contract may be terminated by either party before its specified termination date by giving notice in writing to the other party. The period of notice shall be five (5) business days (in the UNICEF office engaging the Contractor) in the case of contracts for a total period of less than two (2) months and ten (10) business days (in the UNICEF office engaging the Contractor) in the case of contracts for a longer period; provided however that in the event of termination on the grounds of impropriety or other misconduct by the Contractor (including but not limited to breach by the Contractor of relevant UNICEF policies, procedures, and administrative instructions), UNICEF shall be entitled to terminate the contract without notice. If this contract is terminated in accordance with this paragraph 10, the Contractor shall be paid on a pro rata basis determined by UNICEF for the actual amount of work performed to UNICEF’s satisfaction at the time of termination. UNICEF will also pay any outstanding reimbursement claims related to travel by the Contractor. Any additional costs incurred by UNICEF resulting from the termination of the contract by either party may be withheld from any amount otherwise due to the Contractor under this paragraph 10.

**11. Taxation**

UNICEF and the United Nations accept no liability for any taxes, duty or other contribution payable by the consultant and individual contractor on payments made under this contract. Neither UNICEF nor the United Nations will issue a statement of earnings to the consultant and individual contractor.

1. [www.knoema.com](http://www.knoema.com) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. MEHRD 2017. Performance Assessment Report 2015.2016. Solomon Islands [↑](#footnote-ref-2)