

UNICEF Moldova

Terms of Reference

Individual Consultancy in Education, Team Leader for the Development of the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022

Location: Home-based with 15 days in-country

Duration and timeline: 52 working days (within a six-month period July 2017 – December 2017)

1. Background

Positive and supportive parenting is essential for the physical and mental development and well-being of children from early years, throughout childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. Children who grow in a secure, loving and nurturing home environment are better able to withstand life's challenges and achieve their full potential. Consistent positive parenting helps to develop strong self-control, reduces risks and builds the resilience to cope with setbacks and has long-term benefits for children, communities and the country as a whole. In contrast, research proves that poor parenting practices are associated with adolescent emotional and behavioural problems.

Research findings¹ indicate that there is a need to improve parenting skills in Moldova. A 2009 ECCD KAP study² highlights little progress in the number of families applying positive care practices. While the indicator on parents playing with their children reached level over 90%, two others indicators on parents knowing danger signs (83% in 2003 versus 81% in 2009) and regularly reading to children (30% in 2009 versus 37% in 2003) have shown reversed trends. Only 5% of families consider that children with disabilities should attend the kindergarten and no more than 46% of families would allow their children to play with a child who has a disability. More than 20% of families are not accepting the disabilities of their own children and prefer to keep them in boarding schools. Physical punishment is wide-spread, with children under 1 year being beaten in 16% of cases and 6-7 year old children in 57% of cases.

Parents face additional problems in their communication with the teenagers. Adolescence is a critical time of human development, when young people develop the skills they need to make

¹ National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, Government of the Republic of Moldova/UNICEF, Chisinau 2010

² National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, Government of the Republic of Moldova/UNICEF, Chisinau 2010

a living, raise a family, maintain a circle of supportive friends and meet other challenges of life. Adolescence is also the time when many behavioural and psychological problems arise — toxic substance use, delinquency, depression, risky sexual behaviour, academic failure, and school dropout. Parents have very limited skills on how to deal with the changes in teenagers; how to deal with high-risk situations, such as drug and alcohol use and how to discuss sexuality related issues with teenagers. The data of the Study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Adolescents³ (2012), shows that every third adolescent has learned about pregnancy related issues, contraception and STIs from the Internet, and even more of them from their peers. At the same time, adolescents are eager to receive more information on these topics from parents and professionals (health workers and teachers).

Parenting skills need to be improved among young parents as well, particularly those in rural areas or coming from disadvantaged families, as parents who lack parenting knowledge and skills, are unable to provide their children with the full necessary conditions for their adequate development. As a result, school preparedness of these children is quite low and has a direct impact on their learning outcomes, school attendance and heightens the risk of future drop-out.

More literate, educated and economically better-off parents and caregivers adopt more positive care practices compared to poorer families⁴, indicative of the need to sharpen the focus on the most vulnerable families including the Roma.

UNICEF supports the Government of the Republic of Moldova in the on-going reforms of the education, health and child protection sectors through provision of technical assistance in the elaboration and revision of developmental policies.

In order to improve care-givers' knowledge and skills on positive parenting, UNICEF supported the Government of Moldova to develop a cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022, which was officially approved in July 2016. Following to this, UNICEF has taken the commitment to support the development of an inter-sectoral mid-term Action Plan on Parenting.

In this context, UNICEF is seeking an experienced team leader to provide support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) in developing, in close coordination with other line ministries (Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Family (MLSPF) and Ministry of Health (MoH) an inter-sectoral mid-term Action Plan on Parenting supporting the implementation of the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies (2016-2022) (The Parenting Strategy). The Action plan will be aligned to the provisions of the Parenting Strategy, to international practices and to the Council of Europe recommendations on positive parenting⁵,
^{6,7 8}.

³ Study on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Adolescents, UNICEF, 2012

⁴ National Survey on Early Childhood Care and Development: Family Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices, Government of the Republic of Moldova/UNICEF, Chisinau 2010

⁵ The Council of Europe defines positive parenting as "parenting behaviour based on the best interests of the child that is nurturing, empowering, non-violent and provides recognition and guidance which involves setting of boundaries to enable the full development of the child

⁶ Council of Europe (2006). Recommendation 19 on policy to support positive parenting

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

2. Purpose of the assignment

The purpose of this individual consultancy is to support Ministry of Education in the development of the cross-sectoral mid-term Action Plan (AP) to the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022.

The Education expert will act as a Team Leader for a team of experts in health, financing and child protection who will be hired by UNICEF separately. In addition, the Education expert will provide quality technical advice and will support the development of the Education component of the mid-term Action Plan (AP) to the National Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022.

The AP will contribute to the impact result of improving positive parenting skills and reducing harsh and abusive parenting practices among parents or primary caregivers of children (0-18 years).

The consultancy is expected to be carried out within a six months period, starting from July 2017 and ending in December 2017, with possibility of extension as required.

3. Objectives of the consultancy

The objectives of this individual consultancy will be:

- Conduct initial consultations with relevant stakeholders (including but not limited to Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour Social Protection and Family and Ministry of Health) to agree on key steps for developing the Action Plan (AP) to the Parenting Strategy;
- Develop a detailed road map and timeline for the development of the AP, in consultation with stakeholders and UNICEF;
- Based on key strategic objectives of the Parenting Strategy, develop the Action Plan and its key costed activities (per sector) through a consultative process, involving key technical experts from line ministries, CSO and adolescents;
- Develop a clear robust Monitoring and Evaluation framework to the Action Plan;
- Provide an estimated cost to each activity of the Action Plan;
- Ensure the meaningful involvement of children and adolescents in the development of the Action Plan and its M&E framework.

4. Details of how the work should be delivered

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the selected consultant, Team Leader, in close consultation with consultants in Health, Finance and Child Protection, and the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Ministry of Health, and under the guidance of UNICEF (key stakeholders) will:

- Familiarize itself with the cross-sectoral Strategy on Developing Parental Abilities and Competencies, 2016-2022 and its key goals and objectives.

- Consult other relevant resources^{9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20}.
- Develop the template of the Action Plan in accordance to Government guidelines and/or formats in coordination with key stakeholders, form consultative working groups as required.
- Ensure the overall coordination of the process for the development of the Action Plan, including consultative workshops.
- Develop the education component of the Action Plan.
- Organize additional consultations and participatory meetings with national and local stakeholders, including Office of the Prime Minister, State Chancellery, Parliament, and National Committee for Protection of Children Rights, academia, Civil Society Organizations, parents/caregivers, children/adolescents, private sector and United Nations Organizations.
- Prepare a validation workshop and deliver a presentation on the developed Action Plan.
- Based on validation workshop recommendations, finalize the Action Plan and submit it to UNICEF and MoE.
- Further details are described under p.5 below.

Monthly meeting with UNICEF will ensure quality control and will provide relevant technical and programmatic recommendations to the process and the Action Plan.

5. Deliverables and delivery dates

Nr.	Activity	Deliverables	Timeline*
1.	Develop a comprehensive plan, including detailed road map and timeline, on how the work will be completed Consult it with UNICEF, Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders	– Inception report with road map and timeline To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific activities and tasks • Estimated timeline and deliverables form each activity/task • Proposed outline of the Action Plan 	3 working days

⁹ Council of Europe (2006). Recommendation 19 on policy to support positive parenting

¹⁰ Loizou, E. (2013). Empowering Parents Through an Action Research Parenting Program. *Action Research*, 11(1), 73-91.

¹¹ MICS, 2012

¹² Strategy on Child Protection for 2014–2020, approved by Government Decision No. 434 , of 10.06.2014.

¹³ Code of Education and Sectoral Education Strategy 2020

¹⁴ Strategy on children's and adolescents' health and development in the Republic of Moldova for 2014-2024

¹⁵ Tobolcea, I., Soponaru, C. (2013). The Attitude towards Parenting Programmes Involving Children with Disabilities. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala* , 41, 129-143.

¹⁶ Law 147/1999 on the Protection of Children and Young People at Risk (Portugal)

¹⁷ National Strategy for Parenting Support, 1999 (Sweden)

¹⁸ Maher, E.J., Corwin, T.W, Hodnett, R., Faulk, K. (2012). A Cost-Saving Analysis of State-wide Parenting education Program in Child welfare. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 22(6), 615-625.

¹⁹ Programme for inclusive education development in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2020

²⁰ National Programme for promotion of healthy lifestyles for 2007-2015, approved by Government Decision No. 658 of 12.06.2007

2.	Conduct initial kick-off consultative meeting with stakeholders	– Refined Outline of the Action Plan	1 working days
3.	Desk review of Parenting Strategy and related documents	- Proposed outline of the Action Plan aligned with Parenting strategy goals (to include annotated detailed table of contents)	10 working days
4.	<p>Through a consultative process develop a first draft of the Action Plan (including education component)</p> <p>The action plan will need to include robust M&E framework with realistic indicators, targets and timelines to measure progress, output and outcomes and specifying clearly accountabilities of relevant Ministries for completion of the tasks</p> <p>Clear budget against each activity will be developed as well</p>	<p>- Monthly updates to UNICEF on the progress of the work provided</p> <p>– First Draft Action Plan submitted to UNICEF for review</p>	15 working days
5.	<p>Incorporate additional amendments as per UNICEF comments</p> <p>The second Draft Action Plan will be submitted for review to MoE and cross-sectorial working group on parenting working under the supervision of the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights</p>	- Second Draft Action Plan	3 working days
6.	Revise the Action plan based on the recommendations received from UNICEF, MoE, MF, MLSPF, MoH and cross-sectorial working group on parenting chaired by the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights	– Third draft Action Plan with SMART M&E framework submitted to UNICEF and the cross-sectorial working group on parenting	5 working days

7.	Submit to UNICEF for translation into Russian and Romanian the 3 drafts of the Action Plan.	– Consistency between translated versions and English variant ensured.	3 working days
8.	Organize three regional consultative workshops in mutually agreed locations and in Chisinau Organize children's/adolescents' consultations Consolidate comments from the consultative workshops Revise the draft Action Plan	– Consolidated brief document summarizing comments from consultative workshops with youth/children and other partners in 3 rayons and Chisinau submitted to UNICEF and other stakeholders – Revised fourth draft Action Plan submitted to UNICEF and key stakeholders (MoE, MF, MLSPF, MoH, working groups) for review	9 working days
9.	Organise a validation workshop at national level and present the Draft Action Plan to major stakeholders	– Consolidated brief from validation workshop	1 working day
10.	Incorporate final amendments based on validation workshop recommendations.	– Final draft Action Plan (in Romanian, English and Russian) submitted to UNICEF in Word format and electronic version.	3 working days
	TOTAL:		52 working days

** Exact deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signature.*

6. Reporting requirements

The consultant will report to the ECD Officer, who will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance on his/her performance and all other necessary support so to achieve objectives of the consultancy, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to consultant's performance and quality of work.

All activities and deliverables undertaken by the consultant shall be discussed and planned in consultation with UNICEF. The consultant is expected to deliver each component of the work plan electronically (in Word and Excel formats) and in English. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to the ECD Officer by E-mail, with the Deputy Representative in copy.

7. Performance indicators for evaluation of results:

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

- Completion of tasks specified in the ToR;
- Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables;
- Quality of work;

- Demonstration of high standards in cooperation and communication with UNICEF and counterparts;

The National Action Plan should:

- Establish concrete responsibilities and accountabilities (tied to specific actions) of Education, Health and Child protection systems. A comprehensive narrative part should contain specific guidance for professionals' performance and/or tasks targeted at improving parental knowledge and skills;
- Provide timelines for relevant amendment in regulatory and normative framework (legislation, by-laws, rules, regulations) and/or job descriptions to ensure accountably and make possible implementation of specific actions;
- Ensure all activities are aligned with international guidelines and recommendations.

The following principles should underpin expected deliverables:

- frame parenting policies within a children's rights approach as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and recognize children and young people as citizens in their own right;
- recognize and respect diversity in relation to family composition and size, cultural, gender and other differences, in keeping with the best interest of the child;
- respect child's right to be heard and ensure that the views and experiences of children and parents are taken into account in the development of services and policies that affect them;
- build upon existing strengths of parents and further stimulate their participation in child development and children's' life;
- provide universally accessible support to families, which is non-stigmatizing in its approach, and ensure targeted services for those most in need; the so called "progressive universalism" – support for all, with more support for those who need it most – seem to be the most suitable way forward.

8. Qualifications and experience

- Advanced University Degree in Education;
- Minimum of 8 years of relevant professional experience in strategic national planning in education;
- Proven experience in developing results-based government policies, programs, and/or guidelines in education and/or parenting;
- Proven experience in leading teams and ability to ensure engagement of experts from variety of technical fields (health, finance and child protection system specialists)
- Demonstrated experience in the CEE/CIS region including Moldova is a strong asset;
- Excellent command of English, both oral and written;
- Fluency in Romanian will be a distinct advantage;
- Working command of Romanian and/ or Russian is a strong asset.

9. Content of technical proposal

- Relevant experience with similar type of assignments (max 300 words)

- Proposed approach and methodology (max 1500 words), including:
 - Timeline and milestones
 - Risk and mitigation measures
 - Ethical considerations and how the consultant will address them
- Annex: Short Sample or links to related work previously conducted by the consultant

In addition, please provide your *Curriculum Vitae*.

10. Content of financial proposal

The applicant should fill in the Financial Offer Template and specify the consultancy fee, per day of work, requested for the tasks described in the Terms of Reference in [USD/MDL], as well as breakdown of international travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) costs if applicable (as specified in paragraph 14 of this ToR).

Other expenses directly related to the ToR assignments and deliverables such as: (translation/interpretation costs, local transportation etc.) may be included in the financial offer unless specified that UNICEF will cover them separately (see paragraph 14 and 15 below).

The final selection will be based on the principle of “best value for money” i.e. achieving desired outcome at lowest possible fee.

If not provided by ToR, UNICEF will not reimburse costs not directly related to the assignment. This contract does not allow payment of off-hours, medical insurance, taxes, and sick leave.

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/output is incomplete, not delivered or for failure to meet deadlines.

In case when a Moldovan resident is selected for contracting, MDL will serve as contract currency, converted at the UN exchange rate applicable at contract signature date.

Evaluation criteria for selection

The candidate is expected to reflect in the submission the qualifications, knowledge and experience related to the requirements listed above. Technical evaluation will be performed through a desk review of applications, evaluation of technical proposals, and if necessary, may be supplemented by an interview.

11. Payment schedule

The payment will be done in tranches, according to the following schedule. All deliverables must be delivered on time and to the satisfaction of UNICEF Moldova.

Deliverable (delivered according to the timeline agreed upon with UNICEF)	Proportion of payment
Inception Report	10%
Draft 1 Action Plan with M&E framework and budget	30%
Draft 2 Action Plan	30%
Final Action Plan (available in Romanian, English and Russian).	30%

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs are incomplete, not delivered for failure to meet deadlines.

12. Definition of supervisory arrangements

The specialist will work under the oversight of ECD Officer of UNICEF Moldova. Payments will be rendered upon successful completion of each task, as per the schedule outlined above.

13. Work location and official travel involved

The work will require local travels in order to organize three regional consultative workshops in mutually agreed locations and in Chisinau. The consultant is expected to cover costs, arrange and schedule such visits, including transportation. The UNICEF office will facilitate introductions to key informants.

Consultant will make and pay for own international travel arrangements for arriving to Moldova including visa costs, insurance, any taxes etc.

The travel shall be based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel, subject to exceptional approval of business class travel by the Head of Office, for example for medical reasons when certified by UN Medical Services in New York.

The daily subsistence allowance (DSA) should not exceed fees as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for Moldova Country Office.

Travel costs not actually incurred due to travel mission cancellation, delays, contract termination or modification are subject to deduction from final contract amount.

14. Support provided by UNICEF

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the specialist and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work. UNICEF will provide an initial package of relevant documents and available research, and an initial list of relevant experts and counterparts to work with. UNICEF will also request relevant data – as agreed upon with the consultant – from relevant government counterparts.

15. Ethical considerations

The Contractor will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines²¹. The Contractor should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty while interacting with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Contractor should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information. All participants should be informed about the context and purpose of the Assessment, as well as about the confidentiality of the information shared. The Contractor

²¹ UNEG Guidelines <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>

is allowed to use documents and information provided only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.