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

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| **Title of Consultancy:**  ” Reimagining Education” Learning Continuity Technical Adviser for Pacific Island Countries | **Requesting Section/ Hiring Manager:** Education/Chief, Anna Smeby | | **Type of engagement**  Consultant (ZCON)  Individual Contractor (ZIND) | | **Duty Station:**  Home Based  Office Based | |
| **Background and Purpose of Activity/Assignment:**  UNICEF Pacific serves 14 Pacific Island countries toward the outcome that more pre-primary, primary and lower secondary school aged and school-aged children particularly the most vulnerable, are in school and learning. The programme includes support to education systems on early childhood education, inclusive and equitable learning, system strengthening and disaster risk reduction and resilience.  Although learning outcomes vary across the Pacific, regional aggregates from the most recent (2018) Pacific Islands Literacy & Numeracy Assessment show that learning improved in Grade 4 literacy between 2015 and 2018, but that progress is slow. In 2018, 52.7 per cent (60 per cent F, 46 per cent M) performed at or above the expected minimum proficiency level in literacy, compared to 46.4 per cent (52.2 per cent F, 40.5 per cent M) in 2015. There was a slight decrease in numeracy results, with 83.3 per cent (86.5 per cent F, 80.1 per cent M) of students achieving at or above expected levels in 2018, compared to 86.2 per cent (88.2 per cent F, 84.2 per cent M) in 2015. This is to note that there are some promising trends for education and learning in the Pacific, but also some existing challenges that are aggravated by shocks to education systems and communities.  The Pacific is highly exposed to adverse natural hazards, such as tropical cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. These hazards sometimes result in disasters that prevent continuity of schooling due to damage to schools and communities. School closures in the Pacific have also been required during measles or dengue outbreaks as well. The experience with COVID-19 brought even heightened understanding of the vulnerability of Pacific education systems, including in those countries where natural hazards are less common, and a commitment to building resilient systems prepared and ready to withstand and manage shocks and ensure safe and continued learning opportunities for all students, including the most vulnerable.  While only Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are among the few Pacific Island countries that have recorded COVID-19 cases, 12 of 14 countries in the region implemented unplanned school closures in 2020 for varying periods of time. Most closures lasted only a few weeks. Fiji implemented the longest school closures in the Pacific in 2020, for a period of over three months, and closed all schools again on 20 April 2021 due to a second wave of COVID-19 with significant community spread. Schools remain closed across Fiji as of August 2021. While schools are currently open elsewhere in the Pacific, short term closures have occurred during 2021 in either specific centers or whole countries during 2021 and COVID-19 remains a continued threat to countries.  Combined with the expected risks of cyclones, sea surge, drought and other environmental impacts and regardless of the status of COVID-19 and school closures, almost universally across the Pacific there has been a dawning realization of the vulnerability of education systems to pandemics and other risks, and a heightened commitment to reimagine education systems as resilient and ready to provide quality and equitable learning, This is particularly in the event of school interruptions due to COVID-19 or other future emergencies, including for the most vulnerable, and for any circumstance which may impact on a young person’s ability to attend school for a period of time.  In working with countries, UNICEF Pacific is guided by country priorities for the delivery of inclusive education and, along with its focus on quality and equity, has a long history of supporting education in disaster and emergency situations. The impact of COIVD 19 and responses being developed have realized an opportunity to think differently. Although, in many circumstances, these conversations such as use of technology and pedagogical shifts to student centered learning were already in play, the impact of COVID 19 and partner support to responses has created an opportunity to accelerate these, not only during the time of COVID or other closures but as part of the standard education system.  As part of existing partnerships with the 14 Pacific Island countries, UNICEF has supported remote learning initiatives in Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Samoa, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tuvalu, ranging for immediate response to longer-term system capacity building. These include:   * In Fiji, development of remote learning resources, monitoring of remote learning, and provision of guidance and support to assist teachers, parents, and student to adapt to remote learning. * In Vanuatu, FSM and RMI, development of paper-based distance learning materials to be distributed to children in remote islands. In RMI, a parent/teacher guide for the distance learning materials is also being developed and distributed, and trainings on distance learning held for teachers, PTA, and community members. * In Kiribati, development and piloting of radio and video lessons for core subjects, development of remote learning materials and guidance for parents for children with disabilities, and development of online learning platform. * In both Tuvalu and Kiribati, holding workshops for teachers on how to write remote learning resources and producing learning support kits for the most vulnerable homes to support continuity of learning. * Teachers in Tuvalu are also being supported to develop the skills to identify gaps in children’s learning brought about through the school closures and how to respond to these through scaffolded programmes – particularly in areas of literacy and in lower secondary programmes. * In Solomon Islands, revision of existing learning packages to support remote learning at ECE, primary and secondary levels, and maintaining online resources platform to disseminate learning packages and monitor their use. * In Samoa, teachers are also receiving training on using the Moodle learning management system (LMS) for remote learning.   While many of the early COVID-related initiatives responded to urgent needs related to current/expected school closures, the overall aim and requirement as shared by countries is to create change in schooling systems and processes to better support inclusive teaching and learning under any circumstances, including but not limited to school closures. Indeed, as schools in many countries in the Pacific have not yet closed since the above were developed, systems are planning for how they can be integrated into standard teaching practice. Other opportunities can also be imagined such as supporting students who cannot attend school for a period e.g. receiving medical or other care, or accompanying parents to stay, perhaps in a larger center than their home. It is worth noting that, like elsewhere in the world, much of the attention on remote learning focused on internet-based options, and while this remains a priority for development in many Pacific Island countries, the limitations in access preclude internet-dependent approaches from serving as the core of remote learning strategies. To that end, some countries adopt mixed-model approaches and others are presently focusing on paper-based options only, though some of these in parallel are working to expand tech-based options over the long-term including the sustainability of such options and supporting staff capacity development.  At the Pacific regional level, UNICEF is a core partner within the Pacific regional education infrastructure, including the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) and Pacific Education Cluster (PEC), which presents a critical opportunity and responsibility to ensure complementarity of and synergistic support to Pacific Island countries with that from other partners. UNICEF has committed to supporting monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) of remote learning initiatives (including when schools are open) in multiple countries across the Pacific so that this experience and evidence base can further inform system improvements into the future.  The purpose of the assignment is to provide expert technical support on design, setup, implementation, and monitoring of programmes, activities and resources to ensure the continuity of learning, before, during and following school interruptions at national, school, or individual level | | | | | | |
| **Scope of Work:**  The consultant will work as part of the UNICEF education team, providing technical support and guidance, coordinating with partners and other cluster members as relevant and drawing on available global, regional and national literature, as well as key stakeholder guidance and engagement, to build capacity of Pacific education systems to “reimagine education” to ensure equitable and inclusive learning under any circumstances, including but not limited to school closures, including:   1. Developing remote and hybrid learning approaches and pathways, including (but not limited to) digital, and expanding access to diverse platforms as relevant 2. Strengthening teaching and teacher support to address existing challenges for learning outcomes 3. Engaging parents and communities in support to learning, including traditional knowledge 4. Strengthening and leveraging data on education and learning outcomes, particularly for more marginalized children, to better target interventions 5. Building long-term systems strengthening capacity to plan, innovate, be flexible and improve equity and learning, including during emergencies.   Key tasks include:  **1. Review and document existing key guidance, literature, documentation, experience, best practice, and opportunities for continuity of learning.**   * This will include all levels and options for the most vulnerable, as well as relevant parent engagement and support components, particularly within the Pacific context, as well as existing/potential supports from relevant partners, to maximize coordination and cross-country sharing.   **2. Guide, develop and adapt and learning continuity initiatives and approaches.**   * Contribute technical inputs and guidance on selection and design of learning modalities and systems with particular emphasis on context-relevant design, ensuring equity-based and inclusive approaches (considering children with disabilities, gender, vulnerable communities, remote islands, etc.), and attention to all levels from ECE to secondary.   + 1. Work with the country to find practical, workable, and sustainable solutions for each context, including drawing on existing experience, global and regional guidance/evidence, and innovative solutions, as well as existing government and partner initiatives in each context. Noting that This may include online, radio, tv, paper, activity kits, supplementary materials, social media, telephone, home visit, SMS, and other options, identifying and combining modalities as relevant to populations and systems in each context.   ii. This should also include inputs and guidance on the holistic support, engagement and empowerment of education personnel, caregivers/parents and children – such as psychosocial and wellbeing support, messages/information for caregiver/parents (e.g. guidance on home-based learning, responsive caregiving, etc.), guidance/training and active roles for teachers and other school officials in monitoring and supporting student engagement and learning across diverse modalities.   * Provide guidance to discussions and decisions on the use of technology as part of Continuity of Learning programmes. Compile existing options and keep aware of emerging opportunities liaising with the Education team for how these may work in the different context of our partner countries. * Guide discussions with countries to reimagine the use of these initiatives as part of everyday schooling e.g. the use of technology to provide classes in secondary consultant subjects to students in small remote schools or for setting and monitoring group work to be done over a period of time including away from school or the provision of continuity of learning programmes to a student whose access may be interrupted by medical treatment away from home as example.   **3. Monitor, review, and report on reimagine education initiatives.**   * Support monitoring, review, documentation, and review of learning continuity programming in the Pacific, both at national- and regional-levels. * Develop guidance and documentation (including tools, case studies and other, as relevant), based on the specificities of countries and the Pacific as a whole for the region. This will also require coordination and communication with HQ and RO colleagues to avoid duplication and ensure efficiencies given the existing monitoring structures in place. * Provide technical inputs and guidance on clear and feasible monitoring plans that capture student learning and enable an after-action review not just of availability or provision of education services, but effectiveness of that system to ensure learning for children. * Provide country-specific, regional and/or final reports as determined useful and relevant in the work planning process.   **4. Contribute to strengthen education sector and contingency plans, embedding “reimagined education”**  e production of a final report that documents achievements and learning, options and recommendations to inform future contingency and response efforts, as well as system strengthening needs to ensure education systems are more prepared and resilient, including for health emergencies, in the future (humanitarian development nexus).   * Provide technical support and inputs to education sector and overall contingency and response plans, programme resourcing, resource mobilization and the monitoring and evaluation as they relate to the development and/or implementation of these programmes sustainably as integral parts of the education system into the future.   Given the current travel restrictions in place, consultant spethe consultant is expected to start work remotely, connecting with UNICEF colleagues (incl. HQ and EAPRO colleagues as relevant), Ministry officials and partners through virtual means. If and when feasible, the consultant would be expected to be physically present in the Pacific to provide direct support and monitoring to the learning programmes developed.  As part of the UNICEF Education team, the consultant will necessarily need to flexibly define workplans and schedules, ensuring timely support to countries in accordance with a constantly changing situation. As well as collaborating with team members, the consultant is also expected to collaborate with other partners in the Pacific region to ensure coordination and cross-country learning on education response and continuity of learning within the Pacific. The expected duration of this consultancy is 11.5 months, during which time the consultant will develop, update, and implement quarterly workplans for support to country- and regional-level initiatives in discussion with the Chief of Education and education team. | | | | | | |
| **Supervisor:**  The consultant will be supervised by the UNICEF Pacific Chief of Education, who will work closely with the relevant UNICEF focal point/s for each specific programme in guiding the work. If and when the consultant is on mission in countries with UNICEF Field Offices, the Chief of Field Office will serve as day-to-day supervisor, in close collaboration with the relevant Education Officer. In all cases of country-specific work, the Ministry of Education (and, in some cases, NDMO) will play an important guiding role. Final approval of deliverables for payment will be done by the UNICEF Pacific Chief of Education in collaboration with the relevant Ministry. | | | | | | |
| **Start Date:** 1 October 2021 | | **End Date:** 15 September 2022 | | | | **Number of Days (working)**  Full time - 11.5 months |
| ***Work Assignment Overview*** | | | | | | |
| ***Tasks/Milestone:*** | | ***Deliverables/***  ***Outputs:*** | | ***Due Date*** | | ***Payment Amount*** |
| Review of learning continuity documentation and practice with a focus on the Pacific. | | Monthly report and deliverables | | 1 Month | | 9% |
| Technical inputs, guidance and monitoring as agreed with Chief of Education based on country priorities | | Monthly report and deliverables | | 1 Month | | 9% |
| Technical inputs, guidance and monitoring as agreed with Chief of Education based on country priorities | | Monthly report and deliverables | | 1 Month | | 10% |
| Technical inputs, guidance and monitoring as agreed with Chief of Education based on country priorities | | Monthly report and deliverables | | 1 Month | | 9% |
| Technical inputs, guidance and monitoring as agreed with Chief of Education based on country priorities | | Monthly report and deliverables | | 1 Month | | 9% |
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| Technical inputs, guidance and monitoring as agreed with Chief of Education based on country priorities | | Monthly report and deliverables | | 1 Month | | 9% |
| Technical inputs, guidance and monitoring as agreed with Chief of Education based on country priorities.  Drafting of a final report and revisions post UNICEF review | | Final report and deliverables | | 1.5 Month | | 10% |
| ***Please note that consultant estimated total cost may include additional costs, such as living costs as applicable*** | | | | | | |
| **Minimum Qualifications required:**  Bachelors  Masters  PhD  Other  Relevant post-graduate qualifications in education or related field | | **Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:**   1. Minimum of 10 years’ experience related to education, education, education in emergencies or related areas. 2. Demonstrated experience with education planning and delivery, particularly teaching and learning. 3. Experience planning and delivering education programming and teacher training, including in emergencies and/or other remote/distance learning options. 4. Familiarity with remote learning technologies, including common connectivity, learning platform and other options preferred. 5. Excellent writing and communication skills. 6. Demonstrated cross-cultural skills and ability to adapt to different political and cultural dynamics. 7. Demonstrated ability to coordinate multiple complex activities and take a collaborative approach in achieving success. 8. High level communication and relationship building/management skills, including with colleagues, partners and counterparts, and ability to support team building and stakeholder engagement. 9. Proven ability to nurture development of new technical skills and knowledge among non-experts, while also securing context and culture-specific guidance critical to ensuring relevance and feasibility of the designed programmes. 10. Commitment to champion gender equality and social inclusion issues in planning, practices and in support of service delivery. 11. Experience and commitment to working effectively to provide remote technical support flexibly and agilely depending on country circumstances and needs. 12. *Experience in the Pacific is preferred.* | | | | |