

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

<p><b>Title</b> Social Cash Transfer High Performer Qualitative Study</p>	<p><b>Type of engagement</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultant Individual</p>	<p><b>Duty station</b> Lusaka, Zambia</p>
<p><b>Purpose of Activity/Assignment:</b>  Conducting a qualitative study on high performers on the Social Cash Transfer programme</p>		
<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The Zambian Social Cash Transfer (SCT) Programme is the country’s largest poverty-targeted social protection intervention. As of 2021, the programme had reached about 973,323 beneficiary households, translating into 5,061,280 Zambians in all 116 districts, with 8.9 percent of the programme caseload being families with persons with disabilities. As of April 2024, the beneficiary caseload totalled 1,311,101 households. The SCT was designed to assist the most vulnerable households in Zambia to meet their basic needs particularly in the domains of health, education, food and shelter. The programme is an alternative to the in-kind assistance offered through community structures and responds to the growing number of poor and vulnerable households. Previous evaluation studies of the SCT programme demonstrated positive impacts on consumption and food security, as well as multiplier effects on housing conditions, livestock acquisition, debt reduction and investment in productive activities (AIR, 2015; Handa et al., 2016).</p> <p>Further to the scale-up of the SCT, it is important to generate evidence on the experience of beneficiaries to inform programme implementation. The cross-sector of beneficiaries for this research, are those who have achieved above average outcomes with sustained levels of high consumption (called ‘high-fliers’). While research on the outcomes of the SCT has demonstrated strong positive outcomes, poverty trends have been stubborn or even on the rise, suggesting that social cash transfers reduce poverty depth but do not necessarily provide the means for recipients to improve their income levels above the poverty line. This makes it all the more relevant to understand the atypical success of high-</p>		

flyers. A 2019 and 2023 study<sup>1</sup> identified a group of households that managed to sustain their level of consumption at least one year after receiving the last cash transfer. Initial analysis led researchers to conclude that these households managed to diversify their livelihood portfolios into agriculture, livestock and non-farm enterprises. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) has identified similar ‘high-flyers’ in other districts who have been found to create sustainable income generation following the receipt of social cash transfers. As these cases are different from average recipients and not sufficiently predictable through known impact models, MCDSS has decided to explore the specific factors that have contributed to this success, in order to inform the design of future policy choices and the identification of promising ‘graduation pathways’.

This research area, therefore, seeks to explore the factors further, and ultimately inform stakeholders and policymakers on the additional key areas beneficiaries may be supported in to ensure successful transitions from the SCT.

Overall, the study will be undertaken in a qualitative design, that is to say following an inductive (or abductive) line of inquiry, as the goal is to generate insights, understanding and concepts regarding the research questions (and not to test a hypothesis). The open ended design will therefore rely on interpretive, iterative and narrative methodologies/tools. Proposing consultants should include a methodology section detailing the proposed design approach, including data collection and processing plan.

### **Justification**

It is in the context of the above landscape that UNICEF Zambia with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) will engage a consultant to conduct a qualitative study, to inform current programming and create new lines of inquiry. MCDSS is at full capacity in program implementation. Therefore, in order to produce timely and independent insights, an external firm will be hired. In conducting this study, we aim to understand the underlying causal mechanisms that factor into how SCT support is received and perceived, leading to different outcomes among beneficiaries.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective for the consultancy is to design and conduct a qualitative study on the SCT programme in close partnership with MCDSS and UNICEF.

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<sup>1</sup>Sudhanshu Handa, Gelson Tembo, Luisa Natali & Gustavo Angeles. 2019. In Search of the Holy Grail: Can unconditional cash transfers graduate households out of poverty in Zambia? University of North Carolina and 3IE.

Handa, S., Liu, Z., Tembo, G., Adamba, C. & Mvula, P. (2023) 'An empirically driven theory of poverty reduction', CEDIL Research Project Paper 4. Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning (CEDIL), London and Oxford. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.51744/CRPP4>

**Key tasks:**

- a) Collaborate with implementers and government partners to secure contact information of past beneficiaries that had been identified as High-Flyers as part of a previous study<sup>2</sup> as well as other known high performers identified by district social welfare officers in a minimum of 3 selected study districts. Proposed districts include Shangombo, Kalabo and Kaputa. This should be detailed enough to allow on-the-ground tracking and interviewing of beneficiaries.
- b) Undertake a scoping activity to assess availability of beneficiaries, and if they are at the same economic status before full study is conducted and consult with MCDSS and UNICEF with recommendations on their final sampling status.
- c) Once beneficiaries are identified, explore the factors that have contributed to the sustained above average levels of consumption and expenditure, including analysis of household internal factors (such as income generating strategies, education, household demographics, gender dynamics, etc.) as well as external context (such as location, time, community, services, etc.).

The sampling approach should target a minimum number of households across the three districts (Shangombo, Kalabo and Kaputa) using a purposive and/or anecdotal sampling approach, whereby sufficient sampling occurs until saturation is reached. The sampling approach and methodology should allow the consultant to map at least 5 different pathways that households have taken to sustain the effects of the cash transfer program. These findings can be used to explore policy options for graduation pathways.

Research questions for this component may include but are not limited to:

1. What are typical livelihoods strategies employed by High Flyers?
2. To what extent have factors internal to households (such as education, demographic household composition – gender, age, household size, disability status, gender relations, etc.) impacted their outcomes?
3. How have external factors (outside of the scope of the intervention) contributed to drivers or obstacles of productive engagement? (number of income generating activities or types, participation in work and leisure, etc).
4. What community support systems, local organizations or other government services have been key to supporting High Flyers?

The Consultant will report to the Social Policy Specialist (in the Social Policy section of the UNICEF Zambia Country Office) who will carry out contract management and provide quality assurance and oversight to the entire process.

<sup>2</sup> Hjelm, L., Handa, S., de Hoop, J., Palermo, T., Zambia, C.G.P. and Teams, M.E., 2017. Poverty and perceived stress: Evidence from two unconditional cash transfer programs in Zambia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 177, pp.110-117. If this would no longer be possible, alternative method to select more recent 'high-flyers' graduated will be developed. As an alternative, both categories (high-flyers identified as part of the initial study and more recent ones) could also be selected for the sample.

The consultant is required to maintain compliance with [UNICEF's procedure for ethical standards in research, evaluation, data collection and analysis](#). This includes protecting data, only sharing relevant insights with others through aggregated and synthesised data, protecting data with encryption, and setting retention and deletion periods. It also includes storing and transmitting data securely in line with both UNICEF and government requirements.

The consultant must clearly identify any potential ethical issues and approaches, as well as the processes for ethical review and oversight of the research and data collection process in their proposal. Researchers, evaluators or enumerators involved in primary data collection involving human subjects must have undertaken basic ethics training. The institution is responsible for obtaining all necessary IRB and ethics clearances.

Protection protocols for children and, where relevant, other vulnerable groups, must be in place to provide safe environments for data collection. The consultant is required to provide a detailed mitigation plan on data collection. Privacy and confidentiality of participants should be assured with data de-identified at the individual level, or findings summarized to an appropriate level of aggregation. When engaging human subjects, informed consent must be sought from all participants. The nature of the informed consent must be noted in the ethics section of the proposal and any final report.

***Risks assessment and mitigation plan***

- To address any risk of misconduct with interviewees and household and community members including children, the firm will conduct a risks assessment and will develop a mitigation plan. This should include at a minimum:
- Screening/selection of enumerators,
- Study protocols that including protocols for enumerators approaching a household, with different scenarios(what the response is if there is no adult home, where interviews should be conducted, appropriate behavior in the field, referral mechanisms for misconduct, reporting structures etc.),
- Training for enumerators that addresses these protocols and expectations,
- Monitoring/oversight expectations of the enumerators, including random spot checks and incident reporting,
- Reporting mechanisms and how households will be able to report issues.

Consultants, in their submissions, are required to provide data collection plans detailing consideration of field staff for data collection, travel to selected districts, data collection, processing, quality assurance and other fieldwork measures. Consultants will also need to include venue and all logistical costs. Consultants will be required to collaborate closely with MCDSS to obtain beneficiary information in order to design a sound methodology with appropriate data collection instruments leading to detailed results. Consultants should consider the initial scoping visit to identify beneficiaries in their methodology. Feasibility of proceeding with the study should be decided upon results of this scoping visit.

The consultant is expected to produce a technical proposal that outlines the approach to the task, including sampling and methodology to elicit causal pathways for these high performing households, fieldwork preparations, timelines, project management approaches and ethical considerations.

### Tasks, Deliverables and Timelines

SN	TASKS	EXPECTED DELIVERABLES	TIMEFRAME	PAYMENT SCHEDULE
1	Develop inception report, including detailed desk review, with relevant feedback from Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, and UNICEF	Draft and final inception report, based on detailed desk review of project documents and studies. Inception report should also include including research methodologies (including feasibility of study if scoping visit shows limited beneficiaries), proposed tracking plan of beneficiaries, data collection teams and protocols, quality assurance, and project management log-frame with time schedule, activities and responsible persons. Presentation of inception report to government will be required.	4 weeks, including time for ethics applications  Sufficient waiting time (at least one month) should be allocated for ethical review board clearance and identification of respondents  Q3 2024	25%
2	Share interview instruments with feedback from MCDSS and UNICEF	Draft and final instruments.	2 weeks Q3 2024	25%
3	Conduct prior scoping of beneficiaries, with scoping report provided	Conduct prior scoping mission to identify full study feasibility  Produce scoping report with input from UNICEF and MCDSS	3 weeks  Q3 2024	25%
4	Final study report	Conduct fieldwork if feasibility is determined based on scoping report	4 weeks Q3 2024	

		Produce draft and final study report with input from MCDSS and UNICEF		
5	Findings presented to MCDSS and UNICEF in validation meeting	Draft report of findings to be shared and feedback to be incorporated at validation meeting. Consultant is responsible for organizing venue and all logistics for validation meeting	1 day Q3 2024	
6	Share final report with MCDSS and UNICEF	Report should be validated and presented to stakeholders	1 week Q1-Q3 2025	25%
		Cost per unit (USD)	Number of days	Total (USD)
	Estimated Consultancy fee		90 days	
	International travel		2 trips	
	DSA		40 days	
	Fuel (Kalabo, Shangombo, Kaputa) with scope to include other districts	29.63 ZMW per litre	1372km – Kalabo return and internal travel 500km – Kalabo-Shangombo return and internal travel -2370 km – Lusaka to Kaputa return and internal travel 4242km	
			Total	

### Education and Experience

Qualifications. Consultant has:

- Advanced university degree in social science, development or related field
- Knowledge and experience of qualitative design and social protection research (examples need to be provided)
- Demonstrated understanding of socioeconomic context in Zambia, poverty dynamics/trajectories and unconditional cash transfers
- Fluency in local language is an advantage
- At least five years' experience in applied/qualitative research

### Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](#)” from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES  NO     If YES, check all that apply:

**Direct contact role**      YES  NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

The researcher is not expected to interview children in the household, however children may be present when the interviews are ongoing with an adult member. Fieldwork is expected to last for a maximum of one month. The consultant is expected to produce a risk mitigation plan as part of their proposal.

**Child data role**      YES  NO

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

<b>Budget Year:</b> 2024	<b>Requesting Section/Issuing Office:</b> Social Policy /Zambia, Lusaka		<b>Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:</b> The required technical expertise for the assignment is not available within the team
<b>Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, please justify:			
<b>Consultant sourcing:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> International <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both  <b>Consultant selection method:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive Selection (Roster) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk Review/Interview)			<b>Request for:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New SSA <input type="checkbox"/> Extension/ Amendment
<b>If Extension, Justification for extension:</b>			
<b>Supervisor:</b> Social Policy Specialist	<b>Start date:</b> ASAP	<b>End date:</b> 31 December 2025	<b>Number of Working Days: 90 days</b>
<b>Administrative details:</b> Visa assistance required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation arranged by the office: <input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Country-Based to conduct field research and engage at stakeholder workshops (at least one of the workshops should be in person, the others can be remote). If office based, seating arrangement identified: <input type="checkbox"/> IT and Communication equipment required: <input type="checkbox"/>  Internet access required: <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Request Authorised by Section Head:</b>		<b>Request Verified by HR:</b>	
<i>Approval of Deputy Representative Operations (if Operations):</i>		<i>Approval of Deputy Representative (if Programme)</i>	

*Representative (in case of single sourcing/or if not listed in Annual Workplan/or for Sections reporting to the Rep)*