

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

Regional counselling in schools' assessment and CP Policy review consultant

### BACKGROUND

While data on the prevalence of mental health issues remain scarce in the Pacific region, smaller surveys, anecdotal evidence and U-Report polls all point to the existence of feelings of worry, stress, anxiety and depression among children, adolescents and youth, as well as the prevalence of violence, abuse and bullying in schools.

For example, 1 in 2 U-Reporters in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati report that they feel worried due to climate change and from international evidence we know that climate-induced emergencies can take a toll on the mental health of affected individuals, while disrupting access to supportive services. Experience of stress and trauma among children may lead to cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and developmental difficulties, as well as infringe on children's right to recreation and play. As parents also experience distress during emergencies, this can limit their ability to care for and provide support to their children and poses a risk factor for violence. This is worrying in a region highly affected by climate change and where most countries repeatedly face climate change related emergencies.

However, today, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services through all sectors especially health and sparsely available in Pacific countries, with less accessibility by children, young people and their care givers in often rural and remote island communities. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen systems for support through different platforms and actors, including community-based services and services available through the education sector, which a larger proportion of the child population would have access to.

Promoting children's access to MHPSS services for improved wellbeing is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all and at all ages, and target 3.4 (to prevent and treat non-communicable diseases and promote mental health and wellbeing).

Specific countries have been selected, and the specific situation for counselling services in each country are at different levels. In some countries, such as Vanuatu, no formal counselling services through the Ministry of Education and Training exist on a national level, but with a government commitment to establish such a system of services it is crucial to review existing, small-scale and community-based initiatives for counselling for school-going children, to provide recommendations for the government as plans for establishment of nation-wide school counselling are taken forward. In Tuvalu, counselling systems are in school but mostly share the same space with and sometimes take on the role as disciplinarians. There is a need to separate and clearly define the roles of counsellors and disciplinarians for better results. In Solomon Islands, although a recent Education Act (2023) has been passed, it does not include provisions for a formal counseling mechanism in schools. However, the Act recognizes the importance of holistic education, emphasizing not only academic learning but also social and emotional well-being. Despite the lack of a structured counseling system, certain schools have trained chaplains and nurses who offer counseling support.

Across the Pacific, schools are often the first government institution that children come in regular contact with, and hence provide a key entry point for interaction with children and their families. Support is needed to map out and review existing counselling and MHPSS services in schools, and to provide needed recommendations to ensure that these are child-friendly and sensitive based on evidence and international and Pacific best practice, and that they make necessary referrals to further services, including through actors responsible for health and child protection services in the country.

Also, UNICEF Pacific Multi Country Office, have been designated as priority countries for implementing child Protection and safe school policies. For this consultancy Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga and Solomon Islands. The four priority countries, all are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), have enacted domestic legislation which uphold the CRC and have a child protection and safe schools' policies on record with their respective Ministries of Education. Some countries have had their child protection and safe school policies validated by the national government, two countries have implementation plans for their child protection and safe school policies, yet none have child protection and safe school policies which have been fully operationalized. There are varying contexts, norms and circumstances impacting on the implementation and operationalization of the child protection and safe school policies in the priority countries. Also, some countries still have not finalized and endorse draft policies for implementation. Where those policies exist, relevant

service providers are not familiar with the contents. This consultancy will support four of the five countries to conduct the revision and operationalization of the child protection and safe school policies at the national and sub-national levels

UNICEF Pacific is also committed to the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF), which was designed by the Ministers of Education of the 15 Pacific Island Countries and Territories. PacREF is structured into four policy areas, including Policy Area 3, focused on Student Outcomes and Wellbeing (SOWB). PacREF is also structured around regional goods (RGs), including RG 13: Regional evidence and tools to support countries in developing localized responses to child protection and wellbeing in school. Since then, the recognition of the importance of child protection and wellbeing in schools has only grown. The 2024 Pacific Heads of Education System meeting confirmed that child protection should be reflected as a cross-cutting issue across all RGs. The present consultancy contributes to PacREF activities SOWB 2.1.1 (focused on Child Protection in Schools Policies) and SOWB2.1.8 (focused on implementation of Child Protection in Schools Policies). Expected milestones under this RG include the following (of these, only the first 3? are covered by this consultancy):

- Child Protection in Schools Policy developed
- Compendium of resources for MHPSS in schools
- Review of the use of school-based counsellors
- CPIS status review
- Implementation of CPIS activities complete.

This work is to ensure that governments and other service providers have strengthened capacities to deliver quality, inclusive and integrated child protection services – with a focus on MHPSS services – to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, exploitation and harmful practices affecting children and support countries to finalize their child protection and safe school policies to protect children’s rights and their best interests and ensure the socialization of those policies among key stakeholders at various levels. These policies are intended to place the child as the priority when dealing with all identified or suspected cases of child abuse. It will also seek to empower and educate children and their care givers on their rights, personal safety, and steps they can take, if there is a problem. Aligning services with legal requirements and bringing everyone onto the same page in working with children.

## **OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Overall objective of the assignment:**

Under the direction of the Child Protection Specialist (Services), the consultant will further map counselling services and the role of chaplains in schools across the 4 countries targeted for the assignment (Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Tonga, Tuvalu). The mapping will include the current policy environment, existing standard operating procedures and processes in place, capacity of service providers and geographical and thematic scope of services available. The mapping should refer to equity in service provision, looking at accessibility for specifically e.g. girls and children with disabilities. This mapping will be conducted through a remote desk review as well as online interviews with a few selected key stakeholders in each of the countries, as identified between the UNICEF team and the consultant.

This action seeks to achieve the PaCREf milestones on ensuring Child protection in Schools policies are up to date and addresses current issues for protection in schools. It will also review the status of the quality of counselling in schools considering its effectiveness, efficiency and relevance while providing a compendium of relevant resources that could be contextualized and used for MHPSS service delivery in schools. Based on this mapping the consultant will assess the quality, effectiveness and impact of existing counselling services on the lives of children, care givers, teachers and school administrators in selected schools in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and FSM. The assessment should lead to concrete recommendations, tailored for the Pacific region versus specific for the different countries as required, to be taken forward by UNICEF together with government stakeholders and other relevant partners (including faith-based organizations, local administrators, community leaders and civil society organizations). The assessment and CP policy work will be supported by in-country travel to each of the targeted countries, to ensure interaction with key stakeholders, including counsellors, teachers, principals and government staff in ministries responsible for education, mental health care and child protection.

The consultant will also support four countries with the the review and endorsement, and operationalization of the child protection and safe school policies and support the development of a professional training curriculum and standard operational procedures on the CP policy in Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Solomon Islands.

The consultant will draft a review covering the status of existing Child Protection /Safe Schools Policies, and their implementation in Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Solomon Islands; identify gaps, and opportunities, and develop a detailed multi-country work plan in consultation with Government partners, UNICEF Pacific MCO and Field Offices, outlining tailored support for full implementation based on the findings of the review

**ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES, PLUS PAYMENT SCHEDULE PER DELIVERABLE**

| ACTIVITY   | DELIVERABLES   | ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE | PAYMENT (%) |
|--|--|----------------------------|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in inception meeting with the Pacific Child Protection and Education teams, to discuss the assignment and agree on approach for the inception report.</li> <li>• Draft an inception report identifying the scope of the work, the list of stakeholders to be consulted during the process, the methodology to be implemented, and the expected timeline, among others.</li> <li>• Share the draft written inception report with UNICEF and incorporate any feedback.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliverable 1: Inception report</li> </ul>  |                            |             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing policies, procedures and programmes for counselling services and the role of chaplains in schools, as well as related to referrals, MHPSS and child protection services more broadly, including previous studies, surveys and evaluations as available.</li> <li>• Conduct key stakeholder interviews (online) to inform the mapping of available counselling services in the various countries, their scope and coverage</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliverable 2: Desk review mapping of counselling services and the role of chaplains in schools and across the 4 countries</li> <li>• Desks review of Child protection and safe school policy in 4 Countries</li> <li>• Road map and Plan of action to support the finalization and endorsement of pending CP policies</li> </ul> |                            |             |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The consultant will draft a desk review covering the status of existing Child Protection /Safe Schools Policies, and their implementation in Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Solomon Islands; identify gaps, and opportunities, and develop a detailed multi-country work plan in consultation with Government partners, UNICEF Pacific MCO and Field Offices, outlining tailored support for full implementation based on the findings of the review</li> </ul>             |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-country assessment of counselling services in schools in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu including key stakeholder interviews and visits (as possible) to a school with counselling services available.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliverable 3: Travel report with key findings or debrief with country-based UNICEF team on findings</li> <li>Present findings from the report in a regional meeting and get buy-in and commitment from countries to ensure the implementation of key recommendations.</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical support to the development or revision of child protection in school policy and update of CP Standard Operating Procedure/SOPs, and referral pathways at national and sub-national levels in Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu and Solomon Island</li> <li>Provision of inputs for orientation modules for various audiences (school administrators, parents' associations, school boards, child protection school focal points, etc.) to implement the policy</li> </ul> | <p>Deliverable4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised CP and Safe School policy &amp; Referral Pathways</li> <li>Orientation Modules</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update a professional training curriculum and standard operational procedures for the Child Protection Policy and Safe school policy.</li> </ul>   | <p>Deliverable 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional training Curriculum &amp; SOP</li> <li>List of trained Master Trainers to roll out CP policy</li> </ul>  |  |  |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and train a cadre of master trainers to conduct the roll out of the CP policy and SOP trainings and periodic refreshers in their respective countries.</li> </ul>  |   |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment report on counselling services in schools in the Pacific, including quality, effectiveness and impact of services. The assessment should be based on the mapping of services available, highlight any gaps in services (content, delivery, human resources, outreach, etc.) currently available and provide recommendations for continued promotion of MHPSS in schools in the Pacific.</li> <li>The report should include a list of all resources reviewed in the desk review and a list of all stakeholders interviewed; an executive summary (maximum 4 pages); and key findings and key recommendations per each country.</li> <li>The consultant should allow for one draft report submission for UNICEF and in-country stakeholder feedback and allocate time for revising the report as required for finalization.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliverable 11: Assessment report</li> </ul> |  |  |
|  |   |  |  |

#### QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors  Masters  PhD  Other

- An Advanced University degree in international development, human rights, international law, mental health or psychology, or other relevant field is required.
- A minimum of 5 years of professional experience in conducting research, impact assessments and leading evidence generation work, is required.
- Relevant experience in MHPSS or child protection, some of which preferably is from a developing country, is required.
- Experience in both development and humanitarian contexts is an added advantage; as is experience from working in the Pacific.
- Experience working in a UN system agency or UN organization is an asset.
- Proven ability to work independently under difficult conditions.

- Fluency in written and spoken English is a requirement; knowledge of a local language of any of the targeted countries will be considered an asset.

#### CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant will be home-based, including 4 field visits. The consultant will be managed by the Pacific Multi-Country Office based in Suva, Fiji, with additional contact points in UNICEF Field Offices in Tonga, Tuvalu, Fiji and Solomon Islands. All work-related costs will be included in the contract remunerations. The daily follow up and supervision will be conducted by the Child Protection Specialist (Services).

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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 candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that visas (supported by letter of appointment of UNICEF) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are 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. 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.
- No contract may commence unless the contract is signed by both UNICEF and the consultant.
- The consultant must complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of the offer and before the contract signature.

#### GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- Please submit a **separate financial offer** along with your application. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount for all the deliverables** and should show a break down for the following:
  - Monthly/daily fees – based on the deliverables in the Terms of Reference above
  - Travel (economy air ticket where applicable to take up assignment and field mission travel)
  - Living allowance where travel is required
  - Miscellaneous: to cover visa, health insurance (including medical evacuation for international consultants), communications, and other costs