

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SHORT TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT

International Consultant for multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy for infants and young children in Kiribati

BACKGROUND

Providing support for parenting in early childhood is a priority of the Kiribati government, as reflected in its Kiribati Development Plan 2020-2023, national Kiribati Early Childhood development (ECD) Policy 2023-2032, education sector strategic plan 2020-2023, and Kiribati Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Quality Standards. The term parenting in the context of Kiribati is not limited to biological parents but extends to any guardian or caregiver providing consistent care to children that includes adoptive or foster parents, siblings, grandparents, other relatives and young adolescents, who are also parents.

Critical questions pertaining to defining culturally-relevant, inclusive, effective, gender responsive, multi-sectoral and sustainable parenting support for families of infants and young children (0-5 years) in Kiribati, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, including children living with disabilities, remain unanswered. Children develop at their pace, but the developmental milestones for boys and girls are the same. Around the age of three, children begin to develop a sense of identity, which continues to develop as they get older. As parents and caregivers are the primary influencers of a child, creating an enabling environment for the holistic development, well-being and positive gender socialization of the child throughout the life course will lead to more equitable outcomes.

Positive parenting for parents and caregivers of children between birth to 6 years is emphasized in the multisectoral Kiribati ECD policy. The Kiribati ECD policy highlights the need to *“Prepare adolescents and prospective mothers and fathers for positive parenting through the provision of pre-conception education and health services as well as antenatal and post-natal education, health, and nutrition care, including home visits, group sessions and visit to post-natal health and nutrition clinics”*. Strategic Priority 2 of the policy further emphasizes support to parents and caregivers *“to be ready and responsible in ensuring children can access early learning, regular preventive and basic health, healthy nutrition, environmental sanitation, and protection services with integrated positive parenting skills through home visits, day care centres, and community-based services.”* Several programmes that reach out to parents and caregivers are implemented in varying degrees by Kiribati government and other stakeholders.

A major programme, supported by UNICEF from 2017 to 2019, has been the Positive Parenting programme, with the leadership of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs (MWYSSA) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other relevant social sector ministries. A 2019 review of this programme, supported by UNICEF and in consultation with national stakeholders, outlines the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen Multi-Sector Coordination at National Level and in Implementation of parenting Initiatives.
2. Review, align, and revise parenting material with a strong focus on inclusion
3. Pilot a number of different delivery approaches to support parents and caregivers of infants and young children (0-5 years) in Kiribati, including those provided through schools, churches, communities and health systems
4. Build in a strong community engagement component within parenting programme in order to work collaboratively with and through community groups
5. Integrate specific attention and support to the most vulnerable, including children with disabilities

6. Design programme delivery modalities that ensure training for the workforce in how to engage diverse families in activities and decision-making pertaining to their children
7. Advocate for funding for parenting support within each sector and cross-sectorally

Recently, the multi-sectoral ECD Steering Committee and Technical Working Group, led by the Ministry of Education and comprised of other social sector ministries, committed to advancing contextually- and culturally-relevant parenting support in line with the National ECD Policy and drawing upon intervention and practices within each sector which contribute to holistic child development.

OBJECTIVE / SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of the consultancy is to strengthen support for a parenting for early childhood development programme in Kiribati through culturally-relevant, inclusive, multi-sectoral, gender-responsive, evidence-based, and sustainable approaches. The consultancy will focus on the development of a multi-sectoral parenting strategy for infants and young children (0-5 years) and aligned manuals/materials/communication approaches and products that target expecting parents and caregivers of infants and young children (0-5 years).

This multi-sectoral parenting strategy would encompass a thorough response to the review of the national Positive Parenting programme, with an emphasis on bringing together typically disparate parenting support interventions across sectors (Education, Child Protection, Health and Nutrition and WASH) into a coherent whole and implemented in a sustainable way via existing delivery platforms (such as schools, churches, hospitals and health centres, and maneabas), and with a clear strategy for sustainability.

The strategy will be developed based on nurturing care framework that focuses on five inter-related and indivisible components of nurturing care: good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving and opportunities for learning for children, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, to achieve their full potential. The strategy will be fully aligned with UNICEF's priorities in ECD that include early stimulation and early learning, positive gender socialization, protection from harm or violence and provision of a sense of security, improved nutrition, reduction of stunting and under 5 mortality rate as well as improved hygiene practice.

The consultancy will include:

- i. Desk review and inception phase which will be co-constructed with stakeholders in Kiribati
- ii. Development of a national multi-sectoral parenting strategy for infants and young children (0-5 years) with tools and delivery platforms for different age groups, inclusive of a costed implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation framework, based on evidence (e.g. review of positive parenting programme and data collected through various platforms including Kiribati ECCE quality standards) of the key enablers and barriers to positive caregiving behaviours and school's parent/caregiver engagement
- iii. Development or update of related approaches/manuals/materials/resources for the corresponding facilitators/trainers and/or parents/caregivers in alignment with the strategy
- iv. National and sub-national consultations on the strategy and the manuals/templates, and pilot testing of the same
- v. Finalization of all documents for endorsement of MOE and ECD steering committee.

The consultant will provide technical support to the government of Kiribati, primarily under the leadership of the Ministry of Education (MoE) as the Chair of the ECD Steering Committee and in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs (MWYSSA), Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED), Ministry of Environment, Lands Agriculture Development and Ministry of Internal Affairs and other related agencies/non-government organizations. The process of developing this multi-sectoral parenting strategy will be designed to ensure government leadership and ownership, building their

organizational and individual capacity, led by the Kiribati culture and indigenous approaches across Kiribati communities but also drawing upon global and regional best practices.

The consultant is also expected to work closely with all the sections of UNICEF Pacific and Kiribati (Education, Child Protection, Health and Nutrition, WASH and SBC) in the process of development of multi-sectoral parenting strategy and aligned manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products.

The consultant is expected to apply key principles of social behaviour change, gender equality and inclusion, and human rights in drafting this multi-sectoral parenting strategy for infants and young children (0-5 years). This includes defining and understanding the problems that impede positive parenting in Kiribati, including social and behavioural evidence of the enablers and barriers to the desired behaviours, including community insights, as well as health and emotional well-being of caregivers which is key to promoting optimal child development. This may include desk review of available materials or simple primary research to collect new data, as relevant. This evidence is available in the review documents of the previous positive parenting programme, communication for development strategy for ECD, KAP studies, MICS data, data collected through Kiribati ECCE quality standards, UNICEF emergency response plans and other formative research. The process should also include a mapping of key stakeholders ensuring an approach which engages beneficiaries (parents, caregivers and community members) from the design phase .

The consultant is expected to start remotely with a desk review of available documentation and data on parenting, caregiving and the Kiribati social, cultural and political context, gender norms relating to childcare, and the positive parenting materials and review findings and then travel to Kiribati to co-construct the inception plan for the consultancy. This will also include planning meetings with relevant ministries, teachers, church leaders, village chiefs, nurses, parents, caregivers, CSOs, UNICEF's technical specialists in education, child protection, health and nutrition, WASH and SBC, and all relevant stakeholders to better define the methodology and process for the consultancy, and the definition of any data/knowledge gaps and the process to address these. The inception report should clearly outline the proposed process to ensure the Kiribati strategy will be evidence-based, inclusive, gender responsive, culturally-relevant and sustainable. The consultant is expected to employ qualitative methods with a range of different people from ECD TWG, steering committee and all relevant stakeholders in Kiribati to co-construct the inception report including a detailed work plan.

The consultant is expected to spend time in family and community settings, including disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and representatives of both gender, to better understand the culture, value, issues, gender norms and roles, opportunities and challenges for parenting and parent/caregiver engagement of infants and young children (0-5 years) including detailed audience profiles of ECD caregivers and other relevant stakeholders. Ethical issues that might arise from conducting research will be taken into consideration.

The consultant will facilitate and provide technical guidance to the government of Kiribati in designing a draft multi-sectoral parenting strategy with revisions to existing approaches, materials, manuals and resources, plus consideration for implementation platforms (e.g. ECCE centres, health centres, churches, is;and councils and maneabas) and new communication approaches and aligned materials, The consultant is expected to work closely with different groups (churches, village chiefs, teachers, nurses, parents, caregivers and all other relevant groups) to co-create social and behaviour change (SBC) approaches on parenting and integrate these within the strategy to make this inclusive, gender responsive and culturally relevant. The strategy is expected to address specific support for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities and children with vulnerable background.

All the materials and SBC approaches and aligned products must be tailored for the intended target group of users, such as pregnant women and adolescent girls, parents/caregivers of children prior to preschool-going age and parents/caregivers of children attending preschools. Guided by the behavioural drivers the messaging and materials are expected to clearly mention “how ”and “why” to do, in addition to “what” to do.

Afterwards, the consultant is expected to design and pilot the draft strategy including the solutions/interventions defined within this, in close collaboration with relevant and local stakeholders. Where necessary, the consultant may be expected to pre-test a few of these tools or interventions – including a trainer manual/SBC approaches and aligned products for ECE centres/teachers/church leaders/village chief/nurse (both males and females where applicable) or whoever identified as trainers, as necessary, and a handbook for caregivers and parents, plus other complementary approaches (e.g. roadshows, songs, etc.) that are considered relevant for the Kiribati context. UNICEF will bring on board expertise on graphic design and illustration for graphic designing and illustration of manuals/materials/communication aligned products and the consultant is expected to partner with and guide the graphic designers and illustrators. The overall multi-sectoral parenting strategy should adopt principles of being evidence-based, equity focused, co-designed and using participatory approaches to ensure a clear a coherent integration of culture within the design. It should also include a simple theory of change or logic framework, an M&E framework, and a costed implementation plan.

The consultancy is for 126 days, and the consultant is expected to be in Kiribati for at least 100 days (excluding travel days) in which bulk of the consultancy should be achieved and the remaining consultancy may be carried out remotely. The consultant may cover 100 days over two round trips. If there is a time difference, the consultant is expected to follow the Kiribati time zone for scheduling meetings and consultations.

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

ACTIVITY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE	PAYMENT (%)
<p>1. Inception report</p> <p>Based on the discussions with UNICEF, Kiribati government and other stakeholders, co-construct an inception report that outlines the overall methodology with specific attention to how Kiribati culture will be integrated throughout.</p>	Final inception report		11%
<p>2. Draft designed and illustrated version of multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy for infants and young children and aligned manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products that focus on different age groups and delivery platforms</p> <p>The above should be informed by evidence from desk review or primary research, field visits, in consultation with government and other stakeholders via workshops and meetings and applying the principles of social behaviour change and human rights.</p>	Draft multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy and draft manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products		46%
<p>3. Consultations and pilot testing of draft multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy and aligned manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products</p> <p>The consultant will support the ECD TWG to hold and document national and sub-national validation consultations for the strategy including a pilot testing of the strategy including the solutions/interventions defined within it. Feedback should be captured, analysed and documented clearly.</p>	Consultations and pilot testing completed with analysed feedback		11%
<p>4. Second draft of multi-sectoral Parenting strategy and aligned manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products</p> <p>Based on the feedback from the validation consultations and pilot testing , prepare the second draft of the strategy including the costed implementation plan. The second draft will undergo a thorough review by ECD steering committee, MOE and UNICEF.</p>	Second draft of multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy, draft manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products, with costed implementation plan		22%

<p>Final designed and illustrated version of multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy including costed implementation plan and aligned manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products Based on the feedback received from the review of the second draft, make final revisions and submit the final version of the multi-sectoral parenting strategy, costed implementation plan and all aligned resources/manuals.</p>	<p>Finalized multi-sectoral Parenting Strategy, draft manuals/materials/communication approaches and aligned products, with costed implementation plan</p>		<p>10%</p>
<p>Total</p>		<p>126days</p>	<p>100%</p>

QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE AND ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES

Bachelors Masters PhD Other

Academic Qualifications:

An Advanced University Degree (Masters) in social behavior change, communication, education, child development, social sciences or other related field is required

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required

- Minimum of 10 years' experience related to parenting, early childhood , gender equality and social behaviour change.
- Demonstrated experience and expertise with multi-sectoral parent/community support programmes focusing on ECD/ECCE in developing countries is essential.
- International experience of working with various Ministries in developing countries is essential.
- Experience of working in Pacific countries, especially Kiribati will be preferred.
- Experience of working as a remote consultant will be highly preferred. Prepared and interested to live and work in the Kiribati context, despite limitations in transport options, available foods, regularity of power/internet, etc.

CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CLARIFICATION ON SUPERVISION

The consultant will be supervised by the Kiribati Education Specialist, in collaboration with the UNICEF Pacific ECD Specialist and specialists in WASH, child protection, health and Gender Equality, SBC, UNICEF Kiribati ECD Officer, and in coordination with Director of Education, MoE.

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 to ensure that the visa (applicable) 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. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme

delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts. 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/ contractor.

Consultant/Contractor will be required to complete mandatory online courses (e.g. Ethics, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Security) upon receipt of offer and before the signature of contract.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Please submit a **separate financial offer** along with your application and CV. The financial proposal should be a **lump sum amount (in USD) 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), travel insurance communications, and other costs.

Please including in your applications, a **technical proposal** (less than 5 pages) on how the deliverables listed here will be achieved

Candidates are also required to provide links or documents of **relevant publications** which were authored by the applicant (if any)