**Terms of Reference for Individual Consultant**

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| **Title****Education Research Consultant (Education Decentralization) – Data Must Speak (DMS)** | **Duty Station:**Global Office of Research and Foresight (Italy)[ ] [x]  Remote [ ]  Office Based |
| **Start Date:** July 1st 2024 | **End Date:** August 31st, 2025 | **Total working days estimated:** 165 days |
| **Purpose of Activity/Assignment:** The main prupose of the assignment is to support the UNICEF Innocenti Global Office of Research and Foresight (UNICEF Innocenti) in co-creating and co-implementing the new Data Must Speak Strenghen Capacity and Advance Local Evidence Use (DMS SCALE) with Ministries of Education, UNICEF Country Offices, and local stakeholders by leading a global literature review and country-level scoping reviews on their education decentralization processes and use of administrative data to inform central and local decision-making. |
| **Background:** Data and evidence are key to understanding and improving the performance and equity of an education system. Countries and development partners have increased investments in Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and learning assessments, yet data and evidence remain vastly underutilized in education policy, planning, and decision-making at all levels. Further research is needed to understand “what works” for improving data-driven policymaking and “how” to better align data and policy systems, particularly at the middle-tier level. There is growing focus on the role of the middle-tier to bridge policies developed at the national-level with teaching and leadership practices at the school level, which ultimately influence learning outcomes, equity, and inclusion. However, there is a significant research gap on the role of the middle-tier in using data and evidence to support education policymaking.Data Must Speak to Strengthen Capacity and Advance Local Evidence Use (DMS SCALE) is a research initiative that aims to fill this evidence gap, fostering greater national ownership of knowledge derived from existing education data at the country-level. DMS SCALE will collaborate with MoE officials in four countries (Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, and Nepal) to understand their policy priorities and identify pertinent questions on learning, education, and gender equality, equity, and inclusion outcomes that can be answered by data already being collected. This includes engaging with local officials and harnessing the power of data held at the local level, including from school inspections and instructional supervision. DMS SCALE will employ experimental research methodologies to investigate the process of evidence-based decision-making, including robustly testing knowledge co-production, mobilization and dissemination approaches that could support data use and harmonization at the central and local levels.**Objectives of the consultancy:**The consultant will support the DMS research team to initiate the new DMS SCALE research by gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing important information about education decentralization processes, administrative data systems, and data use for decision-making, globally and in participating countries.The consultant will be tasked with (1) analyzing existing global literature about education decentralization processes, (2) leading various country-level reviews of the current state of the education decentralization and the role of education middle-tier stakeholders linked to administrative data collection and use for decision-making, and (3) supporting the team in designing the DMS SCALE interventions to improve the use of data for decision-making that will be robustly tested in subsequent stages. These tasks will be done hand-in-hand with Ministries of Education, UNICEF Country Offices, Regional Offices, and Headquarters as well as with development partners at country level.**Scope of Work:**  * Search for and gather relevant policy and programme documents, laws, research reports, and academic texts about education decentralization and/or deconcentration processes in Global South countries.
* Understand the roles and responsibilities as well as best practices related to education middle-tier stakeholders (region, district, circuit actors) and their use of data for decision-making.
* Conduct primary and secondary analysis at country-level, including through key informant interviews and focus group discussions to gather practical knowledge (incl. lessons learned and best practices) of the current state of decentralization processes in the education sector of selected countries and the function of the decentralized education offices when it comes to data collection and use for decision-making.
* Analyze, synthesis, and write research outputs from global and country level documents to inform the design of the DMS SCALE research.
* Support the DMS research team in finalizing and publishing research outputs and ensure publications adhere to UNICEF Innocenti Quality Assurance processes, including soliciting and responding to internal and external reviews.
* Develop additional dissemination outputs, knowledge products, and donor reporting requirements, including blog posts, PowerPoint presentations, and/or social media content.
* When relevant, work with in-country partners, including Ministries of Education, UNICEF Country Offices on DMS research-related documents, datasets, and meetings.
* Provide technical support to the DMS team in designing DMS SCALE interventions to be robustly tested in subsequent stages of the research.
* Support additional activities for the DMS research, the broader workstreams of the READ unit, and/or UNICEF Innocenti upon request.

**Supervision:**  The consultant will work under the direct supervision of one of the two Data Must Speak Co-managers, UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight.**Methodologies and Tools** * Methodologies to be used: (Systematic) Litterature Review; Qualitative methodologies (e.g., in-depth interviews and potential focus group discussions).
* Software to be used for consultancy: Microsoft Office and other SLC software.
* Subscriptions that will be required: Microsoft Office.

**Conditions of Consultancy** * UNICEF Innocenti does not issue computer equipment to consultants. The consultant will be responsible for providing the necessary computer equipment for the consultancy themselves and should include the cost implications of this responsibility in their bid for the consultancy. The cost of software and subscriptions that may be necessary to complete the consultancy (e.g., Microsoft Word) also needs to be factored into the bid for the consultancy.
* This consultancy requires the consultant to travel in order to complete the required deliverables effectively and efficiently. Travel costs should NOT be included in the bid for the contract as travel costs will be provided at time of travel and approved by consultant’s direct supervisor. UNICEF Innocenti does not make travel arrangements for consultants. The consultant will arrange their own travel, clear the anticipated cost with UNICEF and invoice UNICEF for the travel cost as soon as the travel has been completed.
* UNICEF does not regard Individuals engaged under a consultancy contract as “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures. Consultants are therefore not entitled to benefits such as leave, pension 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.

Payment of professional fees will be based on submission of agreed deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant. Prospective consultants are encouraged to ensure that they fully understand (a) the requirements of each deliverable and (b) the workload associated with reaching a deliverable.UNICEF Innocenti recognises that, due to the locations of some of its research, events may occur that either delay deliverables or prevent them from being completed. These events need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the impact on the payment schedule of the contract. It is UNICEF Innocenti’s objective to be fair to consultants in situations where deliverables are delayed or no longer attainable through no wrongdoing of the consultant.Consultants 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. |

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| **Minimum Qualifications required:** [ ]  Bachelors [x]  Masters [ ]  [ ]  PhD [ ]  Other **Enter Disciplines:** Education, social sciences, political sciences, economy, international development, or related field. |
| **Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:*****Essential skills:*** * Advanced degree with at least three years of relevant professional experience.
* Proven professional work experience in the area of international education, economics, development research, or a related field.
* Experience in leading or supporting (systematic) literature reviews or other academic work related to education in the Global South.
* Some experience in undertaking primary qualitative data collection, including key informant interviews, and synthesizing results into written research outputs.
* Some experience in (quasi-)experimental research design, including designing interventions for treatment groups, considering limitations (e.g., spillover, attrition etc…).
* Excellent written and oral communication skills.
* Demonstrated ability to work well as part of a team and to forge and manage partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.
* Commitment to UNICEF’s core values of care, respect, integrity, transparency, and accountability.
* Ability to work in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment.
* Fluency in English required; proficiency in French required.

***Desirable qualifications:*** * Good knowledge of education decentralization or deconcentration processes as well as familiarity with middle-tier education stakeholders.
* Experience working in the UN or other international development organizations is an asset.
* Fluency in another UN language is an asset.

***Core Values:*** Care; Respect; Integrity; Trust; Accountability; Sustainability.***Competencies:*** Builds and maintains partnerships; Demonstrates self-awareness and ethical awareness; Drive to achieve results for impact; Innovates and embraces change; Manages ambiguity and complexity; Thinks and acts strategically; Works collaboratively with others. |

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| **Deliverable/Output:** | **Estimated number of working days** | **Deadline** |
| Develop concrete workplan, including timeline, preferred methodologies/approaches, and roles/responsibilities for the global literature review and the various country-level scoping reviews. | 5 | By/Before July 15th, 2024 |
| Submit final draft outline for DMS SCALE global literature review developed, including a list of all sources to be used and key messages emerging from the research. | 10 | By/Before August 10th, 2024 |
| Develop country-level research methodology, including primary and secondary analysis; Analyze data collected and draft case study for Country A. | 25 | By/Before September 30th, 2024 |
| Develop country-level research methodology, including primary and secondary analysis; Analyze data collected and draft case study for Country B. | 25 | By/Before November 10th, 2024 |
| Develop country-level research methodology, including primary and secondary analysis; Analyze data collected and draft case study for Country C. | 25 | By/Before December 31st, 2024 |
| Finalize DMS SCALE global literature review, including all three country-level case study and support through publication process. | 25 | By/Before January 31st, 2025 |
| Support the design stages of DMS SCALE’s interventions through technical advises and various iterations across participating countries. | 35 | By/Before April 30th, 2025 |
| Contribute to other workstream of the Education Unit and of the other UNICEF Innocenti units (research proposals, review of research briefs and reports, other reviews) | 15 | By/Before June 15th, 2024 |