

## UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE BULGARIA

### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANT ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

**Start date:** 1 November 2019  
**End date:** 15 October 2020  
**Reporting to:** UNICEF Education Officer

#### I. Background

Adolescence is an important period of the life-course in its own right, as well as a critical period of transition between childhood and adulthood. The second decade of life is characterized by rapid brain development, deep physical, biological, emotional, cognitive and intellectual transformations - among them, the onset of sexuality, increased independence from the family environment, enhanced peer influence, stronger gender-influenced roles, and increased risk taking. Changes are influenced both by biological characteristics (such as age and sex), structural and external/environmental factors (for example, cultural and gender norms, the impact of adverse childhood experiences, etc.). It is a phase that offers enormous opportunities, growth and potential, energy and creativity, but it also requires particular attention due to increased risks and vulnerabilities for adolescent boys and girls. Science tells us that it represents a second critical phase of rapid development after early childhood, and interventions made at this stage can lay or reinforce the foundations for a fulfilling and healthy adult life. In the case of adolescents who faced severe deprivations or rights violations during childhood, adolescence provides a second chance for them to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies they need to thrive.

The environments in which adolescents live, learn and grow have a huge impact on their physical, psychosocial and emotional development. Therefore, adolescent boys and girls need to acquire or reinforce the skills, assets and competencies needed to navigate through the changes in their lives, as well as live in a caring and supportive environment where there are opportunities to build on their strengths and resilience to develop their full potential, reflect on gender roles and identities, enhance their well-being and help them lead productive and meaningful lives. Recognizing and investing in the rights and needs of each adolescent not only enriches the lives of adolescents themselves and supports their own potential, growth and wellbeing, but also significantly contributes to the peaceful and sustainable development of their families, communities, societies and the planet.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reaffirm the importance of investing in children<sup>1</sup>, including adolescents, and emphasizes their role as agents of change<sup>2</sup>. While “adolescents” are not explicitly mentioned in the SDG document and “youth” is referenced in a number of targets, thirteen out of the 17 goals are directly relevant to the lives of adolescents in relation to poverty, hunger and nutrition, health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, economic growth, and peaceful and inclusive societies.

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<sup>1</sup> Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (paragraph 8);  
URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

<sup>2</sup> Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (paragraph 51);  
URL: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

In September 2018, UNICEF and partners initiated the Generation Unlimited partnership at the global level, mobilizing public and private sector actors, UN agencies, and civil society organisations around the goal of ensuring that every young person (aged 10-24 years) is in education, training or age-appropriate employment by 2030. Within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework, and the UN Youth Strategy 2030, Generation Unlimited will contribute to results related to education, skills, fostering decent work opportunities, and youth entrepreneurship.

## II. UNICEF's Role

UNICEF is uniquely positioned to work with and for adolescents due to its human rights-based, holistic and cross-sectoral approach to adolescent programming. Having expertise within sectors including health and nutrition, education, child protection and social inclusion, allows UNICEF to build on existing knowledge and resources and expand the scope of work to and with adolescents. While in the past, UNICEF's work has focused predominantly on younger children, the Organisation is increasingly recognizing the critical importance in addressing the particular challenges and opportunities of the second decade of life. Globally, the Second Decade is one of UNICEF's organizational priorities, a cross-cutting issue that has an impact on other, more sectoral programmatic areas, and vice-versa. This is reflected in UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which states: *To promote their empowerment, UNICEF will support national policies and service delivery systems that are responsive to the needs of adolescent girls and boys. It will promote platforms for the systemic participation of adolescents in decisions that affect their lives and will support programmes that nurture them as informed social actors and enhance their civic engagement.*

The existing Country Partnership between UNICEF and Bulgaria for the period 2018 – 2022 identifies adolescent development and engagement as an explicit cross-cutting priority. The interventions undertaken at country level are contributing to national priorities and to the objectives of Generation Unlimited. In consultation with national partners, the Country Office aims at strengthening interventions related to the second decade of life by formulating a strategy for its support to adolescent development and engagement in Bulgaria both through mainstreaming adolescents' issues in all programme components and through specific initiatives. Emerging strategic priorities for the CO in line with the global Adolescent development and engagement agenda and the priorities of Generation Unlimited include the following areas:

- Ensuring that secondary education transmits skills that young people need for the future of work, including through fostering entrepreneurship and improving the digital and media literacy;
- Providing disadvantaged adolescents and young people within and outside the school system with opportunities for training and skills development, including through strengthening the linkages between education and business;
- Empowering young people for engaged citizenship, including through the World Largest Lesson initiative and by introducing Child Rights Education;
- Creating opportunities for young people's engagement in online and offline platforms to amplify their voices and exchange knowledge and engaging them in a meaningful and sustainable way as co-creators.

### **III. Overall Objective of the Consultancy**

Under the guidance and supervision of the UNICEF Education Officer, in coordination with UNICEF Programme and Communication Officers and in partnership with national partners, local authorities, schools and other relevant national and local stakeholders, the Consultant will support the consolidation and acceleration of the ADAP agenda in Bulgaria, contributing to Generation Unlimited objectives.

### **IV. Specific Activities**

The Consultant will be responsible for the following:

1. Provide technical assistance and support to UNICEF to operationalise Generation Unlimited at country level, taking into consideration CO priorities in the area of adolescent development and engagement;
2. Provide technical assistance and support to UNICEF in conducting consultations with adolescents and young people on different issues and in different areas related to their lives, through different instruments (online and offline);
3. Provide technical assistance and support to UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Science for the introduction of Child Rights Education in pre-school and school curriculum;
4. Provide technical assistance and support to UNICEF for the introduction, implementation and scale up of U-Report;
5. Provide technical assistance and support to UNICEF to develop and implement initiatives for building skills of disadvantaged adolescents for learning, personal development, digital and entrepreneurial skills and skills for employability;
6. Provide technical assistance and support to UNICEF interventions related to adolescents' engagement – such as the World Largest Lesson Initiative and others;
7. Support the development of advocacy materials related to adolescents and young people as well as the development and/or adaptation of adolescent-friendly materials;
8. Support with the preparation of reports and documentation of CO initiatives;
9. Other assigned tasks, as needed.

### **V. Timeframe and duration of the assignment**

The Consultant is expected to complete the assignment in the period **1 November 2019 – 15 October 2020**.

### **VI. Required education, experience and competences**

- University degree in social sciences, psychology, pedagogy or other relevant discipline;
- A minimum of 3 years of professional experience of working on adolescent issues;
- Very good knowledge and understanding of human rights and adolescent and youth issues;
- Experience in facilitating consultations and engagement of children and adolescents;
- Energy and enthusiasm; ability to work under pressure; very good communication, facilitation and presentation skills;
- Pro-activity and strong drive for results;
- Proven analytical and writing skills;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- Fluency in English is a must;
- Willingness and availability to travel across the country.

## **VII. Remuneration and incurred cost**

The Consultant will be paid a negotiated monthly fee within UNICEF fee range, depending on her/his expertise. Payments will be made upon written certification by the Supervisor of timely and satisfactorily provision of consultancy services provided. Travel costs will be covered separately as per UNICEF rules and regulations.

## **VIII. Monitoring and evaluation:**

The Consultant will work under the direct supervision of the UNICEF Education Officer and in coordination with UNICEF Programme and Communication Officers.