

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant to support the implementation of programme for prevention of violence and bullying in schools

Start date: 11 November 2019

End date: 23 October 2020

Working days: Up to 200 days

Reporting to: Maria Yankova, Education Officer

I. Overview.

Violence against children includes emotional and physical abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, sexual exploitation and abuse. It occurs in homes and families, schools, care and justice systems, workplaces and communities. Perpetrators include parents, family members, teachers, caretakers, law enforcement authorities and other children.

Many children do not feel protected in school. Globally, more than one third of all children aged between 13 and 15 say that they are regularly a subject of violence or bullying at school¹. This is why the sustainable development goals put on the global agenda ending violence against children and its sustainable prevention. There is clear evidence of the harm of violence on physical and mental health and children's development, on their ability to learn and build relationships with others, to become fully functional adults and parents. School bullying and insecure school environments are one of the reasons for early drop out of the education system, reduced attendance, poor student performance, and have significant socio-economic effects as education is key for the personal and professional realization of individuals and for the prosperity of societies.

According to the study on the health and behaviour of school aged children (HBSC)² students in Bulgaria are among the top ten out of 43 surveyed countries affected by the problem of school bullying. Data from the Ministry of Education and Science³ (MES) shows around 8000 cases of different forms of violence are registered in schools annually. A study of the views of Bulgarian children on important areas of their life⁴, conducted by UNICEF and the State Agency for Child Protection, also confirms that violence, in particular school violence, is as a major problem for children and adolescents. The different forms of aggression, violence and bullying, are identified as one of the four major problems faced by children in Bulgaria together with poverty, the easy access to drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, and the low quality of education.

Schools, on the other hand, are recognized as an important space where children, teachers and education personnel can learn and adopt pro-social behaviours that can contribute to preventing violence within the school and in the community.

In April 2017, MES initiated the development of a cross-sectoral Action Plan which aims at prevention of violence and building safety in schools. The measures include provision of

¹ A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents, UNICEF, New York, 2017

² Health and behavior in school-aged children - HBSC 2013/2014: An international survey. Summary of data for Bulgaria <https://www.unicef.bg/assets/NewsPics/2017/PDFs/HBSC_2013_2014_Resume.pdf> (02.07.18)

³ Official data MES; National Program for prevention of violence and abuse against children (2017-2020)

⁴ My voice matters. UNICEF. 2015

psychologists and pedagogical councilors, targeted trainings of teachers, introduction of in-class and after school activities for prevention of violence. There has been a revision of the State Standard on Inclusive Education with regards to the cases of bullying and violence in schools.

A **Mechanism for combatting bullying and violence in educational institutions** has been introduced in the education system⁵ to support educational institutions in their efforts to create a safe school environment. Its introduction implies the understanding that real progress in addressing violence and bullying can only be achieved by implementing a coherent and purposeful policy that is shared and implemented by all actors in the education process. The document introduces the necessary measures to create a safe school environment in the understanding of social-ecological model and a whole-school approach to prevention and intervention on violence. Each institution in the system of pre-school and school education is obliged to:

- Set up a coordination council which is responsible for planning, monitoring and coordinating efforts to tackle violence and bullying;
- Assess and analyse the situation with a view to educating the school community on the topic of violence, but also revealing prevalence of certain forms and measures taken so far;
- Based on the assessment, plan / update prevention and intervention activities at both institution and group / class level.

Despite the existence of a unified framework that lays the foundation for a safe school environment, it appears that educational institutions need support for its effective implementation and enforcement. One of the weaknesses of the approaches so far is that they are adult-oriented, and that children and adolescents are not active participants. Empowering them as equal participants in improving the school climate is an approach that also contributes to their development as responsible and independent individuals. Additionally, the role of parents as part of the school community needs to be strengthened and pedagogues need support for their role in the prevention process.

II. UNICEF role.

UNICEF Bulgaria is in the second year of implementation of the Country Programme for the period 2018-2022. The overall goal of the country partnership is to support Bulgaria in its efforts to enable all children and adolescents in the country, including the most disadvantaged, to enjoy their rights and develop to their full potential in an inclusive and protective society. The realization of the right of every child to live free from violence, abuse, exploitation and harmful practices is a cross-cutting element throughout the country partnership in the period 2018 – 2022.

In June 2019 an expert group was established within the MES to develop the program intervention based on a whole-school approach which addresses violence and bullying in schools. The main goal of the programme is to raise the awareness, commitment and capacity of the entire school community to prevent and tackle school violence. The program builds on the whole-school approach, a social-ecological model to addressing the problem. Under this approach violence is looked at as social phenomenon with drivers on several levels (individually, interpersonally-the class, the school and the local community). Tackling the

⁵ The document has been introduced in 2012 and its latest update was in December 2017.

problem requires a response on each level, as well as from every participant in the school community (students, pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff, principals and parents). The programme will be finalized by the working group until December 2019. Key components of the programme are:

- assessing the school environment and creating a school commitment to prevention work;
- raising awareness and knowledge on the issue;
- training of principals and coordination committees in the whole-school approach;
- ongoing support and training of teachers on effective classroom management and communication with parents;
- strengthening the school community through student and parent participation and other mechanisms;
- creating a student peer-to-peer support group and installing the restoration of value approach.

The program will be implemented in 5 pilot schools for 3 school years (one preparatory 2019-2020 and two full school of implementation 2020 – 2022). The schools` selection will be completed in two phases: 1) pre-selection of up to 15 schools through a questionnaire and 2) discussions with children, school staff and parents to explore their readiness and motivation to join the programme.

Evidence and knowledge generated through the application of the approach and the implementation of the different components will inform the national policy framework on violence prevention and child protection in the education and will support the development of training packages and modules on the topic.

III. Purpose and tasks of the assignment.

The overall goal of the assignment is to support the Ministry of Education and Science and UNICEF with the coordination of the programme on prevention of violence and bullying in schools. Under the guidance and supervision of the UNICEF Education Officer, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and in partnership with educational authorities and other relevant institutions, the Consultant will support the implementation of a whole-school approach to prevention of violence and bullying in schools, including through evidence generation, data collection and documentation of the approach and practices in the schools.

In particular, the Consultant will be expected to carry out the following tasks:

1. ***Support the coordination, implementation and documentation of a whole-school approach to prevention of violence and bullying in schools, tested through the program intervention***
 - 1.1. Support and coordinate (including through supervision and provision of guidance and technical assistance) the efforts of all 5 partner schools to build local capacities and develop mechanisms to implement and sustain prevention practices (including assistance for planning of activities, communication on and organization of trainings and other program needs and events during first implementation year 2019/2020);

- 1.2. Provide support for data collection and evidence generation on prevention practices, needs assessment of pilot schools, elements of safe school environment. This will include the provision of technical support and input for schools for the design, planning and implementation of planned surveys at the launch of the program.
- 1.3. Support the analysis, presentation and discussion of the results of the surveys in coordination with the mentors who will be assigned to each school.
- 1.4. Support UNICEF's public awareness and advocacy activities aiming to promote safe school environment and prevention of violence.
- 1.5. Support the documenting of whole-school approach to prevention of violence which is being implemented in pilot schools under the program intervention (as for the first implementation year);
- 1.6. Support the drafting of methodological documents/ guidelines to support the implementation of prevention practices under the programme;
- 1.7. Assist in drafting quarterly progress reports to UNICEF, technical documentation, guidelines, etc. relating to the programme implementation as needed.

2. *Other general:*

- 2.1. Participate in relevant meetings, workshops, seminars as needed;
- 2.2. Others as agreed with UNICEF office.

IV. Timeframe and duration of the assignment.

It is expected that the assignment will take place in the period 11 November 2019 – 23 October 2020.

V. Official travel involved.

The consultancy will involve up to 100 days in-country travel to the settlements where the pilot schools are situated.

VI. Remuneration and total estimated cost for completion of the assignment.

The consultant will receive a daily fee in accordance with the submitted and agreed with UNICEF financial offer. Payments will be made based on written certification of timely and satisfactorily provision of consultancy services provided every month.

In addition, a lump sum will be paid for in-country travel which includes travel cost, accommodation and DSA to the amount of 60 BGN for in-country travel without overnight and 120 BGN for in-country travel with overnight.

VII. Required education, experience and competencies.

The consultant needs to have the following competencies/qualification:

- Master's degree or higher in one or more of the following areas: pedagogy, social sciences/social work, psychology or another relevant field.

- Excellent understanding of the conceptual framework, national policy framework and institutional arrangements relating to violence against children, prevention and child protection.
- Good knowledge and understanding of the functioning and structure of the school education system.
- Experience in project management;
- Ability to work under pressure; good negotiation, communication and presentation skills. Pro-activity and strong orientation towards results;
- Ability to work independently;
- Ability to manage partnerships across diversity of stakeholders;
- Respect for cultural diversity and human rights;
- Fluency of English language will be an advantage.

VIII. Monitoring and evaluation.

The selected consultant will work under the direct supervision of the UNICEF Education Officer and in close collaboration with the expert from the Ministry of Education and Science in charge of prevention of violence and bullying in education and with UNICEF Consultant on prevention of bullying and violence in kindergartens and schools.

Performance indicators

The performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication and quality of the products delivered.

UNICEF recourse in the case of unsatisfactory performance

In case of unsatisfactory performance, the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent 10 days prior to termination.