**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTORS/ CONSULTANTS**

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| **PART I** | | |
| Title of Assignment | Toolkit to measure learning outcomes in low-resource, low-capacity settings | |
| Section | Education Section | |
| Location | Remote, with travel to Nairobi and/or other field locations, as required | |
| Duration | 200 working days over 10.5 months | |
| Start/End date | **From:1-Mar-22** | **To: 31-Dec-22** |

**Background and Justification**

Promoting access to education for refugees, IDPs and other marginalized populations is a key priority for UNICEF. UNICEF’s new Education Strategy 2019-2030 envisions that “Every Child Learns”: “improved learning and skill development for boys and girls from early childhood to adolescence, in particular for the most marginalized and those affected by humanitarian situations”. The strategy aims for improved learning and protection for children in emergency and fragile context, which characterizes many of ESAR’s countries hosting large refugee and other displaced populations. Recognizing that children, adolescents, and youth in emergency and displacement contexts face numerous challenges in accessing and obtaining a quality education, UNICEF has over the past years advocated and supported the strengthening of education provision across the humanitarian-development nexus, the inclusion of refugees in national systems, and the provision of multiple pathways to learning. Efforts have gone into the development of regional and national policies to recognize learners’ qualifications (recognition, validation, equivalence), and in facilitating access to national examinations. UNICEF and partners have also leveraged digital technologies to capture and share student learning, in alignment with national systems requirements.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa, created in 1996, includes 8 member states, with the following 6 members located in UNICEF’s ESA region: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia and South Sudan. Its vision is to be the premier Regional Economic Community for achieving peace and sustainable development in the region. December 2017 marked a major milestone for the refugee-education agenda in the East and Horn of Africa region: the **Djibouti Declaration (DD) on education for refugees, returnees and host communities** was adopted by seven IGAD ministers in charge of education in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia and South Sudan. The DD is the most significant, joint commitment on education and refugees in the region, and represents a collective vehicle to advance the key goal of ‘enhancing refugee self-reliance’ outlined in the Global Compact for Refugees – through more accessible and inclusive education and multiple pathways of learning for refugees. The DD was followed by the Addis Ababa call for Action in 2018, which extends the target population to internally displaced children.

Both documents offer solid **opportunities for strong partnership and development of shared responsibilities among host countries, regional organizations, development partners and the donor community**. It is within this framework that UNICEF stepped up its collaboration with IGAD and continues to provide support, as part of the Technical Taskforce focused on the implementation of the DD, collaborating closely with UN partners, key multilateral and bilateral donors and development agencies, including UNHCR, GIZ, EU, UNESCO, and ECW.

The Djibouti Declaration (DD) Action Plan (IGAD, 2017) puts a strong emphasis on the need to improve learning outcomes for children on the move; accordingly, the forthcoming monitoring framework of the DD foresees measurement of learning outcomes for all signatory countries. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) undertook a vast mapping exercise to create shared understanding of equitable quality or learning outcomes and measurements across humanitarian and development education programs. INEE commissioned two separate mapping exercises, one on academic learning outcomes and another on social and emotional learning. Despite the availability of such useful repositories of methodologies and toolkits, measuring learning in low-capacity, low-resource settings remain very challenging in practice. Existing learning assessment systems in crises-affected countries – when they exist – are often not fit to cover populations on the move or cannot respond to the additional strains brought about by humanitarian crises. Crises-affected locations are typically not sampled in the design phase of national learning assessments or removed in subsequent administrations of an assessment, often due to the security risks involved, resulting in exclusion of crisis-affected populations. Parallel systems of education – sometimes set up in EiE context following a rationale of “last resort” by the humanitarian community – amplify the confusion on what to assess, when and how. Finally, national governments in countries affected by protracted crises see assessing learning as a low priority item, since provision to education service is often a challenge in itself.

Against this backdrop, the COVID-19 pandemic added significant challenges to measuring learning in the region. Disruptions to both livelihoods and education systems have already driven substantial losses and inequalities in education outcomes, with hundreds of thousands of children having lost instructional time, while many others dropped out of school; this in turn has created significant and largely unmet needs for provision of both accelerated and remedial education. Simply reopening schools will not be enough: students will need tailored and sustained support to help them readjust and catch-up after the pandemic. In parallel, Ministries of Education in ESA as well as UNICEF and its implementing partners will need adaptive and reliable monitoring tools to step up to the challenge.

***Justification***

In the first half of 2021, UNICEF supported the preparation of a monitoring framework for the implementation of the DD, to enable IGAD member states to assess progress in operationalizing the commitments in the DD action plan. Engagement with counterparts highlighted **significant gaps in measurement of learning outcomes for refugee/returnee children, IDP children, migrant children and children in host communities**, as well as a **lack of systematic monitoring approaches to remedial and accelerated education** that will be necessary for education systems to recover after the pandemic. Currently only Uganda has a system in place to measure learning in refugee hosting districts and to use the results to inform programmatic action – and even such system is facing challenges in terms of funding.

Filling this evidence gap may not ask for a one-size-fits-all solution, given the spectrum of different measurement needs for children of different age groups, displacement status, and the degree to which their education was affected by the pandemic. In cases where pre-existing learning assessment can be easily customized to children on the move, data architectures to link data with programs, policy and advocacy are needed to make sure that measurement leads to action. Conversely, in case where no learning assessment tools exist, (e.g. when students on the move are attending accelerated learning programs, or are studying on non-standard curricula) there may be potential to adapt existing toolkits for measurement of learning outcomes (such as for instance Save the Children’s Holistic Assessment of Learning and Development Outcomes, HALDO). The rationale is not to conduct fully-fledged learning assessments, rather to have a “minimalistic” and adaptable toolkit that could generate informative metrics on learning, with the dual aim to enable countries to report on the DD and support the feedback loops needed to enable [evidence-based programming in the aftermath of the pandemic](https://www.unicef.org/reports/mission-recovering-education-2021).

A learning assessment toolkit can therefore be strategic to **enable Governments and partners along the development/humanitarian spectrum to systematically track learning and other key education metrics**. The toolkit is conceptualised as an open source, regional public good, whose use would be adequate for IGAD countries to report on the DD but can be extended to the whole ESAR, once the necessary adaptations are made. The envisioned toolkit is well aligned to the fourth benchmark of the second core commitment for children in emergencies in education: “Children and adolescents have equitable access to inclusive and quality learning opportunities”. The core commitment has the following benchmarks:

* Formal and non-formal education programmes, including early learning and skills, are available and used
* Inclusive access to education opportunities is ensured with a specific attention to girls, children with disabilities, refugees, displaced children and other marginalised or vulnerable children
* Teachers and other education personnel are trained to provide quality learning
* Learning is measured to monitor the quality of education

**Scope of Work**

1. ***Goal and Objective*:** Under the supervision of the Education Specialist - Education in Emergencies, Education Section, the consultant will prepare a practical and adaptable toolkit for measurement tool to measure learning outcomes in low-resource, low-capacity settings which should be conceptualized as an open source regional public good and should be constructed in a way to fit national data architectures and in a way to single out potential drivers of subpar learning outcomes, so that corrective action can be delivered*.*
2. ***Provide details/reference to AWP areas covered:***

This assignment is part of the ESARO Education Section Rolling Work Plan 2020-2021 – activity 61: Capacity building on EiE and fragile contexts

1. ***Activities and Tasks:***  Under the supervision of the Education Specialist - Education in Emergencies, Education Section, the consultant is anticipated to perform the following tasks:
2. Carry out consultations with relevant authorities and focal points in-country;
3. Conduct a review on practices of learning measurement in the region;
4. Conduct a literature review on the use and feasibility of low-tech and high-tech solutions to assess learning, relevant to the measurement and reporting needs in the region. In particular, the context and potential for adaptive / gamified applications to measure learning should be explored, with reference to the following research questions:

* Are there any applications / adaptive technology solutions that can be leveraged to generate reliable data for learning assessments?
* If yes, at what conditions can these technology solutions be used by policymakers?
* If yes, at what cost?
* If yes, can the data coming from these applications / adaptive technology solutions be used to report on the monitoring framework of the DD, or to monitor other education outcomes?

1. Draft an inception report entailing the methodological approach, process and timelines to deliver the toolkit;
2. Develop a first version of the toolkit in close consultation with – and for the review of – UNICEF (both ESARO and HQ) and potentially also additional technical partners of UNICEF’s in the region; ensure the timely incorporation of feedback;
3. Study costs and monitoring budgets needed for the implementation of the toolkit;
4. Undertake piloting/testing of the proposed tools, in close collaboration with in-country partners, in one or several selected countries (tbd) and incorporate end-user feedback;
5. Develop a digital resource package for capacity buidling, supporting tools and user guide;
6. Draft a final report on the process, lessons learned, recommendations and a roadmap for rollout.
7. ***Work relationships:***The consultants will be supervised by the ESARO Education Specialist (Emergencies), under the overall guidance of the Regional Education Adviser.
8. ***Outputs/Deliverables:***

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| **Outputs** | **Payment** | **Deadline** |
| 1. Inception report 2. Literature review      1. Toolkit for measurement of learning outcomes 2. Piloting of the toolkit in selected countries 3. Open source package for capacity building 4. Final report | 10%  10%  30%  20%  20%  10% | March 7  March 21  July 18  Oct 3  Nov 21  Dec 5 |

**For all contracts, please ensure that the due date of the last deliverable leaves a buffer for the supervisor of the assignment to review the final output before paying. This ensures that internal quality assurance is performed so that the work is up to standard before the final payment. In addition, for deliverable based payments, the last payment cannot be less than 10% of the total payment as per policy.**

**Payment Schedule**

Payments are based upon satisfactory completion of deliverables in the installments outlined in the table.

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| **Deliverables** | **Duration**  **(Estimated # of days or months)** | **Timeline/Deadline** | **Schedule of payment** |
| 1) Inception report | 5 days | March 7 | 10% |
| 2) Literature review | 10 days | March 21 | 10% |
| 1. Toolkit for measurement of learning outcomes | 85 days | July 18 | 30% |
| 1. Piloting of the toolkit in selected countries | 55 days | Oct 3 | 20% |
| 1. Open-source package for capacity building | 35 days | Nov 21 | 20% |
| 1. Final report | 10 days | Dec 5 | 10% |
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**Desired competencies, technical background, and experience**

1. *Education: Academic qualifications and required level of education.*

Master’s degree in Social Sciences, Economics, Political Science, Public/ Social Policy, Social Development, with specialized training in Statistics, Quantitative Research or Data Analysis.

In lieu of a Master’s degree, a first University degree in a relevant field combined with two additional years of professional experience may be considered to meet this requirement.

1. *State the specialized skills and/or training if needed;*

* At least eight years of progressively advanced experience in M&E in the humanitarian/ development field, with at least four years of experience in education in emergencies and refugee contexts, with field experience in at least two complex emergencies.
* Demonstrated track record in the design of user-friendly M&E frameworks, tools and capacity building packages for large and complex, multi-country projects on education for displaced populations
* An understanding of the current learning crisis in the region and of regional and global efforts to measure and to recover learning
* Experience in dealing with policy level interventions, working with government and/or policy makers in multiple countries
* Experience in facilitating audience-friendly trainings in the international context, ideally with inter-governmental bodies and policy makers
* Excellent communication skills both oral and written.
* Strong coordination skills, adaptability and ability to work under pressure are required.
* Excellent digital skills, full working knowledge of MS-Word, PowerPoint, Zoom, Teams and other presentation and communication platforms.
* Experience of delivering results independently and at distance in a timely fashion.
* Familiarity with UNICEF desirable.

1. *Indicate the length of relevant work experience*

At leasteight years of progressively advanced experience in M&E in the humanitarian/ development field, with at least four years of experience in education in emergencies and refugee contexts, with field experience in at least two complex emergencies

1. *Must exhibit the UNICEF Core Values of:*
   1. *Care*
   2. *Respect*
   3. *Integrity*
   4. *Trust*
   5. *Accountability*
2. *Competencies: list the* [*competencies*](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/DHR-UCF/SiteAssets/SitePages/DHR-UCF/Competency%20Framework%20Brochure.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=JPyNVx) *that the consultant should have for the assignment;*
   1. Builds and maintains partnerships
   2. Demonstrates self-awareness and ethical awareness
   3. Drive to achieve results for impact
   4. Innovates and embraces change
   5. Manages ambiguity and complexity
   6. Thinks and acts strategically
   7. Works collaboratively with otherss
3. *Languages needed.*

Fluency in English required, fluency in French and Portuguese considered an asset.

**Administrative issues**

The assignment will be supervised through the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Education Section. All travel costs need to be included in the financial proposal.

**Conditions**

The consultant will work remotely, with possible travel for consultations / meetings / delivery of trainings (travel costs to be covered by UNICEF). All travel undertaken by the consultant under this assignment will be by the most economical fare and will be paid as per UNICEF policy.

**Risks**

Close oversight is necessary to mitigate the risk that the consultant produces inapplicable resources that are not user-friendly. To mitigate this risk, UNICEF will support close collaboration between consultant and counterpart focal point so that the former will understand the needs of the latter to develop relevant and user-friendly tool and carry out handover. Also, the samples of work that will have been requested as part of the application procedure will be assigned a higher rating in the selection process to gauge the candidates’ adaptability, creativity and the ability to produce quality work.

**How to Apply**

*If you are advertising the consultancy, once it is advertised you can include the link for dissemination of the ToR.*

Interested candidates should provide the following by email:

1. A cover letter that specifies how you meet the desired competencies, technical background and experience(no more than 2 pages)
2. A short CV (no more than 4 pages)
3. A fee structure that should include both daily rate in USD and total fee
4. Relevant records of M&E frameworks and tools and training facilitation

Qualified candidates are requested to submit a cover letter, CV, P11 form and their technical proposals to the online recruitment portal (Talent Management System) or email provided.

Interested candidates to indicate ability, availability, and rate (daily? monthly?) expressed in US$ for international or KES for national consultancy or individual contractor contract to undertake the terms of reference.

**Applications submitted without a fee/ rate will not be considered.**