

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Subject:** *National Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) for Children in China*

**Type of contract:** *Consultant*

**National / International:** *National*

**Expected start date:** 1 May 2019

**Duration:** 75 days

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### 1. Background

UNICEF's mandate is to help children around the world realize their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. Child poverty is a global issue, different from adult poverty. Even short episodes of poverty during childhood hinder children's physical and cognitive development, and imposes risks for capability development, thus increasing the probability for future poverty and disadvantages (Espíndola Advis & Rico, 2012). Separate and tailored solutions are required to address child poverty.

In China, poverty has been conceived as a monetary phenomenon for a long time. The national rural poverty alleviation programme, which targets households living under the poverty line and in poverty block areas and counties, understands poverty mainly as the inability to earn or, in the case of poor areas, as marginalization from markets and growth. National poverty alleviation is geographically targeted and promotes livelihoods, productivity and market access for rural households, aiming to foster growth in poorer regions. This work is dominated by investment in small scale infrastructure and rural livelihoods (including credit and market access) and is coordinated by the Poverty Alleviation Offices. Measures to address poverty among individuals or households without working capacity are in place through the social assistance programmes, implemented by local Bureaus of Civil Affairs. Some limited measures are in place to specifically target children, such as child friendly spaces, clubs for left behind children and cash grants for orphans. This approach has been important, and well implemented, delivering benefits to many of China's poorest communities, in which there are large populations of children. Yet, there are no disaggregated poverty measurement for children at the national level, or poverty reduction programmes tailored for children.

Notwithstanding China's impressive achievements in absolute poverty reduction, China still has poverty. The Government of China has signaled that the next generation of poverty policies will focus on vulnerable groups, including children. Government officials and academics in China are currently considering what new poverty measurements and programmes are needed after 2020 when extreme poverty is eradicated. UNICEF is working with partners to ensure that child poverty analysis is mainstreamed in the multi-dimensional analysis of household

poverty. There remains a need to highlight the distinctive phenomenon of child poverty, as measured by age-specific deprivations where a child is the unit of the analysis.

UNICEF China and other child rights advocates need to be equipped to argue for the most progressive approach to child poverty measurement, that is child-rights based. UNICEF's Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) is rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In our current advocacy work, and for programme planning, UNICEF uses a patchwork of figures that are drawn from existing official available data, which means that UNICEF's analysis of child poverty is limited by the way in which China measures poverty. Therefore, we are only able to talk about the numbers of children living in poor rural households, estimated at about eight million, or 3.9%<sup>1</sup> of rural children, whereas the rural poverty headcount ratio is at 3.1%, as of 2017<sup>2</sup>.

National MODA analysis for children will equip us with a national measure of child poverty to support our advocacy messages and programming priorities. It is now a strategically important momentum for UNICEF China to build a body of evidence which will illustrate the prevalence of child poverty and highlights which groups of children are likely to experience the most serious and overlapping deprivations. Such evidence will support the government to target the worst off and develop multi-sectoral responses, tailored to meet the needs of different populations of children. We are therefore commissioning a study of child poverty analysis in China with the MODA approach, using existing data.

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## 2. Objective (s)

The study is intended to generate evidence for UNICEF's advocacy on child poverty in dialogue with the government, as it sets national poverty, growth and development priorities beyond 2020. Findings can inform the government's 14th Five Year Growth and Development Plan, as well as the new National Programme of Action for Children and poverty alleviation policy. Findings can also be used to inform discussion and decisions about the future strategic direction of UNICEF China's country programme in its new cycle, which will be prepared in 2020.

The **objective** is to obtain 'best estimate' national figures on child poverty, as measured by multiple and overlapping deprivations analysis (MODA), using existing national representative dataset.

In 2014, UNICEF completed and launched an analysis of child poverty using the MODA approach, in four poverty block areas in Hubei Province. The findings have been used to raise awareness of the difference between child poverty and adult poverty and to support the design of integrated poverty reduction programmes in Hubei Province. This has resulted in increased awareness of child poverty among policy makers and academics. The national study will

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<sup>1</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, Poverty Monitoring Report of Rural China, 2018

<sup>2</sup> National Bureau of Statistics. 2017. Statistical Communiqué on the National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (2017). Access: [http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201802/t20180228\\_1585631.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/zxfb/201802/t20180228_1585631.html)

further this previous effort of evidence-based advocacy beyond poverty block areas to the national level.

### 3. Major Tasks, Deliverables & Timeframe

The scope and focus of the study has been determined by a preliminary literature review of available work on child poverty in China (Begum, Deng, & Gustafsson, 2012; Gao, Wu, & Evans, 2015; Qi & Wu, 2014) and expert consultations on what could be learned by applying the MODA approach to publicly available data sets.

So far, studies of child poverty in China have been based on datasets from three large-sample surveys: the China Household Income Project (CHIP), the China Health and Nutrition Survey (CHNS) and the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS). Begum, Deng, and Gustafsson (2012) estimate child poverty rates in China using the CHIP 1988, 1995, and 2002 datasets and the then \$1 per capita per day international poverty line (in 1985 purchasing power parity). They found that the national child poverty rate decreased from 20% in 1988 to 18% in 1995 and 7% in 2002, and child poverty was mainly a rural phenomenon. Qi and Wu (2014) applied a human rights-based multidimensional deprivation approach to measure child poverty and tracked changes from 1989 to 2009 using the CHNS data. They found that child poverty as measured by multidimensional deprivation dropped continuously and significantly from 1989 to 2009; yet, continued to disproportionately affect children in rural areas and the western provinces especially when it comes to income deprivation. Gao, Wu, and Evans (2015) used the CFPS 2010 data to estimate child poverty outcomes and investigate which subgroups were more vulnerable, using the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) indices (Foster, Greer and Thorbecke 1984) to estimate the rate, depth, and severity of child poverty. They found the national child poverty rate to range between 13-22% depending on the poverty line used. Among poor families, those with children were in deeper poverty than those without children. Children living in the western region, and ethnic minority children were found most vulnerable to deprivations.

Our comparison of datasets from the three sample surveys indicated above, show that the CHNS provides the richest data for analysis of child poverty as defined by multiple deprivations, including nutrition, health, child protection, early childhood development, water, sanitation, housing, education and information/participation. Both the CFPS and the CHIP datasets focus on household level data and income and expenditure. Thus, the CHNS data is found to be the most appropriate nationally representative dataset for conducting MODA. While the previous study by Qi and Wu (2014) was based on the CHNS datasets, it covered up to 2009 only. Generating more up-to-date evidence will support the advocacy to prioritize children in China's poverty reduction agenda, as well as to inform relevant policy dialogue. The proposed study aims to produce evidence on the spread, depth and multidimensional features of deprivations experienced by children in China, using the latest CHNS data from 2015. It will apply MODA and analyze the incidence and depth of child poverty, as well as patterns for different socio-economic groups of children.

Main research questions are expected to:

- Estimate the rate and depth of multidimensional child poverty in the sampled regions;
- Describe the characteristics, disparities of child poverty in the sampled regions by geographic region, gender, age, disability, and ethnicity or the other parental and household profiling variables;
- Describe the most severe dimensions of deprivation faced by children in the sampled regions; and
- Map deprivations among children by profiling variables by geographic region, gender, age, disability, and ethnicity or the other profiling variables.

In order to fulfill these purposes, the researcher is expected to **perform a MODA for children, using existing dataset from the 2015 CHNS survey.**

	Tasks	Deliverable	Duration (man-days)	Payment (% of fee)
1.	Finalization of the research proposal based on clarification of the TOR and inputs from UNICEF and an international technical supervisor, including agreed-upon milestones for technical consultations and quality assurance by the international technical supervisor	Research proposal & an agreed-upon plan on milestones for technical consultations and quality assurance by the international technical supervisor (in English)	7 working days in May 2019 <i>Deadline: 15 May 2019</i>	9% Based on invoice
2.	Data analysis and report writing	A draft report (in English)	59 working days from May to September 2019 <i>Deadline: 15 September 2019</i>	79% Based on invoice
3.	Presentation on key findings	Presentation materials (in English and Chinese)	3 working days in October 2019 <i>Deadline: 15 October 2019</i>	4% Based on invoice
4.	Finalization of report	A final report in English and an executive summary (in English and Chinese)	6 working days in October 2019	8% Based on invoice

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The research team will consist of a Chinese national researcher who will perform the core data analysis and report writing, and one international researcher who will serve as a technical supervisor. For deliverables indicated above, the Chinese national researcher will bear primary responsibility while the international researcher will provide technical review and guidance. **Estimated number of days and duration in the table above indicates expected workload of the Chinese national consultant only.**

Complete submission of deliverables as per expected standard and quality as assessed by the contract supervisor is a prerequisite for payment of fees. UNICEF reserves the right to adjust or withhold payments for late deliverables or for deliverables not meeting expected quality.

#### 4. Methodology

The study will apply MODA, establishing dimensions and indicators of child deprivation, based on existing data from the 2015 CHNS. The CHNS is an ongoing open cohort, international collaborative project between the Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the National Institute for Nutrition and Health (NINH, former National Institute of Nutrition and Food Safety) at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDC). The CHNS dataset consists of longitudinal data focusing on health and nutrition conditions of the population. It includes also information on children's wellbeing such as nutrition, health, child protection, early childhood development, water, sanitation, housing, education and information/participation. The 2015 survey draws a sample of 7,319 households with 20,914 individuals in 360 communities of 15 provinces and municipal cities. The participating provinces and cities vary substantially in geography, economic development, public resources, and health indicators.

The CHNS dataset will permit the analysis of multidimensional child poverty to be disaggregated geographically and along sociodemographic characteristics. The following nine dimensions will be tentatively selected: nutrition, health, child protection, water, sanitation, housing, early childhood development, education, and information/participation. The analysis will pay attention to disparities and risks for child poverty based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability and other profiling variables, or the intersectionality of these factors, where the CHNS 2015 data permits. The study is expected to fill the critical gap in up-to-date knowledge about the spread, depth, characteristics and disparities of child poverty in China.

By a research proposal, the research team shall submit a plan, detailing the specific methods they propose to use to determine dimensions of deprivation, indicators, thresholds, and age groups as well as other profiling variables such as gender, which can be used for data analysis. UNICEF will use this plan to ensure the study's quality is up to UNICEF's standards.

The study will adhere to the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2014).

- The analysis and findings will give attention to gender and equity by presenting data that are disaggregated (e.g., age, sex, rural/urban, and ethnicity etc.). Wherever the data allows, the analysis will also account for gender differences in the experience of child poverty across regions, ethnic and socio-economic groups.
- The study will use dataset collected through the CHNS survey in 2015. No primary data collection will be involved in this study. The research team will adhere to CHNS data utilization and ethical requirements.
- The Carolina Population Center (CPC), which manages the CHNS datasets, will only provide any third-party research team with identifiers for community IDs in the CHNS datasets. According to the IRB rules, CPC is not allowed to release city/county names or locations - such identification can only be performed by CPC on behalf of a third party per request, which means it is unlikely that the research team will be exposed to any privacy information that could be linked to specific individual respondents.
- The study is solely funded by UNICEF. There is no conflict of interest known or foreseen.

## 5. Timeframe

Below is a tentative work plan and timeframe. The actual work plan can be adjusted based on the discussion and agreement between UNICEF China and the consultant.

<i>Quarter/Year</i>	<b>Q1/2019</b>			<b>Q2/2019</b>			<b>Q3/2019</b>			<b>Q4/2019</b>		
<i>Month</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
Bidding/LTA process												
Contract issuing												
Finalization of research proposal												
Data analysis and report writing												
Review by reference group												
Presentation on the study and findings												
Report finalization												

## 6. Supervision

The assignment will be overseen by the Social Policy Specialist, and work in close cooperation with other relevant colleagues at UNICEF China.

## 7. Consultancy Requirements

### Qualifications for the Chinese national consultant:

- Doctoral degree in social sciences;
  - Proven research experience in quantitative research/statistical analysis, and expertise in different methodologies for child poverty analysis;
  - Familiarity with the CHNS dataset a strong asset;
  - Ability to use data analysis to examine equity issues related to gender and other forms of social identify in relation to (child) poverty a desired asset;
  - Track record of performing relevant research in China with sensitivity to local contexts;
  - Good academic writing and analytical skills;
  - Proficient in academic writing and presentation with English;
  - A team-worker and willing to work with the international technical supervisor.
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