

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

Title:	Qualitative research on perceptions and experiences of children and adolescents with marketing of unhealthy foods in the school environment
Duration:	9 months
Estimated Start Date:	April 2024
Duty Station:	Jamaica
Reporting to:	Novia Condell, Health Specialist, UNICEF Jamaica

BACKGROUND & ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Adequate nutrition during the childhood and adolescent years is essential for optimum growth, development, health and wellbeing. However, Jamaican children face a double burden of under- and over-nutrition in children. 6% of children under 5 are chronically malnourished and 8% are overweight with the prevalence increasing exponentially to 30% as they grow into the adolescent years. The consequences of childhood overweight and obesity are both short and long term. These include negative effects on children’s educational attainment, physical, social and emotional health and development, and increased risk for early onset of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), the leading cause of death and disability in Jamaica.

UNICEF, the WHO, and other leading global organizations have highlighted pervasive marketing of unhealthy foods to children as a significant risk factor for childhood obesity. Children have limited ability to understand the persuasive intent of marketing and advertising of these foods and beverages. As children become more exposed to marketing and advertising, research continues to emerge showing the effects of advertising on children, in particular the influences on children’s food preferences, purchase requests, consumption patterns and potential impact on their cognitive development. UNICEF’s Child Rights-Based Approach to Food Marketing highlights the growing recognition of food marketing as an ethical and children’s rights concern impacting several of the rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, inclusive of the right to health, the right to adequate nutritious food and the right to life, survival and development.

Marketing of foods that contribute to unhealthy diets are usually prevalent in settings where children gather such as schools. Preliminary research findings from the JAMBAR Kids Study conducted by the Caribbean Institute for Health Research (CAIHR), UWI highlight several forms of marketing in Jamaican schools. However, there is limited research in Jamaica on children’s perception of, and experiences with, food marketing in their school environment. Gaps in the body of evidence around marketing of unhealthy foods to children include the need for qualitative data and use of child appropriate study methodologies.

UNICEF Jamaica’s Country Programme 2022-2026 aims to strengthen Jamaica’s policy, legal and programming environment for improved child and adolescent nutrition through evidence-based advocacy and capacity building. In executing these strategies, the Country Office seeks to ensure that programmes and interventions are informed by compelling available evidence. As such, UNICEF is seeking a consultant to conduct in-depth qualitative research and analysis to better understand how children view, perceive and experience marketing of unhealthy foods in the school environment. Findings can also support the implementation of evidence-based food policies including a comprehensive National School Nutrition Policy which will protect the right to health and support good educational outcomes by ensuring adequate and equal access to healthy food for all students.

PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT

The overall objective of this consultancy is to conduct research to inform policy level decision making and targeted programmatic action to improve the food and nutrition environment for children in Jamaica.

The consultant will conduct a qualitative child-centered study comprising of a series of focus group discussions and/or in-depth interviews to provide insight on the perceptions and experiences of children with marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages in Jamaican schools. Specifically, the study will explore the marketing landscape in schools, children’s attitudes and perceptions to marketing and its influence in on their diet preferences, with emphasis on:

- Direct marketing of unhealthy products to children through sponsorships and donations
- Use of advertising material in and around the school environment

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The expected duties and responsibilities of this consultancy are as follows:

1. Develop a detailed workplan of activities with a projected timeline for successful completion of the assignment.
2. Conduct a literature review of similar research (Jamaica, Caribbean and other regions).
3. Submit the following to UNICEF Jamaica for approval:
 - a. research design, including research questions, conceptual framework, child-centered/participatory methodology, sample selection, ethical aspects and data analysis techniques
 - b. research ethics submission documents (<https://www.healthmedialabirb.com/unicef>)
 - c. the assessment instruments/discussion guides to be used
4. Coordinate and conduct a minimum of eighteen (18) focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews with adequate representation of boys and girls aged 8 – 16 (primary school children aged 8-12 and secondary school children 13-16) in urban and rural areas across the country. Each focus group should have no more than 6 participants.
5. Prepare preliminary and final reports to detail and provide an analysis of the FGDs and interviews. This report should include key findings, recommendations and critical areas to be addressed in nutrition advocacy and programme design, as well as possible areas for further research.
6. Prepare a Power Point Presentation with the main findings and recommendations emanating from the research. Participate in at least one stakeholder review workshop and one research disseminating workshop.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Deliverables	Deliverable Date	Percentage Payment
Workplan, methodology & desk review Report	19/4/2024	15%
Research design, instruments and ethics submission document	26/4/2024	20%
Research/data collection (26/5/2024- 13/12/2024)		
Preliminary Report	13/12/2024	30%
Final Report & Presentation	17/1/2025	35%

Minimum Requirements and Qualifications of researcher (s)	
Education	Advanced university/Master's degree in public health, nutrition, public health nutrition or similar disciplines
Work Experience	A minimum of five years work experience in the qualitative research field. Experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis and behavioural/child-centred research. Previous experience in the health/education sector will be an advantage.
Languages	Fluency in English is required <i>*Please note language levels used in UNICEF are fluent, proficient, intermediate, and basic.</i>
Technical knowledge	Technical knowledge of the food and nutrition environment and nutritional issues facing children and adolescents in Jamaica. Knowledge of and experience in using research findings to inform health & nutrition advocacy and programme strategies.

Other skills and attributes	<p>Ability to produce clear, succinct reports and recommendations, excellent analytical and written communication skills.</p> <p>Demonstrated experience in UNICEF will be an asset</p>
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- All applications will be evaluated based on 75 points for technical - (knowledge /expertise /skills) and 25 points for financial submissions.

Child Safeguarding	
Is this project/assignment considered as " Elevated Risk Role " from a child safeguarding perspective?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<i>If yes, check all that apply</i>
Direct Contact Role	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:
The researcher will engage with children in focus group discussions. This will entail at most 2 hours contact time with participants. Consent will be secured from parents of adolescents under 18 years of age for their participation prior to the FGDs. Assent will be secured from the adolescents under 18 years of age prior to the FGDs.	
Study methodology and questionnaires will be submitted for an independent ethical review.	
Child Data Role	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):
Personal-identifiable information, including children's names, identification and address will not be recorded, manipulated or transmitted. Questionnaires will be coded to ensure confidentiality of respondents.	
More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates	

Budget/ costs indicated are estimated. Final rate shall follow the "best value for money" principle, i.e., achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee. Consultants will be asked to stipulate all-inclusive fees, including lump sum travel and subsistence costs, as applicable.

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 contractor.

Individuals engaged under a consultancy will not be considered staff members under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF's policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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.

Travel will be covered by UNICEF as per policy.

- Travel costs will be estimated and added to the contract once they are determined based on UNICEF Financial Rules and Regulations.
- For agreed country visits, the contractor/consultant will be responsible in administering their own travel. UNICEF will reimburse travel related expenses based on actual costs or on the below criteria whichever is lower and upon presentation of receipts.
- Any travel involved should be budgeted according to UN Travel Standards as a ceiling.
- [UN Secretariat Administrative Instruction on Official Travel, ST/AI/2013/3](#): Sect. 4, para. 4.2, numerals (d) and (e)

For information on Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), can be found on the [International Civil Service Commission website](#) (all countries and destinations can be found by navigating on the

