

UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti

Terms of Reference

Consultancy for Education Research Associate (Sport for Development)

Education Unit

1. Background:

The Office of Research-Innocenti (OoR-Innocenti) is the dedicated research office of UNICEF. It undertakes and commissions research on emerging or current issues of relevance for children in order to inform the strategic directions, policies and programmes of UNICEF and its partners. The Office explores emerging issues, identifies research gaps, brings together existing researchers, and supports or undertakes research and data collection to address critical questions and to inform global debates.

Every Child has the right to learn. However, the gap between what education systems are providing in terms of learning achievements, and what children, communities and economies need, is growing. The breadth and depth of this learning crisis provides the greatest global challenge to preparing children and adolescents for life, work and active citizenship. UNICEF vision for education is that 'every child learns', articulated in the 2019-2030 Education Strategy across three inter-related goals: (i) equitable access to learning opportunities; (ii) improved learning and skills for all; (iii) improved learning and protection for children in emergencies and transitions. The generation and use of research and robust evidence are key for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Education Strategy and the UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 as reflected in the Priorities for research and data in support of UNICEF's Strategic Plan – Using the power of evidence to drive change for children.

Sport for development (S4D) refers to the use of sport, or any a form of physical activity, to provide both children and adults with the opportunity to achieve their full potential through initiatives that promote personal and social development. The international evidence-base on child-focused S4D supports the important role sport can play in improving the lives of children around the world, especially the most marginalised, regarding education, social inclusion, child protection and empowerment. However, there are still significant evidence gaps on how S4D programmes and stakeholders across different policy domains can help further support short-term outcomes and longer-term objectives, such as the achievements of defence of the rights of the child and child-focused SDGs.

In 2006, Barcelona Football Club (FC Barcelona) and the Barça Foundation signed a pioneering partnership with UNICEF. The partners' focus is to improve children's lives through sport, play and protection. In 2018, in collaboration with the Barca Foundation, UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti launched a research project that aims to understand and build the global evidence base for advocacy, policy and practice on the use of sport in fulfilling children's development and overall well-being through S4D programmes. The research programme is now starting a Phase 2.

2. Objective(s):

The Office aims to strengthen its capacity to deliver the production and use of high-quality research about child-focused S4D programmes. The consultant will coordinate and support the design and implementation of the S4D research portfolio. The consultant will work with S4D partners (Barça Foundation and others), colleagues in the Office of Research-Innocenti, Headquarters, Regional and Country offices to build on the existing research and to develop new ones. The role will also involve fostering the development of new partnerships and mobilizing resources for the generation of research and data on S4D and their utilization by decision and policy makers at country level.

3. Specific activities to be completed to achieve the objectives:

In order to achieve the objectives above, the consultant will perform the following activities:

a. Implementation and management of research on S4D (60%)

- Plan and coordinate research on the mapping, implementation modalities, effectiveness and efficiency of child-focused S4D programmes.
- Implement the phase 2 of the S4D research programme, including carrying out quantitative and qualitative data quality assurance and analysis
- Coordinate the implementation with other consultants and enumerators at country level

b. Partnerships, resource mobilization and knowledge exchange on S4D (20%)

- Establish and maintain partnerships and participate in networks of researchers, policymakers and practitioners in the area of S4D.
- Develop proposals and mobilize resources to support S4D research and its use; maintain and strengthen donor networks through routine communications and reporting; support the monitoring of the portfolio of S4D research
- Serve in advisory groups for S4D research
- Prepare inputs and act as UNICEF resource person in relevant conferences, workshops and meetings, including for dissemination of key research outcomes for effective use at country level

c. Technical guidance and support to UNICEF Headquarters, Regional and Country Offices, Governments and Implementing partners (15%)

- Provide guidance and quality assurance on S4D research design to UNICEF field offices and Governments
- Strengthen the capacity of UNICEF field offices and Government counterparts for co-creation design of research and evaluation in the area of S4D
- Strengthen and support the use of S4D research and evaluation findings for policy dialogue and capacity strengthening of Government and Implementing partners at country level.

d. Contribution to the Office of Research-Innocenti education work programme and support to the cross-cutting research agenda (5%)

- Contribute to the overall research activities of the Office and to the use of their findings by policy and decision makers at country level.
- Support the development of proposals and contribute to fundraising for education research and evidence building.

4. Specific outputs/products/results with specific delivery dates:

Specific outputs and delivery dates are as follows:

Deliverables	Estimated number of days	Deliverable deadline
Three country pilot studies for the Phase 2 of the S4D research programme	55	
Seven country case studies for the Phase 2 of the S4D research programme	85	
Co-creation workshop with Barca Foundation and other partners on the S4D research programme; and annual report (covering mid-2019 to mid-2020)	20	
S4D Phase 2 synthesis reports (full draft and summary)	60	
Coordination of the Partnerships, resource mobilization and knowledge exchange on S4D	10	

5. Qualifications and/or specialized knowledge/experience required and desirable for undertaking the assignment:

- Advanced university degree in social policy, economics, education, statistics or related social sciences.
- A minimum of five years of progressively responsible professional work experience at national or international levels in research in the area of education or related field, with developing country level experience essential;
- Demonstrated experience in social sector policies/projects; Experience in programmes on S4D or sports an asset;
- Demonstrated experience in both quantitative and qualitative research projects, methods and analysis, including knowledge and experience in advanced statistical software packages;
- Demonstrated experience in resource mobilization;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Demonstrated ability to work well as part of a team and to forge and manage partnerships; Commitment to UNICEF's core values of care, respect, integrity, transparency and accountability;
- Ability to work in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment. Experience working in the UN or other international development organization an asset.
- Fluency in English required; Fluency in Spanish an asset; Fluency in Portuguese an asset;

6. Duration of the consultancy:

The consultant will work full-time over a period of 11.5 months (total of 230 working days between mid-January and End of December 2020).

7. Supervision and work arrangements:

The consultant will be based in the Education Unit at UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti (Florence, Italy) and will report to the Chief, Education Research. The consultant will work closely with the other Innocenti staff and consultants from the education and other units. The consultant will travel to S4D research programme countries and to S4D events as required for quality implementation of the activities.