

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR LOCAL CONSULTANCY

Senior Expert for a Feasibility Analysis of the National School Management and Governance Approaches

Individual Consultant is expected to perform this assignment remotely (home based) with possible field missions as required.

Duty Station: Yerevan, Armenia

Supervisor: Education Specialist, Education Officer (GPE), Team Leader

Time-frame: from early June to later November (approx. 6 months)

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

The aim of the assignment is to support improvement of Armenia's national school leadership system through comprehensive system analysis and policy recommendations. Under this assignment, the Senior Expert, working within a team of dedicated experts composed of one Senior and two Junior Experts and guided by Team Leader, will be responsible for collecting the data and analyzing Armenia's school management and governance practices to generate evidence-based policy recommendations for improvement of the school management and governance system in Armenia. This assessment envisages both secondary review of existing data, desk-research and, optionally, primary data collection/analysis.

These activities will contribute to the SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) Target 4.1. which requires states to "that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes." At the global level, the agenda around the SDG 4 to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030, has reinforced a focus on learning assessment to gain data on learning that allow to establish and monitor education quality and learning progress.

A feasibility analysis of National School Management and Governance approaches and stakeholder inclinations towards these approaches shall be implemented to identify academic-literature-driven, optimal (efficient and effective) and context-responsive policies which foster school autonomy and accountability. The specific objectives under this assignment include:

1. A secondary analysis of existing research and policy documentation to map the issues and improvement recommendations connected to the existing National School Management and Governance approaches;
2. Cross-case analysis of existing in the country private schools', preschool clusters', participative schools' and other governance models to identify alternative approaches;
3. Critical review of advanced international theory and practice to identify optimal school governance approaches and policies for feasibility analysis in the local context.

Key stakeholders of the assignment are the government line ministries, namely the Ministries of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MoTAI), Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MoESCS), sub-national and local authorities, UNICEF, EU and dedicated CSOs.

The knowledge generated by the study should be used by UNICEF Armenia to inform and amplify its future activities and projects in the country and will also be used by other national stakeholders to further refine the quality, cohesiveness and timeliness of policies in the field of general education.

Scope of Work:

Context

Improved school leadership is foundational in achieving the target 4 of the Education 2030 Agenda via building safe, non-violent, inclusive, and equitable learning environments; propelling the schools towards equitable and quality education for all; eliminating gender disparities and allowing equal access to education for all vulnerable populations. International research indicates that school leadership (both on top and middle level) has strong impact on student learning outcomes. School leadership systems can be broadly defined as sets of policies, practices and structures that define how school leadership is formed, what role it plays, how school leaders are initially and continuously educated, recruited, evaluated, how the broader system governance interacts with individual school leadership.

School leadership reform in Armenia started in 1997 via the World Bank (WB) Education Financing and Management Reform Project (EFMR). The reforms focused on restructuring and decentralizing the education management system, introducing per capita funding (replacing the existing per-class system) and policies to provide schools with more autonomy and agency. By 2005, all schools had their budgets based on per pupil funding. Training of school principals and board members in school financial-economic issues, management and leadership started under the WB EFMR project and continued under the Education Quality and Relevance (EQR) project. Trainings included additional modules in accordance with the main directions of reforms including the following topics: new subject standards and syllabi; new assessment principles; and new student-centered teaching methods and introduction of ICT. The second phase of EQR also included training of principals in designing and implementing school development plans. In line with these reforms Armenia introduced policies and regulations, primarily via the Law on General Education, decrees by the Government and the Ministry, on forming of school boards, election, training, and attestation of principals.

In 2021 the Government approved Armenia's new National Curriculum, to implement the provisions of which in full, the MoESCS jointly with the newly established National Center for Educational Development and Innovation (NCEDI) intends to review school leadership system in Armenia.

Responsibilities in the Team

The Senior Expert will be responsible for contributing to the development and planning of the work of technical working group composed of one Senior and two Junior Experts to be supervised by the Team Leader, with full set of reporting documents adhering to UNICEF quality assurance standards being developed and submitted in a timely manner.

The Consultant will be administering collection of primary data, its duly recording, analysis and reporting, Key expert and key informant interviews (KEI, KII) with assistance of Junior Experts. The Consultant should support the team in database processing, data management and tabulation, if any. Along with the Team Leader, s/he will also be tasked with participating in regular consultations with main stakeholders, such as members of the Local Education Group, MESCS, NCET, NATC, NCEDI, and other agencies as deemed necessary, as well preparing short memos and presentations for such meetings. S/he will also be responsible for initial preparation of all draft reports, based on the inputs received from Junior Experts.

UNICEF will organize thematic orientation sessions and consultations. This assignment is within the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Education Sector Development Programme Grant-a joint UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports initiative to be implemented during 2021-2022.

Methodology

The study methodology shall be primarily based on the analysis of secondary data, including existing research and policy documentation, as well as cross-case analysis of governance practices of school and pre-school institutions in order to identify gaps within the system and propose targeted and both theory-driven and empirically proven solutions to each of these challenges. The latter should be well-grounded in advanced international theory and practice. The team would be allowed to carry out key expert and key informant interviews (KEI, KII) in order to reinforce the cross-case and other analysis.

The detailed methodology allowing for collection of all required information with detailed sampling strategy, study instruments and analytical approach should be developed by the Team at the end of the inception phase and submitted to UNICEF in a form of a Study Protocol for approval and quality assurance.

The final reports should incorporate the main learnings from all stages and provide concrete and accurate policy solutions for the MoESCS to pursue. More information on the technical requirements for each report will be provided to successful candidates.

Ethical Considerations

The assessment approach and data collection and analysis methods should focus on gender and human rights aspects, be responsive and appropriate for analyzing the gender equality, human rights issues, including child rights issues. Gender equality, equity and human rights considerations will be further elaborated by the Consultant and the Team during the inception phase and addressed across the final reports. Ethical dimensions should be taken into consideration by the Team, discussed and measures taken to ensure those. More specifically, prior to conducting interviews the respondents' informed consent should be ensured, age-appropriate language and approaches to data collection involving children should be used. The anonymity and confidentiality of individual data will be protected, and ethical guidelines will be followed as set out by United Nations (UN) Evaluation Group in its standards and norms. Adherence to the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis¹, Strategic Guidance Note on Institutionalizing Ethical Practice for UNICEF Research² and Technical note on Children Participating in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation³ should be ensured by the team.

¹ See UNICEF Procedure for Quality Assurance in Research CF/PD/DRP/2015-002 https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

² See Strategic Guidance Note on Institutionalizing Ethical Practice for UNICEF Research

³ See Children Participating in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

Work Assignment Overview			
Tasks/Milestone:	Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeline	Estimate Budget
Inception Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support in desk researching and secondary review of data; - Support the Team Leader to develop the Study Protocol, with basic literature review, detailed methodology; - Adjustments of the methodology as per guidance and comments from UNICEF. 	Study Protocol for the inception phase and fieldwork plan in English with detailed implementation plan and methodology	First half of June, 2021	
Fieldwork Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure pretesting and finalization of the instruments based on the methodology developed by the study team; - Comprehensive literature review; - Collecting qualitative data through remote KEI/KIIs; - Data transcription and analysis, including cross-case and other comparative analysis ; - Debriefing meeting for UNICEF Armenia on the preliminary findings, testing elements of conclusions. 	Comprehensive literature review in Armenian and English (no more than 20 pages) Brief report and validation workshop on desk review and secondary data Documentation of fieldwork implementation, including the full transcripts/audio-files of KEI/KIIs	End of August, 2021	
Analysis and Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data further analytics; - Inputs in development of the draft report for UNICEF Armenia review. The contents of the report should be developed based on feedback provided after testing and analysis phase of the assignment. - Support in the development of the final report. 	Draft reports in English and Armenian Final reports in English and Armenian with recommendations (up to 50 pages, excluding annexes) and an Executive Summary	September, 2021 November, 2021	

<p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p>Enter Disciplines</p> <p>Advanced university degree in Education, Sociology, Economics, Public Policy, Social Policy or a related field. A PhD degree would be a strong asset.</p>	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 years of documented experience in education (preferably at least 2 years in either research or development of principal or teacher education programs/policies); with solid knowledge of international research practice in the field of early school leadership; as well as of Armenia's national school leadership system; • Extensive experience in designing research projects, studies, evaluations and surveys, data analysis and report writing (both in Armenian and in English; links to published research and analytical documents relevant to the TOR to be provided). • No less than 5 years' experience in qualitative interviewing. • Data management and processing skills through application of SPSS, STATA or other relevant packages. • Proven ability of working in teams and expert groups as well as of working in international and multicultural environments. • Very good communication and presentation skills with government and international organizations. • Fluency in written and spoken English. • Previous experience in working with UN agencies will be an asset.
<p>Terms of the application:</p> <p>The deadline for the submission of applications is May 30. Applications should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover letter; • CV; • Financial Proposal; • Published research and analytical documents relevant to the TOR; • Examples of published work (paper, abstract, proceedings) in top international conferences and SCOPUS-indexed high-quality journals will be an asset. <p>All qualified applicants should apply online, using the UNICEF E-Recruitment system and following the online application link. Incomplete applications will not be considered.</p> <p>Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract 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.</p>	