

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INTERNATIONAL INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT

Title: Foundational Learning Specialist	Funding Code: Grant: WBS:	Type of Engagement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultant (International) <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant (National)	Duty Station: Hybrid
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Background:

Since 2018, Sierra Leone has made concerted efforts to improve access to and quality of education for all children, with an emphasis on the most marginalized and early years learners. However, the country still faces challenges to fully strengthen and transform the system to improve foundational learning outcomes for all.

The Government has therefore identified Delivering the Foundations of Learning for All as the priority reform that will be achieved through education system transformation in the country. Foundational learning is defined as basic literacy, numeracy, and transferable skills, such as socio-emotional skills that provide the fundamental building blocks for all other learning, knowledge, and higher-order skills. Efforts to achieve this transformation will focus on pedagogical solutions and innovations in pre-primary and the first four years of primary school, supported by transversal data and governance reforms. While all levels of education will require strengthening to support the country's growth and human development, substantial investments in foundational years will ensure that young children develop key literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills to prepare them for future success in school and work.

Pre-primary education has been recognized as a critical - and cost-effective way to promote social equality, improve learning outcomes at later ages, and advance countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education, Target 4.2 specifically states that countries should ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Purpose and Objectives:

It is against this background that UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Teaching Service Commission (TSC), seeks to hire an international consultant to support the development of the school readiness framework and the revision of the pre-primary instructional core package. The instructional core package comprises the curriculum, learning outcome, targets/minimum learning competencies, teaching, learning, and assessment materials. The consultant will also develop a detailed teaching schedule, sample lesson plans and learning material for children. In conducting their duties, the consultant will also support the MBSSE and the TSC in reviewing the document on lessons learned and best practices in pre-primary education.

The objectives of this assignment are:

1. To guide and support a national early childhood education (ECE) technical team of experts to be established for the development of the pre-primary instructional core package.
2. To review and develop an instructional core package on foundational learning for pre-primary.
3. To develop training content/modules for the training of pre-primary teachers, head teachers, school quality assurance officers and teacher training institution instructors on pre-primary instructional core packages.

Methodology and Technical Approach:

The International Consultant, will:

1. Develop the road map for this work in agreement with UNICEF, MBSSE and the TSC.
2. With the support of the national consultant, review the document on lessons learned and best practices to be developed by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE).
3. Review existing curriculum materials and teaching and learning materials including, but not limited to, the early childhood care and education (ECCE) curriculum, ECCE curriculum guide, early childhood development (ECD) picture books, learning through play pre-school teacher training guide and participant handbook, play based early stimulation (0-2) training guide and ECE curriculum posters.
4. Conduct in-depth interviews with key stakeholders at national and sub-national levels regarding the existing and desired instructional core packages.
5. Based on the above insights and findings from the interviews, conduct a national SWOT analysis of existing instructional core packages.
6. Develop a pre-primary/school readiness curriculum framework.
7. Conduct and facilitate workshops with the MBSSE, TSC, ECE technical working group, and the group of experts on pre-primary curriculum development geared towards the development of the instructional core packages for pre-primary.
8. Develop instructional core package, teaching and learning materials, and associated presentation materials for discussion with ECE Technical Working Group members, the MBSSE, the TSC and national stakeholders.
9. Pilot the developed TLMs.
10. Finalise and validate the instructional materials based on the results of the pilot and feedback and input from key stakeholders.
11. Develop and/or adapt training guides for the training of teachers, head teachers, SQAOs and TTI instructors.
12. Support the delivery of training to master trainers, head teachers, and SQAOs on the new pre-primary curriculum package.

Specific Tasks:

1. Lead in reviewing the lessons learned and best practices in pre-primary education report.
2. Assist the MBSSE and TSC in setting up the National ECE Technical Team:
 - Provide suggestions for key local participants for the National Technical Team dedicated to pre-primary teaching and learning.
3. Kick-off event preparation and delivery:
 - Support the MBSSE and TSC in preparing and delivering the kick-off event titled "Improving pre-primary Education for All."
4. Capacity Building for the National Technical Team:
 - Guide in contextualizing the science of teaching and learning in pre-primary for the development of pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, socio-emotional, and motor skills.
5. Stocktaking Exercise:
 - Support the development and conduct of a stocktaking exercise to review existing pre-primary instructional materials in Sierra Leone developed with support from key partners.
6. Definition of age and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning and scope:

- Contextualize expected learning outcomes and scope and sequence for pre-primary teaching and learning on the existing curriculum towards play-based learning/ learning through play approach.
7. Development of children’s story books, picture books, and workbooks:
 - Lead in creating models of play based lessons.
 - Lead in piloting the new curriculum package and document the feedback to feed finalization.
 - Collaborate on developing final versions for nationwide implementation.
 8. Preparation/Revision of complementary/supplementary materials:
 - Preparing or revising complementary/supplementary play and learning materials, including posters, charts and manipulatives for pre-literacy and pre-numeracy development.
 9. Support the training of master trainers, head teachers, and SQAOs on the new pre-primary curriculum package.

Management, Organization and Timeframe:

The consultant will work under the overall guidance and oversight of the UNICEF GPE coordinator and UNICEF ECD Specialist. In delivering the tasks, s/he will work in close coordination with the ECD Unit of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education and the Teaching Service Commission. The consultant will operate from home with travels to Freetown as required. Travels to the field (districts) are expected to pilot the new instruction package and training of master trainers. The timing and location of the workshops will be determined by the consultants, UNICEF, MBBSE and TSC and reported in the road map.

Child Safeguarding

Is this project/assignment considered as “Elevated Risk Role” from a child safeguarding perspective?

YES NO If YES, check all that apply:

Direct contact role YES 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:

Child data role YES 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):

More information is available in the Child Safeguarding SharePoint and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates

Work Assignment Overview			
Tasks/Milestone:	Deliverables/Outputs:	Timeline:	Payment schedule: Payment on acceptance of deliverables
Arrival of consultant /start date of consultancy		15 April 2024	
1) Submit inception report/ detail work plan and road map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work plan and road map submitted. 	20 April 2024	Deliverable -1 (20% payment)
2) Assist in setting up the national technical team: Provide suggestions for key local participants for the national technical team dedicated to pre-primary teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National technical team list and the first meeting held. 	20 April	
3) Assist in reviewing the lessons learned and best practices in pre-primary education report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lessons learned and best practices in pre-primary education report. 	25 April 2024	
4) Kick-off event preparation and delivery: Support the MBSSE and TSC in preparing for regional consultations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional and district level consultations held. 	25 April 2024	
5) Capacity building workshop for the national core writing team: Assist in contextualizing the science of teaching and learning in pre-primary for holistic development of the child including pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, socio-emotional and physical/motor skills to the Sierra Leonean context, facilitating the development of teaching, and learning materials for pre-primary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national core writing Team understands their roles and commences work on developing contextualised TLM. 	27 April 2024	
6) Stocktaking Exercise: Support the development and conduct of a stocktaking exercise to review existing pre-primary instructional materials in Sierra Leone, developed with support from key partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inventory of existing pre-primary instructional materials established. 	30 April 2024	
7) Definition of age and developmentally appropriate teaching and learning and scope: Contextualize expected learning outcomes and scope and sequence for pre-primary teaching and learning on the existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning outcomes defined in line with the ECCE Curriculum. 	30 May 2024	

curriculum towards play-based learning/ learning through play.			
8) Development of pre-primary/ school readiness curriculum framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-primary/school readiness curriculum framework developed. 	30 May 2024	Deliverable -2 (30% payment)
9) Development of children's story and picture books and workbooks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in creating models of play based lessons. Lead in piloting the new curriculum package and document the results. Collaborate on developing final versions of teacher and child workbooks for nationwide implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and child workbooks, model play based lessons developed and piloted in selected schools. Final version of teacher and child workbooks for nationwide use. 	30 June 2024	
10) Preparing and/or revising complementary/ supplementary play and learning materials, including posters, charts for pre-literacy and pre-numeracy development, and manipulatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplementary materials including posters, charts and manipulatives developed. 	15 July 2024	Deliverable -3 (25% payment)
11) Development and/or revision of teacher training manuals and teachers' handbooks/guide to align with the instructional core packages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training manuals and handbook developed and pre-tested. 	30 July 2024	
12) Support training of master trainers, teachers and Head teachers on the pre-primary instructional core packages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of 6,120 preschool teachers and 2,827 Head Teachers on the packages conducted. 	30 August 2024	Deliverable -4 (25% payment)
13) Submit final report on work done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report submitted and feedback provided. 	30 Sept 2024	

* Expected timelines for completion are estimated and may vary depending on progress

Budget Year: 2024	Requesting Section/Issuing Office: Education Section	Reasons why work cannot be done by staff: GPE Multiplier grant is currently in its first year of implementation. Within the first half of 2024 there is relevant groundwork to be finalized to ensure a smooth implementation of the activities for the remainder of the programme. The development of pre-primary instructional material requires dedicated technical expertise to work with MBSSE and TSC for at least 90 working days within 6 months to deliver expected results by September/October 2024.	
Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, please justify:			
Consultant Sourcing: <input type="checkbox"/> National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International Both <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant Selection Method: <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive Selection (Roster) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk Review/Interview)		Request for: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Consultancy <input type="checkbox"/> Extension/ Amendment	
If Extension, Justification for extension: N/A			
Supervisor: Education Specialist, GPE/ECD	Start Date: 15th April 2024	End Date: 14th October 2024	Number of Days (working): 90 days

Estimated Consultancy Fee			
DSA for 34 days (when consultant should be in Freetown at different times)			
Travel International			
Travel Local (please include travel plan)			
Residency Permit Costs/Visa fee			
DSA (local travels)			
Total Estimated Consultancy Costs			
<p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p>Advanced university degree (Masters, PhD) in Education, Psychology, Sociology, or related social science fields in the disciplines of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education • Curriculum Development • Learning Assessment 	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of five years of professional experience in the field of early childhood education, curriculum development, and early learning assessment. • Strong technical expertise in pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, socio-emotional and play based learning. • Strong interpersonal skills • Excellent planning, designing, and coordination skills in the development of the instructional core package. • Fluency in written and spoken English. • Strong data analysis skills • Understanding of technology platforms and their use for learning and training • Ability to engage with a wide range of people, including government partners, academic centers, formal and informal networks, NGOs/CSOs, and technical experts if required to collate all relevant information. 		
<p>Administrative details:</p> <p>Visa assistance required: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Transportation arranged by the office: <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Home Based: <input type="checkbox"/> Office Based: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If office based, seating arrangement identified: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>IT and Communication equipment required: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Internet access required: <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
Request Authorised by Section Head,	Request Verified by HR:		

Endorsed by Deputy Representative, Programme:	Approved by Representative
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ⁱ 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 consultant.

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.

The selected candidate is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations, or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.

UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.