United Nations Children's Fund

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

Title:	Funding Code	Type of engagement	Duty Station:
Technical assistance to support analysis of Out-of-school Children in Guyana	**Education Thematic Funds**	☒ Consultant ☐ Individual Contractor Part-Time ☐ Individual Contractor Full-Time	**Georgetown, Guyana**

Background/Context

Children who do not attend school are among the most vulnerable and hard to reach in the world. They may come from the poorest households, have to work to help support their families and live in remote areas with poor access to government services. They may face discrimination as ethnic minorities or live with disabilities, and may often be girls but also boys in other contexts.[1]

In 2010, UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistic (UIS) launched the global initiative on Out-of-school Children (OOSCI) to develop profiles of these excluded children, link quantitative data with socio-cultural barriers and identify policies to address patterns of exclusion.

The OOSCI focuses on children out of school as well as those at risk of dropping out, over a wide age range. To help distinguish distinct groups of children for analysis and policy support, it uses a dimensions of exclusion framework, where each group of children is represented by a particular dimension. In line with the SDG 4 commitment to achieve universal primary and secondary education, the OOSCI dimensions of exclusion model has been expanded in 2023. It is now called the Seven Dimensions of Exclusion (7DE) and includes two dimensions relating to youth of upper secondary age. This model presents the key groups of children, adolescents and youth for OOSCI analysis and interventions:

- DE1 Children aged one year younger than official primary school entrance age who are not enrolled in early childhood education (including pre-primary) or primary school.
- DE2 Primary school aged children who are not enrolled in school, regardless of the level.
- DE3 Lower secondary aged adolescents who are not enrolled in school, regardless of the level.
- DE6 Upper secondary aged youth who are not enrolled in school, regardless of the level.
- DE4 Primary school students who are at risk of dropping out before completing the level or of not continuing to lower secondary.
- DE5 Low secondary students who are at risk of dropping out before completing the level or of not continuing to upper secondary.
- DE7 Upper secondary students who are at risk of dropping out before completing the level.

These dimensions represent the intersection of two different population groups (children who are out of school, and those who are in school but at risk of dropping out) with four levels of education (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). The term 'exclusion' has a slightly different meaning depending on the population concerned: children who are out of school are excluded from education, while children who are at risk of dropping out may be excluded within education because they are not attaining expected learning outcomes and minimum proficiency levels, or they may face discriminatory practices or attitudes within the school (push factors). Of course, children at risk of dropout may also face external pressures to leave school early (pull factors). [2]

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[1] For further background information, see the OOSCI's webpage: www.allinschool.org

[2] Operational Manual, Global Out-Of-School Children Initiative 2023.

A more recent dynamic into the exclusion of children from educational opportunities is the COVID-19 Pandemic, which began in late 2019 and spread globally in 2020, has had unprecedented impacts on education systems worldwide. Governments around the globe swiftly closed schools to curb the spread of this virus; education faced disruptions on a scale never seen before. As per UNESCO data, at the height of the pandemic, over 1.5 billion students, or roughly 90% of the world's student population, were affected by school closures across 190 countries.

While distance and online learning initiatives attempted to bridge the gap, disparities in access to technology, the digital divide, socioeconomic inequalities, and varied household environments meant many students faced challenges in continuing their education. Preliminary data and reports suggest that many students may have dropped out or may not return to school post-pandemic, exacerbating the global challenge of out-of-school children, especially in vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Evidence from OOSCI studies helps to raise awareness amongst decision makers and practitioners. It also provides a basis for recommending changes in government policy or strategies to reduce/eliminate barriers, and to enable more children to access and complete a full course of education. The main assumption is that the recommendations of an OOSCI study accurately reflect and respond to the barriers identified through the study, and are also politically, financially, and technically feasible to implement.

Purpose, Objective and Scope of Study

Purpose of Study
In 2020, 259.5 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school globally.[3] Guyana has not been spared, as significant disparities exist between and among schools in the urban, rural, riverine and hinterland locations. The COVID pandemic has exacerbated the social circumstances in these regions that cause children, and adolescents to be out of school and has reversed the gains made in learning and widened the gap in learning outcomes. Further, the significant concerns for the Ministry of Education are the unacceptable drop-out rate, unqualified teachers, especially in the hinterland and riverine areas, and overall low performance at the primary and secondary levels. Migrant children, children with disabilities and those required to work to support their family incomes are doubly challenged as the education system is not currently providing the flexibility to facilitate attendance and full participation. In 2016, Guyana joined the OOSCI and the first study on out of school children was conducted that year. The country sees the need to continue to collect and track students who are at risk of dropping out, have dropped out, or are hard to reach at national and/or sub-regional levels.

Participation in the Global Initiative on Out-of-school Children will provide a knowledge base that can support existing interventions and new context-appropriate policies and strategies for accelerating enrolment and sustaining attendance for the most excluded and marginalized children. So far, more than 80 national and regional OOSCI studies have been developed.

Objectives

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[3] Ibid

The overall objective of this consultancy is to support Guyana's study of out of school children within the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI). This requires strong technical expertise in data and policy analysis with regards to out-of-school children, as well as project implementation skills to ensure completion of the analysis.

The OOSCI uses evidence-based advocacy to help countries reduce the number of children that are out of school by pursuing the following outcomes:
- Developing comprehensive profiles of excluded children in all regions including migrant children;
- Linking these profiles to the barriers that lead to exclusion;
- Identifying, promoting, and helping countries to implement policies, strategies and budgets that address exclusion of out-of-school children (including children with special needs and other vulnerable children such as migrants).

Expected Results and Scope:

The OOSCI study will be led by the Ministry of Education Guyana, which will set up a Steering Committee and a Technical Team to coordinate the study. It will cover all 11 education districts.

Project implementation support: Through partnership between the Ministry of Education, Guyana and UNICEF, this consultancy will support the timely and effective implementation of the OOSCI study in Guyana based on the 2023 OOSCI Operational Manual, facilitation of communication and ongoing sharing of results among the involved partners (including a national steering committee and Technical Team), overall quality assurance and capacity building for the research team.

Technical Support: UNICEF is desirous of hiring a consultant to undertake the following.
- Serve as the Chief Research Officer to support MOE in the implementation of the study.
- Ensure the quality of the study by closely monitoring the process and involving critical partners in reviewing and finalizing the profiles of out of school children and children at risk of dropping out;
- Draft the study report which will include barriers to education and recommendations on how to address issues linked to exclusion.
- Support the MOE in preparing the final presentations and OOSCI study report to inform decision making.

The expected results are:

- Specific profiles of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out, according to the OOSCI Operational Manual (2023) and the seven dimensions of exclusion (7DE); these profiles should capture the complexity of the problem in terms of magnitude, inequalities and multiple disparities around the 7DE;
- Identified barriers to education that children in Guyana face and clarification of the dynamic and causal processes related to the 7DE;
- Analysis of existing policies and interventions and whether they are addressing the complex needs of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out.
- Recommendations on how to address the issues linked to exclusion from education (out-of-school children) and exclusion within education (children who face a high risk of dropping out), taking into account the national context.

Methodology

In order to complete the OOSCI study in Guyana, the Consultant is expected follow the steps outlined below in the following phases:

Phase 1: Inception and Work Plan

- Coordinate with the Chief Planning Officer, Ministry of Education and UNICEF to adopt technical methodologies from the OOSCI 2023 Operational Manual based on the data availability in the country;
- Develop the OOSCI study design and detailed plan for data collection (including sampling to represent all regions) and analysis consistent with the methodology in the OOSCI 2023 Operational Manual;
- Convene inception meeting with key stakeholders including the Steering Committee and Technical Team set up by the Ministry of Education as the lead implementing agency;

Phase 2: Desk Review and Data Collection

- Identify and collect relevant policy documents and study reports to feed into the analysis on barriers and policies;
- Conduct data review and desk review;
- Develop data collection tools including questionnaires .
- Convene, lead, train and supervise the research team in the collection of primary data as it relates to barriers to education. This includes consultations with stakeholders, IDIs and Focus Groups.
- Calculate the key indicators of the 7DE (using the 7DE calculation tool) and undertake the disaggregated data analysis to develop profiles of out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out;
- Identify barriers to education that children in Guyana face and clarification of the dynamic and causal processes related to the 7DE;
- Analyse policy gaps and develop recommendations for strengthening institutional capacities and targeted interventions for children excluded from education;
- Develop draft OOSCI study report for Guyana.

All data collection should provide for analysis and comparison across demographic categories including gender, localization (rural areas, urban marginal, etc.) and ethnicity. It should also include data on children with disability and migrant children.

Phase 3: Validation and Finalization

- Conduct presentations to the national steering committee to update on progress and preliminary findings;
- Lead validation meeting on the draft OOSCI study report;
- Finalize the national report incorporating feedback from the validation meeting, recommendations and lessons learnt.

Communication and advocacy: The consultant will perform this role throughout the consultancy. This includes contributing to the development of communication and advocacy strategies based on the study and work plan, and their timely implementation. The consultant will explain and validate the analytical process and findings from data and the policy analysis with members of the technical team and communicate and share results among partners throughout the study's development. He/She will also prepare a PowerPoint presentation on findings, lessons learnt from the process and recommendations for interventions and policies.

Ethical Considerations

UNICEF supports data generation in full compliance with ethical considerations. No information, including data, that is reviewed for this assignment or data to which the Consultant is privileged during the assignment - as a direct or indirect result of being the Consultant for this assignment - can be shared and or be used by the Consultant neither can s/he approve the use of the whole or any part of it, for personal or professional purposes, without approval in writing from the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, jointly.

The Consultant is required to disclose in writing any experience, of him/herself or his/her immediate family, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest which may arise during this assignment.

All interviewees will be informed on the purpose of the research and their role and what information is required specifically from them. Confidentiality of their views will be ensured. As interviews will include minors, a written consent should be taken from the persons in charge of their care. All the documents, including data and fieldwork instruments, developed during this consultancy are the intellectual property of UNICEF. All research tools and methodology should be in line with UNICEF regulations and will undergo a process for ethics review approval. UNICEF will ensure external ethics review is completed before data collection commences. The consultant will be guided by UNEG Evaluation Standards and Norms, UNICEF Procedure on Ethics in Evidence Generation, UNEG Standards for Inception Reports during the whole process and will abide with the UNICEF guidance and policies for doing research with children.

All tools developed must be in line with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Ethical Review Board (ERB).

Duration And Estimated Timeline

This study is expected to be completed within 5 months from April-September, 2024

Deliverables	Duration (estimate #of days)	Tentative deadlines	Payment schedule
Inception report, including work plan with a clearly outlined approach, timelines for desk review, data collection methods, analysis and validation. This will follow an Inception Meeting.	10 days	April 30, 2024	20% upon acceptance of Inception Report
Completion of Data Collection from Desk Review, Consultations, IDIs and FGDs.	60 days (including data collection and data analysis)	July 31, 2024	
Draft OOSCI study report, including findings from the desk review, and data collection and analysis. This draft will include profiles for OOSC in Guyana and children at risk of dropping out, barriers to education that	15 days	August 15, 2024	50% upon receipt of draft report

children in Guyana face and clarification of the dynamic and causal processes related to the 7DE; It will also include analysis policy gaps and recommendations for interventions for children excluded from education.			
Validation Meeting among stakeholders	10 days	August 31, 2024	
Final Report on OOSC in Guyana to include feedback from validation meeting.	5 Days	September 10, 2024	30% upon acceptance of final report

Working Conditions

The consultant will work in close collaboration with the national technical team led by the Ministry of Education, in partnership with UNICEF. The consultant is expected to be in country throughout the consultancy and will be required to be in periodic contact (remotely or in person) with the technical team. The Ministry of Education will provide space for work if needed by the Consultant.

Supervisor

The consultant will be supervised by the Education Specialist, UNICEF.

Payment terms

Payment is contingent on approval by the contract manager (UNICEF) and will be made as indicated in the above table. No Advance payment will be made. Payments will be made against each milestone/deliverable and only upon the MOE's acceptance of the work performed. The terms of payment are after receipt of invoice and acceptance of work.. All deliverables are required in English.

Official Travel Involved
Local travel and airport transfers (where applicable) will be under responsibility of the consultant. All travel costs should be planned properly in the technical proposal and included in the financial proposal. Please consider/ include cost saving by considering sharing of transportation costs with other partners travelling to specific areas and districts. All logistics and costs of travel should be factored into the bid budget.

Profile of the Consultant
The consultant must possess the following competencies, skills, and experience:

Qualifications
A Masters or advanced degree in education, social science, public policy, research or related field;
Minimum five years of work experience in conducting data production, data review, analysis and reporting and on equity issues in children's education, preferably in Guyana
Knowledge of child's rights approaches;
Ability to work with governments and facilitate among various stakeholders;
Expert knowledge and experience in SPSS, STATA or similar software;
Expert knowledge and experience in Microsoft Excel;
Excellent analytical capacity of both quantitative and qualitative data;

Effective communication skills, both orally and in writing, in English;
Sensitivity to diverse opinions and difficulties arising from differing social and cultural perceptions;
Excellent writing skills
Proficiency in English (spoken and written).
Proven knowledge of local context

Desirable:
Previous work experience with the United Nations System.
Knowledge of / fluency in the local languages an asset.

Application Requirements

Interested persons are asked to apply by XXXX, online (link will be provided in Advertisement). Please ensure the application is completed thoroughly and the following is shared with the expression of interest.
- A technical proposal for the assignment
- A financial proposal for the assignment

The **technical proposal** should include a detailed methodological proposal, a CV, examples of study, and other relevant information to ensure the quality of the presented proposal and minimise the disqualifications.

The **financial proposal** should be a lump sum and should include consultant's fee, travel costs and per diem, etc. wherever applicable.

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by the UNICEF Human Resources officer after the application closes.

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): **Budget Year:** 2024	**Requesting Section/Issuing Office: Education and Skills**	**Reasons why consultancy cannot be done by staff:** This task requires a national/international expert with experience in data review, production and analysis. This a specialized area of study requiring an experienced consultant in Qualitative/Quantitative Research

Included in Annual/Rolling Workplan: ☒ Yes ☐ No, please justify

Consultant sourcing: ☐ National ☐ International ☒ Both **Consultant selection method:** ☐ Competitive Selection (Roster) ☒ Competitive Selection (Advertisement/Desk Review/Interview)	**Request for:** ☒ New SSA – Individual Contract ☐ Extension/ Amendment

If Extension, Justification for extension:			
Supervisor: Education Specialist, UNICEF	**Start Date:** *April 15, 2024*	**End Date:** *September 15, 2024*	**Number of Days:** *100*

Estimated Consultancy fee			
Travel International			
Travel Local (please include travel plan)			
DSA (if applicable)			
Total estimated consultancy costs[i]			

Minimum Qualifications required:	Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:
☐ Bachelors ☒ Masters ☐ PhD ☐ Other Enter Disciplines Education, Social Science, Public Policy, Research	As stated in section 7 above
Administrative details: Visa assistance required: NA☐ Transportation arranged by the office: NA☐ **Not applicable**	☐ Home Based ☒ Office Based: If office based, seating arrangement identified: ☐ IT and Communication equipment required: ☐ Internet access required: ☐

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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.

Conditions and remarks:

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.

UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. Background checks will include the verification of academic

credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check. Successful individuals will be required to produce the following:

- Certificate of good health
- Proof of Health Insurance
- Statement of good standing
- Designation of beneficiary form
- Fully inoculated
- Mandatory training certificates from UNICEF's e-learning platform
  (prior to commencement of the Assignment)