

Title Consultancy for the Design of Challenge Fund to Support Evidence and Innovation on Educational Strategies to Address Child Labour in India and Bangladesh	Duty Station: Florence Duration: 38 days in 4 months
Purpose of Activity/Assignment: UNICEF's Office of Research-Innocenti (henceforth, Innocenti) is conducting a research project which aims to identify effective educational strategies to address child labour in India and Bangladesh. One of the two primary streams of work for this project involves the design and implementation of a Challenge Fund to support research and innovation initiatives in both countries focusing on the interlinkages between education and child labour. Innocenti is seeking a consultant with extensive grant award management design and implementation experience to deliver a consultative design plan for the Challenge Fund, which will be used to guide the roll-out of Fund in Q4 2021/Q1 2022. Given limited project team capacity, additional external support is required to carry out the preparation of this proposed design plan, particularly desk research and conducting consultations. The project team also requires specific technical guidance on design and standing-up of a research and innovation funding mechanism, as OR currently does not possess this expertise internally.	
Scope of Work: <u>Background</u> The FCDO-funded Asia Regional Child Labour programme is building the evidence on the determinants of child labour and policy, legal, programmatic strategies to eliminate child labour in six countries in the region. As part of this initiative, Innocenti has been funded to implement the “Evidence on Educational Strategies to address Child Labour” programme to support synthesis and evidence-generation on child labour, education and its inter-linkages, and effective educational strategies to address child labour with the aim to inform education-related policies and programmes in India and Bangladesh. <u>One of the key components of the Innocenti research programme is the establishment of a Challenge Fund, which will be a platform for collaborating with in-country researchers and to fund new and innovative research on child labour and education in both countries.</u> <u>Objectives and Description of the Challenge Fund</u> The Challenge Fund is a <u>funding and networking mechanism to inform evidence on, and identify effective strategies for improving child labour outcomes through educational policies, programmes, systems, and technologies.</u> To this end, the Challenge Fund will support (i) in-country researchers in India and Bangladesh to identify, develop, implement and disseminate relevant research that bridges the evidence gap on child labour and its intersections with education, and (ii) in-country innovators working in the education and child labour spaces to improve the evidence-base related to their innovations in India and Bangladesh. The funding available for each country is envisioned at approx. £300,000 (USD 380,000) for a funding period of up to 24 months. (This figure remains open to further adjustment.) The Challenge Fund is currently envisioned to cover two types of grants in each country:	

- 1) Research grants - to fund individual Indian and Bangladeshi-based researchers or provide co-funding to larger, ongoing research studies.
 - Formative research that informs the design of education policies, programmes and systems to address child labour.
 - Cost-effectiveness studies, such as those exploring the value for money of new or promising educational policies, programmes and systems addressing child labour; research which explores the cost to human capital of children engaging in labour over education; and modelling costs of investments and interventions aimed at ending child labour in both countries (amongst others).
 - Secondary data analyses using existing sub-national/national/international datasets to better understand the impact of educational policies and programmes on child labour, at national, sub-national and/or sectoral levels.
 - Conducting smaller qualitative research, preferably as part of a bigger, ongoing research study, explaining contextual specificities related to child labour and education, relationships and dynamics of child labour, otherwise unknown.
 - Conducting primary research and data collection on child labour using quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods.
- 2) Innovation grants in child labour research to fund improved evidence generation activities during the early, mid, or late-stages of innovation ideation, piloting, and/or scaling.
 - Applicants should be based in India and/or Bangladesh, and actively working on relevant innovations at the regional, national, and/or local level.
 - The Challenge Fund defines innovation broadly as an *iterative process that identifies, adjusts and diffuses ideas for improving child labour outcomes through education-linked interventions*.
 - Under this definition, we will consider *both* digital and non-digital (i.e., 'process') innovations – i.e., new programmatic approaches, learning modalities, pedagogies, research innovations in instrument design, measurement, validation, as part of a larger, ongoing or funded research study, etc.
 - Examples of relevant innovation projects could include (but are not limited to) the development/scaling of novel approaches to policy and system strengthening focused on child labour mitigation strategies; exploring new applications of behavioural science approaches in influencing behaviour changes in children, caregivers and community; community-led, 'locally owned' solutions, policies, and programmes that demonstrate new or adapted ideas for approaches that may not yet be recognized in wider practice; and innovations which seek to address intersecting vulnerabilities such as those linked to gender, disability, and migration status.
 - In all three stages of development, the fund will provide resourcing to improve the generation of primary evidence on existing or planned innovation initiatives, including implementation research, monitoring, evaluation, and the capturing of relevant learnings in order to build knowledge and learnings as the innovation process develops
 - The Challenge Fund considers a principled approach to innovation essential, which means rigorous ethical compliance must be central to any funded projects. In addition, funded innovations should be fundamentally informed by core principles of human-centred design.¹

The Challenge Fund mechanism will also aim to facilitate knowledge exchange and lessons-learning between grantees, and to consolidate, communicate, and build both demand and capacity for utilizing evidence on child labour and education amongst government and other stakeholders in both countries and at the regional and global level.

¹ For more on human-centred design, see [IDEO Toolkit](#)

Consultancy Description

Innocenti's initial design of the challenge fund remains at an early stage of conceptualization. We are therefore looking for a consultant with expertise in the design and implementation of research and/or innovation grant award mechanisms and management, to provide consultative support in planning the Challenge Fund for this project within existing UNICEF frameworks and procedures.

The design consultant would lead a consultative internal process to help UNICEF Innocenti in defining and articulating a best-fit approach to the **core dimensions of the challenge fund design and implementation**, including:

1. Identify most appropriate mechanism for the management and disbursement of funds, tailored to existing UNICEF frameworks and procedures. To this end the consultant will explore the different funds disbursement mechanisms and suggest the most appropriate. Options to explore could include, for example:
 - Institutional contracts managed by UNICEF Innocenti
 - Involvement of an Implementing Partner for managing the challenge fund on behalf of UNICEF; in this case Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer principles would be used.
 - Disbursal via Country Offices who would be expected to release funds to selected partners based on milestones.
2. Design of the Challenge Fund call for proposals, including:
 - Eligibility and selection criteria
 - Application process for grantees
 - Resourcing estimates
 - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning strategy
 - Communications strategy for roll-out, uptake and dissemination
 - Recommended adaptations to Fund roll-out/management due to COVID-19.
 - Disaggregation of above points between research and innovation grantees.
3. Design of the implementation architecture for the challenge fund, aligned to UNICEF frameworks and procedures, and the distinct contexts of India and Bangladesh.
 - Identification of criteria for selection of appropriate options for award
 - Administration and governance of the Challenge Fund based on review of global best practice and UNICEF context-specific practices.
 - Based on the Guidance on the **requirements and articulation, via development of a Terms of Reference, for the recruitment of an implementing partner or consultant** to support Innocenti in responsibilities such as (i) opening the funding call, (ii) reviewing grant applications, grant management (including monitoring of grant disbursements and grantee expenditures), and (iii) supporting Innocenti in quality assurance and dissemination of evidence.
 - Ensure that the objectives and intended impact of the Challenge Fund speaks closely to the relevant Education Sector Plans (ESP), and related Education Sector Analysis, led by the Governments of both India and Bangladesh.
 - Provide guidance on overall project resourcing needs and potential strategy for identification of co-funding as necessary.

Key stakeholder consultations will be conducted to inform this design process, including with Innocenti research and administrative staff, HQ Innovation team, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and COs, FCDO Programme Partners (FCDO, ILO, IDS-Sussex), representatives of the relevant research and innovation practitioner community in India and Bangladesh, and relevant experts in the wider aid sector research and innovation grant-making community of practice.

The consultant will also support strong engagement with representatives from relevant ministries of the Government of India (GoI) and Government of Bangladesh (GoB), in order to understand and integrate their perspectives on research priorities and potential scalable innovations from the outset of the design process. Strong government engagement from the outset will ensure that funding criteria capture innovations which are unit-cost affordable for public spending, thus maximizing their potential for scale.

Leading focal points of previous similar initiatives (e.g., from other international organizations) may also be consulted.

<p>Minimum Qualifications required:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bachelors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Masters <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific technical expertise in the design of aid/development sector research and/or innovation grant mechanisms (relevant thematic focus on children and youth, and/or the South Asia context, particularly welcome).• Strong experience in human-centered design-led approaches.• Good education and child labour policy sector planning knowledge and analysis capacity particularly welcome.• Clear record of deliverables in the design/implementation of successful grant mechanisms, ideally within a UN organization or international NGO context.• Strong technical literacy in multi-disciplinary research and the evidence component of innovation projects, with ability to clearly distinguish between both concepts.• Good ability to support engagement with partners• Excellent communication skills with a high level of written and spoken English.• Evidence of high-quality report writing, good visual presentation skills.• Understanding importance of timely delivery, validation and feedback processes as well as precision when selecting and referencing background sources.• Professional, respectful and fully committed to maintaining ethical behaviours.• Clean criminal record and does not subscribe to harmful gender attitudes.• Alignment with UNICEF core values – care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability (CRITA) values.