

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SERVICE CONTRACTING

Assignment	Assessment, learning and evidence generation for the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) initiative in Borno State - Northeast Nigeria for Replications/Scale-Up
Location	Maiduguri
Duration	4 months
Start date	1 st August 2021
End date	30 th November 2021
Reporting to	Education Specialist
Closing date for proposals	28th July 2021

1. JUSTIFICATION/BACKGROUND

Education quality in Nigeria is affected by different and several factors and challenges that are within the context and system. The poor quality of education has lowered demand for education and led to poor academic performance. Children in Nigeria are failing to master basic literacy and numeracy skills (GMR 2010). Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, there were 10.5 million out-of-school children (aged 5-14) in Nigeria. Less than a third of primary school children will proceed to junior secondary school, and even fewer will then go on to complete secondary school. This accounts for more than one in five out-of-school children globally and more than half of out-of-school children in West and Central Africa. Most of these children (88%) are in the northern states where barriers to education include, poverty, socio-cultural norms and insecurity. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, and the closure of schools from March till October 2020 over 80 million children, youth and adult learners were left with limited opportunities for learning and even higher risk of dropping out and never returning to the education system. Learning opportunities for over 400,000 internally displaced children to access education has been further restricted.

Because of low capacity of teachers there is low learning outcomes for children. Even when children are in school, a substantial proportion are not learning. The 2015 Nigeria Education

Data Survey (NEDS 2015) showed a national mean score of 48.5%, 32.3% and 54.5% in literacy, comprehension and numeracy respectively. The North East region is the least performing when it comes to foundational skills. This situation has been exacerbated by an unequitable and poorly performing education system in North East states prior to the insurgency, with large cohorts of children and youth out-of-school.

Where insecurity and weak government capacity negatively affect education, the TaRL intervention takes a strategic approach to address specific determinants of the learning crisis. In 2018, through United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF)'s partnership with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Nigeria (FCDO-Nigeria), and in collaboration with TaRL Africa, conceived the idea of piloting an innovative remedial learning programme together with government and international partners to address some of the learning barriers children face in achieving literacy and numeracy proficiency. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is premised on research that shows that learners learn better when they are assessed, grouped and taught according to their ability and not according to their grade level. This approach ensures that learners are taught at the level of their ability. The learners are first assessed to determine their level of ability after which they are then grouped according to their ability levels rather than grade level or age for a targeted period. This targeted time enables the learners to reach instruction in literacy and numeracy skills according to their level of ability. With teaching targeted to students' abilities, appropriate materials for each ability level, specific training for teachers, and adequate supportive monitoring mechanisms in place, the evidence of the success of these programmes is strong and indicates that such programmes allow children to catch-up and progress in their education, having broken through to literacy and numeracy.

The TaRL pilot was launched in Maiduguri, Borno State, in September 2018 in 14 formal and 5 Integrated Quranic Schools (IQS) in Borno state benefitted over 25,000 students across grades 4 to 6 as a co-curricular remedial learning intervention using mother tongue instructional approaches to support learning based on children's existing competency levels. The pilot, which was conducted over a period of 93 days, achieved promising results. Lessons from the pilot are now being used to accelerate learning results for children at scale.

The scale-up by UNICEF has started in October 2020 in three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa with the aim of reaching over half a million children in 900 schools. The scale-up is being carried out in phases with the first 408 schools having been trained in 2020. As the next group of schools are trained for the scale up, it is important and strategic to carry out an implementation midline research to better understand if the scale up is achieving its set objectives in the Nigerian context, enhancing the education system capacities and to further assess if the TaRL model can inform policies, standards and teacher development strategies for further sustainability and mainstreaming, particularly in the emergency context.

2. OBJECTIVE AND TARGETS

The study is expected to review the implementation of the TaRL interventions in Borno State – Northeast Nigeria to provide evidence on the innovative strategy, the effectiveness, Value for Money, drivers factors of success in pupils learning outcomes and lessons learnt with strategic recommendations for evidence-based advocacy and programming.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) To generate findings on the extent to which the programme is achieving its objective of improving literacy and numeracy skills for students in the EiE context.
- 2) To generate findings on what factors enabled success or blocked success; what processes were built and how effective they were; what was the cost breakdown of the implementation; what elements of the intervention were critical and what were dispensable; what improvements could be made.
- 3) To generate findings and practical recommendations to guide further decisions about improvement, cost-reduction, sustainability and scaling of the TaRL approach in Nigeria, particularly in conflict affected areas.

The primary end user of this research is the Universal Basic Education Commission and Federal Ministry of Education that will use the information to make necessary changes that will lead to a scale up that is efficient, effective and sustainable. The research will also serve as guidance for development partners that might support the scale-up.

Users	Intended Use of the Research
Universal Basic Education Commission/Federal Ministry of Education	To enable UBEC and FME to adapt teaching and learning practices for a scale up that is efficient, effective and sustainable. To help design a literacy and numeracy programme that incorporates best practices from the TaRL programme. To institutionalize the TaRL programme.
FCDO and UNICEF Nigeria	To inform programming and advocacy on literacy and numeracy interventions enabling children to build foundational skills, particularly in conflict affected areas.
FCDO and UNICEF Regionally and Globally	To inform best practices on literacy and numeracy programming, particularly in conflict affected areas.
Education Partners	To inform future programming on improved teaching and learning models in Nigeria and particularly in emergency setting.

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK (WORK ASSIGNMENT)

Scope of the Study

Since it will not be practical for the study to cover all the TaRL schools within the given limited timeframe, working in collaboration with UNICEF, the consultant will develop a detailed methodological inception report that will provide clarifications about adequate methods and approaches that will enable to generate solid evidence to meet expectations formulated within specific objectives and research questions. The consultant is expected to propose a sampling approach for the quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of the evaluation.

The geographic scope of the study is Borno State. It will not cover all the LGAs that are implementing the TaRL programme but will rather propose a statistically significant randomly selected sample size so that the results of the research are within a reasonable confidence limit. The research will further only pick a few schools from the identified LGAs and will ensure that an equity dimension is applied by ensuring that schools in both rural and urban areas are selected. In addition, both under performing and good performing schools are expected to be selected. Both male and female learners and teachers will be selected in the sample sizes.

The Consultancy firm will recruit and train a team of data collectors, who will undertake the data gathering and the spot check visits to the schools.

Proposed Methodology

Though a detailed methodology is expected to be developed by the Consultants, at a minimum, the proposed methods should consist of:

- Literature review covering relevant education sector policies, legislations, reports and programme specific documentation, evaluation reports on TaRL
- Analysis of secondary data, mainly first pilot in 2019 and first scale-up in 2020 exams results, based on a statistically sound, randomized sample of TaRL schools and a comparison set of schools. To provide results from TaRL and non-TaRL schools.
- A learning assessment to measure the effectiveness, using the established Pratham learning assessment tool
- An independent classroom observation
- Survey of teachers and monitors
- Interviews and focus groups discussions with various stakeholders

Research Questions

Criteria	Evaluation Question	Sub-question
<i>Effectiveness</i>	To what extent are the Teaching at the Right Level programme outcomes/objectives being achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are learners being correctly assessed and grouped according to their level of ability? • Are learners being taught at their level of ability in literacy and numeracy? • Are the teachers following the TaRL methodology? • To what extent are learners acquiring literacy and numeracy skills? • Is the intervention effective for boys and girls to the same extent? • Is the intervention effective for children with special needs and other vulnerable groups (IDPs children, adolescent girls at risk of drop-out, orphan children etc)? • Were the outcomes similar for the different sub-group of children targeted? • What are the factors contributing to the outcomes? • To what extent the interventions could be effectively adapted during C-19?
<i>Efficiency</i>	What is the minimum cost required to scale up the TaRL programme to all schools in North East Nigeria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the important drivers and what are the costs of these drivers? • What will it cost for Government to take it to be institutionalized and be effective? • What is the cost per child? • What are the costs related to trainings as well as mentoring, coaching and monitoring?
<i>Relevance</i>	How relevant and valid is the TaRL programme in emergency contexts in Nigeria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How relevant is TaRL programme to addressing learning outcomes at the learners' level in emergency setting? • What are the constraints in the implementation of TaRL programme in emergency setting? • What are specific considerations as the programme targets children in conflict-affected areas? • Who did mainly deliver the programme and support it? And how that impacted costs and outcomes? • What aspects of the programme were most appreciated by target population? • To what extent is the programme aligned with the primary literacy and numeracy curriculum and standards?

<i>Sustainability</i>	What mechanisms have been put in place to warrant continuity of the programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are existing structures involved in delivering the TaRL approach and how have they contributed to the successes and failures of the programme? • How better can this programme be implemented in Government structures? • How might TaRL methodology be incorporated in teacher development policies, training policies, and deployment policies? • Are there unintended consequences, both negative and positive, as a result of implementing the TaRL methodology?
<i>Equity and gender</i>	Does the programme reach the most disadvantaged learners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the programme consider gender and social inclusion issues sufficiently enough to deal with children's needs? • Did the programme consider the emergency context sufficiently enough to deal with children's needs? • Are learners with special educational needs included in this programme? • Has the program been adapted to meet the needs of boys and girls with special needs? • Is there a gender balance in the number of boys and girls reached? • Were the learning outcomes different between boys and girls? • How was the teacher training taking into account and gender-responsive approaches, safeguarding, special needs? • Did the pilot start off considering the needs of different groups differently?

4. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The output of the consultancy is the **final report of the research provided by end of November 2021**. Guided by the UNICEF Research Report Standards and the GEROS Quality Assessment System, the Consultant will prepare a research report that describes the research and puts forward the researcher's findings, recommendations and lessons learned. Below is a sample final research report structure, which has the following components:

- Table of Contents
- Acronyms
- Executive Summary
- Background and Programme Description
- Purpose of Research
- Research Objectives and Scope
- Research Methodology
- Findings and analysis

- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Lessons learned
- Annexes: including the terms of reference, evaluation work-plan and any other relevant documents

5. REALISTIC DELIVERY DATES AND DETAILS ON HOW THE WORK MUST BE DELIVERED

The total time allocated for the research is 3 months. It is expected that the following outputs would be delivered as below.

Tasks	Expected Output	Deliverables	Timeframe (Tentative)
1. Inception phase	Work plan, time frame and methodology and instruments/tools for draft data (qualitative and quantitative) collection to be used.	Detailed Inception Report	31 st August 2021
2. Desk review and fieldwork	Developed and pre-tested questionnaire tools/data collection instruments, sampling strategy and field work undertaken.	Draft Report	30 th September 2021
3. Stakeholder workshop to present and verify preliminary findings.	Report on stakeholder workshop proceedings.	Validation meeting report	Mid-October 2021
4. Prepare and submit Final Report	Final Report.	Final Report (of between 40 to 55 pages (excluding appendices/annexes), written in English, single spacing font size 11 Times New Roman (Raw dataset and questionnaires and list of interviewees to be included in annex).	End of November 2021

Tasks	Expected Output	Deliverables	Timeframe (Tentative)
5. Prepare and submit one policy brief	One policy brief on TaRL in EiE	Policy brief	Mid-November 2021

5.1 Payment Schedule

Payment ¹	Conditions
First payment: 20% of total contract value	Upon submission and acceptance of the inception report
Second Payment: 30% of total contract value	Upon submission and acceptance of the progress update on the field work.
Third Payment: 10% of total contract value	Upon submission and acceptance of the Stakeholder Workshop Proceedings Report.
Final Payment: 40% of total contract value	Upon submission and acceptance of the final evaluation report.

6. OFFICIAL TRAVEL INVOLVED

The contractor's fee should be inclusive of all cost related to both International and local costs.

7. DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE

The successful organization and individual team members must offer the following demonstrated experience, knowledge and competencies:

- Minimum of master's degree in a relevant field, with at least 5 years' experience in conducting similar research for the proposed team leader, and most of the team members;
- Extensive (minimum 5 years) of organizational experience conducting similar process evaluations;
- Strong experience with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and research techniques;
- Strong experience recruiting, training and supervising enumerators;
- Familiarity with the Nigerian and global education sectors and of the proposed foundational literacy and numeracy (TaRL) methodology;
- Ability to work collaboratively with various stakeholders, with colleagues from the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB);

¹ In general, payments should be made against delivery of services / products. Advance payments on signature of contract are discouraged and need to be explicitly justified.

- Ability to adhere to ethical guidelines as specified by UNICEF and the UBEC/SUBEBS in Nigeria;
- High level proficiency in standard computer software Microsoft word and Excel;
- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and deliver quality reports, with recommendations;
- Excellent spoken and written English, of publication standards; and
- Familiarity with the UN and UNICEF programs.

8. Consideration related to the assignment

8.1 Role of the Consultancy firm

- The contractor will be responsible for identifying a technical team required to deliver the key tasks of the consultancy
- The contractor firm will recruit and train a team of data collectors, who will undertake the midline and the visits to the schools.
- The contractor will be responsible for providing guidance on the key tasks to deliver the results for the consultancy

8.2 Role of UNICEF

- UNICEF will be responsible for coordinating the process with government counterparts and will support arranging meetings with key government officials.
- UNICEF will coordinate and facilitate stakeholder involvement at all stages of the assignment.
- UNICEF will facilitate access to information and resources for the consultancy institution in order to successfully conduct the research.

8. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR EVALUATION OF RESULTS

The contract will be based on the delivery of satisfactory deliverable as requested. All tasks have been delivered in a timely manner as indicated in the TOR/Contract. High quality of work and results achieved correspond to the specification of the TORs. Good communication with Education specialist, partners and other stakeholders whom the consultant will interact with.

9. FREQUENCY OF PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Frequent feedback will be provided to the consultant firm on the quality and the timely submission of deliverables as necessary. Final evaluation to be conducted at the end of the contract.

Ongoing performance review, strategic direction, key deliverables and progress discussions to take place with UNICEF on a regular basis with the consultant/firm. The

expert/firm will work closely with the both the Education Specialist, partners as well as UNICEF's key stakeholders.

10. CALL FOR PROPOSALS

A two-stage procedure shall be utilized in assessing the proposals, with assessment of the technical proposal being completed prior to any price proposal being compared. Applications shall therefore contain the following required documentation:

Technical proposal:

- A technical proposal that includes a brief cover letter and understanding of the assignment is required.
- Based on the proposed timetable laid down in the TOR, a proposal of the detailed methodology, tentative work plan and time schedule is required.
- Updated profiles/ CVs of the team members listing similar experiences/ assignments, highlighting those focused on conducting learning needs assessment and training.
- Two examples (studies) of the firm's engagement in similar activities and assignments.

Financial Proposal:

- A financial proposal with a breakdown of all costs that are to be charged to UNICEF. This includes estimated number of working days, consultancy fees, all office administrative costs, international and local travel costs, as well as any additional requirements needed to complete project or that might have an impact on cost or delivery of products. Travel expenses should be based on the most direct route and economy fare. Quotations for business class fare will not be considered.

11. INDICATION OF HEALTH STATEMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF GOOD HEALTH HAS BEEN RECEIVED PRIOR TO SIGNING THE CONTRACT

The consultancy firm must ensure that their team adheres to the Covid-19 travel guidelines set out by Nigeria government.

12. UNICEF RECOURSE IN CASE OF UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment on each individual and consolidated output until the consultant provide satisfactory quality output as reviewed by the project supervisor. In case of unsatisfactory performance, the payment will be withheld until quality deliverables are submitted. If the firm is unable to complete the assignment, the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent 30 days prior to the termination date. In the meantime, UNICEF will initiate another selection in order to identify appropriate candidate.

13. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND WEIGHTING CRITERIA

80% technical + 20% financial= 100% total

Submitted proposals will be assessed using Cumulative Analysis Method. All request for proposals will be weighed according to the technical (80%) and financial considerations (20%). Financial proposals will be opened only for those application that attained 80% or above on the technical part. Below are the criteria and points for technical and financial proposals.

Technical proposal:

- A technical proposal that includes a brief cover letter and understanding of the assignment is required.
- Based on the proposed timetable laid down in the TOR, a proposal of the detailed methodology, tentative work plan and time schedule is required.
- Updated profiles / CVs of the team members listing similar experiences/ assignments, highlighting those focused on conducting learning needs assessment and training.
- Two previous work samples of the firm's engagement in similar activities and assignments

	Technical Criteria	Technical sub-criteria	Maximum points
1	Overall response	Completeness, organization and presentation of proposal	5
		Overall concord between RFP requirements and proposal	5
	Maximum points		10
2	Consultancy firm and key personnel	Range and depth of experience with similar assignments	15
		Client references	5
		Key personnel: relevant experiences and qualifications	10
	Maximum points		30

	Technical Criteria	Technical sub-criteria	Maximum points
3	Strength of technical proposal	Understanding of objectives of consultancy	10
		Technical quality and relevance of the proposal to the TOR; proven experience of the proposed team on formative research in the area of education and languages.	25
		Knowledge of Nigerian socio-cultural environment	5
	Maximum points		40
	Total Maximum points		80

Minimum technical score: 80% of 80 points = 64 points

14. Other Clauses: PSEA Language

Consistent with the UN Secretary General's Bulletin related to "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (ST/SGB/2003/13), entities and individuals entering into cooperative agreements with an agency of the United Nations are obligated to "take preventative measures against sexual exploitation or abuse, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective action when sexual exploitation or sexual abuse has occurred." Failure to do so "shall constitute grounds for termination of any cooperative arrangement with the United Nations." The Contractor is expected to have in place explicit policies related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries, including commitment to the IASC 6 Core Standards (IASC/2002), and the investigation of such cases. Where the contractor does not have enough capacity for the investigation of such cases, it should request the support of UNICEF. Reasonable suspicion of sexual exploitation or abuse of beneficiaries may be reported by any individual to UNICEF if the complainant so prefers.

15. CONDITIONS

- The contractor will work on its own computer(s) and use its own office resources and materials in the execution of this assignment. **The contractor's fee shall be inclusive of all office administrative costs**
- The contractor's fee should be **inclusive of all travel cost**
- Please also see UNICEF's Standard Terms and Conditions attached.

Enquiries:

Please direct any enquiries to: aeboh@unicef.org

Proposals with all supporting documents should be submitted to:

ngrsupply@unicef.org