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1.   BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

Global Programme to End Child Marriage

The Global Programme to End Child Marriage is a partnership between UNFPA and UNICEF and focuses on enabling girls at risk of child marriage to choose and direct their own futures, supports communities with positive norms change, and strengthens systems that deliver services to adolescents girls. The Global Programme is working with national partners to strengthen laws and policies, promote adolescent girls' rights, and ensure the use of robust data and evidence to inform policies and programmes to end child marriage. The programme is implemented in South Asia in Bangladesh, India and Nepal and has been active since 2016. The Global Programme is now in its second phase, which began in 2020, coinciding with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase II (2020–2023) aims to accelerate actions to end child marriage by enhancing investments in and support for both unmarried and married adolescent girls; by engaging key actors (including young people as agents of change) in catalyzing shifts towards positive gender norms, including the right to choose when and whom to marry; increasing political support, resources, gender-responsive policies, and frameworks; engendering respect for laws, including international humanitarian law; and by improving data and evidence on what works.

South Asia Context

The prevalence of child marriage remains high in South Asia despite progress in several countries. In South Asia 28 percent of women aged 20-24 married before the age of 18 and 4 percent of men.[1] These percentages though mask the differences between countries. 9 percent of boys marry as a child in Nepal, the 10th highest prevalence globally,[2] and 51 percent of girls marry as a child in Bangladesh, among the ten countries worldwide with the highest prevalence.[3] Child marriage is driven by structural violence evidenced in gender, ageism, and caste.[4] It is reinforced by cultural and social norms that emphasize the compulsory nature of marriage and its use to protect the girl's chastity, honour, and safety. The whole environment, considering wealth, health, education, and family and the community, support the practice and[5] demand an integrated approach to eliminate child marriage.

Causes and drivers of child marriage in South Asia

Discrimination against girls and women in South Asia is reflected in the policy and legal frameworks[6] and the social norms that promote harmful and discriminatory practices for girls, women, boys and men, uphold gender inequality and the control of adolescent girls' sexuality. This challenges the human rights approach that demands that marriage is consensual.[7] The structural inequality including caste, class, race, ethnicity, intersects with the gender inequality that encourages the marriage of girls more so than of boys. Access to services including education, sexual and reproductive health, and social protection also impacts family decisions on marriage and adolescent girls' futures.

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[1] https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/ accessed 5 August 2021.
[2] C.M. Gaston et al. 2019. Child Marriage among Boys: A global overview of available data in Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450128.2019.1566584.
[3] https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/ accessed 5 August 2021.
[4] UNICEF. 2018. Structural Violence against Children in South Asia
[5] UNICEF and UNFPA. 2018. United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund. 2018. Key Drivers of the Changing Prevalence of Child Marriage in Three Countries in South Asia: Working Paper, UNICEF, Kathmandu.
[6] UNICEF. 2020. Legal Framework for Child Protection in South Asia
[7] Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages. 1964.

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Impact of COVID-19 on children

A study by UNICEF indicated that even before COVID-19 47% of children lacked access to education and health services. It is estimated that an increasing number of children in this complex situation would be affected – 56% globally. Furthermore, even before COVID-19, many policymakers were not adequately responding to gender disparities.[8] One of the best investment in human capital development is by improving secondary education for both girls and boys.[9]

COVID-19 has long-term detrimental impacts on the future of 600 million children in South Asia. Decades of progress on health, education, and protection, including elimination of child labour and trafficking and reductions in child marriage, are being undermined. Before the pandemic, 240 million children in South Asia[10] were categorized as poor. In the worst-case scenario, the number of South Asian children living in poverty could grow to more than 360 million.[11] 430 million children have suffered from lost learning, and there is concern that some children may never return to the classroom. Phone helplines are reporting more calls from children suffering violence and abuse, and children also report they are struggling with depression and mental illness. Children are losing parents and sole caregivers to the virus - leaving them at risk of separation and in need of alternative care. Children living in humanitarian situations are particularly vulnerable to disruption of services that protect them in normal times.

Impact of COVID-19 and unintended consequences of public health measures designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 include:
   a. Disruption to learning through school closures, and limitations on access to online as well as distance learning. There is some evidence that girls have less access to the internet than boys. Moreover, they have many distractions study from home. For instance, due to a patriarchal society, many girls students have to play other roles at home related to caring for the sick relatives, household chores, and responsible for childcare. During the pandemic, the gender imbalance put girls more vulnerable than boys, affecting the girls' physical, social, and educational development.[12]
   b. Economic shocks to households due to lock downs forcing businesses to close and increasing under and unemployment and economic impacts caused by loss of a breadwinner and increased medical costs. Unsafe migration in search of livelihood.
   c. Limitations in access to services including Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), mental health services, and protection services, as the health care system was overwhelmed by the spike in infections.
   d. Loss of support networks including peer support, teachers and other community members that support children and adolescents due to decreased mobility.
   e. Increase in mental health concerns due to disruption to daily life, increased stress, and uncertainty about the future.
   f. Increase in risk of violence and harmful coping measures.
   g. Increase domestic and care responsibilities for girls and women.
   h. Disruption to civil registration system including reduction in birth and marriage registration rates.

UN Women estimates the pandemic will push 47 million more women and girls into extreme poverty worldwide.[13] Given the prevalent gender inequality in South Asia, this will impact on girls' choices in directing their futures and push more girls into child marriage. The education 2030 agenda, encourages the adoption of specific approach that

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[8] UNICEF. (2020, May). *Gender equality and Covid-19*. https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/covid-19/
[9] Porter, S.A. 2016. Girls' education, development and social change. *Policy Future in Education, 14(5), 517-538.*
https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1478210315625904
[10] Note: Includes children in seven countries. No data availablefor Sri Lanka.
[11] UNICEF, 2020, Lives Upended: How COVID-19 threatens the futures of 600 million South Asian children.
[12] UNICEF. (2020, May). *Gender equality and Covid-19*. https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/covid-19/
[13] UN Women, 2020, *From insights to action: Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19*.

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"ensure[s] that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education but are empowered equally in and through education".[14]

UNICEF estimates that the long-term consequences of COVID-19 will result in up to 10 million more girls at risk of becoming child brides over the next decade, jeopardizing progress towards the SDG target 2030 of eliminating child marriage. Increased risk of child marriage is due to interrupted education, increased risk of pregnancy amongst adolescents, economic shocks, death of parents/caregivers, and disruption to services and programmes. Increases in child marriage rates are not a foregone conclusion, and through sustained response and scale-up of initiatives that are demonstrated to reduce the risk of child marriage, this outcome can be averted. Therefore, understanding changes in the drivers and moderator of child marriage is critical to ensure programming strategies and interventions are adapted to the changing situation for girls in South Asia.

2.   OBJECTIVE:

This research aims to analyze the changes in drivers and moderators of child marriage due to COVID-19, including adolescents' attitudes, and assess the impact of the pandemic on girls already married. The research aims to contribute to strategies, policies, and programme interventions that will avert the negative impacts of COVID-19 on child marriage in South Asia.

Key research questions will include:

Drivers and moderators:
*   What changes, both temporary and long term are impacting on the identified drivers of child marriage?
*   Have new drivers and moderators emerged?
*   If so, what is the impact of these emerging drivers and moderators for programme implementation?
*   Factors to consider include economic impact and increase in household poverty, education disruption, social networks, support services, changes in gender norms and expectations, changes in women in workforce, impact of migration including return of migrant workers primarily males to communities, increase in domestic violence and disruption of health service for adolescents including sexual and reproductive health.

Child brides:
*   How have girls already married been impacted by COVID-19, including economic impact and agency in decision making on matters affecting them (e.g. paid work, domestic responsibilities, size of family)?
*   How have disruptions to access to services, social networks for support impacted?
*   Is there an increase in negative coping mechanisms in the household, including domestic violence?

Adolescent voices:
*   How have the perspectives of adolescents as relates to the drivers and moderators of child marriage shifted?
*   Are mental health concerns, access to education, economic opportunities and services impacting on decisions around marriage?
*   Is there a shift in attitudes towards self-initiated marriages?

The research will be conducted in a participatory way with adolescents and communities, including parents/caregivers and vulnerable groups. The purposes of this research focus on the vulnerable groups include persons with disabilities,

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[14] UN WOMEN. 2020. *SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable equality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.* https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-4-quality-education

adolescents with pre-existing mental health conditions, adolescents who are victims of abuse or exploitation, adolescents on the move, those living outside of family care, those socially excluded and married adolescents.

An expert reference group will be convened to provide inputs at critical implementation periods, including reviewing research methodology; commenting on the preliminary analysis of findings; and engaging in drafting recommendations. UNICEF ROSA, with support from UNFPA APRO will convene the expert reference group, and the consultant institution will provide necessary inputs and seek guidance from the expert reference group as outlined above.

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3.   SCOPE OF WORK:

The contracting institution will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Designing the methodology for the research. The methodology should include at a minimum:
    *   Review of existing research and general publications on child marriage and COVID-19 in South Asia.
    *   Conduct qualitative research with parents/caregivers, community members, key informants, and adolescents. The research methods should aim to reach a wide range of stakeholders through both online and offline platforms.
    *   The research will cover 3 countries in South Asia: Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. Locations in country to be determined in consulation with the UNICEF and UNFPA country offices with considerations on rural and urban divide.

2. Ethical clearance. As the research will engage directly with adolescents on mental health issues, including vulnerable adolescents, ethical clearance from all three countries where fieldwork will be conducted will need to be obtained prior to fieldwork. The consultant institution is responsible for obtaining ethical clearance in a timely manner and in accordance with specific requirements by the countries if any.

3. Implementation of research methodology, including online research and fieldwork. The consultant institution will be responsible for arranging fieldwork in the three selected countries, either with their own teams or through establishing partnerships with local organizations with the capacity for fieldwork. This will depend on the travel restrictions imposed in each country to mitigate COVID-19. UNICEF will provide support such as letters of introduction, recommendations on local partners, as needed, however, the contracting institution will be responsible for hiring and managing field researchers, establishing local contacts, scheduling, and conducting activities including workshops or focus groups. The consultant institution will be responsible for implementing online survey/research methods.

4. Analysis of the findings and production of a report with input from the expert reference group that at minimum includes the following:

    a.   Executive summary
    b.   Background to the context in South Asia
    c.   Scope and objectives
    d.   Synthesis of findings of the desk review
    e.   Methodology and limitations
    f.   Ethical issues
    g.   Findings
    h.   Recommendations
    i.   One case study per country in the annex.

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5. Presentation and participation in a webinar on the findings of the research with engagement of members of the adolescent reference group. Presentation should include regional and country-specific findings.

The consulting institution will develop an innovative research design to reach key stakeholders including community members, parents/caregivers and adolescents including those that are currently living under COVID-19 restrictions. Due to COVID-19 it is anticipated that the consultant institution may have limited mobility in conducting field research so it will be necessary to develop partnerships with local organizations that do have access to communities in the three countries selected for field work.

4.   DURATION:

The research will be carried out over a period of 8 months from start of the design phase to completion of the report. The research will begin in October 2021 with the inception report and draft methodology and be completed by end of May 2022 with the submission of the final report, presentation and webinar.

5.   WORKING LOCATIONS:

The consultant institution will work from its home base. Meetings with UNICEF, UNFPA, partners and the expert reference group can be conducted virtually.

Field work in three countries (Bangladesh, India and Nepal) will be required however, travel by members of the consultant institution will be dependent on COVID-19 travel restrictions and as such may not be feasible. This should be considered during the design phase of the research methodology and implementation plan.

6.   DELIVERABLES:

No	Deliverable	Estimated number of days required	Estimated Completion Date
1	Inception report: including key findings of desk review, research methodology, timeframe, ethical clearance process and TOR for adolescent reference group.	20 days	15 November 2021
2	Finalized methodology and implementation plan (including partnerships, timeline)	10 days	10 December 2021
3	Ethical clearance	20 days	15 January 2022
4	Field data collection	45 days	31 March 2022
5	Analysis of findings	30 days	15 April 2022
6	Presentation of preliminary findings to expert reference group	2 days	22 April 2022

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7	Draft report and consultation expert reference group	10 days	13 May 2022
8	Final report and presentation for webinar	5 days	27 May 2022
	Total	142 days	

7.   PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Deliverables	% payable	Due date
Inception report	10%	22 November 2021
Finalized methodology and implementation plan	10%	17 December 2021
Presentation of preliminary findings	25%	29 April 2022
Draft report	40%	20 May 2022
Final report and webinar presentation	15 %	3 June 2022

8.   CONTRACT SUPERVISION:

Supervisor of the contract is Regional Advisor, Child Protection.

9.   QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:

The institution must have proved experience and capacity to bring together a multi-disciplinary team including professionals in adolescent and youth development and participation, experience in child marriage programming and research with communities in South Asia.

The team must be composed of members that demonstrate the following capacities:

A)   Education:
   • Advanced university degree in Social Sciences, child protection, gender and human rights.

B)   Work Experience:
   • Over 10 years of research experience in related field of research
   • Experience in adolescent and community participation and development
   • Expertise in child marriage programming
   • Extensive knowledge and experience of research methodologies with expertise in social norms.
   • Experience in undertaking research in South Asia an advantage.
   • Experience in undertaking research on the subject matter for other UNICEF Country Offices is an asset
   • Strong English report writing skills and a proven record of producing high quality reports

C)   Competencies:
   • Good communication skills
   • Ability to communicate well with adolescents

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D) Language Proficiency:
- English report writing and presentation skills

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10.   APPLICATION AND EVALUATION PROCESS:

Each proposal will be assessed first on its technical merits and subsequently on its price. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects. The Evaluation Team first reviews the technical aspects of the offer, followed by review of the financial offers of the technically compliant vendors. The proposal obtaining the highest overall score after adding the scores for the technical and financial proposals together, that offers the best value for money will be recommended for award of the contract.

The Technical Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:

- **Methodology**
  Detailed methodology / approach to requirement detailing how to meet or exceed UNICEF requirements for this assignment

- **Company Profile**
  Ensure to include information related to the experience of the company as required and outlined in this document.

- **References**
  Details of similar assignments undertaken in last *three* years including the following information:
    o   Title of Project
    o   Year and duration of project
    o   Scope of Project
    o   Outcome of Project
    o   Reference / Contact persons

- **Work Plan**
  Proposed work plan showing detailed sequence and timeline for each activity and man days of each proposed team member

- **Team Composition**
  Title and role of each team member

- **CV's**
  CV of each team member (including qualifications and experience)
  Ensure to include information related to the qualifications and experience of each proposed team member as required and outlined in this document.

- Any project dependencies or assumptions

The Financial Proposal should include but not be limited to the following:

Bidders are expected to submit a lump sum financial proposal to complete the entire assignment based on the terms of reference. The lump sum should be broken down to show the detail for the following:

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- **Resource costs**
  Daily rate multiplied by number of days

- **Data collection and field work costs (x 3 countries)**
  Indicate nature and breakdown if possible

- **Travel Costs**
  All travel costs should be included as a lump sum fixed cost.
  For all travel costs, UNICEF will pay as per the lump sum fixed costs provided in the proposal.
  A breakdown of the lump sum travel costs should be provided in the financial proposal.

- **Any other costs (if any)**
  Indicate nature and breakdown

- **Copy of the company registration**

- **Recent Financial Audit Report**
  Report should have been carried out in the past 2 years and be certified by a reputable audit organization.

Bidders are required to estimate travel costs in the Financial Proposal. Please note that i) travel costs shall be calculated based on economy class fare regardless of the length of travel and ii) costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed the applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as propagated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Details can be found at http://icsc.un.org

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11.   EVALUATION WEIGHTING CRITERIA:

Cumulative analysis will be used to evaluate and award proposals. The evaluation criteria associated with this TOR is split between technical and financial as follows:

    80 % Technical
    20 % Financial
    100 % Total

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The attached Annex A provides a detailed breakdown of the evaluation criteria.

Annex A – Breakdown of technical evaluation criteria

Technical Criteria	Decription	Maximum Points
Overall Response	Demonstrates clear understanding of the assignment and alignment of the proposal to the ToR; detail and thoroughness of the proposal in respect of the requirements of the ToR and assignment	5
Methodology and Approach	Clear and effective methodology and approach to the TOR, with defined tasks outlining on how the company will carry out the assignment, including management, monitoring and quality assurance process. Includes approach to engaging adolescents and has demonstrated capacity in working with adolescents for research.	20
Work Plan	Detailed sequence and realistic timeline for each activity	10
	Human and institutional resource allocation aligns to proposal and addresses ToR	
Company Profile	Company's credentials and suitability for the assignment experience in the area of research, mental health and adolescent engagement. Ideally proven experience working in the region and capacity to organize field level work in 3 selected countries. Well connected with CSO and adolescent networks in the 3 selected countries.	5
Team composition, CV's and experience	• A post-graduate qualification in social sciences or related disciplines. An MA is essential, and a PhD is desirable • At least 10 years of relevant professional experience by the lead researcher. • Expertise in child marriage programming with knowledge and experience in social norms research methodologies • Proven knowledge in the area of adolescent mental health • Demonstrated understanding and experience in engaging adolescents and community in research. • Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the South Asian context, and research in 3 selected countries is desirable. • Knowledge of and experience in research report writing. The proposed team should consist of recognised experts in the area covered by this TOR and be consistent with the methodology proposed.	35
Client References	Proof of similar assignments undertaken in last 3 years demonstrating a proven track record with good feedback from clients	5
	Total	**80**