###### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

***Cost-Benefit of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Education across the Humanitarian-Development Nexus***

1. **Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended children's health, education, safety, and wellbeing; increased inequities within and between countries; and disproportionally impacted children and families already affected by prolonged and violent conflicts, forced displacement, climate change and natural disasters. [In 2021, nearly 235 million people around the globe needed humanitarian assistance.](https://www.unicef.org/media/112536/file/HAC-2022-Overview.pdf)

Children and adolescents affected by humanitarian crisis often see their education disrupted and face multiple stressors that can cause great suffering and significantly increase the risk of developing mental health problems. If children have no access to promotive and responsive mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in a timely and context-appropriate manner, this can have [significant consequences](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/emotional-well-being-of-children-and-adolescents_41576fb2-en) throughout a child's life, affecting their development and contributing to poor academic outcomes, higher rates of unemployment and poorer physical health.

Yet children and adolescents are not getting the support and services they need to enjoy good mental health and psychosocial wellbeing due to gaps in data and evidence; poor and/or inconsistent provision of, and access to, good quality services; insufficient human resources and capacity; low expenditure; and stigma around mental health. Overall, mental health is underfunded. [Many governments spend only a few cents per capita](https://www.unicef.org/media/108161/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf) directly on mental health and mainly to deliver psychiatric services, leaving mental health promotion and prevention highly underfunded.

Research has shown that [school-based mental health interventions are linked to mental health benefits](https://www.unicef.org/media/108161/file/SOWC-2021-full-report-English.pdf). Mental health services when embedded within educational systems create a continuum of integrative care that can promote health, mental health and educational attainment. [The literature confirms](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/unicef-mhpss-2020-review-references.pdf) the significance of schools as a location for MHPSS interventions in humanitarian settings. Overall, schools provide the stability, structure and routine that children need when coping with loss, fear, stress and violence, which can improve mental health and resilience. Schools are also a relatively non-stigmatizing setting in which to identify and address children’s mental health concerns, creating opportunities for discussion and reflection on the characteristics of both positive and poor mental health. Moreover, schools are settings that can promote help-seeking behaviours amongst both staff and students and encourage student and staff engagement in preventative health and wellbeing programs.

UNICEF is investing in scaling up and strengthening MHPSS systems, interventions and services across education, child protection and health in development and emergency contexts. The importance of MHPSS in education is highlighted through UNICEF's recently updated [Core Commitments for Children in humanitarian](https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/core-commitments-children) settings, which identify access to appropriate mental health and psychosocial support services as one, among several, organizational commitments for children. UNICEF's overarching vision of MHPSS in education programming is that boys and girls from early childhood to adolescence, particularly the most marginalized and affected by humanitarian situations, learn and acquire skills within a safe learning environment that promotes and responds to their mental health and wellbeing needs.

Integrating MHPSS within Education in Emergencies (EiE) responses contributes to effective learning and helps protect children from the negative effects of crisis and adversity by promoting positive coping strategies, creating stable routines, fostering hope, reducing stress, encouraging self-expression and promoting collaborative behavior.

1. **Purpose and objectives of the consultancy/Contract**

The two main objectives of this project are (1) build cost-benefit evidence to inform MHPSS policies, budget allocation and services in education settings, spanning the humanitarian to development nexus; and (2) deep-dive to three low-income countries affected by humanitarian crises to conduct a more tailored cost-benefit analysis and a scoping exercise of existing policies, laws, strategies and practice around school-based MHPSS services.

There is scarce evidence about investment in promoting and protecting children’s mental health[[1]](#footnote-2) in schools and the cost-benefit of promotive and preventive school-based mental health programmes in terms of their impact on students’ mental health and wellbeing, on academic outcomes and on monetary return in the longer-term, particularly in humanitarian and fragile contexts.

This project will generate data and evidence to show the cost-benefit of how integrating MHPSS services in schools and learning environments can generate a return to both students and society, including mitigating the negative impact of humanitarian crises. The evidence generated will provide policymakers, donors, and education authorities with useful information to make sound decisions, estimate the resources required and invest in a whole-of-school approach to mental health and psychosocial support, spanning the humanitarian to development nexus. At the global level, this initiative would contribute to the rollout of the global advocacy around school mental health, raising awareness of need, and identifying potential mechanisms to increase investment.

The selected institution will conduct a scoping exercise of existing policies, laws, strategies and practice around school-based MHPSS services in three countries affected by humanitarian situations, with available cost-effectiveness evidence gathered and suggestion of future cost-effectiveness analysis made based on data availability. Additionally, and based on evidence gathered through the cost-benefit analysis, the selected institution will conduct a country- specific cost-benefit analysis on delivering promotive, preventive and responsive MHPSS services in schools and learning environments. The results of the application model will be disseminated and launched at the local level in close collaboration with national/local education authorities and partners.

Methodology and Methods

In MHPSS, cost-benefit analyses typically examine the monetary gain that is linked to health results (e.g., prevention of depression and death) from different types of MHPSS interventions without a specific focus on education results. In EiE, cost-benefit analyses usually look at the monetary gain that is linked to education results (e.g., prevention of dropout and learning loss) from different types of educational interventions. The selected institution will build a connection between school-based MHPSS intervention and education outcomes, and to future monetary returns for both the individual and society, both at global level and for the three deep-dive countries. Particular focus will be given to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing of students and teachers, and the prevention of mental health problems among children, adolescents and teachers in EIE contexts.

The methods of data collection and analysis include a desk review of secondary data, policy document review, and quantitative and qualitative data analysis based on the presented statistics and reports. Periodic technical consultation is also to be arranged with a UNICEF technical group to triangulate data and information.

For the scoping exercise, in addition to the desk review, consultations with country stakeholders will be organized through UNICEF country offices in three selected countries. These will include:

* Discussion with policy makers and providers on the impact and lessons learnt of existing school-based MHPSS policies, laws, strategies and practice; and
* Discussion with researchers on the feasibility of future cost-effectiveness analyses for some of the country interventions, referencing literature of school-based MHPSS cost-effectiveness analysis and depending on data availability in the three deep-dive countries.

The above procedures will follow UNICEF’s ethical standards in research[[2]](#footnote-3).

1. **Work Assignments/TOR**

The main assignments for the institution will be:

* **Development of workplans:** Develop a detailed research workplan in consultation with the stakeholders (e.g., UNICEF headquarters and country offices, MOE/MOH/MOSW officials).
* **Planning workshops:** Co-organise and facilitate three national workshops with the stakeholders, supporting corresponding UNICEF COs to set up a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee.
* **Cost-benefit analysis and policy analysis:** Lead overall development and implementation of cost-benefit analysis and policy analysis for global and for the three deep-dive countries.
* **Report writing and development of communication materials:** Develop four 30-page reports for global and the three deep-dive countries, plus development of audience-friendly PowerPoint presentations, policy briefs and a summary of key findings, including infographics.
* **Launch:** Present the findings to governments, UNICEF offices, and relevant partners, and discuss recommendations based on the findings in the global/countries launch events.

1. **Deliverables**

The expected deliverables are as follows:

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| **Phase** | **Deliverable** | **Submission due** |
| **Phase I (20%)**  One month | * Detailed workplans, with literature review and methodological note of data and analysis at global level and for the three deep-dive countries * Outline of the global report * Outline of the country reports | By the end of Phase I  By the end of the first month of the contract |
| **Phase II (60%)**  Four months | * Progress update on cost-benefit analysis, with analytical datasets * Technical notes from country planning workshops (3-5 pages per country) * Initial draft of the global report * Second and final draft of the global report integrating technical comments from UNICEF and partners in school-based MHPSS * For the global report, a policy brief and a summary of key findings, including infographics * Presentation of key findings for the global launch | By the end of Phase II  By the end of the fifth month of the contract. |
| **Phase III (20%)**  Four months | * Initial drafts of country reports * Second and final drafts of country reports integrating technical comments from country stakeholders * For each deep-dive country, a policy brief and a summary of key findings, including infographics * Presentation of key findings for the national launches | By the end of Phase III  by the end of the 9th month of the contract. |

1. **Reporting Requirements**

**Inception report for Phase I due end of the first month**

* Detailed workplans, with literature review and methodological note of data and analysis at global level and for the three deep-dive countries
* Outline of the global report
* Outline of the country reports

**Progress report for Phase II due end of the 5 months**

* Progress update on cost-benefit analysis, with analytical datasets
* Technical notes from country planning workshops (3-5 pages per country)
* Initial draft of the global report (25 to 30 pages)
* Second and final draft of the global report integrating technical comments from UNICEF and partners in school-based MHPSS
* For the global report, a policy brief and a summary of key findings, including infographics
* Presentation of key findings for the global launch

**Final report (and mission reports) for Phase III by end of 9 months**

* Initial drafts of country reports
* Second and final drafts of country reports integrating technical comments from country stakeholders
* For each deep-dive country, a policy brief and a summary of key findings, including infographics
* Presentation of key findings for the national launches

1. **Location and Duration**

• Starting period: the indicative starting date for the assignment: **20 March 2022**

• Foreseen finishing period or duration: **Nine months**

• Indicative schedule of the assignment, activity schedule or project time frame: See table in **“Section 4. Deliverables”**.

• Specific timelines and milestones for individual activities, and whether or not timeframes are negotiable - and if so under what circumstances. **Timelines and milestones are indicated above. The risk of COVID-related travel restrictions is mitigated by the plan to hold workshops virtually in that case. If for any reason UNICEF is unable to respond to materials submitted the timeframe for deliverables can be negotiated.**

• Location(s) and schedule of the assignment: how many journeys/missions are anticipated throughout the contract duration (if required). **There will be three official missions, travel restrictions permitting. Tentatively those countries may be Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Syria, although the participation of those countries is not yet confirmed. Each mission will be two weeks in length, TBD, i.e., possibly two individuals could travel for one week depending on need. For planning purposes, the institution should include $21,000 of spending on travel.**

1. **Qualifications or Specialized Knowledge/Experience Required**

The contractor shall be an institution with at least 10 years of institutional experience in working on children´s education systems and policy including, budgeting in education and educational psychology. The contractor is expected to demonstrate experience doing situation analyses, research, mappings and policy papers in education.

The institution will propose they will assemble a team of experts. It will be at the discretion of the institution the number of these requested experts per category (e.g. team leader, supervisor...etc.) and number of person-days per expert that will be needed to complete the deliverables. The team will comprise members with the following attributes.

* A Masters or advanced degree (Doctoral degree preferable) in economics, education, psychology, social science, public policy or a related field.
* A minimum of 8 years of work experience in conducting research on value-for-money analyses for MHPSS.
* The ability to work with governments and facilitate among various stakeholders
* Expert knowledge and experience in statistics and presentation to non-technical audiences, including generation of analytical graphs/charts/tables in a logical and understandable manner
* Strong analytical skills including analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data
* Effective written and oral communication skills in English is required. Additionally, knowledge of Arabic and/or Portuguese is an asset.
* Sensitivity to diverse opinions and difficulties arising from differing social and cultural perceptions.
* Previous work experience with the UN and, in particular, cost-benefit analyses in MHPSS or EiE.

1. **Evaluation process and methods**

Proposals will be reviewed following a three-step process: An initial administrative check for completeness and compliance, a technical evaluation (**70 points**) and a financial evaluation (**30 points**)

12.1. **Administrative check**

Proposals will first be reviewed for their completeness in terms of the information requested in this TOR and their compliance with its requirements, together with RFP requirement. Only proposals that successfully pass the administrative check will be subject to technical evaluation.

**12.2. Technical evaluation (70 points)**

Proposals will be reviewed against criteria listed in the below table. Only those proposals that score 50 points (minimum threshold) and above will be considered technically compliant and will proceed to Phase 2. All other proposals will be disqualified.

**Technical evaluation criteria**

Minimum technical required score: 50

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Technical Criteria** | **Technical Sub-Criteria** | page8image6808**Maximum score**page8image8464page8image8784 |
| Overall Response | Completeness of response and overall completeness of proposals submitted:   * + Complete proposal with concise approach and methodology detailing the interest to undertake the assignment, relevance of their qualification and experience, and time frame **(10 points)**   + Demonstrate a clear understanding of the assignment (**10 points)** | **20**  page8image14824page8image15144 |
| Overall Experience of institution and team members.page8image17256 | * + The institution’s relevant experience and qualifications as outlined in the TOR. The range and depth of experience in undertaking similar projects or assignments, particularly at a global level. Required qualifications – over 10 years of experience in specific field(s) of work as highlighted in the qualification section above (8 points)   + Experience – demonstrates relevant and practical experience in conducting a similar assignment. (12 points)   + The team leader should have an advanced degree and experience in education, economics, educational psychology, pedagogy, public administration or related social science fields.   + The research team should have extensive work experience and specialized skills in data collection, conducting research on value-for-money analyses for MHPSS.   + The team should possess excellent analytical and writing skills in English (sample products or reports from previous assignments are welcome) and demonstrate strong coordination skills and the ability to adhere to deadlines.   + The team should possess strong communication and presentation skills.   + Previous work experience with UNICEF in a similar capacity is an asset and an added advantage. | **20** |
| Proposed methodology and approach | * + Proposed methodology and approach in undertaking the assignment. | **30** |

**12.3. Financial proposal (30 points)**

The financial proposal will be reviewed separately and should include all costs that will be incurred to successfully compete the assignment, including mission travel.

**Scoring of the financial evaluation**

* + A bidder’s financial proposal score (maximum of 30 points) will be based on the lowest price/OAR (overall average rate) among technically compliant bidders. The formula below will be used to calculate the financial proposal score:

|  |
| --- |
| Max. Score for Financial Proposal (3***0 pts***) \* **OAR** of lowest priced proposal  Financial Score for Proposal X = -----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------  OAR of Proposal X |

* + The proposals will be ranked from lowest to the highest based on the average cost per talent category.
  + Both technical and financial scores will be combined, and the award shall be made to the highest scoring proposal.
  + A risk analysis for possible delays should be included in the technical bid.

1. **Administrative Issues**

The contract will be conducted remotely. No UNICEF resources or facilities will be provided. The mechanism for including travel cost in the bid is outlined in Section 6 above.

1. **Project Management/Contract Supervisor and other stakeholders**

Linda Jones, Senior Adviser Education, [ljones@unicef.org](mailto:ljones@unicef.org), contract supervisor

Haogen Yao, Education Specialist, [hayao@unicef.org](mailto:hayao@unicef.org) – technical supervisor

Nancy Vega, Programme Assistant, [nvega@unicef.org](mailto:nvega@unicef.org) – administrative support to the contract

1. **Payment Schedule (Please link to deliverables to the extent possible):**

**Payment upon deliverables/phases**: UNICEF will make payments based on the achievement and satisfactory receipt of the specific deliverables as listed in the table above. UNICEF does not make advance payment except under certain conditions in line with UNICEF Financial Rules and Regulations.

**Mission travel:** Mission travel can be reimbursed either upon completion of each trip or when invoicing for deliverables. Clear receipts for all airfare/train tickets, airport transfers, meals and incidentals must be submitted for each traveler. Administrative guidance for this will be provided.

*Fees shall be calculated based on the days offered to complete the assignment and shall be considered the maximum compensation as part of a lump sum contract. No additional fees shall be paid to complete the assignment. Payment will be made upon submission and approval of deliverables and full and satisfactory completion of the assignment*

1. Mental health is defined by WHO as “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. Mental health is not a disorder or disease, nor is it the absence of a mental health problem. It's a state of wellbeing that enables human beings to develop the necessary skills to cope with life's challenges and achieve their potential. In this regard, mental health promotion focuses on enhancing individuals and communities' strengths, capacity and resources to improve psychological wellbeing. At the same time, prevention aims to reduce the incidence, prevalence and severity of targeted mental health problems. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/unicef-procedure-ethical-standards-research-evaluation-data-collection-and-analysis> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)