

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

Title	Funding Code	Type of engagement	Duty Station:
Gender analysis of school dropout in Nigeria	Non-Grant (RR); SC189904 (Thematic)	Consultant Individual Contractor Part-Time Individual Contractor Full-Time	Remote
<p>Background and Purpose of the Assignment:</p> <p>As home to approximately 206 million people¹, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, and the population is continuously growing. According to current projections, by 2050, 1 of every 13 births globally will take place in Nigeria². The country has developed policies that guarantee free and compulsory basic education and has seen increasing access to education. Progress in enrolment, however, is threatened by high out-of-school rates, dropout and persistent inequality.</p> <p>The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) reports that 12.7 million children remain out of school, whereas UNICEF's calculations place the figure at 13.2 million³, making Nigeria the country with the largest number of out-of-school children worldwide. Only 36 per cent of children ages 3-5 attend early childhood education programmes, and just 61 per cent of primary school-aged children regularly attend school⁴. While 6 million children enter Primary Level 1 each year, only 3.6 million remain in the system by the end of Junior Secondary Level 3, with 11 per cent on average dropping out at each grade level. It is thus unsurprising that the transition rate from primary to junior secondary school remains low at 59 per cent.</p> <p>Girls, and especially marginalized populations in the North, remain particularly disadvantaged and increasingly so after primary school. The gender parity index (GPI), based on absolute enrolments, in Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara, for example, range from 0.63 to 0.71, meaning at most, there are 71 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in school in these states⁵. Evaluation of the Girls Education Programme (GEP) implemented in northern Nigerian states from 2012 to 2021 reported the average GPI in enrolment at baseline to have been 0.83 compared to 0.97 at endline, with the GPI in some states remaining low (e.g., 0.81 and 0.82 in Zamfara and Niger, respectively)⁶. Location, belonging to internally displaced populations, poverty, and disability compound gender inequality. For example, 25 per cent of boys in rural areas complete junior secondary school, compared to 9 per cent of girls. On average, boys complete one more full year of school (7.6 years) than girls (6.5 years). Moreover, the gender gap in learning outcomes, measured by gender parity in literacy and numeracy at the end of Primary 2 and Primary 4, grew wider between 2015 and 2020⁷.</p>			

¹ World Bank. (2020). Population, total - Nigeria [data set]. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=NG>

² UNICEF. (2017). *Generation 2030 Africa 2.0. Prioritizing investments in children to reap the demographic dividend*. New York: UNICEF.

³ Alegre Associates and Ed Intersect. (2021). *Independent evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of Sustainable Development Goal 4.1 (Education) in Nigeria. Final report*. Abuja: UNICEF.

⁴ National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). *2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2016-17, Survey Findings Report*. Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund.

⁵ UNICEF Nigeria. (2022). Briefing Note: Education Sector in Nigeria.

⁶ Oversee Advising Group. (2021). *Preliminary Findings: Final Evaluation of Girls Education Programme 2012-2021 in Northern Nigeria [Presentation]*.

⁷ Alegre Associates and Ed Intersect. (2021). *Independent evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of Sustainable Development Goal 4.1 (Education) in Nigeria. Final report*. Abuja: UNICEF.

Recent analyses supported by UNICEF indicate multiple barriers to addressing school dropout and ensuring on-time enrolment, transition, and completion of education for all children in Nigeria. On the supply side, these range from insufficient capacity for evidence-based policy and planning, low budget allocation and inefficient release of capital funds to inadequate and unsafe infrastructure, a lack of materials and poor teaching quality. On the demand side, barriers include sociocultural beliefs and practices, safety and health concerns, reliance on children for income generating activities and household chores, and especially poverty. Particularly in the North, these barriers further marginalize girls, whom social norms relegate to domestic roles, as shown by high rates of early marriage and the lack of female teachers, and for whom inadequate economic power remains a significant challenge. Poor maintenance of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and, especially, the absence of private toilets and sanitary facilities for girls, further increase the likelihood that they will be absent from school or drop out due to a lack of safe menstrual hygiene management. On the other hand, school dropout and failure to transition to secondary education has become an area that requires significant attention, particularly in the South of Nigeria, as boys face pressure to join the economy as soon as possible and thus drop out of school to partake in economic and commercial activities⁸.

Gender equality in education is critical for Nigeria to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4, and to uphold its commitment to ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education for all children in the country. The government of Nigeria acknowledges the importance of gender equality to national development in its 2006 National Policy on Gender in Basic Education, which aims to eliminate gender disparities by systematically mainstreaming gender into all components and levels of education. Its objectives are to ensure equitable access to empowering and inclusive education for all by 2030; increase enrolment, retention, completion and transition at all levels of education; provide a gender-sensitive learning environment; promote equal access to quality education devoid of gender discrimination; and reduce failure and dropout rates of girls and boys at all levels.

The Federal Government, together with UNICEF and partners, has also implemented the Girls Education Programme 2012-2021 in Northern Nigeria, which focused on early school enrolment, retention and literacy; regular mentoring and training of teachers; and improving governance. An evaluation found the programme to be highly effective in achieving enrolment and retention, enabling a shift in mindset regarding girls' education and significantly influencing the decision to send and retain girls in school in Niger and Sokoto states. Community ownership, involvement of school-based management committees, Girls 4 Girls initiatives, the role of traditional and religious leaders and improved capacity and commitment among government and stakeholders were identified as key drivers of change, whereas strong-rooted stereotypes, limited funding, difficulty in reaching the most vulnerable communities, and parents' illiteracy were identified as key barriers to change⁹.

In line with the government's priorities, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, UNICEF prioritizes gender equity in its efforts to support the government to strengthen the Nigerian education system and to deliver quality, inclusive education services, including in emergencies and fragile contexts. These efforts are aligned with UNICEF's Gender Action Plan 2022-2025, whose programmatic results includes gender equitable results across all goal areas through integrated policies, as well as the integration of gender analysis into programming and planning. Specifically in

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Overseas Advising Group. (2021). Preliminary Findings: Final Evaluation of Girls Education Programme 2012-2021 in Northern Nigeria [Presentation].

Education, UNICEF's programmatic priorities include gender-responsive education systems and equitable access, as well as advancing girls' education, learning and skills development¹⁰.

Accordingly, UNICEF's 10-Year Programme prioritizes two key outputs to contribute to gender parity in basic education: 1) Communities promote and support school enrolment, participation and completion by all boys and girls; and 2) Adequate and enabling basic learning opportunities are provided for all children through formal and non-formal education. To achieve these, UNICEF identifies four key interventions: 1) Sensitization, advocacy and mobilization to promote girls' education; 2) Behavioural change communications and role modelling with communities; 3) Work with women's empowerment groups, youth groups and traditional and community leaders to ensure all girls and boys can complete basic education; and 4) Support to the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non- Formal Education (NMEC) and State agencies for mass education (SAMEs) to develop and deliver targeted support, including alternative learning offerings that include foundational, life and vocational skills, for girls and boys who have dropped out of school.

With the above outcome, outputs and interventions in mind, UNICEF is commissioning a gender analysis of dropout from basic education among children in Nigeria. This analysis is intended to better enable UNICEF to deliver on intended results and to support the Government of Nigeria to institutionalize effective approaches for improving gender equity in education.

Scope of Work:

The purpose of the gender analysis of dropout is twofold: first, it aims to identify remaining knowledge gaps, including by mapping the availability of and further needs for data on school dropout, retention, transition and completion for girls and boys; and second, it aims to use available data to analyse the situation of school dropout by gender, to compare the situation among girls and boys with different demographic and family attributes, and to understand the factors driving dropout, as well as those which support retention, transition and completion. The work will cover both a national analysis and a specific focus on Oyo State in Southwest Nigeria.

To achieve this, UNICEF is seeking the services of a consultant with experience in conducting mixed methods research, particularly on gender and education in humanitarian and development contexts, and in analysis of education data to inform evidence-based interventions and system strengthening support. Under the supervision of the Chief of Education, and with the guidance and support of the gender advisor, the consultant will be responsible for the following:

1) Desk Review and Data Mapping

- Conducting a desk review of existing policies and academic and grey literature available to-date (including evaluations of Nigeria's progress on SDG 4.1 and of the Girls Education Programme) on the drivers of gender inequality in education in Nigeria, both nationally and with a focus on Oyo State.
- Identifying existing data sources on school dropout, retention, transition and completion and mapping data availability against key objectives (e.g., policies, SDG 4, UNICEF's Gender Action Plan¹¹). This will also involve identifying remaining gaps and further data that might be needed for the government and partners to monitor progress toward closing gender gaps and reducing dropout. [UNICEF's Out-of-School Children's Initiative Methodology](#) and recent updates will guide the data review.

¹⁰ UNICEF. (2021). *UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2022-2025*. New York: UNICEF. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality/gender-action-plan-2022-2025>

¹¹ *Ibid.*

2) Data collection and analysis

- Conducting a secondary analysis of available data nationally and for Oyo State to identify which factors are associated with school dropout, which factors differently impact girls and boys, the relative importance of these factors in determining children’s educational trajectories, and how multiple vulnerabilities intersect.
- Collecting primary data (either through questionnaires, interviews or focus group discussions) with key stakeholders to complement the secondary data analysis and to provide further contextualization of the findings, alongside key insight into the lived realities for marginalized children, particularly girls, in Nigeria.

3) Presentation of findings and recommendations

- Writing a report which includes research questions, desk review, methodology, data mapping, presentation and discussion of results from primary and secondary data analysis, conclusions and recommendations, both nationally and with a specific section focused on Oyo State.
- Producing a series of research and advocacy briefs based on the key findings (e.g., by gender, by geographic area) which can be used with government and partners to plan and deliver targeted interventions.
- Producing a brief roadmap of priorities and next steps for UNICEF and the Government to address the gaps identified and respond to the most pressing needs (e.g., recommendations on bridging data gaps, identification of potential policy priorities, steps for facilitating early identification of dropout risk/establishing early warning systems, etc.)

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:

The consultant will be responsible for collecting primary data on stakeholders’, including children’s and adolescents’, experiences related to school dropout. Depending on the methodology identified by the consultant together with the Education section, this might involve interviews or focus group discussions with adolescent girls and boys, particularly from vulnerable populations. It is envisioned that these discussions would require approximately 4-5 hours of contact with children and adolescents.

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):

If it is determined that the consultant will collect primary data through questionnaires, interviews or focus group discussions with children and adolescents, then the consultant will analyze this data to identify themes and to support the reporting on findings. It is estimated, depending on the number of participants, that this would require approximately 40 hours of interaction with children’s data. Personally identifiable information collected would be limited to age, school grade if applicable and location. The consultant will be required to de-identify all data and destroy it upon completion of analysis.

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](#) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](#)

Budget Year:	Requesting Section/Issuing Office:	Reasons why consultant cannot be done by staff:
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2022	Education/Abuja	This research will involve in-depth policy and literature review, rigorous data collection and analysis and development of multiple knowledge products, including a thorough research report. The researcher will require a strong background in multiple research methods and statistical analysis and will need to ensure that the outputs are delivered according to high standards for quality research and writing. The requirements, in terms of time and human resources, exceed the current capacity of the UNICEF Nigeria staff. At the same time, these capacity needs are short-term for the duration of this research study.	
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 Individual Contract Extension/ Amendment	
If Extension, Justification for extension:			
			Number of Days (working) 62 days (estimated)
Tasks/Milestones	Deliverables/Outputs:		Timeline
Activity 1 (30%): Desk review and data mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 – Desk review of existing policies and academic and grey literature available to date on the drivers of gender inequality in education in Nigeria and Oyo State completed and first draft submitted to Education team for review. 		10 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 – Desk review revised according to feedback from Education team and pre-final version submitted (final version will be included in the final research report) 		3 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3 – Data sources on school dropout, retention, transition and completion identified and a list/database of data sources submitted to the Education team for review and input on potential other sources of data 		3 days

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4 – Data mapping of available sources of data, gender (and other factor) disaggregation, and gaps completed, with attention to the availability of data to monitor policy objectives (identified in the policy review) and SDG 4 progress. UNICEF's Out-of-School Children's Initiative Methodology and recent updates will guide the data review. 	3 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 – Data mapping revised according to feedback from the education team and pre-final version submitted (final version will be included in the final research report) 	1 days
Activity 2 (40 %): Data collection and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 – Secondary analysis of data conducted, and draft report of findings submitted. Findings will discuss factors that are associated with school dropout, which factors differently impact girls and boys, the relative importance of these factors in determining children's educational trajectories, and how multiple vulnerabilities intersect, including both nationally and for Oyo State. 	10 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2 – Plan for primary research and data validation submitted to the education section for discussion. This will include a plan for data collection methods (e.g., semi-structured interviews, stakeholder questionnaires, etc.), participants and sampling, as well as a draft of any tools to be used (questionnaire, interview protocol, etc.). 	3 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.3 – Consultation with Education team (Abuja and relative Field Office staff) held to refine primary research and validation plan. Final version of plan and tools submitted. 	2 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.4 – Primary research plan carried out and a brief report submitted to the Education section on the process (any challenges and how they were resolved, key emerging themes/reflections by the researcher, lessons learned through the primary data collection process, additional needs if any to finalize primary data collection, as well as steps taken for safeguarding children's data) 	10 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5 – Draft report on findings from secondary and primary data analysis (covering national analysis and a specific section for Oyo State) submitted to Education section for review 	5 days
Activity 3 (30%): Presentation of findings and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 – Draft of full report (including research questions, desk review, methodology, data mapping, presentation and discussion on results from primary and secondary data analysis, conclusions and recommendations for national level and Oyo State) submitted to Education team for review. 	5 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.2 – Finalized version of full report submitted to Education team 	3 days

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.3 – Series of 4-6 research and advocacy briefs (1-2 pages each) and PowerPoint presentations (including data visuals) based on key findings to be used with government and partners (including for national level and Oyo State) submitted to Education team as drafts and finalized according to feedback 	2 days
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.4 - Brief roadmap for UNICEF and the Government submitted to the Education team. The roadmap will cover priorities and next steps (nationally as well as for Oyo and other relevant states, depending on findings) to address the gaps identified and respond to the most pressing needs (e.g., recommendations on bridging data gaps, identification of potential policy priorities, steps for facilitating early identification of dropout risk/establishing early warning systems, etc.). 	2 days

<p>Minimum Qualifications required: Bachelors Masters PhD Other</p> <p>Enter Disciplines – Education Development, Education Policy, Social Policy, International Relations, or related field</p>	<p>Knowledge/Expertise/Skills required:</p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 5 years of experience in education research, including quantitative and qualitative methods, in development and/or humanitarian contexts, with demonstrated experience in gender analysis. • A minimum of 3 years working experience with using education data to inform evidence-based decision-making to address key barriers to education access for marginalized populations. • Strong working knowledge of key data sources on education data (MICS, DHIS, UIS, NEDS in Nigeria, and others) is an asset • Experience in mapping data against key policy and international priorities. • Strong knowledge of the Nigerian context and understanding of international development issues, including the status of the humanitarian-development nexus nationally and at the state level in Nigeria, particularly as it relates to education for girls and marginalized populations. <p><u>Other skills and attributes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working with UN agencies or other international development agencies • Strong knowledge of the Nigerian political landscape and recent developments in education • A good understanding of UNICEF’s programmatic areas, namely Education (especially Education in Emergencies), social policy and child protection • Excellent written and oral communication skills, with experience translating evidence for and communicating with a broad range of actors (including government) on sensitive issues • Ability to present ideas concisely for diverse audiences and to give practical, actionable advice grounded in evidence <p><u>Language requirements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency in English is required.
<p>Administrative details: Visa assistance required: Transportation arranged by the office:</p>	<p>Home Based Office Based: If office based, seating arrangement identified: IT and Communication equipment required: Internet access required:</p>

