

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TITLE – *Multiple and Flexible Pathways for Adolescents Consultant*

CONTRACT MODALITY Individual Consultancy

DUTY STATION GPD – Education – Jordan, Amman - Remote

DURATION OF CONTRACT 11 months

Purpose of Assignment

Background UNICEF is committed to ensuring that all children and young people acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to successfully learn, thrive and transition to further learning, decent work, and active citizenship.

UNICEF's mission is to uphold the rights of every child, everywhere. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals and the UNICEF Strategic Plan, the education programme offer is designed so that every child learns, including those furthest from a classroom.

Globally, large numbers of adolescents are out of school, and completion of upper secondary education remains far from universal. In contexts affected by conflict and displacement the position is sharper still: adolescents arrive over-age for their grade, with interrupted or undocumented schooling, and often with a legal status that limits what they are permitted to enroll in. For many of them, the formal system as currently configured offers no realistic point of re-entry. Multiple and flexible pathways exist to address exactly this. UNICEF's global guidance on secondary education sets out the range: accelerated learning, catch-up and remedial provision, bridging programmes, re-integration routes, alternative delivery modalities, and links into technical and vocational training and apprenticeship. Each respond to a different barrier and a different group of learners, and the guidance is explicit that no single model fits all contexts.

Since that guidance was issued the operating environment has shifted. Displacement has become longer and more protracted rather than temporary. Learning loss from prolonged school closure has changed the profile of learners entering these pathways. Digital and remote delivery modalities have moved from the margins to the mainstream. Humanitarian financing has tightened, raising the bar for demonstrating that provision is affordable and leads somewhere.

Three gaps are now limiting progress. First, promising delivery models exist across countries but are documented unevenly and to inconsistent standards, so practitioners cannot readily learn from one another. Second, certification remains the binding constraint: a learner may complete a flexible pathway and find that the certificate does not permit re-entry to formal school, admission to technical training, or recognition by an employer, and in many settings age-and-grade policy or legal status blocks progression regardless of what was learned. Third, country offices and partners designing provision lack practical technical guidance calibrated to displacement settings. This assignment addresses those three gaps. It is anchored in the PROSPECTS partnership countries, which provide the country evidence base, and is designed so that the resulting guidance is usable by the wider community of practice working on flexible pathways in fragile and displacement-affected settings.

Purpose of Activity/Assignment:

The consultant will produce a technical guidance package on multiple and flexible pathways for adolescents in development and humanitarian, developed as a companion to UNICEF's existing global guidance on secondary education and flexible pathways. The package will update the evidence where it has moved, document delivery models that work, address certification and equivalency directly, and provide technical design guidelines that

country offices and partners can apply.

Scope of Work

The consultancy strengthens the design, certification and system integration of multiple and flexible pathways for adolescents in development and humanitarian settings, by consolidating current evidence, documenting effective delivery models, resolving the certification and equivalency question at country level, and producing practical technical design guidance for UNICEF country offices, governments and implementing partners.

Scope parameters

- **Pathway types in scope.** Accelerated learning, catch-up and remedial provision, bridging programmes into formal education or technical training, and re-integration routes. Technical and vocational training is treated as a destination, and a linkage point rather than as the frame of the assignment.
- **Age band.** Adolescents aged 10 to 19, with the precise band and any sub-banding confirmed at inception.
- **Country coverage.** The certification and equivalency scan covers all PROSPECTS partnership countries. Documented models are drawn from these countries and from comparable displacement-affected settings elsewhere where the evidence warrants. Four countries are visited.
- **Audience.** UNICEF country offices, ministries of education and technical training authorities, implementing partners, and the wider community of practice on education in emergencies and flexible pathways.

Time Period The consultancy for the duration over 11 months, December 2026 – October 2027.

Supervisory Arrangement:

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Programme Specialist, and under the overall guidance of the Global Lead, Skills & Secondary Education in the Global Education Practice Amman.

Methodology

The assignment is desk-led, with country visits used to verify and test rather than to generate primary evidence. The consultant will work from existing evaluations, programme documentation, administrative and non-formal provision data, and remote key informant interviews arranged through country office focal points, before undertaking any travel. Key informants are adults: ministry and technical training authority officials, non-formal education providers, implementing partners, country office staff and employers. The assignment does not involve direct engagement with adolescents and does not involve the collection of personal data on learners.

A transparent evidence standard will be agreed at inception and applied consistently to every documented model. Cases will be graded and labelled according to the strength of evidence behind them, distinguishing independently evaluated models from promising ones and from those that are documented but not evaluated. The grading is itself a finding and will be reported as such.

The Consultant is expected to travel to some of the countries to provide consultations and technical support.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline
	Deliverable 1 Inception report and analytical framework. Confirms the pathway types in scope, the age band, the case	15.12.2026. - 10 days

	selection criteria and evidence grading standard, the architecture of the guidance package, and the workplan. Presented to the section for sign-off before analysis begins.	
	Deliverable 2 Multiple and Flexible Pathways Evidence update: what has changed since 2020. Working paper reviewing the evidence, policy and delivery landscape for flexible pathways since the publication of the current global guidance, covering protracted displacement, learning loss and recovery, digital and remote delivery modalities, and the financing environment.	15.02.2027. – 16 days
	Deliverable 3 Documented models. Ten to twelve programme cases documented against a common template and graded transparently against the agreed evidence standard, distinguishing evaluated, promising and documented-but-unevaluated models. Includes two country visits of five days each to observe delivery and verify documentation.	30.04.2027. – 32 days
	Deliverable 4 Certification and equivalency module. Regulatory scan across the PROSPECTS countries establishing, for each, what a non-formal or accelerated certificate entitles a learner to do next and who decides, including age-and-grade re-entry policy, national qualifications framework placement, TVET admission rules,	30.06.2027. – 22 days

	and whether eligibility differs by legal status. Sets out regulatory options with worked country examples and a readiness diagnostic a ministry can apply to itself.	
	Deliverable 5 Technical design guidelines. Design parameters and two to three contextlinked archetypes rather than a single model, covering programme design, teaching and learning, learner support and wellbeing, certification and onward pathways, governance and financing, and a facilitator competency profile. Written to be usable inside and beyond PROSPECTS and structured as a companion to the existing global guidance. Technical design guidelines. Design parameters and two to three contextlinked archetypes rather than a single model, covering programme design, teaching and learning, learner support and wellbeing, certification and onward pathways, governance and financing, and a facilitator competency profile. Written to be usable inside and beyond PROSPECTS and structured as a companion to the existing global guidance.	31.08.2027. – 26 days
	Deliverable 6 Validation, final package and presentation. One facilitated session with country offices and the wider community of practice, final guidance package incorporating feedback, and a presentation deck for	15.10.2027. – 14 days

	strategic and advocacy use.	
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Payment Schedule:

Payment will be made on submission and acceptance of deliverables. UNICEF reserves the right to withhold payment in case the deliverables submitted are not up to the required standard or in case of delays in submitting the deliverables on the part of the consultant.

Important Notes

- Individuals engaged under a consultancy or individual contract will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.
- The selected candidate is solely responsible for ensuring that the health insurance (and visa if applicable) required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract. Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully-vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.
- UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

QUALIFICATIONS / SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE/ COMPETENCIES (CORE/TECHNICAL/FUNCTIONAL) / LANGUAGE SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

- **Minimum requirements:**
- **Education:** Master’s degree in education, development studies, monitoring & evaluation or a related field.
- **Work Experience:** A minimum of 8 years of professional experience in in educa0on systems strengthening, with demonstrated exper0se in Mul0ple Flexible Pathways (MFPs), secondary educa0on, and skills development.
- **Skills:** Proven experience in designing and operationalizing system-level reforms, including integration of non-formal and alternative pathways within national education systems, and alignment with qualification frameworks, certification systems, and learning-toearning pathways. Strong track record of working in humanitarian and development contexts.
- **Language Requirements:** Proficiency in English. Knowledge of Arabic will be an added advantage.

- **Technical Proposal** (1-3 pages) containing the following: Brief understanding of the assignment, proposed approach, and methodology, workplan - timeline and consultant's comparative advantage for the assignment.
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