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# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## Social and Behavior Change (SBC) Consultant – Parenting, Child Protection & Mental Health in the Digital Sphere, Media, and Crisis Contexts

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| **CONTRACT MODALITY** | Individual Consultancy |
| **DUTY STATION** | **UAE, Abu Dhabi, Remote with travels** |
| **DURATION OF CONTRACT** | **1.38 months** |

****** Two consultants will be recruited, with each consultant assigned to one of the two pillars. ******

### Purpose of Assignment

The primary objective of this consultancy is to design, implement, and monitor evidence-based SBC strategies, campaign framework, communication packages and community engagement tools addressing parenting support, child and adolescent mental health, child protection and wellbeing in the digital environment. These initiatives will promote positive parenting & mental health and digital safety for children while providing behavioral guidance during crises and unexpected school closures across the Gulf region, starting in UAE, to be later tweaked to each of the Gulf countries.

### Scope of Work

**Pillar 1: Parenting SBCC Strategy, Mental Health & Child Protection in the Digital Sphere**

**Behavioral Insights**: build on existing documentation including the UAE parenting vision and quality parenting support guidelines, and conduct a rapid behavioral desk review to identify key behaviors, barriers, and opportunities related to the following:

- Digital consumption patterns, online risks (cyberbullying, grooming), and help-seeking behaviors among UAE youth.
- Parental engagement and shared caregiving responsibilities (fathers and mothers) on positive parenting and children's mental health and wellbeing
- Parenting SBCC strategy: develop a national Parenting SBCC Strategy that translates recommendations from the Parenting Vision and Quality Parenting Support Guidelines, together with findings from the behavioral analysis, into practical communication, engagement and behavior change actions. The strategy should build on relevant national initiatives and frameworks and promote: positive parenting practices; active engagement of both fathers and mothers; inclusive and shared caregiving; positive parent-child communication; awareness and uptake of reliable parenting support services; and greater support for vulnerable families, including families of children of determination
- Toolkits for Caregivers: Based on behavioral findings, develop actionable guidance and behavioral nudges for parents to support positive parenting including guidance to: managing children's screen time, spot signs of online distress, and foster open dialogue about digital safety, and encouraging positive father engagement

This involves a desk review, light behavioral analysis, through few groups with parents.

**Output:** Report of the desk review, National Parenting SBCC Strategy, Parenting Communication and Campaign

Package, with recommendations for the toolkits and plan for rolling out the kit (where to reach parents?).

**Pillar 2: Responsible Media Engagement & Public Campaigns**

- Media Guidelines: Draft regional guidelines for digital providers, media professionals and content creators on safe, stigma-free reporting of child mental health issues. This is complemented with a practical media training component to support the effective adoption and application of the guidelines. This needs the engagement of an experienced international media trainer to support the delivery of this training,
- Parenting Communication and Campaign Package: Develop a comprehensive Parenting Communication and Campaign Package aligned with the Parenting Vision, SBCC Strategy and UAE national and cultural values. The communication approach should: reflect family cohesion, respect, responsibility and positive caregiving; be inclusive of Emirati, expatriate and migrant families; ensure accessibility and inclusion of families and children with disabilities; position parenting support as a positive, practical and accessible resource for all families, rather than as a response only when families experience difficulties; and promote consistent and reinforcing messages across government, community, service delivery, digital and media channels. Based on the behavioral findings and identified target audiences, the package should include: campaign strategy; messaging framework and key messages; campaign themes; social media content framework; community engagement concepts and materials; recommended communication channels; and campaign dissemination and implementation plan.
- Youth Co-creation: Convene youth focus groups to co-design peer-to-peer messaging around mental well-being and digital safety.

This takes a desk review of a quick screening of media and digital providers in relation to messaging for young people and safeguarding their mental health and 5 working focus groups with young people, each covering one area: mental wellbeing, first aid mental health, digital safety, managing digital media and AI, communicating with parents.

**Output:** Parenting communication and campaign package, media guidelines, x people trained and ready to adopt, peer messages cocreated with young people, and a social media-based promotion plan for the messages. i.e. in your words: the campaign strategy, messaging framework, key messages and creative direction, with design and production to follow separately, then this additional support may not be necessary. Clarifying this distinction would help define the scope appropriately.

| **Work Assignments Overview** | **Deliverables/Outputs** | **Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable** |
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| **Consultant 1 task**<br>**Pillar 1: Parenting SBCC Strategy, Mental Health & Child Protection in the Digital Sphere** | | |
| Review existing parenting, child protection, mental health and digital safety evidence, including the UAE Parenting Vision and Quality Parenting Support Guidelines. | Inception report and detailed methodology | 27/11/2026 |
| Conduct a rapid behavioral desk review and light behavioral analysis, complemented by consultations/ focus groups with parents and | Rapid behavioral review and analysis report, including consultation findings and prioritized behavioral insights | 30/12/2026 |

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| caregivers, including fathers and families of children of determination | | |
| Identify key behaviors, barriers, motivators, social norms, and opportunities related to: parental engagement and shared caregiving responsibilities on positive parenting, digital consumption patterns, online risks (cyberbullying, grooming), and help-seeking behaviors among UAE youth, children's mental health, screen use, online risks and help-15. | | |
| Develop a national Parenting SBCC Strategy with a theory of change, building on relevant national initiatives and frameworks and promote positive parenting practices; active engagement of both fathers and mothers; inclusive and shared caregiving; positive parent-child communication; awareness and uptake of reliable parenting support services; and greater support for vulnerable families, including families of children of determination | National Parenting SBCC Strategy and implementation/monitoring framework | 30/12/2026 |
| Develop recommendations and content specifications for practical caregiver tools and behavioral nudges, including screen-time management, recognition of online distress, parent-child dialogue, digital safety and positive father engagement.<br>Define the rollout and dissemination approach for reaching diverse families through government, community, service-delivery, digital and media channels | Caregiver toolkit recommendations, content outline and rollout plan. | 30/12/2026 |
| **Consultant 2 task**<br>**Pillar2: Responsible Media Engagement & Public Campaigns** | | |

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| Undertake a rapid screening of media and digital-provider practices and messages affecting child and adolescent mental health, wellbeing and digital safety. | Media and digital-provider rapid screening brief. | 28/11/2026 |
| Draft regional guidelines for digital providers, media professionals and content creators on safe, stigma-free reporting on child's mental health issues. | Regional responsible-media guidelines and practical training package. | 10/12/2026 |
| Design practical media-training materials to support the effective adoption and application of the guidelines. This needs the engagement of an experienced international media trainer to support the delivery of the training. | Media training delivered | 18/12/2026 |
| Develop a comprehensive Parenting Communication and Campaign Package aligned with the Parenting Vision, SBCC Strategy and UAE national and cultural values. The communication approach should: reflect family cohesion, responsibility and positive caregiving; be inclusive of Emirati, expatriate and migrant families; ensure accessibility and inclusion of families and children with disabilities; position parenting support as a positive, practical and accessible resource for all families; and promote consistent and reinforcing messages across government, community, service delivery, digital and media channels. Based on the behavioral findings and identified target audiences, the package should include: campaign strategy; messaging framework and key messages; campaign themes; social media content framework; community engagement concepts and materials; recommended communication channels; and campaign dissemination and implementation plan. | Parenting Communication and Campaign Package, including dissemination plan. | 30/12/2026 |

**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.
- Contracts are conditional upon the selected candidate's willingness to comply with any current or future vaccination requirements that may be established by UNICEF, where applicable. Failure to comply with applicable vaccination requirements, where required and without an approved medical exemption by UNICEF, may result in the withdrawal of the consultancy offer or termination of the contract in accordance with the General Terms and Conditions of Contract.
- 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 social and behavioral sciences, psychology, communication for development (C4D), or other related field.

**Work Experience:**

- Documented media experience, training media professionals and designing public awareness campaigns or behavior change toolkits targeted at youth and caregivers.
- Minimum of **5 to 7 years** of progressive professional experience in designing and executing SBC strategies, specifically within child protection, mental health, or digital safety sectors.
- Prior experience with UN agencies or international NGOs is highly desirable.

**Language Requirements:**

- Fluency in English and Arabic (written and spoken) is required, as deliverables must be contextualized for local Gulf audiences.

**Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:**

- Strong familiarity with the cultural, social, and digital landscape of the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** countries.

- Strong analytical skills with the ability to translate complex psychological and protection concepts into simple, actionable behavioral messages.
- Excellent stakeholder management skills to coordinate effectively across regional governments, media houses, and country offices