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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior Consultant: Digital Learning and AI in Education

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	**Nairobi, Kenye, Office-based with travel**
DURATION OF CONTRACT	**11.5 months**

Purpose of Assignment

Under the overall guidance of the Chief of Education and the direct supervision of the Education Specialist, Quality Learning and Skills Building, and in collaboration with UNICEF Innovation and Child Protection teams, as well as UNICEF Global Center of Excellence (COE) and Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), the consultant will provide management of UNICEF Kenya's broad digital learning and AI in Education portfolio, linked to the KCO EdTech Strategy and Global Digital Education Strategy and organizational AI strategies.

Background and Justification - The Government of Kenya aims to accelerate socio-economic development through strategic digital transformation. This ambition is anchored in key policy frameworks, including the Kenya Digital Economy Blueprint and the Kenya Digital Masterplan (2022–2032), both of which prioritize ICT infrastructure expansion, innovation, and digital skills development. Within the education sector, this vision aligns with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and the ICT in Education and Training Policy (2021), positioning digital learning as a cornerstone for building a knowledge-based economy where learners not only consume information but also create knowledge.

Significant progress has been made to embed ICT across Kenya's education system. Primary and secondary schools are increasingly equipped with digital devices and internet access, supported by key national initiatives:

- The Digital Literacy Programme (DLP): Following a primary school rollout under Phase 1, DLP Phase 2 focuses on equipping junior secondary schools with essential digital learning tools.
- Last-Mile School Connectivity: Led by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, and the ICT Authority—with support from development partners—programmes such as Giga and the National Optic Fiber Backbone Infrastructure (NOFBI) are expanding broadband connectivity to remote and underserved learning institutions.

Kenya is also establishing a robust environment for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies. Grounded in the Kenya National AI Strategy 2023 and the draft National AI Policy currently under Cabinet review, AI is rapidly entering classrooms, institutions, and government systems. To govern this landscape, the Ministry of Education, supported by UNICEF, is developing dedicated Guidelines on the Use of Emerging Technology and AI in Education. While AI offers powerful opportunities to personalize learning, strengthen systems, and expand inclusion, its swift integration necessitates clear safeguards addressing equity, data privacy, child online safety, assessment integrity, and the evolving role of teachers.

Despite these advancements, deep-seated regional disparities and infrastructural deficits continue to perpetuate educational inequities. Unequal access to electricity, devices, and connectivity risk excluding the most vulnerable children, particularly those in rural and hard-to-reach areas - from quality learning opportunities. Bridging this digital divide requires scalable, evidence-based innovations in school connectivity and digital pedagogy that enable interactive teaching, support real-time learner tracking, and improve overall foundational learning outcomes.

As an EdTech frontrunner, Kenya was selected under Cohort One of the Global UNICEF Digital Education Strategy and receives dedicated support through high-profile partnerships, including Google, the Mastercard Foundation Resilience in Secondary Education (RISE) programme, the EU-funded Last-Mile Connectivity project (targeting 1,000 schools and 369,400 learners), the Akelius Digital Language Learning pilot in Dadaab Refugee Camp, PROSPECTS 2.0, and the regional Airtel Partnership. Guided by UNICEF's universal equity mandate under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, these joint initiatives leverage digital tools to eliminate barriers to education and ensure that every child—regardless of gender, location, or ability—can develop and reach their full potential.

The fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does- in programmes, advocacy and in operations. The equity strategy, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families, translates this commitment to children's rights into action. For UNICEF, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias, or favoritism. To the degree that any child has an unequal chance in life - in its social, political, economic, civic, and cultural dimensions- her or his rights are violated. There is growing evidence that investing in the health, education, and protection of a society's most disadvantaged citizens- addressing inequity not only will give all children the opportunity to fulfill their potential but also will lead to sustained growth and stability of countries. Therefore, the focus on equity is so vital. It accelerates progress towards realizing the human rights of all children, which is the universal mandate of UNICEF, as outlined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while also supporting the equitable development of nations.

Scope of Work

Under the overall guidance of the Chief of Education and the direct supervision of the Education Specialist (Quality Learning and Skills), the Education Specialist has the following key functions/accountabilities:

- Contribute to the design and management of digital learning and AI in Education initiatives that are aligned with UNICEF Global Digital Education and AI Strategy, KCO EdTech Strategy, and that complement the GoK education objectives of enhancing digital learning and skills for improved learning outcomes.
- Provide advice and technical support on DL programme and innovations, drawing on UNICEF policies, strategies, processes, and best practices at the global, regional and CO levels that will shape UNICEF's contributions and engagements in the overall EdTech space in Kenya.
- Provide overall technical guidance on UNICEF's engagement in DL aligned to the UNICEF KCO Ed-tech strategy of 2024
- Contribute to the deployment of accessible and sustainable scaling up of school internet connectivity through consideration of the enabling environment, including affordable data costs, quality digital content development and adaptation, enhancement of software component of school connectivity project under the last mile school connectivity digital literacy and pedagogical skills for teachers and teacher training initiatives on ICT integration in education including learning assessments.
- Support monitoring of key DL activities implemented by UNICEF and Implementing Partners (IPs) and use the information gathered to document relevant data, lessons, and best practices for wider use within the EdTech community of practitioners and to inform key decisions both internal to UNICEF and within.
- Contribute to the development and quality control initiatives during the deployment of digital learning initiatives-with strong focus on the including of the most marginalized/vulnerable children in the deprived counties targeted. Including contributing to institutional consultancy procurement processes, generation and review of relevant technical To Rs, and vendors/MNO technical performance as guided by the supervisor.
- Contribute to KCO's DL and Skills advocacy, networking and partnership building efforts including knowledge sharing and resource mobilization to enhance DL programmes and other relevant priority areas as needed.
- Support development of appropriate DL tools for surveys/assessments and share information with stakeholders to assess progress on school internet connectivity, overall progress on ICT Integration and collate relevant data from connected schools and document challenges with recommendations from ongoing interventions in schools. Report on critical issues, bottlenecks, and potential implications to the

education programme.

- Provide relevant technical support in identifying, new innovations, capturing/synthesizing, and sharing lessons learned for knowledge development and contribute to capacity development of stakeholders. Participate in relevant internal and external DL/education program meetings to provide technical and operational information, advice, and support relevant to enhancing digital learning and skills development, including drafting of DL briefs, and other strategic program materials for management use, information and/or consideration. Represent UNICEF in ed-tech forums as relevant. Participate at the EU PSTC & Ed-tech wub-working group as necessary.
- Plan and undertake field programme monitoring visits, including joint PMVs with stakeholders to assess progress and challenges and documents best practices and lessons from implementation.

Summary of key Accountabilities:

1. Strategic planning and technical support for innovation in education, digital learning and artificial intelligence: Provide technical inputs and advisory support for the implementation of UNICEF's Global Digital Education Strategy in Kenya as a Cohort One country. Develop and maintain implementation plans, programme approaches, budgets, priorities, progress reports and research inputs, and facilitate technical engagement with KCO management and the UNICEF Global Center of Excellence to support alignment and informed decision-making.

2. Technical coordination and implementation support for donor-funded digital education programmes: Provide day-to-day technical coordination, implementation support and quality assurance for major donor-supported initiatives on digital learning and the use of technology in education, including Google, Last Mile Connectivity of Schools, Airtel and Akelius. Track agreed workplans, deliverables, risks and results, and provide timely technical updates and recommendations to the supervisor.

3. Support for expanded access to curriculum-aligned digital content: Provide technical assistance to government counterparts and partners to expand the availability, accessibility and use of quality, curriculum-aligned digital content on government platforms, including the Kenya Education Cloud and the CEMASTEA Virtual STEM Portal. This includes supporting the adaptation and rollout of carbon literacy content and virtual science laboratories.

4. Research, evidence generation and knowledge management for digital learning: Coordinate the digital education research portfolio in Kenya by preparing research plans, supporting the onboarding and technical coordination of research partners, refining research questions, and overseeing agreed data collection, analysis, documentation and dissemination processes to strengthen the evidence base for programming and policy dialogue.

5. Capacity strengthening of implementing partners and relevant UNICEF personnel: Assess priority capacity needs and design and deliver targeted technical training, coaching and knowledge-sharing sessions for Last Mile Connectivity of Schools implementing partners and relevant UNICEF personnel on blended learning approaches and other agreed digital learning topics.

6. Technical support for holistic, inclusive and responsible ICT integration in education: Support implementation of Last Mile Connectivity in Schools and related programmes, including PROSPECTS, by ensuring that teacher professional development, digital skills, appropriate digital content, inclusion, child online protection and responsible technology use are addressed alongside school connectivity and device-procurement interventions.

7. Resource mobilization and partnership development for digital education: Support the identification and assessment of funding and partnership opportunities, and prepare concept notes, proposals, briefs and resource-mobilization inputs to strengthen financing for equitable and sustainable digital education in Kenya, under the guidance and clearance of the supervisor.

8. Policy and systems-strengthening support for digital education and AI in education: Provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and other government partners and stakeholders to strengthen the enabling policy environment for digital education and the responsible use of AI in education. This includes supporting evidence reviews, stakeholder consultations, preparation and review of policy and guidance documents, workshop processes, and follow-up actions agreed with UNICEF and government counterparts.

Work Assignments Overview	Deliverables/Outputs	Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable
Inception Report	**Inception Report**	31 Jan 2027
AI in Education Policy	**Strengthening the policy environment for digital education and use of AI in Education by providing technical support to MoE, SAGAs and stakeholders** to advance a) Evidence gathering to support effective policy development and (b) drafting of policy documents through workshop	31 March 2027
Digital Education Content	**Provide technical support to expand availability of curriculum-aligned digital content on government platforms,** including Kenya Education Cloud and CEMASTEA Virtual STEM Portal. This includes advancing adaptation of carbon literacy content and virtual science labs *(including Carbon Literacy Content on KEC & Virtual STEM Labs on CEMASTEA Portal)*	31 March 2027
Google Education Project	**Technical support to major donor-supported projects focused on digital learning and use of technology in education** and provide technical oversight. Oversee	1 December 2027

	research for digital education in Kenya including through development of research plans, onboarding research partners, defining research questions, and overseeing data collection and analysis to strengthen the evidence base through – a) Research; b) Project Design; c) Project Implementation; d) Management of Implementing Partners and; e) Reporting	
Holistic integration of digital education throughout KCO Education Portfolio	**A) Support through technical support the implementation of KCO DLP projects** e.g. Last Mile Connectivity in Schools, PROSPECTS, RISE, Airtel, and Akelius by ensuring that soft elements of teacher training, digital skilling, content development and others are paired with responsibility with school connectivity and device procurement initiatives.	30 September 2027
	B) Provide targeted training to Implementing Partners on Blended Learning Approaches and other relevant topics	30 September 2027
Digital Education Strategy Implementation	**Technical leadership in development and implementation of the strategy for implementation of the Global Digital Education Strategy**, for which Kenya is part of Cohort One for implementation. This includes developing plans, programs, budgeting, prioritization, reporting, research, and engagement with country management and the Center of Excellence to ensure alignment	30 November 2027

	(including Reporting, Budgeting, Strategy updating and technical guidance on DLP at KCO education - linked to Digital Educ Strategy implementation matters).	
Resource Mobilization	**Technical inputs for DLP proposals supporting identification of new resource opportunities and strategies** to improve financing for digital education in Kenya *(including inputs or drafting DLP proposals & Concept Notes, partnerships alignments and reporting).*	31 October 2027
Technical support/Capacities' enhancement to UNICEF Education IPs	**Technical support to UNICEF Education IPs on implementation of DLP in their PDs, including monitoring** field visits/face-to-face or online capacities enhancements on implementation of DL components in PDs	30 June 2027
Reporting	**Support DLP data and evidence generation** collation of information for donor reporting + internal briefs.	31 August 2027
Final Reporting	**Final Report(s)**	15 December 2027
Travel	In-country travel within UNICEF KCO's 14 education target counties with a maximum of 10 field visits during the contract period: Turkana, West Pokot, Samburu, Garissa, Mandera, Wajir, Tana River, Marsabit, Nairobi, Kajiado, Kilifi, Bungoma, Busia and Homa Bay.	To be decided and approved prior to travel by section chief & supervisor

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:

- Education: An advanced university degree (master's degree or equivalent) in any of the following fields - Educational Technology, Digital Learning, ICT in Education, Computer Science, International Development, Public Policy, Social Sciences, Education Planning, or any other relevant field directly related to digital transformation and innovation in education.

Work Experience:

- At least 10 years of progressively responsible professional experience in programming, including demonstrated technical expertise in digital learning and implementation of Digital Literacy Programmes (DLP) initiatives, ICT integration, EdTech or related education-technology programmes. Previous relevant experience with UNICEF or another UN agency is an added advantage.

Knowledge/Expertise/Skills:

- Strong technical knowledge of digital learning, ICT integration, EdTech, and the responsible use of AI in education.
- Ability to design and implement digital education strategies, programmes, and school-connectivity initiatives.

- Strong programme-management skills, including planning, research, monitoring, quality assurance, and donor reporting.
- Ability to provide technical assistance and strengthen the capacity of government counterparts and implementing partners.
- Strong analytical, communication, partnership-building, and knowledge-management skills.

Language Requirements:

- Fluency in English

Desirables:

- Experience applying digital learning approaches in low-resource, rural, refugee, or other underserved settings.
- Experience supporting government-led digital education policy, responsible AI guidance and online safety.
- Familiarity with Kenya's education system, Competency-Based Education, and national digital learning priorities and EdTech ecosystem.
- Experience coordinating donor-funded programmes with research institutions, EdTech providers, and mobile network operators.
- Practical experience embedding disability inclusion, child online protection, data privacy, and safeguarding in digital education programmes.