unicef | for every child

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Senior Consultant (Childhood in an Aging World Initiative): Strategic Research, Partnership and Coordination Support

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	**Amman, Jordan** & remote
DURATION OF CONTRACT	5 months and 2 days

Purpose of Assignment

UNICEF is developing a new analytical and policy initiative tentatively titled "Childhood in an Aging World", focused on the implications of rapid population ageing and population decline for children and future generations.

While ageing has traditionally been analysed through pensions, labour markets and care for older persons, UNICEF's interest is in understanding the implications of demographic change for children, adolescents and young people. In many countries, ageing is occurring alongside declining fertility, shrinking child populations and increasing fiscal and political pressures. At the same time, smaller generations of children may create opportunities for greater per-child investment, stronger human capital development and improved child outcomes, depending on policy choices made today.

Initial discussions have highlighted the need for a sharper analytical framing focused specifically on rapidly ageing and shrinking societies and the opportunities and challenges these trends create for children. Rather than producing a single flagship report, UNICEF intends to develop a series of shorter analytical products addressing different dimensions of demographic change and childhood.

To support the design and operationalization of this initiative, UNICEF seeks an experienced senior consultant to provide evidence synthesis, conceptual development, partnership mapping, coordination support and strategic advice. The consultant will help shape the overall research agenda, identify priority policy questions, assess evidence gaps, map potential partners and contributors, and support development of the governance arrangements and implementation roadmap for the initiative.

The consultant will not be responsible for producing the thematic analytical products themselves. Rather, the consultancy will focus on developing the overall initiative in coordination with the UNICEF management team for this work, along with developing the research architecture and partnership framework that will guide subsequent analytical work.

Scope of Work

Under the supervision of the Senior Advisor, Social Protection (GPD-ESP) and in coordination with a UNICEF management team for the initiative, the consultant will provide strategic research, coordination and partnership support to advance the Childhood in an Aging World initiative. **UNICEF will lead the substantive agenda, partner engagement and governance processes**, with the consultant serving as a senior technical adviser and coordinator.

Workstream 1: Evidence Review and Gap Analysis

The consultant will conduct a targeted review and synthesis of existing literature and analytical work relating to:

- Population ageing and population decline.
- Child-focused implications of demographic change.
- Fertility decline and shrinking child populations.
- Intergenerational equity.

- Care systems and intergenerational care.
- Education systems in contexts of demographic decline.
- Social protection and demographic change.
- Wealth transfers, inheritance and inequality.
- Automation, productivity and demographic transition.
- Relevant UNICEF and broader megatrends analysis.

The review should identify:

- Existing evidence and major findings.
- Key policy debates.
- Knowledge gaps.
- Existing initiatives and ongoing research.
- Areas where UNICEF can make a distinctive contribution.

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Workstream 2: Development of Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda

Building on the evidence review, the consultant will support UNICEF in refining the overall narrative and policy framing for the initiative.

This will include:

- Identifying and prioritizing core policy questions.
- Testing alternative analytical approaches.
- Clarifying UNICEF's comparative advantage.
- Developing a conceptual framework and theory of change.
- Identifying opportunities for comparative and longitudinal analysis.
- Developing recommendations on the overall structure of the initiative.

Workstream 3: Design of the Analytical Series

The consultant will support development of a proposed analytical series comprising a set of thematic policy and research products.

Responsibilities will include:

- Identifying and prioritizing 4-6 thematic briefs.
- Defining the rationale, objectives and research questions for each theme.
- Recommending sequencing and timing of outputs.
- Assessing opportunities for comparative cross-country analysis.
- Preparing concept notes for proposed thematic products.

Potential themes may include, but are not limited to:

- Investing More in Every Child in Ageing and Shrinking Societies.
- Care Systems, Grandparents and the Intergenerational Care Economy.
- Education Systems in Contexts of Population Decline.
- Demographic Change, Wealth Transfer and Child Inequality.
- Automation, Productivity and Children's Futures.
- Intergenerational Equity and Public Investment in Children.
- Maintaining Access and Equity for Children in Depopulating Areas: Rethinking Service Delivery in Ageing Societies

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Workstream 4: Partnership, Governance and Coordination Support

The consultant will support UNICEF in establishing the foundations required to implement the initiative.

Responsibilities will include:

- Mapping potential institutional partners.
- Identifying researchers, academic institutions and policy experts.
- Developing proposals for policy dialogues and knowledge exchanges.
- Supporting preparation of governance arrangements.
- Drafting TORs and proposed membership criteria for internal and external reference groups.

The consultant will provide technical and administrative support to these processes. UNICEF will retain responsibility for partner engagement, final partner selection, establishment of reference groups and overall leadership of the initiative.

Workstream 5: Ongoing Strategic Advisory Support

Throughout the consultancy, the consultant will:

- Serve as a sounding board for the UNICEF team.
- Review presentations and concept materials.
- Help test emerging arguments and policy recommendations.

Support thematic discussions across UNICEF sectors and with external partners

Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable**
Deliverable 1	**Deliverable 1** – Inception Report and workplan, including methodology, stakeholder mapping approach, and detailed timeline.	20 December 2026
Deliverable 2	**Deliverable 2** – Evidence Review and Gap Analysis, including literature review, mapping of ongoing initiatives, assessment of evidence gaps, preliminary recommendations for research priorities.	18 January 2027

Deliverable 3	**Deliverable 3** - Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda, including refined narrative, theory of change, priority policy questions, and proposed analytical approach.	28 February 2027
Deliverable 4	**Deliverable 4** – 4.1 Framework for the Childhood in an Aging World Series, including proposed thematic briefs, research questions, suggested methodologies, sequencing and publication roadmap. 4.2 Partnership and Engagement Strategy, including partner mapping, potential country contributors, policy dialogue framework, and partnership recommendations.	31 March 2027
Deliverable 5	**Deliverable 5 -** Governance Package and Final Roadmap, including internal and external reference group TORs, governance structure, and final implementation roadmap and presentation.	30 April 2027

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:

Advanced university degree (Master's or higher) in one or more of the following:

- Social Policy
- Public Policy
- Economics
- Demography
- International Development
- Sociology
- Related discipline

Work Experience:

- Minimum 10 years of progressively responsible experience in social policy, public policy, economics, demographic analysis or related fields.
- Demonstrated experience designing major research, policy or analytical initiatives.
- Strong understanding of child and family policy issues, including social protection, care systems, human capital development or related sectors.
- Experience synthesizing evidence and translating research into actionable policy recommendations.
- Experience working with multilateral organizations, governments, research institutions and development partners.
- Strong partnership development and stakeholder engagement experience.
- Demonstrated project management and coordination skills.
- Experience working across multidisciplinary teams.

- Experience supporting global or multi-country research initiatives.
- Familiarity with UNICEF mandate and programming.

Experience working with academic institutions and research

Language Requirements:

•Excellent written and spoken English is required.
•Knowledge of another UN language (particularly French, Spanish or Arabic) is an asset.