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TERMS OF REFERENCE

TITLE – Engagement, Uptake and Capacity Building Consultant – Children and the Global Debt Crisis

CONTRACT MODALITY	Individual Consultancy
DUTY STATION	**New York, remote**
DURATION OF CONTRACT	6 months

Purpose of Assignment

Rising debt service burdens are constraining the fiscal space that governments need to invest in children. In many low - and middle-income countries, interest payments on public debt now exceed spending on health or education, with direct consequences for children's rights and well-being today and for the human capital on which future growth depends. UNICEF has led the preparation of a book on Children and the Global Debt Crisis, which brings together evidence, analysis and policy options on how sovereign debt affects children and how debt architecture, fiscal policy and financing decisions can better protect investments in them.

The manuscript is close to submission. The value of the book will depend on what happens next: whether its evidence and recommendations are understood, used and built upon by UNICEF Country Offices, Regional Offices and headquarters teams, by government counterparts and partners, and by the academic and policy community. This requires deliberate, sustained work on engagement, messaging and capacity building, timed to key policy moments, rather than a one-off launch.

The purpose of this consultancy is to support UNICEF in maximizing the uptake and impact of the book. The consultant will help maintain clear and consistent key messages, plan and prepare for key events, support Country Office dissemination plans, coordinate an internal capacity-building series with authors and speakers, develop a plan for engagement with external partners such as universities (including an external webinar series), and produce simple, accessible products that make the book's con tent easy to share and use.

Scope of Work

Under the supervision of the Partnerships Manager, and in close collaboration with the book's editors and authors and relevant headquarters, regional and country offices, the consultant will support the strategic communication, dissemination and uptake of the book's findings, ensuring their effective use in policy dialogue, advocacy, research and programming.

The assignment will focus on five mutually reinforcing areas:

• Key Messages and Strategic Positioning: Develop and maintain a coherent, evidence-based set of key messages grounded in the book's findings and recommendations, tailored to UNICEF staff, government and finance counterparts, development partners, and academic and research audiences. Prepare supporting materials, including FAQs and speaker talking points, and ensure consistent messaging across communication products, presentations and events.

• Milestones, Events and Country Office Support: Develop and maintain a calendar of key publication, launch and policy engagement milestones across the research countries and regions. Coordinate preparations for up to four priority events, including briefing notes, agendas, speaker materials and follow-up. Support selected Country Offices in adapting dissemination materials for national events and policy discussions, and document examples of how the book informs policy dialogue and programming.

• Internal Learning and Capacity Building: Design and coordinate a series of four interactive learning sessions for UNICEF staff, working closely with the book's authors and relevant technical experts. Support session planning, speaker coordination, preparation of materials, facilitation and follow-up, with a focus on strengthening staff capacity to communicate and apply the book's findings in policy dialogue, advocacy and programming.
• Academic and Institutional Engagement: Develop and implement a targeted engagement approach with universities, research institutes, think tanks and policy networks to promote the book's use in teaching, research and policy discussions. Identify and prioritize up to 15 relevant institutions, coordinate tailored outreach and follow-up, and facilitate opportunities for collaboration, including up to two joint webinars with academic and institutional partners.
• Development of Communication and Knowledge Products: Draft, edit and coordinate the production of up to six accessible, audience-specific products to support dissemination and practical uptake of the book's findings. These may include policy summaries, presentations, thematic briefs, articles, blogs, explainers, FAQs and data visualizations.
Products will be developed in consultation with the supervisor, grounded in the approved manuscript and tailored to clearly defined audiences and intended uses. This may also include exploring AI-enabled approaches to organizing and presenting public-facing knowledge products through a centralized digital resource hub, to facilitate access to and continued engagement with the book's findings.

Work Assignments Overview	**Deliverables/Outputs**	**Delivery deadline to complete the deliverable**
1. Inception, milestones calendar and engagement plan	• Inception note confirming priorities, target audiences, working arrangements and work plan for 60 working days, building on previous communications and dissemination efforts (January-September 2026). • Shared calendar covering publication, launch, priority policy events and academic engagement, updated as needed, across the research countries and regions. • Stakeholder map covering key internal and external audiences	5 January 2027 – 12 days
2. Key messages and strategic event support	• Approved master message set tailored to UNICEF staff, government and finance counterparts, development partners and academia. • Two-page FAQ and adaptable speaker talking-points template. • Preparation and follow-up for	31 January 2027 – 12 days

	up to four priority events, including briefs, agendas, speaker materials and action logs. • Updates to messages at major policy or publication milestones, as needed.	
3. Country Office dissemination support	• Overview of selected Country Office dissemination plans and opportunities. • Practical support to adapt key messages, presentations and other materials for national events and policy discussions. • Tracker documenting requests, support provided and examples of uptake in policy dialogue, advocacy and programming	28 February 2027 – 12 days
4. Internal learning series	• Overall coordination and planning, including session plan and speaker schedule, for four learning sessions (60–90 minutes each). • Coordination of speakers, briefing materials, slides and facilitation. • Recording links where permitted, attendance and questions log, and a one-page takeaway for each session.	31 January 2027 – 12 days
5. Academic and institutional engagement	• Prioritized list of up to 15 universities, research institutes, think tanks and policy networks. • Tailored outreach materials and short pitch deck. • Coordination of up to two joint webinars with academic partners. • Engagement tracker and concrete follow-up proposals for	28 February 2027 – 12 days

	interested institutions.	
6. Communication and knowledge products	• Up to six agreed, audience-specific products, selected based on clear dissemination needs (e.g., one-page overview, slide deck, thematic summary, article/blog, explainer/FAQ or data visual). • Coordination of technical review and clearance. • Final editable versions organized in a shared repository. • Maintenance of "Children and the Global Debt Crisis" internal SharePoint, including updating materials consistently. • Explore the feasibility of developing an external-facing digital dashboard or resource hub for Children and the Global Debt Crisis, potentially leveraging AI- enabled tools such as Microsoft Copilot, to bring together key messages, policy briefs, blogs, event recordings and links (including the UNGA event), and other public-facing communication products in an accessible, user-friendly format. Subject to feasibility and available time, develop an initial prototype or concept for future implementation.	16 June 2027 – 12 days
7. Final report and handover	• Concise final report summarizing deliverables, engagement, uptake, lessons learned and recommendations. • Organized repository of approved products, calendars, trackers and learning materials.	16 June 2027 – 12 days

	• Handover briefing and forward-looking calendar for the following six months.	

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**
- Advanced university degree in economics, public policy, international development, public finance, social sciences or a related field. A first university degree combined with additional relevant experience may be accepted in lieu of an advanced degree

- **Work Experience**
- At least 7 years of relevant professional experience in research uptake, knowledge management, policy engagement, capacity building or related areas.
- Experience designing and coordinating learning or capacity-building events, including webinars and multi-session series with multiple speakers.

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- Experience supporting country-level teams in the use of research or policy products is an asset.

- **Skills**
- Strong organizational and interpersonal skills, with the ability to work independently and manage multiple stakeholders remotely.

- **Language Requirements**
- Excellent English writing, editing and synthesis skills; working knowledge of French and/or Spanish is an asset.

- **Desirables**
- Familiarity with UNICEF and the UN system is an asset. Proficiency in Microsoft 365 tools, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Teams and SharePoint, CoPilot.

- **Technical proposal required.**

  Candidates should submit the following:

  1. Brief technical proposal (maximum 2 pages) outlining:

  • Their proposed approach to promoting the dissemination, engagement and uptake of the Children and the Global Debt Crisis book among UNICEF offices, government counterparts and academic partners.

  • Their approach to designing capacity-building activities and developing accessible knowledge products for different audiences.

  • Key priorities and proposed milestones for the six-month assignment.

  2. Two or three samples of previous work (maximum 5 pages each) demonstrating relevant experience. These may include:

  • Writing samples, such as a policy brief, blog, explainer or FAQ intended for a non-specialist audience.

  • Examples of previous work on research uptake, dissemination, engagement or capacity building, such as a concept note, session plan or dissemination strategy.

  Candidates should briefly indicate their role in producing each sample.