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INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT - MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS) AND EDUCATION

Parent Sector : Education Sector (ED)

Duty Station: Bangkok

Classification of duty station:

Standard Duration of Assignement :

Job Family: Education

Type of contract : Non Staff

Duration of contract : From 7 to 11 months

Recruitment open to : External candidates

Application Deadline (Midnight Paris Time) : 27-AUG-2023

UNESCO Core Values: Commitment to the Organization, Integrity, Respect for Diversity, Professionalism

OVERVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE POST

1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Good physical and mental health and well-being enable children's access to and participation in education, because children learn better when they are physically and mentally healthy, well-nourished and safe. As defined by the WHO, mental health refers to 'a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community'. To better enable children and young people to realize this positive outcome, diverse practitioners working in this field advocate for and support access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), which refers to any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental health conditions.[1]

Creating an enabling learning environment that safeguards psychosocial well-being, and where all learners

and education personnel feel included, supported and valued, has been agreed as a policy priority by Ministers of Education and broader education sector partners in Asia-Pacific in the [Bangkok Statement](#) of the second Asia-Pacific Region Education Ministers' Conference (APREMC, Bangkok, June 2022). These education priorities were further affirmed at the UN Secretary General's [Transforming Education Summit](#) (TES, New York, September 2022) where member states recalled that effective integration of mental health in schools can improve learning outcomes, help identify at-risk learners and provide support, and reduce the likelihood of mental health concerns developing into more severe mental health problems and risk behaviours.

[1] UNICEF. 2019. [Mental health and psychosocial technical note](#). New York, UNICEF.

Enhancing mental health literacy, positively addressing school/ learning culture and academic pressures, and enhancing capacity of the education workforce are all essential, whole-of-education approaches to mental health promotion.[2] Indeed, the education sector is uniquely positioned to support mental health and psychosocial well-being by, inter alia: supporting young people's social and emotional learning, skills- and resilience-building; promoting positive peer relationships; facilitating access to screening and referral; ensuring access to counselling and providing initial management of mental health conditions.[3] Approaches carried out at multiple levels of the education system, with engagement of partners in other sectors such as health and social welfare, should also be aligned with over-arching, evidence-informed standards and guidance on school health [4], [5] and specific guidance on MHPSS in the education sector. [6]

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] UNICEF. 2022. *Strengthening mental health and psychosocial support systems and services for children and adolescents in the East Asia and Pacific region. Regional Conceptual Framework and Report*. Bangkok, UNICEF.

[4] WHO and UNESCO. 2021. *Making every school a health-promoting school: global standards and indicators for health-promoting schools and systems*. Geneva, WHO.

[5] WHO. 2021. *WHO guideline on school health services*. Geneva, WHO.

[6] WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF. 2022. *Five essential pillars for promoting and protecting mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments*. New York, UNICEF.

Within the framework of its organizational [Strategy on Education for Health and Well-being](#) and to further realize the priorities and commitments by countries and development partners expressed at APREMC and TES, UNESCO Bangkok is evolving a suite of work to build capacity of countries in the Asia-Pacific region for enhancing MHPSS in and through education. In this regard, since late 2021 to the present, UNESCO Bangkok has embarked on the following:

- Design of an Excel-based, MHPSS review and assessment tool aimed at supporting Ministries of Education in Asia-Pacific region to review and assess their readiness and response efforts in addressing learner and teacher mental health and psychosocial well-being needs. A Beta-version of the tool has been field-tested together with the Department of Education in the Philippines (June, 2023) and field-testing is planned in a second country in Quarter 4 of this year;
- Advocating with education policy makers for MHPSS programmes as a key component of quality education and enabling learning environments, including in relation to addressing school violence and bullying and as part of comprehensive school health approaches;
- Highlighting findings from available data on the relationship between learners' psychosocial well-being and learning outcomes, including to respond to learning loss as a result of COVID-19-related school closures, and outlining research priorities to close the gap on evidence and inform future practice in this area.

This evolving body of work of UNESCO Bangkok has involved close collaboration with other partners in Asia-Pacific, notably UNICEF's regional offices for East Asia and Pacific (EAPRO) and South Asia (ROSA), and key agencies of the Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on School Health, Nutrition and Education.

2. PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

To provide project coordination, implementation advice and country-focused technical assistance to implementation of activities of the UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office in Bangkok (UNESCO Bangkok) in Asia-Pacific on MHPSS in and through education, specifically related to: (i) the revision and finalization of a draft MHPSS review and assessment tool for the education sector, including planning, design and delivery of a field-testing workshop for same; (ii) original research on approaches to integrating MHPSS in and through education; with focus on teacher capacity for delivering universal prevention approaches to MHPSS in schools; (iii) country uptake and roll-out of key technical and operational frameworks on MHPSS in the education sector.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the overall authority of the Director of UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office in Bangkok (UNESCO Bangkok), the overall guidance of the Chief of Unit for Inclusive Quality Education, and the direct supervision of the Regional Advisor on Education for Health and Well-being, the select consultant is expected to provide technical assistance, project coordination and implementation support to activities in Asia-Pacific of UNESCO Bangkok on MHPSS in and through education, specifically through the following tasks:

1. Analysis, revision, testing and finalization of a draft MHPSS review and assessment tool for the education sector.

(i) Critically review, analyze and further revise the content and structure of the existing draft, Excel-based MHPSS review and assessment tool in preparation for field-testing in a second country. Further revisions must apply relevant knowledge of different assessment methods and procedures relevant to education sector policy and programming and should also be based on the following inputs to be provided to the consultant by UNESCO Bangkok: the current version of the draft MHPSS tool in Excel and Word formats; an initial field-testing report from the Philippines; documented feedback from technical peer reviewers; and, a limited list of supplementary reading materials (less than 10 reference items);

(ii) Coordinate the convening and work of an expert reference group, led by UNESCO Bangkok, aimed at providing technical input to the revision and finalization of the draft MHPSS review tool (max 10 persons who will provide at least two rounds of review). This will include, inter alia: developing the reference group's TORs, membership and workplan; arranging the reference group's virtual meetings and documenting the agreements of those meetings; communicating with, analyzing and collating feedback from reference group members on iterative versions of the draft MHPSS review tool, and giving expert advice on the group's recommendations to be implemented;

(iii) In consultation with national education authorities, respective UNESCO and UNICEF field offices in the second field-test country (Fiji, TBC), design the agenda, materials, activities and evaluation for the in-person field-testing workshop of the draft MHPSS review tool. Coordinate the logistic planning for, and lead the facilitation of the in-person workshop that will take place in Quarter 4 of 2023 (October, TBC); evaluate the outcomes of the workshop and make specific proposals on actionable

recommendations; and, write-up the workshop's outcome report (s), including a summary report to be submitted to the national education authorities and a report of specific recommendations to UNESCO Bangkok for the further revision of the draft MHPSS review tool;

(iv) Finalize the MHPSS review tool on the basis of consolidated peer review and findings of the field-testing in the two participating countries;

(v) Draft an approach for the launch and public promotion of the final MHPSS review tool, to be carried out by UNESCO, UNICEF and relevant partners. Support the logistic planning for, and lead the facilitation of the launch event in Quarter 2 of 2024 (dates, TBC).

UNESCO Bangkok will provide technical inputs to the workshop agenda for the in-country consultation and will lead on logistic preparations for the country consultation, including the provision of simultaneous language interpretation as required. Any travel costs by the consultant to participate in these meetings will be covered directly by UNESCO Bangkok as part of the overall meeting budget.

2. Technical advice and coordination of research on approaches to integrating MHPSS in and through education.

(i) In consultation with UNESCO Bangkok and collaborating partners, further revise an existing draft project document for original research in selected Southeast Asian countries on practices for strengthening MHPSS in the education sector, with focus on teacher capacity for delivering universal prevention approaches to MHPSS in schools. Further revisions will entail, inter alia: contributing technical inputs to the proposed research objectives, scope, key questions to be investigated and roles of collaborating partners; and, developing a costed workplan and results logframe. The research is tentatively expected to span an initial 10-month phase and involve quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary data collected from the agreed Southeast Asian countries (specific countries and their number to be confirmed);

(ii) To support 2.(i) above, conduct desk-based literature review of existing global and (sub) regional technical and operational guidance, research reports, analytical toolkits and implementation checklists, including in emergency and crisis contexts, for approaches in formal education settings to supporting teacher and learner well-being. This will include the specific considerations of vulnerable groups of children as well as identifying any gender differences. Desk review will only highlight English-language materials and focus primarily on published materials and grey literature by UN and other development or humanitarian programme partners;

(iii) Contribute to the establishment and work of an expert reference group, convened by UNESCO Bangkok, aimed at providing technical input and guidance to the implementation of the research. Such support will include, inter alia: developing the reference group's TORs, membership and workplan; arranging the reference group's virtual meetings and documenting the agreements of those meetings; communicating with and collating feedback from reference group members on draft inputs to, and outputs from the research;

(iv) Support technical oversight and implementation of the research, including: drafting a Call for Proposals from, and assessing bids submitted by interested research institutions to carry out the research; reviewing and supporting quality-assurance of key inputs/outputs by the research implementing partner(s) such as draft research methodologies, bibliographies of reference material,

mapping of data collection sources, design of data collection instruments, findings of numerical and narrative analyses, content and structure of reports and other research products, providing to the Regional Advisor suggestions for improvements and recommendations on next steps, as appropriate;

(v) Provide monitoring support to, and regular written summaries of research implementation by documenting progress of key activities conducted and results achieved, noting any adjustments made to the delivery of the agreed project workplan;

(vi) Develop a 16-page technical brief on emerging findings and key messages of the research for joint publication by UNESCO and partners.

3. Guidance and implementation backstopping to country uptake, contextualization and roll-out of key technical and operational frameworks developed by UNESCO, UNICEF and partners on MHPSS in the education sector, ensuring linkages with complementary programme streams on quality, inclusive education; comprehensive school health; school violence prevention and child protection.

(i) Provide analytical technical review and feedback on country-level MHPSS workplan(s) being implemented with UNESCO's financial support by national education authorities in at least two countries (Philippines and Bhutan, TBC), in coordination with relevant field offices of UNESCO and UNICEF;

(ii) Provide support to monitoring and public awareness-raising of country-led implementation on MHPSS education initiatives being supported by UNESCO and partners, through regular written project reports and news/promotional articles for web and social media, as appropriate;

(iii) Develop country case studies of country-level implementation of MHPSS integration in and through education in each of the supported countries, in consultation with relevant field offices of UNESCO and UNICEF and national implementing partners;

(iv) Based on the lessons learned from implementation, draft recommendations to UNESCO Bangkok on potential plans and future opportunities for UNESCO's continued technical and financial support to MHPSS programme implementation in the education sector at country-level, in the already-supported countries and prospective additional countries in the region.

4. TIMETABLE AND DELIVERABLES

The consultant will be required to work during the period **September 2023 to July 2024** (tentatively).

The deliverables for this consultancy shall be the following (submission dates provisional):

No.	Deliverables	Timeline
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revised draft MHPSS review tool for second round of field testing; draft field test workshop agenda; - TORs and workplan for the MHPSS review tool expert reference group; - TORs and workplan for MHPSS research expert reference group; - Costed workplan and results logframe for the MHPSS research; 	September 2023

2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report of MHPSS review tool field testing in-country workshop and recommended next steps, with annexes of all workshop materials (max 30, A4 pages); - Implementation progress report of the MHPSS research (including literature review conducted; - Feedback and recommendations provided on the selection of the research implementing partner and their submitted research methodologies and data collection tools; - Notes of meetings and consolidated inputs of the expert reference group) (max 50, A4 pages, including annexes); 	December 2023
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation progress report on technical assistance to country uptake and roll-out of MHPSS technical and operational frameworks, with case studies for each country supported (max two, A4 pages including visuals); - Draft text of the MHPSS research technical brief; 	March 2024
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final MHPSS review and assessment Excel tool and draft approach for its launch; - Final copy-edited and proof-read text of the technical brief of the MHPSS research findings (max 16, A4 Pages); - News/promotional articles for web and social media of MHPSS country level implementation by the education sector; - Recommendations to UNESCO for future MHPSS programme support to national education authorities in Asia-Pacific; 	July 2024

5. LOCATION AND TRAVEL

The consultant will be home based in any location, working remotely. The consultant should be available to meet with the UNESCO team (online) during office hours of Bangkok, Thailand and may expect at least one, in-person meeting at UNESCO Bangkok Office, along with at least one field mission in Asia-Pacific to support delivery of the consultancy's scope of work. Costs related to any duty travel or physical presence at the UNESCO Bangkok office and any in-person participation by the consultant at in-country consultation workshop(s)/meeting(s) outside of their normal place of residence will be separately covered by UNESCO.

The Specialist may be required to travel on missions directly related to projects and implementation during the assignment. The Specialist should travel economy class and receive DSA at the standard rate (and which should be reduced, as necessary, when the number of days of DSA exceeds the limits stipulated in the table of rates published by ICSC). DSA is only payable to individuals carrying out assignments away from their usual place of residence or work. The Specialist is expected to make her/his own travel arrangements and should be provided with a lump sum to cover travel-related expenses in accordance with UNESCO rules and regulations. Travel-related expenses (e.g. the cost of tickets, terminal fares and DSA) must be fixed and agreed between the parties. The Individual Specialist is responsible for obtaining UNDSS security clearance prior to each approved mission.

6. SUPERVISORY ARRANGEMENTS

The consultant will be directly supervised by, and report to the Regional Advisor on Education for Health and Well-being, UNESCO Bangkok. In addition to the submission of contract deliverables, the contractor will routinely engage with the Regional Advisor and members of the Education for Health and Well-being team

through emails and virtual meetings. Upon commencing the consultancy, the consultant will participate in an initial online meeting with UNESCO Bangkok to reconfirm the parameters of the consultancy and to update, as needed, the consultancy approach to work and timeline, to define required sub-tasks and interim outputs to be carried out as a contractor and the supportive inputs required from UNESCO and collaborating partners on the respective MHPSS activities.

COMPETENCIES (Core / Managerial)

Accountability (C)

Communication (C)

Innovation (C)

Knowledge sharing and continuous improvement (C)

Planning and organizing (C)

Results focus (C)

Teamwork (C)

Professionalism (C)

For detailed information, please consult the [UNESCO Competency Framework](#).

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Education

- An advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in field such as education, school health, social and emotional learning, psychosocial well-being, mental health, adolescent health, public health, social work, psychology or social science or other relevant fields.

Work Experience

- A minimum of five (5) years of extensive professional expertise, practical involvement and field experience in any of the pertinent technical domains mentioned above. Submission of a minimum of two (2) references from projects in the field showcasing proficiency in these subject areas is mandatory.
- Proficiency in conducting research and analysis within any of the specified technical areas, utilising qualitative and quantitative methodologies appropriate for programme evaluation.

Skills/Competencies

- Excellent analytical, oral and written communication skills, including the production of written content for both specialist and generalist audiences.
- IT infrastructure, software and devices to support remote meetings, communication and online/digital data collection, as appropriate.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Excel or similar common applications.

Languages

- Fluency in spoken and written English.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Work Experience

- Strong understanding of UNESCO's mandate in education and its strategy on education for health and wellbeing
- Experience working in the Asia-Pacific context and demonstrated understanding of education systems in this region, including familiarity with mental health impacts on, and responses by the education sector related to COVID-19.
- Previous experience working with the UN and/or other multilateral, bilateral and civil society development partners.

- Previous exposure to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts across multiple countries concurrently, involving coordination with partners in this operational setting.
- Prior experience in developing multi-sectoral approaches to addressing mental health and psychosocial support needs of young people, including in post-crisis or emergency contexts.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligibility

The consultancy is open to suitably qualified individuals.

Submission of Application

Interested individuals are invited to submit the application and requirements through the UNESCO Careers website at <https://careers.unesco.org/careersection/2/joblist.ftl>

Interested candidates should click on “**Apply Now**” and download and complete the Employment History form (Word document) in ‘Employment History Form / My Documents’. Before uploading the document, at the end of the Word document, please insert the extra pages with the following required information:

- An updated Curriculum Vitae (CV) and a cover letter indicating how your qualifications and experience make you suitable for the assignment.
- Written technical and financial proposals (in English) consisting of
 - Technical Proposal
An approach and methodology for the assignment, a workplan and comments on the Terms of Reference if any (in brief). The Technical Proposal should demonstrate the consultant’s response to the Terms of Reference by identifying the specific components and how the intended objectives/outputs/delivery shall be addressed.
The technical proposal should not exceed 5, A4 pages, including specific references to relevant examples of successfully undertaking equivalent or comparable assignments.
 - Financial proposal, quoted in US dollars, including budget breakdown with a rate per unit (cost per person/day)

UNESCO places great emphasis on ensuring that the objectives of the work assignment, as described in the Terms of Reference, are met. Accordingly, in evaluating the proposals for the assignment, attention will focus first and foremost on the technical elements. From those proposals deemed suitable in terms of the criteria in the Terms of Reference, UNESCO shall select the proposal that offers the Organisation the best value for money.

The complete application shall be submitted on or before **27 August 2023** (Midnight Paris time). Please note that only pre-selected candidates will be contacted.

Queries of a technical nature about these TORS may be directed to: ehwb.bgk@unesco.org

SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Please note that all candidates must complete an on-line application and provide complete and accurate information. To apply, please visit the [UNESCO careers website](#). No modifications can be made to the application submitted.

The evaluation of candidates is based on the criteria in the vacancy notice, and may include tests and/or assessments, as well as a competency-based interview.

UNESCO uses communication technologies such as video or teleconference, e-mail correspondence, etc. for the assessment and evaluation of candidates.

Please note that only selected candidates will be further contacted and candidates in the final selection step will be subject to reference checks based on the information provided.

UNESCO recalls that paramount consideration in the appointment of staff members shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, technical competence and integrity. UNESCO applies a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of harassment. UNESCO is committed to achieving and sustaining equitable and diverse geographical distribution, as well as gender parity among its staff members in all categories and at all grades. Furthermore, UNESCO is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Candidates from non- and under-represented Member States ([last update here](#)) are particularly welcome and strongly encouraged to apply. Individuals from minority groups and indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Worldwide mobility is required for staff members appointed to international posts.

UNESCO does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process.

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