

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the establishment of an Institutional Contract

Programme/Project Title:	<i>National communication campaign on Inclusive Education: Bringing Inclusion and Respect</i>	
Consultancy/Services Title:	<i>Institutional consultancy for disability inclusion campaign and multi-stakeholder engagement</i>	
Consultancy Mode:	National ☒ International ☐	
Mode of selection	Competitive ☒ Single Source ☐	
Location	Kyrgyz Republic	
Travel	In country travel	
Duration of Contract:	From: November 2026	To: August 2027/~10 months

1. Background

Children with disabilities remain among the most excluded and marginalized groups of children, facing significant barriers to accessing, participating in, and completing quality education that equips them with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to thrive. Despite global and national commitments to inclusive education, many children and adolescents with disabilities continue to be excluded from learning opportunities or are unable to benefit fully from education due to physical, social, attitudinal, and systemic barriers. The 2023 *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (MICS) for the Kyrgyz Republic provides the latest nationally representative evidence on children and women, including disability-disaggregated data across key areas such as education, health and social protection. The inclusion of child functioning data for children under five and children aged 5–17 offers an important evidence base for designing inclusive education and SBC interventions that respond to the barriers faced by children with disabilities and their families.

Evidence consistently demonstrates that children with disabilities are at heightened risk of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, institutionalization and social isolation across multiple settings, including homes, schools, communities and online environments. These risks are often compounded by stigma, discrimination, harmful social norms, and misconceptions about disability, which can undermine children's dignity, participation, wellbeing, and access to protection and support services. Evidence from the 2021 UNICEF study on *Social attitudes towards children with disabilities and their families* highlights that stigma remains widespread and is reinforced throughout prevailing narratives and limited social inclusion. Media representation often portrays persons with disabilities through a lens of pity, charity, and passive beneficiaries, or alternatively as exceptional “heroes”, rather than as individuals with rights and agency. At the same time, there is limited visibility of children with disabilities in everyday context, and narrow portrayal of disability that does not reflect its diversity. Families, particularly fathers, are underrepresented as active agents of inclusion.

These patterns contribute to broader social norms that position children with disabilities primarily as recipients of care, reinforcing dependence, rather than as rights-holders and active members of society. These findings confirm that stigma is reinforced through:

- Media representation;
- Social norms;
- Limited interaction with persons with disabilities.

Under SmartED project funded by Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Islamic Development Fund (IsDB), UNICEF supports the Ministry of Education in strengthening institutional and school-level capacities well as establishing supportive enabling environment for inclusive education in local communication and society at large to operationalize inclusive education as a core priority of the national education reform. Ministry of Education and UNICEF Kyrgyzstan will address persistent social norms and discriminatory attitudes towards children and adolescents with disabilities and their families, at both national level and at the local level in the 10 pilot communities around the inclusive schools.

The list of the identified schools is as follows:

1. N. Davlesov Secondary School No. 3, Kemin District, Chui Oblast;
2. Alekseevka Secondary School, Jaiyl District, Chui Oblast;
3. N. Orozaliev Secondary School No. 3, Ala-Buka District, Jalal-Abad Oblast;
4. Tazhibay Murzaparov Secondary School, Batken District, Batken Oblast;
5. Shukurbek Beyshenaliev Secondary School, Ak-Talaa District, Naryn Oblast;
6. Manas Secondary School No. 10, Balykchy City, Ysyk-Kol Oblast;
7. Secondary School No. 5, Talas City, Talas Oblast;
8. Third International Secondary School, Kara-Suu District, Osh Oblast;
9. A. Navoi Secondary School No. 18, Osh City;
10. Secondary School No. 11, Bishkek City.

A key component of this effort is the development and implementation of a national communication/SBC (Social and Behaviour Change) campaign, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, local education stakeholders, media, communities, and the private sector.

The campaign shall be implemented in full alignment with the SmartED Communication Strategy and its visibility objectives. In addition to promoting inclusive education and disability inclusion, the campaign shall contribute to increasing public awareness and understanding of the SmartED Project and of the support provided through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). All communication and visibility activities undertaken under this assignment shall comply with UNICEF requirements and applicable SmartED branding and visibility guidelines.

UNICEF will apply a Social and Behaviour Change approach for the campaign to address the social norms, attitudes, and behaviors that contribute to the exclusion of children with disabilities. The campaign will move beyond raising awareness and seek measurable shifts in attitudes, community participation, and inclusive behaviors among families, educators, media professionals, community leaders, private sector actors and the general public. The campaign will be grounded in a human rights-based approach, promoting children with disabilities as rights-holders, active participants, learners, community members, and agents of change.

The campaign design and assets will be informed by the findings of the baseline research conducted in the above-mentioned 10 pilot schools which will generate a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the current status of inclusive education readiness at system and school levels, including social and behavioral elements, which will inform the design, targeting and implementation of the pilot intervention in 10 schools. It will also inform the community engagement which is foreseen under the scope of this TOR.

2. Purpose and specific objectives

The overall purpose of this assignment is to design and implement an evidence-based Social and Behavior Change and communication campaign, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, aimed at advancing the meaningful and equal participation of children with disabilities in schools and society, promoting positive social norms, reducing stigma and discrimination and strengthening community support for inclusive education at a national level and in/around 10 pilot communities identified in Section 1 above.

Specific objectives:

The SBC/Communication Campaign will pursue the following specific objectives:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of disability inclusion and inclusive education among key audiences;
- Promote positive attitudes toward children with disabilities as equal members of society with rights, aspirations, and capabilities;
- Strengthen supportive social norms that encourage enrolment, participation, learning, and wellbeing of children with disabilities;
- Improve representation of disability in media, digital platforms, and public discourse through rights-based and inclusive storytelling;
- Strengthen engagement of parents, caregivers, communities, educators, media and private sector actors as champions of inclusion;
- Build capacity of communication professionals, media actors and partners to apply disability-inclusive communication standards;
- Generate evidence and learning on effective SBC approaches for disability inclusion and inclusive education;
- Increase awareness and understanding of the SmartED Project as per the requirements of the SmartED Communication Strategy;
- Ensure consistent visibility of the SmartED Project and its funding partners through all campaign materials, events, media engagement activities and digital communication products, in accordance with the SmartED Communication Strategy and branding requirements.

Expected results:

- Increased public exposure to positive and rights-based representations of children with disabilities;
- Improved attitudes toward disability inclusion among campaign target audiences.
- Increased community engagement in support of inclusive education in the ten pilot communities;
- Strengthened capacity of media, government and private sector stakeholders to communicate responsibly and inclusively;
- Stronger participation of children with disabilities and their families in public dialogue and advocacy.

Suggested primary audience:

- Children, adolescents and youth with and without disabilities;
- Parents/caregivers and families of all children;
- Teachers and other school personnel;
- Media professionals;
- Community/religious leaders;
- Executive and Representative bodies of Local Self-Governance;
- Community around 10 pilot schools;
- General public.

Secondary audience:

- Government;
- Private Sector.

Alliance building with other key stakeholders

The Business Advisory Council for Children (BACC) is a UNICEF-led platform that engages private sector partners to advance children's rights through responsible business practices, advocacy, innovation and social impact initiatives. Under this assignment, the selected agency will work closely with UNICEF and BACC members to mobilize private sector engagement in support of inclusive education and disability inclusion. Private sector partners will be encouraged to amplify campaign messages, adopt disability-inclusive communication standards, support awareness initiatives, and contribute to changing social norms affecting children with disabilities and their families through their corporate communication channels, customer engagement platforms, employee networks, and public-facing activities.

3. Description of the assignment, incl. key tasks

A. Communication Strategy Development

The successful offeror will develop an evidence-based SBC and communication strategy subject to approval by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in accordance with the objectives of the GPE/ISDB SmartED Project.

Key tasks:

- Conduct audience analysis using available research and baselines findings;
- Identify behavioral insights, barriers, social norms and drivers (in consultation with and through engagement of the children and youth with disabilities, caregivers, and representative organizations of persons with disabilities throughout campaign design, testing, implementation, and validation);
- Develop audience segmentation (minimum 6 target groups of the primary target audience identified above);
- Develop messaging framework, tailored to each audience group, that promote protection, inclusion, participation, and respect for the rights of children with disabilities;
- Develop a Campaign Action Plan as a part of Inception Report with clear phases and implementation calendar and in alignment with the SmartED Communication Strategy;
- Prepare standardized co-branded communication templates for use across campaign activities and community events;
- Suggest methodology for the campaign using the mixed channels (digital, media, community, private sector);
- Develop the campaign monitoring framework based on the agreed campaign KPIs.

B. Campaign Development and Implementation

Prepare an overall campaign implementation plan, including the creative concept, phasing, channel mix, production schedule, dissemination plan, stakeholder engagement approach, risk mitigation measures, accessibility requirements, approval workflow and monitoring arrangements for UNICEF and Ministry of Education review and approval before production and rollout.

The successful offeror would include the following but these are subject to UNICEF approval and may be refined within the agreed budget based on the approved campaign plan:

- 1 National Campaign Brand Package (campaign identity, slogan, visual identity and messaging toolkit);
- 5 professionally produced short videos/reels (up to 60 seconds each);
- 2 public service announcement videos (60-90 seconds);
- 10 social media assets per campaign phase (UNICEF can provide access to existing communication assets);
- 20 social media cards/infographics.

- 3 human-interest stories in UNICEF editorial format;
- 10 short testimonial videos from children, parents, teachers, or community members;
- Media engagement package including press release templates and media briefings;
- Engagement of minimum 3 influencers with combined reach exceeding 500,000 followers (Influencers must be selected based on relevance, credibility, child-safeguarding standards, reputational risk screening, audience relevance and UNICEF approval).

All campaign products and activities shall comply with the SmartED Communication Strategy and applicable branding and visibility requirements. All communication materials, including videos, social media assets, event materials, media products, human-interest stories and community engagement materials, shall appropriately acknowledge the SmartED Project and its financing partners in accordance with approved branding guidance. All creative concepts and final products require UNICEF approval before production/dissemination.

The language of the communication assets will be Kyrgyz with Russian subtitles or voiceover. Content must avoid pity-based narratives and promote dignity, agency, and inclusion and promote positive social norms that contribute to the protection, inclusion, participation, and well-being of children with disabilities, while challenging attitudes that increase risks of neglect, violence, bullying, discrimination, and exclusion.

The successful offeror shall ensure that all campaign materials and communication products are developed in accessible and disability-inclusive formats. Depending on the type of deliverable and communication channel, accessibility requirements shall include, as applicable, subtitles/captions, sign-language interpretation, easy-to-read formats, accessible visual design, alternative text (alt text) for digital content, and disability-inclusive language.

The technical proposal shall clearly describe the approach and measures to be applied to ensure accessibility of the proposed campaign products and activities. **All costs associated with meeting these accessibility requirements shall be included in the financial proposal and shall not be treated as additional costs during contract implementation.**

C. Media and Capacity Building

The successful offeror is expected to contribute to strengthening national capacities for disability-inclusive communication.

Key Tasks:

- Develop a disability-inclusive media toolkit;
- Conduct at least 2 national media workshops (1 in Bishkek and 1 in Osh), including all necessary logistics (25 participants per 1 workshop);
- Coordinate and provide mentoring support to selected media outlets: leading online news media, national and regional TV, and digital media platforms (at least 5 media outlets);
- Ensure all media engagement activities include information on the SmartED Project, its objectives, achievements and financing partners, in accordance with approved messaging and visibility requirements;
- Support publication and dissemination of project achievements through national and local media channels, digital platforms, and stakeholder networks;
- Develop media briefing materials that include approved SmartED key messages, donor visibility requirements, and branding guidance.

UNICEF will retain full ownership and strategic oversight of the campaign, including approval of all communication materials and activities. The successful offeror is therefore required to:

- Ensure alignment and coordination of all partner-led communication actions with UNICEF guidance;
- Ensure consistency of messaging across all channels and partners;
- Coordinate and integrate private sector contributions (i.e., partner-led actions) in the national campaign framework.

Selection Criteria: Engage leading online news media, national and regional TV, and digital media platforms, selected based on their reach among Kyrgyz-speaking audiences, geographic coverage, credibility, engagement, experience in covering social and child-rights issues, and commitment to disability-inclusive and ethical communication. Priority should be given to Kyrgyz-language media outlets with strong regional reach.

D. Community Engagement in the 10 pilot areas

The successful offeror is expected to mobilize communities around pilot schools to support inclusive education and create positive perceptions of children with disabilities and inclusive education.

Key tasks:

- Conduct 10 facilitated face-to-face community dialogues (1 per location) with parents, caregivers, community leaders, religious leaders, teachers, and adolescents to discuss barriers to education, disability inclusion, and children's rights and co-development of local solutions to address the barriers (min number of participants per location per event is 20);
- Conduct 10 community mobilization events (1 per location) such as open school days, festivals, theatre performances, sports events, radio programs, or storytelling sessions showcasing successful inclusion stories and achievements of children with disabilities with around 200 participants in each location;
- Organize 1 national inclusive event in Bishkek (World Day of Disability, December 3, 2026) with minimum number of participants 200 people.

UNICEF will coordinate with the Ministry of Education a nomination of local focal points from District Education Departments to support the mobilization process in each selected community.

All community engagement activities shall ensure visible recognition of the SmartED Project through event branding, information materials, public announcements, visual assets, photos, videos, and social media coverage. Community events shall be documented and promoted through relevant communication channels to demonstrate project results, stakeholder participation, and community ownership of inclusive education.

E. Monitoring and Reporting

The successful offeror will:

- Develop a monitoring framework with clear indicators/KPIs;
- Report monthly on:
 - Number of people reached through national campaign activities, including partner-led actions;
 - Media coverage;
 - Engagement rate across digital platforms;
 - Number of private partner-led initiatives implemented, including 3 required above.
- Report on community engagement report consisting of 2 parts: on community dialogues; and community events;

- Submit a final report with evidence of increased awareness of disability inclusion (based on campaign analytics and feedback).

4. Deliverables, expected timeframes and payment schedule

No	Deliverable	Description	Timeline	Payment
1	Inception Report	Detailed methodology, workplan, stakeholder mapping, risk mitigation plan and campaign development roadmap	1 month after contract signing	20% of the contract amount
2	SBC and Communication strategy	Audience analysis, behavioral objectives, messaging framework, indicators and implementation plan		
3	1 National Campaign Brand package	Campaign concept, identity, slogan, visual assets, messaging toolkit and campaign delivered	2 months after contract signing	30% of the contract amount
4	Creative Materials Package	List of required materials provided in Section 3.B. of this Terms of Reference		
5	Media Capacity Building Report	Media training toolkit, participant records, training report and materials published	2 months after contract signing	
6	Community Engagement report #1: Report on support facilitated community dialogues indicating achieved results	Community dialogue findings Visibility of community engagement activities is carried out.	5 months after contract signing	30% of the contract amount
7	Community Engagement report #2: Report on community events with photos, indicating achieved results	Community events report with participation data, photos and lessons learned. Visibility of community engagement activities is carried out.	6 months after contract signing	
8	At least 3 human interest stories for UNICEF and the Ministry of Education's digital	Three approved human-interest stories and accompanying visual assets are	7 months after contract signing	20% of the contract amount

	accounts & mass media	published/disseminated via mass media.		
9	Final Campaign report	Comprehensive performance report against indicators, lessons learned and recommendations	10 months after contract signing	

5. Ethical considerations

The contractor will be responsible for considering ethical issues when consulting children/adolescents and/or Disabled People's Organizations at the stage of the campaign methodology, design and pilot testing of the messages.

The contractor shall ensure that all consultations, message testing, filming, photography, interviews, testimonials and human-interest stories involving children, adolescents, parents/caregivers, persons with disabilities, Disabled People's Organizations and other stakeholders are conducted in accordance with UNICEF safeguarding requirements and UNICEF's ethical reporting guidance for children. This includes applying do-no-harm principles, obtaining informed consent from parents/caregivers and assent from children, protecting privacy and personal data, avoiding stigmatizing or exploitative representation, and securing UNICEF approval before any images, videos, quotes or stories are used or disseminated.

See UNICEF's publicly available guidance on ethical reporting on children and safeguarding, including reporting guidelines, ethical guidelines for media, UNICEF's safeguarding policy, and safeguarding information.

6. Delivery and reporting requirements

Deliverables and reporting requirements are provided in section 4 Deliverables, expected timeframes and payment schedule.

7. Location and official travel involved

At least two travels to each of target sites (as per the list of target communities provided above) are anticipated. The travel schedule will have to be coordinated among selected agency, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education.

It is essential that:

- i) travel costs are calculated based on economy class travel, regardless of the length of travel;
 - ii) costs for accommodation, meals and incidentals shall not exceed applicable daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates, as promulgated by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC);
- Unexpected travels shall also be treated as above

8. Qualification requirements/specialised knowledge/experience required to complete the task

	Qualification requirements
Organization	<i>Over 5 years proven experience in the area of communication and advocacy, based on the company/organization profile, list of completed projects, portfolio, links to the publications etc. Recommendation letters from previous customers would be an asset;</i>

	- Minimum 5 years of experience in delivering social-behavioral change activities based on the list of completed projects (share a link or enclose relevant sample); - Experience in work with governmental institutions and/or NGOs related to OPD (Organizations of People with Disability), based on formal partnership agreements, memorandums, joint projects, participation in work groups or committees etc. (copies of documents to be submitted or a link shared); - Previous experience of working with UNICEF or other UN agencies is an asset.	
Personnel	Qualifications	Education
<i>Team Leader</i>	At least 5 years of experience in project coordination, public awareness campaigns, and social and behavioral change. Proven experience in managing large-scale communication campaigns involving multiple stakeholders. Strong verbal, written and presentation skills in Kyrgyz and Russian.	University degree in Communication, Public Relations or related Social Sciences
<i>Communication Specialist</i>	At least 5 years of experience in campaign development, media and public relations, content creation and communication planning Experience in developing communication products for social or development issues.	University degree in Communications, Public Relations, Marketing, and Media Studies or other related field
<i>Social media specialist</i>	At least 3 years of experience implementing digital campaigns and social media platforms. Experience in audience engagement, social media analytics, and digital ad. Demonstrated experience in managing multiplatform campaigns.	University degree in Communications, Marketing, Digital Media or related field
<i>Videographer</i>	At least 5 years of experience producing professional video content for television, online and social media.	
<i>Photographer</i>	At least 5 years of professional photography experience	
<i>Copywriter and Editor (Kyrgyz and Russian languages)</i>	At least 5 years of experience in writing, editing, and adapting communication materials	University degree in Journalism, Communications, Linguistics or related field
<i>Community mobilizer</i>	At least 2 successful projects on organization of facilitated discussions to analyze barriers and co-create solutions, establishment of regular support groups; organization of community events (short descriptions of the projects are required as part of the submission package) Knowledge of the Kyrgyz and Russian knowledge (CV is required)	

	<i>Proven experience in facilitation (at least one reference is required as part of the submission package)</i>	
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9. Evaluation process and methods

The evaluation of proposals will be conducted in the following three phases:

1. Preliminary review for completeness of required documentation.
2. Technical Evaluation of technical proposals (80% out of 100%).
3. Financial Evaluation of the financial proposals (20% out of 100%).

1. Preliminary review: All the proposals received will be checked for completeness and compliance. The technical proposal must be separated from the financial proposal. Proposals that do not meet the preliminary review will be invalidated and not considered for technical evaluation.

2. Technical Evaluation: All proposals that meet the preliminary requirements will be evaluated technically. The maximum score is 80 points, and the minimum passing score is 64 points. In making the final decision, UNICEF considers both technical and financial aspects. The Evaluation Team first reviews the technical aspect of the offer followed by the review of the financial offer of the technically compliant vendors. Each proposal shall be evaluated based on the technical evaluation criteria and bidders' qualifications listed below.

10. Selection criteria, including qualifications/specialized knowledge/experience required

Proposals will be evaluated technically using the technical scoring as indicated below:

MANDATORY SELECTION CRITERIA		Yes/No
1	The company or organization must be legally registered and hold a valid registration certificate (copy enclosed).	
2	Company or organization has a minimum of 5 years of experience in communication, SBC, public awareness campaigns or social marketing.	
3	Ability to work in Kyrgyz and Russian languages. <i>Availability of min one leadership team member fluently speaking English</i>	
MAIN SELECTION CRITERIA		Max. Points
1	<u>To the organization:</u>	
	<i>Minimum 5 years of proven experience of the organization in nation-wide communication campaigns</i>	15
1.1	<i>Over 5 years of experience in social-behavioral change, community engagement and work with governmental institutions and/or NGOs related to Organizations of People with Disability</i>	15
2	<u>To staff:</u>	
	<i>Competencies of team leader</i>	10
2.1	Experienced Communications specialist 4 points	20

	Social Media specialist	4 points	
	Videographer	4 points	
	Photographer	4 points	
	Copywriter and Editor in Kyrgyz and Russian languages	4 points	
2.2	<i>Competencies of community mobilizer</i>		10
3	<u><i>Completeness of the proposal and responsiveness to the TOR:</i></u>		
3.1	<i>Quality of the proposed methodology, detailed timeline, consultations, data collection, analysis methods, and presentation. The proposal should detail the proposed approaches based on the TOR requirements.</i>		10

Total: 80 points

11. Project management and administrative issues

Day-to-day support of the assignment will be provided by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Communication and Education officers. It will include relevant information sharing, briefing and de-briefing, sessions, and meetings.

UNICEF will provide Contractor with guidelines, additional information, and will supply Contractor with materials related to the SmartEd project, inclusive education, national education reform, etc.

12. Financial Proposal Evaluation

Interested bidders are required to submit on a separate envelope their financial offer which should detail the rate per technical team member in relation to the number of days the team member will work on the project. Include the cost of services per quarter related to deliverables and dedicated human resources, such as overall management and technical specialists. All travel and the related budget should be part of the proposal. The partner institution will be responsible for administering its own travel and will be responsible for all travel costs including flights, daily subsistence allowance, etc. The price of each of the technically compliant proposals shall be considered only after evaluation of the above technical criteria. **A maximum of 20 points** assigned to the financial proposal will be allocated to the lowest financial proposal. As a result of the financial evaluation, the points of each proposal will be taken into further consideration in the final evaluation. The bidders should ensure that all pricing information is provided in accordance with the following: a) The currency of the proposal shall be in Kyrgyz Som, and invoicing must be in the same currency. b) All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization.

13. Award of Contract

UNICEF will make an institutional contract award to a bidder who submitted a highly technically compliant proposal. The awards will be made starting from the highest-scoring proposal as a result of the combined technical and financial evaluation scores. Overall, the awards shall depend on several criteria, including the needs, prices offered and what provided the best value for money, and is in the best interests of UNICEF.