

O³ Programme

Consultancy Terms of Reference for Assessment of the Psychosocial Impact of COVID-19 on Teachers, Teacher Educators and Learners and Psychosocial Support Needs in Selected Countries

I. Background

The International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) is a category I institute established by the UNESCO General Conference in 1999, and mandated to strengthen teacher policy and development in Africa. Among the key sub-areas of focus in the area of capacity development are teacher policy development, health and wellbeing, teacher training and enhancing teacher education/training institutions. IICBA responds to the COVID-19 crisis and its impact.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimated that 191 countries had implemented some form of national school closures related to COVID-19, affecting more than 90% of all enrolled learners worldwide by April 2020¹. The psychosocial effects on both teachers and learners of the long-term school closure due to this pandemic have, since the beginning of the pandemic, been a concern. Many teachers in Africa contracted the virus, and many of them may have succumbed to COVID-19. It has also been reported that in some schools, teachers' salaries have either been reduced to 50% while others have completely lost their contracts due to the COVID-19 crisis – most especially those working in privately owned schools. The threat of contracting the disease coupled with economic difficulties incurred by the pandemic may have jeopardised teachers' psychosocial wellbeing. After school reopening, teachers' exposure to the pandemic may have increased due to their constant proximity with students, not least because class sizes in many African schools are big. In Rwanda, for instance, the student population emerged as the subgroup with most COVID-19 cases after school reopening². This may have exacerbated the existing teachers' anxiety about their safety vis-a-vis COVID-19 due to their everyday work with students.

On their parts, learners, especially vulnerable ones including those from marginalized communities have been severely impacted by COVID-19 lockdown and school closures³, which could have exacerbated existing inequalities in educational systems and societies in general. School closure, lack of outdoor activity, aberrant dietary and sleeping habits are likely to disrupt children's usual lifestyle and can potentially promote monotony, distress, impatience, annoyance and varied neuropsychiatric manifestations. Incidences of domestic violence, child abuse, adulterated online contents are on the rise. The children from marginalized communities are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 infection and may suffer from extended ill-consequences of this pandemic, such as child labour, child trafficking, child marriage, sexual exploitation and

¹ UNESCO. (2020a). *Adverse consequences of school closures*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/consequences>

² Rwanda biomedical Centre (2021). *COVID-19 Cases by Occupation, January 01-29, 2021 (N=6401)*.

³ UNESCO. (2020b). *UNESCO's support: Educational response to COVID-19*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/support>

death. The rise in domestic violence⁴ and unwanted early pregnancies conceived during the school closure and lockdown period among primary and secondary students aged between 14 and 18 were reported⁵. Teachers are in the forefront position for providing psychosocial support (PSS) not only to such students, but also other students who may have been mentally affected by the rise of COVID-19 among the student population.

II. Contextual Issues Impacting on Teachers' Psychosocial Wellbeing, Motivation, Welfare and Health

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of threats to the safety, mental and physical health, and overall development of teachers, teacher educators and learners. Teacher and learner support is critical in assuring inclusive and equitable quality education and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the Education 2030 Agenda. In school reopening, governments and partners need to promote and safeguard every child's right to education, health and safety, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this regard, teachers, teacher educators and school leaders need to be properly trained, supported and motivated to enable them to provide appropriate support to learners and closely monitor their safety and wellbeing.

Teachers' motivation and possibility to provide learner support has been hampered by the COVID-19 outbreak that led to an unprecedented disruption of conventional teaching and learning practices. This disruption and closure forced 1.2 billion children and youth away from schools and deprived them from learning and essential school-based services such as immunization, school feeding, mental health, and PSS. In many African countries, online, distance and blended learning was envisaged in responding to COVID-19 and the consequent school closure as well as ensuring social distancing after school reopening. Many challenges related to technology access and limited instructional technology skills affect both teachers' and students' emotional wellbeing when they are required to use these new learning and teaching modalities without adequate preparation. In addition, lacks of parental resources, parental learner support skills and adequate housing conditions for learning have been reported. Students from marginalized communities are less likely to have access to relevant learning digital resources (e.g. radio devices, laptop/computer, broadband internet connection, etc.) and less likely to have a suitable home learning environment (e.g. a quiet place to study, their own desk dedicated to learning use, etc.). Additionally, they may not receive as much (direct or indirect) support from their parents as their more advantaged counterparts do. All these challenges signal the central role of teachers not only in supporting learning, but also in providing necessary PSS for meaningful learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and similar crises.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) set forth

⁴ WHO. (2020). *COVID-19 and violence against women*. World Health Organisation. <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/emergencies/COVID-19-VAW-full-text.pdf>.

⁵BBC Gahuza (2021, February 6). Rwanda: Imvo n'imvano ku bana b'abanyeshuri batewe inda mu gihe cya 'guma mu rugo' (Rwanda: Documentary on pregnancies conceived by underage students during the lockdown period). <https://www.bbc.com/gahuza/amakuru-55961413>

the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, teaching and learning conditions as well as their participation in decision making. The joint UNESCO/ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel⁶ recommends the need to pay much attention to teacher motivation and their wellbeing which are deemed essential to achieve the delivery of high-quality teaching services⁷. As new learning modalities and approaches that respond to crises such as COVID-19 emerge, teachers' capacity need to be developed to enable them to enhance their capabilities to provide PSS and maintain quality learning. Such capacity development will enable provision of PSS that will nurture supportive relationships and enhance the adaptive coping skills and sense of control, which in turn will reduce stress for all those affected.

UNESCO-IICBA has been running a series of webinars on teachers' wellbeing in which the issues discussed above permeated. In response to those issues, IICBA, in partnership with UNESCO Harare and Dakar offices, will contribute to teacher PSS development within the framework of the O³ Programme (2018-2021). It is in this context that the assessment of the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners and PSS needs in selected countries will be conducted.

III. Purpose of the Assignment

The assessment of psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners and PSS needs aims at:

- assessing psychosocial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on in-service teachers, teacher educators and learners;
- identifying and ranking the causes of negative impact of COVID-19 on in-service teachers, teacher educators and learners by their severity;
- identifying innovative strategies governments are employing to address these challenges;
- identifying the potential challenges school leaders, teachers and teacher educators are facing in providing health and PSS to teachers and learners;
- assessing PSS needs for in-service teachers, teacher educators and learners
- provide recommendations for resilience development, infection control and provision of PSS to teachers, teacher educators and learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- develop high level advocacy and Policy Briefs for member states, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and other partners based on the key findings of the study.

IV. The Targeted Participants

The target participants in this assessment of psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners and PSS needs are primary and/or secondary education in-service teachers, teacher educators, primary and secondary education inspectors, officers and directors, policy makers, experts who are responsible for monitoring and documenting psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on primary and/or secondary level teachers, teacher educators and learners or those

⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb298/pdf/ceart-10.pdf>

⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_493315.pdf

who provide PSS to primary and/or secondary level teachers, teacher educators and learners in the target countries.

V. The Scope of the Work

The study will be conducted online using a web-based survey. Data for the assessment of psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners and PSS needs will be collected from primary and/or secondary in-service teachers, primary and/or secondary teacher educators, school leaders, education inspectors, officers and directors, relevant policy makers and experts in 22 countries that are worst hit by COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa: South Africa, Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Kenya, South Sudan, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Cameroon, DRC, Liberia, Mali, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition to online survey, in-depth (focus group) interviews will be conducted in seven countries: Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. The key results and findings will be validated through two online regional workshops (one in English and the other in French) and a final report will be produced and submitted.

The successful consultant(s), will be responsible for the following tasks:

Task 1: Prepare an inception report, develop sound methodology and data collection tools and secure approval of the inception report, methodology and data collection tools.

The key activities will include:

- Participate in an inception meeting with the O³ Programme Team
- Prepare an inception report that includes the theoretical bases (based on the relevant literature review) for the assessment and a clear plan of activities and explanation of how the assignment will be executed;
- Create a sound methodology, including developing qualitative and/or quantitative data collection tools (including online survey and online focus-group interview tools);
- Present the theoretical bases for the assessment, methodology and data collection tools to IICBA and other UNESCO offices for approval

Task 2: Collect and analyse data on psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners, innovative strategies used by government to deal with the challenge, potential challenges school leaders, teachers and teacher educators may face in providing health and PSS to teachers and learners and PSS needs in the target countries.

- Collect data in the light of the validated methodology and using the validated tools;
- Organise and analyse data;
- Identify and rank the causes of negative impact of COVID-19 on in-service teachers, teacher educators and learners by severity;
- Produce the first draft of the report on the findings from the assessment;
- Present the findings from the assessment to IICBA and other UNESCO offices for approval;
- Edit the report in the light of constructive feedback on the first draft and submit the final report

Task 3: Generate recommendations for resilience development, infection control and provision of PSS to teachers, teacher educators and learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Task 4: Develop high level advocacy and Policy Briefs based on the key findings of the study

- A. A generic Policy Brief for member states,
- B. A Policy Brief for Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) such as SADC, EAC, ECOWAS, etc.
- C. A Policy Brief for other partners involved in supporting education and teacher development.

Task 5: Present to, and validate the findings, recommendations and Policy Briefs with teachers, teacher educators, learners, school leaders, UNESCO O³ Program Team, policy makers in member states and other partners in two regional online validation workshops (one in English and the other in French)

The key activities will include:

- Prepare Power Point presentations (in both English and French) for use in the online validation workshops
- Disseminate the assessment findings, recommendations and Policy Briefs to representatives of teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, education inspectors, officers and directors, UNESCO O³ Program Team, policy makers in member states and other partners
- Facilitate online validation workshops with representatives of teachers, teacher educators, learners, school leaders, education inspectors, officers and directors, UNESCO O³ Program Team, policy makers in member states and other partners;
- Submit final reports of the assessment findings, recommendations and high level advocacy and Policy Briefs edited in the light of constructive feedback received in the online validation workshops.

VI. Expected Outputs (Deliverables) at the End of the Assignment

The Consulting Team will produce and submit the following deliverables:

- An inception meeting report
- An inception report with theoretical bases for the assessment, a clear plan of activities and explanation of how the assignment will be executed;
- A methodology with the final version of data collection tools, including a tested online survey (to be validated by the O³ Programme and UNESCO Team);
- An editing report indicating how constructive feedback/comments received from the O³ Programme and UNESCO Team on the inception report, methodology and data collection tools were addressed;
- Compiled data sets;
- A draft report of 1) psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners, 2) a hierarchy/ranking of causes of negative impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners by severity, 3) innovative strategies used by governments to deal with the challenge, 4) potential challenges school leaders, teachers and teacher

educators may face in providing health and PSS to teachers and learners, 5) PSS needs in the target countries as well as 6) recommendations for resilience development, infection control and provision of PSS to teachers, teacher educators and learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic;

- An editing report indicating how constructive feedback/comments received from the O³ Programme and UNESCO Team on the draft report were addressed
- Drafts of high level advocacy and Policy Briefs for member states, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and other partners based on the key findings of the study.
- Power Point presentations (in both English and French) to be used in the online validation workshops;
- Two online validation workshops (one in English and the other in French) with representatives of participating institutions, partners and the O³ Programme Team facilitated;
- A record of constructive feedback/comments received in the two online validation workshops;
- Final versions of the assessment report and high level advocacy and Policy Briefs submitted;
- An editing report indicating how constructive feedback/comments received during the online validation workshops were addressed.

VII. Key Technical Skills for the Consulting Team

- At least ten (10) years of professional experience in applied research, conducting need assessments and developing recommendations in multi-country education projects in Africa;
- At least a Master's Degree in educational psychology, special needs education, school counselling, clinical psychology, mental health or a related field. PhD in educational psychology, special needs education, school counselling, clinical psychology, mental health or a related field is an added advantage
- Proven experience working with online survey tool development and management, and facilitation of online events (webinars, virtual discussions, etc.);
- Experience in high level advocacy and Policy Briefs development;
- Excellent facilitation, organisational, communication and analytical skills;
- Excellent command in written and spoken English (minimum C1 level or equivalence) and a very good command in written and spoken French (minimum B2 level or equivalence).
- Excellent research and publication record;
- Deadline driven with a focus on results; and
- Experience within the UN system, the African Union and other large multilateral organisations is a plus.

VIII. Time Frame and Tentative Work Plan

The duration of the consultancy will be 30 working days as follows:

Task	Number of days	Deliverables
<p>Task 1: Prepare an inception report, develop sound methodology and data collection tools and secure approval of the inception report, methodology and data collection tools</p>	<p>10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inception meeting report • An inception report with theoretical bases for the assessment, a clear plan of activities and explanation of how the assignment will be executed; • A methodology with the final version of data collection tools, including a tested online survey (approved by the O³ Programme and UNESCO Team); • An editing report indicating how constructive feedback/comments received from the O³ Programme and UNESCO Team on the inception report, methodology and data collection tools were addressed
<p>Task 2: Collect and analyse data on psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners, innovative strategies used by government to deal with the challenge, potential challenges school leaders, teachers and teacher educators may face in providing health and PSS to teachers and learners and PSS needs in target countries.</p>	<p>10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiled data sets; • A draft report of 1) psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners, 2) a hierarchy/ranking of causes of negative impact of COVID-19 on teachers, teacher educators and learners by severity, 3) innovative strategies used by governments to deal with the challenge, 4) potential challenges school leaders, teachers and teacher educators may face in providing health and PSS to teachers and learners, 5) PSS needs in the target countries as well as 6) recommendations for resilience development, infection control and provision of PSS to teachers, teacher educators and learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic; • An editing report indicating how constructive feedback/comments received from the O³ Programme and UNESCO Team on the draft report were addressed
<p>Task 3: Generate recommendations for resilience development, infection control and provision of PSS to teachers, teacher educators and learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft of recommendations for resilience development, infection control and provision of PSS to teachers, teacher educators and learners during and after the COVID-19 pandemic;
<p>Task 4: Develop high level advocacy and Policy Briefs</p>	<p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts of high level advocacy and Policy Briefs for member states, Regional Economic

for member states, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and other partners based on the key findings of the study.		Commissions (RECs) and other partners based on the key findings of the study.
Task 5: Present to, and validate the findings, recommendations and Policy Briefs with, teachers, teacher educators, learners, school leaders, education inspectors, officers and directors, O ³ Programme and UNESCO Team, policy makers in member states and other partners	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Point presentations to be used in the online validation workshops (in both English and French); • Online validation workshops facilitated; • Documentation of constructive feedback provided in the online validation workshops; • Final versions of the assessment report and high level advocacy and Policy Briefs edited in the light of the constructive feedback received in the online validation workshops submitted • An editing report indicating how constructive feedback/comments received during the online validation workshops were addressed submitted

IX. Application Process and Deadline

Those wishing to be considered for this consultancy assignment should submit their applications to info.iicba@unesco.org and copy b.nkuyubwatsi@unesco.org using *Assessment of the PS Impact of COVID-19 and PSS Needs* in the subject area. A complete application should be submitted in one document consisting of a **technical proposal** made of 1) the consulting firm profile and experience in applied research, conducting need assessments as well as developing online surveys, recommendations and Policy Briefs; 2) CVs of the key members of the proposed Consulting Team; and 3) a sample of consultants' peer-reviewed publication as well as a **financial proposal** that details the fee for conducting the assignment. Complete applications written in English should be submitted by **17 March 2021**. For any question related to this call, please send an email to b.nkuyubwatsi@unesco.org