

## Consultancy Terms of Reference

<b>Job title</b>	Research Coordinator
<b>Department/section/team</b>	<a href="#">The MHPSS Collaborative</a>
<b>Work location (city)</b>	Colombia
<b>Employee Responsibility</b>	No
<b>Employment</b>	Consultancy
<b>Duration</b>	6-8 months, part time, 60 days (approximately August 2022 – May 2023)

### Purpose of project

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in Education in Emergencies (EiE), including social-emotional learning (SEL), has been identified as a potential pathway to address both children’s mental health and psychosocial needs and to improve learning outcomes and student retention.<sup>1</sup> While there is widespread interest in this type of programming, and even more during Covid-19 pandemic, this interest is not matched by evidence to support effectiveness in terms of type of MHPSS in EiE intervention or implementation method.

This research seeks to examine and understand the enabling environments for MHPSS interventions delivered in education settings in humanitarian contexts, via mixed methods research to capture the perceptions of children, teachers, and caregivers, as well as implementers and programme staff. This two-year research project will build on Phase I and begin with a “research protocol design” phase lasting approximately three months.

This will be followed by primary data collection with children, teachers, caregivers, other education stakeholders, and programme staff in three locations (Colombia, Kenya, and Greece) between July 2022-June 2023. Data analysis, validation workshops, report and article production, and dissemination of learnings will take place over the rest of 2023. Primary research questions include:

- 1) What do children, teachers and caregivers perceive to be the role of classroom based MHPSS interventions in humanitarian contexts?
- 2) What are students’, teachers’, and caregivers’ perspectives on what constitutes an enabling environment for MHPSS interventions in education in humanitarian contexts, and particularly in their context?
- 3) What are the key elements of different domains of an enabling environment, as assessed across different contexts, and how do they relate to each other?
- 4) What roles do classroom-based MHPSS interventions play in return and/ or re-entry to school during COVID-19 school closures in humanitarian contexts?
- 5) What is the perspective of implementing staff, local stakeholders, and other relevant actors regarding change processes within a specific MHPSS intervention?

The dissemination of findings is a key outcome of this project. The dissemination strategy for this research will prioritize learning events that are relevant and appropriate at global, regional/national, and local levels (as well as specifically tailored for actors at each of these levels). In addition, the strategy strongly

<sup>1</sup> Aber JL, Tubbs Dolan C, Kim HY, Brown L. Children's learning and development in conflict- and crisis-affected countries: Building a science for action. *Development and psychopathology*. 2021:1-16.

emphasizes the cross fertilization of MHPSS with EiE learnings. These two key priorities will guide all activities and events that make up the dissemination strategy.

### **Scope of the assignment**

The Research Coordinator (RC) will be responsible for overseeing the planning, implementation, and dissemination phases of research in Colombia. The RC will work closely with the Collaborative's global project team, specifically the Lead Researcher, the Director/Technical Specialist, and the Programme Officer. In Colombia, the RC will be embedded with the local implementing partner (Norwegian Refugee Council and their Better Learning Programme team) and work in close collaboration to strategically plan and carry out all primary data collection tasks. They will additionally work with a range of local, regional, and national stakeholders relevant to the provision of education for children in context. The exact timeline of research design and planning; data collection and analysis; and finalization and dissemination will be determined collaboratively with the RC and the implementing organization during the research inception phase for the site (approximately July-August 2022). The RC is a national position, to be located within Colombia.

### **Responsibilities and tasks**

The RC is responsible for:

- Identifying, reviewing, and summarizing documentation related to the programme as well as the country education system, and other related topics (as guided by Team Leader) in English and Spanish;
- Support the in-country kick-off workshop with NRC country office teams in order to facilitate the creation of site-specific research questions as well as to integrate input on protocols into overall research design;
- At Research Design Phase, and as part of primary data collection, working with the Collaborative team to finalize protocols and lines of inquiry on top of global protocols and lines of inquiry;
- Lead process of ethical approval and permits in all research sites;
- Lead process of recruitment and training of enumerators as needed;
- Lead all processes of primary data collection, in collaboration with NRC, including data management and cleaning;
- Contribute to both preliminary and full data analysis (primary and secondary data) in collaboration with Lead Researcher;
- Creation and presentation of process-oriented reflections and preliminary findings to NRC and other local stakeholders, as relevant (details/format decided upon by RC);
- Lead validation workshop with NRC and other relevant stakeholders;
- Contribute to report writing, in collaboration with Lead Researcher and Director;
- Contribute to journal article, in collaboration with Lead Researcher and Director;
- Lead local presentation of research findings in context (1); lead or participate in global level dissemination presentations (2);
- For duration of assignment, weekly check-ins with Collaborative Team member responsible for context; during active periods of data collection waves, brief daily check-ins (can be via WhatsApp or email);
- Participating in as-needed check-in calls with Porticus and/or Advisory Board (as possible and requested by Collaborative Team)
- Ensure that the work undertaken by the Collaborative is of high quality at design, implementation and evaluation phases. Ensure appropriate levels of technical support are built into Collaborative's initiatives to enable meaningful engagement of stakeholders from local to global.
- Ensure programming supports achieving the Collaborative's strategic and thematic objectives.

- Ensure MHPSS initiatives of the Collaborative support and demonstrate best practice in child safeguarding, inclusion and gender mainstreaming.
- Contribute to advocacy and policy messaging and strategies, together with key partners to a broad audience to lift the global MHPSS agenda.
- Ensure the Collaborative is recognized for its leadership in convening expertise on child and family MHPSS innovation, quality, scale, contextualization and learning in any verbal and written communication or publication.

### Key deliverables

1. Inception Report with full, initial methodology
2. IRB application
3. Preliminary Workshop with NRC Colombia Country Team
4. Finalized and validated protocols for all research sites
5. Process oriented reflection (and/or preliminary findings) presentation
6. Final country report
7. One academic article submitted to peer-reviewed journal
8. One in-country presentation of overall study findings
9. Two global-level presentations of overall study findings

All key deliverables will be collaboratively developed alongside the MHPSS Collaborative team (Lead Researcher and Director/Technical Specialist).

### Qualifications

#### Required:

- Fluency in English and Spanish;
- University degree (proof of completion e.g. diploma or transcripts); graduate degree preferred
- 5+ years experience in qualitative research (conducting open or semi-structured interviews)
- 1+ year experience conducting interviews and/or working closely with government officials, donors, INGOs, and other high-level stakeholders
- Excellent notetaking and transcription skills
- Access to reliable internet and mobile phone coverage

#### Desired:

- 5+ years' experience working in the education and/or MHPSS sector in case study country
- Strong writing and analytical skills
- Experience conducting literature reviews and summarizing documents into briefers
- Experience designing qualitative research methods and tools

### Professional skills and experience

- MHPSS and/or education professional with a track record of relevant expertise in MHPSS and/or education programming, monitoring and evaluation in fragile and humanitarian settings;
- Proven skills and experience working at the interface of MHPSS with other sectors, and with relevant MHPSS and/or education coordination groups;
- Thorough knowledge of MHPSS and/or education assessments and learning needs analyses, quality standards, programme design and capacity strengthening. Experience in knowledge transfer and learning (e.g., running workshops, seminars, presentations, webinars, creating learning materials and lessons learned reports);

- Strong networking abilities and talent in fostering and maintaining partnerships, from local to global levels;
- Experience with advocacy and policy work;
- Ability to establish and maintain effective partnerships and working relationship with donors, researchers, civil society, and interagency and cross-disciplinary partners;
- Understanding of, or previous engagement with, implementation science research a plus (e.g., ability to interpret research findings, understanding of MHPSS and/or education operational research);
- Excellent verbal and written English skills, particularly communication, facilitation and presentation skills for diverse audiences.

### Personal skills

#### Communicating with impact

- Actively listens and seeks to understand before being understood
- Ensures communications are concise and well-structured
- Shares relevant and timely information with others
- Prepares effectively for meetings

#### Problem solving and decision making

- Gathers the right information and uses critical thinking to make effective and timely decisions
- Stays with a problem or challenge until a solution is reached or is no longer reasonably attainable
- Knows when to involve others in a decision
- Simplifies processes and procedures wherever possible

#### Innovating and adapting

- Suggests creative improvements and better ways of working
- Seeks out and applies successful ideas from others to overcome challenges
- Shifts tasks, roles and priorities to perform effectively under changing or unclear conditions
- Applies lessons learned to enhance future ways of working

#### Delivering results

- Delivers timely and appropriate results using available resources
- Plans, prioritises and performs tasks well without needing direct supervision
- Creates and applies measures and metrics to track performance
- Demonstrates financial awareness and a concern for cost effectiveness

To apply, please send a cover letter, CV, and desired day rate by 21 July 2022 to:  
Andreas Jespersen, [ahje@redbarnet.dk](mailto:ahje@redbarnet.dk)