

**Communication for social change - to reduce stigma and harmful social norms  
against children with special educational needs and disabilities to improve their  
access and participation into formal and non-formal educational services  
Institutional Contract**

**Terms of Reference**

Children with disabilities are one of the most isolated groups of children, experiencing widespread violations of their rights. Discrimination mainly arises not as a result of children's disability, but rather as a consequence of lack of understanding and knowledge of its causes, fear of difference, or negative cultural biases and stereotypes related to disability. Charity and medical models of disability significantly influenced views and values of society toward disability and children with disability have been treated as subjects of pity, isolation, charity and abuse over the years. These attitudes increase vulnerabilities of children with disabilities and deny them respect for their dignity, their individuality, and even their right to life itself. It is further compounded by social isolation, poverty, lack of services and assistive equipment/technologies, and inaccessible environment. Over the last several years, UNICEF Georgia has conducted two large-scale surveys that included the questions related to disability stigma (2012, 2015). The survey results of 2012 indicated that 40% of the Georgian public perceived disability stigma as a social norm; the results have not been changed in 2015 - 41.5%. Furthermore, according to MICS 2019, an estimated 8 per cent of Georgia's children aged 2–17 years have some form of functional difficulty. While services for children with disabilities are available, they are insufficient, cash transfers and other social entitlements are not based on need, and stigma remains widespread. Moreover, teachers lack systematic knowledge about disabilities and find it difficult to conduct lessons and manage the behavior of children with disabilities.

Addressing the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, children out of compulsory education and from poor and socially vulnerable families is one of the priority areas of UNICEF's current work in Georgia, including supporting the Government to ensure that children, especially those most vulnerable, at risk or with disabilities, participate in educational programmes that meet national quality and inclusiveness standards.

The 'See Every Color' initiative, implemented by UNICEF in 2015–2017 with strong support from parents' organizations and communities, included a focus on strengthening the capacities of teachers and health workers to understand and address the needs of children with disabilities. It also included discussion and debate at the community level between teachers, doctors and parents of children with disabilities, both about the reasons for exclusion of people with disabilities, and the actions needed to create proper conditions for their social inclusion. The campaign, however, did not focus on the systemic barriers to educational inclusion within schools. Subsequent discussion suggests that that greater inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools still remains to be achieved.

**With this in mind, UNICEF is planning to support a communication for behavioral and social change intervention to reduce stigma and harmful social norms against children with special educational needs and disabilities, to improve their access and participation into formal and non-formal educational services and to contribute to the change of public attitude and creation of a child welcoming environment in Georgia.**

### **The Proposed Concept:**

UNICEF seeks to select and contract a local organization to support the development and implementation of interventions to address the existing stigma, negative public perceptions and attitudes towards children with disabilities for **inclusive education**. The focus would be on **school-based initiatives**: working with teachers and peers to create genuine inclusion within schools for children with disabilities and **outside of school initiatives**: communications for social and behavioral change creating demand for and acceptance of inclusive education for children with disabilities.

The intervention shall address the existing stigma, negative public perceptions and attitudes towards children with disabilities specifically targeting fulfillment of their right to education. Proposed actions will focus on demonstrating abilities of people rather than their disabilities and will highlight the importance of being included and valued:

- Parents, family members and peers of children with disabilities are important targets for tackling stigma.
- Interventions that bring children and young people with and without disabilities together to work towards a common goal show some evidence of achieving changes in attitudes and behaviors.
- Interventions that empower children with disabilities, their parents and their families to share their experiences can have an impact on policy and services.

As teachers and school personnel have such a key role in implementation of inclusive education, it is essential to influence their bias through the integrated work on building positive attitudes among teachers, peers and parents and enhancing their knowledge of disabilities and their experience of inclusive education.

The intervention shall also embrace nation-wide media, celebrities and opinion makers, outdoor campaigns, installations, public speaking engagements by people with disabilities, young people, discussions and public debates about stigmatizing behaviors and social norms, etc. The latter will also include TED type of talks about disability that will generate innovative ideas by creative speakers including those with disabilities. It is also proposed to use social media to challenge stigmatizing behavior and to promote abilities rather than disabilities and to prevent negative reporting by various media channels to ensure dignity of every child.

### **Objective:**

Achieving inclusion in schools requires systemic change at all levels, which entails a focus on children with disabilities themselves, their parents and families, teachers, school personnel, peers, and the regulatory, policy and legislative architecture that enables education provision.

**Thus, reducing stigma and harmful social norms against children with special educational needs and disabilities to improve access and participation of children into formal and non-formal educational services is set as a main objective of an intervention.**

**Specific target groups to be involved:**

Children with disabilities and their peers, parents, caregivers, school administration, teachers, community and religious leaders, national and local political leaders, celebrities and opinion makers, media - at local, regional and national levels.

**Specific tasks:**

- Design and implementation of **communication for behavioral and social change intervention(s)** targeting inclusive education and involving minimum 20 schools countrywide.
- Developing resources on better parenting and introduce attractive and sustainable models for parents' education in educational institutions.
- Assessing, measuring and documenting achievements and constraints for improved actions.

**Activities and deliverables:**

**Activity one:** in close coordination with key stakeholders, to plan and design communication for social/behavior change intervention(s) with clear vision, time-bound implementation plan/milestones and measurable indicators for change on realization of the child rights, inclusive education and child welcoming environment.

**The plan shall include the following sub-activities:**

- a. developing and disseminating reading and training materials on the child rights, inclusive education, and child welcoming environment for educational providers and public
- b. conducting a series of regional consultations and information sessions for improved capacity on the child rights, inclusive education and child welcoming environment for teachers, parents, other public members and civil society organisation
- c. planning, designing, and conducting a series of attractive, inter-active and educational TV & radio programmes and talk shows for public education on the child rights, inclusive education and child welcoming environment
- d. proposed methodology to measuring impact of the set interventions and sustainability of the changes achieved.
- e. other sub-activities proposed by the applicant organisation

**Deliverables: a plan for the communication for social/behavior change intervention(s) with clear vision, time-bound implementation plan/milestones and measurable indicators for change on the child rights, inclusive education and child welcoming environment.**

**Activity two:** develop resources on better parenting and introduce in educational institutions for parents improved awareness.

**Deliverables: Resources on better parenting developed which contributes to parents' education on the respective subject-matter.**

**Activity three:** implement an intervention in accordance to the developed and approved plan

**Deliverables: monthly reports developed and presented to the key stakeholders.**

**Activity four:** assess, measure and document impact and constraints of the intervention against control schools and provide recommendations on the sustainability of the changes achieved.

**Deliverables:**

**Tools and plans for assessing, measuring, and documenting achievements and constraints designed and endorsed by key stakeholders**

**Medium term assessment conducted measuring and documenting achievements and constraints against control schools and suggesting recommendations for improvements/adjustments**

**Activity five:** develop and present a final report reflecting measurable behavior change indicators including % people stigmatizing children with disabilities (CWD) in Georgia with recommendations for follow up actions

**Deliverable: final report reflecting measurable behavior change indicators and recommendations on sustainable models for parents' education in educational institutions.**

**Visibility:**

Information about the project will be disseminated through campaign and related publicity materials, reports and publications will acknowledge the role of the donor.

**Qualifications:**

- Minimum 5 years of successful work experience in developing and implementation of communication for social change strategies and campaigns.
- In-depth knowledge of the methodological and analytical approaches of social research.
- Demonstrated understanding of social issues in Georgia, in particular social norms and cultural practices around the child rights, inclusive education, child welcoming environment, better parenting, disability, violent behaviors and practices.

- Attentiveness to details and compliance with timelines.
- Proven experience of effective communication and networking at central and local government level, with communities and professional organizations.
- Excellent presentation and report writing skills in English and Georgian.
- Demonstrated human and institutional capacity of managing large scale projects and donor funds.

**Timeline (2021 – 2022) and milestones:**

<b>A plan for the communication for social/behavior change intervention(s) with clear vision, time-bound implementation plan/milestones and measurable indicators for change on the child rights, inclusive education and child welcoming environment.</b>	September 2021
<b>Resources on better parenting developed which contributes to parents' education on the respective subject-matter.</b>	September – December, 2021
<b>Monthly reports developed and presented to the key stakeholders</b>	Throughout the implementation period
<b>Mid-term analysis of the campaign to carry out modifications, if needed and produce the mid-term report.</b>	March 2022
<b>Final report reflecting measurable behavior change indicators and recommendations on sustainable models for parents' education in educational institutions.</b>	By the completion of a project

**Supervision:** the work of the organization will be directly supervised and guided by UNICEF Communication for Development Officer in consultation with the Education Specialist.

