Terms of Reference
for a desk-based literature review and preparation of a report
on education sector responses to substance use among young people
in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

UNESCO is looking for an individual or an institutional consultant with a strong command of
Russian (and ideally Ukrainian) to identify, review and compile the best available evidence in
Russian (and ideally Ukrainian) on the nature and extent of the use of alcohol, tobacco and
other substances by young people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia together with education
sector responses, including policies and school-based interventions targeting both young people
who are not using substances and those who may already use substances.

The review findings shall be compiled into a synthesis report in Russian. Timeframe for this task:
July – September 2014.

1. Background and rationale

Psychoactive substance use is an important public health concern throughout the world. The
global burden of issues or health related problems attributable to alcohol and illicit drug use is
significant by any measure; according to the latest WHO estimates it amounts to 5.4% of the
total health problems. Another 3.7% of the global health problems are attributable to tobacco
use (WHO, 2010).

Young people1 are not isolated from the world with prevalent use and tolerance of substances.
Available evidence shows that the initiation of substance abuse is most likely to occur during
adolescence, and some experimentation with substances by older adolescents is common.
Alcohol, tobacco and cannabis are the substances most commonly used by youth around the
world. Substance use impacts significantly on the health and wellbeing of young people at
individual, family, community and societal levels. It may deteriorate family relations, cause
unwanted and unprotected sexual activity, accidents, violence, trouble with authorities.
Substance use among young people is also detrimental to the achievement of educational
outcomes – it may lead to school dropouts, absenteeism from school, and poor school
performance (Palen LA et al, 2006).

Quality health and life skills education can equip adolescents and young people with the
knowledge, attitudes and skills required for behaviour development and change for a healthy
lifestyle, before or as the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs becomes an issue for their
cohort. Schools not only have a key role in ensuring that young people develop the knowledge,
attitudes and skills that enable responsible health seeking behaviour, but also significant
opportunities and means of doing so. Over the years substantial experience has been
accumulated with regard to school-based substance use prevention programmes. A conceptual
basis for drug use prevention education with a focus on the school level, including general
principles for effective interventions, was produced by UNODC in the publication Schools –
School-Based Education for Drug Abuse Prevention (2004); existing interventions and policies
have been found to yield positive results in preventing substance abuse including through
school-based education, were documented and summarized by UNODC in the publication titled

1 According to the UN definition the term “young people” covers “adolescents” aged 10-19 and “youth” aged 15-24.
However trends indicate that substance abuse among young people is on the rise everywhere in the world; this shows that evidence-based and quality substance abuse prevention education has not been effectively implemented or scaled up to reach children and young people at an appropriate age. In many settings educational programmes continue to rely only on abstinence messages that mostly target young learners who are not supposed to use substances; while some of them may already be drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and/or using illicit drugs; therefore those messages do not work.

Therefore there is a need for practical guidelines specifically tailored to the needs of ministries of education for the development and scaling-up of national level education sector’s responses to prevent and address substance use among young people, to mitigate the consequences by presenting concrete examples of what works and does not work from different regions and countries. As a response, and in line with the mandate to promote healthy lifestyle among girls, boys, young women and men in educational settings, UNESCO proposes organizing an international consultation on education sector responses to substance abuse among young people; deliberation on how the best available evidence and standards can be translated into education sector institutionalised and scaled up responses.

A desk-based literature review is therefore proposed to inform the international consultation by focusing on education sector responses to substance abuse by young people worldwide and in regions. This will lead to documentation and dissemination of good policy and practice of education sector responses and school-based interventions on substance use among young people by mid-2015.

The Terms of Reference described below are for the consultants/organizations to identify and review published and grey literature including literature that is available only in Russian (and ideally Ukrainian) from Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) Region and prepare a report (discussion paper) for the consultation mentioned above.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the consultancy are to identify, collect, compile and synthesize the published and grey literature including literature that is available in Russian (and ideally Ukrainian) related to the nature and extent of the use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances by young people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia together with education sector responses, including policies and school-based interventions targeting both young people who are not using substances and those who may already use substances substance use.

3. Expected output

A synthesis report in Russian that summarizes the state-of-the-art evidence, covers the following key topics:

- The nature and scope of the use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances by young people in the EECA region, in particular in-school young people, including recent trends, by countries and types of substances;
- The short-term consequences and longer term impact of substance abuse by people, focusing on educational consequences;
- The role of the education sector: the need for a comprehensive response to prevent substance use, and to help mitigate the negative consequences of substance use on in-
school young people who already use substances and the community (indicated prevention and harm reduction approach);

- Approaches to measuring effective/successful education sector policies and school-based interventions, outcomes and impact of those (building on the existing conceptual basis and international standards for school-based interventions on substance use);
- Best practice examples of the education sector response to prevent substance use and mitigate its negative consequences as well as, gaps in the existing responses (universal, selective and indicated prevention) from selected countries (building on conceptual basis and standards developed by UNODC), in the following areas:
  - National education sector policies;
  - School level policies, including policies on the access to education vis-à-vis drug control policies with implications to education access;
  - Curricula, extra-curricular activities in schools and teaching methods (links with life-skills education and health education in general, and how harm reduction approaches are being included in existing HIV and drugs prevention education programmes);
  - Training of teachers and other education personnel;
  - Support for learners, particularly those who use substances;
  - Linkages between school-based programmes and health services, rehabilitation programmes, community-based programmes and the community (parents, NGOs, etc.).
- Barriers for the implementation and the scaling up of effective school-based interventions;
- Summary of analysis of approaches that work and approaches that do not work at macro level/national policies, and why; recommendations on interventions that can be scaled up to national level.

4. Process

a) Agree with UNESCO on the methodology, the reporting format and the detailed outline;
b) Collect published and unpublished grey literatures through online search and correspondence with identified key informants;
c) Review the best available evidence in Russian and ideally Ukrainian, summarise the evidence using the agreed template and outline;
d) Compile the literature (published and grey);
e) Prepare a synthesis report in Russian including the summarized evidence (at least 40-50 pages excluding the references).
5. Timeframe and deliverables

It is estimated that the assignment would be completed within a period of two months from July to September 2014.

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<td>1. Desk-based review and compilation of literature available in Russian (and ideally in Ukrainian)</td>
<td>List of literature compiled</td>
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<td>2. Draft a synthesis report in Russian based on the above reviews and analyses</td>
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<td>3. Finalize the synthesis report based on feedbacks coordinated by UNESCO</td>
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6. Qualifications

- Mandatory to have an advanced University Degree in Education, Public Health or in a related field;
- At least 5 years experience in research on topics related to substance abuse prevention and harm reduction among young people and life skills/health education;
- Preferably to have knowledge and understanding of the development, the management, the monitoring and the evaluation processes of school health programmes;
- Proficiency in Russian and ideally working knowledge of Ukrainian.

7. Expression of Interest

Interested consultants / organizations should submit a cover letter indicating remuneration, CV or an organizational brief, and a brief proposal on the approach to the assignment (including proposed data sources, methodology and report outline), to Tigran Yepoyan (t.yepoyan@unesco.org) by COB 21 July 2014.