**BRAC Pakistan**

1. **CONSULTANCY SERVICES REQUIRED:**

BRAC Pakistan requires services of a senior Evaluation Consultant to conduct an independent assessment of management practices focusing on student dropout and high turnover of teachers in the DFID funded BRAC Primary Schools under the Sindh Education through Non-State Actors (SENSA) Programme in Kambar Shahdadkot, Khairpur and Karachi in Sindh province of Pakistan. While the main focus of this assessment is to find out the underlying reasons of low attendance and high dropout rate of students in different cohorts at the BRAC Primary Schools, the study will also analyze other school management issues including enabling environment for learning and teacher turnover in these schools.

The Consultant is expected to propose recommendations to BRAC for enhancing the retention rate of students and also improve school management practices. The findings of this comprehensive assessment will inform the BRAC Pakistan management in improving student attendance, retention and completion with an overall goal of accelerating learning and increasing transition to further education.

1. **BACKGROUND:**

With 6.7 million children, the proportion of out of school children in Sindh accounts for 51% of total school age children. BRAC Pakistan is one of three national non-governmental organizations (NGO) implementing the Sindh Education through Non-State Actors (SENSA) programme in Kambar Shahdadkot, Khairpur and Karachi. Funded by DFID, SENSA is supporting a full cycle of quality primary education for up to 35,432 previously out-of-school students from the poorest families across four cohorts in BRAC primary schools (65% female, 35% male, 3% with a disability) in Kambar Shahdadkot, Khairpur and Karachi. Students were eligible for support if they were enrolled in BRAC primary schools in Sindh or identified as suitable for enrolment under the pilot Education Fund for Sindh (EFS)programme between 2012 and 2016.

In line with DFID’s strategic priority for reducing number of out-of-school children in Pakistan, SENSA isa four year programmeto enhance primary school enrollment rate in Sindh province. While SENSA has moderately achieved most of the performance indicators, there are issues in BRAC schools with respect to student attendance rates and dropouts. This has also been noted by the DFID review mission in May 2018. While student attendance rates were above target in other implementing partner schools, the required targets were not met in 35% of BRAC schools.The dropout rate of students at BRAC schools is 27% against the target of 12%. This is predominantly related to external issues around poverty, leading to family migration for work, child work and early marriage, but also to some internal quality issues related to the school environment, teacher management and quality of education.

Moreover, parents as well as their children also not willing to continue school partly because boys have to work, and girls are married off to other villages or parts of the city. There is also lack of interest and motivation of children to attend school. In some cases, children also move to other schools/madrassahs to continue their education. BRAC has tried to address the issue of student dropout through a number of measures including changing school timings and engaging parents and students in enhancing their interest in education.

BRAC is exploring specific strategies to improve retention of students - identifying risk factors earlier, taking pre-emptive steps to target additional support to ‘at-risk’ children. However, this would require empirical evidence from the field through research to understand the problem in a holistic manner. Therefore, an enquiry to find out as to why parents and children may be unwilling to continue schooling is warranted. The findings may help addressing demand-side barriers for families, ensuring schools and teachers meet quality standards, and focusing on issues contributing to higher female dropout.

Achieving reduced dropout of students will improve Value for Money(VfM) with greater effectiveness and improved equity. Given the higher dropout rate in BRAC schools in Karachi, the issue needs more in-depth analysis of the factors contributing to this problem so that more context specific strategies to improve student attendance, dropout, and teacher retention rates, based on evidence from the independent assessment.

1. **Objectives and purpose**

The main purpose of this assessment is to undertake a rigorous analyses of the school management practices focusing on student dropout and teacher turnover with an aim to understand better the demand side barriers to completion of primary education in BRAC primary schools in Kambar Shahdadkot, Khairpur and Karachi. The assessment will identify the underlying factors affecting students’ retention in all four cohorts as well also analyze the enabling environment for student learning and teachers’ performance, and their satisfaction level.

The specific objectives of the assessment are:

1. To undertake a comprehensive assessment of the internal and external factors leading to high student dropout rate by identifying underlying causes of this issue;
2. To analyze the extent of enabling environment of school in terms of student learning outcomes teaching methodology, behavior of teachers towards students (corporal punishment and physical violence), physical infrastructure including space, furniture, toilet facilities, drinking water, sporting facilities and other amenities which may affect students’ motivation to stay in the school;
3. To assess the factors (including financial and professional development incentives) which may affect teachers’ performance and motivation to stay in the job;
4. To evaluate the human resource management policy and practices in the BRAC schools focusing on recruitment and performance management systems in order to identify specific causes of teacher turnover in the BRAC schools.
5. To assess external factors including community support and demand side barriers to education including socio-cultural environment to education in the school catchment area
6. To propose appropriate strategies sensitive local context (social, cultural and economic) to improve the overall enabling environment within BRAC schools for students as well as teachers to reduce student dropout and teacher turnover.
7. To assess factors hindering mainstreaming of students after graduating primary school to continuing education.
8. **SCOPE OF WORK:**

The consultant will be responsible for conducting the “Assessment of Management Practices in BRAC Primary Schools in Sindh” with a focus on student dropout and teacher turnover as major issues for improvement.

The study will also look at other broader aspects of school management including human resource management including hiring of teachers, professional development and their performance management, students’ learning outcomes and physical facilities at the schools as part of an overall enabling environment for enhancing student retention and teachers’ satisfaction level. This analytical process will identify specific reasons for high dropout rate of students as well as other issues and challenges in school management resulting in teacher turnover. Based on the findings of the study, the Consultant will also propose a set of recommendations for school improvement to enhance the effectiveness of school management which would in turn reduce student dropout incentivize teacher retention.

As part of the assessment exercise, the Consultant will have to visit Kambar Shahdadkot, Khairpur and Karachi fordata collection. During the field visit the Consultant will meet with the key stakeholders, especially Sindh Government Education officials besides visiting BRAC’s Regional and Area Education Offices. A detailed assessment of the sample schools will be carried out which would involve meeting with school head, teachers, school management committees, parents (including the parents of dropout students), current and dropout students (both male and female).

Specifically for this assessment exercise, the Consultant will be required to:

* Review the existing studies, reviews, progress and monitoring reports (by Oxford Policy Management - OPM) related to SENSA Programme, BRAC policies, project proposal and other education related reports by the government and NGOs working on education in Sindh province.
* Sampling of schools and dropout students for in-depth analyses;
* Assess the current school management practices including year-wise enrollment in different cohorts, attendance of students, dropouts and completion rates disaggregated by gender;
* Evaluate the human resource management policies and practices, identify issues and gaps in the management of BRAC schools especially performance management of teachers;
* Assess the effectiveness of BRAC’s strategies in addressing school management issues – in particular low attendance and school dropout rates of students;
* Assess the professional development of teachers and its impact on improving students’ learning outcomes and improved performance of teachers vis-à-vis changing their behavior towards the students;
* Assess the physical facilities of schools in terms of space, furniture, learning materials, toilets, drinking water and protection from extreme temperatures.
* Assess the role of community and parents in school and education management, especially in enhancing students’ attendance and reducing dropouts.
* Evaluate the coordination between BRAC local and regional education offices in monitoring the performance of schools and maintaining the educational standards at BRAC school;
* Assess the overall enabling environment in the BRAC schools for students’ learning and professional growth of teachers and other incentives for the retention of high performing teachers;
* Assess the current barriers on the demand side of the primary education
* Assess the barriers in mainstreaming children to middle schools particularly to girls
* Based on the findings of the review, provide recommendations for school improvement focusing on improving attendance, reducing student dropout and incentivize retention of high performing teachers; and
* Prepare a Change Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to support the recommendations of this assessment exercise

1. **Methodology and approach**:

The Consultant will provide details on the overall approach and methodology to be employed for the Assessment of Management Practices of BRAC Schools, which may be included, but not limited to:

1. Review of secondary data (on schools, enrollment, dropout and complete rates of the BRAC schools and reports
2. In-depth interviews of individuals
3. Focus group discussions
4. Workshops
5. Stakeholder meetings

In addition, the Consultant will also be expected to provide data management plan including the tools for primary and secondary data analysis.

1. **Expected Deliverables:**

* An inception report presenting an understanding of the tasks, methodology to be employed to complete the assignment, and a workplan.
* Debriefing of the BRAC Senior Management on the completion of the field work in Sindh to provide a preliminary findings
* A comprehensive report on the Management Practices of BRAC Schools highlighting the underlying causes of student dropout and teacher turnover and other issues in school and education management. Also, provide recommendation on school improvement to reduce student dropout rate.
* Incorporate the comments from BRAC management on the draft assessment report and submission of the final report.

Maximum number of consultancy days for the assignment: 45 days

1. **Required Qualifications of the Consultant:**

* A senior development professional with advanced qualifications in social sciences or economics with proven capacity in designing and conducting evaluation of donor funded education programmes in Pakistan.
* At least 20 years of work experience with international NGOs and with proven consulting experience nationally and internationally.
* Previous experience of conducting programme reviews and evaluations of education projects would be an asset.
* Strong contextual knowledge of rural Sindh and education sector would be desirable
* Strong qualitative research, analytical and report writing skills with an ability to facilitate workshops with multi-stakeholders.