**Proposal Writing**

**Shobai Miley Pori (“ Everyone Reads Together”)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**– February 2021 –**

1. **Introduction**

The United States of America agency for International development (USAID) is expected to release a call for proposals for a Inclusive Education project (Shobai Miley Pori :“Everyone Reads Together”).The anticipated aim of the project is to improve early grade reading outcomes in Bangla for children with disabilities in Government Primary Schools in Bangladesh. To accomplish this objective, the activity will strengthen government service delivery of disability-inclusive education and create inclusive school environments and instruction for children with disabilities to improve student learning outcomes. Through this activity, children with disabilities will gain the foundational literacy skills necessary to advance through the government school system and be more equipped to obtain better economic opportunities upon completing their education.

USAID/Bangladesh posits that:

* ***If*** research is conducted to understand the contextual realities of education for children with disabilities, and
* ***if*** the school environment and instruction are inclusive and responsive to the needs of children with disabilities, and
* ***if*** local communities have the knowledge, attitudes, and practices to support disability-inclusive education, and
* ***if*** the government has the capacity to plan, manage, and support quality disability-inclusive education,
* ***then*** reading outcomes for children with disabilities will improve.

Shobai Miley Pori addresses the following USAID Education Policy priorities: “children and youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, have increased access to quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes social well-being,” and “children and youth gain the literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills that are foundational to future learning and success.”

The consortium partners - having past and ongoing initiatives aimed to support Inclusive Education in Bangladesh and the South Asia Region - have already conducted several workshops to reflect and develop an initial project design. The consortium now intends to hire a consultant supporting the proposal writing process based on Shobai Miley Pori anticipated priorities and building upon partners previous experience.

This document describes the expected objectives and outcomes of the consultancy.

1. **Context**

*Barriers to education access for children with disabilities*

Over the past decade Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in expanding access to education by achieving near universal net primary enrollment, with over 98% of children of primary school age enrolling in school. Nonetheless, children with disabilities continue to be underrepresented and underreported in its education system. In 2017 only 75,021 children with documented disabilities attended government primary schools. The World Health Organization estimates that in any population 15% of people have disabilities, which would equate to over 2.5 million primary-school-aged children with disabilities in Bangladesh.4 This gap between enrolled students and the estimated population size reveals the large scope of underreported or out-of-school children with disabilities. In particular, girls with disabilities are underrepresented. In contrast to the gender parity for children without disabilities, 56% of enrolled children with disabilities are boys. Additionally, children with “invisible” disabilities, such as learning difficulties, go undiagnosed and are underreported. Children with disabilities face multiple barriers to schooling. For children with mobility impairments, the physical school environment presents limitations. For example, only 15% of schools have an access ramp, and only 1% of Government Primary Schools have accessible toilet facilities for children with mobility disabilities. The social environment also creates a threatening school space. In Bangladesh, a study of 20 pre-service teachers cited students bullying their peers who have disabilities. Families of children without disabilities resist having children with disabilities in their children’s classes. As a result, parents and caregivers of children with disabilities perceive these social stigmas and antagonistic behaviors and fear for their children’s well-being.

Societal and parental expectations for children with disabilities are low. Parents of children with disabilities are reluctant to send their children to school because they do not have the expectation that their children will be included at school and receive an education like their peers without disabilities. In addition, these parents do not understand the benefits and opportunities of education for their children with disabilities. One small study of 15 Bangladeshi schools revealed that only 7% of parents of children with disabilities were confident their children would become economically empowered after graduation. This combination of social and economic factors contributes to decreased enrollment and increased dropout among children with disabilities.

*Barriers to learning for children with disabilities*

Students with disabilities struggle to participate fully in schools. The under-identification of children with disabilities delays or prevents necessary accommodations and adaptive pedagogy to meet the child’s learning needs. Social stigmas and a lack of institutional support around screening make identification of children with disabilities difficult, and the scope of coverage, extent, and quality of classification services is unclear. Some students enroll but do not report their disability, while other students enroll without ever having been screened for a disability. In addition, the lack of accurate data hampers government resource allocation for disability-inclusive education.

Pedagogical barriers for children with disabilities abound. Teachers do not receive training to identify learners with disabilities and to adapt pedagogy to their needs. A review of Bangladesh’s teacher training curriculum shows minimal attention to a disability-inclusive approach, and classroom teachers are not confident in their inclusive classroom techniques. Nonetheless, in 2018, 68,000 head teachers were trained on pedagogy that is inclusive of children with disabilities, but the impact of the training at the classroom level is unknown. To date, the primary education curriculum and its textbooks have not been adapted to serve learners with disabilities. In addition, children with communication and language barriers (such children who are deaf or hard of hearing) are left out of the learning process because others do not know how or are unwilling to communicate with them.

As a result of these non-inclusive environments, children with disabilities struggle to learn and persist in school. A study of 40 children with disabilities in 15 schools showed a decline in the proportion of enrolled children with disabilities from first grade to fourth grade. Among the 40 children, 35% of them were in grade 1, whereas only 9% of the children were in grade 4. These data indicate that despite initially accessing education in first grade, children with disabilities face challenges to persist and be promoted in school.

*Early grade reading outcomes*

Even for students without disabilities, the quality of early grade reading instruction remains poor, and many students are failing to master foundational skills. A USAID-funded assessment in March 2018 found that 44% of students finish first grade unable to read their first word in the Bangla language, and 63% of second graders cannot read with comprehension. Although there is no country-specific data about the learning outcomes of children with disabilities in Bangladesh, global data indicate that children with disabilities perform 15-16 percentage points below their peers on literacy exams.

*Government of Bangladesh initiatives for children with disabilities*

The Government of Bangladesh’s National Education Policy (2010) highlights the importance of disability-inclusive education through the mandate that: “equal opportunities have to be ensured for all kinds of disabled and underprivileged learners.” To implement this mandate, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education provides mainstream education services for children with disabilities, while the Ministry of Social Welfare provides educational services to children with severe impairments through special education institutions.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education prioritizes inclusive education through an $18 billion five-year sector program, called the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) (2018-2023). Inclusion is integral to the PEDP4’s topline program development objective to “provide quality education to all children of Bangladesh from pre-primary up to Grade 5 through an efficient, inclusive and equitable education system.” The sector program specifically targets children with disabilities through Sub-Component 2.6. “Special Education Needs and Disability.” The goal of this sub-component is: “Children with special education needs and disabilities receive primary education at mainstream primary schools.” Key results under this sub-component include: 1) revised curriculum and teaching-learning materials; 2) teacher education and development on inclusive education, 3) flexible assessments for children with disabilities; and 4) creation of linkages to specialized services and the provision of assistive devices and learning materials. The end-of-program target for this sub-component is 107,000 children with disabilities enrolled in schools by 2022.

In addition, Special Education Needs and Disability is a cross-cutting issue in the PEDP4 that is included in other sub-components. Specifically, curriculum revisions (Sub-Component 1.1), textbook and supplementary reading material development (Sub-Component 1.2), teacher education (Sub-Component 1.4), and flexible examinations (Sub-Component 1.7) mention special education needs and disability.

While the political will for disability-inclusive education is strong, this is a nascent area for Bangladesh in which technical capacity at the school-level and government levels is limited. The total Government of Bangladesh funding for the implementation of sub-component 2.6 is US $4.3 million.

Six development partners provide direct budget support to the government-led implementation of the PEDP4: the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). In addition, some of these partners provide technical assistance aligned with the sector plan.

*USAID support to the PEDP4*

USAID, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, and the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance have reached an agreement for USAID to support the Government of Bangladesh’s implementation of PEDP4 Sub-Component 2.6 through the Shobai Miley Pori Activity. USAID’s support to the PEDP4 also contributes to the PEDP4’s Gender and Inclusive Education Action Plan objective to: “reduce inequalities between boys and girls and all other disadvantaged groups of children through an inclusive and equitable education system.”

*Previous USAID education activities*

Previous USAID-funded activities implemented early grade reading throughout Bangladesh. The Reading Enhancement for Advancing Development (READ) activity implemented by Save the Children provided support to over 5,000 Government Primary Schools to improve early grade reading outcomes (2013-2018).21 The Innovations for Improving Early Grade Reading Activity implemented by BRAC also provided support to 445 Government Primary Schools for early grade reading (2015-2018).22 Notably, these activities were not included under the previous sector programs, and thus did not directly address system strengthening to sustain education reforms.

1. **Anticipated scope for the Shobai Miley Pori call for propoal**

Shobai Miley Pori Activity will support the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to implement the Special Education Needs and Disability component of the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4), the five-year education sector program. It is anticipated that Shobai Miley Pori will provide both technical support at the central and district levels of government *and* implementation support in schools in selected *upazilas* (sub-districts).

The target beneficiaries of the interventions are children with disabilities in grades one and two in select Government Primary Schools. The total number of beneficiaries will depend on the number of schools in which the Contractor conducts activities and the prevalence of children with disabilities. USAID prioritizes reaching children with identified and unidentified disabilities who are already enrolled in school, rather than conducting outreach to enroll new students with disabilities whose schools may not yet be ready to meet their needs. Increasing access to education without providing a disability-inclusive school environment risks stigmatizing children and driving higher rates of repetition, drop out, and lower learning outcomes. Because this activity aims to support the five-year education sector program of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, it is not within the scope of the activity to support specialized schools for children with disabilities that fall under the management of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

Shobai Miley Pori is a five-year activity that will be implemented at a central level and in

Government Primary Schools in select local communities. The location of school-level

implementation will be determined in negotiation with USAID and the Government of

Bangladesh.

The goal of Shobai Miley Pori is to improve early grade reading outcomes in Bangla for children with disabilities in grades one and two in Government Primary Schools.

**The results contributing to that goal are:**

1. Research conducted on education for children with disabilities.

2. School environments made inclusive and instruction made effective for children with disabilities.

3. Communities gain the knowledge, attitudes, and practices to support disability-inclusive

education.

4. Government systems strengthened to plan and manage quality disability-inclusive education.

The consortium partners have already developed an **initial program design with detailed activities**. This will be shared with the selected consultant for further elaboration and guidance on the consultancy.

1. **Objectives**

The **overall objective** of this consultancy is to support the consortium to design a quality project strategy and approach on disability inclusive education response to the anticipated USAID call for proposal.

The **specific objectives** / **expected outcomes** are:

1. Contributing to the definition of a quality project strategy leverages partners strengths and experiences and meet USAID guidance and priorities for the call
2. Leading the proposal writing process, together with consortium members, ensuring the final document is compliant with HI’s quality standards and donor’s requirements.
3. **Roles and responsibilities**

**The consultant will:**

* Propose a clear methodology for the consultancy, considering that consortium members work across different time zones and remotely.
* Provide working space, access to the internet, telephone usage and office services (copies, etc.)

**Handicap International, as consortium lead, will:**

* Provide logistical support, including arranging meetings as requested by the consultant
* Make available all relevant documents to the consultant.

1. **Profile sought**

* Strong experience in supporting proposal writing, more specifically for USAID (for consortium would be a strong asset)
* Strong analysis and writing skills in English
* Strong facilitation skills (remote working sessions)

Preferable:

* Former experience with HI
* Strong theoretical understanding of inclusive education/inclusion in developing countries
* Sound international experience of inclusive education preferably in Asia or context similar to Bangladesh
* Solid awareness of education sector in Bangladesh

1. **Selection criteria**

Interested consultants shall submit to [i.henstock@hi.org](mailto:i.henstock@hi.org) and [al.coutin@hi.org](mailto:al.coutin@hi.org) the following:

* A Curriculum vitae
* A motivation letter stressing experience in both reconciliation and social cohesion program design
* Business Registration or Legal Documents to conduct consultancy service in Bangladesh, TIN
* Proposed methodology and schedule for the mission **detailing** **the mission outputs**
* A financial quotation, indicating a **daily fee EURO per full working day**
* Submission on or before 24 Jan’2020.

Short listed candidates will be provided with a more detailed description of the envisaged project design.

1. **Duration and time frame**

The consultancy is:

* expected to last 15 days
* to take place between end-January / end of February 2021.