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TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Feasibility Study for Harnessing AI-Enabled Learning Systems to Mitigate School Dropout Rates in Jordan*

Background

Vision Hope International is a Germany-based charity (NGO) committed to transforming the world by empowering its most vulnerable people. We believe that empowered individuals can bring about significant change. The organization provides emergency aid primarily in the MENA region, including countries like Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Over the years, Vision Hope has successfully implemented numerous projects, ranging from combating hunger and cholera in Yemen to supporting refugees in Jordan in educational projects, but also by providing emergency aid to children affected by the Beirut explosion. Our core areas of work encompass food security, health, education, employment, and water supply. Sustainability is a cornerstone of these activities, and we emphasize long-term cooperation and collaboration with local partners for project implementation.

Vision Hope's mission is to build sustainable communities in war-torn regions, leveraging local potential and structures, and fostering community-oriented interventions to create a world where war no longer devastates communities and individuals.

The initiative titled "Empowering Jordanian Schools with AI-Enabled Learning: A Dual-City Approach" seeks to harness both existing and available, but not yet utilized AI technologies to enhance the educational environment in Al-Karak and the capital, Amman. Vision Hope International (VHI) in collaboration with Branches of Mercy (BOM) and Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) aims to leverage these AI technologies to create a more engaging educational framework.

Purpose and Use of the Feasibility Study

The primary objective of this feasibility study is to delve deep into the challenges and opportunities associated with the utilization of AI-empowered learning in Al-Karak and Amman for reducing the drop-out of school children.

Specifically, the study aims to:

- **Understanding Barriers**: Identify and analyze the obstacles hindering the in-depth utilization of AI-empowered learning in the educational systems of Al-Karak and Amman.
- **Assessment of Current Equipment Infrastructure**: Evaluate on a sample basis in coordination with the Education offices in Karak and Amman the existing technological infrastructure in schools and determine its readiness to support AI-empowered learning solutions.
- **Stakeholder Analysis**: Understand the perceptions, attitudes, and readiness of key stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, and administrative staff, towards the adoption of AI in education.
- **Roll-out Strategy**: Propose a phased approach for introducing and scaling AI-empowered learning solutions. This should include pilot programs, feedback mechanisms, and iterative improvements.
- **Capacity Building**: Recommend strategies for building the capacity of educators (including the concept of master trainers) and administrative staff to effectively use and support AI-empowered learning tools.
- **Integration with Curriculum**: Explore how AI-empowered learning solutions could be based on this initial pilot and seamlessly be integrated into the existing curriculum, ensuring alignment with educational goals and standards.

Methodology

Data Collection:

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**: Organize FGDs with educators, students, parents, and administrative staff of the relevant ministries and its offices in Karak and Amman to gather qualitative insights. These discussions will be instrumental in understanding the nuances of stakeholder perspectives and apprehensions.
- **Interviews**: Conduct one-on-one interviews with key decision-makers, AI technology providers, and educational experts to gain in-depth knowledge about the feasibility and challenges of implementing AI-empowered learning.
- **Market Survey**: Undertake a comprehensive market survey to identify both existing and available but not yet utilized AI-empowered learning software in Jordan. This will involve reaching out to software vendors, attending relevant trade fairs, and analyzing online platforms.

Data Analysis:

- **Quantitative Analysis**: Use statistical tools to analyze survey data, providing a numerical overview of stakeholder perceptions and the current state of AI-empowered learning readiness.
- **Qualitative Analysis**: Analyze the data from FGDs and interviews to identify patterns, themes, and narratives. This will help in understanding the deeper concerns, aspirations, and suggestions of stakeholders.

- **SWOT Analysis**: Conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis based on the collected data to understand the potential and challenges of the project.

Stakeholder Involvement:

- **Stakeholder Mapping**: Identify and map all relevant stakeholders based on their influence and interest in the project. This will help in understanding whom to engage with and how.
- **Feedback Loops**: Establish mechanisms for continuous feedback from stakeholders throughout the feasibility study. This ensures that the study remains relevant and adapts to emerging insights.

Initial Situation and Problem Analysis

- What current problems of the beneficiaries have been identified as relevant to the proposed project? Which of the causes of these problems will be prioritized and addressed in the project?
- What existing local potential, structures (institutions, networks, umbrella organizations, etc.) and social mechanisms can be built on? What gaps have been identified in the system?
- Are there any approaches or results from previous development measures? If yes, how can they be extended? Or what lessons have been learnt?
- What other circumstances, for example, conflict dynamics, must be taken into account in the context?

Local Project Partner

- Why have BOM and ARDD been selected as local project partners? Who suggested the idea for the project? How will you improve the local project partners' ownership?
- Do any formal agreements exist between the stakeholders BOM and ARDD? To what extent have existing agreements between stakeholders been formalized?
- Are the partners' resources and strengths, both individually and at an organizational level, well understood?
- What relevant professional, methodological, and political competencies, both at an individual and an organizational level, will/need be further developed?

Beneficiaries and Other Stakeholders

- Define the criteria for selecting schools and students who will benefit from the initiative in both cities? Who is selecting them?
- Understand the composition of the student population in terms of gender, socio-economic background, language, ethnic origin, capacity, etc.
- What potential does each beneficiary have for self-help? How well are the beneficiaries equipped for self-help?
- Evaluate the potential of students and teachers to adapt to AI-enabled learning systems.

- How strong is the various stakeholders' support for the project, for example, in terms of their own contribution? In what ways do they influence the project?

Evaluation Based on OECD DAC Criteria

Relevance - To what extent is the planned project doing the right thing /relevant to the problems?

- Will the planned project approach address a key development problem or a significant developmental bottleneck in the partner country or region?
- Are the focus, priorities and objectives (approach) of the planned project clearly defined and aligned with the expectations of the beneficiaries?
- To what extent do the intervention objectives and design adequately take into account the specific needs of the beneficiaries and any structural obstacles in the project region, partner/institution, or policy programs?
- Are the norms and standards of the approach compatible with those of the beneficiaries?
- Is the project designed to be conflict-sensitive (Do No Harm Principle)?

Coherence – how suitable is the intervention?

- How consistent are the planned activities with human rights principles (inclusion, participation), and any conventions or relevant standards/guidelines?
- To what extent do synergies and connections exist between the planned project and other interventions by the same stakeholder (organization) and other stakeholders.
- What similarities or overlaps exist between the beneficiaries and projects implemented by other stakeholders in the same context? To what extent does the intervention add value and avoid duplications?

Effectiveness – Which project approach is best for achieving the objectives?

- Are the cause-effect relationships (including assumptions) plausible? What negative effects might arise?
- Is the chosen methodological approach suitable and sufficient for achieving the project objective? Are alternatives required?

- At what level (multi-level approach) do you anticipate implementing additional measures to increase effectiveness?
- How will changes be measured? What indicators (fields) are most suitable?

Efficiency – is the proposed project's planned use of funds a cost-effective method to achieve its objectives?

- To what extent can the planned measures be implemented with the envisaged funds and personnel in the proposed time period?
- To what extent can the envisaged spending be allocated cost-effectively, and are the investments, operating expenses and personnel in proportion to the intended goals? Impact**: Determine the potential long-term benefits of the initiative on the education system.

Impact (significance) – what contribution does the planned project make to achieving higher level development policy impact?

- What particular contribution does the project objective (outcome) make to the overall objective (impact)?
- To what extent does the planned project build structures, set examples and have a broad impact? On what levels will norms or structures be changed?

Sustainability - to what extent will the positive impact remain once the project has ended (without additional external funding)?

- How can the sustainability of the results and impact be ensured and strengthened (structurally, economically, socially and ecologically?)
- What long-term capacities will be established in the beneficiaries to enable them to continue the implemented measures independently?
- What personal risks for those implementing the project, or institutional or contextual risks, may influence the sustainability of the project how can these be minimized?

Recommendations

On the basis of the main findings on topics 3 to 6, what concrete suggestions can be made or incorporated into the project concept in its specific context?

- What components, if any, are missing from the project concept to make the cause-effect relationships more coherent and to sustainably achieve the planned objectives? What planned components are not suitable or may have a negative impact, and for what reasons?
- Can the assumptions of cause-effect relationships be supported?

- What findings and project-relevant data from the study are suitable for inclusion in the project impact matrix of the project proposal? What are the recommendations for possible impact monitoring and data collection indicators?

Timeframe:

The feasibility study should not commence later than 01.11.2023 with a maximum duration of two months.

Offer:

Presentation of the suggested expert pool with CVs and planned engagement in a Staffing and a separate Time Schedule.

A detailed budget including all taxes for the feasibility study should be prepared, including all costs associated with data collection, analysis, stakeholder consultations, and report preparation, including a detailed staffing schedule with related fees, per-diem, accommodation, travel, insurance, office expenditure, etc shall be prepared.

The contract type is a lump sum based on details provided in the contract.

Reporting:

The selected consultant/team will submit an interim report halfway through the study phase and a final comprehensive report at the end of the study. Both reports should be submitted in English and should include detailed findings, recommendations, and an executive summary. The final report shall not exceed 30 pages without Annexes. The interim report will be revised/commented on by VHI within 10 days from submission. The draft final report will be revised/commented on within 20 days from submission. The final approval of the final version of the final report will be given within 15 days from its submission incorporating the comments of VHI.

Qualifications:

The consultant/team should comply with the following profile:

- **Feasibility Study Expertise**: The consultant/team should have a proven track record of conducting feasibility studies, particularly in the education sector in Jordan. Their past work should demonstrate a deep understanding of the local educational landscape and its unique challenges and opportunities.
- **AI in Education**: Familiarity with AI technologies is essential. The consultant/team should not only be aware of the latest AI technologies but also understand their practical application in educational settings, both globally and within the context of Jordan.
- **Analytical Prowess**: Possess strong analytical skills, with the ability to dissect complex data, identify patterns, and derive meaningful insights. Experience with both quantitative and qualitative data analysis is crucial.

- **Detailed Reference List**: The ability to produce high-quality reports should be demonstrated through the submission of a detailed reference list, outlining the topic, the client and the date the report was written. Ideally, some client testimonies should be presented as well, if applicable.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Experience in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, from government officials to teachers, students, and parents. The consultant/team should be skilled in facilitating discussions, workshops, and focus group sessions.
- **Cultural Sensitivity**: A deep understanding of Jordan's cultural, socio-economic, and political landscape. This ensures that the feasibility study is contextually relevant and respects local norms and values.
- **Multidisciplinary Team**: The team should be multifaceted, comprising members with expertise in education, technology, policy-making, and community engagement. A diverse team ensures a holistic approach to the feasibility study.
- **Networking**: Established connections with AI learning providers, universities, and other relevant institutions in Jordan. This will aid in gathering data, understanding the market landscape, and fostering collaborations.
- **Project Management**: Proven experience in managing projects efficiently, ensuring that timelines are met, resources are utilized optimally, and objectives are achieved.
- **Language Proficiency**: Fluency in both Arabic and English to ensure effective communication with local stakeholders and the production of bilingual reports.

By ensuring that the consultant or team possesses these qualifications, the feasibility study will be conducted with a high degree of expertise, cultural sensitivity, and thoroughness.

Application Process:

Interested consultants/teams should submit a proposal detailing their approach to the study, a proposed timeline, a detailed budget, and CVs of all team members by 19th of October 2023 by email to **tender@vision-hope.net.**