

The project aims to contract credible Education Management Organizations (EMOs) from the private sector to manage and improve the functioning of public schools by introducing innovations, modernizing processes, addressing management gaps, improving school infrastructure and facilities and cooperatively working with teachers, schools' staff, school management committees and other education stakeholders.

For improving the standards of education in Sindh, the Government, acting through the Authority, envisages a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, for the introduction of EMOs.

The Education Department is working closely with USAID for the implementation of Sindh Basic Education Program, under which, state-of-the-art schools are being constructed in selected districts of Sindh.

The key objectives of the project are:

- Improving the functioning of public schools through innovation and modernization of the education system.
- Reducing inefficiencies and addressing the management gaps in public education.
- Delivering better quality education to the children in Sindh.
- Encouraging greater private sector investment in the education sector, in particular in the rural and less developed areas of Sindh.

TRC has been selected as an Independent Expert for 7 EMO schools of two different Operators including IRC and HANDS in District Khairpur and Sukkur. The role of TRC is to provide technical assistance to the operators for implementing the school improvement plans agreed with the Government of Sindh. TRC monitors progress on quarterly basis against 7 Key Performance Indicators (i) School Management Plan, (ii) Improved Staff Availability and Attendance, (iii) Improved Students' Enrollment, Attendance and Retention, (iv) Lesson Planning and Students' Assessment System, (v) Continuous Professional Development of staff, (vi) School Repair and Maintenance and Improved Community Engagement, and (vii) Improved Health and Hygiene practices, and sporting activities.

During the reporting period, TRC has technically reviewed and provided detailed feedback on the following documents of all 7 schools:

- **Annual Management Plans** based on learning and teaching activities; achievements of KPIs; and other interventions committed by the Operator under their agreement.
- **Implementation Framework** based on day-to-day school operations and management procedures, SOPs (e.g. school assembly, school timetable, curriculum management, lesson planning, teaching methodology, progress monitoring, examination system, skill development, co-curricular activities etc).

In addition to this, Operators were further provided technical assistance in designing Monitoring; Evaluation and Reporting (MER) tools including:

- **Attendance Management System** ensuring a systematic method of data collection, of both teachers and administrative staff to maintain a time based daily/monthly attendance record of the school.
- **Training Need Assessment (TNA)** for determining training needs of teachers and administrative staff. It includes, but not limited to current knowledge, skills, attributes and abilities, to identify gaps and other areas of development.
- **Classroom Observation Tool** comprises of checklists to assess learning environment and children's learning and development.

TRC, in the capacity of an Independent Expert, carried out 4 monitoring visits to each school on quarterly basis for validating Operators' reports and progress. Classroom observations, Interviews with head teachers and teachers, review of operators' reports, interaction with students and community, observation of PTM and SMC meetings etc were some of the activities carried out during the visits.

TRC also conducted a sample based annual assessment of 280 students. 40 students (20 males and 20 females) from each school were randomly selected and assessed on English, Science, and Mathematics. The tests were administered from grade 1 to 8. Each assessment paper entailed 10 questions based on the three subjects and had equal marks. The purpose was to evaluate current competence level of students in their core subjects across grades progressively and to set benchmarks for the coming years. The results provided the individual assessment of each student on comprehension, knowledge and analytical understanding of basic mathematics concepts.

Project name	Sindh Basic Education Program RFP-3
Project duration	April 2018 – March 2022
Targeted districts	Khairpur and Sukkur, Sindh
Partner organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Indus Resource Centre (IRC) · Health & Nutrition Development Society (HANDS)
Reporting period	July 2019 – June 2020

Project background

The Education Management Organisation (EMO) Project is an important part of the Sindh government's strategy towards developing the provincial education sector and improving the literacy rate. In 2013, the Government of Sindh passed the Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in compliance with Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan. The legislation has placed a renewed obligation on the Government of Sindh, including the Sindh Education and Literacy Department, to take steps to address the weak performance of the education sector. The project aimed to contract credible Education Management Organisations (EMOs) from the private sector to manage and improve the functioning of public schools by introducing innovations, modernising the education system, addressing management gaps, maintaining and upgrading the school building and facilities, and cooperatively working along with teachers, school staff and management committees, surrounding communities and all relevant tiers of the Schools Education Department. To improve the standard of education in

Sindh, the government, acting through the authority, envisages a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, for the introduction of (EMOs) in Sindh.

The Sindh Education and Literacy Department is working closely with USAID for the implementation of the Sindh Basic Education Program, under which state-of-the-art schools were constructed in selected districts of Sindh.

The key objectives of the project include:

Improving the functioning of public schools through innovation and modernisation of the education system;

1. Reducing inefficiencies and addressing management gaps in public education;
- Delivering better quality education to the children in Sindh; and
1. Encouraging greater private sector investment in the education sector, in particular in the rural and less developed areas of Sindh.

Project introduction

Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC) works as an independent expert for seven EMO schools of two different operators including (IRC) and (HANDS) in Districts Khairpur and Sukkur. The engagement of TRC in the project is to provide technical assistance to operators for the execution of their agreed project deliverables with the PPP node. TRC is responsible for monitoring and supervising the progress every quarter against seven key performance indicators (KPIs). The seven KPIs include; (i) school management plan, (ii) improved staff availability and attendance, (iii) improved student enrollment, attendance and retention, (iv) Lesson planning and student assessment system, (v) continuous professional development (CPD) of staff, (vi) school repair and maintenance and improved community engagement, and (vii) improved health and hygiene practices, and sporting activities. TRC has developed a comprehensive monitoring mechanism that articulates a comprehensive portrayal of the activities undertaken during the first year of the project. The following narrative further explains the step-by-step approach TRC's role as an independent expert for EMO schools.

Activities carried out by TRC

Quarterly visits

The TRC team has carried out four consecutive visits of all seven schools on a quarterly basis in Districts Khairpur and Sukkur.

Objectives: The specific objectives of the school visits included: a. physical assessment of school infrastructure, b. introductory meetings with EMO staff, school administration and teachers, SMC members and parents, c. validating MoVs of EMOS' QPR, and d. sharing

technical feedback and recommendations for further improvement. The team visited the following schools

Name of School	District	EMO
Government High School, Gagri	District Khairpur	IRC
Government High School, SATABO	District Khairpur	IRC
Government High School, Dirb Mehar Shah	District Khairpur	IRC
Government High School, Faqirabad	District Khairpur	IRC
Government High School, Bhellar	District Sukkur	HANDS
Government High School, Kamal Khan Indhaar	District Khairpur	HANDS
Government High School, Pir Essa	District Khairpur	HANDS

Process: The school visits followed by the physical verification of the progress mentioned in the operators' reports, assessed the furniture, fixtures, and equipment provided by the Sindh Government under the project, observed selected classrooms to assess the quality of education being provided by operators, and ratified the overall quarterly progress against the set KPIs and agreed project deliverables. TRC developed monitoring checklists, performance indicators, and classroom observation tools to systematically record the findings. The visits were followed by debriefing meetings with the operators' staff on a quarterly basis to discuss the findings and share feedback with suggestions and recommendations for further improvement.

Outcomes: In light of the quarterly physical verification visits, TRC, as an independent expert, issued 28 quarterly certificates to the independent auditor to release the fund. The feedback and suggestions provided to the operators has resulted in an overall improvement of the schools' functions and services. It ultimately benefited the governance and quality of CPD sessions for public and private teachers.

Sample-based annual assessment of children

TRC carried out a second annual assessment of students in all seven schools administered under the Operator – (IRC and HANDS). The assessment was conducted for the academic session 2019-20 in January 2020. The results have been further compared with the last year's results.

Objectives: The specific purpose of the second sample-based annual assessment for the year 2019-20 was to evaluate the current competence level, aptitude, and academic learning of students in core subjects in each grade progressively, and to set benchmarks for the coming years. It also aimed to determine whether or not the course's learning objectives had been met.

Process: Altogether, 280 students (140 Boys and 140 Girls) from all seven selected schools were randomly selected -- comprising five students from each grade. The assessment was held from grade I till VIII for core subjects including English, Science, and Mathematics. Each assessment paper, comprising 10 questions based on all three subjects, was developed carrying equal marks. To avoid the probability of paper outflow, the assessment was conducted on the same day in all schools. TRC staff invigilated the entire exercise under their supervision. To avoid language

barriers and any chance of limited readability of the students, all papers of Math and Science were set in Sindhi — the mother tongue (L1) of the natives where the schools were placed.

Outcomes: The results of each students and school were compiled and further divided into several categories. The table of all 280 students from grade I till VIII were listed and shared with their individual results, which explained the total marks students obtained in each subject. A comparative analysis of the two-year assessment was formulated and shared with the operators. TRC also provided a one-on-one session to each operator to improve the performance and produce better results in the coming years through an appropriate action plan.

Contract management workshop

TRC attended a two-day contract management workshop arranged by the Sindh Basic Education Programme in collaboration with SELD and PPP Node on February 26-27, 2020, in Karachi. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders, KPIs, non-KPI obligations, common issues, learnings, observations and standard reporting formats in detail to achieve desired results.

Objectives: The specific objectives of the workshop included; (i) Identifying current practices of contract management, (ii) sharing best practices based on each other's experiences provided by a range of experts, (iii) developing a common understanding of agreed roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, and (iv) discussing standards of monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Process: Two representatives from TRC attended the workshop and shared their individual and collective experiences with the stakeholders and also discussed the variety of monitoring approaches used during the quarterly visit to the operators. TRC's approach and methodology to monitor the KPIs and improve the overall quality of the education system were appreciated and found exceptional. Most of TRC's strategies were shared as an example with other IEs for knowledge sharing.

Day 1: The first day started with Mr Naveed Ahmed Shaikh's (COP-CMP) welcome speech. He highlighted the significance of this workshop and spoke about the objectives that would identify the current practices of contract management under the PPP model. Based on this, participants would share based practices with one another. The workshop also aimed to discuss the development of standard Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) tools and formats along with a common understanding of agreed roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders for effective contract management.

Day 2: The second day began with a summary of the decisions taken on the previous day along with the objectives of the day. An interactive dialogue and discussion prevailed the whole day and important decisions were made by taking desired obligations of contract management into consideration.

Outcomes: The ultimate outcomes of the workshop included better understanding of KPIs and non-KPI obligations, and timely achievements of desired results. The workshop ended with a recommendation to constitute a Technical Working Committee comprising independent experts

(IEs) including TRC and AASA and independent auditor (IA) Ferguson Pvt Ltd, and stakeholders from SELD, to discuss and come up with the standard reporting formats for all IEs and IAs with mutual agreement.

Technical working committee

In pursuance of the recommendations as adopted in the contract management workshop, a technical working committee (TWC) was constituted and notified from the SELD to develop a standard reporting format. The TWC is comprised representatives from IEs, IAs and the operators.

Objectives: The main objective of the meeting was to discuss and develop consensus on the outline of the proposed standardised quarterly and annual reporting format for all EMOs (Operators) and IEs that cater to the demand of all RFPs and packages. The discussion points intended to: improve the overall quality and performance of the operators and IEs, make reporting procedure productive, easier, and simplified for informed decision making, and ensure accountability and transparency at all levels.

Process: The committee was notified by the SELD along with its separate ToRs which defines the criteria and desired results in the stipulated time. TRC has been part of this technical committee for policy recommendations to the SELD.

Outcomes: Two separate meetings of TWC have been carried out so far to review and discuss the existing formats and come up with a standard reporting format. TRC has also provided its detailed rubric to assess the KPIs of the project.