

Terms of Reference

Digital Learning Programme for refugee children

1. Background

1.1 Refugee Context in Pakistan

After more than forty years, Afghan refugees continue to make up one of the largest and most protracted displacement situations under UNHCR's mandate. Today, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan hosts almost 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees, shouldering a large share of the collective responsibility to protect them. The majority of refugees reside in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (58 per cent) and Baluchistan (23 per cent)-the least developed provinces of Pakistan. Two thirds of the Afghan refugee population (69 per cent) living in urban and peri-urban areas have access to national public services on par with host communities. 52 per cent of the registered population is under the age of 18.

1.2 Refugee Education in Pakistan

UNHCR's Education Strategy focuses on facilitating access to quality and equitable education services in nearby public schools, however 31 per cent of Afghan refugees continue to reside in remote Refugee Villages (RV), with limited access to public services. To ensure synergy and alignment to national education systems, UNHCR coordinates jointly with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and provincial education departments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and Punjab to provide access to education for children left behind across 54 refugee villages and supports 142 Refugee Village (RV) schools.

1.3 Challenges to education of refugee children

Access to free primary education is enshrined in Pakistan's Constitution federally and managed and administered provincially. Despite the impressive enabling environment allowing refugee children to access public schools, the enrolment of Afghan children remains low. In Pakistan, UNHCR estimates that almost 80 per cent of an estimated 500,000 refugee children and youth are not enrolled in formal education, resulting in extremely low literacy among Afghan refugees. Only an estimated 39 per cent of registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan can read and write.¹ Limited access to education is one of the most significant challenges faced by refugees, and key barriers in the refugee villages include:

- Poor quality school infrastructure: semi-permanent schools at further risk of natural disasters;
- Overcrowded classes with limited supply of teachers: student ratio at 1:100+ in many schools;
- Lack of adequate water and sanitation infrastructure;
- Lack of qualified teachers and limited learning material;
- Limited teacher professional development opportunities;
- Language barriers and difficulties in delivering host country curriculum; and
- Higher school drop-out rates (starting at Grade 4 and 5) as refugee families adopt negative coping mechanisms.

2. UNHCR's Education Response in Pakistan

UNHCR works in collaboration with the government and implementing partners to improve access and quality of education through 5 strategic areas:

- Access to free quality education through 142 refugee villages (RV) schools across 54 refugee villages, reaching over 49,000 primary and 6,000 secondary aged children, with 39% female enrolment. UNHCR supports over 1200 teachers across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (99 RV schools), Balochistan (35 RV schools) and Punjab (8 schools).

¹ UNHCR, Pakistan-Education Factsheet, 31 July 2022, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/3282> (Accessed 30/9/22)

- Access to girls' education through Home-Based Girls Classes and primary and secondary Accelerated Learning Programmes.
- Support refugee and host children through the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Programme.
- Strengthening linkage to education pathways through the DAFI Scholarship Programme.
- Strengthening national systems to reduce barriers and mainstream refugee children into the national system.

In 2023, UNHCR Pakistan introduced digital technology to enhance the quality of education and teaching practices across 88 RV schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This included the provision of 1 LED screen per RV schools and digital tablets to teachers to support a blending learning programme that reinforces the existing national curriculum to support students' learning as well as motivation to attend school. UNHCR is seeking to expand and scale the initiative to new refugee village schools in Balochistan and Punjab. UNHCR's goal is to ensure refugees and hosting communities are meaningfully supported to access global and national digital education and connectivity efforts, as aligned to UNHCR's [2030 Global Education Strategy](#), [Connected Education Challenge](#) and efforts led by the Government of Pakistan.

The infrastructure context in the refugee villages has inherent challenges for implementation and delivery of education technology. Classroom infrastructure, hardware, connectivity, and power are critical components to consider in implementing education technology programmes in low- resources contexts. Reliable power and connectivity are crucial building blocks as they enable access and use. UNHCR has solarised 142 refugee schools and will lead on improving the school infrastructure to enable access and use of new technology. UNHCR has also procured the hardware (android tablets) and will coordinate with the selected contractor on to ensure environmental conditions, such as heat, dust, and safety and security, is addressed to maximise the durability of the tablets as well as other hardware requirements (e.g., charging stations).

3. Objectives of the assignment

The selected contractor, in partnership with UNHCR, will be responsible in launching a new programme supporting refugee student and teacher's access to connected education (CE)². The contractor will contribute to strengthening UNHCR's education interventions within the refugee villages, directly empowering teachers to effectively use technology in their classrooms and expand access to quality education for refugee children in Pakistan. UNHCR expects to distribute up to 7,711 tablets in coordination with on the ground implementing partners and reach up to 142 refugee village schools across Balochistan, KP and Punjab.³

The CE programme will improve the pedagogical and technical skills of teachers, enhancing the quality of teaching and empowering teachers to help students learn more effectively and interactively with the support of digital technology (LEDs and digital tablets). UNHCR expects to see improvements in teacher capacity, instructional quality, and ability to effectively manage classrooms in low resource contexts. The connected education programme will also incentivise refugees' students, encouraging new students to enrol and stay in school and show results in increased enrolment and retention of students. UNHCR anticipates this new method will also help re-enrol children to school at critical grades, such as Grade 4 and 5, where there are high levels of dropout (up to 70%). Through this programme, UNHCR expects to see improvements in student motivation, ability to retain information taught in the class and improved holistic learning outcomes. UNHCR anticipates young refugee students will emerge well- skilled in technology and prepared for further opportunities, including enrolling in nearby public secondary schools

² Connected Education focuses on establishing new linkages between people, information, and ideas through the use of innovative pedagogical approaches, community-led design techniques and diverse convening platforms. Where applicable, connected education also utilizes new digital tools and connectivity networks. Through these approaches connected education can both expand access to and enhance the quality of education (UNHCR 2017).

³ Final allocation and selection of schools and locations will be finalized during the planning and design phase.

and/or enrolling in tertiary education, and successfully completing the education cycle. In the long term, this project will contribute to the development and socio-economic inclusion of refugee families in Pakistan.

The partnership between the contractor and UNHCR will also serve to support UNHCR's work in advocating for mainstreaming refugee access in the national education system and building the capacity of refugee village schools to provide quality education to refugees and prepare them effectively to mainstream into secondary education. UNHCR actively works to ensure that refugee education programmes align with national programme and government priorities, including ensuring access to national curriculum and certification where possible.

4. Description of Assignment

The contractor will be responsible for the following:

4.1 Collaboration with UNHCR and implementing partners on the programme design

This project is a collaboration with UNHCR. UNHCR will lead on the direct implementation of the hard infrastructure components, which includes identifying the relevant refugee village schools in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, upgrading both energy and connectivity needs and finalising the overall implementation model with the implementation partners responsible for managing the refugee schools. UNHCR expects a 1 weeklong inception design phase bringing together the contractor, UNHCR sub-offices and implementing partners in Islamabad, reviewing existing school level data and needs assessment, and putting in place clear project processes for relevant stakeholders. This will cover reviewing school infrastructure, human resources, users (teachers, students), school management, local community, and project processes. UNHCR expects the contractor to outline key activities that will support the inception phase, this may include the following activities but not limited to:

- Facilitate an orientation and/or introduction to the proposed Edtech model for UNHCR and/or presentation of current and/or past projects with similar objectives and scope. (Essential)
- Finalised project implementation plan, results framework, risk planning and budget. (Essential)

4.2 'Soft Infrastructure': Lead on developing and installing offline education content on tablets

A key component of UNHCR's connection education programme is the 'soft' infrastructure component that is complemented by the 'hard' infrastructure components: classroom infrastructure, hardware, connectivity, and energy (4.1).

Relevant and age-appropriate education content is a critical component, especially offline content to mitigate the significant challenges of connectivity in refugee villages. The contractor will be responsible for identifying and supplying UNHCR the 'soft infrastructure'- digital education material/ content and pedagogical training for teachers that is aligned to the Standard National Curriculum (SNC) of Pakistan from Grades KG-5 and/or Grades 6-12 as required. UNHCR has nearly transitioned all 142 refugee village schools to the SNC from the previous Afghan curriculum and expects the contractor to support key subjects' students are struggling in such as Urdu, English and Maths. UNHCR will supply and install the hard infrastructure components including the provision of 7771 android tablets and 124 LEDs across 124 schools (final selection will be agreed during the inception phase). The contractor is expected to review the tablet specifications, install, and test the educational content and lead the distribution process among the identified refugee village schools in close cooperation with UNHCR and its implementing partners. UNHCR expects the educational content to meeting the following requirements but is not limited to:

- Low maintenance and easy to use digital education content suitable for android tablets and LEDs; able to allow for modification and uploading additional feature and content. (Essential)

- Educational content is suitable for students enrolled in Grade KG to Grade 12, aligned to the SNC, and available for off-line use by students and teachers. (Essential)
- Education content includes priority subjects: English, Urdu, Math, Science, Social Studies and Islamiyah. (Essential)
- Storage, installation, and distribution process for the tablets provided by UNHCR and/or other considerations required; installation up to 7,711 tablets and distribution up to 142 schools. (Essential)
- Develop a model for all grades to use the tablets, including proposing a schedule and/or approach for blending learning. (High desirable)
- Provide a manual/guidance tool that has relevant tutorials, videos, and demonstrations and training to teachers, students and UNHCR staff on how to use the tablets, the educational content, learning and assessment and trouble- shooting user problems and maintenance. (Essential)
- Integrated teacher lesson plans for blending learning approaches. (Essential)
- Have strong security features and controls to prevent digital misuse. (Essential)
- Education content includes gamified learning activities that are stimulating, fun, interesting, and motivating and allow students to learn independently at their own pace and/or used in groups at different levels. (Highly desirable)
- Consider possibility of in-built login for user (student) to track learning and progress, as well as support programming monitoring data. (Highly desirable).

4.3 Teacher and UNHCR Staff Training

Well-resourced and motivated teachers are central to harnessing the potential of technology in the classroom. UNHCR supports over 1200 teachers across 142 RV schools. Teachers will be expected to develop their own lesson plans to deliver blended lessons across different subjects, aligned to the SNC. School Headteachers will also be expected to be trained, including managing timetables for students and teachers to access the tablets. School Watchmen will also be expected to be trained in ensuring the security and safety of the hardware as well and general maintenance.

In collaboration with UNHCR and its implementing partners, the contractor is expected to provide comprehensive training on project implementation. The contractor will also train and mentor either all teachers and/or a cohort of master teachers on the project and implementation at the school level. The contractor will be expected to ensure all teachers are trained either directly and/or indirectly through a cascade model of training of teachers (ToT) through a master cohort model. Ideally the improving teaching quality should include ongoing, and classroom based- mentorship rather than stand-alone sessions. This will be finalised during the project inception phase in collaboration with UNHCR's implementing professional development officers. UNHCR expects the contractor to outline key activities that will support teacher training, this may include the following but not limited to:

- Relevant teacher training model to support the scale up digital learning activities across Grades KG to 5 (Priority) and K6-12 (Desirable), including relevant teacher training activities, mentorship, coaching and/or other relevant teacher professional development activities. (Essential)
- Teacher handbooks and guidance materials with example concepts and model lesson plans on blending learning for teachers to use as reference materials. (Essential)
- Train teachers (up to 1200 teachers) on digital learning assessment tools for formative assessment. (Highly desirable)
- Scheme of study aligned with the SNC for teachers to use. (Essential)
- Develop a timetable and sharing system with the resources (LED and tablets) available to support RV Headteacher/school administration and UNHCR implementing partners. (Essential)

- Relevant items teachers may require supporting their own development. (Desirable)

4.4 Community Engagement

Community actors and parents have a critical role in supporting the refugee villages schools. In each RV school, school management committees (SMCs) are established with parent and community members. UNHCR expects the contractor to outline key activities that will also target parents and community stakeholders, this may include the following but not limited to:

- Community awareness messaging on digital technology among parents and community stakeholders. (Essential)
- Training of UNHCR partners on facilitating awareness raising sessions. (Essential)

5. Programme Management and Monitoring and Evaluation

The connected education programme will be implemented by UNHCR staff and its respective sub-office focal points. Implementing partners are responsible for implementation and monitoring of all education activities in the refugee villages. The contractor will be expected to provide technical services (as per the projective deliverables) and collaborate with UNHCR. UNHCR will manage the implementation of the project through implementing partners, liaise with district and provincial education authorities and ensure linkages with other relevant education and government stakeholders in the country.

The contractor will be expected to implement activities against the agreed project deliverables, monitor implementation in partnership with UNHCR and its implementing partners. UNHCR expects the contractors to outline specific monitoring and evaluation practices that may support UNHCR to but not limited to:

- Ensure a common understanding of the desired outcomes of the project, including the contractor's role in achieving these among headteachers, teachers, UNHCR staff and other key stakeholder. (Essential)
- Put in place clear data collection process at the project start to ensure evidence of outcomes and impact is collected by UNHCR, including baseline and endline assessments. (Desirable)

6. Deliverables

The project is expected to run from [August 2023 to December 2024](#). Key deliverables include:

Planning & Design:

- Finalise project description, including implementation plan, M&E plan, results framework, and detailed budget.
- Develop/contextualisation of educational content/software for described Grades and subjects.
- Develop teacher training package for direct and indirect training of teachers, including curriculum support and scheme of work for teachers.
- Develop capacity building package for UNHCR and implementing partners on project implementation and monitoring.

Implementation:

- Storage, installation of education content/software, testing and physical distribution of 7711 tablets at school location across refugee villages.
- Support UNHCR in ensuring classroom infrastructure is ready to implement activities, include storage of tablets, installation of internet (if required) and training on basic usage and maintenance.
- Provide comprehensive training to teachers and UNHCR implementing partners.

- Develop and lead community awareness raising sessions via SMCs.
- Conduct teacher training and ongoing mentoring to deliver activities in coordination with UNHCR and implementing partners.
- Monitoring of activities in coordination with UNHCR and implementing partners.

Reporting:

- Monthly activity reports.
- Quarterly implementation meetings.
- Bi-annual Narrative and Financial Reports.
- Annual Report and Financial Reports.

7. Qualification requirements of the contractor

Essential

- Minimum of 5 years' experience and expertise implementing Edtech/Connected Education programmes (specifically using LEDs and android tablets) at-scale.
- Minimum of 5 years expertise in instructional design, content development, capacity development, holistic student learning and teacher development or equivalent.
- Have tested and ready-to-go education content/application and/or other software for schools and other education institutions in local languages.
- Software is highly interactive and engaging, including illustration, animations, and edutainment for both online and offline learning.
- Minimum of 3 years' experience in implementing similar projects in Pakistan.
- Minimum 3 years' experience in strengthening teacher training competencies and implementing blending learning models in low-resource schools.
- Active registration with National Tax Number (NTN), Sales Tax Registration Number (STRN), Form H, Certificate of Incorporation.

Desirable

- Experience and/or extensive knowledge of implementing education programmes in refugee communities in Pakistan and/or other relevant refugee contexts
- Excellent understanding of the education challenges and barriers facing refugees in Pakistan, especially living in rural and remote districts with low- resource school environments
- Experience with marginalised children, including refugees, out of school children, overaged- girls, children with disabilities and/or other marginalized children and youth.
- Good knowledge of local languages, such as Pashto/Dari.

8. Preparation of the proposal

The applicant should prepare a technical proposal for the deliverables outlined under Section 4: and Section 6, which should contain a relevant approach to implementing digital technologies in refugee contexts to expand access to quality education, improve teaching capacities and impacting student learning outcomes. The technical proposal should contain information on responding the contextual challenges foreseen as well as other risk mitigation strategies required for successful implementation. While the ToR provides the minimum of what UNHCR's expectations of the contractor, the contractor will propose additional approaches and innovative strategies to undertake this project.

The proposal should describe staffing and organisational setup of the project with detailed proposed timeline of activities. Description of relevant qualifications and experience should be accompanied by a list of relevant projects.

Technical proposal should also include a narrative on the financial construction describing the rationale for the proposed activities. It is particularly important that the financial narrative included in the technical proposal does NOT contain any financial figures. However, it should contain a detailed description of the proposed project including, size and composition of teams, means of transport as well as any assumptions on which the financial proposal is based on.

The financial proposal should follow the supplied format in terms of providing the breakdown of the proposed budget. The budget should include clearly identified unit costs and quantities per activity.

9. Milestone Payments

- Planning and Design phase completed: 20%
- Implementation: Installation of tablets and distribution completed: 20%
- Implementation: 1st Biannual Report (August- December 2023) submitted and verified: 20%
- Implementation: 2nd Biannual Report (January-June 2024) submitted and verified: 20%
- Implementation: Final Report submitted and verified (July-December 2024) submitted and verified: 20%

10. Evaluation Criteria & methodology

The submitted proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Score
<p>Overall Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of and responsiveness to requirements, proposes a minimum package of activities that is needed to achieve objectives. - Understanding of scope, objectives, and provides clearly defined activities and targets. - Overall alignment between UNHCR Pakistan’s requirements as well as coherence to Connected Education Approach and national strategies. <p><i>If understanding and alignment with UNHCR’s requirements are below:</i> <i>Excellent = 10</i> <i>Very Good = 7-9</i> <i>Good = 5-6</i> <i>Fair = 3-4</i> <i>Poor = 0-2</i></p>	10
<p>Technical expertise and experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical proposal is high quality, logical and presents a feasible and realistic scale-up approach with specific skills, specialist and track record highlighted. (Total = 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Excellent = 10</i> ○ <i>Very Good = 7-9</i> ○ <i>Good = 5-6</i> ○ <i>Fair = 3-4</i> ○ <i>Poor = 0-2</i> - Project approach and activities are suitable and responsive to the needs of the ToR, evidence based and learning centred, and contextually appropriate. (Total = 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Excellent = 10</i> 	25

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Very Good = 7-9</i> ○ <i>Good = 5-6</i> ○ <i>Fair = 3-4</i> ○ <i>Poor = 0-2</i> <p>- Experience and/or existing presence in relevant location implementing similar education technology programmes. Ability to operate in given security conditions of locations. (Total = 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Worked in Pakistan – 2 points ○ Worked in Pak including KP and Baluchistan – 3 points ○ Worked in Pak including remote areas of KP and Baluchistan – 5 points 	
<p>Organisational Capacity</p> <p>- Professional expertise, knowledge and experience with similar projects, contracts, and clients (UN/humanitarian sector) (Total = maximum 10 points and project worth min Rs 1 million)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Experience of doing similar projects not with Government and UN/NGOs – 1 point per project</i> ○ <i>Experience of working on similar projects with govt – 2 points per project</i> ○ <i>Experience of working on similar UN/NGOs = 2 points per project</i> <p>- Professional experience operationalising large education interventions across multiple locations in collaboration with other partners and/or relevant education stakeholders (e.g., government and community stakeholders) (Total = 5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Experience of doing 1 Education project over Rs 2 million in 1 province = 1 point (up to a maximum of 3 points if same province) -1 additional point for any additional project over Rs 2 million, in a different province</i> <p>- Demonstrated capacity to complete project within the stipulated period, (Total = 5 points) Based on reference letters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Project completed in time – 1 point each, max = 5</i> 	20
<p>Risk Management</p> <p>- Recognition of the risks/peripheral problems and methods to prevent and respond to operational challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Excellent = 5</i> ○ <i>Very Good = 4</i> ○ <i>Good = 3</i> ○ <i>Fair = 2</i> ○ <i>Poor = 1</i> 	5
<p>Sustainability of results</p> <p>- Sound strategy on how the results achieved through this project will be carried on beyond the partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Excellent = 5</i> ○ <i>Very Good = 4</i> ○ <i>Good = 3</i> ○ <i>Fair = 2</i> ○ <i>Poor = 1</i> 	5

<p>Budget Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed description of proposed activities, including composition of implementation team, cost-effectiveness and elaborates on maximising resources to achieve ToR objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Excellent = 5</i> o <i>Very Good = 4</i> o <i>Good = 3</i> o <i>Fair = 2</i> o <i>Poor = 1</i> 	5
Total	70

The Technical Proposal has a total score of 70 points. Applicants must score minimum of 50 points to be considered technically compliant and in order, for the Financial Proposals to be opened.

Financial proposal has a total score of 30 points.

Financial proposal will be judged against the overall proposed budget, but also based on the proposed unit costs and feasibility of underlying field models.

The final selection of the applicant will be based on a quality and cost basis.

Both technical and financial proposals as well as any accompanying documentation needs to be submitted ELECTRONICALLY.