BRITISH COUNCIL

Education

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Call for proposals

Research and Analysis of Schools Closures response in the Americas (RASCRA) - 2020

September 2020

Call for Proposals - Research and Analysis of Schools Closures response in the Americas (RASCRA) - 2020

Call for Proposals

The British Council Argentina seeks the services of a skilled and experienced UK consultant with international reach and experience to undertake a research and analysis project, which has as its objective the collection, synthesis and analysis of available data and insight into the effect on education (primary and secondary schools) in the region and the response to school closures.

Timescales of the project

Apply by: 28 September 2020

Start date: 1 October 2020

End date: 16 December 2020

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the Americas particularly affected, with most countries in the region suffering total or partial school closures and having to adapt to alternative means of education. As of September 1st, more than 50% of the cases and more than 50% of the total deaths worldwide have been in the Americas.[1] At the start of the Pandemic in March 2020, nearly 155 million children in the Americas were not in school[2]. As of September, it is estimated that globally more than 800 million children, or over 45% of enrolled learners are not at school.[3] UNESCO estimates that one billion students, two-thirds of the global student population, face either school closures or uncertainty.[4]

As a direct result of school closures, and the resulting change to teaching and learning during the pandemic, the British Council's English for Educational Systems (EES) unit surveyed teachers and teacher educators worldwide about their needs in order to adapt and develop relevant content and support. This global survey has so far attracted 9,000 replies from over 140 countries worldwide and a regional snapshot is now available.

Further insight and data into the effect of the pandemic has been collected by multiple organisations, including the World Bank and UNESCO. There has also been research into the effectiveness of the responses (including remote teaching; online guided learning; mobile

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[1] https://covid19.who.int/
[2] https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-more-95-cent-children-are-out-school-latin-america-and-caribbean
[3] https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse
[4] https://en.unesco.org/news/new-academic-year-begins-unesco-warns-only-one-third-students-will-return-school

learning; TV and radio, etc.). In the British Council EES survey, teachers stated they felt overwhelmed by the sudden switch to remote teaching and were struggling with the amount of information, guides and resources that were available while simultaneously trying to teach and manage their classes. It also emerged that teachers need clear and direct guidance on how to meet the challenges of this new approach to both teaching and learning.

What is needed now is evidence-based qualitative and quantitative research into how education systems in the Americas have been affected and what can be done by those responsible for educational systems to effectively respond to the ongoing pandemic and potential future partial or complete closures of educational establishments, with a focus in particular on inclusivity and how teachers can best be supported to ensure learners can continue to learn. It seems certain at the time of writing that the shift to remote teaching, remote learning, blended learning, use of educational platforms and the concept of the 'flipped classroom' are not transient tools to manage a short-term pandemic-induced crisis in educational systems globally – but represent a sudden and possible permanent shift in how we teach, and how children learn.

Instead of evolving over a number of years, this shift has been driven by necessity and context. As previously mentioned in the reference to UNESCO – the most vulnerable students in terms of socio-economic status are most at risk of being excluded from this new model, and of course as well as having the most to lose, were already in the worst position to be losing further ground on their peers.

To quote UNESCO:

"To date, the world's students have lost an average of 60 days of schooling since lockdowns began in February and March. In a situation like this, the risk of dropouts, decreased quality of learning, and negative social and economic impacts is high."[5]

Project Summary

British Council Argentina would like to commission desk research on the following research questions:
1. How have educational systems in individual countries in the Americas have been affected by the pandemic in terms of days lost, numbers of children who have accessed state education services over the 6 months from March 2020
2. How effective has each country been in terms of the response? This is with a view to better the understanding of the issues and the ways in which learning, teaching and teacher development can be supported in the region during this type of crisis.
3. What strategies have been more successful than others in terms of:
   - Student learning outcomes?
   - Student engagement?
   - Teacher adoption?
   - School / educational system adoption?
4. Have any particularly innovative models been adopted? If so, what are these models and how have they been implemented? What did the innovative aspect of the solution/model imply?

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[5] https://en.unesco.org/news/new-academic-year-begins-unesco-warns-only-one-third-students-will-return-school

Background of British Council Argentina in Remote Teaching

The British Council Argentina is well-placed to lead on the commissioning of this research and analysis because of the experience of the British Council's Remote Teaching Centre (RTC) in Buenos Aires, which has been the main hub for the delivery of remote lessons to over 80,000 state primary school children, as well as a number of remote teaching and teacher development initiatives in the region and elsewhere.

Objectives of the project

The objectives of this research and analysis project are to:

Collection and reviewing of data

a) **Collect and review the existing data** available from educational and government sources across the Americas and elsewhere, related to how the pandemic has affected education systems to **identify the most effective responses** that have been implemented both in terms of educational models and evidence of student learning. This analysis should include the following countries as minimum:
- **Argentina**
- **Brazil**
- **Chile**
- **Colombia**
- **Mexico**
- **Peru**
- **Uruguay**
- **USA**

b) **Identify any gaps** in knowledge and insight that can be met by **focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders** and representatives in specific countries in the Americas, to provide more detail of some of the issues and responses.

c) **Undertake additional data collection** from **focus groups and interviews.** Support will be provided by the British Council in contacting stakeholders and facilitating these meetings.

d) **Synthesis and analysis of data,** highlighting what worked well, what could have been done better and what remains to be done in order to plan a more robust and high-quality response to this ongoing pandemic and any future events that may cause closure of educational establishments.

Analysis

e) **Review the successful strategies** adopted by teachers and organisations **for remote teaching** (i.e. synchronous; live online) and identify **how best to provide teacher development** for this.

f) **Review the successful strategies for guided online learning** (i.e. asynchronous support via a Learning Management System) and best practice in countries to provide support for teachers in how to use LMS.

g) **Review the effectiveness of TV and radio programmes** implemented in the Americas and elsewhere to support the school closures and a **special focus** should be made on the provision and effectiveness of **English language teaching via radio and TV.**

h) **Review the successful strategies and programmes utilising mobile solutions** (WhatsApp, SMS, etc.) that have been implemented to support education during school closures.

i) **Review and highlight examples of educational systems where the blended / remote learning models have not been a success,** due to student attendance, lack of remote teaching skills or challenges caused by connectivity. Compare and contrast with best practice models.

Reporting

a) **Produce** an **executive summary report** and a second **detailed report** of the findings of the above.

Deliverables

Deliverables should include the following:
- An evaluation work plan, including planned timeline, methodology / approach, planned stakeholders to be consulted and sampling framework, data collection and analysis tools, qualitative and quantitative protocols for data collection and analysis
- Presentation of preliminary findings (October and November)
- Draft evaluation report written in English that meets the requirements outlined below
- One (1) electronic file of the clean (final) qualitative and quantitative data collected
- Final evaluation report in English

The **final evaluation report** should be jargon-free, clear and simply written. The report should include an executive summary, brief project background and recommendations. Technical information should be included in appendices only. Analysis of project achievements should always be backed up with relevant data, with reference to the data source. Recommendations should be specific and include relevant details for how they might be implemented.

The structure of the report should cover the following:
- Executive summary (approximately 10% of the final report)
- Brief project background (approximately 5%)
- Main findings relating to the evaluation questions and including detail of any unintended outcomes that might result from reviewing data and analysis, interviews, amongst others (At least 50%)
- Recommendations for future action (At least 25%)

In addition, the final report should contain at least the following annexes:
- Terms of Reference for final evaluation
- List of online meetings
- List of persons interviewed
- Details of evaluation methodology
- Summary of online interviews
- List of documents reviewed
- Any other relevant material, including data collection tools

Details of consultancy

This call for proposal is opened to all UK institutions and individuals who can commit to delivering the following:

ACTIVITY	DATE - year 2020
Deadline for asking clarification of questions	21 September (4pm BST)
British Council to respond to clarification questions	22 September
Deadline for submission of proposal	28 September
Selection of proposals	30 September
Final Decision communicated to winning applicant	30 September
Signing of contract	1 October
Beginning of consultancy assignment	1 October
Initial findings – first draft report submission	30 October
Initial findings – second draft report submission	30 November
Final report submission	16 December
End of consultancy assignment	16 December

Confidentiality

All information supplied to applicants by the British Council, either in writing or orally, must be treated in confidence and not disclosed to any third party (save to your professional advisers, consortium members and/or sub-contractors strictly for the purposes only of helping you to participate in this call for proposals) unless the information is already in the public domain or is required to be disclosed under any applicable laws.

Intellectual Property

The Consultant expressly agrees that the Final report, initial findings reports submission, their content and resources, shall belong exclusively to the British Council, even if created outside its premises, if bound to or resulting from the performance of the scope of this Agreement and/or the information owned by the CLIENT.

Budget

The maximum budget for this project will be £49,000 (including VAT if payable) and should be taken into consideration in your proposal. This is to cover everything as outlined on pages 4, 5 and 6.

Proposals

Your proposal should cover the following points:

- Your interest in this opportunity.
- Your track record (aligned with what is being sought).
- Qualification evidence of Spanish and Portuguese fluency (at least a member of the consultancy team)
- Your methodology and approach for the research and analysis project (you can use images, sample materials etc. to support if needed).
- Budget for delivering everything outlined on pages 4, 5 and 6 broken down by scope, stages and criteria suggested.

Please note that the proposal should have **a maximum of 7 pages**.

Selection criteria

You will have your response evaluated as set out below:

Stage 1: It will be checked if all required documents have been provided according to the specifications. Incomplete or incorrect submissions will be disqualified and not evaluated further.

Stage 2: The proposal will then be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weightings set out below. If excluded at this point, they will not be evaluated further.

CRITERIA	%
Methodology and Approach that demonstrates that the researcher understands the request	50%
Knowledge of the sector, professional experience, qualifications and competencies.	30%
Value for money	20%

Clarification

It is possible to submit a proposal that covers everything outlined on pages 4, 5 and 6 and include a comparative analysis of responses elsewhere, with the budget proposal breakdown. In these cases, when submitting, subject line should be "Proposal – Research and Analysis of Schools Closures response in the Americas 2020 and comparative study with …". In these cases, timescales will remain the same.

Proposals should be sent to Milagros Mendez Prato (Milagros.MendezPrato@britishcouncil.org) by no later than Monday, 28 September 2020. Subject line: "Proposal – Research and Analysis of Schools Closures response in the Americas 2020".

Should you have any questions related to this call for proposals, please contact Milagros Mendez Prato by no later than 21 September 2020, 4pm BST. Subject line: "Proposal – Research and Analysis of Schools Closures response in the Americas 2020 - Questions".

Proposals will be assessed according to compliance with the terms of reference above and breakdown of costs/budget.

All institutions/individuals will be contacted by Wednesday 30 September with the results.

CONTACT PERSON

Milagros Mendez Prato

Head of Education and English - Argentina

British Council

Milagros.MendezPrato@britishcouncil.org

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND MONEY LAUNDERING POLICY

The British Council is a UK organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

As a non-profit organization, the British Council must comply with applicable Brazilian law, including by making sure that its assets are protected and properly used to meet its objectives. We also have a duty to protect the public funds we receive. The funds must not be used to support criminal or terrorist intentions, or in any way that violates the applicable penalties.

This policy applies to all British Council operations worldwide, unless the local legal requirements are more stringent, or if the enforcement of the policy is unlawful under local regulations.

The British Council will assess the risks of becoming involved in terrorism and money laundering, and of violating applicable penalties. It will implement proportional measures to manage these risks, while continuing to work in difficult and challenging places.

The British Council undertakes to:

- Have systems, procedures, and controls in place, to make sure the risks of becoming involved with the funding or support to terrorist activity, money laundering, or violation of penalties are managed;

- For the highest-risk negotiations, check whether the funds that the British Council receives or works with are not on lists of banned terrorist groups or persons, lists of financial penalties, or other lists of regulatory compliance, and assessing the risks, if any;

- Train its team to be aware of the risks related to terrorist activity, money laundering or violation of penalties;

- Make sure that its staff understands their obligations to report any actual or suspected terrorist or money laundering activity; and

- Comply with its obligations, informing the external authorities when necessary.

We require that all funds received by the British Council comply with this policy, to make sure that funds and assets are not used to fund or support terrorist or money laundering activity.

The British Council will review this global policy annually, to reflect new legal and regulatory developments and ensure the adoption of best practices.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The British Council creates opportunities for people from the UK and other countries and builds a relationship of trust between them around the world. The British Council seeks to work effectively with diversity and promote equal opportunities, and this is an essential part of the work.

The British Council is committed to ensuring that there is no unjustified discrimination in the recruitment, retention, training and development of employees based on age, disability, gender (including transgender), HIV/AIDS, marital status (including steady union), pregnancy and maternity, political opinion, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, socioeconomic history, criminal background, trade union membership, work pattern, existence of dependents or any other data irrelevant to the function performed.

It also aims at respecting and promoting egalitarian legislation, following the laws and intentions they express in this area and seeking to avoid unjustified discrimination, recognizing that discrimination is a barrier to equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights.

The British Council undertakes to:

- understand, value and work with diversity, in order to allow fair and integral participation in our work and activities;

- ensure that there is no unjustified discrimination in our recruitment and selection processes, among others;

- promote equality, including checks on conditions of equality and impact assessments of policies and functions, as well as progressive action plans aiming at diversity;

- treat everyone with whom we work with justice, dignity and respect; and

- do our part to remove barriers and correct imperfections caused by inequality and unjustified discrimination.

The British Council requires all employees to ensure that their behavior is consistent with this policy. It also asks that customers, users, partners and suppliers be aware of this policy and act accordingly.

The British Council will provide appropriate and adequate resources to implement this policy, and make sure that it is communicated and understood.

The British Council will review this policy annually, to reflect new legal and regulatory developments and ensure the adoption of best practices.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

We believe that child protection requires everyone to take responsibility and that every child matters. We recognise that the care, protection and welfare of children is paramount and that all children have the right to be protected from all types of harm.

The British Council also recognizes that it has a fundamental duty of care towards all children with whom it interacts, including the duty to protect them from abuse. This goal is achieved through compliance with all applicable legislation on the protection of children, as well as compliance with the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

We aim to achieve this through compliance with UK child protection laws and the relevant laws in each of the countries where we operate and by adhering to Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989.

A child is defined in the British Council as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday (UNCRC 1989) irrespective of the age of majority in the country where the child is, or in their home country.

The British Council is committed to:

- valuing, respecting and listening to children

- ensuring all necessary checks are made when recruiting staff

- maintaining strong child protection systems and procedures for staff

- training its staff and providing a common understanding of child protection issues to inform planning and practice

- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children and parents/carers

- sharing information about any concerns with the relevant agencies and involving parents and children appropriately

- providing effective management for staff through clear processes, supervision and support.

We will provide adequate and appropriate resources to implement this policy and will ensure it is communicated and understood.

The British Council will review this global policy statement annually to reflect new legal and regulatory developments and ensure good practice.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The British Council creates opportunities for exchange of knowledge between nations and the United Kingdom, creating a relationship of trust with the nations where it is based. Its operations and activities have an impact on the environment and, as such, it is committed to manage and reduce the impact of the organization on the environment.

The Environmental Management System (EMS) has been awarded the ISSO14001 certificate in the UK and the environmental action plan aims at reducing carbon footprint in the United Kingdom.

The British Council uses a tool called the Environmental Framework Tool (EFT), to manage its environmental impact in more than 100 countries where the British Council operates.

In Brazil, efforts are being made to improve environmental performance by using this tool, which requires the British Council to report progress in specific areas, including employee awareness and their understanding of the environmental impact of activities and behaviors.

The British Council undertakes to:

- evaluate, understand and control the environmental impacts arising from its activities;

- ensure compliance with all relevant national environmental legislation;

- define environmental objectives and targets for activities with significant impact, taking into account the aspirations of the partners;

- communicate progress in reducing environmental impact to stakeholders within and outside the British Council; and

- monitor and reduce the impact of corporate travel on the environment.

The focus of the British Council will be to:

1.	Reduce the use of power and water and the carbon emissions resulting from its activities;

2.	Reduce the production of garbage, reinforcing practices to reduce use, reuse of materials and recycling;

3.	Choose sustainable options during the procurement of goods and services;

4.	Monitor and reduce the environmental impact of business travels and explore innovative mechanisms to further develop cultural relations in countries where it operates in an effective manner;

5.	Use its creativity and global position to promote sustainability through commitment to the climate change agenda.

The responsibilities of the British Council are the following:

- Responsibility for the environmental policy falls on the National Officer
- The EFT National Coordinator is responsible for:

    – managing the implementation of the EFT in Brazil

    – leading the implementation team, called the Green Team Champions

    – completing the EFT evaluation process and submitting a report to the Regional Coordinator

- The implementation team, called the Green Team Champions, shall be responsible for:

    – working with the National Coordinator to promote environmental awareness

    – contributing to the development of the British Council's environmental policy and action plan for the country

    – leading specific tasks aligned with the EFT

The entire British Council team is responsible for adjusting to the new environmental policy and adjusting its actions to support the improvement of its environmental performance. Officers will be responsible for including in the induction of every new employee an introduction to the environmental policy.

ANTIFRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

The British Council creates international opportunities for people from the UK and other countries and builds relationships of trust between them around the world.

As a nonprofit organization, the British Council must comply with the applicable Brazilian law, including by making sure that its assets are protected and properly used to meet its objectives. The British Council also receives British aid funds (through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office), and it needs to take steps to preserve these public funds.

The British Council has a policy of "zero tolerance" with regard to fraud, bribery and corruption. Always investigating and seeking to take disciplinary and/or legal measures against those who commit or assist someone to commit, fraud or any other improper activity in their operations.

The British Council undertakes to:

- Develop an anti-fraud culture throughout the organization;

- Seek to minimize opportunities for occurrence of fraud, bribery and corruption;

- Have effective systems, procedures and controls in place, which enable the prevention and detection of fraud, corruption and bribery;

- Make sure that its team is aware of the risks of fraud, bribery and corruption and that it understands its obligations to report any actual or suspected incidents of fraud, bribery or corruption;

- Analyze all reports of fraud, bribery and corruption seriously, and investigate them proportionately and appropriately; and

- Fulfill its obligations by reporting any incidents of fraud, corruption and bribery to the appropriate external authorities.

The British Council will provide appropriate and adequate resources to implement this policy and make sure that it is communicated and understood.

The British Council will review this global policy annually, to reflect new legal and regulatory developments and ensure the adoption of best practices.