TERMS OF REFERENCE

Post Title: Consultant to develop a Policy Toolkit and Guidelines for improving Boys’ Educational Achievement and Active Citizenship

Project Location: Home-based

Project Duration: 40 consultancy days

Fee: £14,000

Closing date: 20 May 2016

1. Background and Rationale

Educational achievement and learning outcomes are critical components of a child’s or adolescent’s overall development and wellbeing. They are also cross-cutting concerns for two key priority areas as identified by ministers at the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (19th CCEM), namely foundational early years and gender. At the 19th CCEM (Nassau, the Bahamas, 2015), delegates noted the importance of continuing to meet the needs of all learners, address issues of equitable access to learning as well as the underachievement of either boys or girls in Commonwealth contexts (see Annex 1). The key role of early childhood education in the foundation for all lifelong learning and wider social and economic outcomes was also recognized.

In several Commonwealth countries, and in particular those of the Caribbean region, ensuring that boys improve their learning outcomes and engage in active citizenship require that different factors and dimensions are adequately addressed (access to quality education, access to adequate health care and sanitation, access to nutritious diet, strong parental support and guidance, safe and stable environments, positive role models, social protection, household income etc.). Avoidance of at risk situations and negative behaviors, as well as violence prevention including gender based violence, therefore depends on effective actions across multiple sectors.

Small improvements in the skills of a nation’s labor force can have very large impacts on future well-being. However, because the benefits of educational investments are seen only in the future, it is possible to underestimate the value and importance of improvements¹, and therefore education is not high on the national policy agenda.

The issues of low learning outcomes, high dropout rates at primary or post primary levels, particularly in rural areas are still a major challenge for educators and policy makers. In particular, ‘male underachievement’ or ‘boys’ underachievement - when boys drop out of secondary school and spurn tertiary education - cannot be resolved by intervening in the

¹ The High Cost of Low Educational Performance, OECD, 2010
education sector alone. It is also exposed as a major gender issue in education with wide social and economic implications that affects all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not only in the Caribbean but across Commonwealth countries.

A country’s policy framework must therefore take into account how different sectors (environment, health, trade, education and social services, economic, etc.) contribute to strengthening learning systems (including formal and non-formal education) and ensure that each sector builds on and reinforces the efforts of other sectors. Failure to invest in learning and skills development ultimately leads to a serious shortfall in boys’ attainment of their potential and, in the long term, a loss in human resources.

2. Initial work

The Secretariat has engaged in several consultations in the Caribbean as a way of ascertaining the most effective approach to achieve knowledge transformation for impact within the region. Based on these and other activities and engagement with the region, the Secretariat has acquired the knowledge and background information to inform its next step towards providing assistance.

Between 2009 and 2012, the Secretariat held a series of consultations with Caribbean member states, during which boys’ underachievement was identified as a regional priority. In response, a number of country based interventions, strategies and activities were put in place (see Annex 2). In 2009, it collaborated with the World Bank to examine ‘boys at risk’ as a gender issue related to development challenges. During a joint World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat workshop, 15 Caribbean countries identified thematic areas to address boys at risk including schooling and education, skills development for labour market insertion, with some issues of a more general cross cutting nature (see Annex 3).

From 2014 to 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat provided technical assistance and funding to St Lucia and Jamaica to support their national efforts to address the issue. St Lucia’s focus is on delivering mentoring schemes for boys whereas Jamaica’s emphasis is on delivering entrepreneurship skills to boys through same sex schooling, and improving teaching strategies.

More recently (January-February 2016), as part of knowledge brokering, the HEU supported a virtual global discussion forum for policymakers and stakeholders to freely discuss and share information and experiences on topics relating to specific challenges with regards to boys’ educational achievement. One of the conclusions was that there is need for a multi-sectoral, integrated policy approach to improving boys’ education, as well as that of girls. The wider socioeconomic policies and development strategies were also recognized as critical to the employment and occupation of youth, and that education, socio economic and cultural advancement should be more integrated and focused on human development, with strong links established between schools, learning environments and the world of work (see Annex 4). The e-discussion stemmed from a policy brief on ‘Engaging Boys for Active Citizenship’ (see Annex 5).
These initiatives have shown that much good work and practice are undertaken to tackle the challenge, though essentially at micro and project levels. There remains a lack of inter-sectoral, integrated policies and strategies to address the below average learning outcomes of boys. Subsequently, their low educational attainment leads them to pathways of gang violence, crime, alcohol and drug abuse, spread of HIV and Aids. Lack of skills and opportunities encourage idleness, marginal and illegal economic activities and violence, raising questions about the relevance of education, especially for males.

Boys’ underachievement in education and their participation or perception as perpetrators and victims of violent crime therefore require a new gender and social development paradigm as well since boys and girls engage in different at risk behaviours and in different ways. They engage differently in the school environment, communities and the labour market. Programmes and policies therefore need to be designed and implemented with different approaches and tools to benefit and reach effectively both girls and boys, including through a sustainable violence and risk prevention agenda.

3. **SDGs: Cross sector Linkages**

Several factors have been identified internationally as contributing to male underachievement at all levels of educational systems. Frequently reported are social construction, self-perception, level of parental involvement, attitudes toward schooling, and attitudes of teachers towards male students, pedagogy, teaching styles, learning environments and peer pressure. Other factors reported include the lack of male role models and socioeconomic conditions including family composition such as prevalence of single female-headed households, and the fact that poor families are less likely to afford the secure and stimulating environments which young children need in order to thrive and develop.

Indeed, the reasons offered as to why a child or youth may not attend school are numerous and varied. Intertwined factors, such as income, parenting/family life, quality of housing and surrounding neighbourhood, pre-school experiences, access to recreation, culture, school environment, and a sense of belonging to the community are repeatedly mentioned by key stakeholders - teachers, school administrators, social workers, children, youth, and parents.

The wide range of determinants that influence school success indicates that several service sectors need to be involved in planning and actions on the issue of boys’ underachievement. Those sectors that need to be involved include Education, Social Services and Health, as well as other levels of government for cross-sectoral problem analysis, understanding, agreement, planning and collaboration. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine successfully addressing global problem such a violence, at risk behaviors of children and adolescents, educational achievement gap between income classes, without a fair level of cross-sector work and collaboration. That includes partnerships involving government, private sector, non-profits, civil society, communities and the public.

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*3A Preliminary Survey of factors precipitating male achievement: A Bahamian Perspective, College of the Bahamas, 2008*
In practice however, governments pursue a wide range of policy objectives, not necessarily coherent among each other. Each sector tends to pursue its own particular objective, and concerns about boys not developing to their full potential are not sufficiently factored into specific sector policies, whereas collaborative efforts are required to address the various inter-related social, economic and environmental factors underpinning boys’ educational achievement.

The SDGs’ inclusion of targets that refer to multiple goals and sectors may facilitate integration and policy coherence across sectors. For example, the SDGs with strong connecting targets that address the risk factors associated with boys not attaining their full educational potential are gender and education (SDGs 4 and 5); poverty and inequality (SDGs 1 and 10); inequality and peaceful and inclusive societies (SDGs 10 and 16); and healthy lives, prevention of substance abuse and education (SDGs 3 and 4).

4. Specific Objectives

The 2007 World Development Report summarized five major areas of life in which young people make significant choices on the path to adulthood: continuing to learn, starting to work, developing a healthful lifestyle, beginning a family and exercising citizenship (World Bank 2006). It highlights how the choices made in these different arenas can enable young people to realize their full potential in adulthood as citizens, household heads, workers, entrepreneurs, leaders and so on, and, therefore, how constrained or ill-advised choices can have significant adverse implications for their human capital and future capabilities.

Capacities to recognize synergies and resolve trade-offs among different sector policy objectives and instruments are also often limited at country level. In response to member countries expressed needs and requests, the Health and Education Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat therefore proposes to build on its previous work, knowledge exchange, analysis and learning to develop a set of cross-sectoral policy toolkit and guidelines.

The policy toolkit and guidelines are intended to assist national policy makers, non-sector experts and other relevant stakeholders to establish a coherent set of sector policies and a cross-sectoral policy framework that will support boys’ educational achievement and engagement in active citizenship at country/national level. The objective is to improve the learning outcomes of boys, curb the school dropout rate and shape health outcomes and wellbeing.

The policy toolkit and guidelines will therefore adopt an integrated, cross sectoral approach that takes a holistic view of the learner. A life-cycle approach will be used to undertake the analysis of the key issues affecting boys aged 0 to 17 years. A causal and trends analysis using -year age intervals (0-59 months, 5-10 years, 10-14 years, 14-17

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years) will be helpful in determining the developmental needs and the ensuing programmatic interventions that need to be undertaken within a policy framework, keeping in mind inter-linkages and variations among sex, various socio-economic groups and geographic locations.

The policy toolkit and guidelines will recognise the interrelatedness of social phenomena and the need for holistic solutions under the SDGs framework e.g. indicatively:

1. Economic Opportunities and Access to Assets.
2. Diverse Pathways to Education and Skills.
3. Health, Well Being and Life skills.

5. **Overall Scope of Work**

The consultancy will explore policy failures across a range of case-study countries, including Caribbean countries, and will highlight examples of progress in countries which are successfully responding to the challenges. Based on the findings, the consultant will make key policy recommendations and develop a policy toolkit and guidelines to extend and improve educational and learning policies and promote more integrated approaches to health, education, sport, social protection, skills development and any other relevant area or sector.

The policy toolkit and guidelines will provide practical knowledge for practitioners to implement cross-sector initiatives, navigate differences that can prove challenging to align when pursuing shared goals in a consensus-oriented environment, as well as provide actionable guidance on how to address bottlenecks.

5.1. **Key Tasks**

The consultant is expected to undertake the following:

1. Develop a work plan in consultation with HEU.
2. Produce an inception report which will have the following sections:
   a) Key research questions and analytical approach (e.g. analysis of context and need; analysis of cross sectoral interventions)
   b) Methodology
   c) Data collection tools and analysis
   d) Proposed outline
3. Analyze data and develop guidelines
4. Present a draft of a technical paper based on lessons learned from the work of both the Commonwealth Secretariat and other partners in the field of gender and access to quality education, with emphasis on boys’ learning outcomes.
5. Present a position paper
6. Present a draft of policy toolkit and guidelines for review and feedback within the agreed time frame.
7. Present a final version of the policy toolkit and guidelines within the specified time frame of the consultancy.

8. Present an action plan to take forward the policy toolkit and guidelines with indication of roles, responsibilities and resources.

9. Present a final version of the technical paper and a position paper.

10. Assist selected countries in the implementation of the Policy toolkit and guidelines. This will include engaging with stakeholders in selected countries in a review of both the draft toolkit and a field test approach and methodology.

5.2. Outputs

1. Policy toolkit and guidelines (output 1)

Development of a policy toolkit. The policy toolkit will be process specific, rather than issue or sector specific, acknowledging that there are common elements to all successful cross-sector collaborations. The development of the toolkit will include:

- A) A review/assessment of current approaches to address boys’ underachievement, as reported in selected reports, technical papers, member states’ responses, and other documents, resulting in a report on key findings, recommendations and suggestions for a strategic framework and guidelines that will be incorporated in the policy toolkit. The review will identify evidence-based findings on practical cross-sectoral approaches. Skype interviews will be conducted wherever possible with stakeholders and practitioners.

- B) The strategic framework will help identify and develop inclusive cross-sectoral strategies and options to address boys’ at risk behaviors, disengagement from learning and low learning outcomes. Isolated project interventions alone will not suffice to address the issue. However, not everything has to be done at once. The strategic framework will help identify which interventions are urgent and which can help address the immediate critical challenges and bottlenecks.

2. An action plan (output 2)

An action plan to take forward the policy toolkit and guidelines with indication of roles, responsibilities and resources.

3. Advocacy and Communications material (output 3)

Incorporation of lessons learned from the work of both the Commonwealth Secretariat and other partners in the field of gender and access to quality education, with emphasis on boys’ learning outcomes, into a technical paper articulating the need for various interventions at different levels and proposing strategies to enhance these through national or regional programmes and policies. The technical paper will be submitted as input into the development of a Position Paper on Boys’ Educational Achievement and a basis for further strategic thinking, advocacy and sharing of knowledge.

4. Training and Capacity Tools for Implementation (output 4)

Assist selected countries in the implementation of the Policy toolkit and guidelines.
5.3. **Approach and Methodology**

Methodology may include but not will not be limited to the following:

1. A literature review and desk research to:
   a) Analyse contextual factors (including economic, societal, and cultural) that are causing boys’ underperformance and low survival rates at secondary and tertiary education levels.
   b) Describe current policies and interventions in place to address the issue.
   c) Identify bottlenecks and the challenges the country faces in addressing boys’ underachievement - such as gaps in the national policy framework and programmes, and implementation capacities of government institutions.

2. A situational analysis with the purpose of understanding why boys have been underperforming in education and developing solutions to resolve the existing situations. It will demonstrate logical links between the identified problems and their causes, framing the issue in a cultural and/or social context, and suggest possible approaches. The situation analysis will use all available data such as national statistics, research, survey results, and needs assessments of the vulnerable population. Key elements will include:
   a) Data analysis and a participatory assessment of the needs and aspirations of boys.
   b) Problem analysis.
   c) Stakeholders’ analysis.

3. Based on the comprehensive review of the literature and desk research as well as the situational analysis, examination of the conditions that are likely to prompt calls for cross-sector collaboration and offer propositions to guide the design and implementation of cross-sector collaborations.

4. Identification of areas of mutual interest and collaboration/cooperation with key stakeholders working towards access to education and retention in relation to boys’ education, especially the disadvantaged.

5. Consultations and interviews with selected stakeholders.

A briefing for the selected consultant will be organized to provide additional background and guidance as well as discuss the inception report. Travel if any, will be covered directly by the Health and Education Unit.

6. **Time period for assignment**

July 2016 - August 2016 (for a total of 40 working days within this period).

The table below indicates the anticipated timeframe for the consultancy and the maximum number of working days required for each task to be completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output 1 - Policy toolkit and guidelines</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Inception report</td>
<td>1 working day</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Review/assessment of current approaches to address boys’ underachievement. Analysis of contexts, needs and cross sectoral interventions.</td>
<td>4 working days</td>
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- Develop report on key findings, recommendations and suggestions for a strategic framework and guidelines that will be incorporated in the policy toolkit. 3 working days

- Draft strategic framework to help identify and develop inclusive cross-sectoral strategies and options to address critical challenges and bottlenecks concerning boys’ at-risk behaviors and disengagement from learning. 4 working days

- Integrate feedback and suggestions following consultations 1 working day

- Consolidate toolkit and guidelines into user friendly modules and validation. 5 working days

**Output 2 - Action Plan**

- Develop action plan to take forward the policy toolkit and guidelines with indication of roles, responsibilities and resources. 4 working days

**Output 3 - Advocacy and communications materials**

- Develop technical paper incorporating lessons learned articulating the need for various interventions at different levels and proposing strategies to enhance these through national or regional programmes and policies. 4 working days

- Integrate feedback and suggestions in draft paper 1 working day

**Output 4 - Training and Capacity Tools for Implementation**

- Assist countries in the implementation of the policy toolkit and guidelines. 8 working days

**Finalisation of policy toolkit and guidelines and other papers**

| Total Number of Days | 40 working days |

7. **Indicative Budget**

£13,000-14,000 (consultancy rate of £350/day or £1750/per week upon negotiation).

The table below indicates the anticipated budget for the consultancy and tasks.

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<td>4 working days</td>
<td>£1,400</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3 working days</td>
<td>£1,050</td>
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- Draft strategic framework to help identify and develop inclusive cross-sectoral strategies and options to address critical challenges and bottlenecks concerning boys’ at-risk behaviors and disengagement from learning.  
  4 working days  £1,400

- Integrate feedback and suggestions following consultations  
  1 working day  £350

- Consolidate toolkit and guidelines into user friendly modules and validation.  
  5 working days  £1,750

**Output 2 - Action Plan**

- Develop action plan to take forward the policy toolkit and guidelines with indication of roles, responsibilities and resources.  
  4 working days  £1,400

**Output 3 - Advocacy and communications materials**

- Develop technical paper incorporating lessons learned articulating the need for various interventions at different levels and proposing strategies to enhance these through national or regional programmes and policies.  
  4 working days  £1,400

- Integrate feedback and suggestions in draft paper  
  1 working day  £350

**Output 4 - Training and Capacity Tools for Implementation**

- Assist countries in the implementation of the policy toolkit and guidelines.  
  8 working days  £2,800

**Finalisation of policy toolkit and guidelines and other papers**

5 working days  £1,750

**Totals**

40 working days  £14,000

8. **Qualifications and experience required**

- A Master’s Degree in Economics, Education or any related field in Social Sciences or a related discipline with 10 years’ experience of assignments with leading international development organisations and at least 5 years in conducting similar work.
- Strong academic background in education and expertise in cross sector policy.
- Experience of working with major stakeholders at national and international levels in the field of education.
- Extensive professional work and experience in educational programme and policy development, implementation, and assessment, with a particular focus on access and learning outcomes.
- Practical expertise of assessing education interventions and systems
- Full familiarity and engagement with the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Involvement with the MDGs covering monitoring, evaluation or assessments.
- Wide-ranging technical knowledge of both the theoretical and practical applications of gender, education and development and familiarity with relevant work in this area by a variety of partners.
- Familiarity with issues and challenges faced by Commonwealth countries
- Respect for diversity and intercultural understanding.
- Excellent writing, analytical and presentation skills.

**Administrative and working arrangements**

The consultant will work under the supervision of Adviser, Education. Linkages with other relevant staff members and partners for consultative processes will be facilitated. Under the overall guidance provided on the assignment by the supervisor, the consultant will be expected to exercise independent judgement and initiative in implementation of the tasks at hand and delivery of the expected products.

Applicants should submit:

- A technical proposal responding to the ToR with specific focus on addressing the scope of work
- Timeline and methodology to be used
- An initial work plan based on methodology outlined, and confirming availability of the applicant.
- Company or organization profile (where applicable) and CVs of consultant(s) who will deliver the work;