

Pakistan Literacy Project (PLP) July – December 2025 Terms of Reference for a summative evaluation

1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Pakistan Literacy Project, launched in 2020 by Room to Read in collaboration with our implementing partner *Idaara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi* (ITA), aims to strengthen early grade literacy and cultivate a lifelong love of reading among children in Pakistan. The project envisions a future where every primary school in Pakistan implements quality early grade reading instruction and has a functioning school library, enabling more children to develop strong reading skills and the habit of reading at grade level. To advance this goal, the project has established libraries in public schools across Lahore and Bahawalpur districts in Punjab and provided training for educators, librarians, and government officials. It has also adapted and distributed high-quality storybooks in six local languages, while supporting the local publishing industry by developing culturally relevant children's books in partnership with local authors, illustrators, and publishers. The initiative works closely with both government and communities to promote sustainable reading practices and embed library use within the formal school system.

2. OBJECTIVES & EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This evaluation will take place in Bahawalpur and Lahore districts, Punjab Province. The objectives are: (1) assess the effectiveness of the intervention in improving reading habits among the targeted population; (2) evaluate the relevance of the program's design and implementation in addressing the specific needs of the school communities; (3) analyze the sustainability of the program's outcomes and potential for long-term impact; and (4) generate actionable recommendations to inform policy decisions and enhance the design, delivery, and scalability of future literacy initiatives.

Achieving these objectives requires a thorough examination of three primary evaluation questions:

- i. **Effectiveness:** To what extent has the intervention supported children's reading habits within the targeted schools?
- ii. **Relevance:** How well does the design and implementation of the program align with the specific needs and contextual challenges of the target communities?
- iii. **Sustainability and Scalability:** What evidence exists to demonstrate the sustainability of the program's outcomes, and what factors could influence its potential for long-term impact and broader scalability?

3. EVALUATION DESIGN

To assess program effectiveness, a cross-sectional design, with both quantitative and qualitative data, will be used. The evaluation will focus on measuring the reading habits of early grade children within program schools, with a comparison to non-program school students. Reading habits include reading behaviours, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and reading confidence. It will also assess the effectiveness of librarians/teachers in applying the strategies and materials provided by the program. Additionally, library reading period observation will be conducted to assess the reading activities provided to children, focusing on teaching practices, methods, and materials used during reading activities.

3.1 Data collection instruments

Data will be collected from five primary sources:

- i. **Habit of Reading Assessment:** Room to Read has developed and validated (i.e., Bangladesh, India, South Africa) a Habit of Reading assessment instrument. Room to Read will share this tool with the vendor, which they should then translate/back-translate and pilot prior to use.
- ii. **Child version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (CRSES):** Room to Read is interested assessing self-esteem/self-worth among the participants in its programs. As a new area of investigation, we are piloting the use of several measures, initially the CRSES. Room to Read will share this tool with the vendor, which they should translate/back-translate and pilot prior to use.
- iii. **Library Rating system Tool:** Room to Read uses a library rating tool to collect objective data on the functioning of a school library. Room to Read will share this tool with the vendor, which they should pilot prior to use.
- iv. **Library Reading Activities Observation form:** In partnership with the Library Management Observation form, this tool focuses deliberately on how librarian/teachers conduct reading activities within a library, as well as how the children engage with the activities.
- v. **Interview/Focus Groups:** The vendor should collect data using key informant interviews with librarians/library focal teachers; teachers conducting reading activities during library periods; head teachers (HTs). The vendor should develop these interview tools and share with Room to Read prior to use.
- vi. **Book checkout:** Room to Read will share a book checkout dataset from the 34 Model Libraries. The vendor should use these data to support/triangulate the findings generated from the other tools mentioned here.

3.2 Sampling

The evaluation will involve collecting data from the following respondent groups:

- i. **Program Group:** Children and teachers/librarians from schools that participated in the Room to Read and ITA's intervention. These schools are now fully supported through the School Education Department within the Punjab provincial government. ITA will support the vendor in sample selection for the Program group.
- ii. **Comparison Group:** Children from an equal number of comparable schools that have not previously participated in the program and will not be included in the upcoming phase of library establishment. ITA will support the vendor in preparing a sampling frame of comparison schools that have similar observable characteristics to the Program group.
- iii. **Key Informant Interview:**
 1. Librarians/Teachers: In each district, 10–12 participants should be selected from the sampled Program Schools, from both Grade 3 and Grade 5.
 2. Head Teachers: A total of 10–12 participants should be selected, evenly divided between the districts and Program Schools.

3.3 Sample Sizes

Sample sizes have been determined based on the tool administered.

- **Habit of Reading:** 1200 children (600 from the program group and 600 from the comparison group). The student sample will come from 10 program and 10 comparison schools in each district. The sample will be stratified by grade level, with 600 students from both Grade 3 and 5. See Table 1.

District	Type	School	Children sample size		
			Grade 3	Grade 5	Total
Bahawalpur	Program	10	150	150	300

	Comparison	10	150	150	300
Table 1 Lahore	Program	10	150	150	300
	Comparison	10	150	150	300
TOTAL		40	600	600	1200

- **Library Reading Activity Observation:** Conducted in all sampled Program schools in each district.
- **Library Rating Tool:** Conducted in all sampled Program schools in each district.
- **Key Informant Interview:**
 - Librarians/Teachers: In each district, 10 participants should be selected from the sampled Program Schools, from both Grade 3 and Grade 5 (minimum 20, maximum 25). In cases where there is a stand-alone library, the sample should include the school librarian. In cases where it is a classroom library, the sample should include the teacher who manages the reading activity within the class.
 - Head Teachers: 10 participants from the sampled Program schools, evenly divided between the districts (minimum 6, maximum 12).

3.4 Data Collection Mode

All primary data collection for this evaluation is expected to be conducted using Computer-Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). As part of their proposal, bidders are required to demonstrate their capacity to carry out data collection through CAPI, including but not limited to:

- Experience with programming digital survey tools (e.g., ODK, SurveyCTO, KoboToolbox, or other appropriate platforms).
- Ability to mobilize the necessary number of tablets or equivalent devices for data collection.
- Training and management of enumerators in the use of digital data collection methods.

Vendors should clearly outline their technical and logistical readiness for CAPI in their proposal, including contingency measures for hardware or software challenges in the field.

4. DELIVERABLES

The vendor will provide the following deliverables:

- i. **Cleaned dataset:** All data should be shared with ITA and Room to Read upon conclusion of the activity. Data should be cleaned for errors and personally identifiable information and saved in a common format (e.g., csv). These data should be deleted from the vendor's server/devices upon approval of the final deliverable.
- ii. **Preliminary report draft:** The vendor should submit a preliminary report three weeks prior to submitting the final report. Room to Read will review this report and provide feedback to be incorporated into the final version.
- iii. **Final report:** The vendor will provide a final report that includes the following sections: Executive Summary, Introduction, Methodology, Results, Discussion/Recommendations. The report should not exceed 30 pages, not including annexes. A template will be shared with the vendor prior to drafting.
- iv. **Presentation:** The vendor will present the findings from the evaluation to Room to Read, ITA and other stakeholders. This will include 30 minutes for the presentation and 30 minutes for questions. Room to Read will convene the presentation.
- v. **Executive Summary slide deck:** The vendor will prepare a concise set of slides that shares major findings and recommendations. The vendor should follow the [5/5/5/ rule](#) when

preparing and finalizing the slide deck. A draft slide deck should be submitted two weeks prior to submission.

5. TIMETABLE

The research study, including field data collection and reporting, will take place between September to November 2025. However, the selected agency will be engaged earlier, starting in July 2025 to support tool contextualization, translation and digitization, stakeholder coordination, and preparatory processes including obtaining necessary approvals from stakeholders and government departments. The detailed deliverable schedule will be finalized in consultation with ITA and Room to Read during the inception phase.

6. AUDIENCE AND USE

The primary audience for this evaluation is School Education Department (SED), Punjab, the Ministry of Education (MoE), and our implementing partner, ITA. The findings will support the SED and MoE in shaping evidence-based policies and strategies at both national and local levels. For ITA, the evaluation will provide actionable insights to enhance program design, delivery, and scalability, ensuring that interventions are effectively meeting the needs of beneficiaries. Additionally, the evaluation will serve as a tool to foster collaboration between stakeholders by identifying opportunities for alignment and resource optimization. The results will also be disseminated to broader stakeholders to promote accountability, learning, and replication of successful practices in literacy interventions.

7. ETHICS AND RISKS

This evaluation will adhere to the highest ethical standards to ensure that the dignity, rights, and well-being of all participants are safeguarded. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants or their guardians, with a clear explanation of the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of their involvement. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained to protect personal data and sensitive information. Special attention will be given to mitigate any risks of discomfort, harm, or unintended consequences during data collection, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children. Additionally, the evaluation team will be trained on ethical practices and local sensitivities to ensure respectful engagement with all stakeholders.

8. RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

The vendor should recruit a dedicated evaluation team that includes a lead evaluator, research coordinator(s), and enumerators. The vendor will be responsible for project management, including the development of the evaluation framework, ensuring methodological rigor, and delivering final outputs. Research coordinators will oversee day-to-day operations, including data collection, team coordination, and quality assurance. Clear roles and responsibilities will be assigned, with regular check-ins and progress updates to ensure timelines and objectives are met. Collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, School Education Department and ITA, will be integral to ensure the evaluation remains contextually relevant and aligned with their needs.

9. Terms of Contract

The selected agency will be offered a consultancy contract based on a competitive bidding process. Interested agencies are required to submit a comprehensive technical and financial proposal, with clear articulation of their methodology, work plan, team structure, data quality assurance mechanisms, and relevant experience in similar evaluations, inclusive of travel, translation, programming, and personnel costs. The consultant entering into the contract must ensure that the entire scope of work can be completed within the budget. Cost realism will be a key consideration during the selection process, and proposals will be assessed accordingly.

10.How to apply

Interested candidates are invited to submit their CV, proposal, line-item budget, and two samples of previous work either via email to talha.iftikhar@itacec.org or in hard copy to the address listed below.

The deadline for submissions is July 07, 2025.

Please note: Any questions or requests for clarification will be entertained until **June 25, 2025**. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Submission Address:

Talha Iftikhar
Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA)
12 Sharif Colony, Canal Park, Gulberg II,
Lahore, Pakistan