Overview
Sesame Workshop is seeking an organization or team of consultants to conduct a Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA) on pre-primary education in Iraq. A RERA is a “good enough” situation analysis of educational institutions, learners, and their communities as a dynamic system of relationships involving assets and multiple contextual risks. A RERA integrates key methodological elements of a rapid education needs assessment and contextual risk analyses, such as conflict analysis, disaster risk assessment, and resilience analysis, to inform USAID strategy and programming. Importantly, a RERA investigates how risks impact the school community, how education influences risks, and how contextual risks influence each other. Information on how to carry out a RERA can be found at this link: eccnetwork.net/resources/rapid-education-and-risk-analysis-rera-toolkit. Sesame Workshop expects that applicants use this toolkit as the basis for their work.

The RERA will be used to inform the conflict-sensitivity plan, the activity plan, as well as one specific objective related to the project’s collaboration, adaptation, and learning strategy. The RERA should describe the two-way relationship between crises or conflicts in Iraq and pre-primary education (formal or informal), identify ways in which current educational programming mitigates or contributes to the impact of the crises or conflicts for children and their families, and identify sources of resilience at the household, community, and institutional level.

The program will operate in the following governorates: Ninewa, Anbar, Salah-al-Din, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Basrah. The RERA should at minimum review existing literature, assessments, data from these governorates and have targeted key informant interviews with individuals or organizations in these locations.

The maximum budget for the RERA is $100,000.

Proposals are due by September 1, 2021. Proposals should include:

- A three-page (max) proposal that outlines: an initial assessment plan, a timeline, a budget, and core team.
- CVs for each core team member
- Two examples of needs assessments, RERAs, conflict analyses, education sector assessments, or other work performed by the team or organization in Iraq or the region

Project overview
In partnership with USAID/Iraq, Sesame Workshop and partners will use a combination of original multimedia that promotes inclusion and reflects the diversity of Iraqi society, direct services that reduce the vulnerability of children, and youth engagement programming that lays the foundation for self-efficacy and participation. This project will help USAID Iraq reach its goal to contribute to a stable, sovereign Iraq that is able to respond in a timely and transparent manner to the needs of its citizens.

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1 “Good enough” means that the methods used for data collection, processing, and analysis balance rigor with the realities of field work in a fluid context. The methods used should be sufficiently systematic to allow for informed initial decisions about the project.
The project has four major strategic objectives:

- Strategic Objective 1: Children have **improved foundational skills** including learner readiness, social and emotional learning, and mutual respect and understanding
- Strategic Objective 2: Facilitators have **improved effectiveness**
- Strategic Objective 3: Youth have **increased assets, agency, contributions, and access to an enabling environment**
- Strategic Objective 4: The project has **improved quality and relevance through the use of data and evidence**

The geographic focus for the child, facilitator, and youth direct services interventions of this project will be in Ninewa, Anbar, Salah-al-Din, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Basrah. Additional governorates such as Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulamaniya may be determined based on key assessments and/or monitoring and evaluation findings. Ninewa, Anbar, Salah-al-Din and Kirkuk governorates were either in whole or in part under ISIS occupation from 2013-2017. The rationale for the selection of these governorates is: 1) severe and/or ongoing impact because of ISIS occupation and the military operations that led to the liberation of these areas; 2) presence of diverse ethnic, religious, and sectarian groups living as IDPs, returnees, or part of hosting communities such as in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates; 3) Baghdad is the political center of Iraq and the seat of government, while Basrah is the economic center of the country providing the majority of Iraq’s revenue through its oil and seaports. Both governorates witnessed youth protests and civil unrest resulting from decades of corruption that has caused lack of services, community tension and frustration among youth.

**Objectives of the RERA**

The RERA will be used to inform the following activities and products:

1. The project design workshop to be held with partners October 24-29, 2021.
2. The monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan due September 30, 2021.

The general questions Sesame Workshop seeks to answer are:

- How does the pre-primary education sector relate to the country’s broader political, economic, social, security, and environmental situation?
  - This includes, but is not limited to, the COVID-19 pandemic as an environmental threat, the deterioration of the economic condition in Iraq, the resulting protests, the recent conflict, and resulting displacement.
- What are the perspectives of youth on the country’s political, economic, social, security, and environmental situation?
- How does the media (broadcast or digital mass media, radio) or the arts (performance, music, visual, etc.) relate to the country’s conflicts or crises? What are the ways that youth engage with media or the arts?

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2 For this activity, facilitators are defined as individuals who deliver early childhood education and development services and programming to young children, ages 3-8.

3 Youth are defined as aged 15-29. The USAID Positive Youth Development (PYD) Framework defines the following: Assets: youth have the necessary resources, skills and competencies to achieve desired outcomes; Agency: Youth perceive and have the ability to employ their assets and aspirations; Contribution: Youth are engaged as a source of change for their own and for their communities positive development; and Enabling Environment: Youth are surrounded by an environment that develops and supports their assets, agency, access to services and opportunities, and strengthens their ability to avoid risk and safe and secure: [https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework](https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development-pyd-framework)
• What are the causes, characteristics, consequences of the main contextual risks in the country to young children, youth, their families, and/or service providers?
  o What types of children, families, or service providers experience the most severe consequences, and for what reasons?
• What is the two-way interaction between contextual risks and the pre-primary education sector, particularly at the facility and community levels? What are the consequences of these interactions?
• What are the resilience factors at the family or community level that positively influence access to, safety, and quality of pre-primary education? Do any of these resilience factors provide opportunities to engage or work with youth?

These questions will be refined and made more precise as part of the RERA scoping.

Methodology
The RERA Toolkit (available here: https://www.eccnetwork.net/resources/rapid-education-and-risk-analysis-rera-toolkit) provides the overall guidance for how to conduct the assessment. The final methodology should be based on the assessment plan itself; Sesame Workshop expects the RERA team to propose a precise methodology as part of the assessment plan, and will provide review to the methodology. Sesame Workshop anticipates that a significant amount of information can and should be collected from the desk research of the RERA, and does expect that any proposed fieldwork is essential or critical to decision-making (rather than duplicating work already done). Some of the governorates where the project focuses have been the focus of other types of assessments (e.g. Kirkuk or Kurdistan), and these should be leveraged for the RERA to the extent possible, while other governates may not have much information available from existing assessments (e.g. Basra). Finally, the RERA approach must reflect do no harm and conflict-sensitive practices and processes. The safety of participants, communities, staff, and partners is essential.

Locations & Scope of the RERA
For the purposes of the RERA, young children are defined as those aged 3-6 years old, and youth are defined as those aged 15-25 living in Ninewa, Anbar, Salah-al-Din, Kirkuk, Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulamaniya, their parents or caregivers, as well as practitioners or service providers who work with young children and youth in these areas. Practitioners or service providers could include educators, social workers, and child protection officers. The assessments should reflect the diversity of the population we aim to serve while also maintaining safety for all involved and a conflict-sensitive approach. The geographic scope of the project is large, and so the final focus geographies for the RERA will be determined in collaboration with the RERA team.

Deliverables, Timeline, and Payment Schedule
This section describes the deliverables and payment schedule proposed by Sesame Workshop. Due dates are provided only for essential or fixed dates related to other milestones in the project. If no date is provided, assume that it is up to the RERA team to determine the best timeline.

Deliverable 1: Signed contract (10%)
Sesame Workshop aims to have a team contracted for this work no later than September 8, 2021. This should include a final scope of work (using this RFP as a foundation), an approved core team (composed of a team lead, a conflict advisor, and an education expert), and a final budget.

Deliverable 2: RERA Plan & Conflict Sensitivity Checklist (25%)
The RERA Plan is a significant milestone in the assessment process. This plan will lay out the specifics of this RERA from a technical and operational perspective. It is a comprehensive document that may be adapted or adjusted; however, it should represent a shared understanding of the approach, especially in light of the budget and geographic scope of the project. Developing the RERA Plan and the Desk Review (see deliverable 3) may run concurrently as the Desk Review could inform the RERA Plan.

There are two required templates that should be used to complete this deliverable:

- **RERA Design Plan** includes the technical scope, plan, methods, analytical plan. This is a simple template that outlines required sections of the RERA Plan and annexes.
- **RERA Conflict Sensitivity checklist** provides a structured opportunity to reflect on the ways in which the RERA Plan as stands demonstrates conflict sensitivity. There is not one way to demonstrate conflict-sensitivity, but the completion and results of conflict sensitivity checklist should inform any final changes or updates to the RERA Plan itself.

The following templates are optional and may be useful in completing the RERA Plan:

- **RERA Research Questions** provides a structured template that links the RERA research questions to primary and secondary data sources at different levels. Finalizing the specific RERA research questions will be a collaborative effort between the RERA team, Sesame Workshop, and partners.
- **Adapted RERA parameters checklist** (note that the template available in the toolkit does not currently include pre-primary)
- **Key informants and focus group participants matrix** provides a comprehensive list of potential types of participants for a key informant interview or a focus group discussion.

The RERA Plan and Conflict Sensitivity checklist are due no later than September 23, 2021.

**Deliverable 3: Desk review presentation and draft field work tools (15%)**

Sesame Workshop is running a design workshop with partners October 24-29, 2021. Sesame Workshop would like the RERA team to present an initial overview of the key insights and findings from the desk review at this workshop (due October 24, 2021). This design workshop will likely also provide an opportunity to refine or finalize any fieldwork plans as a group.

Templates in the RERA Toolkit related to the desk review include:

- **School community review scoring rubric** guides the analysis of secondary data collected through the desk review (documents or select expert interviews) in order to determine the specific risks that may need further investigation through primary data collection.
- **Key documents and resources matrix** which provides a structured file for listing and organizing desk review literature.
- There is no template for the initial presentation, due October 24, 2021.

Draft field work tools refer any observation tools, surveys, key informant interview guides, focus group guides, other discussion guides, etc. These draft tools need approval before field work can begin. Sesame Workshop anticipates that these draft tools would be piloted and refined as part of fieldwork.

Templates in the RERA toolkit related to completing tools are:

- **School community fieldwork tool**, which provides a comprehensive overview for quantitative, qualitative, and observational data collection. It is a guide that also includes sample questions.
Deliverable 4: Draft Report (20%)

The draft RERA report should be written according to the template provided in the RERA Toolkit (see here) and is due November 15, 2021. Sesame Workshop will review and give feedback in 8 business days in order to allow for enough time to make changes and revisions to inform the presentation to USAID.

Deliverable 5: Final report and presentation to USAID (30%)

The final presentation to USAID will be scheduled prior to December 31, 2021.

The final RERA report will be due December 6, 2021.

Qualifications

- Demonstrated experienced completing rapid needs assessments for humanitarian programs; Experience with USAID RERAs a significant advantage
- Experience in conducting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative research, with a focus on educational research
- Ability to draw programmatic implications based on research findings
- Connections with families, schools, and/or community organizations to facilitate recruiting (or a relationship with a recruiter who can provide such connections)

Submission and Contact

All submissions should be sent via email to joseph.elias@sesame.org, Senior Director Program Management, International Social Impact Programs, and anjuli.shivshanker@sesame.org, Senior Director, Program Monitoring and Evaluation, International Impact

Questions

If there are any questions as the proposal is being developed please reach out to Joseph Elias and Anjuli Shivshanker via email with those questions or to schedule a phone conversation.