



## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)**

**Activity Title:** USAID/Djibouti New Basic Education Activity  
**Reference Number:** 72060322RFI00009  
**Release Date:** 07/08/2022  
**Response Due Date:** 08/01/2022

### **I. ABOUT THE RFI**

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued solely for planning purposes. USAID seeks public comment/feedback in order to enhance its project design process.

This is not a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government to issue any solicitation or Notice of Funding Opportunity, or ultimately award a contract or assistance agreement on the basis of this RFI, or to pay for any information voluntarily submitted as a result of this request. USAID is not obligated to procure any of the services described herein, nor in no way be committed to utilize submitted information or issue a solicitation as a result of this request. The issuance of this request will not restrict the Government's ultimate approach, if any.

Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI. It should be noted that responding to or providing comment on this RFI will not give any advantage to any organization in any subsequent procurement (if any).

USAID posts its competitive business opportunities on [beta.SAM.gov](https://beta.SAM.gov) or [www.grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). It is the potential offeror's/applicant's responsibility to monitor these sites for announcements of new opportunities.

### **II. ACTIVITY BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Mission to Djibouti (USAID/Djibouti) is in the preliminary stages of designing a new activity, henceforth referred to as “the New Basic Education Activity” or simply “the activity”, to support Djibouti’s efforts to improve inclusive, equitable access to quality basic education. The activity will serve as a follow-on to the current [Djibouti Early Grade Reading Activity \(DEGRA\)](#) described below. The Mission anticipates that the activity will be implemented over a period of up to five years.

**Country context.** Djibouti is a lower-middle-income economy with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) equivalent to US\$1.85 billion in 2017 and a population estimated at approximately one million, mainly concentrated in and around Djibouti Ville where an estimated 75 percent of the population lives. Despite a relatively high per capita income of US\$1,862 in 2015, 30 percent of the population lives in poverty and 21 percent lives in extreme poverty according to the fourth round

of Djibouti's household survey (EDAM4, 2018). The same survey also found that 36 percent of Djibouti's population is under 14 years old and 51 percent under 24 years old<sup>1</sup>. Over the past two decades, the government of Djibouti (GoDj) has placed education at the center of its development policies, with education reforms focusing on improving quality, access and relevance. Despite advances in some areas, quality, equity and system efficiency remain serious concerns. While the Gross Enrollment Rate in primary school has been over 100 percent for the last ten years (reflecting overage children enrolled at that level), the percentage of out-of-school children and youth between the ages of 6-14 was estimated to be approximately 17.6 percent in 2017<sup>2</sup>. In terms of completion, 76 percent of a cohort group that started in grade 1 together completed grade 9 (cycle moyen) in 2019, and 65 percent completed grade 12 (cycle secondaire); the comparable completion rates in 2006 were only 50 percent and 35 percent respectively<sup>3</sup>. The repetition rate in each of the grades from 1-4 stands at around 5 percent; this jumps to 20 percent repetition in grade 5 (the end of the cycle primaire). Gender's impact on education depends on place of residence (rural/urban) and household economic status. For higher income level families in urban areas gender is not associated with a negative impact on education, but gender has a very significant impact on educational access and equity in rural areas and in poorer families.

**USAID's current basic education activity: DEGRA.** DEGRA is a five-year activity (February 2019 - February 2024) that seeks to improve reading outcomes in French for more than 55,000 children in Grades 1–5 in all of Djibouti's 151 public primary schools. DEGRA implements a coordinated approach that engages teachers, parent teacher associations (PTAs), and the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (MENFOP) to catalyze change. It supports MENFOP to create inclusive, gender-equitable, and enriching environments for reading at the school, community, and policy levels. Through quality materials and multiple layers of individualized support, the activity ensures teachers use evidence-based instructional practices for reading, tailored to student needs, based on regular assessment data. PTA engagement extends learning beyond the classroom through simple activities that encourage reading in the community. Three components guide implementation: 1) instruction, 2) community participation, and 3) policy. A [mid-term performance evaluation](#) was conducted in 2021 and is available on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse website.

**Upcoming USAID activities.** USAID/Djibouti recently completed the design of two new activities to support early childhood education and youth employment. Awards for these activities are expected to be made in late 2022. There may be areas for collaboration between both of these new activities and the New Basic Education Activity; this will be a subject to explore as activity design moves forward.

### III. PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY GOAL, OBJECTIVE, AND INTERMEDIATE

---

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. [Project Appraisal Document: Expanding Opportunities for Learning Project Djibouti](#). September 2019.

<sup>2</sup> MENFOP, UNICEF. Etude sur les enfants non scolarisés à Djibouti. Novembre 2019.

<sup>3</sup> MENFOP, Cambridge Education, UNICEF, GPE. [Analyse du système éducatif de Djibouti](#). 19 Avril 2020.

## RESULTS

The New Basic Education Activity will support the [USAID Education Policy](#), particularly the principle that “children and youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, have increased access to quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes social well-being”. The top-level activity goal is “Improved learning outcomes in literacy and mathematics for Djiboutian children in basic education”. The preliminary activity purpose is to increase the number of children in Djibouti benefiting from high-quality, equitable, and inclusive basic education services. USAID recently held a series of consultation meetings with MENFOP technical staff and leaders, including the Secretary General and the Minister of Education. As a result of these discussions, the team drafted the three preliminary Intermediate Results (IRs) below. These directly align with MENFOP’s draft Basic Education Master Plan 2021-2035<sup>4</sup>:

**IR1:** Improved access to education with special emphasis on disadvantaged and vulnerable children

**IR2:** Improved quality of teaching and learning

**IR3:** Improved MENFOP capacity to practice results-based management and oversee the basic education system

The New Basic Education Activity will work to build upon DEGRA’s gains in literacy, with a broadened focus to include mathematics. During consultations, MENFOP highlighted the importance of equity in education, including the need to strengthen programs and modalities that increase access and prevent drop-outs; to ensure availability of accessible teaching and learning materials; and to continue DEGRA’s efforts to engage families and communities in children’s learning. MENFOP is interested in continued support for professional development of teachers, school directors, and supervisors. There is interest in exploring how information and communications technology for education (ICT4E) could be used to strengthen teaching, learning, and overall monitoring and evaluation of the education system through efforts such as the digital dashboard whose development and implementation DEGRA has supported. MENFOP also expressed interest in strengthening the capacity of its staff to practice results-based management and improve skills such as leadership, project and systems management, and policy analysis and development.

Under this activity, USAID/Djibouti will partner with the GoDj (specifically MENFOP); other donors; the private sector; civil society organizations and community actors; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The activity will engage at all levels (national, regional, and community), and will contribute to achieving GoDj and USAID objectives. It will build upon the work that USAID, the GoDj, and its partners have achieved, and seek to contribute to the current momentum for improving access to and quality of basic education in Djibouti.

## IV. PROGRAMMATIC PRINCIPLES

---

<sup>4</sup> The referenced Master Plan is MENFOP’s Schéma Directeur de l’Éducation Fondamentale 2021-2035.

The following programmatic principles are applied to all USAID/Djibouti activities:

- 1) **Focused:** As a small mission, USAID/Djibouti will invest deeply in a few areas which offer the best return on investment.
- 2) **Cross-sectoral:** Activities will use flexible strategic approaches guided by designing and integrating solutions to development challenges rather than single-sector tools.
- 3) **Sustainable:** Activities will seek to create robust enabling environments that increase private sector engagement and support GoDj leadership and accountability.
- 4) **Transformative:** USAID/Djibouti will mobilize and influence partners, seeking to catalyze investments that will increase overall development impact in a resource-limited environment.

## V. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Comments must be submitted by email to the following email addresses: [caddis@usaid.gov](mailto:caddis@usaid.gov) with a copy to Mrs. Tsegereda Gebremedhin at: [tgebremedhin@usaid.gov](mailto:tgebremedhin@usaid.gov) no later than 16:00 Addis Ababa time by the Response Due Date shown on the cover page of this RFI. The subject line of the email must read “**RFI-XXX**”. USAID is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information, answer questions or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted.

## VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All information provided will become the property of USAID and will not be returned. USAID reserves the right to use information provided by respondents for its purposes. Responses may be used by USAID without restriction or limitation. Proprietary information must not be submitted.

Sincerely,



Admir Serifovica  
Contracting/Agreement Officer

Attachments:

- I. Request for Information - Public Questions

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### USAID/Djibouti New Basic Education Activity Request for Information – Public Questions

Respondents to this RFI are asked to provide input on some or all of the questions below.

1. What inclusive educational strategies and approaches, like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), can improve education and learning opportunities/outcomes for marginalized and vulnerable primary school-age Djiboutian children living in both urban and rural areas?
2. Gender equity in education remains an issue in the remote rural areas in Djibouti. What evidence-based approaches should USAID consider to improve basic education of girls in rural areas?
3. How can USAID increase community awareness/participation and influence behavioral change of parents and caregivers to achieve greater engagement in children's education and to increase primary school enrollment?
4. What best practices or models exist for developing sustainable community-led programs that provide learning to out-of-school children and youth and prevent primary school drop-outs?
5. What best practices exist to motivate pre-service and in-service teachers to secure their buy-in, improve their teaching skills and knowledge, and encourage peer learning and innovation? What data can be collected through learning assessments to strengthen teacher skills, knowledge, and attitudes?
6. What factors should USAID consider to support the MENFOP's nascent efforts in the use and development of ICT4E to improve learning outcomes for basic education? What relevant lessons learned in other countries can be leveraged for this work?
7. What best practices or models for improving Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) could be adapted to the Djiboutian context to develop, implement and maintain an effective evaluation system at all levels?
8. What best practices can USAID design/implement to reinforce MENFOP senior staff capacity in areas such as leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation, project management, systems management, and use of digital programs?
9. How can USAID foster close collaboration with private schools and other development partners involved in basic education to support a continuum of learning?
10. What other factors, recommendations, or considerations regarding this activity in Djibouti should USAID be aware of?

*RFI Number: 72060322RFI00009*  
*USAID/Djibouti New Basic Education Activity*

Finally, please provide brief information that describes your organization's capability and interest in implementing activities to achieve the objectives of USAID/Djibouti Activity.

- END of AMENDMENT #1 to RFI No. 72060322RFI00009 -