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Passages

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Research Firm/Researchers

This scope of work defines the key parameters, responsibilities and deliverables expected for this contract that will support the qualitative research in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) within the Passages project umbrella for Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

- Date of (re)Issuance:** 2 October 2020
- Due Date for Questions:** 16 October 2020. Submission of Questions or requests for clarification in writing to info@passagesproject.org by 17:00 Hours Washington, DC.
- Deadline for Proposals:** **October 23rd 2020.** Proposals (including detailed technical and financial proposal) are due 17:00 Hours Washington DC time. No late submissions will be accepted. Proposals are to be submitted electronically to info@passagesproject.org Emailed submissions must contain the subject line "MFF Qualitative Research Proposal". The successful consultant/firm will be notified within 15 business days of the deadline.

Purpose

Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) has received funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement and evaluation an adaptation of the Transforming Masculinities intervention (called 'Masculinite, Famille et Foi' (MFF)) in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). IRH is seeking a qualified, local DRC research subcontractor to conduct and manage a post-program qualitative study to inform end line quantitative findings from 2019.

This scope of work sets forth the background and objective for the evaluation and the scope of work for the research subcontractor.

Period of Performance: October 2020 – February 2020

Location: Kinshasa, DRC

About the Passages Project

The Passages Project aims to address a broad range of social norms, at scale, to achieve sustained improvements in family planning and reproductive health, with a focus on very young adolescents, newly married youth, and first-time parents. This research project is building the evidence base and contributing to the capacity of the global community to strengthen normative environments that support reproductive health, especially among the aforementioned groups. Passages capitalizes on formative life course transitions to test and scale up interventions that promote collective change and foster an enabling environment for healthy timing and family planning and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies. [Learn more](#)

About the Activity: Qualitative Research for Masculinite, Famille et Foi Program

As part of the Passages Project, IRH has been collaborating with Tearfund to implement and evaluate the [Masculinite, Famille et Foi \(MFF\)](#) intervention in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). MFF is a family-planning focused adaptation of the Tearfund-developed [‘Transforming Masculinities’ \(TM\)](#) intervention. The TM intervention is a gender norms shifting approach to transforming harmful concepts of gender and masculinities to promoting gender equality and reduce rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). MFF is currently the only normative intervention designed for congregations to reduce IPV, increase voluntary FP use, and improve RH outcomes by addressing the social norms that shape inequitable gender relations and prevent the use of modern methods of FP. **As an innovation, MFF addressed existing social and gender normative barriers to voluntary family planning use and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP) through gender transformative programming.** MFF consisted of the following components, core to its approach:

1. **Mobilizing faith leaders:** Transformed leaders to create a supportive normative environment for positive change and diffusion of gender-transformative ideals through workshops and diffusion activities. Faith leaders are positioned in existing community structures, shaping normative environments that in turn influence outcome behaviors and intentions. By working within existing structures with individuals of high influence, MFF’s focus on self-reflection was intended to lead to the transformation of leaders that will reverberate through their communities.
2. Transforming Masculinities with **gender champions:** Trained pre-identified and respected gender champions at the congregational level to be transformative members in their communities, gender champions act as peer mentors and change agents and facilitate ‘community dialogues’ with couple members.
3. Transforming Masculinities with **young couples (18-35 years of age):** Community dialogues with ten couples over the course of eight weeks to discuss topics ranging from the roots of GBV to FP and male involvement. This community dialogue process was intended to lead couples to identify, create, embrace, and disseminate new, positive identities and gender-equitable attitudes and norms, and to then take action within their community. We hypothesized that being an NMC or FTP is a moment of transition for individuals, during which enculturation into new roles and social norms can occur.
4. Transforming Masculinities with broader **congregation members:** Diffusion activities to communicate gender equality through faith leader sermons, couple testimonies, congregation-mobilizing events, mentoring by gender champions, and group discussions.
5. We hypothesized that a faith-based approach targets a specific community and interconnected group within which norm change can be effective and efficient. Social connections and the influence of the scriptures in informing behaviors and the role of influencers allow for the diffusion of new gender transformative attitudes and norms. Across all of the above, the promotion of gender equality and positive, non-violent male roles, the reduction of violence between intimate partners, and HTSP through FP/RH service delivery are the core topics explored.
6. An **enabling service environment**, including youth-friendly health services and GBV response protocol (clinics, pharmacies, hotline), reflecting the multi-level approach within MFF.

Post-Program qualitative study details

The MFF program in Kinshasa has been evaluated through baseline and end line quantitative surveys, and a midline ethnography study. Qualitative research was expected to take place concurrently in late 2018 when the end line quantitative surveys were being administered, however, funding restrictions have delayed this work. Now, this qualitative study is being conducted to support existing data collected at end line.

The focus of this study is to explore how social dynamics related to implementing the project in an urban setting, Kinshasa, build upon and explain findings from the quantitative evaluation and other previously collected program data. With this focus, we seek to better understand and explain findings from the quantitative study and provide needed information to guide future adaptation of norms shifting interventions from rural to urban settings. This focus will allow the team to better understand and unpack findings to articulate pathways of change in this model, to adjust the theory of change to better represent MFF norms shifting in an urban setting, and to interpret now the added value of a norms-shifting intervention led to behavioral shifts in uptake of voluntary family planning (FP) and reproductive health use and prevent intimate partner violence (IPV).

Current, the early phases of planning are underway, and a research protocol is being developed in anticipation of identifying a research firm to support this work. As such, below are initial insights into the aim, objectives, questions and methods.

Research Aim: This post-program qualitative study aims to understand how social dynamics within and outside of congregations in an urban setting influenced the success of the MFF intervention

Research Objectives: Through this study, and with a focus on MFF project outcomes of voluntary FP/RH use and prevention of IPV, we seek to respond to these four objectives:

1. Describe factors in the socio-normative environment in a congregation (e.g., member attendance, mobility, participation in church activities, expectations of young couples) that influence whether and how norms shift;
2. Describe how, within a congregation, young couples interact and influence each other's voluntary FP/RH and IPV behaviors;
3. Explore from whom young couples seek information, advice and support across their different social spheres (e.g. congregation, work, family, peers) and how they influence young couple voluntary FP/RH and IPV behaviors.
4. Understand with whom young couples share information and advice about voluntary FP/RH and IPV within and outside the congregation.

Tentative Timeframe

This qualitative study will begin in October 2020 with protocol and guide development. The protocol will be submitted for review and approval to the Georgetown University and local Kinshasa, DRC Institutional Review Board (IRB) – it will also undergo donor approval. Once IRB approval is obtained, and study staff recruited, research training will be conducted with the research team and partners (Tearfund and ECC). The intention is to begin training and data collection in January 2021, and complete the data collection by January 2021. Interviews will be transcribed into French in January and February 2021, simultaneous to data collection. Analysis will be conducted in February 2021 (in French). A short (English) report produced between February and March 2021. In addition to the local research consultant, IRH will recruit a strong global bilingual international consultant to support the research and lead the analysis and report writing.

Methods

The methods below are based on an initial brainstorm - the research team will refine this approach and explore whether individual participants will participate in interviews/in-depth interviews (IDI)/focus group discussions (FGD)/etc. across multiple interviews or discussions, or on a single one. As for scope of the data collection, we tentatively expect the data collection to include 3 communities in Kinshasa, with approximately 60-100 IDI and 4-8 FGD.

- **IDIs and FGDs** will be used with a subset of gender champions and men and women who participated in couple dialogues in intervention congregations. Participatory techniques including influence mapping, ranking, and vignettes will be embedded in IDI and FGD. Techniques and questions will be focused on understanding congregation dynamics, patterns of diffusion, perceptions of normative environments, and key reference groups for MFF behaviors of interest and how these influenced, facilitated or constrained the ability of MFF to achieve its goals.
- **Data validation with stakeholders and project participants.** At the end of the study, as a preliminary report-out, the quantitative study findings and this qualitative study will be shared with key program participants and stakeholders, asking them to interpret and critique the findings and apply the results to the theory of change. Discussions will be recorded and incorporated into the final report.

The locations in Kinshasa, DRC will be determined based on discussions within the team, largely influenced by the ability to contact and engage with participants and facilitators of the intervention after time has passed. They will be within a number of the following communities: Gombe, Lingwala, Makala, Bumbu, Matete, Masina I, Masina II, Ndjili I, Kimbanseke I, Kimbanseke II, Maluku, Kinsenso, Kalamu I, Kasavubu, Limete I, Limete II, Ngaba, Lemba I, and N'sele.

Detailed scope of work task description during timeline:

This scope of work is only for the submission of the protocol to the DRC IRB, training and supervision of field teams, qualitative data collection and analysis. All study activities will be undertaken in close supervision by IRH, the international research consultant, IRH partners engaged in MFF project including partners in DRC, with ongoing support. The scope of work will include, but may not necessarily be limited to, the following activities:

- Review relevant documents including: the project concept note, research protocol, project briefs, draft data collection instruments, consent forms, eligibility screening/recruitment documents, baseline, midline and end line research reports and findings, and other relevant literature, to become familiar with the research and the context.
- Undertake credible research ethics certification prior to the start of the study (if not already undertaken). The digital FHI 360 Research Ethics Training Curriculum or the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) is preferred.
- Support the submissions to local IRB (ethics review) for the study.
- Lead the translation of data collection instruments and consent forms in French and Lingala, then pretest them in communities with similar population characteristics as those of the targeted study population. Review and finalize the data collection instruments and consent forms prior to the study in consultation with IRH. Note that additional literature review or tool development is not required; the subcontractor will pre-test already existing and translated instruments. The translations from English to French will be done by IRH and Tearfund. Support for Lingala translations may be needed, depending on scope.
- Oversee the entire field process including, but not limited to: identifying and hiring interviewers and supervisors, collaborating with IRH and global research consultant to train data collectors and

supervisors on research methods and ethics; and conducting/managing all data collection activities in congregations.

- Ensure the safety and security of all research proceedings, and all data security on-the-ground. Report any safety and ethical concerns within 12 hours of an incident and participate in meetings for safety planning and prevention.
- In light of COVID-19, ensure all the safety and security (masks, handwashing, social distancing) of all researchers and participants.
- Systematically transcribe audio-recorded interviews of semi-structured interviews, and clean the data. Submit copies of these transcripts, audio recordings, participant lists and notes from data collection. Once approved, safely delete all copies of data.
- Submit biweekly email progress reports and participate in routine phone conferences (biweekly/monthly) with IRH staff on the study implementation.
- Develop draft report for review by IRH, global research consultant and partners. Revise report and resubmit as final deliverable.

Expected outputs:

1. An inception report detailing the work plan, providing comments to all data collection instruments & SOW, listing key documents to be reviewed, and outlining the format for final report.
2. Biweekly e-mail progress reports describing the process of data collection, based on a short template: what went well, what did not work and why, what are some recommendations of human resources and/or other resources required to better support the data collection during the endline study.
3. Copies of all transcribed qualitative interviews.
4. A draft report summarizing data collection planning, processes, and experiences.
5. Final report based on the above draft with edits made according to IRH and partner comments. To be completed to the satisfaction of IRH before final payment.

Time frame* for the evaluation and deliverables:

The work outlined above is planned to commence on in October 2020 with document review and training; data collection should start no later than January 2021 (preferably earlier in October) and conclude no later than February 2021; and data analysis and report writing should conclude no later than end of March 2021.

Deliverable	Deliverable Due Date	Amount to be Paid
Contract agreement and Submit inception report	November 15 2020	30% of consultancy fees
Submit biweekly progress reports <u>and</u> receipts for all reimbursable expenses; Submit report describing conclusion of data collection activities	Ongoing; January 20, 2020	40% of consultancy fees upon receipt of report describing conclusion of data collection activities
Submit final and cleaned raw data & Submit draft of field report	February 10, 2020	30% of consultancy fees

***The timeframe will depend on the signing of the contract**

Payment will be made within 30 days of receipt and acceptance of the invoice and deliverables. Subcontractor is not authorized to invoice IRH for any amount in excess of this agreement. Last invoice should state “Final” and invoices should reference the Contract Number.

Submission of proposals:

Interested bidders are required to submit a detailed technical and financial proposal in response to this SOW.

The technical proposal should include the following sections: 1) the consultant(s) or organization's competency in conducting qualitative, participatory studies, including particular knowledge and prior experience in working with similar populations (youth) and on similar topics (GBV, RH); 2) methodologies based on the above, including ethical considerations and policy influence considerations; 3) An illustrative work plan against the period of performance given. The proposal should also include the CVs of all proposed key staff (required) and any supporting staff as appendices (not required but desired if you know the person(s) with whom you plan to work). **The proposal should not exceed 10 pages.**

The financial proposal should be a separate document from the technical proposal and should be easy to read and relate with in terms of monetizing the technical proposal. The budget should include a separate cost for each study element, including separate costs for each research activity. Please provide a competitive professional fee.

Criteria for Evaluation

The Contractor will be selected for this scope of work based on their background in research and experience in the region of DRC. The Contractor will be willing to provide the services to the Institute for Reproductive Health. Selection criteria are the following (maximum 100 points):

Selection Criteria	Points
Technical Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrated understanding of the proposed study through technical proposal and clarity• Appropriateness of methodology and work plan	35
Financial Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost and competitiveness of the budget	30
Relevant and Thematic Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of previous family planning and reproductive health evaluations undertaken as the lead organization.• Experience working in Kinshasa, DRC – ability to speak Lingala & French	35
TOTAL	100

Exclusion criterion is an incomplete proposal submission, one not adhering to the above guidance.

Please note that all costs associated with proposal preparation, submission and/or negotiation cannot be reimbursed as a direct cost of the assignment, nor is the issuing of this RFP a guarantee that a sub-agreement will be awarded.

Contract Mechanism

It is anticipated to award a fixed-price subcontract to the Offeror whose proposal will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria described previously.

[END OF RFP]

ATTACHMENTS

Annex A – Terms and Conditions

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Offerors are responsible for review of the terms and conditions described.

WITHDRAWALS OF PROPOSALS

Offerors may withdraw proposals by written notice via email received at any time before award. Proposals may be withdrawn in person by a vendor or his/her authorized representative, if the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the proposal before award.

RIGHT TO SELECT/REJECT

IRH reserves the right to select and negotiate with those firms it determines, in its sole discretion, to be qualified for competitive proposals and to terminate negotiations without incurring any liability. IRH also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received without explanation.

DUE DILIGENCE PROCESS

Any selected firm may be required to complete a Financial Pre-Award Assessment in order for IRH to ascertain that the organization has the capacity to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed award. As part of the Pre-Award Assessment process the firm may also be requested to submit a financial audit report from the previous fiscal year. In addition, payroll records and other financial information may be requested to support budgeted costs.

CLIENT PRIOR APPROVAL

The selected offeror may be subject to funding agency approval before a subcontract can be awarded. Therefore, organizations are reminded that there may be delays for this process to be completed. In addition, should such approval not be given, this subcontract cannot be awarded.

DISCLAIMER

This RFP represents only a definition of requirements. It is merely an invitation for submission of proposals and does not legally obligate IRH to accept any of the submitted proposals in whole or in part, nor is IRH obligated to select the lowest priced proposal. IRH reserves the right to negotiate with any or all firms, both with respect to price, cost and/or scope of services. IRH has no contractual obligations with any firms based upon issuance of this RFP. It is not an offer to contract. Only the execution of a written contract shall obligate IRH in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such contract.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FIRM GUARANTEE

All information submitted in connection with this RFP will be valid for three (3) months from the RFP due date. This includes, but is not limited to, cost, pricing, terms and conditions, service levels, and all other information. If your firm is awarded the contract, all information in the RFP and negotiation process is contractually binding.

OFFER VERIFICATION

IRH may contact Offerors to confirm contact person, address, bid amount and that the bid was submitted for this solicitation.

FALSE STATEMENTS IN OFFER

Offerors must provide full, accurate and complete information as required by this solicitation and its attachments.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Offerors must provide disclosure of any past, present or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review or management of this solicitation and anticipated award in or outside of DRC. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in IRH having to re-evaluate selection of a potential vendor.

RESERVED RIGHTS

All RFP responses become the property of IRH and IRH reserves the right in its sole discretion to:

- To disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow solicitation instructions.
- IRH reserves the right to waive any deviations by vendors from the requirements of this solicitation that in IRH's opinion are considered not to be material defects requiring rejection or disqualification; or where such a waiver will promote increased competition.
- Extend the time for submission of all RFP responses after notification to all vendors.
- Terminate or modify the RFP process at any time and re-issue the RFP to whomever IRH deems appropriate.
- IRH reserves the right to issue an award based on the initial evaluation of offerors without discussion.
- IRH reserves the right to award only part of the activities in the solicitation or issue multiple awards based on solicitation activities.
- IRH will not compensate offerors for preparation of their response to this RFP.
- Issuing this RFP is not a guarantee that IRH will award a subcontract.
- IRH may choose to award a subcontract to more than one offeror for specific parts of the activities in the RFP.

Certification of Independent Price Determination; the offeror certifies that—

- (1) The prices in this offer have been arrived at independently, without, for the purpose of restricting competition, any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which offeror has any ownership or other interests,
 - (2) or any competitor relating to (i) those prices, (ii) the intention to submit an offer, or (iii) the methods or factors used to calculate the prices offered;
 - (3) The prices in this offer have not been and will not be knowingly disclosed by the offeror, directly or indirectly, to any other offeror, including but not limited to subsidiaries or other entities in which offeror has any ownership or other interests, or any competitor before bid opening (in the
 - (4) case of a sealed bid solicitation) or contract award (in the case of a negotiated or competitive solicitation) unless otherwise required by law; and
 - (5) No attempt has been made or will be made by the offeror to induce any other concern or individual to submit or not to submit an offer for the purpose of restricting competition or influencing the competitive environment.
- (a) Each signature on the offer is considered to be a certification by the signatory that the signatory—
- (1) Is the person in the offeror's organization responsible for determining the prices being offered in this bid or proposal, and that the signatory has not participated and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; or
 - (2) (i) Has been authorized, in writing, to act as agent for the principals of the offeror in certifying that those principals have not participated, and will not participate in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above;
(ii) As an authorized agent, does certify that the principals of the offeror have not participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above; and
(iii) As an agent, has not personally participated, and will not participate, in any action contrary to subparagraphs (a)(1) through (a)(3) above.
- (b) Offeror understands and agrees that --
- (1) violation of this certification will result in immediate disqualification from this solicitation without recourse and may result in disqualification from future solicitations; and
 - (2) discovery of any violation after award to the offeror will result in the termination of the award for default.