

# The FOUNDATIONS programme: Strengthening Adolescent Girls' Sexual & Reproductive Health in Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone

## Request for Expressions of Interest of Country Research Partnerships

June 2023

### The FOUNDATIONS Programme

#### Overview

Strengthening Adolescent Girls' Sexual & Reproductive Health (FOUNDATIONS) is a 6-year multi-country, gender-transformative project, with a total value of CAD\$ \$47,114,662 funded by Global Affairs Canada. The project aims to enhance the empowerment of adolescent girls, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, to exercise their adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) and rights in Mali, Niger, and Sierra Leone.

The FOUNDATIONS programme is a Consortium programme delivered by Save the Children Canada in partnership with ODI/Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Equipop, and SickKids Centre for Global Child Health. FOUNDATIONS is the largest ASRH programme ever implemented by Save the Children globally.

The project will be grounded in a rights-based and multi-level gender-transformative approach, that draws from learning from other GAGE evaluated initiatives e.g. the Act with Her Ethiopia programme. The programme will focus on gender norms change related to sexual and reproductive health, child marriage, and gender-based violence in Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone.

#### The key issues the project will address include:

- High rates of sexual- and gender-based violence, inclusive of child, early and forced marriage
- High rates of adolescent pregnancy (and related complications)
- Restrictive policy and environment around adolescent sexual and reproductive health

#### Outcomes

The ultimate outcome of the project is to improve sexual and reproductive health related outcomes by the most marginalized and vulnerable young women and adolescent girls through:

- Increased decision-making by in and out of school adolescent girls on their sexual and reproductive health and use of services
- Improved sexual and reproductive health services
- Improved effectiveness of key stakeholders to advocate for evidence-based, equitable sexual and reproductive health policies, legal frameworks and services

### Purpose of the call

#### Overview

We are pleased to announce this request for expressions of interest for country research partners in Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone for the FOUNDATIONS programme. We are making this call to identify individuals

and/or organisations who will partner with GAGE and the FOUNDATIONS consortium to co-design and implement a longitudinal qualitative study aimed at assessing the impacts of the FOUNDATIONS programme and improving the evidence based on social-norm change processes around ASRH, and the ways these interact with broader demographic, policy and legal (e.g. support for girls' secondary education, investments in adolescent health centers, criminalization of Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) and FGM/C), and economic structural factors.

It will complement the quantitative research and analysis (led by SickKids) assessing the impact of the project on the lives of direct and indirect beneficiaries. Through longitudinal qualitative research and case studies, this research will contribute to the regional and global evidence base, and take the rare opportunity to evaluate the effects of long-term multi-level programming on adolescent trajectories over the course of key years of adolescence. Research findings will be published and disseminated with local, national, regional and international policy, practitioner, donor and research audiences with the aim of strengthening evidence-informed programmes, services and policies that adolescent- and gender-responsive.

### Methodology and key information

The qualitative research component of the FOUNDATIONS consortium is led by GAGE. GAGE will conduct 3 rounds of longitudinal qualitative data collection in the three focal countries and a set of audio diaries with adolescents to complement the data collection findings, together with partners in the focal countries.

The research will consist of the following components as follows:

- consultations to design context-responsive research tools
- collection of primary data
- coding and analysis of the data
- preparation of country research reports and related knowledge products
- dissemination of findings in each of three countries.

Data collected will be used to track progress against output and outcome indicators at 18 month intervals – i.e., baseline, midterm, endline.

### Outputs, deliverables

Expected outputs and deliverables include the following activities (and may be subject to change)

1. Planning discussions with GAGE and FOUNDATIONS teams
2. Reviewing and piloting research tools
3. Co-leading qualitative research training
4. Undertaking data collection
5. Contributing to preliminary analysis debriefing sessions
6. Transcription and translation of research interviews
7. Contributing to analysis of the findings and co-authoring reports and knowledge products
8. Co-leading dissemination activities on the research findings

### Dates

The overall FOUNDATIONS programme runs from 2021-2027. The research activities for the qualitative component that GAGE/ODI will be leading are expected to commence around quarter 3 of 2023.

Please send your clarification queries to [procurementgri@odi.org.uk](mailto:procurementgri@odi.org.uk) by **21<sup>st</sup> June 2023** Questions and answers will then be circulated to all bidders.

The timeframe for the call will be as follows: call released on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 with the deadline for bidder queries by 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023. Proposals will be due on **10<sup>th</sup> July 2023**. Short listed bidders will then be invited to interviews on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

## Capacity statements outline

We request the submission of an expression of interest statement with a maximum of 5 pages, plus appendices, to cover the components mentioned above. Please include the following sections in your capacity statement:

- 1. Brief description of your organisation (if relevant)** – size, mission statement, history, organisation of teams/departments, disciplinary background of researchers and methodological experience (or equivalent if you are applying as an individual).
- 2. Content expertise on gender and adolescence** – in general and over the last three years. Please include research and evaluation work you have done related to any of the following thematic areas: i) sexual and reproductive health, ii) voice and agency; and iii) gender-based violence. In addition, please list three key projects that you think best exemplify your work relating to these thematic areas and gender and/or adolescence and where applicable attach relevant research reports and/or articles or provide appropriate links. Please include institutional experience on child protection.
- 3. Motivation** - please explain your interest in this project and why you would be well suited to carry it out.
- 4. References** – please list three referees that you would be happy for us to contact.

**All submissions will be equally assessed. Please also respond to sections 4-10 in your capacity statement.**

### **5. Data collection**

#### **a. Qualitative data collection**

Please provide a summary of your /your institution's experience, with specific examples, in qualitative data collection. Please include the following information:

- i. Experience with utilising different types of qualitative research instruments.
- ii. Identify key staff to be involved in the data collection process and key examples of projects in which they have been involved. Please specify how the data collection in the field is managed, with what size and profile of teams. Please include CVs. Please also explain your process of quality assurance.
- iii. Experience of programme evaluation.
- iv. Experience of working in survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) contexts with young people and adolescent girls.
- v. Please provide three reports or articles that best represents your work drawing on qualitative research methods.

#### **b. Qualitative data analysis component**

Please provide a summary of your/your institution's experience, with specific examples, in qualitative data analysis. Please include the following information:

- i. Approach to qualitative data analysis, including if relevant experience with different software packages.
- ii. Two to three examples of reports and articles produced by core personnel to be involved. Please explain role if these were co-produced with other researchers and if so what their role was in the analysis.

**6. Dissemination / research uptake / learning**

- a. What types of approaches do you use to disseminate and communicate your research findings? Please provide examples of the following as relevant:
  - i. Reports
  - ii. Events
  - iii. Website (and other forms of social media)
  - iv. Journal publications
  - v. Resource centres

**7. Experience in securing ethics approvals:** Please outline your usual ethics approval/ IRB processes.

**8. Budget /cost structure:** Please provide a budget which includes the components below ). Please provide a breakdown between fees and expenses. Fees should be broken down by staff member, cost and activity

**Budget scenario:** Please provide us with a detailed breakdown of what it would cost to undertake 10 focus group discussions, 20 in-depth interviews and 20 key informant interviews in three sites.

- a. Please provide costs for:
  - vi. Principle investigator costs – both daily rates and costs for 20% time.
  - vii. Research assistant rate – both daily rates and costs for 20% time.
  - viii. Administrative/ overhead costs / indirect costs – please specify what is and is not included in the daily rates/ percentage time rates.
- b. Please provide costs for field work i.e. transportation and daily subsistence
- c. Please provide costs for transcription and translation

**For the call for expressions of interest , please send all documents to [procurementgri@odi.org.uk](mailto:procurementgri@odi.org.uk) by July 10<sup>th</sup>. Please put 'Foundations Programme Request for Expressions of Interest' followed by your institution's name in the email title.**

## Annex 1: Evaluation Criteria

Component	Weighting
<b>Technical proposal</b>	<b>60%</b>
Team composition and CVs	35%
Methodology, approach and plan	15%
Relevant institutional experience	10%
<b>Commercial proposal (price and value for money)</b>	<b>40%</b>

## Call conditions

### Communications

We will only communicate about this call by email.

Applications must be submitted electronically to [procurementggri@odi.org.uk](mailto:procurementggri@odi.org.uk). We may reject any submissions sent to any other address.

### Confidentiality

We will share the questions, and our responses, with other applicants, unless we agree to treat any exchange of information as confidential.

If you would like us to treat any exchange of information and/or information included in your submission as confidential, you must let us know and explain your reasons. We will confirm if we accept your request and if we do not, we will work together to decide whether the information in question can be omitted from your submission, or communicated to us outside the call process.

### Closing date and submission requirements

We may reject any submission which is, in our reasonable opinion, incomplete or is submitted after the stated closing date.

Where a length of response is stipulated, that response length relates to the number of 15 A4 Pages excluding appendices (maximum 100 pages with appendices). Text based information must be answered in English.

We will only evaluate submissions which meet our stated length and appearance requirements. We will not evaluate any information which we have not requested in the tender documents.

### **Changes to ODI requirements**

Where we change our requirements during the call, we will inform you as quickly as reasonably possible.

You will provide a single point of contact (including telephone and e-mail details) to receive this information, and you will ensure that you have appropriate cover arrangements in place if your contact is away from work, as we expect you to provide a prompt acknowledgement of our changes.

### **Consortium partners and subcontractors**

You must name all proposed sub-contractors and/or consortium partners in your submission and explain their role. We cannot guarantee that we will approve any other third parties after we have accepted submissions.

We will require the right to approve subcontracts and must have the right to enforce some contractual terms directly against your subcontractors in order to meet our own contractual obligations to the contract funder and to the other consortium partners.

### **Consortium submissions**

We will only contract with a lead single partner. We may require consortium partners that are not lead partners to enter into direct agreements with ODI to cover part or all of their project contributions, where this is necessary to meet our own contractual obligations to the contract funder and to the other consortium partners.

### **Submission principles**

We expect your response to demonstrate openness, transparency, attention to detail and the ability to work in the spirit of collaborative working.

### **Additional or missing information or documentation**

If we request additional or missing information or documentation, we will specify the time by which we expect it to be submitted to us. If you fail to supply this on time, we may reject your submission.

### **Conflict of interest**

This will be an open, fair, non-discriminatory and competitive call. If you declare an actual or potential conflict of interest which may prevent you from participating in the GGRI project effectively, or we become aware of one ourselves, which we cannot resolve in good faith using reasonable efforts, we may reject your submission.

### **Financial standing and compliance screening**

We may run reasonable checks on you before or after accepting your offer to make sure that you are a suitable project partner. These may include requiring you to complete questionnaires. If as a result of this screening we conclude that you are not a suitable project partner and/or that you will not meet our funder's requirements, we will inform you as quickly as possible and work together to find a way forward. We will not be obliged to award a contract to you if we are unable to agree a mutually acceptable solution.

Please be aware that as our funder is a UK government department, if we become aware after awarding a contract to you of any circumstances which mean that continuing to work with you presents a compliance risk to us or our funder, we may withdraw / terminate the contract award at any time.

### **General**

We are under no obligation to accept your submission, whether because it is the cheapest bid or for any other reason. ODI is not a public body, and we are not regulated by public procurement law. We will follow the stated call principles, as amended from time to time, but any decisions which we make in relation to this submission will be made in our absolute discretion.

This call will be interpreted in accordance with the law of England and Wales. By responding to our call invitation, you agree that the English courts have exclusive jurisdiction over any claim or dispute connected with this call.

*Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year longitudinal research programme building knowledge on good-practice programmes and policies that support adolescent girls in the Global South to reach their full potential.*

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