

Request for Applications

Serve as local research partner for organizational network analysis of the referral network for adolescent girls and young women in Gaborone and Kweneng East, Botswana

Introduction

Data for Impact (D4I) is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). D4I supports countries to realize the power of data as actionable evidence that can improve programs, policies, and—ultimately—health outcomes. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), through the Carolina Population Center (CPC), leads D4I in partnership with Palladium, ICF, John Snow, Inc. (JSI), and Tulane University.

D4I seeks a research organization to serve as our local partner for an organizational network analysis (ONA) of the referral network for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in Gaborone and Kweneng East, Botswana. The purpose of this request for applications (RFA) is to determine the organization best suited to play this role. The successful applicant will demonstrate superior technical, logistical, and organizational capacity needed to conduct the study. If selected, the successful applicant will be contracted through UNC.

DREAMS Botswana

Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe women (DREAMS) is a public-private partnership that aims to address the structural drivers that increase girls' HIV risk, including poverty, gender inequality, sexual violence, and a lack of education. In Botswana, DREAMS-like activities were initiated in two districts in May 2018—Gaborone and Kweneng East. The DREAMS service delivery model focuses on finding HIV-negative AGYW who are at high risk of acquiring HIV; screening AGYW for HIV infection, intimate partner violence, and high-risk behaviors; providing AGYW and their sex partners with appropriate interventions; and tracking AGYW to ensure they are receiving appropriate services and that services are layered appropriately so that referrals are taking place and being completed.

Greater Gaborone and Kweneng East were selected as program districts because they are located in the area of Botswana with the highest number of AGYW living with HIV. Community activities are complemented by testing and clinical services provided by both community and clinical partners. Five Government of Botswana clinics that offer youth-friendly health services in these districts are leveraged for DREAMS implementation. Although some services can be integrated (e.g., HIV and family planning), it is not possible to integrate the full range of services and interventions needed to effectively serve at-risk AGYW, and therefore effective referral among providers is critical to meet the various needs of this population.

Organization Network Analysis

This mixed-methods, cross-sectional study involves both a quantitative survey and qualitative research. For the quantitative component, an ONA approach will be used. Youth-friendly health facilities in Gaborone and Kweneng East will be the origins of the network analysis, which will also include “safe spaces” established for AGYW. A small qualitative study will explore AGYW preferences about DREAMS service types using a participatory mapping process. This study has the following specific objectives:

- 1) To systematically catalogue service availability and define existing referral network pathways for all DREAMS services that exist in the two target districts at the start of the program
- 2) To quantify client flow between linked facilities in Gaborone and Kweneng East at the beginning of the program
- 3) To explore knowledge and preferences of AGYW about DREAMS-related services

Data Collection

Data collection will include implementation of approximately 50–75 paper-based quantitative surveys with an estimated 5 youth-friendly health centers, 16 government social workers, 8 police stations, and 10–20 DREAMS safe space coordinators in Gaborone and Kweneng East. In addition, a total of four focus group discussions (FGDs) will be held with AGYW. In each district, one FGD will be held with eight to twelve 15–19-year-old AGYW and one with eight to twelve 20–24-year-old AGYW. FGDs will include a mapping exercise and will focus on AGYW’s knowledge of formal and informal service sites, what motivates AGYW to seek out different types of services, barriers to seeking services, and preferences related to service sites and service providers.

D4I and the local research partner will train the data-collection team in Gaborone. We anticipate that the data-collection team will consist of five enumerators who will implement the quantitative survey, two qualitative interviewers who will implement the FGDs, one or two data clerks who will enter the surveys into an Excel spreadsheet, and a field supervisor who will coordinate and track progress during data collection and manage the team.

We estimate that the training will take five to six days, to including a one-day pre-test of the study tools. The data-collection team will be trained on research ethics and the study protocol. The local research partner will handle all training logistics, including transport for pre-testing. Training will cover the following topics: introduction to the study and an overview of the survey, treatment of human subjects, interview techniques, and an in-depth review of the study tools in both English and Setswana. Practice interviews will occur prior to the pre-test.

Quantitative survey interviews are expected to take 45 minutes and can be conducted in either English or Setswana. Completed surveys will be entered into a spreadsheet on a password-secured computer. Double data-entry will be used to ensure that data are accurately transferred from paper to the electronic spreadsheet.

For FGDs, AGYW will be recruited through safe space coordinators. FGDs will be conducted in Setswana, and maps will be developed during FGDs. In addition, field notes will record information not contained in the maps. One interviewer will facilitate the FGD while another will record field notes in English. FGDs are expected to take 60–90 minutes.

Data will be encrypted and transferred from the local research partner to a secure D4I server each week during data collection.

Prior to the start of data collection, D4I will obtain ethics approval in Botswana and from UNC in the United States. As part of that process, the study tools and consents will be translated into Setswana. (Note: This process will be handled by D4I and will not be the responsibility of the local research partner.)

Activities and Responsibilities for the Local Research Partner

The local research partner will work in close collaboration with D4I to carry out the following activities.

Recruitment of Enumerators

The local research partner will recruit a sufficient number of qualified enumerators and interviewers to implement the ONA survey and FGDs in a two- to four-week period.

Training of Enumerators/Interviewers and Pre-Test of Data-Collection Tools

The local research partner will lead the training of the data-collection team as described above with support from D4I.

Finalization of Data-Collection Tools

The local research partner will participate in the finalization of all data-collection tools following the pre-test of the tools.

Liaise with Local Authorities

The local research partner will be responsible for conducting all necessary protocol visits with local authorities at all study locations prior to the start of data collection.

Data Collection/Data Quality

The local research partner will implement data collection over a two- to four-week period as described above. The team supervisor will ensure data quality by closely supervising members of the data-collection team and reviewing their work for accuracy and completeness.

Dissemination of Results

The local research partner will contribute to the development of the draft and final study reports. The local research partner should also plan for a half-day results dissemination meeting for approximately 40 people, to be held in Gaborone.

Deliverables

- Finalized data-collection tools and consent forms
- Submission of the cleaned quantitative data set in Excel
- Submission of photographs of maps made during FGDs, accompanied by detailed, typed field notes in English
- Written comments on draft and final reports and participation in the results dissemination meeting
- Provision of secure storage of all hard copy documents (e.g., consent forms)

Timeline

D4I has already begun preliminary preparations for the study. The successful applicant should plan to start activities in March/April 2019. The expected timeline for study benchmarks is presented below:

- Training of data-collection team and data collection: April/May 2019
- Draft study report: July 2019
- Final study report and dissemination meeting: August/September 2019

Application Requirements

The successful applicant will be required to possess the following skills and competencies:

- Experience with quantitative survey implementation
- Experience conducting focus group discussions, preferably with AGYW
- Evaluation design and research skills
- Excellent project management and people management skills and the ability to deliver within timeframes as reflected in the work plan
- Excellent writing skills in English.

Organizations wishing to serve as D4I's local research partner for the Botswana ONA study should submit the following:

- 1) A **cover letter** that clearly indicates that the application is responding to the "Botswana ONA RFA" and states the applicant organization's name, address, phone numbers, URL, and main email address. There should be a contact person listed for any purpose related to this RFA.
- 2) A **technical proposal** that describes in detail the approach to addressing the technical and logistical requirements to conduct a facility survey of the magnitude described above. The approach should describe a recruitment plan for enumerators (qualifications, where recruited from, size of overall team, number of team members, etc.), topics for enumerator training, and a discussion of data-collection logistics and data-quality measures.

The technical proposal should highlight any activities that will build local evaluation research capacity, including that of the data-collection team itself. The applicant should also include a description of its organizational resources that will be used to carry out the required tasks.

The technical proposal should include a **detailed timeline** that lays out all the project activities and tasks with projected completion dates for each activity and task.

The technical proposal should be no more than 10 pages, 1.5 spaced with 1 inch margins, and 11-point Times New Roman font.

- 3) An **organizational description and experience statement**. The applicant should provide a brief description of the overall governance structure of its organization. The applicant should describe the number and roles/responsibilities of the staff that will implement the study.

The applicant should name the key technical and administrative/financial personnel that will be involved in the activities. It should name a principal investigator and a chief administrative/financial officer who will serve as the main technical and financial liaison with D4I (this can be the same person). CVs of key staff should be included in the application.

The applicant should also describe the organization's past experience successfully organizing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research in Botswana. The applicant should provide a description of past projects (up to 3, with no more than 1 page description per project; these pages will not count toward the overall length of the application). The demonstrated capacity to do high-quality work will be a crucial consideration.

The organizational description should be no more than 3 pages, 1.5 spaced with 1-inch margins, and 11-point Times New Roman font, exclusive of CVs and past project descriptions.

- 4) A **description of financial/accounting structures and practices**. The applicant should submit, on letterhead, a statement of how the applicant calculates any indirect costs (if charged in the budget).
- 5) A **detailed budget and budget narrative** that breaks down costing information by line item. It should include, but is not be limited to, the following cost categories:

Personnel cost: List name and/or position title, annual base salary or daily rate, percentage of effort or number of workdays for each category of staff (e.g., field supervisor, enumerator, etc.). Please provide justification and a description of responsibilities for each category of staff.

Training: Include expenses for training of enumerators, such as lunch and tea breaks, training materials, venue, and per diem.

Travel/transport: List travel/transport expenses, such as vehicle rental, driver per diem, etc., for training and data collection.

Other Direct Costs: Indicate cost for printing of data-collection tools and consent forms, cost of dissemination meeting, and any other direct costs.

Budgets can be supplied in a separate spreadsheet along with a budget narrative in a Word document.

Deadline

Proposals must be submitted electronically to measure_rfp@unc.edu by 8 a.m. U.S. Eastern Daylight Savings Time on March 11. The submission should include all materials related to the application.

Questions

Questions will be accepted via email at measure_rfp@unc.edu until 5 p.m. U.S. Eastern Standard Time until February 25. Answers will be provided via email to each declared/intended bidder by 5 p.m. U.S. Eastern Standard Time on March 4. A list of all questions and answers will be posted at <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/about/contracting-with-us>

Proposal Review and Notification of Intent to Enter into a Sub-Agreement

Following receipt of applications, D4I will review the received materials and may conduct a second round review of “best and final” applicants. If this occurs, D4I will follow up with specific questions and may request additional information from the “best and final” applicants. Applications will be reviewed in terms of their technical soundness, organization past experience, quality of key staff, and financial competitiveness.

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