REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): EVALUATION RESEARCH FIRM

This scope of work defines the key parameters, responsibilities and deliverables expected for a sub-contract with the Uganda-based Impact Innovations and Development Center (IIDC). This sub-contract will support one phase (baseline data collection) of a long-term evaluation of the REAL Father project. The selected research firm will support this research in six regions in Uganda, led by Impact and Innovations Development Centre (IIDC) and in partnership with the University of California San Diego (UCSD).

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

RFP ISSUANCE DATE: Wednesday, February 13, 2023
DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: Wednesday, March 1, 2023. Proposals (including detailed technical and financial proposal) are due 17:00 hours Uganda time. No late submissions will be accepted. Proposals are to be submitted electronically to IIDC requests@iidcug.org. Emailed submissions must contain the subject line “REAL Fathers Outcome Evaluation Research Proposal”. The successful consultant/firm will be notified within 15 business days of the deadline.

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

PURPOSE

IIDC has received funding from the LEGO Foundation to adapt, scale, and evaluate the integration of the REAL Fathers project and early childhood development (ECD) in six cultural regions across Uganda. IIDC is seeking a qualified local research partner with which to enter a sub-contract to conduct and manage the initial phase (a baseline survey) for the larger, long-term outcome evaluation. Baseline data collection is expected to occur in August 2023. Contingent upon funding availability and mutual agreement between IIDC and the Contractor, there is potential for the Contractor to also conduct subsequent surveys (i.e., midline and endline surveys).

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: April 1 – September 30, 2023
LOCATION: 24 districts within six cultural regions (4 districts each)

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<th>Bunyoro:</th>
<th>Teso:</th>
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<td>1. Hoima district</td>
<td>1. Katawiki district</td>
<td>1. Dokolo district</td>
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ABOUT THE REAL FATHERS PROJECT

The Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative is an evidence-based father-centered mentoring program designed to address gender norms that promote use of violence in child discipline and with intimate partners through promotion of positive parenting and partnership skills building. The REAL Fathers Initiative uses a 6-month mentoring program and a community poster campaign to model alternative strategies for nonviolent discipline and conflict resolution to improve fathers’ parenting and communication skills and confidence in adapting nonviolent strategies. The project works with young fathers (ages 16-25) who have toddler-aged children (1-3 years) who are learning new roles as parents and husbands. This stage in a man’s life is an ideal time to promote nonviolence in parenting and partner relationships as there is still ambiguity in the normative expectations about these roles and behaviors. Targeting couple communication skills, joint problem solving, and nonviolent responses to couple conflict reduces perpetration of IPV in the long term. Self-reflection on gender roles, by husbands and wives, and at the community level through exposure to posters, leads to improvement in acceptance of an expanded role for the father over time.

The project was piloted in Northern Uganda in 2013-2015. After proving successful1, the project was adapted and scaled in 2017 to Karamoja and integrated within Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centers. Following another successful round of implementation, the REAL Fathers Initiative is now endorsed by Uganda’s government for national scale-up.

ABOUT THE REAL FATHERS SCALE-UP CONSORTIUM

The REAL Fathers Initiative is led, implemented, and evaluated by a consortium of organizations that reflect the principles guiding the programmatic approach: continuous quality improvement; learning and adaptation; effectiveness and efficiency; and sustainable impact. The REAL Fathers Initiative Scale-up Consortium covers three program arms:

1. Learning & Results/Management Arm. Our team is led by Impact and Innovations Development Centre (IIDC), a learning partner and Technical Assistance organisation supporting Violence Against Children prevention partners in 3 East African Countries. IIDC and its partners led REAL Fathers integration into ECD systems, resulting in government buy-in and scale-up endorsement. Building on this experience as lead partner for the REAL integration, IIDC will provide leadership and overall implementation oversight, infusing evidence-based learning/adaptation in implementation, managing sub-grants and results management.

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2. **Implementation Arm.** Four implementation organizations will implement REAL Fathers across Uganda: Somero Uganda with Teso-regional partners; All Nations Child Development Centre; World Education-Bantwana; and Forum for African Women Educationalists.

3. **Evidence Generation/Research Arm.** The University of California San Diego (UCSD) will lead research activities, including M&E study design, indicator selection, and protocol development. The Contractor (Evaluation Partner) and UCSD will work as partners in the evaluation research.

**RESEARCH AIMS**

Recent funding to IIDC allows for the scale-up of REAL Fathers to six new regions in Uganda. An initial research aim of this work is to generate evidence on current prevalence of positive parenting practices, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and violent physical punishment of children. As such, a baseline survey will occur before intervention start to address the following research questions:

1. Assess baseline levels of positive parenting practices and father-child interaction.
2. Assess baseline levels of harsh physical punishment of young children and IPV.
3. Generate evidence on fathers’ gender attitudes and households’ decision-making around caregiving and child care.
4. Establish baseline levels of early childhood development outcomes.

**METHODS**

This baseline survey will be one part of a larger outcome evaluation. The REAL Fathers Initiative will be evaluated using a pre-post cluster randomized controlled trial (C-RCT) with control group. The research team will refine this approach and identify a sampling frame in collaboration with the Contractor (Evaluation Partner).

**STUDY SITES & STUDY POPULATION**

The study will be conducted in 6 regions of Uganda, and 4 districts within each region (24 districts total: 12 intervention; 12 control). These regions have been selected as they have not yet been reached by the REAL Fathers Initiative (i.e., they are new areas for national scale-up). Within each district, 5-7 villages (clusters) will be selected for inclusion in the study.

**PARTICIPANTS**

The survey is designed to reach young fathers ages 18-25 who are parents to toddler-aged children (ages 1-3). Based on preliminary sample size calculations, and an assumed intra cluster correlation of 0.24, we anticipate needing complete data from a minimum of 1,300 young fathers, but potentially up to 2,800 fathers (650-1,400 per arm). As with previous evaluations of REAL Fathers, participants will be identified in partnership with Local Council 1 elected leaders via the generation of a list of all eligible young fathers in selected villages based on eligibility criteria.

**INDICATORS**
An existing survey instrument for fathers used in previous evaluations of REAL Fathers will be adapted for the 2023 baseline survey. However, the primary outcome indicators will largely remain the same. From the previous survey, these include:

- **Positive parenting.** Young fathers were asked about their use of positive parenting practices in the past month. The question, "In the past month, if the child did something that you liked or approved of, did you..." included five different behaviors. Positive parenting practices included whether the father: said something nice about or praised the child; gave the child physical affection; gave the child special privilege like holding the child, allowing the child to sleep with you, or spending more time with the child; went someplace or did something special with the child as a reward; and show or tell the child that you love him/her, with possible response options of yes, no, and don't remember (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.63; Northern=0.64).

- **Parent child interaction.** Young fathers were asked, “How often do you do any of the following together with your wife/partner for your child?”, with nine different actions listed. These included whether you: played with your children at home; cooked or fixed food for your child; dressed or changed the clothes of the child; gave your child a bath; read books or looked at the pictures in books with the child; told stories to the child; sang songs with the child; took the child outside the home, compound, yard, or enclosure; or spent time with the child naming, counting, and/or drawing things, with possible response options being, never, rarely, once or twice a month, several times a week, or every day (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.89; Northern=0.83).

- **Perpetration of physical, sexual, or psychological IPV.** Young fathers were asked about the frequency of perpetrating IPV in the past three months. Six measures were included whether you shouted or yelled at your wife; slapped your wife; pushed or shoved your wife; threw something at your wife that could hurt her; physically forced your wife to have sex with you when she did not want to; or insulted your wife. Each question included response options of never, sometimes, often, or no response (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.74; Northern=0.62).

- **Harsh physical punishment of child.** Young fathers were asked about the physical discipline that they used with their child in the past one month. Seven questions included: whether you shook him/her; shouted, yelled at, or screamed at him/her; spanked, hit, or slapped him/her on the bottom with bare hand; hit him/her on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with something like a belt, stick, or other hard object; hit or slapped him/her on the face, head, or ear; hit or slapped him/her on the hand, arm, or leg; beat him/her up, that is, hit him/her over and over as hard as you could, with response options yes, no, and don't remember (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.66; Northern=0.67).

- **Early Childhood Development.** Measures will be further identified and refined, but include Good health, Opportunities for early learning, and Adequate Nutrition, and Responsive Caregiving. These could be assessed by parents and care providers who are knowledgeable about holistic child care and development, parents and other care providers trained and enrolled in group-based saving, microfinance schemes and income generation initiatives. In addition, indicators may include children enrolled in ECD centers by age, gender, ability; children 3 years old demonstrating early learning and development standards; trained personnel in deployment for ECD services; pregnant women who receive at least 8 regularly-scheduled prenatal check-ups; proportion of infants and young children receiving scheduled immunizations.
Intermediate outcome measures will also be assessed. These include the following:

- **Gender equitable attitudes about caregiving.** Young fathers were asked to respond to ten statements about gender equitable attitudes around caregiving. Some statements included that only when a woman has a child is she a real woman; giving a bath and feeding are the mother’s responsibility and a man who shares housework with his wife will eventually be overpowered by her. Response options included agree, partially agree, and disagree (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.82; Northern=0.62).

- **Gender equitable division of household chores.** Young fathers were asked, “Not counting any help you receive from others, how do you and your partner divide the following tasks?” Six tasks were listed: washing clothes, repairing the house, digging in the garden, cleaning the house, preparing food, and buying food. Response options included: I do everything; usually me; shared equally or done together; usually wife/partner; and partner does everything (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.78; Northern=0.64).

- **Couple communication.** Young fathers were asked, “In the past month, did you appreciate your wife for the good things she did?”, with the four actions including: you took time to listen to your wife’s concerns; you and your wife spoke about things that frustrated you; your wife talked about things that frustrated you; and you and your wife talked about things that made you happy, with possible response options of yes, no, and don’t know (alpha: Karamoja=0.56; Northern=0.60).

- **Justification for use of IPV.** Young fathers were asked about situations when the male partner considers a husband justified in hitting is wife. Six situations were described including, if she goes out without telling him; neglects the children; argues with him; refuses to have sex with him; burns the food; or is unfaithful to him, with possible response options yes, no, and do not know (Cronbach alpha: Karamoja=0.81; Northern=0.63).

In addition, basic demographic characteristics will be assessed including: father age; children(s’) age; wife age; father’s educational attainment; father’s employment.

**SURVEY ENUMERATION & DATA COLLECTION**

The Evaluation Partner will hire and train local survey enumerators to conduct the research in each of the six regions. It is expected that local languages will be known by and spoken as needed with survey participants. The Contractor (Evaluation Partner) will program the survey tool in an online survey data collection tool such that the survey may be carried out on electronic tablets. Before the start of endline data collection, it is expected that enumerators will complete trainings in:

- Ethical principles of research and data collection procedures;
- Best practices for translation of survey questions, consent and assent forms to local languages;
- Safety protocols for conducting data collection; and
- Data collection procedures using e-tablets programmed in mobile data collection platforms.

**COMMUNICATION TO ETHICAL RESEARCH**
The study protocol will be submitted to local Ethics Committees in Uganda in addition to the UCSD Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study will also be registered on ClinicalTrials.gov, an online database by the U.S. National Library of Medicine of randomized trials.

**EXPECTED OUTPUTS (DELIVERABLES) & ANTICIPATED TIMELINE**

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<tr>
<th>DELIVERABLE</th>
<th>ANTICIPATED TIMING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inception report detailing project work plan and timeline</td>
<td>April 15, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final data collection instruments (generated in coordination with UCSD)</td>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCSD &amp; Local IRB approval (in coordination with UCSD)</td>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Council for Science &amp; Technology (NCST) approval</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outline of baseline report</td>
<td>April</td>
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<td>Survey programming in online software (such as REDCap or CommCare)</td>
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<td>Hiring of survey enumerators; Creation of training plan</td>
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<td>Training of survey enumeratory; Survey pre-test</td>
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<td>Data collection</td>
<td>August</td>
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<td>Final, clean dataset</td>
<td>September</td>
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<td>Basic descriptive analyses</td>
<td>September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report (generated in collaboration with UCSD)</td>
<td>September</td>
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<td>Weekly email progress reports (ongoing)</td>
<td>April-September</td>
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**SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

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

The technical proposal should include the following sections: 1) the consultant's or organization's competency in conducting outcome evaluation studies, including particular knowledge and prior experience in working with similar populations and on similar topics (IPV, violence, gender); 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); 4) Three references of individuals or other partnering organizations who can speak to the applicants' skills and experience with evaluation research.

*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 Uganda. Specific selection criteria are as follows:

1. Technical Proposal
   a. Demonstrated understanding of the proposed outcome evaluation study design
   b. Appropriateness and completeness of proposed methodology (inclusive of sampling frame and participant selection strategy)
2. Financial Proposal
   a. Cost and competitiveness of the budget
3. Relevant Technical and Thematic Experience
   a. Evidence of successful implementation of outcome evaluation research
   b. Evidence of research experience in the areas of ECD, gender equity, social norms, or public health
   c. Evidence of working in Uganda
   d. Evidence of strong English written and oral communication
   e. Evidence of adequate human resources and operational facilities to conduct the study
4. Quality of Documentation
   a. Clarity of writing
   b. Reputation of publication sources
5. Professional References (3)

**CONTRACT MECHANISM**

It is anticipated to award a framework sub-contract agreement to the firm whose proposal (technical and financial) is successfully evaluated by the evaluation team based on the evaluation criteria described previously. The assignment under the framework agreement shall be renewable for future outcome measurement assignments based on successful performance of the previous assignment.