

Terms of Reference for Operations Research on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Mbale and Busia districts, Uganda.

1. Background

The Power to You(th) programme (PtY) is a five-year programme (2021–2025) implemented in six districts in Uganda: Isingiro, Kalangala, Bukwo, Mbale, Kampala and Busia. The programme aims to empower adolescent girls and young women to increase their agency, claim their rights, address gender inequalities, challenge gender norms and advocate for inclusive decision-making regarding harmful practices, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and unintended pregnancy. Boys and men are engaged as positive contributors to this change process. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are strengthened to have the capacity and legitimacy to represent underserved communities, and to engage with a variety of actors to expand civic space and change social norms, leading to the development and implementation of progressive laws and policies. The overall strategic programme objective of the Power to You(th) consortium is to contribute to the meaningful inclusion of more adolescent girls and young women from underserved communities in all decision-making.

SGBV and harmful practices, such as Female Genital Mutilation / Circumcision (FGM/C), early and forced child marriage, and teenage pregnancy, are deeply rooted in harmful gender and sexual norms perpetuated by unequal (patriarchal) power relations. According to the Uganda Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA) 2016, Uganda has a high prevalence of SGBV (22%) among women 15-49 years. The Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS, 2016) also indicated that the prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence among teenagers aged 15-19 years were slightly above those of ever married women, that is; Physical (23.5%), sexual (16.8%), physical and sexual violence at 9.4% among teenager against physical violence: 22.3%, sexual (16.6%), physical and sexual (9.3%) for ever married women.

Bukedi Sub-region registered the highest prevalence of SGBV among women at 40% and a teenage pregnancy rate of 22%. Anecdotal reports from Uganda Police and an analysis of national SGBV program data suggested that SGBV cases had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the two lockdown periods in 2020 and 2021 (UPHIA 2016). In addition, over 2,500 cases of gender-based violence were registered in Busia district during the lockdown according to records from World Vision (The Independent, December 23, 2020). In Mbale, according to the police annual crime report of 2022, a total of 17,698 cases of domestic violence were reported compared to 17,533 cases reported in 2021 thus giving a 0.94 percent increase in the volume of domestic violence registered. According to the Senior

Community Development Officer, Mbale registers more than 50 cases of GBV daily, however, many are not reported (Monitor e-paper, Monday, December 18, 2023).

Probable causes of the prevalent SGBV rates in Mbale and Busia include; cultural beliefs and norms, unequal power relations, financial stress, among others. So, we intend to explore and understand the social norms surrounding SGBV and how these influence care and support for young survivors. The findings from this operation research will support;

- documentation of key social norms that influence SGBV so as to generate evidence based and targeted strategies / interventions including Gender Transformative Approach (GTA) to reduce SGBV in the target communities,
- linkages with already established PtY structures and stakeholders such as community champions, youth advocates, religious, cultural leaders and CSOs among others for effective implementation of newly developed interventions or recommendations from the research and,
- documentation of survivors' views, needs and challenges related to access to SGBV services, care and support so as to inform integration of Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA) to improve their sexual and reproductive health and well-being.

2. Objectives

The primary objective of this operations research is to explore and understand social norms surrounding SGBV and how these influence care and support for young survivors in Busia and Mbale districts so as to formulate clear and actionable recommendations for the PtY programme.

Research questions

1. What are the different social norms surrounding SGBV in Busia and Mbale district, in terms of root causes, prevention and response?
2. What are stakeholder's perspectives on how social norms influence SGBV?
3. What are stakeholder's perspectives on how social norms influence access to SGBV care and support by survivors?
4. What are survivors' experiences with care and services, including barriers and positive norms that influence help-seeking behaviour?

3. Scope of Work

The operations research will encompass the following key components:

a. Capacity building

- Train youth researchers and research team on data collection and analysis, including coding and making a codebook (e.g. learning to work with Nvivo or MaxQda)

b. Literature Review:

- Review existing literature on SGBV and social norms in Uganda, including prevalence rates, regional variations, and existing interventions.
- Explore how social norms influence SGBV, access to care and support to survivors.

c. Data Collection:

- Conduct fieldwork to selected communities in Busia & Mbale to gather primary data through interviews, focus group discussions, and other relevant methods.
- Engage with key stakeholders, including community leaders, local authorities, youth groups, and NGOs working in the field of SGBV.
- Supervision and mentorship of youth researchers

d. Data Analysis:

- Explore social norms surrounding SGBV and how these influence care and support for young survivors within their communities.
- Document personal narratives and stories of young survivors of SGBV, ensuring confidentiality and sensitivity in the process.
- Analyse collected data to identify patterns, trends, and insights regarding social norms surrounding SGBV and their influence on care and support for young survivors.

4. Deliverables

- Inception Report: Provide a detailed plan outlining the methodology, tools, and timeline for the research study within two weeks of contract initiation.
- Research Proposal for Ethical Review submission, including research tools
- Plan and facilitate a training of youth researchers and research team on data collection and analysis

- Draft Research Report: Submit a comprehensive draft report containing findings, analysis, and recommendations within six weeks of data collection completion.
- Final Research Report: Incorporate feedback received during the review process and submit the finalized report within two weeks of receiving comments.
- Documentary Material: Deliver documented stories of young survivors of SGBV, ensuring anonymity and consent where applicable.

5. Timeline

The consultancy is expected to commence on 1st May 2024 and conclude within 5 months.

6. Qualifications:

- Masters degree in social sciences, social/cultural anthropology, gender studies, public health, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience in conducting qualitative research, particularly on sensitive topics such as SGBV.
- Experience working with youth researchers, training, supervision and mentorship would be an added advantage.
- Experience with implementing a GTA lens in programming and research activities
- Familiarity with cultural contexts and norms in Uganda, preferably with experience working in the target districts or sub-regions.
- Strong analytical and report writing skills.
- Excellent facilitation and coordination skills
- Ability to work independently and collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders.
- Fluency in English and proficiency in local languages spoken in the target districts (desirable).

7. Application Process

Interested candidates should submit the following documents to ekiggundu@rhu.or.ug , copy dnanyange@rhu.or.ug by 26th April 2024:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV) highlighting relevant qualifications and experience.

- Cover letter outlining the candidate's suitability for the consultancy and proposed approach to conducting the research.
- At Least two examples of their work on a previous similar assignment (evaluation or research reports) including references
- A work plan (time and activity schedule) and budget for the assignment, including the estimated number of days and daily rate (in UGx) within the 5 months.
- Detailed cost proposal in UGx including the number of days you would spend on the assignment and daily fees (budget should cover all costs in-country as well, including local research teams and logistical costs)

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the applications:

- Relevance of qualifications and experience to the scope of work.
- Demonstrated understanding of SGBV issues and cultural dynamics in Uganda.
- Interest in mentoring and experience with building capacity of young researchers
- Quality and feasibility of proposed methodology.
- Ability to deliver high-quality outputs within the specified timeline.
- Previous experience working with vulnerable populations and ensuring ethical research practices.
- The availability to carry out the assignment in the proposed time frame

10. Reporting

The consultant will report to the PMERL lead & PM throughout the duration of the consultancy, providing regular updates on progress and seeking guidance or support as needed.

11. Confidentiality

The consultant shall adhere to strict confidentiality protocols throughout the research process, ensuring the anonymity and protection of all participants and sensitive information collected.

12. Intellectual Property

All research findings, reports, and documentary materials produced as part of this consultancy shall be the property of the PTY Consortium and may be used for dissemination and advocacy purposes with appropriate attribution to the consultant.

13. Evaluation

Upon completion of the consultancy, the PTY Consortium will conduct an evaluation to assess the quality and impact of the research study, including the relevance of findings to program objectives and potential implications for future interventions.

14. Amendment

These Terms of Reference may be subject to amendment or revision as deemed necessary by the PTY Consortium.

15. Contact Information

For inquiries or clarification regarding this consultancy, please contact ekiggundu@rhu.or.ug or dnanyange@rhu.or.ug