Terms of Reference (ToR)

Academic Partnership for “Beyond Barriers: Overcoming Funding and Workforce Obstacles to Achieve a Localized Humanitarian Response”

Summary

Concern Worldwide, with funding from USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), will undertake a 24-month project in support of efforts to overcome two of the largest barriers to the localization of humanitarian action – humanitarian financing and human resources. This focused research project will be implemented across five different humanitarian contexts (Somalia, DRC, Malawi, Bangladesh, and NW Syria) with an aim to develop transferable learning on sustainable funding and human resource issues, within the lens of advancing locally led humanitarian preparedness, response, and recovery.

Concern is seeking an academic partner (individuals or institutional research teams) in each of the five study contexts with the expertise to advance the proposed research. In collaboration with the Concern Beyond Barriers Team, the Academic Partner (“the partner”) under this program will support the finalization of the study protocol, assist in the selection and engagement of in-country stakeholders, and lead on the data collection and preliminary analysis.

About Beyond Barriers

Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organization committed to the relief, assistance and advancement of poorest people in the least developed countries of the world, aiming towards the ultimate elimination of extreme poverty in the world’s poorest countries. Founded in Ireland in 1968, Concern has over 4,000 personnel working in 24 countries around the world, primarily in Africa and Asia. Beyond Barriers is one of Concern’s primary initiatives aimed at improving humanitarian system strengthening; others include joint initiatives between Concern, International Medical Corps (IMC) and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) on the Building a Better Response Project (BBR), the National NGO Program on Humanitarian Leadership, and Local Capacity Strengthening for Response (LCS4R).

This program will advance a series of practical solutions to overcome common challenges, such as assessment frameworks, case studies, and rapid funding mechanisms. The tools will then be rolled out both in-country and globally via dissemination workshops, a newly developed program website. Aimed at transferability and opportunities for scale-up, this program will be grounded in a focus on proactive, operational solutions to funding and human resource barriers. The program will pay particular attention to the impact of power dynamics in the system. With a focus on a finite set of routine operational issues and challenges that organizations in those contexts face, learning derived from the analysis will help provide an enabling environment in which local humanitarian action can have agency and resources.
Scope of Work

With guidance and support from Concern Worldwide, the academic partner will be responsible for:

- Procuring all necessary local approvals to be able to conduct the study
- Providing regular and timely updates to the Beyond Barrier Team on any contextual factors that could cause risk to the study participants, researchers, or integrity of the project
- Identifying and developing an outreach schedule with in-country stakeholders including NGOs, CBOs, INGOs, relevant government authorities, UN agencies and donor agencies to participate in study
- Conducting 15-20 in-person key informant interviews and 5-6 focus group discussions for key stakeholders in the in-country program sites
- Conducting a brief literature review on localized humanitarian response as it relates to financing and human resources in the country context, with specific reference to literature produced in local languages by local and regional researchers
- Supporting finalization of study protocols, instruments, and design of stakeholder workshops; the workshops will be conducted with local and international actors, co-facilitated with Concern Beyond Barriers team, to examine barriers to localization and explore context specific solutions
- Providing translation of study instruments and materials into relevant local languages
- Ensuring that data collected in local languages is transcribed and translated to English and presented to Concern Beyond Barriers team coherently

Partnership Purpose & Timeframe

The estimated timeframe for this partnership is approximately 6 months. Due to the time frame of the Beyond Barriers project, all deliverables must be completed by February 28, 2023. This timeline is subject to change based on individual country timeline and needs.

- **CONTEXT SELECTION & DESIGN: June 1, 2022 – July 31, 2022**
  - In-country literature review
  - Work with Concern Beyond Barriers Team on research methodology, instrument development and data collection tools
  - Assist in identification of relevant stakeholders for workshop, interviews and focus group discussions
  - Assist in development of plans for in-country visits of Concern Beyond Barriers team

- **RESEARCH PHASE: August 1, 2022 – January 15, 2023**
  - In coordination with Concern Beyond Barriers team, facilitate in-country workshops (One three-day workshop)
  - Lead data collection activities of 15-20 KIIIs and 5-6 FGDs
  - Collate, translate, and submit data to Concern Beyond Barriers team according to an agreed upon timeframe
Outputs

- Brief Literature Review on localization pertaining to the specific country context (including relevant policies and legislation), focusing on local authors and research in local languages
- Co-facilitation of workshop
- 15-20 KII and 5-6 FGDs to be conducted in the country context
- Summary report of findings of research project

Essential Requirements

- 10 + years of research in humanitarian, development, or relevant sector
- Experience implementing focus group discussions and key informant interviews
- Track record of rigorous qualitative research outputs
- Education to master’s level
- Ability to work comfortably in English and local languages
- Willingness and flexibility to coordinate with Concern team based in Ireland, US, and other country context researchers as needed
- Ability to travel within country context to humanitarian program areas as needed

Desirable Requirements

- Work experience in NGO/humanitarian/development sector
- Previous work on theme of localization and/or partnerships in humanitarian sector
- PhD level education
- Research teams should be cognizant of Concern’s gender equality strategy and work to create balanced and inclusive teams

Budget & Level of Effort

Academic partners will be compensated for time and effort on this project, as per the budget submitted and agreed upon.

Application Requirements

- CV and references related to previous research experience for the entire research team (identify lead researcher, if submitting as team)
- Explanation of previous qualitative research experience in the country context and understanding of the subject and motivation to conduct research on locally led humanitarian aid (500 words maximum)
- Proposed budget (inclusive of total amount, days to complete above outputs within the specified timeline)

Application Instructions

Interested candidates should send the above requested documents to the following email address: beyond.barriers@concern.net