CALL AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Country Research Associate

I. Background

Inspiring Girls and Grassroots Networks for Inclusive and Transformative Education (IGNITE) is a consortium funded by the Agence Française de Development (AFD) through the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations (SFFO). The consortium comprising the International Rescue Committee (IRC), MENA Partner, the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), and Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa) aims at empowering adolescent girls and advance gender equality in seven target countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon, and Nigeria. For this assignment, the project will specially focus on Nigeria, Cameroon, and Ethiopia. The overall objective of the project is to facilitate feminist Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advance gender-transformative education and empowerment for marginalized adolescent girls, rooted in sustainable and locally driven approaches.

IGNITE will be supporting feminist and youth-led CSOs to accelerate gender equality in and through education. This will be achieved through sub-granting and collaborative organizational capacity strengthening in finance, administrative and technical areas, including research.

II. Research question and methodology

Anchored on PASGR's *Utafiti Sera* (Research to Policy) approach – an innovative and tested co-creation framework for enhancing engagement of multiple stakeholders in the research and policy making processes. IGNITE will conduct research to investigate how feminist-led CSOs can effectively collaborate with adolescent girls to challenge and transform gender-related social norms that act as barriers to adolescent girls' education outcomes. The Research is intended to present an opportunity to map local CSOs/feminist organizations and gain a better understanding of the policy ecosystem in which they operate. The research will evaluate progress towards enhancing adolescent girls' access to education and examine the socio-cultural practices and norms that impede their equity in access. Further, the research will lead to the identification of key stakeholders as well as organizations working on capacity development pathways and will aim at supporting the partners in advancing girls' educational outcomes, including government departments, organizations specialized in girls' education, school communities, and teacher unions, parents, guardians, caregivers, and community members during the lifespan of the project.

a. Research Questions

The overall aim of this research is to facilitate feminist Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advance gender-transformative education and empowerment for marginalized adolescent girls, rooted in sustainable and locally driven approaches through a mixed-method research approach. In line with the identified policy gaps, this research study will seek to answer the following specific questions:

i. How do power dynamics influence access to education by adolescent girls and in what ways do they manifest within the policy spectrum on girls' education?

ii. How do gender norms and patriarchal systems contribute to exclusion of women from decision-making, and what are the implications for adolescent girls' education?

iii. What roles do feminist organizations play in shaping policies related to girls' education, and how do they link with policymakers and other stakeholders in the education sector?

iv. How do existing policies support or impede girls' access to education, and what effects do these policies have on the quality and inclusivity of educational opportunities for adolescent girls?

v. What opportunities exist for leveraging policy change and supporting shifts in social norms through an adaptive and iterative approach using the Thinking and Working Politically approach?

b. Research Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to facilitate feminist Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advance gender-transformative education and empowerment for marginalized adolescent girls, rooted in sustainable and locally driven approaches. Specifically, the study will be guided by the following research objectives:

i. To examine the influence of power dynamics on access to education by adolescent girls and explore manifestations within the policy spectrum on girls' education.

ii. To analyze how gender norms and patriarchal systems contribute to the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and assess the implications for adolescent girls' education.

iii. To investigate the roles of feminist organizations in shaping policies related to girls' education, and to understand their strategies for engaging with policymakers and other stakeholders in the education sector.

iv. To assess how existing policies either support or impede girls' access to education, and to evaluate the effects of these policies on the quality and inclusivity of educational opportunities for adolescent girls.

v.   To identify opportunities for leveraging policy change and supporting shifts in social norms through an adaptive and iterative approach, utilizing the Thinking and Working Politically (TWP) approach.

The research will adopt the Utafiti Sera[1] approach during entire research process. This includes conducting the Political Economy Analysis (PEA): a comprehensive stakeholder mapping, as well as in-depth analysis of interests to enhance the understanding of their dynamics in influencing adolescent girls in society, particularly in terms of education, social norms, and behavior change. The PEA will therefore provide useful insights into the workings of policy systems, identify barriers to girls' education, and determine appropriate actions for bringing about positive change, both for and beyond feminist CSOs. Interviews and FGDs will be conducted to understand family and community values, assess retention risks, review school and government policies and highlight the intersectional discrimination committed against girls.

c. Research Methodology

The research study will adopt a mixed method research design combining both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The two design options will employ a cross-sectional survey (quantitative) with either ethnography or grounded theory (qualitative), depending on the different country contexts. A cross-sectional survey collects data to draw conclusions about a population of interest at a particular point (time). Ethnography is the study of human interaction in their social environments and activities. It aims to understand the values, behaviours, and beliefs of a particular group of people. The term "grounded theory" refers to a collection of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research to develop theories (theory building).

The Principal Investigator in collaboration with PASGR will develop the research instruments (data collection tools and sampling techniques) that will be employed by the research study.

In collaboration with PASGR, the country Principal Investigator assisted by the Research Associate will adopt a political economy analysis lens in reviewing existing policies on and adolescent girls' education in the target countries, with a focus on identifying the gaps and proposing suggestions for improvement. It will also be instrumental in mapping of stakeholders with a specific focus on girls' and adolescent girls' education in Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Nigeria. The political economy analysis (PEA) approach is much prefered for its utility in conducting an in-depth analysis of the social, political, economic, and cultural

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[1] Political Settlement is 'the forging of a common understanding, usually between political elites, that their best interests or beliefs are served through acquiescence to a framework for administering political power' (DFID, 2009).

underpinnings and principles that govern education of girls (adolescent) in the three countries. The analysis interrogates formal and informal rules that create incentives and influence the ability of important actors, their powers, motivations, interests, and their interactions with one another, and how political bargaining processes unfold.

The approach is recognised since it enables the identification of opportunities and barriers, as well as strategies for overcoming those barriers. Unsworth & Williams, (2011) state that PEA provides knowledge that may be used to mobilise social groups, including active groups, to demand improved services from their government and how informal local institutions influence development. The PEA will allow the mapping of the key stakeholders that will be incoporated in the entire research process in line with the Utafiti Sera approach. The approach will allow PASGR to establish the communinty of practice based on the identified key stakeholders as well as walk with them in the entire period of the reaserch including the uptake phase.

Findings and recommendations from the PEA and synthesis of existing evidence from the review of policies will serve as a foundation to develop evidence-based strategies aimed at enhancing girls' education opportunities and improving their overall outcomes. Additionally, the findings from these studies will be clearly documented, and their implications will be utilized to engage policymakers and practitioners.

I. Specific Roles

The RA's will work under the direct supervision of the Country PI and support other members of the consortium.

The RA's roles encompass the following tasks:

1. Undertake country specific qualitative and quantitative research on girls' education in Nigeria, Cameroon and Ethiopia.
   - Providing statistical and analytical Assistance to the country specific research and PEA.
   - Working closely with the PI and other teams within the country and across the consortium to provide methodological, research and evidence-based support, as and when required.
   - Assessment of barriers and challenges faced by adolescent girls in accessing inclusive and gender-transformative education in their country.
   - Contributing to the publication of scientific and non-scientific outputs including but not limited to reports, articles, podcast and data as and when required.
2. Critically reviewing reports produced by peers, academics, and other agencies

- Keeping abreast of findings from relevant research in the country and internationally, making this available to project staff.
- Assessing opportunities for Policy Change and Social Norm Shifts.
3. Conducting extensive stakeholder Mapping and Analysis.
    - Support the designing and implementing of a stakeholder engagement plan.
    - Identification of policy windows and opportunities for transforming girls' education within their country and region of operation.
    - Contribute to the identification of evidence-based interventions and strategies that can be utilized to significantly enhance girls' educational opportunities and outcomes, promoting gender equality and empowering girls to thrive in their educational pursuits.
4. Performing any other duties as directed by the PI.

Note: The scope of work will be tailored to address the specific contexts and challenges of girls' education and social norms in each country - Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Nigeria. The findings and recommendations from the PEA will contribute to evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation to promote gender-transformative education and empower adolescent girls in the region.

II. Timeline
The Research associate is expected to be engaged for the whole duration of the project, from March 2024 to March 2026, allowing time for the consultants to conduct a thorough and comprehensive context analysis/mapping. The detailed timeline for the various tasks will be mutually agreed upon between the selected consultant and the project stakeholders. Flexibility in setting the timeline will ensure that the assessment process is well-paced and efficient, accommodating any unforeseen challenges or adjustments required during the project implementation phase.

Moreover, regular communication and progress updates between the consultant and the project team will be essential to ensure smooth coordination and adherence to the agreed timeline.

III. Qualifications and Expertise for Country Research Associate.
The ideal consultant should possess the following qualifications:

IV.   Country Research Associate

Minimum Requirements
1. Advanced Degree preferably a master's degree with a specialization in relevant field(s) of public health, education, social sciences, gender studies or a related field.

2. Five years of relevant experience in gender transformative mainstreaming in national policies related to education, governance, and political economy.
3. Five years' experience in participatory capacity training within the above-mentioned fields.
4. Demonstrated experience in working on similar assignments in African countries.
5. The consultant should also be able to propose evidence-based interventions and strategies that can contribute to improving girls' access to quality education and enhancing their educational outcomes.
6. Strong research skills and the ability to deliver high-quality outputs within the specified timeframe will be crucial for the successful completion of the consultancy.
7. Fluency in English and/or French. For Cameroon, the candidate should be fluent in both English and French, written and oral.

Application process

Interested candidates for the role of Country Research Associate are required to submit an application or expression of interest for this position. Applications should include:

- A CV/resume, including contact information.

- A cover letter explaining their interest in the position, and relevant experience.

- Include the financial proposal/budget.

- A description of any affiliated institution that can host the Utafiti Sera house.

Interested and eligible candidates are requested to submit their application with the subject clearly indicating "**Country Research Associate**" no later than **5.00pm EAT 23rd February 2024** to recruitment@pasgr.org. cc mkapchanga@pasgr.org

For any inquiries and questions related to the call, kindly reach out to mkapchanga@pasgr.org and jbabu@pasgr.org. Any form of canvassing will lead to automatic disqualification.