



Terms of Reference to carry out research on 'Root causes and consequences of child marriages in Nepal'

Background

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has been serving the people of Nepal since 1954 through its community development projects in Doti, Bajhang, Mugu, Rukum East, Nawalparasi and Kapilvastu. Together with Transform Aid International (TAI) Australia, UMN has been planning to conduct research on child marriage in Nepal, which will also be a part of the global child marriage research led by TAI in East Africa and South Asia. For the same, UMN needs highly qualified researchers to perform and fulfil the following objectives.

Section A: Scope of the Research

1. Aim of this research:

The aim of this research is to explore and examine underlying causes of child marriages and to understand deeper level of consequences of child marriage in Nepal (UMN working areas). In addition, the study also will explore whether and how Covid-19 contributed for increasing the cases of child marriages in UMN programme areas.

1.1 Research Questions:

To achieve the aim of the research, two research questions have been developed, and the first research question does have two sub-questions.

- What are the underlying causes and local practices of child marriages in UMN working areas?
 - a. What are the contemporary push and pull factors for child marriages?
 - b. How are they (underlying causes, local practices, and push & pull factors) different for girls and boys, and before and during Covid-19 pandemic?
- What has been the short term (within two years) and long terms (after two years) consequences (lived experiences) of child marriages for girls and boys, and how can they be potentially addressed?

2 Research Design

2.1 Methodology

The study will adopt qualitative research methodology. Qualitative methodology helps explore deeper level of causes and issues of the topic purely based on human experience; and hence the methodology is best fit for the research.

2.2 Semi-structured interview

The research will use standardised open ended interviews. This approach is known for asking identical questions so that responses are open ended. Such open ended questions allow interviewees to give in-depth views/answers as they like.

2.3 Focal Groups Discussion

Focal Group Discussions (FGD) will be conducted with children primarily who have at least a friend who has done child marriage or teachers or religious leaders. FGD is a guided group discussion, not an interview per se, with a small group of people on a specific topic.

2.4 Research Participants

The following are key research participants for this research.

- Children who have done child marriages and their parents
- Children whose friends have done child marriages
- School teachers (schools where child marriage rate is higher)
- Religious leaders/Community leaders including local government officers
- Others

2.5 Sampling

The study primarily uses purposive sampling method. The study will purposefully select participants that are relevant for the study. The sampling and recruitment of participants are totally dependent on the nature of research questions. For now, about 20-22 interviews and 4-5 FGDs in each district has been estimated.

2.6 Ethics:

This research approach follows the do-no-harm principles and strategy. TAI and partners child protection policy or safeguarding policies and guidelines will be strictly followed to protect children while undertaking this research. Any potential effects that might appear before, during and after interview or FGD will be handled carefully. Participation to the research is purely voluntary and no pressure or force will be used to any participants to participate in the research. Prior signed consent to all activities such as interview, FGDs will also be taken. In addition, this research will also be aligned with Australian Council for International Development and Research for Development Impact guidelines.

Section B: Scope of Assignment:

3. Objectives of the assignment
 - To review literature as required
 - To design/finalize the proposed research design and methodology
 - To develop research tools and instruments /methods
 - Visit the field and collect data
 - Analysis and sense-making of the data
 - Research report preparation
 - Disseminate the research findings among UMN team and wider stakeholders
4. Required total number of researchers: 2
5. Assignment period: One month for now and may be extended as required. Hoping to start from 20th June 2022.
6. Type of consultancy: Full time, monthly payment-based consultancy and the recruited consultants will be based in UMN Thapathali office, Kathmandu.
7. Budget:
 - Each consultant will receive total NPR 105,900 inclusive of tax, for a month.
 - Travel and accommodation in the field visit will be covered by UMN
8. Field work and data collection: Each selected consultant will visit in two UMN working districts out of Doti, Bajhang, Rukum East and Mugu. One will visit Doti and Bajhang and another will visit in Rukum and Mugu. In each district, UMN works in two rural municipalities. UMN cluster /local partners' team will support in visiting the communities.
9. Data Analysis: Collected data for each district will be analysed separately and later meta analysis as a whole for UMN working districts. Standard qualitative data analysis tools and steps will be considered to analyse and meaning making out of collected data.
10. Qualifications and qualities:

- Master's degree in any discipline with relevant experience, preference will be given to MPhil.
- Knowledge and experience of social issues, particularly child marriage and community development work/field.
- Have completed at least two qualitative research independently
- Happy and ready to travel rural areas and communities
- Have knowledge, experience, skills and confident to lead the research of particular district independently

11. Acknowledgement and Disclaimer

- No contract would be created until a formal written contract is executed between UMN and a selected consultant.

12. Security

A risk assessment will be conducted by the Consultant and UMN prior to the field visit. The UMN and its partners will provide advice on the current security situation, risk assessment and mitigation planning in the area one week prior to travel to the field. However, the evaluator /team will decide the travel plan and be responsible for all related security matters.

13. Ownership and confidentiality

The research report and data will be the property of UMN. The Consultant agrees that the information obtained remains confidential, and any publication or citing needs prior written approval from UMN.

Submission of interest

Interested consultants are requested to submit an application (expression of interest) which includes:

- A cover letter (addressing the essential criteria)
- CV
- Details of at least two referees

Closing deadline and contact details

- Application should reach in the following email address by 17:00 hours of 19 June 2022. The applications received lately will not consider in reviewing process.
- Email address to send application: avinaya.shah@umn.org.np, prem.sintan@umn.org.np; and consultants.meal@umn.org.np