

Terms of Reference

January 2021

Communications Consultant for Our Voices III

1. Background

The International Centre: researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire (IC) (<http://www.beds.ac.uk/intcent>) is an award winning, applied research centre committed to increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking in local, national and international contexts.

The IC has recently received funding from Oak Foundation for a three year project (Sept 2020 - Aug 2023) entitled Our Voices III. This project builds on earlier work undertaken as part of the Our Voices programme of work at the IC (see <https://www.our-voices.org.uk/>).

This project has two main strands of work with the ultimate goal being to:

'reduce child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/E) by developing, evidencing and championing, ethical child-centered practice and research'.

The first strand of work involves undertaking a Delphi study that will explore whether and how 'participatory approaches' and principles support efforts to prevent CSA/E and respond to those affected. Through the study - which aims to develop agreement and consensus among international experts working in this field surrounding the value and challenges of adopting a 'participatory approach' - a model will be developed to outline the relationship and connections between different participatory principles with the aim of informing policy and practice. As part of this project, the team will also be designing a series of participatory consultations with young people with lived experience of CSA/E to further explore the implications of the findings on practice and help shape recommendations for those working in the field of CSA/E.

The second strand of work involves developing an international network, 'The Our Voices University Network', comprised of researchers who are interested in researching CSA/E. This builds on a pilot project ['The University Network: Children Challenging Sexual Violence'](#) and aims to build the capacity of researchers globally to improve evidence and influence practice and policy for children and young people affected by CSA/E. This will be achieved by creating a strong and active network of academics and (I)NGO researchers working through taskforces. These taskforces will develop resources to build capacity, share good practice and promote ethical participatory child-centred research. The network will create a supportive, reflective community for knowledge exchange. Engagement in the network will lead to partnership working between academia and practice within and across subject areas and country contexts. It will specifically engage with researchers in low income settings.

Through this work, there will be an increase in ethical research exploring CSA/E to inform the development of improved programmes for children and young people.

2. The Consultancy

As part of the Our Voices III grant, the IC is looking to work with a skilled and experienced influencing and communications professional who has an awareness of international children's rights policy and practice. The consultant, through consultation with the team, will undertake a mapping of key stakeholders and develop a communication and influencing strategy and action plan. This will ensure that key partners are engaged in the project, and that learning and recommendations from the work translate into practical changes on the ground.

2.1. Scope of work

The consultant will undertake a mapping exercise and develop a communication and influencing strategy and action plan to help ensure that:

- All relevant stakeholders, including individuals and teams within influential organisations, are identified;
- 'Levers' for engagement and influencing are identified for all priority stakeholders;
- Stakeholders are effectively engaged and involved throughout the life of the project and;
- Outputs and learning from the project are communicated in appropriate and relevant formats for different stakeholder groups to maximise impact and reach.

Potential activities therefore include:

- Working with the team to crystalise objectives for the communication and influencing strategy;
- Mapping key stakeholders, including named contacts within organisations and bodies, that can support the realisation of the objectives;
- Identifying the most appropriate and effective 'levers' for engagement with different priority stakeholders (e.g. running a joint webinar series; developing podcasts; writing joint briefings and blogs) and identifying low cost high impact activities and outputs for communication (e.g. videoscribes, infographics, newsletters etc) that could help to raise the profile of the work;
- Drafting a strategy and action plan for the three years for the team to review;
- Identify within the action plan simple methods for monitoring and evaluating the plan;
- Working with the team to review and update the plan on an annual basis to take account of any changes or new opportunities arising.

The amount of funds available is £7,500 and it is expected that this should cover approximately 15 days of support over the three year period (dependent on day rates).

Proposed timeline and activities (to be discussed with candidates)

Year 1 (2021) (7 days of work)

- Review details of the project to familiarise oneself with the aims and activities.
- Hold online meeting with project manager to discuss the project and begin brainstorming.
- Design and lead a half day online workshop with the whole team (four individuals) to map and prioritise stakeholders.
- Undertake activities to help identify key individuals/teams and levers for engagement within stakeholder groups.
- Carry out additional work to design draft strategy.
- Revise strategy based on feedback from project team.
- Develop action plan to support the implementation of the strategy.

Year 2 (2022) (3 days of work)

- Design a half day workshop with the team to reflect on the strategy and action plan, discuss changes to activities, updates on what is working etc.
- Amend action plan in light of progress.

Year 3 (2023) (5 days of work)

- Provide on-going support and guidance in final dissemination and communication of outputs.
- Support the team to develop short report on the success of the communication and influencing strategy, drawing from data collected as part of the M&E activities outlined in action plan.

2.2 Deliverables

- A mapping and prioritisation of key stakeholders that identifies key individuals/ teams and possible levers for engagement.
- A three-year communication and influencing strategy.
- A three-year action plan to support the strategy including M&E activities for monitoring and evaluating progress.

2.3 Essential skills, knowledge and experience

- Over five years of experience working at a high level within policy/ communications in the field of international child rights/ child protection.
- Experience of developing communication and influencing strategies that have led to impact within international policy or organisational service development.
- Experience working with diverse stakeholder groups e.g. donors, policy makers, academia, and government agencies.
- Expert knowledge of the international child rights/ child protection sector.
- Good understanding of the policy process.
- Experience in supporting research impact activities.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Ability to be flexible and adaptable.
- Ability to work in collaboration with the IC's project team.

2.4 Point of contact and supervision

Claire Cody, the Our Voices III project manager based within the IC, will be supervising this consultancy and will be the main point of contact for the consultant.

2.5 Ownership and use of deliverables

The University of Bedfordshire and Oak Foundation will have the right to use freely and as it sees fit all documents deriving from the project, including those developed under this consultancy. The IC will retain authorship of any reports and tools developed as part of this consultancy.

2.6 Proposed timeframe and day allocation

Task	Suggested day allocation	Timeline
Year one		2021
Review programme documents	0.5	Mar
Online meeting with Project Manager	0.5	Mar
Develop and facilitate half day online workshop with team	2	Mar
Draft strategy for team to review	2	Mar
Revise strategy and develop action plan based on feedback	2	Apr
Year two		2022
Online meeting with Project Manager to share updates	0.5	May
Develop and facilitate half day online workshop with team	2	June
Revise action plan based on workshop	0.5	June
Year three		2023
Online meeting with Project Manger to share updates	0.5	Jan
Develop and facilitate half day online workshop with team to reflect on action plan	2	Feb
Revise action plan based on workshop	0.5	Feb
Support the team to develop short report on outcomes of strategy	2	July

3. Tender process

All interested applicants who meet the essential criteria outlined in section 2.3 are invited to apply for the consultancy by submitting a proposal to Claire Cody at claire.cody@beds.ac.uk by **Friday 29th January 2021**. The proposal should include:

- A letter of interest outlining the key steps that would be undertaken in order to develop the deliverables (outlined in 2.2)
- A budget including proposed activities and day rates (including/excluding VAT)
- A CV highlighting relevant experience, skills and knowledge with details of two referees that will be contacted.

3.1 Evaluation of tenders

All applications will be independently assessed by a team at the University of Bedfordshire based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the specification (40%)
- Experience/ track record of individual/organisation (30%)
- Cost (30%)

Following this assessment, eligible candidates will be called for an online interview.