Terms of Reference of the consultancy
Title: Consultant services in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) - Zimbabwe
Place: Zimbabwe - Mutare / virtually
Duration: Septembre 2023 - Octobre 2024
Reports to: Claudia Maffettone, Mediation and Track II Specialist, or her representative

About Search for Common Ground

Search for Common Ground (Search) is an international non-profit organisation that promotes the peaceful resolution of conflict. With headquarters in Washington, DC and Brussels, Belgium, Search has a mission to transform the way individuals, organisations and governments handle conflict, moving away from destructive approaches in favour of cooperative solutions. With over 800 employees worldwide, Search implements projects in more than 30 countries.

About Berghof Foundation

The Berghof Foundation is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization that supports efforts to prevent and overcome political and social violence through conflict transformation. Its approach aims at restoring and improving broken social relations and turning conflict into constructive collaboration. In doing so we seek to help our local partners in their efforts to work towards more inclusive and peaceful societies. The Berghof Foundation works in a number of countries located in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Europe and Latin America. The Berghof Foundation is dedicated to supporting negotiation and mediation processes and provides capacity building for parties in conflict. Moreover, it has conducted empirical and action research on local-local and local-national governance interaction as well as on political settlement strategies and reconciliation in a variety of post-war countries. Principled collaboration with local partners is essential for the work of the Berghof Foundation. The organization relies on respectful and nurtured relationships with trusted partners on the ground and its projects are designed and implemented collaboratively. This ensures local responsibility and active participation in the projects and fosters an essential sense of ownership.

About the project

Search is currently implementing a 24-month programme (January 2023-December 2024) in consortium with Berghof Foundation and Interpeace in Burundi, Niger and Zimbabwe, with the overall objective of enhancing the effectiveness, legitimacy and use of insider mediation as a mechanism for the prevention and transformation of violent conflict at the local, national and international levels. As such, the programme identifies, trains and equips a diverse set of local actors to mediate conflict within their own communities. The proposed programme aims to strengthen and expand on the results of the previous phase of the consortium’s initiative,
Building Peace from the inside: Supporting Insider Mediation for Sustainable Conflict Transformation. While Berghof Foundation and their local implementing partner, Africa University’s Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance (IPLG) are responsible for the activities implemented in Zimbabwe and Interpeace for the activities in Burundi, Search is in charge of the implementation in Niger, as well as the coordination of the consortium.

The final evaluation of phase 1 showed that participating insider mediators would benefit from psychosocial support throughout phase 2, as they are regularly exposed to conflict, trauma, suffering and stress of the parties they engage with and may find themselves in high-risk situations due to their specific role in local mediation. The need for psychosocial support in the form of counseling and peer coaching is also highlighted in the EU Mediation Guidelines, which highlights the increased vulnerability of insider mediators to a range of psychological and neurological influences during a mediation process.

Objective of the consultancy

Search and Berghof Foundation are looking for consultancy services to provide mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to insider mediators involved in the project in Zimbabwe. The consultant should ideally be based in Zimbabwe and should be aware of the local security concerns and sensitivities. They will support the Berghof and IPLG team in the design, implementation and monitoring of activities that support the psychosocial well-being of insider mediators, and identify lessons learned throughout the project. He/She will organize a combination of face-to-face and virtual psychosocial support sessions (ideally 1-2 in-person and around 5 virtually, but exact frequency to be determined with the project team) to help insider mediators in Zimbabwe cope with the increased stress associated with their mediation work, and to provide them with a platform to share their experiences.

The support should include, on the one hand, support sessions around self-help techniques to equip the insider mediators to cope with the trauma and stress they are frequently exposed to and, on the other hand, how they themselves can make use of MHPSS techniques in their mediation activities when engaging with conflicting parties. Each support session should include both a presentation on relevant topics, based on the identified needs of the mediators, and followed by an open discussion to share experiences. The use of a mixed approach to MHPSS, including both existing traditional/everyday/community practices and science-based approaches, would be particularly appreciated. A report for each session on the support provided, techniques used, as well as trends, best practices and recommendations will be produced by the consultant, providing an overview of each session.

This information should feed into the development of a training module on MHPSS, which will be developed by the project team with support from a curriculum development specialist over the life of the project. Some coordination between the MHPSS consultant and the curriculum development specialist may be necessary. Both the in-person and virtual sessions would
coincide with the project team visits to the project implementation areas or the planned online activities. The cohort of insider mediators consists of around 50 mediators, of which approximately 25 are women and 25 are young people (below the age of 35). These are the broad lines of the assignment, but the format can be adapted by the consultant, in consultation with the project team.

**Deliverables**

1. Report on the identification of the psychosocial support needs of the insider mediators, taking into account the composition of the cohort of mediators;
2. Develop a work plan and schedule, outlining the topics of each support session;
3. Develop the content that will be presented and discussed during the support sessions;
4. Organise and facilitate 1-2 in-person and 5 virtual psychosocial support sessions for the insider mediators (exact frequency, location and format to be determined in coordination with the Berghof and IPLG team);
5. Throughout the sessions, support the insider mediators on how to address any vicarious trauma and how to deal with trauma in the communities they work in, for example, by teaching them self-help techniques;
6. Writing of reports after each support session (exact amount to be determined, based on amount of sessions to organise) to capture key topics presented, as well as key trends, lessons learned and best practices identified during the sessions, while ensuring participant confidentiality; bearing in mind that these reports will be used to extract this information and integrate it into a training module on MHPSS, as part of a training programme;
7. Development of a final report, summarizing the main content presented, trends, lessons learned and best practices from the different support sessions.

**Reporting line**

The consultant will work under the supervision of the Mediation and Track II programme specialist at Search, or her representative, and will collaborate with the Berghof Foundation and IPLG project teams.

**Budget**

The maximum budget available for this assignment is around **8000 EUR, all costs included**. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of their price competitiveness, taking into account the technical and financial proposal.

**Required profile**

**Education**
Graduate degree in psychology, sociology, public health or related field. An undergraduate degree will also be considered if the candidate has demonstrated significant practical experience.

Experience

- Demonstrated experience in the design and implementation of MHPSS programmes, preferably in the context of Zimbabwe;
- Demonstrated experience working with the psychological effects of violence, community conflict or other traumatic events;
- Demonstrated experience with mixed approaches to mental health support, including both existing traditional/everyday/community practices and science-based approaches would be particularly appreciated;
- Experience working with peace actors or mediators in general is an advantage;
- Previous experience working with NGOs is an advantage.

Desired profile and skills

- In-depth knowledge of coping mechanisms and therapeutic tools (such as self-help techniques) that can be applied to people frequently exposed to conflict, trauma and stress;
- The ideal candidate should be from or based in Zimbabwe, have experience in trauma healing in Zimbabwe or a similar context and preferably have knowledge of the socio-political and cultural context of the country;
- Demonstrated skills in empathy, active listening, communication, critical thinking, patience, observation and confidentiality;
- Good short-term planning ability;
- Motivation and self-discipline to work with limited supervision;
- Excellent facilitation skills (in-person and virtual);
- An excellent command (oral and written) of English is essential for this assignment. Knowledge of any country-specific languages is an advantage.

Applications

Interested candidates are invited to send their CV, technical proposal, financial proposal (which must mention the estimated number of hours per service, the total estimated number of hours and the hourly rate) and three references of previous work carried out in this field. All applications must be submitted through our career portal, Lever, no later than August 27th 2023. Contracted consultants will be solely responsible for payment of all applicable taxes and other charges as required by national and/or local law.

Offers submitted will be under continuous review and selection will be made based on the following criteria:
● The financial offer will be awarded on the basis of the lowest cost, but will be weighted according to the relevance and coherence of the technical proposal;
● Applicant CV’s: Preference will be given to applicants with outstanding practical experience of the context and subject;
● The availability of the consultant and his ability to carry out the activities within the time limit.

For any questions regarding this assignment, please contact the following email addresses:
avanpeteghem@sfcg.org; n.detweiler@berghof-foundation.org