Terms of reference

Mid-Term Evaluation of project REG-19-022

Addressing the mental health needs of adolescents in schools, in the community and at institutional level in Tanzania and Vietnam through the co-creation and application of digital and non-digital solutions.

1. Introduction

Background on funding partner

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss-based foundation established in 2003 whose purpose is to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in growing secondary cities around the world. We do this by investing in sustainable solutions, and by connecting and catalysing the work of diverse partners. At Fondation Botnar, we are committed to cultivating and nurturing learning both within and outside of the organization so as to effectively contribute to the change we want to see.

Background on implementing partner ("grantee")

ODI is a UK registered charity which exists for public benefit and aims to inspire and inform policy and practice which will lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. ODI is leading a consortium with two national partners: the Vietnam National University and the Tanzania Training Centre for International Health. The role of the country partners is key: to ensure that the in-country ethical procedures are followed/permissions obtained; to leverage existing relationships with ministries of education, teachers and other government representatives; to lead on logistics for primary mixed method data collection and contribute to data analysis, write-up and dissemination; to run and co-facilitate along with ODI staff the co-creation/human centred design workshops to design context-relevant solutions/interventions; and to take part in the regular check-ins of the solution while it is being implemented and tested.

Project description

The project is set in Tanzania and Vietnam, countries where youth face various stresses which can affect their mental health. Drivers of these stresses vary given different levels of economic development, quality and availability of public services, and capability of policy institutions. Nevertheless, there is growing awareness in LMICs such as the project countries, that non-

communicable diseases, including mental health, need to be addressed for the current wellbeing of youth and to ensure their, their families' as well as the wider economy's future wellbeing and productivity. Globally it is also increasingly recognised that youth and school children face growing mental distress and that solutions involving multiple players at different administrative levels need to be designed and tested. With an increasing digitalisation across the world, including in LMICs, new digital technologies can become part of the solution when adapted to contexts and co-designed and tested with users.

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the well being, and particularly the mental health, of adolescents through the development of digital and non-digital solutions in Tanzania and Vietnam.

Specific objectives:

- Identify drivers of mental ill-health amongst mid (11-15) and older (16-19) adolescents (in schools) in two secondary cities in Tanzania (Morogoro and Mwanza City) and Vietnam (Vinh and Nha Trang), taking into account underlying social norms that may be driving mental distress

- Co-create - with adolescents, teachers and relevant local authorities- and test digital and non-digital solutions/applications for use in the classroom, the community and in relevant local government units to support in enhancing the mental health and overall well being of adolescents

- Review and adapt digital and non-digital solutions through a mixed method baseline and end line study as well as ongoing regular check-ins.

- Document the effectiveness of the technology and non-technology-based intervention for mental health problems

Current state of project implementation

The project started in April 2020 and is planned for a period of 30 months. It is currently implementing Phase 3 out of the six phases included in the project plan and summarised in the table below:

Phases	Status	Dates
Phase 1: literature review, situation analysis, development of primary data collection methodology for carrying out baseline and endline studies	Completed	May – Oct 2020
Phase 2: identification of the project sites in the two countries and the baseline primary data collection, analysis and write-up.	Completed	Nov 2020 – May 2021
Phase 3: design and facilitation of the co-creation workshops	Under way	June – Aug 2021
Phase 4: implementation of the co-designed experiments	Not started	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022
Phase 5: the endline study	Not started	Jul – Oct 2022
Phase 6 :dissemination and research uptake activities	Not started	Nov 2022- Feb 2023

2. Evaluation objectives and questions

The evaluation pursues the following objectives:

1. To support the grantee's and Fondation Botnar's reflection on achievements to date and the ways in which the research can, in the medium to long term, contribute to change in the lives of children and young people in low- and middle-income countries

For midterm evaluations, the focus should be on program improvement to leverage results – i.e., review of the completed activities and a reflection on the potential downstream impact of the research on people's lives especially as the pilot/intervention starts to be rolled out/tested, the conditions that need to come together for this impact to materialise, and how the project can contribute to it in its future steps.

2. To learn about the status of the research carried out in the project, in particular with respect to research fairness and equity

Fondation Botnar subscribes to the principles of the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) and the Research Fairness Initiative (RFI). It is important for the Foundation that research is fair and equitable, building lasting partnerships and sustainable capacity.

3. To receive guidance on the process of co-design, piloting and defining the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system in the next phases.

To support adaptation of the findings, this evaluation objective builds on the outcomes from the first two objectives. Insights should be integrated into the next phase consisting of co-design, piloting and adjusting the MEL system, as necessary, though it is envisaged that the evaluator may also work with the grantee during the co-design,m piloting and adujsting phases.

The scientific quality of the research undertaken by grantees is regularly reviewed by external experts in the specific field of each project. Therefore, the mid-term evaluation is <u>not</u> supposed to replicate the research undertaken in the project (e.g., by measuring effects that the product under development may cause among its target groups) or to verify the project's overall scientific quality.

Evaluation questions

1. What is the place and relevance of the project in the wider context of its topic of mental health needs of adolescents in combination with digital and non-digital solutions?
2. What is the **project status** with respect to answering the research questions?

- Which successes or promising results have been attained so far? What are the most important insights the project has generated to date?

- What difference has the grant by Fondation Botnar made or is it likely to make – and what data need to be gathered, how, to determine this difference?

3. Which **challenges** have been met in the course of the project and how has the grantee managed these challenges, to what effects?

- How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the project in its process and outcomes, and how does the grantee manage issues linked to the pandemic?

4. How has the project been aligned with the **Research Fairness** Initiative and how can research fairness be optimised in future steps of the project? Key aspects to be considered are:

- Decision-making and responsibilities in the project, i.e. how research partners share their responsibilities in the project to ensure decisions are fair and effective?

- Capacity-building

- Project ownership, in particular how research partners share costs and benefits of the research?

5. How is the project expected to contribute to addressing mental health needs of adolescents? How can its research **inform policies and practice** to improve young people's well-being in low income countries? What steps have been undertaken, what else can be done (including questions on other actors to be involved)?

6. To what extent can adaptations in the co-design approach, piloting and the MEL system improve the projects outcomes?

During the inception phase, the evaluation team can review and develop additional evaluation questions as necessary, in consultation with Fondation Botnar and the implementing partner.

Alignment with Fondation Botnar strategic learning and evaluation

The project is part of Fondation Botnar's Key Change 3 (Health inequalities amongst young people are reduced) portfolio. Fondation Botnar emphasises learning to understand the systems affecting young people's wellbeing and to advance on the path towards the Foundation's vision. Strategic learning questions guide our enquiry. This evaluation is expected to feed into the following question:

In which way and to what exent does the project align and contribute to the Key Change 3 Theory of Change?

3. Methodology

Approach

Fondation Botnar is open to a wide range of evaluation approaches and methods. Regardless of the approach chosen by the evaluation team, the evaluators are expected to foster participation at key moments of the evaluation, seeking the grantee's advice and support (i) during the inception phase, when crafting the evaluation instruments, (ii) during the data analysis phase, and (iii) in developing recommendations. As a rule, methods and perspectives should be triangulated in all evaluations.

The evaluator or evaluation team is required to document the evaluation process and – if applicable – include lessons learnt and recommendations for future mid-term evaluations of Fondation Botnar projects in the evaluation report.

Role of the external evaluator

The external evaluator or evaluation team is expected to work in partnership with the grantee and the project lead at Fondation Botnar so as to maximise the transparency and utility of the evaluation process and products. The contracting evaluator is expected to collaborate closely with the grantee to:

* Reach a shared understanding of the evaluation objectives and questions, and develop the evaluation approach and process accordingly
* review the broader theory of change for the project and potential future steps for downstream impact
* consult regularly with the project team to boost both the validity of findings and the relevance of results and recommendations, also taking into account the grantee's internal communication needs
* recommend adjustments for project's next phase including co-design approach, pilot approach and MEL system as needed so as to effectively inform future steps to enhance downstream impact
* facilitate a learning, validation workshop or consultation (online) so as to discuss initial findings and recommendations with the implementor and Fondation Botnar.

As a rule, Fondation Botnar representatives will be involved in the inception and debriefing phases.

4. Evaluation logistics

Scope and field visits

The core of the evaluation is expected to take place between June 2021 and August 2021, with around three individual touch points for recommendations going beyond this period until July 2022. Its overall budget must not exceed CHF 40,000.

Ideally, face-to-face contact with the project team and visits to project sites in United Kingdom, Vietnam & Tanzania should be part of the evaluation process. However, current restrictions and risks linked to the COVID-19 pandemic may preclude travelling. The evaluation team can work via the phone and online platforms, such as videoconference and visual collaboration tools, to avoid physical contacts. This may also include taking part remotely in the co-creation workshops and in the mini check-in worhshops during the implementaion period (touch points).

Ethical considerations

The evaluator is expected to comply with evaluation standards, including ethics, throughout the evaluation process, as set out in the OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation (http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf).

Proposed timeline

Evaluation activities will start upon execution of the consultancy contract and conclude no later than August 2022. The Interim Report including the respective slide deck should be submitted no later than [15. August 2021]

Work packages/action	Responsible	Time/deadline
Selection of evaluator	Fondation Botnar/Grantee	June 2021
Kick-off/inception meeting	Evaluator	June 2021
Submission of inception report	Evaluator	June/July 2021
Evaluation research and analysis, including validation workshop	Evaluator/Grantee	June/July 2021
Submission of Interim evaluation report	Evaluator	Mid-August 2021
Feedback on Interim evaluation report	Fondation Botnar/Grantee	September 2021
Learning workshop	Evaluator	September 2021
Guidance Touch Points	Evaluator/Grantee	September 2021 – July 2022
Submission of Final Report	Evaluator	August 2022

Inception and dissemination consultations

At a minimum, the consultant will facilitate two workshops with the grantee and possibly representatives of Fondation Botnar. The minimum set of activities are specified as follows:

∗ Inception meeting or workshop (on-line or in a hybrid format) with representatives of Fondation Botnar and of the implementing organisation

✳ Validation workshop (on-line or in a hybrid format) with the implementing organisation, to verify and deepen findings, reflect on future steps and gather inputs for recommendations.

Deliverables

The deliverables expected from the evaluation are as follows:

✳ Inception report of 5-15 pages (plus annexes) including:

- Understanding of the evaluation purpose and scope (– i.e. what is in and out of scope)

- Proposed adjustments to evaluation objectives and questions as appropriate

- Data collection and analysis plan(s) including draft instruments and training plans for any field workers, if appropriate, to be developed in consultation with the grantee

- Tentative work-plan and schedule for the overall evaluation process, specifying involved stakeholders' roles and moments for communication between the specific stakeholders

- Preliminary proposal for the dissemination of findings

✳ Interim evaluation report (in support of the grantees submission for their go/no-go milestone)

✳ Recommendations and guidance on adjustments for project's next phase including co-design approach, pilot approach and MEL system

✳ Full draft evaluation report of up to 30 pages including a three-page executive summary (anticipating one round of feedback)

✳ Presentation and discussion of findings and recommendations in a debriefing workshop

✳ Final evaluation report accompanied by a max 10-page slide deck summarising the conclusions and recommendations

5. Evaluator requirements

Evaluation expertise

✳ Theory-based evaluation
✳ Participatory evaluation
✳ Process evaluation
✳ Desirable: Familiarity of research fairness approaches (RFI or KPFE Principles)

Contextual experience

✳ Excellent written and spoken English
✳ Design skills required to support and participate in the co-design / co-creation process

* Experience in conducting interviews, group discussions and workshops via online platforms
* Desirable: work experience in Tanzania and/or Vietnam
* Desireable: Knowledge in the field of mental health, adolescents and digital technologies

References

Applicants are requested to include at least three hyperlinks to examples of evaluations that are broadly representative of the evaluator's or the evaluation team's capability vis-à-vis this call.

6. Expression of interest and deadline

Expression of Interest

The expression of interest should be no longer than **2 pages** consisting of:

* Introduction of the evaluator or evaluation team including relevant experience and skills
* Short proposal of the methodological approach
* Rough day-rate

An annex can include further documentation such as CVs, reports and publications or other relevant documentation. The 2-pager, however, will be the main basis for decision-making.

Deadline

Interested experts are requested to send their expression of interest by 31 May 2021 at 11 am Central European Time. Applications in pdf format can be electronically submitted to cc. dsuhr@fondationbotnar.org