



CEFMU Evaluation 2022-2023

Request for Proposals

AJWS is looking for an evaluation consultant to design and conduct an evaluation of our 10-year strategic work in India to address the root causes of child, early, and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU). We are looking for an evaluator with expertise in assessing progress on improving adolescent girls' and young women's lives through strategies that emphasize grassroots, feminist, and systemic models of change.

Background

Since 2013, with the generous support of The Kendeda Fund, AJWS has expanded its efforts to advance the rights of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in India, especially with regard to child, early and forced marriage and unions (CEFMU). As part of the third and final phase of the strategy (May 2021-April 2024), we are seeking to evaluate our contribution to sustained influence on individual girls and communities. A core strategic tactic has been collectivizing of AGYW--mobilizing AGYW to undertake perspective building and collective action for social change. Ultimately, we would like to understand the scope of success with our goal: AGYW have greater access to and availability of gender-transformative services and responsive resources, driven by their own agency, awareness and engagement with partners and allies, to address vulnerabilities to root causes of CEFMU.

Since the inception, the program has focused on addressing gender inequality as the root cause of CEFMU. The program has sought to draw attention to the Four A's—expanding aspirations for all AGYWs, building agency so AGYW can make decisions, ensuring access to services, and increasing availability of resources and institutions—that enable AGYW to determine their own trajectory in all aspects of life, including deciding when, whether, how and with whom to enter into a marriage or union. The primary investment—both in terms of financial resources and accompaniment¹—has been at the level of grantmaking to partner organizations, grassroots organizations working on gender justice and related issues. In India, grassroots organizations, many of which were linked to feminist movements working on gender-based violence and gender equity, were supported in developing their skills or practices to examine root causes of CEFMU. The strategy also integrated a robust research portfolio that identified gaps in knowledge around CEFMU and its causes, and supported partners to build their analysis of the challenges facing AGYW. AJWS focuses on the norms that drive the practice of early/child marriage, including conservative social norms that prevent girls' and young women's access to education, livelihoods and sexual health and rights, and not only on behaviors and immediate consequences linked to early/child marriage (e.g., early pregnancy and poor maternal health results).

¹ To AJWS, accompaniment means cultivating trusting relationships with grantee partners that foster mutual learning in support of stronger communities and social movements.

AJWS considers that gender inequality rooted in patriarchy, in particular the absence of sexual rights and control over girls' agency, lies at the core of girls being disallowed by their families, communities and society from choosing if, when, who and how to marry.

During the first two phases of the strategy, we collected a rich body of qualitative evidence (outcome harvesting and outcome monitoring) about progress towards the Four A's that enable AGYW to determine their own trajectory in all aspects of life, including deciding when, whether, how and with whom to enter into a marriage or union. These qualitative evaluations focused on examples of success provided by organizations that support and mobilize AGYW. In particular, our evaluations have focused on collectivizing of AGYW--mobilizing AGYW to undertake perspective building and collective action for social change—which has been a core focus of our strategy. Through this qualitative evidence we have several important learnings about our strategic approach:

- Overwhelmingly, the strategy is effective in mobilizing women and girls into actors of change in their personal lives. Both the personal and public resistance to control of their lives (e.g., accessing public spaces, negotiating and challenge gender norms that deprioritize education, recognizing and challenging sexual violence) emerged from a recognition that the individual inequality experienced is actually emanating from political and social structure (i.e., critical conscious raising).
- The greatest incidence of outcomes is related to increasing agency and aspiration, but as of 2017 only moderate progress had been made toward increasing availability and access (which increasingly became a strategic focus from 2018 onward).
- Collectives emerged as crucial sites for sharing less discussed issues, becoming a strategic link in advancing understanding of gender discrimination and taking actions challenging patriarchal oppressions within the home and outside.
- The ability to discuss issues around gender and sexuality emerged as a key marker of the transition from a safe space to a dialogic one in which AGYW can question oppression.
- Influenced by their learning in the collective and from peers, and emboldened by a new support structure, girls are able to negotiate better at home regarding delaying marriage, convincing parents about the need for further education, being self-dependent, looking for jobs and having the mobility to move freely.
- By building relationships within their larger sphere of work, including with girls' families, community leaders, the government, and other stakeholders including social movements, organizations were able to continue their activities with greater effect and address child and early marriages in their communities.

Additional background information

To learn more about the 4As: see [What's Missing in the Fight Against ECM](#)). The evaluation should be designed to understand relative change comparing [collectivized spaces](#) to safe spaces that do not have a strategic focus on creating dialogue, conversation, and crucial thinking as a pathway to propel change (i.e., critical conscious raising).

Evaluation Goals

Moving forward, in the final evaluation we are looking to build upon this rich evidence. The final evaluation is focused on sustained impact at the level of girls and communities, and we have several important hypotheses that we are looking to validate:

- If organizations strategically mobilize for engaging girls in discussions, conversations, and critical debate, then it nurtures trust and solidarity (critical conscious raising). If girls' experience solidarity around inequality and oppressive social norms, then they will take *sustained collective action* towards resisting unequal gender norms in their lives.
 - If girls build trust and solidarity, then they are more likely to have a network of peer and adult allies to enlist in supporting their efforts to resist unequal gender norms.
 - Engaging in critical conscious building is more likely to result in relationships of trust and solidarity than when receiving just trainings and educational content without political analysis.
 - If girls build trust and solidarity through critical conscious raising, then they are more likely to engage in sustained collective action than when they receive training/education content not designed to build political perspective.
- If girls have participated in actions as a result of collective critical conscious raising, then they will experience *sustained benefits* from those actions (e.g., continued ability to negotiate for their aspirations, direct benefit as a result of their negotiations/collective action).
- If girls take up leadership and organize collective action (emerging from AGYW voice and leadership), local organization act as allies, and social movements contribute to advocacy, then we will see *increased enabling environment* for girls, specially and in particular an increase in access and availability to empowering resources (at a local level).

In addition, throughout the course of the strategy, programming has consistently engaged with social movements by developing strategic partnerships with key social movement actors in India (organizations and individuals), generating learning and amplifying the voices of AGYW in movement spaces, supporting the leadership of young AGYW movement leaders, and influencing social movements via the AGYW-specific issues that grassroots groups were bringing up in social movement and global advocacy spaces. As a result, we have seen examples where AGYW rights issues become a visible component of at least two social movement (e.g., feminist, health, education, youth and livelihood) agendas and even examples of state- and national- level changes that have supported AGYW rights in India as a result of an Indian social movement integrating AGYW into their agenda, including motivating their constituencies to prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of CEFMU. Ultimately, we are interested in learning what has contributed to social movement actors strengthening their position as advocates for their constituencies on behalf of AGYW rights. Evidence should be collected with the goal of helping AJWS understand how social movements can shift to take up marginalized voices, how social movement can be a site for change, and how social movements can contribute to larger social change. In summary, our evaluation seeks to assess sustained improvement in girls lives and uptake of their issues in social movement spaces as a result of AJWS's support.

The evaluation questions will be refined, and methodology selected with the consultant. The first step after hire will be working with AJWS staff (including members of SLRE and Programs teams) in a learning and planning phase before finalizing the evaluation workplan. We expect that the design will most likely benefit from mixed method approach and expect it to include quantitative comparative design elements. We look forward to the expertise of the evaluation consultant in aligning the most appropriate methodology and data sources with the evaluation questions and goals (and budget). Overall, we expect the evaluation planning and process to be highly collaborative and iterative.

Support for this Consultancy will be provided by Margo Mullinax, Director, Strategic Learning, Research and Evaluation (SLRE). The consultant and the SLRE Director will have regular weekly check-ins and a work plan with regular review and approvals along the way, in addition to the deliverables. The

consultant should prepare and send weekly agendas for the check-ins. Engagement with AJWS may occur through Zoom and will not require in-person travel to NY; the workplan should include engagement with staff in diverse locations (facilitate work virtually). It is expected that data collection will take place in multiple locations in India (in person).

Deliverables and Timeline

It is anticipated that this assignment will cover an 8–14-month period with approximately 40-60 days of work estimated. The evaluation is expected to begin in fall 2022 and be finalized no later than December 2023. The final timeline is flexible and will be determined by the methodology.

Anticipated steps and estimated days of work (to be finalized in agreement with the consultant)

- Review of AJWS documents and learning conversations to support evaluator understanding and inform design (4 day)
- Review of empirical evidence that might support understanding of collectivizing as a tool for sustained social change (1 day)
- Evaluation inception report with a detailed evaluation design, workplan and timeline (3 days)*
- IRB-submission and revision—approval must be secured for this project (can be supported through AJWS) (1 day)
- Evaluation implementation—data collection and analysis (25 days)
- Ongoing meetings with AJWS staff to support an iterative process, provide updates, and develop an ongoing learning space to ensure the evaluation meets institutional needs (3 days)
- Final report, including an executive summary and presentation (4 days)*
- Utilization/ meaning making space/ interpretation session to facilitate staff and participant understanding of key findings and strategic implications (2 days)*

*Denotes hard deliverables that will be expected to be finalized through a review process with AJWS staff that may include up to 3 reviews of drafts before approval. Deliverables must be submitted in English.

Budget

Budget is based on 3-phases and is expected to range from 50,000USD to 90,000 USD. The budget will be finalized based on the evaluation design, which should be tailored to maximize learning within this budget. No additional costs will be covered outside of the budget, and all expenses should be accounted for during budgeting and planning (e.g., consultant rate, translation, subcontracting, travel). Budget phases:

1. Preparation for evaluation, including engagement with AJWS, securing IRB, as needed, literature reviews, instrument design, and coordination for data collection
2. Implementation/conducting of the evaluation, including data collection and analysis, convening, subcontracting of local consultants as needed, and ongoing consultation with AJWS staff
3. Report writing, including engagement with AJWS, and final presentations/ space to support utilization

Interested Applicants

Consultant Qualifications

- Demonstrable and extensive experience producing high-quality, credible evaluations focused on philanthropy and/or human rights social change (minimum of 10 years)

- Ability to conduct research in India
- Demonstrable and extensive experience producing high-quality, credible evaluations of work that focuses on root cause change, addressing structural and systemic barriers to social justice, or programmatic approaches responsive to context; strong preference for experience with girls and women's collectives
- Experience working with grassroots organizations in the Global South and demonstrated sensitivity to power and power dynamics when designing and conducting evaluations
- Experience supporting learning and its implementation with a focus on translating research and/or evaluation findings into action; strong reporting skills for non-technical audiences
- Proven participatory process facilitation skills, including online spaces
- Demonstrated capacity to manage and organize all relevant logistics and activities to effectively carry out the assignment, producing deliverables on time and on budget
- Ability to work effectively and efficiently in a highly consultative environment

Black, Indigenous and People of Color; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Trans and Gender non-conforming people; women; and differently abled people are encouraged to apply. We also encourage applications from people of diverse religious, spiritual and cultural backgrounds.

Proposals: Please submit the following

- *Brief* Cover letter (no more than 3 pages). Cover letter should include:
 - Interests in the project and qualifications, including relevant work experience.
 - Your ideas for the evaluation. We are seeking a thought partner in this work and would like to understand how you would approach this project methodologically.
 - As relevant, please list the member(s) of the project team and describe their role(s) and qualification(s).
 - Please provide your expected daily rate and any other relevant budget information
- Curriculum Vitae(s)
- Contact details for two references (not contacted until after interviews)
- Sample of work that is most relevant to this assignment

Please submit these documents via email to Margo Mullinax mmullinax@ajws.org, with 'AJWS CEFM Collectives Evaluation' in the email subject. The deadline for applications is **12 September 2022**. Shortlisted consultants will be interviewed via Zoom, with anticipated start date in fall 2022.