

# BRIDGING THE GAPS

Health and rights for key populations

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR A STUDY ON

### THE ROLE OF BRIDGING THE GAPS IN STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY: BEST PRACTICES IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Launched in 2011, Bridging the Gaps is a key populations programme focused on the health and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, including men who have sex with men (MSM), people who use drugs (PWUD), and sex workers. The programme is implemented in 15 countries, by nine alliance partners: Aidsfonds, Aids Foundation East West (AFEW), COC Netherlands, Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF), Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), International Network of People Who Use Drugs (INPUD), International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC), and Mainline.

Capacity development of civil society organisations is one of the strategies to contribute towards achieving the programme's goals, and we are therefore looking for an academic partner to conduct a study to identify and document the current best practices in this field. We are seeking proposals that utilize community-based, participatory methods to gather and analyze data and disseminate findings. Interested institutes must demonstrate experience conducting evaluation research and working in equitable partnerships with communities. The terms of reference and the qualification requirements are provided below. Interested academic institutes meeting the qualification requirements are invited to apply and send their application package before 12:00 CET on Monday, 16 October 2017 to Ellen Eiling [eeiling@aidsfonds.nl](mailto:eeiling@aidsfonds.nl).

#### Documents to be included when submitting the proposal:

- 1. The research proposal (Maximum 4 pages)**, outlining the proposed research methodology, tools and approaches for analysis of data. A one page timeline should also be included.
- 2. CVs of researchers** to be involved, including past experience in similar research projects and providing contact details for two references (Maximum 2 pages per CV).
- 3. Financial proposal (Maximum 1 page)**. Detailed financial proposal, including number of days, daily rate and clearly stating the total amount (incl/excl VAT) up to a maximum sum of €250.000. Institutes with the possibility of bringing in their own, additional funds will receive priority.

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## 1 Introduction

Key populations, (LGBT) people, including men who have sex with men (MSM), people who use drugs (PWUD), and sex workers are disproportionately affected by HIV compared to the general population. Globally there are only a handful of programmes focusing on key populations. Our alliance aims to bridge that gap. We address HIV as an integral part of SRHR and work together within a network of extended partnerships. Our shared vision is to end the AIDS epidemic among key populations. To make this a reality, we contribute to **three long-term goals**:

1. A strengthened civil society that holds governments to account;
2. Increased fulfilment of human rights of key populations;
3. Improved SRHR and fewer HIV transmissions.

One of the key strategies to contribute towards realising these goals is capacity development of civil society organisations and networks at local and regional level, including those led by key population communities. As you can see from our programme's theory of change in Annex 1, civil society is at the heart of improving health and rights for key populations and civil society strengthening is one of the key strategies of the programme. We are therefore planning to conduct a study to learn about the **most efficient and effective approaches** in capacity development specifically aiming to reach the three long-term goals.

The study should begin at the latest by the end of 2017 and conclude by December 2019 latest. It will have a focus on further strengthening the evidence base of current practices, and on learning. We would like the study to:

- identify how civil society was strengthened by Bridging the Gaps in at least three focus countries, based on a minimum of 3 case studies, and taking into account a balance between the various focus areas of capacity development, the three programming regions (Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and South-East Asia), and the three key populations.
- provide recommendations to further improve our various capacity strengthening strategies and roles, based on an analysis of practices within the programme as well as of the current state of the art within the wider field of capacity building of civil society organisations and networks led by and/or serving marginalized groups.

## 2 Research questions

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the different key interventions / models / approaches taken by the Bridging the Gaps Alliance in developing the capacity of KP organisations/movements/civil society partners, networks and service providers, to:
  - a. hold governments to account;
  - b. demand an enabling social, legal, and policy environment;
  - c. demand services that meet their needs?
2. To what extent has the Bridging the Gaps Alliance strengthened civil society partner organisations' capacities to:
  - a. hold governments to account;
  - b. demand an enabling social, legal, and policy environment;
  - c. demand services that meet their needs?

3. What are the best practices in capacity strengthening?
  - a. What are the best practices and core success ingredients for strengthening civil society (regarding our key outcomes)?
  - b. What are Bridging the Gaps' best practices for strengthening civil society regarding our key outcomes?
  - c. How can capacity strengthening within Bridging the Gaps be further improved (*given lessons learned and best practices from within as well as outside the programme*)?

### 3 Research Design and Methods

We are seeking research proposals that utilize community-based, participatory methods to design, gather, and analyze data and disseminate findings. Each study should take into account principles of community based research<sup>1</sup>. Although the research design will be developed in collaboration with the Bridging the Gaps Alliance Research Team, composed of representatives from the alliance. Initial key principles include:

- Participatory methods should be utilized to gather, and analyze data and disseminate findings
- A literature study, and possibly key informant interviews, should be conducted to identify current best practices in capacity development of civil society organisations regarding our long-term goals (beyond the Bridging the Gaps programme);
- To identify the currently applied approaches within Bridging the Gaps, interviews/surveys could be held amongst key staff from alliance partners;
- For the 3 focus countries or case studies, more in-depth, qualitative research with country and regional partners may be most suitable, to gain more in-depth insights into capacity development processes, outcomes and recommendations;
- This could be followed by a survey, for pre- post measurements, or using outcome harvesting as a methodology to identify key achievements.

### 4 Scope and focus countries

Locations and scope will be decided together with the academic partner and the Research Team. We will jointly select case studies, to capture capacity development initiatives at local, regional, and global levels, and in each of the three regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and South-East Asia.

### 5 Profile of desired academic institute and their proposed lead researcher(s)

- Has an excellent level of expertise in evaluation research, an existing network in international cooperation, and capacity development processes in particular;
- Demonstrates experience and willingness to conduct evaluation research in equitable partnership with our national and regional partners.
- Has experience working with communities and research institutes in the global south and is willing to collaborate with local research institutes;
- Has experience with community based research, applying participatory methods and culturally sensitive approaches;
- Is familiar with the work processes of NGOs and can translate that knowledge into recommendations for practice.

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/CBR\\_definition](http://www.communitybasedresearch.ca/Page/View/CBR_definition)

## 6 Roles and Responsibilities

**Academic institute** - is responsible for planning and implementing the data collection, analysis and reporting, delivering the end-results. The planning and implementation will be done in close collaboration with alliance partners, country and regional partners and preferably supplemented by the involvement of in-country research institutes.

**Aidsfonds** - will coordinate the study and act as contract partner. Aidsfonds will approve the deliverables, enters into a contract with the research institute, and facilitates the collaboration with the Research Team.

**Research Team** - representatives of the Bridging the Gaps Alliance partners and the academic partner (and possibly also of country/regional partners) will be established, to ensure smooth collaboration, continuous alignment of interests and planned research activities. The research team will provide input for the proposed planning, research framework, interview guide(s), draft report, and the final draft report. Input will be mainly provided through email and calls.

**Review Committee** – a review committee of experts in the field of SRHR and HIV/AIDS will review the jointly developed proposal.

## 7 Required end results

- Literature review on current best practices in capacity development for key population networks or civil society organisations, contributing to the achievement of one or more of the Bridging the Gaps programme's long term goals;
- Research tools and instruments used to collect data;
- Raw data set, preliminary analysis of data;
- A set of recommendations based on analysis conducted, and formulated together with alliance partners and academic partner;
- Detailed intervention descriptions of best practices within the programme, with steps and tips for effective capacity development;
- A research report, including the literature review and detailed analysis of findings and practice recommendations;
- A peer reviewed publication.

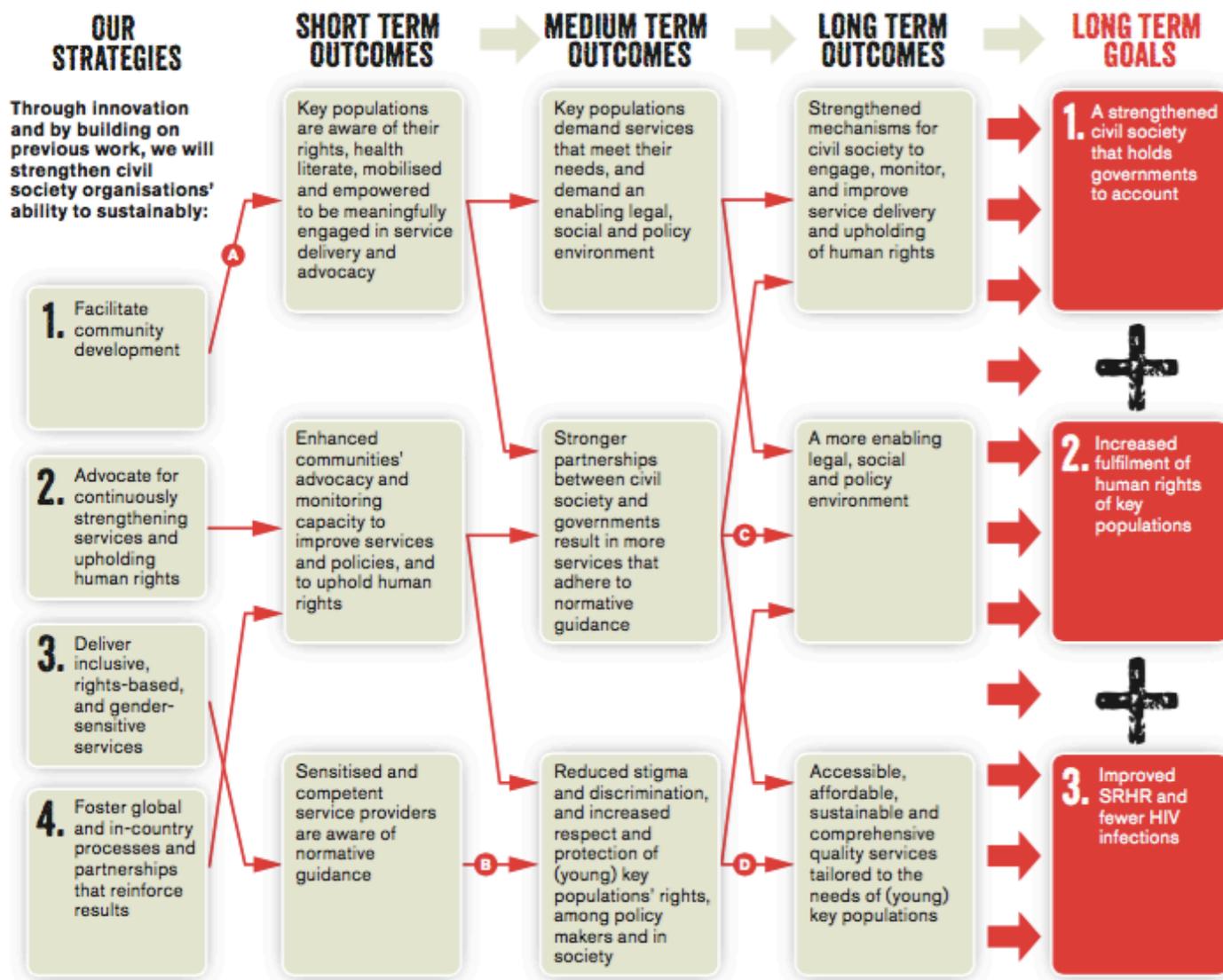
## 8 Time frame

The proposal must be submitted to the Aidsfonds on Monday, 16 October 2017 (12.00 CET), to Ellen Eiling (eeiling@aidsfonds.nl). Interviews and the final selection will take place in November. The collaboration regarding the development and implementation of the research will run from January 2018 through December 2019.

## 9 Available budget

A maximum budget of €250,000 is available. Institutes with the possibility of bringing in their own, additional funds will receive priority.

## ANNEX 1. THE BRIDGING THE GAPS PROGRAMME THEORY OF CHANGE



<b>How the programme aims to contribute to the outcomes and long-term goals as visualised in the Theory of Change</b>	
<b>Bridging the Gaps focuses on four interrelated strategic areas</b>	<b>Intervention strategies across key populations and organisations to achieve the short, medium and long-term outcomes</b>
<p><b>1. Facilitate community development</b> We will work directly with communities and the organisations that support them. Building on BtG1, key populations will be involved in designing services, peer education, implementation, and M&amp;E of services.</p>	<p><b>Essential strategies to facilitate community development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building (organisational and content);</li> <li>• Meaningful involvement of key population communities through country and regional partners;</li> <li>• Community mobilization and development;</li> <li>• Building networks and strengthening capacity of local partners;</li> <li>• Providing technical assistance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Advocate for continuously strengthening services and upholding human rights</b> We will collaborate with PITCH (Aidsfonds) and PRIDE (COC) to build the capacity of civil society organisations to hold their governments to account and continuously gather evidence to bolster our advocacy work.</p>	<p><b>Essential strategies to advocate</b> for continuously strengthening services and upholding human rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer legal support as integral part of services.</li> <li>• Advocacy and lobby to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase awareness of the needs of and issues important to key populations;</li> <li>• address stigma and discrimination;</li> <li>• address violence against people from key populations and supportive legislation;</li> <li>• increase policy and financial commitment;</li> <li>• work on the decriminalisation of drug use, sex work and LGBT people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Deliver inclusive, rights based, and gender sensitive services</b> We will further innovate current good practices to deliver life-saving services to key populations in combination with capacity building.</p>	<p><b>Essential strategies to deliver inclusive, rights based, and gender sensitive services</b> for key populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STI and HIV prevention, testing, counselling, treatment and care services;</li> <li>• Harm reduction services for PWUD;</li> <li>• SRH services;</li> <li>• Improve access to, uptake and coverage of effective and acceptable services;</li> <li>• Sensitization of service providers (addressing stigma and discrimination).</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Foster global and in-country processes and partnerships that reinforce results</b> We will further develop our considerable expertise to foster collaboration between key population organisations and between global and local organisations to create a coordinated response and ensure that good practices and innovations are shared, replicated and refined. Specific intervention strategies will be developed with country partners in the first half year of 2016.</p>	<p><b>Essential strategies to foster global and in-country processes and partnerships</b> that reinforce results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen greater national, regional and global commitment to adequate funding and services;</li> <li>• Conduct research to be used in global and in-country processes and partnerships to show evidence and reinforce results;</li> <li>• Production of advocacy resources utilizing evidence gathered at country level to reinforce results;</li> <li>• Include national partners in global advocacy by inviting them as keynote speakers.</li> </ul>