

Terms of Reference short-term consultancy

Qualitative research on sex work & violence eSwatini

Aidsfonds is seeking an experienced anthropologist or social science researcher to coordinate a Study into sex work & violence, and conduct the qualitative component of the research.

1. Background

Background of Aidsfonds

Aidsfonds is working towards a world without AIDS. We strive for a world where there are no longer any deaths from AIDS, where people enjoy good sexual health, and a cure is available for all people living with HIV. A world in which everyone can love freely and without fear. We do this by working together with the communities who are hit hardest by HIV, STIs, discrimination and exclusion. We strengthen their voice and support them with information, knowledge and funding. For all that is love. We are there to help everyone living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. For more information see: www.aidsfonds.org

Aidsfonds has a long history of directly supporting communities. We invest in programmes that focus on macro-structural changes, addressing the structural barriers to HIV prevention. Aidsfonds currently coordinates three main international programmes supporting sex workers: Love Alliance (advocating for SRHR for key populations), Emergency Support Fund for Ukraine and Neighbouring Countries (ESFU), and Hands Off (reducing violence against sex workers in Southern Africa).

Hands Off II programme

High rates of violence perpetrated against sex workers have been consistently documented in Southern Africa. As one of the structural drivers increasing the risk of HIV infections, violence leads to inconsistent condom use and prevents sex workers from accessing legal support and health care services. Large-scale research shows that if violence against sex workers is tackled, we can prevent up to 25% of new HIV infections. The first phase of the Hands Off programme (2014-2019) has proven that the Hands Off model, a combination of engagement with police in the HIV response, setting up community-led crisis response systems and movement building, results in reduced violence against sex workers.

Building on this model, Hands Off II (2019-2024) will continue to contribute to the reduction of violence against sex workers at community, national and regional level. We do this through four long-term outcomes: 1) an empowered and resilient sex worker movement that demands its rights, 2) increased access to and use of inclusive services for sex workers, 3) a more enabling environment for sex work, and 4) sex workers protected and served by law enforcement. The

programme's primary target group is adult female, male and transgender sex workers, meaning those who receive money or goods in exchange for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally. Hands Off is implemented in Angola, eSwatini, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. See for more information: <https://aidsfonds.org/project/hands-off-reducing-violence-against-sex-workers>

Hands Off research into Sex work & violence

In the first phase of Hands Off a regional participatory study was conducted on sex work and violence amongst more than 2000 sex workers in the five programmatic countries. The research (with both a quantitative and qualitative aspect) was designed by sex workers and implementing partners in the Hands Off programme. The study informed planning and programming of Hands Off partners, and results have been used by sex workers to lobby for change.

In 2024 the Hands Off programme will start implementation in eSwatini. Aidsfonds will work with [Voice of our Voices](#), a sex worker-led organisation, to implement interventions that reduce violence against sex workers in the country. The programme will start with a study identifying the needs of sex workers at four different sites in eSwatini (Shiselweni, Hhhohho, Lubombo and Manzini region).

Research methodology

The research is based on an established methodology. The qualitative component includes a desk study, in-depth interviews with sex workers and key stakeholders, and focus group discussions (FGDs). For the quantitative component, sex workers will be trained as research assistants to administer the survey among their peers. The sex worker community will assist in selecting interviewees to foster an open and trusting relationship. The in-depth interviews and FGDs will be organized around four central themes: 1) Violence, 2) Police, 3) Social networks and 4) Prevention strategies, harm reduction, and risk mitigation.

2. Key responsibilities

Aidsfonds is seeking an experienced anthropologist or social science researcher to coordinate a Study into sex work & violence (overseeing the quantitative data gathering conducted by Voice of our Voices) and conduct the qualitative component of the research. Although the consultant will not be involved in the quantitative data collection and quantitative analysis themselves, they will collaborate with Voice of our Voices to ensure the research's overall quality. The consultant's tasks will include:

- Overall coordination and management of the study, including planning, data collection, qualitative analysis and completion of the study in collaboration with Voice of our Voices.
- Applying for ethical clearance with the ethics committee.
- Training sex workers as research assistants and the research coordinator of Voice of our Voices on research methodologies and techniques, using the Aidsfonds training manual which can be shared upon request
- Coach and mentor research assistants while practicing in the field.
- Context analysis based on a pre-identified topic list in which relevant policies, documents and literature available on sex work, HIV, health and law enforcement in eSwatini are analysed.
- Conduct at least 20 in-depth interviews and conduct 16 focus group discussions with sex workers.

- Conduct at least 8 in-depth interviews with other relevant stakeholders, such as law enforcement, government and public health representatives.
- Transcribe, translate, code and analyse qualitative data. Aidsfonds is responsible for quantitative data analysis.
- Write a research report for eSwatini that reflects the results of both the quantitative and qualitative study (based on report template and quantitative results supplied by Aidsfonds). The consultant should be comfortable with the results of this study being used for advocacy and lobbying purposes.

3. Deliverables

- Ethical clearance for the study.
- List and soft copies of all relevant literature, laws and policies related to Sex work in eSwatini.
- Raw data set: transcripts (translated into English).
- Original audio files of all in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.
- Written report for eSwatini based on an outline, including case studies and quotes.

Examples of previous research reports on Sex work and violence can be found by clicking the below links

- [Sex work and violence in Namibia - Aidsfonds | Ending AIDS Together](#)
- [Sex work and violence in Mozambique - Aidsfonds | Ending AIDS Together](#)
- [Sex work and violence in Southern Africa \(regional report\) - Aidsfonds | Ending AIDS Together](#)

At the start of qualitative data collection, we request the consultant to share the first four examples of translated transcripts from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for review. The remaining transcripts and audio files will be submitted at the end of the research.

4. Profile

The programme team is seeking an enthusiastic, well-organised, and sensitive researcher to lead the Hands Off research initiative. The ideal consultant will have familiarity with the theme of sex work and a balanced, non-judgmental attitude towards female, male, and transgender sex workers, as well as other key populations involved in sex work.

General Requirements:

- Academic background in Anthropology, Social Science, or International Development Studies.
- Proven experience in qualitative field research and in-depth data collection.
- Residency in eSwatini or neighbouring countries.
- Ability to discuss sensitive topics and adapt communication for different groups and

stakeholders.

- Capacity to facilitate and lead open conversations around participants' priorities while adhering to mandatory themes and structures.
- Ability to establish a safe interview setting and build trusting relationships with participants
- Strong writing and analytical skills.
- Strong communication skills to relay new concepts clearly, engagingly, and helpfully.

Desired Qualifications:

- Previous involvement with sex worker-led or key-population-led initiatives.
- Experience in community-based research and participatory methods of data collection.
- Adaptability in assessing, diagnosing, and solving on-the-job challenges and situations.
- Familiarity with Siswati is highly valued, but not a necessary requirement

5. Application process

The assignment will be from **October 2024- March 2025**. Payment will be made in three tranches: 25% at the start of the assignment, 25% after training and ethical clearance, and 50% at the end of the assignment, when all deliverables are handed in and approved by the Hands Off project lead. Our finance department will pay tax at the prevailing tax rules. The selection process will take place in September 2024 and decisions will be made in close collaboration with Voice of our Voices.

How to apply

Please submit the following information to Ingeborg van Beekum <ivanbeekum@aidsfonds.nl>:

- CV or resume detailing relevant experience
- Motivation letter
- Examples of previous research work (if available)
- Contact information for 2 references
- Statement of your daily fee

Please submit your application by **2 September 2024**