TOR Research Guidelines

Community-Led Research on Human Rights Knowledge and HRG-Related Barriers to Accessing Services

Background

Nepal's national HIV and health response has made notable progress in expanding access to prevention, treatment, care, and support services. Despite these achievements, people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key and vulnerable populations continue to face significant **human rights- and gender-related (HRG) barriers** that limit equitable access to essential services.

These barriers include, but are not limited to:

- Stigma and discrimination
- Violence
- Criminalization
- Lack of legal literacy
- Gender inequality
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Limited access to justice

Such challenges disproportionately affect women, youth, and marginalized groups, undermining the principles of **Leave No One Behind (LNOB)** and **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)**.

In this context, this research is designed and planned under the **Human Rights Grant supported by UNDP/Global Fund under GC-7**, aiming to generate credible, actionable evidence on human rights knowledge and lived experiences of HRG-related barriers among priority populations. The study will adopt a **Participatory Partnership Research (PPR)** approach, ensuring meaningful involvement of community networks throughout the research process and strengthening evidence-based advocacy for rights-based HIV and health interventions.

Objective of the Research

Overall Objective:

- Assess the level of knowledge on human rights and identify HRG-related barriers to accessing services among PLHIV and key populations in Nepal.

Specific Objectives:

- Assess awareness and understanding of human rights (as they relate to health in particular HIV services) among PLHIV and key/vulnerable populations.

- Identify HRG-related barriers affecting access to HIV, harm reduction, SRHR, and social protection services.
- Document experiences of stigma, discrimination, violence, criminalization, and institutional barriers.

Target Communities

- People Living with HIV (PLHIV), including Young PLHIVs (YPLHIVs)
- People Who Use Drugs (PUD), including Women Who Use Drugs (WUD)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) communities
- Migrant populations
- Prison and detention populations
- Female Sex Workers (FSWs)

Scope of Work
The study will adopt a qualitative research design incorporating the following:

1. Design a community-led, participatory research framework and methodology.
2. Develop qualitative tools aligned with human rights and HRG frameworks through meaningful engagement of community members.
3. Conduct online training for community-based network focal points and data collectors.
4. Conduct **30 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** and **40 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**, ensuring representation of all key populations.
5. Lead and coordinate data collection with strong community engagement.
6. Conduct data analysis and interpretation.
7. Prepare a comprehensive research report with actionable recommendations.
8. Support and present findings with national stakeholders.

Community Engagement Approach

- Network advocacy focal points and trained community data collectors will be actively involved.
- Communities will participate in tool validation, data interpretation, and dissemination.
- Ethical standards, confidentiality, and safeguarding will be strictly maintained.

Deliverables

- Inception report with methodology and community-validated data collection tools
- Training materials
- Cleaned datasets and analysis outputs
- Draft and final research report
- Presentation for national dissemination meeting

Duration

The assignment is expected to be completed within **8 months (January – August 2026)**.

Eligibility Criteria

Research institutes must demonstrate:

- Proven experience in conducting qualitative studies on human rights, HIV, gender, and key population contexts is essential
- Strong understanding of HRG-related barriers of key populations
- Experience working with PLHIV, key populations, and marginalized communities in Nepal
- Capacity to work collaboratively with community networks
- Prior experience in training and mentoring community data collectors