

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Workshops to strengthen programmes targeting the drivers of early pregnancy in South Africa

1. Introduction

Under the cooperation programme “*Strengthening the prevention of unintended early pregnancy in Malawi and South Africa*” (2022-2023), the Embassy of France in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi, will **support a workshop series with civil society organisations (CSO) working on the drivers of early pregnancy in South Africa.**

The purpose of the workshops will be to foster practical knowledge sharing amongst practitioners, and strengthen the design of interventions directly or indirectly contributing to the prevention of unintended early pregnancy.

The French Embassy will partner with CSOs working in this sector to organise the workshops in South Africa in 2023, and will endeavour to create synergies with other converging initiatives on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

2. Background

Unintended early pregnancy is a protracted issue in South Africa. According to recent statistics, an average 120,000 girls and adolescents under the age of 19 become pregnant each year in the country. An increase in the number of early pregnancies was recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 132,612 births to teenage mothers aged 15-19 in 2020, and 3,774 births to girls aged 10-14. Children born to teenage mothers account for 13% of births in the country.

While the phenomenon is not new, South Africa's Minister of Basic Education Angelina Motshekga called the situation ‘a national crisis’ in 2021, and the same year the National Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools was adopted. The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disability also initiated the drafting of a Programme of Action to better coordinate and step up efforts to address teenage pregnancy. At the Generation Equality Forum, stakeholders from the South African Action Coalition on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) also highlighted the importance of this issue.

Adolescence is a critical phase for every human's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development.¹ Despite being characterised as the healthiest period in an individual's life, experimental behaviours that could have adverse effects across the life-course start at this stage.² During this phase, most boys and girls initiate sex, often with limited knowledge of effective methods of preventing, resulting in a high rate of unintended pregnancies.³

¹ Patton, G.C., S.M. Sawyer, J.S. Santelli, et al. (2016). Our future: a Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing. *The Lancet* 387(10036):2423-78.

² Laski, L. (2015). Realising the health and wellbeing of adolescents. *bmj* 351:h4119.

³ Santhya, K. and S.J. Jejeebhoy. (2015). Sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls: Evidence from low-and middle-income countries. *Global Public Health* 10(2):189-221

On top of being a posing health risks for both the mother and the child, pregnancy among adolescent girls has social, economic and psychological implications that affect their educational and future opportunities, and hinders progress towards gender equality.

The multiplicity of factors driving early pregnancy, and the difficult to offer standardized responses, partly explain why it proves difficult to reverse the trend through improved prevention.

There is therefore a need to generate evidence on, identify and strengthen or upscale prevention interventions that are effective and perhaps under-resourced.

The Embassy of France's cooperation programme 'Strengthening the prevention of unintended early pregnancy in Malawi and South Africa'

The programme aims to support the strengthening of the prevention of unintended early pregnancy in Malawi and South Africa, by adding value and complementing existing interventions by governments, civil society and other development partners. It stems from France's commitment as global leader of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and SRHR, and responds to South Africa's and Malawi's key concern for the prevention and management of unintended early pregnancy.

The programme consists of three work streams:

- research & exchange of expertise;
- multi-stakeholder engagements and youth participation on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); and
- **capacity-strengthening of practitioners, including CSOs working to advance adolescent SRHR.**

3. Purpose of the workshop series

The workshop series contemplated under this programme aims at:

- i. **Fostering practical knowledge sharing amongst practitioners on the prevention of unintended early pregnancy;**
- ii. **strengthening the design of interventions directly or indirectly contributing to the prevention of unintended early pregnancy.**

The workshops will build lessons learned by participating CSOs from their own interventions, as well as evidence gathered through research and multi-stakeholders engagements supported under the French Embassy's programme.

The workshops will focus on interventions in the following sectors:

- Personal development of adolescents, including management of their sexuality / sexual and childbearing behaviours (incl. CSE);
- Interventions addressing the economic drivers of early pregnancy;
- Early-warning & support systems (at household, school, community levels);
- other areas / issues that may emerge from engagements with partners and from the findings of the research commissioned by the French Embassy.

4. Target groups / participants

- Participants: CSOs working in South Africa, with interventions that directly or indirectly (intentionally or not intentionally) contribute to preventing unintended early pregnancy, in the broader context of improving adolescent SRHR.
- Target: at least 15 CSOs (nation-wide).

5. Activities

- At least 2 workshops in South Africa in 2023 – location to be determined based on number and location of participants.

The workshops will be completed by the end of November 2023.

- The duration and programme of each workshop will be decided jointly between the partner CSOs organising the workshops and the French Embassy, based on a survey and on engagements with other CSOs in the sector.

6. Services commissioned to partner CSOs

The French Embassy may partner with one or several CSOs to undertake the following:

1. Assist the French Embassy with the identification of CSOs working to advance adolescent SRHR in South Africa, including but not exclusively in the following sectors:

- access to sexual and reproductive health services (e.g. contraception, prevention & treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, termination of pregnancy)
- Personal development of adolescents, including comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) (in and out of school), management of their sexuality / sexual and childbearing behaviours;
- Interventions addressing the economic drivers of teenage pregnancy (e.g. in relation but not limited to, transactional sex) and child marriages;
- early-warning & support systems for adolescents at household, school, and community levels (e.g. social workers' interventions, mother groups, peer groups).
- any other area / issue that may emerge from stakeholder engagements and from the findings of the research commissioned by the French Embassy.

2. Conduct a survey to determine the expectations and needs of CSOs in the sector, which will inform the programme of the workshops.

In particular, the survey will focus on:

- knowledge and skills that CSOs would like to strengthen with regards to the prevention of teenage pregnancy and child marriages (e.g. better understanding of the drivers of early pregnancy);
- gaps and shortcomings in intervention design that stakeholders would like to address;
- best practices for prevention of early pregnancy (in South Africa or elsewhere).

The survey will be informed both by engagements (e.g. survey, interviews) with targeted CSOs, and the findings of the research conducted by the French Embassy.

The methodology and tools for the survey shall be developed jointly with the French Embassy.

3. Organise and run the workshops (minimum 2), including:

- Development of the workshops' programmes;
- Identification of facilitators and experts as needed;
- Invitation and selection of participants to each workshop (minimum 2);

- Logistics and payments to service providers and participants as needed (bookings, transport allowances, etc);
 - Facilitation of the workshops.
4. Report – narrative and financial – to the French Embassy on the workshops’ proceedings and outcomes (assessment and feedback from participants, lessons learned, emerging trends, etc).

7. Budget

EUR 24 000.

8. How to submit a bid

Interested bidders must submit the following documents/ information:

- Technical proposal (max. 10 pages) --
 1. Explain their understanding of the work and deliverables,
 2. Provide a brief methodology on how they will approach and conduct the work, including a tentative schedule;
 3. Explain why they are suitable to perform the evaluation work, incl. experience in similar activities and in the sector concerned.
- Financial proposal.
- 2 references.

Further information about the project may be obtained from the Embassy. Requests should be addressed by email to noelle.garcin@diplomatie.gouv.fr by **14th of April 2023**.

Interested bidders are requested to submit an electronic copy of their proposal with the subject REF: “Workshops on unintended early pregnancy – *[name of Bidder]*”.

Proposals to be submitted by email to noelle.garcin@diplomatie.gouv.fr before 5 May 2023.

T&C:

Based on the bids received, the Embassy of France will engage short listed bidders to discuss their technical and financial proposals further.

The Embassy reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal, and to annul the selection process and reject all proposals at any time, without incurring any liability to the applicants.