PROJECT PROPOSAL: EVALUATION AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOPE’S ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

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**BACKGROUND**

Strengthening Care Opportunities through Partnership in Ethiopia (SCOPE) is a collaboration between the University of Washington’s School of Global Health, University Presbyterian Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the University of Gondar, Ethiopia. SCOPE’s mission is to improve the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS and prevent new infections by bridging the medical and faith communities in Gondar, Ethiopia. SCOPE identifies intersections of faith and medicine through outreach, education, and training. Three branches of operation make up SCOPE’s organizational identity:

1. Outreach to local communities, aimed at reducing stigma and expanding HIV testing, diagnosis, treatment, and care.
2. Education of new global health leaders through fellowship programs at the University of Washington and the University of Gondar.
3. Training of local faith leaders to reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS and increase access to testing and care.

A working volunteer board governs SCOPE. Partners in Gondar at the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the University of Gondar work with fellows from the University of Washington and the University of Gondar to implement projects related to HIV/AIDS prevention and care. SCOPE implemented several successful projects in the last few years including an HIV/AIDS testing campaign on the North Gondar Diocese grounds and the development of a pilot project training soul fathers as health educators. One of SCOPE’s core values is education of future global health leaders through their fellowship program. Fellows develop and oversee SCOPE projects in Gondar and are the primary project implementers in the current organizational model.

**PROBLEM DEFINITION**

SCOPE has special placement in the sector working closely with the religious community, but is still defining their niche in the realm of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. The organization has successfully demonstrated that they can train soul fathers to refer pregnant women to local clinics. SCOPE is seeking funding for a major scale up that would substantially expand this model to several additional clinics and communities. In its current form, the infrastructure of SCOPE is not positioned to manage a large operations expansion. Two issues will need to be addressed if SCOPE wins funding to scale up the Woleka Pilot Project:

Agree on a Unified Vision – Pursuing funding to expand the Woleka Pilot Project would change the overall goals of SCOPE to increasing uptake of prenatal care and facility based delivery and preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS. This more defined focus would change how SCOPE concentrates their programs. Partner organizations and volunteers will need to align with these objectives. It will be important for SCOPE to ensure all partners are equally invested in taking the project to scale. Without cooperation, commitment, and meaningful communication between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, University of Gondar, University of Washington’s School of Global Health, University Presbyterian Church, and the Gondar Ministry of Health the transition and expansion will be difficult.

Make Staffing Decisions – SCOPE will need to have a strategy for hiring and growing staff in Gondar if it receives money to expand operations. Decisions about whom to hire, when, and for what purpose are important strategic components to ensuring the project’s success. In addition, structural limitation will also need to be considered. For example, SCOPE currently operates without a central office space in Gondar or the U.S., which could become problematic as the organization grows.

**PROJECT GOAL**

The goal of this project is to evaluate SCOPE’s organizational plan and recommend strategies to improve and scale-up programs in Gondar, Ethiopia and neighboring kebeles. The final report will identify operational, programmatic, and organizational challenges to SCOPE’s current model and offer suggestions for addressing them.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The project has six primary objectives:

1. Improve goal alignment across partner organizations (Ethiopian Orthodox Church, University of Gondar, University of Washington’s School of Global Health, and University Presbyterian Church).
2. Improve communication methods between partners in Gondar and Seattle.
3. Map partner organization structure and processes as they relate to SCOPE projects.
4. Explore and make recommendations for new partnership opportunities for SCOPE.
5. Make recommendations for SCOPE personnel and office needs.
6. Evaluate potential non-monetary strategies for incentivizing partners and volunteers and make recommendations for strategies for SCOPE to pursue.

Activities will consist of collecting and distilling quantitative and qualitative data from primary literature and from key informants at partner organizations to accomplish these objectives. An initial interview will be conducted with each partner organization to identify areas of interest in the project and perceived value of participating. Interviews will be translated, transcribed, and condensed into a guiding document for the SCOPE Board to use in their discussion of mission, vision, and goals in July 2014. The final document will include a plan for tracking goals across partner organizations drawing on best practices from the field and elements specific to the Gondar ecology. In addition, the final document will outline a continuum of recommendations from minimum requirements for success to optimal operating standard.

Methodology for improving communication will also start with input from local partners in Gondar. This project will pilot meetings of SCOPE representatives from the University of Gondar, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and local health clinics. The meetings will be structured according to feedback from initial interviews. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the meetings will build off the outlines from former fellow projects. The project will explore communication norms between Seattle and Gondar partners and provide recommendations for best practices for communication frequency, content, and reporting.

Partner organization mapping will focus on identifying processes for selecting priests and fellows who work on SCOPE projects. Maps of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church’s North Gondar Diocese and University of Gondar will include a description and visual representation of the decision-makers at each level. The map will also show the process for selecting SCOPE fellows from the University of Gondar and religious men and women who work on fellow projects. Contact information along with commentary for whom to contact in what circumstances will be included.

Exploration of partnership opportunities will include identifying new partners as well as new roles for SCOPE’s current partners. Recommendations will be informed by data from site visits and staff interviews at prospective sites. Current partners will participate in interviews that gauge how they want to work with SCOPE. Based on feedback, the report will make recommendations about decreasing, repositioning, or expanding participation of partner organizations.

Analysis of personnel needs in Gondar will take into account costs, benefits, and implications of hiring paid staff members to work for SCOPE in Gondar. The report will give a short term and long term vision for SCOPE personnel in Gondar to accommodate growth. The recommendation will include job descriptions for hired staff as well as proposed salaries for each position. Information on salaries and descriptions will be based on industry norms from other organizations operating in Ethiopia. The report will also examine options for a central office space for SCOPE.

The final report will give recommendations for how to incentivize volunteers to participate with SCOPE. Data collected from interviews, meeting pilots, and project observation will inform guidance on non-monetary incentives to motivate volunteer participation. The report will include a compilation of best practices from other organizations in addition to Gondar-specific data.

**DELIVERABLES**

All deliverables will be finalized and submitted in the final project report upon return from Ethiopia in September 2014. Documents intended to inform the July board meeting will be completed prior to the meeting.

1. Summary document outlining broad themes of partner organization interviews (July 2014)
2. SOPs for communication practices (September 2014)
3. Maps of Ethiopian Orthodox Church and University of Gondar with commentary (September 2014)
4. Written recommendations for opportunities for program expansion and collaboration (September 2014)
5. Written recommendations for personnel and office space with Personnel Descriptions (September 2014)
6. Written recommendations for volunteer incentive programs (September 2014)

**PROJECT SCOPE & APPROACH**

The evaluation component of this project will serve as a formative evaluation. It will look at ongoing programs and how to improve them. The final report is intended for internal use by SCOPE and will be designed to inform decisions made by the board regarding vision, expansion, program scale up, and communication. The report will make strategic suggestions for the organization based on interview, observation, and publically available data. Interviews will be modeled according to best practices of other global health organizations operating in Africa.

**ETHICAL ISSUES**

This UW Human Subjects Division determined that this project does not fall under the definition of “research” under section 45 CFR 46.102(d) and therefore does not require review by the IRB. This project is intended for internal use by SCOPE to evaluate current programs and inform strategic decision-making. Project participants will consist of volunteer partners who participate in interviews that gauge their perceptions of SCOPE and its projects. Data will not be collected for external use from program participants, patients, or their families.

To limit the risk of negative outcomes for SCOPE, the project manager will prevent discomfort of interview subjects by stating the goal of each interview and clearly communicating how responses will be used. Interviews are designed to capture attitudes about SCOPE and refine the goals of each organization individually and as a collective group. Interviews will also be used to monitor effectiveness of organizational practices such as compensation, non-monetary incentives, and communication forums.

**CONSTRAINTS**

Barriers to implementing this project include:

1. Language and translation
   1. The project is interview-based, and therefore, dependent on a reliable and accurate translator.
2. Time constraints
   1. SCOPE is currently volunteer-led in Ethiopia. Leaders of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and University of Gondar may have other obligations that prevent them from participating.
   2. All the necessary interviews need to be conducted by the fellow in a three month time frame.
   3. The University of Ethiopia fellow may have conflicts with the interview schedule.
3. Identifying interview subjects
   1. It is imperative to talk to people who have influence and decision-making power in their organization. These individuals may be difficult to identify or gain access to.
4. Cultural Sensitivity
   1. Difficulty getting accurate wage estimates when it is culturally impolite to talk about money.
   2. Difficulties having people speak openly about systemic problems or taboo subjects.

**MEASUREMENT**

Measurement for this project will be mostly qualitative. Interview transcripts and meeting minutes will be the primary data sources that inform the strategic recommendations in the final document. Written summaries for individual meetings and interviews will be available in addition to summaries condensing general themes and opinions.

**TIMELINE**

A detailed timeline for the project can be found in Appendix 1. Expected completion dates are denoted by month.

Appendix 1.

