



USAID Youth Excel: Our Knowledge Leading Change Program Grant Competition
Using 'Research-to-Change' (Implementation Research)
to Strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial support for marginalized and vulnerable youth in East and Southern Africa

July 27, 2021, Webinar

Question and Answer

1. Do you have a sense of how local is being defined for this? Is it the [NPI definition](#) of a local entity?

Youth Excel is funded by the USAID New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) and seeks applications from local entities, as per the NPI definition based on ADS 303.6, for this grant competition. Applicants must be able to certify that they qualify as local entities based on the following criteria (listed in Section D of Annex I. Concept Note Template), in one of the 6 eligible countries (listed in Section I of the Request for Concept Notes):

- Is legally organized under the laws of a country that is receiving assistance from USAID;
- Has its principal place of business or operations in a country receiving assistance from USAID;
- Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country receiving assistance from USAID;
- Is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance from USAID.

2. On the application form: I am asked to add a "Prime" for the projects, is this asking for the main target of the project? If not, could you provide more details?

This question refers to the prime recipient organization of donor funding. This may be the applicant itself, if it was the awardee of project funding directly from a donor, or another organization, if the applicant was a subawardee.

3. Who on the support organization is the letter of support for?

Applicants that have an existing donor-funded project and are applying for Youth Excel funding to add a new implementation research component to the project are required to provide a letter of support from their current donor for their Youth Excel concept note submission. Applicants that are applying for Youth Excel funding to fully support a new implementation research project are not required to submit a letter of support.

4. On the application form, about section C: Can an entity that has never received funds directly but partners with others, apply? Or implements activities with their own funding apply?



Yes, applicants with either type of past experiences may apply, and are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip them to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

5. Can an international organization, registered as a charity in the USA, with the 501(C)3 status, working in one of the eligible countries, apply?

Eligibility for the Youth Excel grant competitions is restricted to local entities as per the NPI definition based on ADS 303.6. Applicants must be able to certify that they qualify as local entities based on the following criteria (listed in Section D of Annex I. Concept Note Template), in one of the 6 eligible countries (listed in Section I of the Request for Concept Notes):

- Is legally organized under the laws of a country that is receiving assistance from USAID;
 - Has its principal place of business or operations in a country receiving assistance from USAID;
 - Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country receiving assistance from USAID;
 - Is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance from USAID.
6. As we draft the budget, are we allowed to buy capital assets like motor vehicles and motorcycles to support in the project implementation?

No, Youth Excel does not anticipate funding capital assets as defined in 2 CFR 200.12. Youth Excel may consider funding requests for equipment, such as motor vehicles/motorcycles, as defined in 2 CFR 200.33 on a case-by-case basis only if necessary for project implementation, and additional provisions will apply. Youth Excel will provide further budget guidance to organizations invited to submit full applications, including detailed budgets, in the next stage of the grant competition.

7. Is this opportunity for organizations targeting young people, led by young CEOs?

Applicants that identify as youth-led or youth-serving organizations are eligible to apply, as per the following definitions listed in Section D of Annex I. Concept Note Template:

- Youth-led organization whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are predominantly under the age of 35, and who has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or support youth under age 35.
 - Youth-serving organization that has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35.
8. As we develop our concept note, can we leverage on one of our recently ended projects that focused on youth mental health?

Yes, you can leverage on your recently ended projects that focused on youth mental health.

9. Past performance: are the details of the projects required specific to the applying organization or can details of projects that have been implemented by members of the proposed project team (that may not necessarily be part of the applying organization) be included in this section?

The past performance section refers to projects that the applying organization has implemented.



10. Would a project from an existing USAID funded project be eligible to apply and receive funding from this grant competition?

Applicants with either a new or existing donor-funded project, including USAID, are eligible to apply. Please note you will be required to provide a letter of support from your current donor as part of your Youth Excel concept note submission.

Questions from the webinar

Local organization vs. International Organization

11. Can you provide a written explanation/criteria of how 'International' and 'local' organizations are being defined? Especially in relation to specific aspects such as other offices, contributions to support functions, control of brand, staff demographics, governance, and board of trustee setups etc.

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- Is legally organized under the laws of a country that is receiving assistance from USAID;
- Has its principal place of business or operations in a country receiving assistance from USAID;
- Is majority-owned by individuals who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of a country receiving assistance from USAID;
- Is managed by a governing body, the majority of whom are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the country receiving assistance from USAID.

Consortium/Joint/Group applications

12. Can a consortium of youth-led organizations apply for this?

Consortiums for the purposes of this grant are not allowable and thus will be disqualified.

13. Will a coalition application be accepted?

Coalitions for the purposes of this grant are not allowable and thus will be disqualified.

14. Is it allowed to work jointly, meaning two organization can work together on the same project?

Consortiums for the purposes of this grant are not allowable and thus will be disqualified.

Eligibility

15. Kindly clarify if the approaches can be delivered within/in partnership with medical/clinical institutions, exclusive of treatment/screening and diagnosis

Yes, if the proposed approach does not include grant funding being used in medical/clinical treatment it is allowable to deliver in partnership with medical/clinical institutions.

16. Do all those requirements for eligible organizations need to be met?



Yes, all specified eligibility criteria must be met.

17. If I have not been funded by IREX before, can I apply?

Yes. It is not a requirement to have received funding from IREX before you can apply.

18. Does it mean that when an organization is not invited to the participatory selection, they may have been disqualified?

Yes, as only those who pass the eligibility screening will be invited for the participatory selection.

19. Are University-based programs that handle youth eligible?

If they meet the criteria of a Youth-led or Youth-serving organization, as per the following definitions listed in Section D of Annex I. Concept Note Template, yes they are eligible

- Youth-led organization whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are predominantly under the age of 35, and who has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or support youth under age 35.
- Youth-serving organization that has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35.

20. Can a registered CBO, community-based organization, not yet NGO status apply?

Yes, CBOs are eligible to apply

21. Confirm eligibility of companies limited by guarantee without share capital exclusively operating as non-profit.

Such a company would be eligible to apply for the grant competition.

22. Are fiscal hosted organizations eligible?

Yes, they are eligible provided they meet the outlined eligibility criteria.

DUNS number

23. DUNS How do you get a DUNS number?

You can apply for one using this link: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>. Please note that it is free to apply for a DUNS number.

24. What is DUNS number?

A **DUNS number** is a unique nine-character number used to identify your organization. The US federal government uses the DUNS number to track how federal money is allocated. Recipients of over \$25,000 of USAID funding must have a DUNS number.

25. Is it a must to register for DUNS no before concept application?

No, you will only need to have it before you can receive any funding for the grant competition.

26. Does that mean that without a DUNS number you cannot get any funding from USAID?



Recipients of over \$25,000 of USAID funding must have a DUNS number. Organizations without DUNS numbers may submit concept notes to the Youth Excel grant competition, but must be willing to register for a DUNS number if selected to receive an award.

27. How you get a DUNS number being a grassroots community-based organization.

You can apply for a DUNS number using this link:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html> is free to apply for a DUNS number.

28. I applied already but I put a wrong DUNS, how can I correct details on it and I submit it to you back?

If your concept note is still in draft form, you can edit accordingly. If already submitted, please submit the concept note afresh with the correct details. Please note that the edit submission feature on JotForm has been updated. If you have already submitted the application, you will need to resubmit the application. If you have not, please note that you will be able to edit your submission moving forward up until the deadline. **No edits can be made after August 2021 at 11:59pm EAT.**

Letter of Support

29. Suppose you don't have a donor for the application, does the letter of support still hold?

If you are proposing a new project for which you seek funding from this competition, you will not need a donor letter. However, if your concept will be implemented as a new component of an existing program, the entity that funds said program must provide a letter of support.

30. For the letter of support must it be from a donor supporting a mental health project?

Not necessarily, the letter must be from a donor who is supporting the program your concept is based on. However, if your concept is based on a new project without that does not have donor funding, you will not need a letter of support. Please note that we do not need letters of support from all applicants as they are not part of the application review. The letter of support is to ensure that the current donor endorses a new funding.

31. Assuming we already have existing activities that are pending due to lack of funds. And basically, the funding has been mobilized locally. Do we still need to come with any letter of support?

If you are currently receiving funding for an ongoing project and are applying for Youth Excel to contribute funding to a new implementation research component of it, a letter of support from the current donor is required. Otherwise, a letter of support is not required at the concept note stage.

32. Can an implementing partner write/give the letter of support? (We are an implementing partner in an ongoing YOUTH MH innovation) - we are not in direct contact with the donor as we are sub-grant partners

The Prime/implementing partner in this case would be the entity to provide you with a letter of support.

33. The letter of support thing is still not clear, please re-wrap for once and at once for the last time



Applicants that have an **existing** donor-funded project and are applying for Youth Excel funding to add a new implementation research component to the project are required to provide a letter of support from their current donor for their Youth Excel concept note submission. Applicants that are applying for Youth Excel funding to fully support a **new** implementation research project are not required to submit a letter of support.

34. Can the organization which does not have a project take the letter of support to the government authority for acknowledgement?

The letter of support applies to organizations whose concept is based on an existing project. If you are proposing a new project, you will not be required to submit a letter of support from a donor.

Proof of Financial Capacity

35. If you have managed more than \$75,000, are you supposed to submit the documents?

Yes, you can submit documents showing you have managed more than \$75,000 as part of the 3-5 submissions in Section C on past performance, though the requirement is to show evidence of managing funds of \$25,000-\$75,000.

36. If I have never handled a project of \$75,000 but I have partnered with another organization handling a project close to that amount. Can I use this to qualify for the funding?

Yes. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

New/Start-up Organizations

37. We are a new organization in the field of mental health. We are currently aggressively looking for funding. If we are yet to receive grants, do we still qualify?

Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

38. Will you be disqualified if you have not managed other grants before?

Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

39. Startups with new ideas with no previous projects of the grant magnitude. What happens if they apply?

Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

40. What about newly registered organizations? With no funds received yet, can they still apply?



Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

41. What about new organization that legal registered but have not yet received fund from donor, in relation to your standard form.

Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

42. What about newly registered organization? With no funds received yet, can they still apply?

Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

43. Can a new organization apply in consortium with an old organization? or must all orgs approve financial capability?

Consortiums for the purposes of this grant are not allowable and thus will be disqualified.

Application

44. Can you submit more than one application?

No, you can only submit one application per organization.

45. On Part C of the application form on past performance, there's somewhere they ask you to share 3 to 5 donor funded projects, what does reference name entail & what if you only have one funder are you eligible?

Reference name refers to the name of the funder who awarded you the project you have listed.

46. I would like to know if we apply online or through email?

Submit your concept note online via JotForm <https://www.jotform.com/build/211944167938163> by 11th August 2021 at 11:59pm EAT.

47. The certification form is online, so should we bring the authorization officer on board before submitting the application?

The representative who is authorized to sign grant applications or official documents on behalf of your organization may electronically sign the certification section of the online concept note submission form.

Implementation

48. Can the receiving organization subgrant?

Subgranting is not allowable for this grant.

Other

49. Will regret emails be sent on 20th Aug?



Youth Excel will send out notifications to all applicants when the selection process is complete.

50. Are the 3-6 grantees per country?

No, this is the total number of grantees we will award for this competition.

51. Can one continue with webinars for learning purposes?

The webinars are intended to provide clarity for those who are planning to apply for the grant competition. However, you are welcome to attend.

52. Can a consultant support the development of more than one application for the grant competition?

Yes they can.

53. Which organization has benefited from the fund previously? It would be of use to understand the research model some of the organizations have.

This is the first grant of its kind we are running in the ESA region



USAID Youth Excel: Our Knowledge Leading Change Program Grant Competition
Using ‘Research-to-Change’ (Implementation Research)
to Strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial support for marginalized and vulnerable youth in East and Southern Africa
August 2, 2021, Webinar
Question and Answer

54. Can the proposed program be entirely digital?

Concept notes will not be disqualified based on mode of program delivery. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, we encourage digital approaches for your concept.

55. Is the organization eligible if 50% of the board is composed of two people, with one being under the age of 35?

Applicants that identify as youth-led or youth-serving organizations are eligible to apply, as per the following definitions listed in Section D of Annex I. Concept Note Template:

- Youth-led organization whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are predominantly under the age of 35, and who has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or support youth under age 35.
- Youth-serving organization that has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35.

Organizations with 50% or more leaders and board members who are under the age of 35 may identify as youth-led organizations.

56. Kindly advise on qualifying youth organizations with not more than three previous past performance projects

Part of the requirements is having managed donor funding similar to what you are proposing for your concept. You are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with partnership or independent funding will equip you to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

57. Do activities like distributing starter packs to youth groups in the form of tools etc. qualify under this call?

Yes, organizations may purchase supplies for use by participants in their proposed implementation research activity. All supplies must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable under USAID rules and regulations.

58. Does the grant pay for the monitoring, evaluation and documentation associated with the research process?



Yes, monitoring, evaluation and documentation costs can be supported by Youth Excel funding. Successful grantees will be supported by the IREX team to develop a comprehensive budget that covers allowable, allocable, and reasonable costs associated with the proposed concept.

59. Should the organization be strictly an NGO or any private business? Does my consultancy firm which is registered by the government eligible to apply?

Yes, all types of non-governmental and private organizations, including consultancy firms, that are registered with the local government are eligible to apply as long as they meet the other criteria in Section 2 of the Request for Concept Notes.

60. Are institutions that have never been given a grant by donors, eligible to apply?

Yes, applicants that have not received a grant from a donor may apply, and are encouraged to demonstrate how relevant past experiences with other funding will equip them to manage and implement Youth Excel funding.

61. Can newly formed NGOs that do not have prior funding but have good and effective technical capacity apply for this program?

Applicants must have experience managing 3-5 projects of similar size and scope that demonstrate their capacity to successfully implement the proposed concept.

62. If an organization does not have a bank account but is willing to open one, are they still eligible?

Yes.

63. Will you give a certificate for the webinar?

No, we will not.

64. Can you write a concept note for one person and the money to be given to the person?

No, individuals are not eligible for Youth Excel grant funding. Organizations that meet the criteria in Section 2 of the Request for Concept Notes may submit concept notes.

Questions from the August 2nd Webinar

Eligibility

65. Would you please elaborate on the type of organization this call is targeting? Do you need the organization to have been existing for a certain number of years? Have audited financial records etc.? Can you consider research institutions embedded in a university setting (I mean the university hosting the grant) for example?

Organizations that meet the criteria in Section 2 of the Request for Concept Notes may submit concept notes. Youth Excel will conduct risk assessments of finalist organizations at the last stage of the grant competition selection process. Research institutions and universities are eligible to apply.

66. What if our board of directors is full of people above 35 but work also with the youth with psychosocial disabilities?



Applicants that identify as youth-led or youth-serving organizations are eligible to apply, as per the following definitions listed in Section D of Annex I. Concept Note Template:

- Youth-led organization whose Chief Executive Officer or other leaders are under the age of 35, and whose Board of Directors are predominantly under the age of 35, and who has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or support youth under age 35.
- Youth-serving organization that has a mission, mandate, or programs with an expressed priority of serving or supporting youth under age 35.

Applicants are not required to meet the definition of a youth-led organization if they meet the definition of a youth-serving organization.

67. Can a community-based organization that has just existed for six months also apply for the funding?

Yes, CBOs are eligible to apply

68. I have a CBO that has just started, and I have not implemented any project can I apply?

Applicants must have experience managing 3-5 projects of similar size and scope that demonstrate their capacity to successfully implement the proposed concept.

Research-to-Change

69. What is the difference between "Human Centered Design" and Research to Change"?

Research-to-change is not bound to any one methodology or approach. It draws from any form of data gathering that has the specific goal of strengthening programs within context. If Human Centered Design is being used to gather data that strengthens programs, then it also can be considered as Research-to-Change.

70. Should the research to change be budgeted for in all the stages and can an organization use all the stages or can choose one of the three stages?

You are encouraged to select the research-to-change stage that is most relevant for the project you are including in the concept note application. Organizations will conduct research-to-change over the life of the project and all associated costs should be included in the budget.

Start Ups

71. The application asks for 3-5 donor funded projects to establish capacity. Are start-ups ineligible? We have been running a girls' empowerment initiative in Eswatini for six months and are focused on providing psychosocial supports as well as hands-on business skills. As a new organization, are we eligible?

Applicants must have experience managing 3-5 projects of similar size and scope that demonstrate their capacity to successfully implement the proposed concept.

Application

72. Are we expected to receive an email notification once an application is submitted?
unfortunately, I didn't get a notification after my submission

Applicants who applied prior to August 5, 2021 would not have received a confirmation email. Applicants would have seen a “thank you” page after submission, noting that your submission has been received. Please note that the submission feature has been enabled on the form, and applicants will now receive confirmation emails to the email listed on the form.

73. Is it okay to use previously used methodologies in previous programs to enhance or implement this project?

Yes, applicants may propose previously used or new methodologies. If previous data gathering methodologies support or are aligned with using the Research-to-Change approach in your project then that is allowable. If an organization has a previous program that they would like to learn more about using Research-to-Change, they can implement this previous program in a new setting or in a new way while gathering data to strengthen their work in real-time.

74. Participatory selection: eligible participants will be invited to review 3 concepts notes. How does their recommendations affect an organization concept note selection for funding?

As per Section 4 (2) of the Request for Concept Notes, the recommendations of applicants from the participatory selection process will be shared with the Youth Excel review panel to take into consideration during decision-making.

Proof of Financial Capacity

75. On matters regarding financial eligibility - to show that you have handled projects worth \$25,000 and above. Is this only based on donor funding worth the amount or internal organization contribution amounting to that amount or more still qualifies?

Annex I. Concept Note Template, Part C. Past Performance requires applicants to list 3-5 donor-funded projects of similar size and scope that demonstrate your organization’s capacity to successfully implement the proposed concept. You may list relevant past projects of any amount, which may include donor and cost share contributions. You are not required to have experience managing over \$25,000.

76. Can community organizations doing great work have not necessarily handled 25k+USD in cash. I see this requirement being counterproductive in terms of being more inclusive in who can bid and apply for such opportunities. How can this be made more possible to elicit more participation from smaller organizations?

Annex I. Concept Note Template, Part C. Past Performance requires applicants to list 3-5 donor-funded projects of similar size and scope that demonstrate your organization’s capacity to successfully implement the proposed concept. You may list relevant past projects of any amount, which may include donor and cost share contributions. You are not required to have experience managing over \$25,000.



77. We have received grants-in-kind in terms of volunteers and personnel from partner organizations. Can this count towards the 25,000 grants?

Annex I. Concept Note Template, Part C. Past Performance requires applicants to list 3-5 donor-funded projects of similar size and scope that demonstrate your organization's capacity to successfully implement the proposed concept. You may list relevant past projects of any amount, which may include donor and cost share contributions. You are not required to have experience managing over \$25,000.

Consortium/Joint/Group applications

78. If you are a new entity, can you partner with existing organization who has capacity?

Consortiums for the purposes of this grant are not allowable and thus will be disqualified.

79. Are consortia allowed in submitting the concept?

Consortiums for the purposes of this grant are not allowable and thus will be disqualified.

Grant Opportunity Information

80. How many awards/grants are you intending to give out?

We anticipate awarding 3-6 subawards subject to the availability of funds.

Other

81. Do you also award funding to projects in the area of economic development/economic empowerment?

Economic development/empowerment projects related to the theme of using 'Research-to-Change' (Implementation Research) to Strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial support for marginalized and vulnerable youth in East and Southern Africa may be funded by this grant competition.

In addition, Youth Excel offers a variety of cross-sectoral, positive youth development funding opportunities around the world. Please follow Youth Excel on [Facebook](#), check back on the [Youth Excel](#) site, or sign up for our [mailing list](#).

82. How soon can we receive this recording since the deadline is just around the corner?

Webinar slides, recording, and Q&A document will be emailed out to those who registered for the webinar and posted on August 4, 2021 on <https://www.irex.org/program/seeking-concept-notes-strengthening-youths-mental-health-east-africa-and-southern-africa>

83. How long will today's webinar take to be shared with us participants



Webinar slides, recording, and Q&A document will be emailed out to those who registered for the webinar and posted on August 4, 2021 on <https://www.irex.org/program/seeking-concept-notes-strengthening-youths-mental-health-east-africa-and-southern-africa>