

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Consultancy- Humanitarian Nutrition Research**

#### **Background**

HelpAge International is a registered charity in the UK, leading an international network focused on ageing issues and supporting older people globally. HelpAge works with 171 partners in 90 countries to help older people claim their rights and challenge discrimination and poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives. HelpAge operates through a Global Team with staff based across the world. Through this structure HelpAge delivers its Strategy 2030.

HelpAge International works with and for older people in emergencies, including the direct provision of humanitarian and recovery assistance and a leading role to promote the integration of ageing issues in policy and practice with the broader humanitarian community.

#### **Overview**

HelpAge and other research has consistently shown that failure to include older people in humanitarian response leaves them at serious risk of hunger, malnutrition, dehydration, exposure to the elements, illness, and even death. Humanitarian programs frequently use a blanket and centralized approach that does not include older people or respond to their differential needs. Nutrition responses in particular almost always focus on children and women of childbearing age, without addressing the specific nutritional needs of older people. They are rarely included in nutritional assessments, decision-making about nutrition response requirements, or programme design. As a result, programmes frequently do not include them or assess their needs adequately. Nutrition responses typically do not consider the diversity of experience of older people and the differing needs and circumstances of sub-groups who are more at risk, such as older people with disabilities, older women, older caregivers and older displaced people. There is also often no consideration of the potential impact that poor nutrition can have on older people directly, their families (e.g. caregivers), and the wider local and national healthcare systems which will be further stretched if older people do not get the food and nutrition they need. The reasons that older people are typically overlooked in nutrition responses vary and include a lack of knowledge and awareness among health and nutrition organisations of the specific nutritional risk factors for older people, a lack of widely agreed criteria to measure malnutrition (in this case meaning under nutrition) in older people, and an assumption that older people are adequately taken care of within their communities, which may not be the case.

HelpAge International seeks support to assess how well older people's nutritional needs are understood, how information on older people's nutrition status is being

gathered and used, and how effective nutrition clusters and cluster partners around the world are at including older people in their responses.

### **Purpose**

The primary purpose of the proposed research is to deepen our understanding of the barriers and enablers to inclusion of older people in nutrition cluster responses to humanitarian crises. It is anticipated that this research will generate evidence that will be used to assist nutrition practitioners, in addition to supporting HelpAge advocacy in promoting the identification of at-risk older people and ensuring their inclusion in nutrition cluster response plans. In addition, the research should inform and reinforce wider communications and advocacy on older people as an overlooked and neglected population group in humanitarian crises around the world.

### **Target audience**

The report will be targeted at the humanitarian community, including the Global Nutrition Cluster, national clusters and cluster coordinators, UN, I/NGOs, donors, civil society and government stakeholders working in the area of humanitarian nutrition, as well as humanitarian actors more broadly. The resulting report will need to be authoritative but use simple, non-technical language accessible to a wide range of technical and non-technical audiences, including the media. All sources used should be documented. The report will incorporate case studies, quotes and photos in order to bring the human story to the data.

### **Research focus**

The research will:

- Map and assess nutrition responses globally to determine:
  - if there is knowledge and awareness among nutrition cluster actors of older peoples' diverse and differing nutritional needs related to their context;
  - if sex, age and disability disaggregated data is being collected, analysed, reported and used in nutrition responses,
  - if older people's nutritional status is recognised as a concern;
  - if older people are therefore included in nutrition programming, and if not, what barriers there are to accessing to nutrition services and facilities;
  - if particular sub-groups of older people are being identified as being more at risk of under nutrition.

For those responses that do include older people, the research will:

- Provide an analysis of the benefits of including older people in targeting of supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes – including impact on mortality/morbidity, behaviour of older people (e.g. eating habits, spending on food), family/intergenerational

- dynamics (e.g. reduction in older people prioritising food for others; reduction in caregivers restricting food provision to older people);
  - Examine how cluster nutrition partners overcome the challenges of measuring malnutrition in older people;
  - Explore whether health indicators are a gauge for under nutrition, and highlight collaboration with health clusters/cluster partners on the management of chronic health conditions, including “food as medicine”;
  - Highlight successes as well as activities and approaches to be replicated; indicate where adjustments may be necessary.
  - Reflect on what contributes to the inclusion of older people in nutrition responses – which stakeholders are relevant, what information is required.
  - Examine whether nutrition responses support the engagement and participation of older people and incorporate their perspectives and experiences in plans, programmes and monitoring;
  - Examine what sustainable solutions are proposed for older people once nutrition programmes come to an end.
- Propose recommendations that will increase the inclusion of older people in nutrition responses globally and sustainable solutions to respond to the nutritional needs of older people.

### **Scope of Work**

It is anticipated that the research would include the following elements:

- Desk research including analysis of global, regional and national Nutrition Cluster documents, HelpAge documents, as well as nutrition assessments, sitreps, survey results, planning and response documents from other organisations working in the area of nutrition.
- Interviews with key informants involved in humanitarian nutrition coordination and response.
- In depth case studies in 2-3 contexts to identify concrete gaps, common issues and opportunities to strengthen inclusion of older people.
- Interviews/focus group discussions with older people included in nutrition programmes.

Interested consultants are very welcome to propose alternative or adjusted methodologies that meet the purpose and scope of the study.

### **Deliverables**

The final deliverable for this project will be a draft report of 15-20 pages, including Executive Summary, which is suitable for online dissemination and presentation at public events. The report should include:

- Commentary on current practices, challenges and consequences
- Opportunities to strengthen practice.
- Recommendations/call to action

## **Timelines**

The research is expected to commence in April 2023 and conclude with a final report for dissemination in August of 2023. Interim deadlines to be agreed.

## **Management**

This consultancy will report into the Humanitarian Advocacy Adviser but will be supported by an advisory group which will meet regularly with the selected consultant, including through an inception phase and at key milestones (agreed at inception) to help plan, guide and review the work.

## **Skills and experience**

### **Essential**

- Primary degree(s) or equivalent professional experience in relevant field(s);
- Familiarity with international humanitarian response and coordination structures, with an understanding of key issues affecting older people;
- Knowledge and/or experience of humanitarian nutrition programming;
- Experience in developing research reports, that require the ability to synthesise and present quantitative and qualitative analyses;
- Strong written communication skills, including the ability to summarise and present complex information in a simple, clear and concise way;

### **Desirable**

- Demonstrable in-depth knowledge of ageing and the rights and needs of older people;

## **Equal Opportunities**

HelpAge International is committed to creating an inclusive working environment, promoting and providing equal opportunities and respecting diversity in employment. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified individuals regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

## **Safeguarding**

Everyone has a role in creating and sustaining a safe and respectful working environment, where no one comes to any harm or is maltreated. At HelpAge we take our responsibilities very seriously and will take action against wrongdoing. We will do everything we can to ensure that we do not engage people that pose a safeguarding risk and will undertake criminal record checks as required.

## **Diversity & Inclusion**

HelpAge International is dedicated to creating a diverse and inclusive environment for all its employees/consultants while extending the culture of inclusion into our work.

We believe that our workforce should reflect the wide diversity of the communities we serve, and that diverse voices should be elevated and intentionally integrated into our work. We embrace difference and diversity of identity, experience, and thought, and actively strive for inclusive behaviors across our organization and work regardless of gender, race, disability, age, nationality, ethnic/national origin, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, marital status, pregnancy, social status, and political beliefs.