



Request for Tender – Mental Health Researcher

AkiDwa invites tenders from a qualified person to conduct research for a baseline study of the mental health needs of migrant women and the services available to them. The successful applicant will also deliver a series of informal psychosocial support and art therapy sessions in a culturally sensitive manner, following from recommendations made in the report.

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2001, AkiDwa is an ethnic minority-led national network of migrant women living in Ireland. The organisation advocates for migrant women's equal rights in Irish society, free of gender and racial stereotyping. In partnership with others, AkiDwa uses a holistic and gender-specific approach to promote migrant women's integration and provides them support for access to mainstream services and initiatives.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

To advance the work of the organisation mainly on women's health and migrant integration and to help implement AkiDwa's new strategic plan 2019-2021, and thanks to funding from Tusla, Ireland's Child and Family Agency, AkiDwa has launched a research project on the mental health of migrant women, with a view to piloting a series of informal psychosocial support and art therapy sessions in a culturally sensitive manner.

Migration can often be stressful and negatively impact upon a person's mental health. Leaving one's home and adapting to a new environment, culture and life presents challenges. Refugees and migrants have a particularly difficult task of integrating in a new country and culture, and they may face negative attitudes, prejudices or discrimination which could undermine and hinder their efforts for integration leading to social exclusion which is a modifiable risk factor for mental disorders. Many refugee women living in Ireland have fled from extreme violence and persecution in their home country. Upon resettlement, refugee women have to deal with the loss of support systems, gender based violence, loss of personal livelihood and culture and sometimes poverty and unemployment.

The mental health of migrant and refugee women is therefore compounded by many and complex factors resulting in disorders such as depression, anxiety, trauma, stress disorder and mental breakdown. Medical intervention is available in Ireland, non-medical support is equally important in fostering and promoting women's own coping mechanisms. Since March 2018, AkiDwa has been providing informal group talk therapy using a psychosocial approach, known as Let's Talk.

RATIONALE

AkiDwa has developed and planned the Let's Talk project of psychosocial support for migrant and refugee women. In order to assure that we are meeting the needs of our intended clients, we require someone with the expertise to conduct research on issues relating to mental health. This person will have the experience and skills to gather testimonials from migrant women and the service providers who help them, delivering conclusions on how we can best develop our pilot project.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

We require the support of a consultant to conduct a baseline study on the mental health and access to mental health services of migrant women in Ireland, in particular recent arrivals under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. The consultant will also deliver psychosocial group sessions and art therapy sessions to migrant women. This is a limited term consultancy.

Through interviews and focus groups with migrant and refugee women, the researcher will establish the mental health related needs of these women, from a service provider's perspective, a social perspective and transcultural perspective. Further, the researcher should conduct desk research and consult with service providers and relevant advocacy organisations to establish what mechanisms for support are already available to these women.

A report of the findings shall be produced, alongside recommendations for AkiDwa's pilot programme, Let's Talk, on how we can best meet the needs of refugee women with stress or trauma related needs. This report and its recommendations will feed directly into the delivery of ten sessions of informal psychosocial support and ten art therapy sessions, meeting the needs of migrant women in an evidence-based and culturally sensitive manner.

TASKS OF THE CONSULTANT

- Meet with migrant women and conduct interviews and focus groups to formulate a baseline assessment of their mental health needs
- Discuss with local service providers to identify support mechanisms and measures
- Produce report of findings with recommendations for Let's Talk pilot sessions
- Work with AkiDwa staff to plan and facilitate ten group talk therapy sessions and ten art therapy sessions.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

- Draft report of initial findings from fieldwork, delivered to the Policy & Research Officer
- Final report of the baseline study, with recommendations for our pilot programme, Let's Talk
- Delivery of ten group therapy sessions, and ten art therapy sessions



TIME FRAME

After recruitment, the consultant will be expected to begin field research in June. Final report is to be delivered in September. The full series of therapy sessions will commence in October and delivered before the end of the calendar year.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

- A qualification in a relevant discipline (e.g., psychology, social science, mental health)
- At least two years post relevant professional research experience
- Experience of facilitating group talk sessions
- Track record of high quality research outputs and proven ability to coordinate delivery of a research project
- Experience of conducting focus groups and interviews
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and the capacity to write / present for multiple audiences
- Strong computer and data analysis skills including the Microsoft Office suite, and database management (SPSS)
- Experience working with migrants / good knowledge of migrant and gender issues, possessing the ability to work effectively in a cross-cultural environment
- Ability to effectively prioritise and organise own workloads and operate under pressure
- Adhere to the anti-racist and feminist ethos and philosophy of AkiDWA and work from human rights and equality perspective

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN TENDER RESPONSE

1. Researcher name, address, telephone and email
2. Current CV, including experience, qualifications and/or publications
3. An outline of proposed methodology for the project, including timeline milestones for the project deliverables.
4. The names of two professional references, stating your working relationship and contact details. References will not be contacted unless the tender is successful.

Note: If submitting your application by email, please save all documents in PDF format.



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APPLICATION

Please submit your request for tender by **12pm on Friday 24th May**. Submissions or queries can be made by email at PR_officer@akidwa.ie or by post to:

AkiDwa Policy & Research Officer
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