

Company Profile - GK Consulting, LLC

Background

GK Consulting LLC is a female-owned and operated small business that specializes in social research and project management in international development around the world. The company has a strong commitment to effective, results-driven social research that is of the highest caliber, and which integrates the appropriate balance of the academic and the practical, depending on the client's needs. The firm also prides itself in strict adherence to ethical research with human subjects, as prescribed by the American Sociological Foundation (ASA) in addition to specific country-level guidelines set by the client. Experts at GK Consulting have worked on contracts for corporations, governments, multilateral funding agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and independent researchers. With an impressive database of consultants, GK Consulting can guarantee well-organized teams and individuals with ample experience and drive, carefully selected for each individual project.

GK Consulting was established and registered as a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) in Massachusetts, USA in August 2012. It is a registered vendor for the World Bank, Millennium Challenge Corporation, the US Federal Government (FBO, SBA), and the Cadmus Group. The firm is covered by Professional Liability and General Liability policies.

Organization and Management

GK Consulting was founded by Gwendolyn Heaner, PhD, who serves as Managing Director and lead researcher/project manager in most GK Consulting projects. She has over ten years of experience in social research in international development. She obtained her PhD in the social sciences with a focus on social change in Liberia, where she conducted more than a year of ethnographic research throughout the country in 2007-8. She has since held numerous social research consultancies in the region and elsewhere (assignments range from serving as 9-country evaluation manager to single-region ethnographer) for a range of organizations such as UNICEF, Sida, UNWomen, The Millennium Challenge Corporation, USAID, Plan UK, World Bank, Oxfam GB, ArcelorMittal Liberia, and smaller entities (local NGOs and start-up INGOs). She has recruited, hired, trained (virtually and in-country) and managed field teams for nine separate projects quantitatively and qualitatively measuring baseline, midline, or endline evaluation indicators. She has worked within the capacity constraints of local offices to develop effective programme-wide monitoring and evaluation strategies and conducted exhaustive desk and field research to inform future programme planning and development of refined research methodologies. She has also worked on assessments of advocacy programming, requiring her to deal with fluid and 'hard to measure' indicators such as decision-making, capacity, empowerment, confidence, well-being, livelihoods, values, and power, particularly among women and young people. Her work deals with a variety of sectors in international development, including social safeguards in infrastructure and mining, access to finance (micro), agriculture, education, and human rights/gender policy.

GK Consulting has four part-time support staff, and Senior Consultants specializing in East/Central Africa, Asia, and West Africa, along with a Senior Quantitative Analyst / RCT specialist, and is active in contracting consultants on a project-to-project basis. GK Consulting's roster includes more than fifty fully vetted consultants around the world with whom the company has recently worked.

Areas of expertise:

- Social welfare / social protection
- Education
- Gender / Women's Empowerment
- Participation / Civic Engagement
- Peace-building
- Infrastructure / service delivery / WASH
- Agriculture
- Extractive Industries
- Emergencies (natural disasters, conflict, public health)

Areas of service:

- Research Design, Implementation and Analysis – Qualitative, Quantitative (including quasi experimental and RCT)
- Participatory research
- Capacity building (NGO, government, business)
- Social Impact Assessments (Baseline, Midline, Final; ESIA, PEAs)
- Development of social accountability mechanisms; social safeguards
- Development of monitoring tools and strategies
- Database Development and Management (for qualitative and quantitative data)
- Project Management and Technical Assistance for multi-country evaluations
- Training module development (videos, presentations, manuals)
- Training and workshop facilitation (virtual or in-country)
- Desk Reviews / Literature reviews
- Proposal-writing

2013/2014 Clients

- Hifab for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Indvelop for UNWomen
- Millennium Challenge Corporation
- Plan UK (3 separate contracts)
- The Cadmus Group for USAID
- Indvelop for UNICEF
- The World Bank

Geographical Areas

- **Sub-Saharan Africa** (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Mali, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Zimbabwe)
- **Asia** (Pakistan, Cambodia, India, China)
- **Latin America** (El Salvador, Brazil)

Relevant project experience

GK Consulting specializes in rigorous social research, with a strong emphasis on locally conducted and context-specific mixed-methods fieldwork and evaluation.

Funding Organization: Plan UK / Credit Suisse

Thematic Area: Gender, Economic Empowerment, Youth, Financial Literacy

Geographical Focus: Rwanda, Brazil, China, India

Baseline Evaluation on Plan UK (funded by Credit Suisse) programme on Financial and Life Skills Education for adolescent girls and boys in India, Rwanda, China and Brazil. Responsible for all aspects of the quantitative and qualitative research design (to be used for baseline, midline and end line), implementation and analysis, including sampling, designing data collection tools, coordinating data collection in the field and ensuring quality of data, and analysing a large amount of qualitative and quantitative data, in research methods and providing clear guidance on the future evaluation strategy of the project. Preparing each country-level M&E strategy/tools to complement baseline data collection to inform key performance indicators / outcome indicators. Training, managing and providing QA of local consultants in each country office who will conduct the on-the-ground fieldwork; assisting in their country-level analysis and reporting.

Funding Organization: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Thematic Area: Gender, Economic Empowerment, Household Enterprises, Infrastructure, SGBV, Livelihoods

Geographical Focus: Liberia

Liberian – Swedish Feed Roads Project. Getting women-to-work and establishing GBV safeguards. Background research to further understand the actual prevalence of sexual and/or gender-based violence in communities with increased accessibility/mobility on roads, including who perpetrators and victims are (i.e. does prevalence increase as a result of increased interaction with strangers/ crime overall or does prevalence decrease as a result of increased sensitization and access to justice/police; understand how GBV prevalence is affected by the temporary phases of road construction. Then, planning a pilot project that looks toward sustainable solutions for mitigating any negative consequences and maximizing any benefits. Evaluating the pilot project, refining the project and then rolling out to other roads throughout the country.

Funding Organization: The World Bank

Thematic Area: Youth Employment, Economic Empowerment, Household Enterprises, Education, Livelihoods

Geographical Focus: Liberia

The World Bank: Jobs and Job Creation in Fragile and Conflict States, focus on Liberia. The Liberia case study would pilot the implementation of a data collection toolkit to improve the understanding of the constraints to household enterprise productivity in Liberia. The key research question is: *What are the opportunities for and constraints to non-farm household enterprises in Liberia?* The toolkit would use the framework and findings of the new regional flagship report, *Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa*, to develop a data collection toolkit. Responsible for: a) Draft a literature review, toolkit questionnaires, and work plan/research methodology; b) Finalize the toolkit questionnaires; c) Supervise and provide guidance to the research team to field the toolkit in a minimum of four communities in Liberia, d) Draft a report on household enterprises in Liberia; e) Provide feedback to the World Bank Task Team on the adaptation of the toolkit questionnaires for broader implementation

Funding Organization: UNWomen

Thematic Area: Microfinance, Gender, Economic Empowerment, Household Enterprises, Livelihoods

Geographical Focus: Liberia

Partnership with Indevalop (Sweden) for UNWomen: Women's economic, social and security status; Peace Building Fund Projects in Liberia. Baseline evaluation. The economic empowerment project invests in women to consolidate peace and build prosperity in Liberia's at risk communities by increasing the economic security of at least 4,000 women and girls, improving the relationship between regional traders and the security sector, and increasing women's participation in the management of community natural resources and land. Design, testing and finalization of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to collect all necessary data for the indicators (both outcome and output); collection of baseline data in 5 targeted areas (sample size of 1500 people; qualitative research in 5 communities); development of database with qualitative and quantitative data; analysis of baseline data with report on the findings.

Funding Organization: Plan UK / DFID

Thematic Area: Education, Child Rights, Gender, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Livelihoods, Alternative and Non-formal Education

Geographical Focus: Liberia
Plan UK: Building Skills 4 Life Year 3 Evaluation – Providing key inputs to refinement of quantitative tools, and close oversight of quantitative consultant for 9-country mixed-methods evaluation of young women's empowerment (Sierra Leone, Malawi, Mali, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cambodia, Pakistan, El Salvador, Rwanda), to generate overall program-wide progress against outcomes, numeric outcome indicators and from previous baseline/MTE results. Integrating quantitative analysis on attitudes to girls' education, child labour, financial barriers to access education, non-formal education centres, quality of education, violence in schools, school governance, access to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) services, into meta-analysis. Designing all qualitative data collection tools (specific to each country's unique interventions), conducting virtual training and preparing training videos, developing qualitative database with built-in analysis tools to help local consultants in reporting, providing three rounds of comments on country reports to ensure high-quality deliverables to country offices. Accountable for the meta-analysis; ensuring evaluation delivers actionable and evidenced programmatic recommendation on the scope, adequacy, appropriateness and sustainability of the program strategies and delivery modalities. Using 9-country qualitative and quantitative data for meta-analysis of entire program

Funding Organization: Plan UK / DFID

Thematic Area: Education, Gender, Child Rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Livelihoods, Alternative Education

Geographical Focus: Liberia

Plan UK: Girls' Education Challenge Baseline Evaluation, Sierra Leone – Primary firm for quasi-experimental three-wave (baseline, midline, endline) evaluation consisting qualitative and quantitative research across five districts (144 communities) in rural Sierra Leone, targeting 1440 households (adult and girl questionnaire completed in each); 6500 girls for learning assessments, managing field team of 21 persons over two months. Baseline completed 2013; midline will occur in 2015 and endline in 2017. For baseline, G Heaner served as project manager, team leader, and primary researcher and analyst. Responsible for refining quantitative surveys, programming electronic data entry devices (Magpi), training field team on random sampling and administration of questionnaires, providing on-going QA to

3 field teams, virtual data maintenance and preliminary analysis, analysis and reporting on data (using Excel and SPSS), preparing report, providing key inputs to programme logframe and M & E framework as related to project's long-term goals and outcomes, based on baseline data collected. In addition to above, responsible for designing and finalizing all qualitative research instruments (focus group discussions, key informant interviews, case study guidance) as related to long-term project outcomes, training field team; analysis and reporting of findings. During project implementation, sitting on advisory board for ongoing M&E

Funding Organization: UNICEF

Thematic Area: Education, Gender, Child Rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Livelihoods, Alternative Education

Geographical Focus: Liberia

Partnership with Indvelop (Sweden) for UNICEF Liberia Baseline evaluation on Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), focusing on reaching out to young people to help instil peace at the community-level; providing alternative education for older students and at-risk youth. Designing quantitative instruments and monitoring and evaluation tools and methodology; training field team; analysis of quantitative data; preparation of baseline and M&E training materials. Designing qualitative instruments and monitoring and evaluation tools and methodology; training field team; design of qualitative database and analysis tools for use by Unicef staff for life of the programme; analysis of qualitative data; preparation of baseline and M&E training materials

Funding Organization: Millennium Challenge Corporation

Thematic Area: Gender, Economic Empowerment, Micro and small enterprises (MSMEs), Microfinance, Household enterprises, Livelihoods, Marginalisation

Geographical Focus: Liberia

Provides social and gender expertise on compact development processes with ultimate goal to contribute to private sector development through international trade and thereby reduce poverty, create jobs, and improve human welfare in Liberia. Conducting field visits and desk review for preparation of a Social and Gender Analysis to complement the Constraints to Economic Growth Analysis for Liberia MCC Compact Process

Funding Organization: The Cadmus Group / USAID

Thematic Area: Gender, Socioeconomic Impact, Livelihoods, Agriculture, Infrastructure (Roads), Cultural Heritage

Geographical Focus: Liberia

For the Cadmus Group, GK Consulting provided expertise in social impact through planning and executing qualitative fieldwork for scoping exercise and subsequent programmatic environmental assessment for USAID-funded rural road repair project in Liberia. Developed mitigation strategies and ensure alignment with USAID and Liberia EPA regulations; liaising with government, civil society, donor agencies and communities during development of mitigation strategies and 'user-friendly' toolboxes for ongoing research to be conducted given capacity constraints of in-country staff