



Request for Partners

What works for more respectful development?

IDinsight is looking for partners to quantitatively study Dignity-focused program interventions

May 2024

Executive Summary

IDinsight's Dignity Initiative, is excited to announce a Request for Partners (RFP) for an innovative and transformative project. We are seeking a values-aligned, data-driven, and dynamic implementation partner to join us on a pioneering journey to uphold and integrate the concept of dignity within the global development sector.

The concept of dignity in development recognizes the intrinsic value of every person and the importance of respecting and upholding this value in development work. Respecting dignity therefore involves moving beyond traditional metrics of success to include the well-being and self-worth of individuals and communities as key indicators of progress. This approach suggests that when interventions are designed with dignity at their core, they are more likely to be sustainable, effective, and transformative.

This partnership will focus on conducting a pivotal quantitative study to understand what interventions and tools can further advance the upholding of dignity in the development sector. Through this partnership, the Dignity Initiative aims to conduct a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to evaluate the effectiveness of various dignity interventions and tools. We are looking for a partner who is passionate about the power of dignity in development, brings expertise in implementing field-level operations, and is striving to become a thought leader in the sector.

Together, we will design and pilot effective interventions and generate rigorous evidence to improve the dignity approach both within our organizations and externally. These learnings we develop collectively will further lay the groundwork for a global movement that advocates for a dignified approach to development. We are committed to fostering a collaborative environment where ongoing communication and mutual respect will be the cornerstones of our partnership as equals. We invite expressions of interest from organizations ready to embark on this transformative journey with us. Together, let's shape a development sector that truly honors the dignity of every individual.

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1. Introduction

Dignity is “a trait universal to all humans, which is inalienable, inherent, and unearned. Recognizing a person's dignity requires us to treat them in a way that respects their dignity.” (Wein, Lanthorn & Fischer, 2022).

Dignity matters to all peoples but has a distinct meaning in various cultures. However, research shows that around the world, there are three common pathways for being more respectful of people's dignity: increased representation, ensuring agency, and reduced inequality (Wein, 2021). Informed by this understanding, the Dignity Initiative at IDinsight aims to uphold people's dignity in global development and international aid. The Initiative provides tools, advice, and new research to support leaders to build programs, services, and funding streams that affirm the dignity of those they seek to serve.

The evolving landscape of dignity in development has presented both challenges and opportunities. There is a new collective recognition emerging in the sector of the critical role that dignity plays in guiding the development sector in a more humane and ethical direction. To build on our efforts, we see a further urgency to identify and advocate for actionable steps that organizations can implement to uphold dignity within their operations and programs. Most importantly, it is crucial that we support these recommendations with solid data and evidence.

This call for evidence was highlighted when practitioners in the field of dignity came together and built a [consensus research agenda](#) in November 2022. To this end, in a next step in our agenda, we embark on testing “what works” by conducting a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) designed to provide empirical data and evidence on the impact of various dignity-focused interventions.

2. Study Objectives

The main objectives of the RCT are as follows:

1. Measure the effectiveness of a package of dignity-focused interventions in increasing the felt respect for dignity among program participants.
2. Provide actionable insights and feedback that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the dignity interventions.
3. Generate evidence to guide the Dignity Initiative's future program design and policy recommendations.

2.1 Research Question

The central research question for this RCT is:

"Does a package of dignity-focused interventions lead to an increase in felt respect for dignity of the program participants?"

This question will guide the study design, data collection, and analysis.

To answer this question we will explore a few components:

- Measurement of changes in self-reported levels of felt respect for dignity among the intervention group versus a control group.
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of how dignity impacts other dimensions of well-being including the benefits to individuals, the program and society.
- Gain deeper understanding of particular aspects of the interventions that are most effective at enhancing dignity.

3. Scope of Collaboration

The implementation partner identified through this RFP will play a critical role in the execution of the RCT. The scope of collaboration includes a comprehensive set of tasks and responsibilities that the partner will undertake to ensure the successful implementation and evaluation of the interventions.

The aim of this section is to outline the anticipated scope of collaboration and set expectations for the partnership. It is intended as a flexible framework rather than a rigid set of procedural guidelines. We aspire to build this partnership on open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to achieving the objectives of the study. A larger focus will be placed on co-creating and co-leading the study and its related activities.

3.1 Expectations from the Implementation Partner

The implementation partner will be expected to:

- Participate in the selection of a package of dignity interventions from the possible intervention list that is feasible to be implemented in their own programs.
- Collaborate with IDinsight in finalizing the intervention designs and ensuring they are culturally and contextually appropriate, including through small scale pilots if required.

- Participate in the development of and in managing a detailed project plan, including timelines, milestones, and resource allocation.
- Recruit and/or train program field staff to deliver the interventions ensuring adherence to ethical standards and research protocols.
- Implement the interventions according to the agreed-upon methodology, maintaining high fidelity to the intervention design.
- Develop a regular progress report mechanism with IDinsight to keep track of challenges encountered and adjustments made.
- Support the data collection and analysis of the data and the dissemination of findings.

3.2 Description of the Work to be Performed

The work to be performed by the implementation partner will include:

- **Co-designing:** Developing the interventions and adapting it to the required contexts.
- **Staff Training:** Preparing and conducting training sessions for implementation staff.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Coordinating with local stakeholders and community leaders to facilitate the smooth delivery of interventions.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Monitoring the progress of the interventions and making necessary adjustments.
- **Results and Analysis:** Supporting IDinsight in the interpretation of results and preparation of reports and publications.

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

We envision to divide roles and responsibilities as follows:

IDinsight will:

- Design the RCT methodology and develop the study design
- Support adapting existing tools and resources to be more context-specific
- Provide overall guidance and oversight during the implementation of the interventions
- Provide required technical support
- Analyze data and disseminate findings.

Implementation Partner will:

- Finalize the design of the intervention and adapt it into the required contexts

- Pilot a short-list of selected interventions as required
- Integrate a final package of dignity-focused interventions into their programming (for a select-study area)
- Implement the adapted program in agreed-upon study areas over the course of the study period
- Support data collection and preliminary data management.
- Maintaining responsible communication channels with the participants
- Communicating any changes and developments on the ground that may affect the RCT measurement and outcomes.

3.4 Benefits for the Partner

Conducting this study offers the implementation partner a unique set of advantages that will not only benefit the current program but also provide a foundation for future growth and leadership in the sector. The three key benefits include:

1. **Program Improvement through Participant Insights:** The implementation partner will have the unique opportunity to directly incorporate participant experiences and perceptions into their program development.
2. **Capacity Building:** Engaging in the design and execution of an RCT study is a significant capacity-building opportunity for the implementation partner. This knowledge transfer is a long-term investment in the partner's team, equipping them with the skills necessary to independently conduct similar research or evaluations.
3. **Thought Leadership in the Dignity Movement:** By collaborating with IDinsight and potentially other partners in the sector, the implementation partner positions itself as a thought leader in the dignity movement. As a thought leader, the implementation partner will have the opportunity to influence the sector, share best practices, and contribute to the global conversation on dignity.

Additionally, for organizations that are already planning an RCT for their own program, we believe this dignity study can offer an even greater opportunity. The study can be easily integrated as an extra arm for the existing research method. This will ensure the partners gain more insights to their program especially on participant experiences and their preferences. We are happy to co-design this research with the partner and adapt the study into the context as required.

4. Possible Intervention List

Through in-depth discussions, the Dignity Initiative would like to align with the implementation partner on a list of feasible interventions to implement from a shortlisted set. This initial shortlist was created through a methodical process, starting with a comprehensive review of the available literature to identify ideas for potential interventions. From there, we engaged a diverse group of development professionals to prioritize these options, resulting in the current shortlist.

The interventions differ in terms of their engagement approach and the program phases during which they are applied. This intervention list, and some additional context and information about each intervention, is presented in Table 1 below. Partners are encouraged to use this list as a guide to assess the practicality of incorporating a selection of these interventions into their current or planned programs.

Our goal is to combine a robust set of interventions into a program and to evaluate their collective impact on improving the upholding of dignity for the program participants. The final design of these interventions, and how they can be implemented, will be co-designed with the implementation partner based on feasibility and relevance.

Table 1: Intervention Shortlist

	Intervention	Context
1	Polling what types of services, support and/or interventions program recipients would most welcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding community needs is critical for the success of any development program. Traditional needs assessments may not always capture individual preferences or may overlook minority opinions. Polling offers a direct and democratic approach to ascertain community priorities, potentially leading to more effective and appreciated interventions.
2	Participatory co-design workshops with potential recipients to discuss and provide feedback on program design before it is implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory co-design workshops are vital in tailoring programs that meet the actual needs and constraints of recipients, increasing the likelihood of success. Evidence shows this approach not only improves outcomes but also reinforces respect for recipients' dignity, turning them from passive receivers of development aid into active contributors.

3	Participatory monitoring and evaluation workshops to jointly agree on indicators of success to be measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional M&E practices often involve top-down approaches where external evaluators set the success criteria. • Participatory M&E workshops aim to democratize the evaluation process, recognizing the value of stakeholder input, particularly from those directly affected by the program.
4	Supporting community-based organizations (CBOs) to organize the community to speak up or give feedback on challenging aspects of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBOs are often deeply rooted in the communities they serve and can play a crucial role in facilitating community engagement. • By supporting these organizations, programs can benefit from more accurate community representation and constructive feedback.
5	Conducting a formal procedure to obtain consent from each individual participant at the beginning of a program or intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent processes oftentimes end up being merely a procedure and fail to effectively engage and inform the participants. • To facilitate informed decision-making by the participants, project workers should discuss the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested, as well as the risks and benefits involved.
6	Providing in-person meetings with program recipients to explain the progress of the program and provide updates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A two-way communication channel that firmly establishes participants not just as beneficiaries but as active stakeholders of the interventions, can help build themes of recipient dignity and program accountability.
7	Providing cash compensation to program recipients at a fair rate for time spent on work related to the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipients of development assistance often contribute valuable time and insights that are crucial for the success of programs. • Compensating them for this contribution is not only fair but also respects their time and supports their livelihoods.
8	Asking explicit permission if you are taking pictures or recording videos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many humanitarian or development contexts, documenting aid efforts through photos and videos is common. • However, it is crucial to recognize and protect the rights and dignity of the individuals featured in these media. • Gaining explicit consent respects their autonomy and agency.

9	<p>Providing a community with choices about the timing of when services should be delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery schedules are often determined without direct input from the community, which can lead to low participation or access issues. • By providing the community with choices about service timing, programs can become more user-centered and responsive to the needs of those they serve.
10	<p>Communication of intervention effectiveness and accountability to the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities that are the recipients of aid or development programs have the right to know how interventions are performing and how organizations are holding themselves accountable. • Transparent communication can empower communities and foster a collaborative environment.
11	<p>Sharing results with field staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline data collectors play a critical role in the success of monitoring and evaluation activities. • Keeping them informed about how the data they collect is used can lead to a more informed and motivated team, which can positively affect interactions with the community.
12	<p>Treating recipients with dignity as a criterion in staff performance reviews.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manner in which development workers interact with recipients can significantly impact the recipients' sense of dignity and the overall effectiveness of development assistance. • By making the treatment of recipients a formal part of performance reviews, organizations can prioritize and reinforce the importance of dignity in their operations.
13	<p>Establishing fair rates of pay and benefits across expatriate and local staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disparities in compensation between expatriate and local staff can lead to perceptions of inequality and may impact staff morale and effectiveness. • Aligning pay and benefits contributes to a more cohesive and motivated workforce.

5. Funding

The Dignity Initiative has already secured resources to support the study design, data analysis, and dissemination stages of the proposed study. Further, we are in advanced conversations around securing resources to support study implementation and data collection. Our expectation is that this RfP will allow us to incorporate the implementation partners' needs into these conversations. While we expect the implementation partner to continue to cover the cost of core program implementation (related to on-the-ground activities, personnel, materials, and other direct costs related to the core program). Beyond this, however, IDinsight is committed to providing support towards the financial requirements associated with the implementation of the dignity-related interventions, up to a limit of USD \$50,000. These costs may take the form of covering some of the setup and training costs, for example. This contribution is intended to alleviate some of the financial burden on the implementation partner and facilitate a collaborative environment where the focus remains on the integrity and success of the interventions.

6. Partner Desired Qualifications

This section outlines the qualifications and eligibility criteria of an ideal implementation partner organization for this study. In addition to the technical and operational capabilities listed below, a key criterion for the selection of the implementation partner will be the alignment with the overarching vision of the research agenda, which places a strong emphasis on dignity and accountability. Prospective partners must demonstrate a shared commitment to these core values.

6.1 Organizational Experience and Capacity

- Demonstrated experience in research and evaluations of their programs with successful collaboration with research institutions, governments, and/or international development organizations. Ideally, this capacity is housed internally and exemplified in the existence of a strong internal monitoring, evaluation, and learning team.
- Experience with data collection, management, and analysis in compliance with ethical standards and privacy regulations.
- Proven ability to manage complex projects with multiple stakeholders.
- A perceived need to improve performance when it comes to respect for dignity.

6.2 Participant and site information

- Potential programs should be able to integrate dignity based interventions without major changes to the programs nature and objectives.
- Sufficient program scale to ensure the study is well powered given the study design. While final target sample size numbers will be aligned on with the implementation partner in a subsequent step, at this point, IDinsight anticipates a clustered design, which may require program implementation across at least 200-250 communities.
- The target population must have adequate representation across various stratifications to ensure the validity of the study.
- The organization has existing program field staff and resources that can support the research activities.
- While the geographic scope is global, preference will be given to regions where IDinsight is currently active (India, Africa and South-East Asia).
- Sites which are severely affected by conflict or security concerns are not eligible for this collaboration.

6.3 Financial and Operational Capacity

- Financial stability and the ability to manage funds responsibly and transparently.
- Adequate systems and logistical capabilities to carry out the RCT in the chosen locations.
- Ability to recruit, train, and manage field staff effectively.
- Consistent leadership and points of contact over the course of the collaboration.

6.4 Ethical Compliance

- A commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards in research, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality.
- Compliance with all applicable local and international laws and regulations regarding research with human subjects.

6.5 Cultural Sensitivity

- Demonstrated cultural competence and sensitivity in working with diverse populations.
- Desire to engage with communities respectfully and to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries.

7. Submission Procedures

7.1 Proposal Format

Proposals should be structured as follows:

- **Executive Summary:** A concise overview of the proposal, including the organization's suitability for the project.
- **Organizational Background:** Information about the organization's history, mission, motivation and experience relevant to the study.
- **Previous Experience with Quantitative Research Studies (if any):** Details of any previous RCT or similar quantitative research study conducted by the organization including reports, if available.
- **Possible Program Shortlist:** Details of possible programs run by the organization that are fit to be considered for the RCT implementation.
 - Program objectives, Theory of Change (ToC), geography, existing data and research, program reach, etc.
- **Target Audience:** Expected target population and their characteristics, along with details on any existing relationships with the organization if the program is yet to be implemented.
- **Intervention Shortlist:** Proposed initial list of shortlisted interventions that the organization views as feasible to implement within their program, along with a brief description of the capacity available for the same.
- **Questions:** Any questions and points of discussion you feel are outstanding.

Interested partners can use this [sample format](#) to structure your proposal. Please note that this is not a strict format for submission but is aimed to offer guidance for effectively responding to the RFP.

Should you require any support during the submission process in the form of answers to clarifying questions, or a need to better understand the proposed RCT and study, please send your queries to the official Dignity Initiative email address on dignity@idinsight.org. We will be happy to respond to your queries.

7.2 Submission Process Timelines

There will be a two step process for the submissions of expression of interest to partner with IDinsight on the RCT.

1. **Submission of Expression of Interest:** Interested partners should fill in this [form](#) as an expression of interest. This form will allow us to communicate directly with

interested potential partners, providing any necessary updates on the progress of the process. The form also offers an opportunity to ask clarifying questions regarding both the RFP and the project.

2. **Submission of Proposal:** Interested partners are then expected to submit an official proposal as outlined in Section 7.1 above. This proposal will provide comprehensive information of your application, building on the basic information provided in the expression of interest. All proposals must be submitted by **14 June 2024** to the official Dignity Initiative email address on dignity@idinsight.org. All submissions should be in pdf format and sent via email with the subject line ***"Dignity Initiative RCT Implementation Partner Proposal"***.

Following the review of submitted proposals, shortlisted candidates may be invited for further engagement sessions for the purposes of alignment and/or clarifications in order to foster our possible collaboration. It's critical to understand that the purpose of submitting a written proposal is not to elicit final answers, but rather to engage in a peer-to-peer dialogue.

Final selection of a partner will be based on the conclusions drawn from the submitted written proposals, as well as subsequent alignment conversations. Following final selection, there will be a period of further alignment and co-creation to ensure that the RCT adequately fits around the selected partner's proposed programs, after which the project will officially commence.

7.3 Timelines

1. RFP Release Date: 14 May 2024
2. Proposal Submission Deadline: **14 June 2024**
3. Selection Process and Consultations: June - July 2024
4. Anticipated Final Selection Date: **30 July 2024**
5. Proposed Project Start Date: 1 Sept 2024

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