



# Independent Evaluation of VaxSocial

## Request for Proposals

Closing Date: October 27, 2023

Address proposal and required documents to **VaxSocial@charity.org**

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## About the Partners

[Advancing Health Online](#) (“AHO”), a fiscally sponsored project of Global Impact, is an initiative launched by Merck and Meta in June 2021 to advance public understanding of how social media can be utilized to better understand and increase the health and resiliency of communities around the world by bringing actors together from technology, health, global development, and the academic sector. AHO’s goal is to support effective integration of social media as a core component of public health communications to improve health outcomes. To achieve this, AHO collaborates with organizations working at the intersection of technology, global health, and behavioral science.

[Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance](#)’s (“Gavi”) mission is to save children’s lives and protect people’s health by increasing access to immunisation in poor countries. Gavi is a unique organisation that aligns public and private resources in a global effort to create greater access to the benefits of immunisation. It does this with precision and in creative, innovative ways to ensure that donor contributions efficiently save lives and help build self-sufficiency in the world’s poorest communities and regions.

[Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) is guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led

by CEO Mark Suzman, under the direction of co-chairs Bill Gates and Melinda French Gates and the board of trustees.

[Global Impact](#) (“Global Impact”), a nonprofit organization that is exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, works on charitable ventures to inspire greater giving. Global Impact serves as a trusted advisor, intermediary and implementing partner across the private, nonprofit, and public sectors. Through these partnerships, including through its role as a fiscal sponsor, Global Impact has raised nearly \$2 billion for causes such as disaster relief and global development. **Global Impact will serve as the contracting entity for VaxSocial.**

### RFP Timelines

Activity	Responsible Party	Due Date
Request for Concept Notes	Global Impact	Oct. 9, 2023
Final date for submitting Concept Notes	Applicant	Oct. 27, 2023
Declination or Invitation to Submit Full Proposal	Global Impact	Nov. 3, 2023
RFP Issue Date	Global Impact	Nov. 3, 2023
Final date for submitting Questions	Applicant	Nov. 8, 2023
Response to Questions	AHO/Gavi	Nov. 10, 2023
Applicant submission deadline	Applicant	Nov. 17, 2023
Estimated Selection confirmation date	Global Impact	Dec. 8, 2023

### Background

AHO and Gavi have partnered to launch a new initiative called VaxSocial which supports innovative approaches that leverage social media<sup>1</sup> to build confidence and drive vaccine uptake across several Gavi-supported countries. Our investments in potentially cost-effective and high-impact projects aim to identify and support approaches that can bring transformational impact and be scaled up to help reduce deaths for millions of children and individuals across the world. VaxSocial encourages partnerships that bring together diverse expertise from multi-disciplinary stakeholders, particularly those that operate locally.

#### Rationale for VaxSocial:

Childhood vaccination has been one of the greatest public health achievements, leading to important progress in child survival and health outcomes worldwide.<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that 51 million deaths can be prevented through immunization between 2021 and 2030.<sup>3</sup> However, UNICEF and WHO announced in July 2022 the largest sustained decline in childhood vaccinations in approximately 30 years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AHO’s definition of social media is meant to be broad and inclusive. Our social media definition includes: traditional social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok, SnapChat) and other online platforms including: WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger Chat services; and online chatbots.

<sup>2</sup> Galles, N. C., et al. (2021). Measuring routine childhood vaccination coverage in 204 countries and territories, 1980–2019: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2020, Release 1. *The Lancet*, 398(10299), 503-521.

<sup>3</sup> CDC. (2022). Fast Facts on Global Immunization

<sup>4</sup>UNICEF (2022). COVID-19 pandemic leads to major backsliding on childhood vaccinations, new WHO, UNICEF data shows

Disruptions and shifts in attitudes and beliefs caused by the pandemic are showing to have a long-lasting impact on confidence in and the perceived value of routine immunizations. New data indicates declining confidence in childhood vaccines of up to 44 percentage points in some countries during the pandemic.<sup>5</sup> Vaccine confidence can fluctuate depending on factors including rumors, misinformation, trust in government and political polarization.<sup>6</sup> Maintaining and building confidence requires close contact with communities to understand their views and concerns on vaccines, and engaging with them to build the kind of trust and confidence parents and caregivers need to vaccinate their children.

**VaxSocial will prioritize innovative “out of the box” ideas that can complement traditional approaches to sustainably build confidence, spark behavior change, drive vaccine uptake and accelerate progress towards global and national targets are critical.**

Today, social media is omnipresent. At an individual level, channels and platforms are used to communicate with relatives, friends, businesses, colleagues, media figures, and acquaintances. Organizations including advertisers, news media, and government agencies, also use these platforms and tools to reach billions of users. With such a wide reach, growing interest has emerged in the role that social media platforms – such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, Reddit, YouTube, TikTok, and others – have in public health promotion, including influencing health decisions and behaviors.

Research has shown that the global proliferation of mobile phones and internet coverage has supported the accessibility of online health information. As a result, internet users are more likely to utilize online health information to inform health decision-making.<sup>7</sup> The potential of using such platforms to elicit positive health behaviors has also been shown in research, for instance in the spaces of tobacco smoking, nutrition, physical activity, or alcohol consumption.<sup>8</sup> Multiple systematic reviews have concluded that social media interventions, in comparison with in-person interventions, are underused, effective tools for health promotion and influencing positive health behaviors.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, social media presents an opportunity to develop and implement targeted and customized cost-effective interventions to drive behavior change, as noted in recent research related to COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.<sup>10</sup>

In the context of vaccination campaigns specifically, effective social media-based communication interventions require strong engagement and alignment with community leaders and governments as well as deep understanding of the targeted audience and the factors that influence their decisions – including their concerns, past experiences with

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<sup>5</sup>UNICEF (2023). [New data indicates declining confidence in childhood vaccines of up to 44 percentage points in some countries during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

<sup>6</sup> Larson, H. J., et al. (2022). [The vaccine-hesitant moment](#). *New England Journal of Medicine*, 387(1), 58-65.

<sup>7</sup> Thapa, D. K., Visentin, D. C., Kornhaber, R., West, S., & Cleary, M. (2021). [The influence of online health information on health decisions: A systematic review](#). *Patient Education and Counseling*, 104(4), 770-784.

<sup>8</sup> Elaheebocus, S.M.R.A., Weal, M., Morrison, L. and Yardley, L., (2018). [Peer-based social media features in behavior change interventions: systematic review](#). *Journal of medical Internet research*, 20(2), p.e8342.

<sup>9</sup> Seiler, J., Libby, T.E., Jackson, E., Lingappa, J.R. and Evans, W.D., (2022). [Social Media-Based Interventions for Health Behavior Change in Low-and Middle-Income Countries: Systematic Review](#). *Journal of medical Internet research*, 24(4), p.e31889.

<sup>10</sup> Athey, S., Grabarz, K., Luca, M. and Wernerfelt, N., 2023. [Digital public health interventions at scale: The impact of social media advertising on beliefs and outcomes related to COVID vaccines](#). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 120(5), p.e2208110120.

vaccination and healthcare systems, religious and political affiliations, and socio-economic status.

### **VaxSocial programs:**

Through VaxSocial, AHO and Gavi are supporting programs in India, Indonesia, and Nigeria (up to two projects per country) focused on childhood immunization and/or HPV immunization, depending on country context and vaccination rollout status. Programs are expected to last between 12 to 18 months and should be finalized by July 2025.

### **Objective**

The purpose of the evaluation is to evaluate the impact of different social media-based interventions implemented by VaxSocial programs to increase vaccine confidence and drive vaccine uptake. Results of the evaluation will add to the evidence base of whether social media-based interventions can translate online engagement with offline action (i.e., change perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors among target populations). This will help generate learnings on the impact, cost-effectiveness, complementarity, and sustainability of diverse social media-based approaches, in order to guide policy and investment changes at global, regional, country, and local levels.

Specifically, the primary research and learning questions for this work are:

- Can we attribute changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards vaccination to social media interventions?
- In which situations (incl. specific challenges, population segments, health system context, etc.) is social media an effective modality for building vaccine confidence and driving vaccine uptake and how can it complement or augment social and behavior change programs as part of an integrated social behavior change strategy?
- How do different social media interventions compare to each other, in terms of health impact and cost-effectiveness, and which social media modalities (e.g., channels, messages, messengers, etc.) drive the greatest impact in each situation?

Other questions to explore:

- What are the requirements/enablers that need to be in place to enable success of social media interventions? What cost and level of complexity in implementation are associated with these requirements/enablers?
- What reach and impact do social media interventions have beyond the direct users?
- What are the methodologies and best practices to scale, replicate or tailor agile social media interventions in different contexts?

### **Scope of Work**

VaxSocial is seeking an evaluation partner to design and independently conduct an impact evaluation over the duration of the VaxSocial Initiative (2023-2025), using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The evaluation partner will develop and implement a research framework that allows for cross-country and cross-program evaluation of VaxSocial programs (expected 3-5) across India, Indonesia, and Nigeria. AHO is in the process of selecting the awardees for the VaxSocial programs, and this evaluation is intentionally timed to align with the shaping and kick-off of the VaxSocial programs. The evaluator will work with country programs on the design and rollout of the programs themselves, balancing broader program objectives with evaluation objectives, methodology and indicators.

Deliverables may include, but are not limited to:

- Participate in VaxSocial Programs kick-off and workshop sessions with VaxSocial Country Program teams to review and provide feedback on program M&E framework and concurrent monitoring tools / data collection / plans for real-time dissemination of impact and learnings.
- Develop inception report with strategy, methodology and timeline for the evaluation – leveraging qualitative and quantitative data collected by VaxSocial programs and proposing additional indicators/data collection needed to answer the primary and secondary research questions.
- Collect and communicate in real-time on progress, recommended pivots, and insights.
- Document implementation tools and challenges, and making them available to Gavi and AHO for future use by countries.
- Attend quarterly calls to share evaluation progress and learnings with AHO partners.
- Synthesize learnings so that they can be disseminated to key audiences at global, regional, country, and local levels, in order to drive policy and investment changes.

## Principles

The evaluation of VaxSocial will be expected to operate with the following principles to maximize learnings:

- **Impact-focused:** Capture impact broadly and, where possible, demonstrate attribution between social media intervention and health impact.
- **Iterative:** Allow for data sharing and program adjustments in real-time.
- **Community-linked:** Validate and share back results with contributing communities to ensure the evaluation is non-extractive.
- **Innovative:** Be open to trialing innovative, digital, and multi-disciplinary approaches to conduct this evaluation.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Disseminate learnings from this evaluation with key audiences to inform best practices and shape the future of how social media promote offline health action and vaccine uptake.
- **Locally-based:** In line with the VaxSocial ethos of supporting local organizations, the evaluator should also demonstrate presence and understanding of local communities.

Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative methods and approaches that reflect their expertise to best deliver the expected objectives and outcomes of this evaluation. These could

include approaches that are typically used in other sectors (e.g., digital marketing). We encourage partnerships between different evaluation expertise fields (e.g., economics, social media, marketing, health, etc.) to spark holistic and innovative approach for this evaluation. Should applicants decide to create a consortium of organizations, one organization will be expected to be the consortium lead and coordinate the proposal submission and implementation.

## Duration

The scope of work is expected to kick off in November 2023 and be completed by 31 July 2025.

## Submission

### Submission Guidance

Applicants must submit their Concept Note to: **VaxSocial@charity.org** with the subject heading **VaxSocial Evaluation Concept Note – [Name of Applicant Organization]**. Applicants may submit multiple emails (suitably annotated – e.g., Email 1 of 3) if the attached files are too large to suit a single email transmission.

### Submission Content

Please ensure that the below elements are submitted in PDF Format:

1. **Cover Letter** which includes:
  - Name, address, and website of the Service Provider
  - Name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address of the person to be contacted regarding the content of the concept note, if different from above
  
2. **Technical concept note** | Up to two pages maximum (any standard font, size 11, visuals are welcome and are not included in page count) covering the following sections in approx. 300 words per section:
  - Section 1: Objectives, incl. how it aims to respond to the research and learning questions of laid out above.
  - Section 2: Evaluation Approach, incl. tools that can be leveraged to assess impact and cost-effectiveness, data sources, innovative or novel approaches the respondent can put forward.
  - Section 3: Knowledge and Learning Approach, incl. how this evaluation will leverage findings to inform grantees' work throughout the project, how it will translate findings into learnings that can bring policy and investment implications.
  - Section 4: Experience, incl. why your organization is best positioned for this evaluation.
  - Section 5: Budget proposal. Please provide an estimated cost of the project (including a full budget is not necessary at this time).
  
3. **Appendix** | Applicants can submit CVs and case studies of relevant experience to illustrate why your organization is best positioned for this evaluation.

## Evaluation

Members of the evaluation committee will review each concept note. Concept notes will be evaluated based on value-for-money over the whole-of-life of the goods or services, relevant experience, and innovative approaches. Concept notes approved by the evaluation committee will be invited to submit a full proposal to provide additional details including context, methodology, timeline, and budget.

The Fund is authorized to evaluate proposals submitted under its RFPs, to consult with outside experts, as needed, in evaluating proposals, and to grant or deny awards using criteria determined by the Fund to be appropriate and at the Fund's sole discretion. The Fund's decisions will be final in all matters relating to its RFPs, and applicants agree not to challenge any such decisions.

## Terms and Conditions

Global Impact's decision will be final in all matters relating to RFP solicitations, including whether or not to grant an award and the interpretation of the RFP's Terms and Conditions. Awards granted in connection with RFP proposals will be subject to any additional Terms and Conditions contained in the contract (or, in some cases, other mechanisms) pursuant to which the contract funding will be provided. Global Impact's decision will be final in all matters relating to RFP solicitations, including whether or not to provide an award and the interpretation of the Global Impact RFP Terms and Conditions. Applicants understand and acknowledge that they will need to agree to these Terms and Conditions to receive an award. See contractual agreement for complete Terms and Conditions.