**Invitation to Tender: Evaluation & Learning Partner for Participatory Design of Alternative Help Systems project**

We are looking for an experienced evaluation and learning partner to improve our understanding of how community-led support systems for racially- and economically-marginalised children and families can be developed in a participatory way, their early impacts and the processes involved.

If you have experience of supporting community-led, place-based approaches to learn, adapt and do what they do best, please read on and apply. We would love to hear from you.

**Submission deadline: 5pm on Wednesday 23rd October 2024**

**Who we are**

[Impact on Urban Health](https://urbanhealth.org.uk/) is part of Guy’s & St Thomas’ Foundation, a charitable foundation based in South London. We address health inequalities by focusing on a few complex health issues that disproportionately impact people living in cities – [children’s health and food](https://urbanhealth.org.uk/our-work/childrens-health-and-food), [multiple long term conditions](https://urbanhealth.org.uk/our-work/multiple-long-term-conditions), [the health effects of air pollution](https://urbanhealth.org.uk/our-work/health-effects-of-air-pollution), and [children’s mental health](https://urbanhealth.org.uk/our-work/childrens-mental-health). Most of this work is specifically focused on the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, but we share what we learn both nationally and internationally to influence urban health around the world.

**Children’s Mental Health funding programme**

Our vision is a world where every child can thrive because their needs are met. This means, for example, families having a safe, warm home, enough money for nutritious food, and the time and space to play. But right now, some children don’t have these things.

If these needs aren’t met children may experience distress that causes poor mental health. If this happens, every child should be able to access safe, timely, effective help.

Together with our community partners we influence decision-makers to improve the conditions children grow up in so that every child has access to the things they need to be healthy and happy. We work closely with local people and organisations who are trusted by their communities to develop impactful ways of improving children’s mental health.

**Participatory Design of Alternative Help Systems project**

We are funding Partisan (<https://www.partisanuk.org/>) to develop and prototype alternative mental health support systems with the local community.

Traditional mental health systems meet the needs of some people but are often not flexible enough to meet the specific and complex needs of those who are marginalised and racialised.

For good reason these communities often have difficult relationships and negative experiences with our current systems; where whiteness prevails, the evidence base for interventions is Eurocentric, mental health trainings are underpinned by theories that are rooted in slavery and colonialism, and racial trauma is pathologized. Marginalised and racialised communities are often left feeling judged, uncomfortable, unsure who they can trust, and further trauma-inducing harm is caused.

The ‘Participatory Design of Alternative Help Systems’ project seeks to disrupt these systems and to empower communities to design, deliver and own location-specific alternative help systems that support the wellbeing of children, young people and their caregivers.

Partisan will work with communities and community-led organisations to design and test two alternative prototypes of mental health support systems. One will involve working with communities who are further away from health equity and from having infrastructure and governance, while the other will involve learning from organisations who already have infrastructure and governance but are keen to strengthen their work in relation to Partisan’s strategic values and priorities. Both prototypes will go through relationship and capacity building phases which will support the sharing of key knowledge, training in democracy and decision making, change work, wellness and health. A core governance and infrastructure framework will be in place to support the design, participatory-grant making aspect and delivery of the work. Partisan will then work with partners and their communities to design, test and adapt the prototypes.

**What do we want the evaluation and learning partner to achieve?**

**Supporting Impact on Urban Health**

The evaluation and learning partner’s primary purpose is to generate learning that can be used to inform Impact on Urban Health’s work and future decision making, whilst also supporting Partisan’s project to learn and develop.

At Impact on Urban Health we are equally as interested in the “how” of redistributing power as in the systems or designs that the community partners create. The learning from the process of developing these alternative approaches could be applied elsewhere and used to influence statutory and non-statutory providers towards becoming more equitable, trusted and accessible.

This includes helping Impact on Urban Health to improve our understanding, funding, partnerships and communications on community-led support systems. In particular, we want to be able to understand and demonstrate what's working, what isn't and why in relation to children’s mental health. We want to understand what that means for Impact on Urban Health initiatives going forward and – crucially – how others can learn from the work we’re funding and develop their own approaches in different contexts.

**Working with Partisan**

It’s really important to us that this is done in a way which is conducive to Partisan’s work. Separately and prior to this evaluation, we have provided funding for Partisan’s internal learning; they already work with Practice to Policy as a learning partner to structure their internal working practice and foster a culture of collective responsibility and impact. Partisan is also working with a research collaboration (TRUE, Greenwich University, MAC-UK) that is currently evaluating the impact of their first three years of work against their new strategy. We expect the appointed evaluation and learning partner to work in a complementary way with these other learning pieces.

**Evaluation approach**

We would like the evaluation and learning partner to take an approach that incorporates the core principles of developmental evaluation, as originally described by Michael Quinn Patton (2011).

The dual purpose of this role will require supporting both Impact on Urban Health and Partisan (and the community organisations they are working with) by asking evaluative questions and helping to make sense of real-time information, data, feedback and experiences to inform ongoing decision-making and continually adapt to changes in context.

**Key learning questions**

**Process:** how can communities develop alternative forms of mental health support and what does that look like?

* Equity: What approaches enable equitable, community driven models of care?
* Participation: what is the role of community participation and what impact does this have on children’s mental health?
* Design and support: what is needed to ensure these interventions are as effective as possible?
* Role: how can Impact on Urban Health and other funders and commissioners best support the development of initiatives such as this? What conditions can commissioners invest in, in order for alternative models of support to thrive?

**Change:** what difference does this process and these interventions make to children’s mental health and race equity within the boroughs?

* Early indications for impact: what impact are the support offers having on children, young people’s and families’ mental health?
* How can community-based support offers such as these prevent children’s distress, benefit the least well-off and fill gaps in provision of support for children’s mental health?
* Who benefits: Who are the support offers reaching (including those who are not well served by statutory services)?
* Who delivers: Who is offering the support, and what difference does that make to its effectiveness?

**Sharing:** What are the potential opportunities for building on this work elsewhere?

* Who are the key stakeholders for this and how can they best be engaged?
* How might good practice be replicated?

Using these broad learning questions as a starting point, we expect the evaluation & learning partner to work with us and Partisan to develop a more detailed set of questions and an evaluation plan to guide the approach.

**Audiences**

The primary audiences for this learning will include:

* Impact on Urban Health; specifically, our Children’s Mental Health team, other funding programme teams and our participatory Parent Panel
* Partisan
* SEL ICB, SLaM and other funders and commissioners to influence statutory provision

The secondary audiences may include local communities & local community organisations.

**Outputs**

We expect the evaluation to generate both summative and formative actionable learning. Outputs are not limited to but should include:

* An evaluation plan developed in consultation with Impact on Urban Health and Partisan, to be reviewed and iterated on a regular basis.
* Regular updates on evaluation progress and emerging findings to Impact on Urban Health and Partisan to provide an opportunity to inform the evaluation activities, interrogate the data, validate the findings and discuss their implications
* Interim and end of project reports, with timing and content to be agreed with IOUH
* Accessible and user-friendly creative outputs, to communicate insights and learning from the evaluation to the audiences listed above as and when required

**What we are looking for**

The evaluation & learning partner will need experience of:

* Working with community-led place-based initiatives
  + with a strong understanding and enthusiasm for working with communities in this way
* Using developmental evaluation approaches
  + and using a range of qualitative, quantitative and creative methods to actively support the development of new social initiatives
* Evaluating participatory approaches
  + And navigating the complexities involved
* Working directly with communities
  + ideally in Lambeth and/or Southwark or other areas of South London

We welcome applications from people with lived experience of the issues being addressed.

The evaluation and learning partner will need to be able to:

* build positive and trusting relationships with Impact on Urban Health and Partisan, to support the learning process whilst also challenging and being a critical friend when needed
* ask powerful questions and support others in making sense of complex information
* be responsive, adaptable and flexible to the changing needs of the work

**Budgets and Timelines**

There is a budget of up to £100,000 including VAT available to fund the evaluation partner role from November 2024 to July 2027.

**How to tender for this work**

Please send your proposal to **Jen Durrant** (Evaluation and Learning Manager) at jen.durrant@urbanhealth.org.uk by **5pm on Wednesday 23rd October 2024**. We will then invite shortlisted applicants for a 45-minute interview w/c 4th November to explore their proposals in more depth.

**Your proposal should include the following:**

* Details of your organisation(s), the people who would be working directly on this project, and the experience and personal qualities they would bring to this role – noting our requirements listed under ‘What we are looking for’.
* What approach you would take to respond to this brief – noting our learning questions and output requirements.
* How you will work with Impact on Urban Health, Partisan, the community organisations and people involved to ensure that the developmental evaluation adds value to our work.
* How your work will comply with good ethical and equitable practices.
* A clear breakdown of indicative costs (including number of days, day rates and VAT if applicable) to fulfil the requirements of this role.

If you have any questions, please do ask. Questions can be sent to Jen Durrant at jen.durrant@urbanhealth.org.uk