

Call for Proposals – Research on Youth retention strategies and job sustainability

CFYE Overview

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) is a 7-year programme funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that aims to create a prosperous future for 230,000 young women and men in the Middle East, North Africa, Sahel & West Africa and Horn of Africa regions. The Fund will be supporting initiatives in 11 focus countries that will offer youth, in particular young women, opportunities for work that is demand-driven and productive, offering a stable income and safe working conditions, and that is contributing to their personal development and social protection.

Assignment Overview

This is a call for proposals: CFYE invites interested organizations to submit a short proposal for the assignment described below.

CFYE is looking for an experienced consultancy firm to conduct qualitative research on Youth retention strategies (including both strategies explicitly designed for retention, as well as job quality improvement strategies that could contribute to improving retention) in the CFYE portfolio and beyond. Retention is one of the three stages of the CFYE Youth Quality Work Journey. Through this framework CFYE encourages Implementing Partners (IPs) to apply a Youth and Gender Lens to the journey of youth in their company and optimize the experience of youth employees in their company.

The insights from this assignment will advance CFYE and partners' understanding of workable solutions to the challenge of youth retention. We will use these insights to contribute to tools and solutions that can be applied by our IPs and ultimately by other actors working on youth employment interventions.

The assignment outputs should show the business case for investing in youth retention strategies and share practical tools to enable action, including through a clear overview with examples of costed retention solutions. Insights and recommendations will be made available to the wider ecosystem of youth employment actors, so they can apply this knowledge and contribute to sustainable youth employment creation.

Objectives and Activities

Under the Youth Quality Work Journey, CFYE distinguishes 3 stages: how to attract youth, how to select youth and how to retain youth. CFYE identified 10 topics that are key in optimizing the stages in the youth quality work journey. 6 out of these 10 topics could support companies to improve their retention rates, notably: Young Professional Development Opportunities, Peer Networks, Space for Youth Voice, Youth focused secondary benefits, Young Parent Specific Benefits and Youth Focused Respect and Dignity at Work. Gender Inclusive Practices are important to enhance retention of young women.

This specific assignment focuses on how companies can retain youth. The objective is to gain insight into:

1. What are effective strategies for youth retention? (within or outside of the topics referenced above)
2. What effective strategies are implemented in CFYE portfolio? (By providing examples of costed business cases of retention strategies).
3. How can companies or organizations decide which retention strategies are suitable for them both from an operational and financial perspective.

To achieve these objectives the following learning questions were identified:

- What are generally seen as (cost-)effective youth retention strategies (outside of the CFYE portfolio)? And how can these be dis-aggregated across sectors/business models/gender?
- What critical challenges are our Implementing Partners facing around youth retention?

- What retention strategies are our Implementing partners deploying, and to what extent are they successful?
- What other job quality investments are companies making that contribute to improved youth retention?
- What gender inclusion strategies are effective in youth retention?
- What is the business case for youth retention strategies?

Key activities of this assignment include:

- Desk research of relevant methodologies for cost-benefit analysis of (youth) retention strategies in the wider ecosystem
- Present custom research design for this specific assignment
- Desk analysis of available research/evidence on effective retention strategies within the youth employment ecosystem.
- Cooperation with CFYE research intern to access and analyse qualitative data of retention strategies from existing reports.
- Analysis of current CFYE Youth Impact Growth Matrix results for 43 CFYE Implementing Partners,
- Conduct 9 short case studies (incl. quick cost-benefit analysis) of tried and tested retention strategies of 9 CFYE Implementing Partners under three themes: Digital, Green and Gender.
- Present preliminary findings on effective retention strategies to CFYE portfolio. Utilize this session to collect additional input.
- Update and improve the CFYE Solutions Database with new insights on youth retention. Develop into tool with a practical and simple decision-making tree to arrive at a shortlist of relevant retention solutions split out across relevance for type of employment/business models and gender inclusion. This database does not need to be costed.
- Present the result at CFYE internal meeting and potentially in an external facing platform (eg. Podcast or conference).

Expected outputs/deliverables

Methodology guidelines:

We kindly invite service providers to propose a relevant research design and -specifically- solution disaggregation strategy.

- We would suggest to primarily focus desk research and portfolio analysis on retention strategies utilized by organizations that primarily provide direct employment and dependent self-employment (agent models). Retention is less relevant (at least conceptually) for self-employment.
- In addition, the type of business model is an important factor in determining relevant retention strategies. CFYE distinguishes 9 different business models, of which a selection is particularly relevant for this research. Some examples include digital and offline service matching platforms.
- Thirdly, we foresee that sector will play a role, and propose to distinguish solutions across sectors, including Agriculture, Manufacturing and ICT.
- Case studies: The methodology for these case studies should include interviews with IPs including youth employees, but also looking at quantitative data that supports the business case.

Output 1: Desk study report (max 15 pages) on effective youth retention strategies across different employment types, business models and sectors.

The report should answer the following questions: What challenges are companies facing when it comes to youth retention? Why should companies invest in youth retention strategies? What are generally seen as effective youth retention strategies (outside of the CFYE portfolio) and how do they relate to job quality? What gender inclusion strategies are effective in retention? The report should give an overview of evidence base for effective retention strategies.

Output 2: 9 case studies (1 page each) of implementing partners youth retention strategies.

These case studies should analyze the retention strategies these partners are deploying, whether they are effective and what the business case for investing in these strategies is. 3 case studies should focus on Digital sector companies, 3 on Green sector companies and 3 on company strategies for gender inclusion in relation to youth retention.

Output 3: Updated and improved database of solutions related to the Youth Quality Work Journey.

CFYE has started drafting a simple database with youth retention activities implemented by IPs. Based on the desk study and the case studies this database should be updated with additional external and internal strategies and improved to make it fit for external use. It should also include filter-options, allowing organizations to create a shortlist of relevant solutions for them.

Timeline

Estimated starting date in October 2024 until end of February 2025

Budget:

The total estimated budget for this assignment is 35.000 euro including any logistic arrangements or tools required. No travel is foreseen as this research can be remotely implemented.

Operational Arrangements:

- Reporting: You will work with the Technical Assistance and learning manager, the Social Impact Project manager of CFYE, and will work closely with other members of CFYE Technical Delivery, Strategy & Impact team and wider VSO / CFYE Team.
- Location: this assignment can be delivered remotely.

General requirements

- Extensive experience with relevant research assignments in the (youth and women) employment domain in an international context
- On the ground presence is not required for this assignment but specific research experience in Africa and the Middle East being a plus.
- Experience with relevant research methodologies, including cost-benefit analysis of employment strategies
- Ability to process existing reports and raw data from interviews and the draft database into attractive, easy to understand recommendations
- Cultural sensitivity: Respect for diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences, especially within the specified regions.
- Demonstrate experience in working with private sector/companies on research assignments.

How to Apply

Interested consultants are requested to provide a high-level proposal of a maximum of 10 pages all together, where they elaborate on:

1. Their suggested approach/methodology to the proposed activities
2. Relevant track record of the organization and profiles of proposed team members for implementation
3. High level workplan

4. Break-down of proposed budget for the assignment (breakdown of proposed fee structure and any other expected costs).

Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis. The final deadline for proposal submission is 13th of September.

For any questions and submission of proposals, please reach out to Marlou Rijk at marlou.rijk@thepalladiumgroup.com.