TERMS OF REFERENCE

Knowledge Management Needs Assessment
October 2023

Background

Humanity United (HU) is a grantmaking and operating foundation that takes a trust-based approach, honoring the lived experience and agency of those closest to the issues we focus on. We lead, support, and collaborate with a broad network of efforts and organizations that share our vision of a world free of conflict and injustice.

HU works at the intersection of human rights, peacebuilding, locally grounded action, and influencing systems to recognize shared humanity. We focus on two specific portfolios of work: Peacebuilding and Forced Labor & Human Trafficking. In addition, we invest in a cross-cutting Public Engagement portfolio that includes investigative journalism, policy change, and strategic communications as leverage points to try and shift harmful systems and practices towards a recognition of shared humanity.

At HU, our mission is to cultivate the conditions for enduring peace and freedom. While these conditions can change as we learn and adapt, at this time we are focused on cultivating:

- **Agency** – We support efforts to shift and build the power of individuals and communities to determine and pursue the outcomes or solutions that best address their needs. What we aim to see is a shift of power that results in an increase in agency.
- **Accountable and Responsive Institutions** – We use our influence and proximity to power, often working through networks, to make certain key institutions accountable and responsive to the people most impacted by human exploitation and violent conflict.
- **Recognition of Shared Humanity** – We support efforts that recognize and advance the shared humanity, interconnectedness, and intrinsic dignity of all human beings.

As a private foundation based in the United States, HU is privileged to engage with a wide range of stakeholders around the world and believe that we have a responsibility to make sure institutions are informed by and responsive to the individuals and communities most impacted by violence and exploitation and that those individuals and communities can access systems that impact them. In order to meet the needs of our partners and focus on the conditions we seek to cultivate; we anchor our work in five strategic pillars:

1. We work through relationships and networks.
2. We practice a philosophy of “accompaniment.”
3. We are learning-focused, systems-enabled, and people-centered.
4. We are expansive in our efforts.
5. We invest internally so we can grow together with our partners.
Knowledge Management Needs Assessment Scope of Work

Purpose

In our commitment to fostering a learning-focused, systems-enabled, and people-centered organization (third pillar), HU is committed to strengthening our capacity to create, store, and share knowledge to support our mission and goals. HU therefore seeks a consultant to conduct an assessment of needs, capacity, challenges, gaps, practices, opportunities, and decision-making processes related to institutional Knowledge Management (KM). This will involve, among other things, identifying capacity and tools (i.e., KM software and platforms) already in place, documenting how staff access information and the current barriers to knowledge management, and providing recommendations to help HU articulate, develop, and implement an organizational KM strategy that is comprehensive and useful for staff, partners, and other stakeholders.

Currently, we do not have a definition of “knowledge” at HU and it would be part of this needs assessment to facilitate a process where we can define and articulate what we consider “knowledge.”

The primary objectives of the KM Needs Assessment include:

1. Assess the overall KM situation at HU in terms of practices, policies, gaps, capacity, decision-making processes, accessibility needs regarding how knowledge is to be gathered and input, as well as for how it can be output and utilized, and lessons learned.
2. Generate an understanding of staff’s concerns, perspectives, attitudes & values, capacities, and needs related to knowledge management.
3. Diagnose the bottlenecks that HU currently faces related to knowledge management systems and provide recommendations to address those.
4. Facilitate the creation of an effective organizational KM strategy that aims to enhance collaboration and communication among staff and partners, facilitate informed decision-making, reduce redundancy and errors, and foster innovation and learning across the organization.
5. Agree on a definition of “knowledge” at HU.

Key Questions

The following questions represent the types of questions we hope to answer through the KM Needs Assessment. We anticipate they will be further refined in partnership with the consultant.

1. What are staffs’ concerns, perspectives, attitudes and needs related to KM? What skills, resources, technologies, or other inputs are most needed to build KM competencies? What support interventions or approaches are most and least welcome by staff?
2. What technology investments and trends in Knowledge Management should HU pay attention to?
3. What are the types of programmatic knowledge collected by HU and its partners (including evaluators) that should be stored, shared, managed?
4. How do HU staff manage programmatic knowledge generated by grantees, third party consultants, contractors, and evaluators? What policies, standards, and norms guide programmatic data collection and management? What gaps in skills, resources, and policies should be addressed?

5. What would an effective KM system look like at HU that motivates staff to learn, encourages networking, captures and disseminates knowledge that supports our mission and goals, and fosters innovation?

6. How can we prioritize accessibility, so that the KM system can be utilized and contributed to by all staff regardless of dis/ability, different learning and working styles, and other consideration?

7. How can we ensure that our KM system abides by organizational IT policies/requirements?

Approach and Methodology

- The needs assessment methodology and instruments will be co-created by the consultant and HU. The consultant should propose a co-creation methodology to facilitate this process.
- We anticipate this assessment will require Key Information Interviews and discussions with a range of HU staff that are representative of our programmatic and operational scope.
- The Needs Assessment will likely include analyzing a sample of knowledge documentation (using our current database) across portfolios and units.
- It is possible that the Assessment will include KIIs with a limited selection of programmatic partners.

Audience

This assessment will target an internal audience of varying technical backgrounds and ultimately provide senior leadership at HU with a roadmap for implementing strong knowledge management practices.

Timeline

The needs assessment must be initiated on January 8, 2024 and completed by June 28, 2024 with the following suggested timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>Proposals due</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>Consultant selected</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>Project kick-off and initial orientation process</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Draft Assessment Plan</td>
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<td>March 1</td>
<td>Full Assessment Plan finalized (including research instruments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4-29</td>
<td>Data Collection &amp; Ongoing Analysis</td>
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<td>April 1 to May 3</td>
<td>Data Synthesis &amp; Reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Submission of Draft Report &amp; Presentation of Key Findings</td>
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<td>June 7</td>
<td>Feedback Incorporated</td>
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Deliverables

- Assessment Plan (including research instruments, methodology, and data management protocol including informed consent scripts)
- Final Report (up to 20 pages) synthesizing research findings and proposing actionable recommendations, that prioritize accessibility, user experience, and ease of implementation given the existing structures and processes at HU.
- Case studies of how other foundations of similar size have successfully implemented Knowledge Management systems.
- PowerPoint of Key Findings (up to 30 slides, to be accompanied by verbal presentation); we envision a general presentation and interactive session with staff, and a targeted session with executive leadership.
- 2-page executive summary in a narrative form suitable for internal executive leadership audiences, and an executive summary suitable for a general staff audience

Requirements/Qualifications

- Deep commitment to a participatory, learning approach to evaluation and willingness to work in partnership with Humanity United to design and implement the Assessment.
- Substantial expertise in Knowledge Management best practices and emerging trends and technology.
- Experience in innovation management and innovation design processes.
- Experience in change management and processes.
- Working knowledge of knowledge management best practice in the philanthropic sector.
- Evidence of respected thought leadership in Knowledge Management practices in international development, humanitarian operations, human rights, or a related sector.
- Experience in establishing KM structures with mostly qualitative data, storytelling, anecdotal evidence, and/or data on vulnerable populations.

Application Process

- Applicants must submit a written proposal by midnight ET on November 30, 2023 to Joan Marshall-Missiye at jmissiye@humanityunited.org
- Proposals must include a description of how the work will be executed, relevant experience, bios for the proposed team, detailed budget in the range of $40,000-$70,000. The budget should document breakdown of consultant hours by consultant role, consultant billing rate, and other major budget categories.
- If selected, we would like to see sample needs assessment products/deliverables for relevant needs assessments you have conducted.
- Please submit any questions about the RFP via email to Joan Marshall-Missiye at jmissiye@humanityunited.org