REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

This Request for Applications (RFA) the Batwa Livelihoods Innovations Challenge (BLIC) is issued by Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) through the **Long-term Assistance and SErvices for Research: Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE)** at Purdue University. LASER PULSE is a five-year program implemented by a consortium comprising Purdue University (lead institution), the University of Notre Dame, Indiana University, Makerere University, and Catholic Relief Services. LASER PULSE is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement 7200AA18CA00009.

Topic: The Batwa Livelihoods Innovations Challenge (BLIC)
Area of Interest: Indigenous Peoples of Uganda, specifically the Batwa people of southwestern Uganda
Country: Uganda

Award Number and Size: 1 to 3 awards for a period of up to 8 to 12 months of research and translation for up to $10,000-$35,000 per award; for this RFA we expect to award $100,000 in total funding across all awards.

Application Submission Process and Timeline:
Issuance of Request for Application: August 20, 2021
Deadline for submission of questions on the RFA: September 8, 2021
Webinar to address questions regarding RFA: September 9, 2021(Register and submit your questions here for the Webinar)
Deadline for submission of Application: September 20, 2021
Expected award status notification: October 29, 2021

Contact Information: For programmatic questions, please email Dr. Viola Nilah Nyakato at vnyakato@must.ac.ug or Send an email to blic2021@must.ac.ug

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

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BLIC	Batwa Livelihoods Innovation Challenge
CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
CDR	Center for Development Research
FP	Family-planning
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GUCC	Gulu University Constituent College
HESN	Higher Education Solutions Network
Lab	USAID Global Development Lab
LASER PULSE	Long-term Assistance and SErvices for Research Partner University-Led Solutions Engine
MUST	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RCI	Uganda Mission Regional Coordination Initiative
UIC	USAID Interest Countries
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Background on LASER PULSE

LASER PULSE (Long-term Assistance and SErvices for Research Partner University-Led Solutions Engine) is part of the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) 2.0 portfolio of programs from the Center for Development Research (CDR) in the U.S. Global Development Lab (Lab) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). HESN 2.0 leverages a vast network of higher education institutions, local stakeholders, private enterprises, and other development actors to increase the use of scientific research for development, refine and translate complex data, build local scientific potential, and test new and innovative development approaches.

1.2 Brief Overview of Voices of Indigenous People's Research Initiative

Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Uganda Mission Regional Coordination Initiative (RCI), through the LASER PULSE (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University–Led Solutions Engine) program led by Purdue University, is pleased to announce an an innovation challenge focused on research projects that target improvements in Batwa livelihoods. The announcement is part of the Voices of Indigenous People's Research Initiative implemented by the Uganda Mission Regional Coordination Initiative (RCI) by engaging local governments, local universities, researchers, and the private sector as partners in development. The research initiative is a two-site study of two research teams: Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Mbararaand Gulu University Constituent College (GUCC) in Moroto. The two teams conducted independent research on selected marginalized indigenous groups, the Batwa in southwestern Uganda led by MUST and the Ik, Tepeth, and Karamojong led by GUCC.

This call is part of the research led by MUST which undertook a study on the marginalization of the Batwa people of southwestern Uganda, as an indigenous community. The development goal for the call is **improved quality of life among Batwa in southwestern Uganda.** The MUST research team investigated the marginalization of the Batwa, a group of indigenous people living in the southwestern parts of Uganda aimed at generating evidence on the livelihoods of Batwa indigenous communities living in the districts of Kisoro, Rubanda, and Kanungu in southwestern Uganda. The study shed new light on the challenges the Batwa face, including marginalization, landlessness, limited access to social services such as education and healthcare, as well as financial challenges.

The figure below provides six aspects of Batwa marginalization: deprived land rights, limited political representation, economic deprivation, limited access to social services, and social and policy discriminatory acts. Batwa marginalization manifests at all levels from the topmost government level down to the lowermost levels in the community.

Economic Deprivation

Limited Access to Social Services

Political Marginalization; Limited Representation

Community/Social Discriminatory Acts

Access to Resources; Deprived Land Rights

Marginalization

Policy Discriminatory Acts
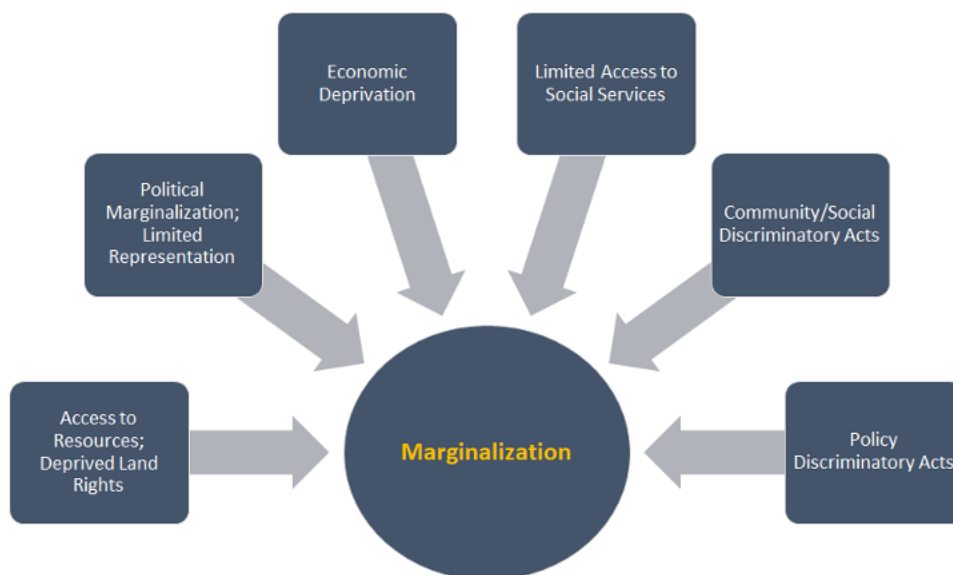
The above dimensions of Batwa marginalization align with previous studies which have linked Batwa marginalization to a lack of access to social services such as modern healthcare and education (Willis et al. 2006, Warrilow 2008) resulting in poor health and well-being indicators (Willis et al. 2006; Berrang-Ford, Dingle et al. 2012). Furthermore, Batwa communities still lag in terms of education, as they continue to face social discrimination perpetuated by other tribes (Turyatunga 2010).

1.3 About the Batwa

According to the Uganda Constitution of 1995, the Batwa are among the 65 recognized indigenous communities within the country. The Batwa are former forest dwellers that lived as hunter-gatherers in most of the forested areas occupying the Great Lakes region, particularly in southwestern Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Lewis, 2000; Beswick 2011). They are typical of short stature, are traditionally hunters, and they love ancestral dancing, especially the Rutwa dance. During their forest habitation, they used to wear hides and skins. They exhibited social cohesion. Culturally, they pay a dowry in the form of sheep, goats, and honey. There are limited intermarriages with other members of the community. Among the Batwa, men are traditionally the breadwinners.

During the early 1990's, they were evicted from Ecuya, Bwindi, and Mgahinga forests to pave way for conservation. While these forests were the main source of the Batwa livelihood, there was no deliberate government resettlement plan at the time. In addition, there was no alternative land provided outside the conservation areas. As such, land increasingly became a key component of Batwa's progressive marginalization and vulnerability. After the unplanned displacement, Batwa communities have depended on the work of NGOs who coordinate and support Batwa livelihoods, with little or inadequate consultation of and involvement from the Batwa. Eviction from the forests dispossessed the Batwa of almost all their land rights and even the few that have land do not enjoy the security of tenure (Lewis, 2000). As such, they continue to live a life of neglect, begging for food and working as a source of cheap labor. Most illegal activities such as poaching, wild honey

collection, and fishing within the protected areas of southwestern Uganda are often blamed on the Batwa by park and forest managers; yet they are simply hoping to live like their counterparts from other tribes (Bitariho et al., 2006). As a consequence of their eviction and subsequent loss of their forest-based livelihoods, the majority of the Batwa live destitute lives and suffer severe isolation, discrimination, and socio-political exclusion (ITFC, 2012; IRN, 2006). Batwa's customary rights to the forest lands have not been recognized within Uganda and they have not been compensated for the loss of their lands and the resultant lifestyle (hunter-gatherers) since their eviction from the forest (ITFC, 2012; IRN, 2006).

Between July 2020 and March 2021, MUST conducted a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study to generate data on the livelihood of Batwa indigenous communities living in the districts of Kisoro, Rubanda, and Kanungu in southwestern Uganda. The study aimed at building evidence around the factors that Batwa livelihoods are composed of, across policy, access to services and resources, culture, and their history/heritage. The study presented findings from the GIS mapping of the Batwa communities, as well as quantitative and qualitative data sets, and builds seminal evidence about their culture and history/heritage. Additionally, it explored their livelihoods, access to services and resources, and interrogated policy decisions for the strategic empowerment of the Batwa people. In this way, the study raised the voices of the Batwa. From the GIS data, the study provided maps of Batwa communities and ongoing development projects. According to the study findings, the Batwa living in southwestern Uganda were found to occupy 60 Batwa settlements, also known as Batwa communities. The majority of Batwa communities were in the Kisoro district. Nearly all the Batwa communities are located on land that is owned or in the custody of non-government organizations. In addition, non-government organizations are the lead agencies in the welfare and development work for Batwa; they implement Batwa livelihood projects mostly in crop farming (such as Irish potato growing, tea plantations, and millet), tourism (community halls and forest experience), and water tanks. Kisoro and Kanungu Districts had more Batwa-funded projects than Rubanda. At the family level, the Batwa were found to engage in livestock rearing, crop farming, and beekeeping.

2. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

All applications are <u>required </u>to:

1. Incorporate collaboration between the project implementers and MUST research team to ensure that the proposed intervention can, and will be, applied as a solution to the development challenge.

2. Outline anticipated intermediate and long-term policy or practice change(s) resulting from the intervention. This includes a strategy or plan that describes how the intervention project will embed *Research Translation* such that outputs are adapted into usable and appropriate products, policies, and practices.

3. Address considerations and impacts of gender in all aspects of the Application (see Appendix 1). *The following sections define the scope of the interventions to be funded by LASER PULSE through MUST.*

2.1 Announcing the Batwa Livelihoods Innovations Challenge (BLIC)

The Batwa Livelihoods Innovation Challenge (BLIC) is premised on the above research findings which indicate that the majority of the Batwa, 322 (67.6%), originated from the forests. Some of the Batwa study participants still return to the forests for spiritual (30.5%) and medication (45.8%) purposes. The majority of Batwa have experienced ethnic-related discrimination and exclusion. At least 40% of the Batwa do not own any land. Marginalization of Batwa is experienced at all levels from the top hierarchy of the government level down to the lower levels within communities.

Marginalization was found to be the root cause of all Batwa developmental challenges across their social, economic and political spheres of life. Economic deprivation and lack of land access ownership and utilization emerged as the most-pertinent concerns of Batwa. As such the Batwa Livelihoods Innovation Challenge (BLIC) is a call for social innovations towards the improvement of Batwa livelihoods. The innovations are required to address challenges of lack of land ownership, access and utilization, poor education, health and outcomes, and the endangered Batwa culture. The innovations are expected to address the causes and effects of these challenges. The innovations should show linkage with other Batwa development challenges specifically social discrimination, and gender-based violence, exclusion, food insecurity, and mindset change.

Grants ranging between **$10,000 - $35,000** will be awarded to 2-3 successful applicants to design and implement cost-effective social innovations towards addressing Batwa livelihoods challenges. Four thematic areas have been selected for this call for proposals and they include: 1) Land (access, ownership and utilization), 2) Health and wellbeing, 3) Education, and 4) Batwa culture and identity. Some of the issues within these thematic areas manifest as rampant communicable and non-communicable diseases, gender-based violence, food insecurity, homelessness, social and political marginalization, unemployment, exclusion from services, and poor mindsets, among others. Out of the selected innovations, at least one (1) will focus on addressing the issue of lack of land access, ownership, and utilization among the Batwa.

The grant seeks to effectively tap into the immense potential of Civil Society Organizations, Non-Government Organizations and Community-based Organizations. Development work experience with the Batwa people will be an added advantage. The grant requires that innovations are generated and implemented collaboratively with the Batwa communities and the Local Governments of Kisoro, Kanungu and Rubanda. Collaborating with key local government offices is essential for buy-in, institutionalization, and sustainability of the development interventions. Supporting ideas may be cutting-edge forms of approaches that leverage social systems, human interactions, and social determinants to unpack complexity and to innovatively solve the livelihood challenges among the Batwa people.

2.1.1 Thematic Focus for the Batwa Livelihoods Innovations Challenge (BLIC)
The Batwa Livelihoods Challenge (BLIC) provides the following four thematic areas as areas of focus for the call for expression of interest. The themes were derived from an extensive literature review, conducted by the research team that later informed the Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) study on the marginalization of the Batwa living in the districts of Kisoro,

Rubanda, and Kanungu. The themes were also informed by insights and findings from stakeholders who participated in the dissemination and co-creation workshops that prioritized the challenges of Batwa. BLIC applicants are expected to present innovative ideas and solutions [1]that will address the Batwa livelihood challenges associated with land ownership, access and utilization, education, Batwa culture and identity, and health and wellbeing.

1. Land Ownership, Access, and Utilization

Coupled with discrimination, marginalization, lack of land ownership, and inadequate access to social, economic, and political opportunities and services, most Batwa live a destitute life. The Batwa's desire for hunting, medicinal plants, and religious rituals in and from the forests cannot be simply erased after three decades of their evictions and displacement from the space they had known to be home. In the following figure, is an illustration of the Batwa land challenge, its causes and effects:
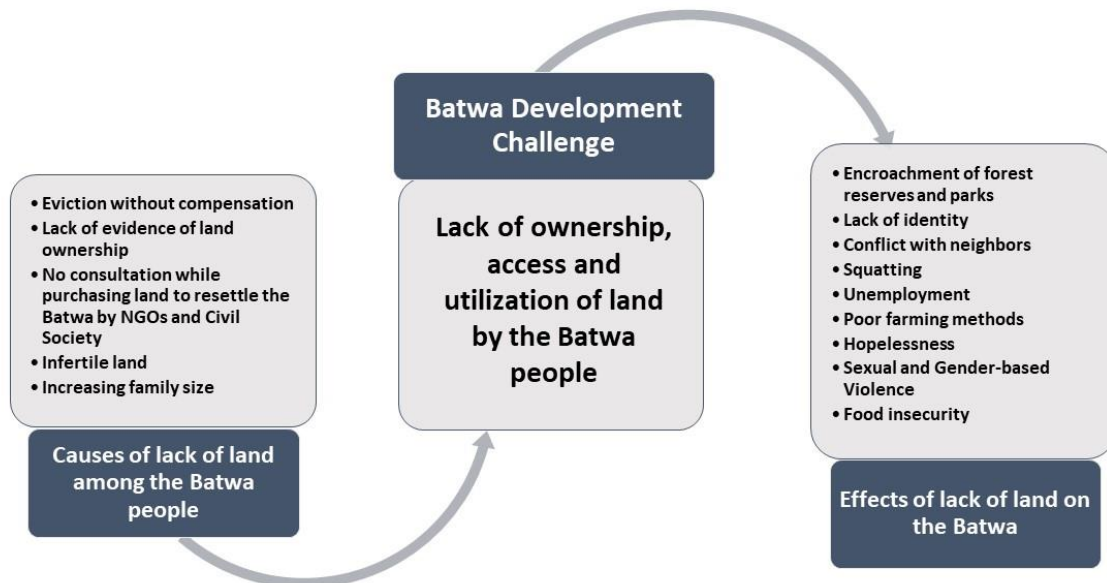
The 2020 study conducted by MUST found out that the majority of Batwa Households (60.1%) do not own land. Only 15.8% of those who reported to own land had inherited it and generally, the Batwa who own land acquired it through the assistance of NGOs (55.8%). Most of the land was not registered (54.3%) and 42.1% had no sale agreement for the land they claimed was theirs. Only 36.8% had at least an acre of land. Most participants (78%) lived on communal land, with more than half in temporary shelters with floors made of mud. One in five has no latrine at their residence and close to a half cook in either open spaces or in the rooms where they sleep (48.5%). In each household, there is an average of six people and the range is from 1-22 people. Many sleep in the same room with children and visitors (49.4%), while 21.2% have no sleeping rooms at all. At least 8% of participants reported not having any house at all. During community engagements, most Batwa believed land ownership, access, and utilization to be the answer to almost all their

development challenges. Batwa people remain marginalized yet it is everyone's human right to have a life; thus we are all tasked to innovate terms of how they can co-exist with the already conserved place and find sustainable means of livelihood to have healthy and productive lives in the social, economic as well as political spheres.

The BLIC challenge will support innovative ideas toward increasing the percentage of Batwa households with improved access, utilization, access, and ownership. Examples of innovations/interventions may include, but are not limited to:

a) Improved land use and management by addressing poor farming methods, inadequate utilization of land, low crop yields, and food insecurity.
b) Innovative ways of tackling the question of Batwa landlessness addressing issues of Batwa with no permanent settlement
c) Offer of land titles to Batwa families living on land that is in the custody of NGOs, civil society organizations, and government agencies
d) Models for a sustainable reduction in the number of Batwa who engage in illegal activities in protected areas

2. Education

Batwa are among the few communities in Uganda with poor education outcomes. According to this research, more than half of Batwa have no formal education at all. More males than females have acquired at least primary-level education (47.7% vs 36.5%). Only 3% of Batwa have achieved at least secondary-level education. The gender difference in attainment of education was significant. There were no significant differences in educational attainment by the district of origin.

Three factors: poverty, negative attitudes towards education, and discriminatory acts were cited as key leading causes of the low educational attainment among the Batwa.

i) **Poverty:** Despite increased access to free education under the Universal Primary Education Program (UPE), this study found that a lack of educational materials like stationery and school uniforms contributed to poor educational attainment among the Batwa. More importantly, they do not have access to food at school and neither is it readily available at home nor in the communities. This is because they do not have land to cultivate.

ii) **Negative attitudes towards education:** Findings indicate that most Batwa have a low interest in education; they do not acknowledge the benefit of education. Despite disciplinary actions against learners by parents and authorities, most children do not obey and prefer to stay out of school. "*Our children were also big headed, we used to send them to school and they refused. You try to discipline them instead they disappear in the forest and hide there. After disciplining them, you think he or she has gone to school yet they would be deceiving us, they dress up properly in the uniform in your mind you also feel happy that the child has gone to school when actually he or she is hiding in the forest*" (**FGD female Batwa, Kisoro**)

iii) **Discriminatory acts against the Batwa at school:** There were reports of discriminatory acts against Batwa students, which affected their learning experiences. "*Yeah... we have schools just in the neighborhood and our children are allowed to join them but the challenge is that when they reach there, sometimes they are not treated well just like others and because of*

that, they do not study very well. Because of that, they do not take education very seriously" (**FGD young, female Batwa, Kisoro**)*.*

Under the education challenge, we are seeking interventions that will demonstrate how to improve school enrollment and completion among the Batwa of school-going age. The innovation could consider the following, but is not limited to:

a) Improve learning environments in local schools that address the unique needs of Batwa school-going children
b) Improve family incomes targeting improved capacity to provide for school requirements
c) Increase the number of Batwa children's school completion rates for both males and females

3. Batwa Culture

Being an indigenous group of people, the Batwa have a unique culture that is largely associated with their hunter and gathering lifestyle which dominated their way of life when they lived in the forest. According to the MUST study, the majority of the Batwa 322 (67.6%) had been born and lived in the forests, with many coming from the Echuya forests, 129 (40.1%), and Bwindi 127 (39.4%). More than one in three still identified the forest as their home while 72 (22.9%) wished not to be associated with the forest as their place of origin. Some participants, 30.5%, still went to the forests for spiritual (30.5%) and medicinal (45.8%) purposes.

Among the Batwa, men are traditionally the breadwinners. Domestic violence was found to be very high and was associated with increased use of alcohol and poverty. Traditionally, the Batwa had places set aside for burial and sendoff rituals associated with the last funeral rites. For example, burial sites were usually deep in the forests near big trees and the dead were buried standing upright. Traditionally, the Batwa worshiped, venerated, sacrificed, and offered appeasement gifts to their "god" in special places.

However, when they were driven from the forest, their cultural practice of worshipping ancestors was greatly interfered with, as they have very limited access to the forest. Like most traditional patriarchal communities, Batwa men were responsible for protecting their family and the property, while the production of food and reproduction remained roles for the women. On the other hand, men were free to use their money and resources as they wished. It is believed that they were kings (*batware*) of the area. Originally, the men were hunters and the women were involved in ceramics. To be recognized as a man, one would first trap or kill an animal. Men would collect medicinal herbs to administer to male children, while women gathered for themselves and their children. Men were responsible for providing fire (*gushingata*) and were also expected to be warriors.

A key element of the Batwa culture is their language. According to our findings, about one-third, 117 (30%), of the Batwa spoke and identified Orutwa as their native language. However, the Batwa have adopted languages spoken in the communities where they live, with 330 (69%) able to speak Rukiga, 175 (36%) speaking Kifumbira, and 31 (6%) able to speak Kinyarwanda. Among these, 176 or 37% recognize Rukiga as their native language, 147 (30%) recognize Kifumbira as their native language and only 7 (1.5%) recognize Kinyarwanda as their native language. It is important

to note that the Batwa culture is waning. Unfortunately, the Rutwa language (also known as Orutwa) is going extinct in the community; unlike most other local dialects, there is no local radio station in the country/area that uses/broadcasts programs in that language.

Under this theme, we are seeking innovative ideas that provide opportunities to preserve the culture of the Batwa through strengthened intrahousehold and community relations among the Batwa and neighboring communities. Social innovations should address themselves to models and approaches towards promotion and preservation of the Batwa Culture with a focus on, but not limited to:

    a. Improving intra and inter-community attitudes towards the Batwa culture
    b. Community sensitization and models to improve household relations and relationship with neighbors
    c. Innovative ways towards preserving Orutwa Language
    d. Undertake low-cost participatory initiatives on Batwa culture-centered tourism and benefit sharing

4. Health and Wellbeing

NGOs and civil society have been at the forefront of Batwa health and wellbeing. However, the Batwa communities have the poorest health outcomes. According to our study findings, at least 190 Batwa or 39% reported that they smoke, among whom 99 were men and 91 were women. A total of 272 or 57.2% reported that they drink alcohol, of which slightly more men than women consume alcohol. At least 62 or 13% of participants mentioned they drink alcohol daily. The reported HIV prevalence was 5.9%, with a higher rate among females (6.9%) than males (4.5%). The highest HIV rate reported was in Kanungu at 8.4% followed by 6.2% in Rubanda and the least reported in Kisoro at 4.4%.

Regarding maternal health services, only 38% of participants indicated that they attended antenatal care whereas, at least 50% of participants reported having their last delivery at a health facility. The proportion of participants who delivered at health facilities was lowest in the Rubanda district at 25%. The proportion of participants who reported that they ever used a family-planning (FP) method was 37%. Overall, 32% of Batwa children completed the routine immunization schedule for children under 5 years.

Concerning gender-based violence (GBV), at least 1 in every 4 Batwa experienced gender-based violence in a period of just one month. This violence was largely perpetuated by a spouse (75.2%). At least 30% reported physical violence, 15% sexual violence, 24% emotional violence and 18% economic violence. The female participants were more likely to report the experience of any of the four forms of violence compared to male participants in the three districts. GBV is further exacerbated by a myth that sleeping with a female Mutwa (*Mutwakwazi*) cures HIV/AIDS.

The theme targets interventions that will enhance the health status and wellbeing of Batwa households through improved access to information and services. We are seeking innovative ideas that will address the health and wellbeing of the Batwa as individuals, families, and communities informed by, but not limited to, the following initiatives:

a. Community-based health services that establish Village Health Teams (VHTs) among Batwa communities, home-based HIV testing, and or delivery of family planning commodities.
b. Innovative ways to mitigate addictions such as excessive smoking, alcoholism, or drug abuse
c. Innovative ways to address gender-based violence and support mechanisms for victims of gender-based violence

HIV/AIDS sensitization campaign and ensuring 90-90-90 strategy is implemented for testing treatment and prevention of new infections. Strategies to ensure delivery of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs at the community level.

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[1] *These may be completely new or may be for the ongoing project or intervention*

3. APPLICATION INFORMATION AND PROCESS

This section provides specific information on the RFA including appendices that support the document.

3.1 Eligibility

Eligible participants should have demonstrated experience in working with and for the Batwa in development initiatives. Partnerships are encouraged. Participant categories may include:
1. Registered Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
2. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)
3. Registered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
4. Academia

Note: All applicants should demonstrate their strategy to engage, partner and work with the District Local Governments that host the Batwa, specifically Kisoro, Rubanda and Kanungu. We envisage that such collaboration with key local government offices is essential for buy-in, institutionalization and sustainability of the development interventions.

3.2 Submission Instructions

An application should be submitted to the research team through Mbarara University Grants Office (MGO). **It is preferred that all applicants send their application via email** that are sent to blic2021@must.ac.ug. **Those unable to send their applications by email should deliver their physical applications to the MGO offices at MUST town campus.** All applications must be complete when submitted. The MUST research Team reserves the right to request additional information from applicants if necessary.

The deadline for the Application submission is **September 20, 2021 at 5:00 PM EAT.**

Late Applications will not be reviewed. Additions or modifications will not be accepted after the submission date. MUST is not responsible for late or incomplete submissions.

3.3 Format and Review Process
Applications have a limit of 10 typed pages of core content, excluding the cover page and supplemental materials (e.g., work plan, budget, references). Content details are provided in the Application summary table at the end of this section. Applications must be in English, with narrative portions prepared in MS Word or Open Office format, using Times New Roman font, size 11, or similar typeset in single line spacing on 8.5x11 inch sized paper. Only evaluate the first 10 pages for Applications exceeding the 10-page limit of core content.

Applications will be reviewed by selected external reviewers, recruited worldwide and have relevant skills and experience on the topic and geographic focal areas, USAID personnel and MUST and RAN research team, and LASER PULSE Management team. Reviewers will evaluate the Applications based upon specifications listed in the Evaluation Criteria section (Section 4). Successful Applications are subject to final approval by USAID before notification of award.

3.4 Strategy for Gender Inclusion
Prior to developing an Application, applicants should review the gender analysis guidelines in Appendix 1. Applications should reflect that the project team is fully aware of the relevant gender considerations for the development solution proposed. The intention is not that the proposed solution be 'about gender,' but that the team should look at gender as a factor that is relevant for any work with human beings, or solutions that propose to benefit human beings.

Applications responsive to gender will 'unpack' certain nouns that mask the target group, but tend to default to a focus on a single sex. For example, terms such as: youth, farmers, entrepreneurs, armed group actors/fighters, and head of household often default to men or boys. Other nouns, such as teachers, caregivers, and parents, often tend to default to a focus on women or girls. As appropriate, applicants should ensure that the target group is clarified and that the choice of focus population is supported by evidence that this is the population group in need for this sector. The LASER PULSE gender online training will show many practical examples where an improperly targeted group can lead to missed opportunity for impact in development solutions and research translation. The Application in response to this RFA should show how these gender considerations are addressed in research design, the development of tools, the research subject selection, the collection and analysis of data, and the proposed translation of the research.

3.5 Project Output Reporting
Applications must include a brief narrative describing the expected outputs of the proposed award. The implementing team should identify the various outputs. These items can be listed as bullet points within the text, with an estimated delivery date placed in parentheses after a given item's description or as a Gantt chart or other format. Note that traditional academic outputs such as journal articles, technical reports, posters, etc. should also be listed but it is anticipated that these are not the only research outputs that could be produced from the proposed work.

The Project Leader (PL) of each successful Applicant team that is awarded a grant will receive a Grant Award Reporting Guidelines document describing procedures on curation and submission of award information, research products, and research datasets. These guidelines will also contain a template for the research team to develop a brief data management plan that will be required as part of the post-award process. Once the award has commenced, output data compiled and reported by the Pl shall consist of, but not be limited to: (1) the names and selected information of the Pl and Co-Pls; (2) research products such as technical manuals, policy briefs, guidebooks, peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and relevant datasets; and (3) presentations at convenings where translated research is disseminated to various development actors, including translation partner(s), policymakers, donors, or other development researchers. Pls will receive from MUST a Research Output Reporting Form (via an online survey) to facilitate the submission of required data and information for monthly reporting.[1]

3.6 Budget and Narrative Preparation for Application
The project budget must be submitted using the MUST Application Budget Template in Excel

3.7 Budget, Budget Narrative, and Cost Share Documents
The budget, budget narrative, and cost share documents should provide, in detail, the total costs for implementation of the program that the Applicant's institution is proposing using the template provided. Generally, each institution included in the Application will be a direct subaward of MUST and follows LASER PULSE's Prime Institution grant management guidelines. Foreign governments are not eligible to receive funding and should not have a budget associated with the Application. Foreign government translation contributions can be applied as cost-share, however.

1. The budget must be submitted in Excel, Google Sheets or an Open Office format using the template provided with unlocked cells and all formulas available to enable MUST to check the calculations included. This budget template and budget narrative should be completed for each applicable institution that is planned to receive funding (i.e. the Prime and any sub-award partners) included in the Application.
2. The following major line items must be included within the budget narrative. When available, each major line item must be supported by detailed breakdowns of each expected sub-expense under that line:
a. Personnel (positions and/or names, rates, etc.)
b. Anticipated Travel (if trips are known, please provide details, if not yet known, then overall estimates and number of proposed trips would be helpful)
c. Breakdown of costs associated with partners
d. Please provide a breakdown of all anticipated other direct costs (i.e. the amount, type, and unit cost with as much detail as possible). Examples may include, but not limited to: consulting fees, participant support costs, workshop costs, maintenance or usage fees, program specific software, etc.
e. Equipment and Supplies - Per USAID restrictions, LASER PULSE will not allow funding to the following categories/items:
   a. Procurement of commodities listed below, but not limited to

i. Agricultural commodities,
  ii. Motor vehicles,
iii. Pharmaceuticals,
iv. Pesticides,
v. Used equipment,
vi. U.S. Government-owned excess property, or
vii. Fertilizer

3.8 Application Summary

In Table 1 below are the application guidelines.

Table 1: Application guidelines

Section	Description
Cover Page (*1 page maximum; does not count against the page limit*)	- Project title - Lead institution applying for the Award - PI, Co-PI(s): names, titles, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers - Sector of inquiry - Geographic Focus Area(s) - Country or list of countries where project will take place - Project length (years, months) - Total budget requested (USD) - Signature and contact information for authorized official from the lead institution (email and phone number) - Contact information for the person responsible for negotiating the final agreement, if different from the above
Project Summary (*1 page maximum; does not count against the page limit*)	Project Summary
Research Plan (*4 pages*)	- Brief background and local context of development challenge in the Districts of Kisoro, Rubanda and Kanungu, Southwestern Uganda, - Description of research gaps: - Clear identification of research question(s) and justification for research focus framed in the context of local, social, cultural, and economic background. - Clear differentiation from past published research and description of innovative concepts and methodology.

	• Research methods and approaches, including objectives and hypotheses • Description of how the project will leverage the team's experience with community engagement, private sector, or government entities in improving the Batwa livelihoods and wellbeing in respective districts in Southwestern Uganda • Strategy for research translation [partnership, process, research translation product(s), dissemination plan]. • Integration of gender considerations into the research plan (see Appendix 1)
Project Management (*1 page*)	• Qualifications, roles and responsibilities of team members, including technical and administrative staff
WorkPlan *(not included in page limit)*	Timeline for the entire project period by activity, indicating what, when, by whom and where, using the provided Work Plan Template

Research Output Reporting
(2 pages)
	● Link research activities to outputs/deliverables:
	    ○ Describe project outputs intended as deliverables (e.g. journal articles and/or technical reports, white papers, and conference posters) with estimated approx. dates of completion.
	    ○ Describe research translated products (e.g. policy briefs, infographics, dissemination workshops) that follow from the translation strategy, with estimated approx. dates of completion for each item.
	• Brief description of output curation and management strategy (1-2 paragraphs).

Budget *(no page limit)*	Use provided BLIC Budget Template(see budget details in Section 3.12 and 3.13)
Budget Narrative/Justification *(no page limit)*	Detailed budget narrative that explains each cost including cost associated with research translation activities. Use the provided Budget Narrative Template
Appendices	
List of References (Bibliography)	

PL Qualifications *(maximum 2 pages each)*	Curriculum vitae (CV) of the PI (use the provided [CV Template](#))
Collaborator Qualifications *(maximum 2 pages each)*	Curriculum vitae (CV) of any Co-PLs (use the provided [CV Template](#))
[Letter of Commitment](#) from partner organization(s)	Signed letter(s) of commitment from partner organisation (s) on the intervention project (for projects proposing to partner with any organisation, they must provide a letter of commitment for partnership)
Checklist for Application	see [Appendix 3](#)

4. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

MUST in partnership with RAN and LASER PULSE will conduct a peer review for submitted Applications, followed by Consensus Reviewer Panel meetings organized by sector, to discuss the reviews based on the criteria listed below. Selected Applications will be recommended to USAID for final approval prior to notification of award. Applicants are highly encouraged to develop their Applications with these criteria in mind.

4.1 Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be rated based on two criteria: Research Merit and Broader Impact.

4.1.1 Research Merit

The research merit criterion encompasses two sub-criteria: (1) Attention to local context and leveraging local capacity, as well as (2) Technical merit:

1. **Sub-criterion 1: Attention to local context and leveraging local capacity**

   To what extent does the research plan take into account the local social, cultural, and economic contexts in (country/region name) in framing the development challenge, research questions, and research methodology/approach? To what extent does the Application appropriately leverage the team's experience with community engagement, the private sector, or government entities?

2. **Sub-criterion 2: Technical merit**

   To what extent is the technical plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? To what extent does the proposed research build off/leverage the team's ongoing or completed research projects or learning projects? To what extent does the proposed research explore innovative concepts and methodologies?

4.1.2 Broader Impacts

This criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired outcomes for LASER PULSE; and will be judged based on these questions:

1. Sub-criterion 1: Embedded Research Translation

   To what extent does the Application reflect the findings from the research findings from the MUST research report on 'Understanding the Marginalized Indigenous Batwa People of Southwestern Uganda'

   Key considerations for the model are:

   a. Interpretation and understanding of the research findings.
   b. Extent to which the Application captures the collaborative process and involvement of the Batwa
   c. Assessment of the potential impact of the intervention on improvement of Batwa livelihoods and wellbeing.

2. Sub-criterion 2: Gender Mainstreaming

   How well does the proposed intervention project identify relevant gender issues for the specific context and how has the consideration of these contributed to the overall intervention process and approach? How will the team composition promote gender inclusive participation and contribute to inform the research focus and implementation at all stages?

3. Sub-criterion 3: Other Societal Impacts

   What is the potential of the proposed activities to benefit the community/society beyond the scope of the project?

4.2 Evaluation Process

MUST research team will conduct a preliminary screening of Applications to ensure they are complete and conform to instructions and requirements.

The selected Applications will be separated into respective technical sector groups and reviewed by a panel consisting of technical experts assembled by the MUST research team in consultation with RAN, LASER PULSE and USAID. The evaluation criteria emphasizes strengths and weaknesses of each sub-criterion and the overall adjectival rating for the main criteria (RM and BI). Each Application will be evaluated based on the main criteria (RM and BI) and sub-criteria described above. Reviewers are required to provide written narratives on the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of each sub-criterion and the adjectival rating based on the scale of "Excellent (E)", "Very Good (V)", "Good (G)", "Fair (F)", and "Poor (P)", according to the descriptions in Table 1. Additionally, Reviewers will also provide overall adjectival rating for the main criteria (RM and BI).

After the individual reviews have been completed, the MUST research team will conduct a Consensus Reviewer Panel for each of the technical sectors, to deliberate on the review comments and determine a final consensus rating for each application. The Consensus Panel will also recommend the Applications into one of three funding recommendation categories - "Fund", "Fund if Possible" and "Do not Fund" - according to those final ratings. The research team, in

consultation with RAN, LASER PULSE and USAID, will make the final selection of successful Applications based on the criteria listed above in addition to regulatory and geographic factors that may be relevant to individual Applications. USAID will provide final review and approval for the selected awards. While 2 to 3 awards are anticipated as a result of this request for Applications, MUST in partnership with RAN and LASER PULSE reserves the right to fund any or none of the Applications submitted. All proposed activities that occur outside of the United States require concurrence of the respective USAID Mission(s) as such, Applicants may be asked to provide additional information to USAID if your Application is shortlisted for a potential award.

Table 1. Rating Definition for Research Merit and Broader Impact Sub-Criteria

Adjectival Rating	Descriptive Statement
Excellent	Outstanding application in all aspects. Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion and convincingly demonstrates that it will meet the RFA objectives. Weaknesses, if any, can be easily addressed.
Very Good	Strong application in all aspects. Applicant fully addresses all aspects of the criterion and convincingly demonstrates a likelihood of meeting the RFA objectives. Weaknesses, if any, can be easily addressed.
Good	Applicant addresses all aspects of the criterion and demonstrates the ability to meet the RFA objectives but shows some weaknesses, yet the positives of the application outweigh the negatives.
Fair	Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion nor is evidence presented indicating the likelihood of successfully meeting the RFA objectives. Significant weaknesses are demonstrated and clearly outweigh any strengths presented.
Poor	Applicant does not address all aspects of the criterion and the information presented indicates a strong likelihood of failure to meet the RFA objectives.

5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1 – LASER PULSE Gender Analysis Considerations

Researchers responding to this RFA must consider the questions below when designing Applications. ***Please do not answer these questions as written in this Appendix. Instead, show in the research Application (focus, tools, analysis, recommendations, and translation plan) that these questions have been considered to the extent possible and relevant.***

Note that gender does not mean women. Gender refers to socially constructed norms and concepts about masculinity and femininity. These norms cut across all other aspects of an individual, as relates to his or her race, class, religion, ethnicity, ability, and age. Research has shown that gender norms are remarkably resilient across cultures [World Bank Gender Portal].

The LASER PULSE research Award Application will require applicants to apply a 'gendered lens' to the research translation that they propose, so that LASER PULSE does not fund work that reinforces harmful gender norms, or fails to take advantage of opportunities to address gender norms to promote development and human rights goals.

Research Considerations[1]

In formulating your proposal, please ensure that you have:

1) Discussed the relevant gendered social inequalities and/or gender gaps.
2) Identified any direct and indirect problem impacts and how they vary by gender.
3) Described how these differential impacts inform the research project design.
4) Described the relevance of gender considerations to any human subjects research.

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[1] Adapted from https://www.genderportal.eu/projects/gender-eu-funded-research-toolkit-and-training

5) Reviewed literature relating to gender differences and implications of gender to the research field.

6) Show that sex-disaggregated (by biological sex of subjects) and gender-sensitive data[2] (contextual/ situational) will be collected and analyzed throughout the research cycle, and included in the final publication and research translation products.

7) Demonstrate how differentiated outcomes and impacts on women and men are considered.

8) Ensure that all questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, etc. (when included) are also designed to unravel potentially relevant sex and/or gender differences in your data. Particularly, describe how translation products, including policy recommendations, physical products, or practices, could result in subsequent gender-differentiated outcomes.

Resources for Gender Analysis
- USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy
- CARE Gender Marker Guidance: https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/images/in-practice/Gender-marker/CARE_Gender-Marker-Guidance_new-colors1.pdf
- https://www.feedthefuture.gov/the-womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-index

5.2 Appendix 2 – Glossary of Selected Key Words

Collaboration
Willingness to work together in an open and supportive manner to advance the work of LASER PULSE to achieve its goals and objectives; applies to LASER PULSE staff in their interactions with USAID and research teams (e.g. HEI researchers, development actors) that are recipients of LASER-funded awards. Also applies to HEI researchers and development translation partner(s) involved in their funded research.

Co-Principal Project Leader (Co-PL)
Each implementing team receiving an award will be composed of a Project Leader (PL) affiliated with the prime recipient, as well as one or more Co-Pl(s). MUST defines Co-Pl as a key member of the research team (who is not the PI) that also serves as the point of contact for their institution. If there is more than one team member from a given institution, said institution will inform MUST who will be their designated Co-PL.

Development Practitioner(s)
Individual persons engaged in the design, planning, and/or implementation of local, regional, national, or international development programs/projects. This definition refers to personnel of NGOs and community-based organizations; but it can also include individuals representing governments or the private sector in an implementation capacity (e.g., extension agents) as opposed to a funding capacity. Under certain circumstances (e.g., co-creation of research questions), donor staff may also fall under this definition.

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[2] https://www.oecd.org/dev/38640915.pdf

Development Stakeholders

Any entity involved in international development funding, promotion, and/or implementation, as well as the intended beneficiaries (e.g. local communities and their citizens).

Higher Education Institution

Based upon USAID documents, LASER PULSE defines a Higher Education Institution (HEI) as a tertiary education institution that provides educational opportunities that build on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. This may include public or private universities, colleges, and training institutes.

Embedded Research Translation

An iterative co-design process among academics, practitioner(s), and other stakeholders in which research is intentionally applied to a development challenge.

Translation Partners

In this RFA, LASER PULSE uses the term "Translation Partners" to refer to Development Practitioner (s) (see definition above) that are, or are intended to be paired with researchers as part of a team submitting an Application.

5.3 Appendix 3 – Application Checklist

List of Required Documents for the Application

☐ A Completed Application (maximum 10 pages)

☐ Workplan (not included in the page limit); use template provided

☐ Detailed Budget; use Application budget template provided

☐ Detailed Budget Narrative (must explain all costs); use template provided

☐ Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the Project Leader (maximum 2 pages); use template provided

☐ Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the Co-PLs (maximum 2 pages each); use template provided

☐ Signed Letter(s) of Commitment [from each partner organisation(s)]; use the provided template)

☐ Certificates of Completion (from the PL and Co-PLs for two online trainings): 1) Gender Analysis in
Project and Application; 2) LASER PULSE Research to Translation Training