

## **Optimus Study on protecting children: Latin America 2011–2015, Call for pre-proposal**

The UBS Optimus Foundation seeks to commission research on child sexual abuse prevalence and service provision in a Latin American country in a project that will last from October 2011 through 2015.

### **1. Background: Optimus Study on protecting children**

The Optimus Study is a cross-national initiative on child sexual abuse in the context of other forms of maltreatment. It aims to apply the best social science research methods available to create an evidence-base for intervention and prevention strategies. The Optimus Study has successfully developed a research model that integrates standardized population-based survey methods with tracking health and social statistics to assess prevalence and response rates. The Foundation is seeking a research team that would be interested in replicating this model in **one** country in Latin America.

Data from the different studies will eventually be pooled into a common data archive, enabling comparative analyses over time and between countries. The UBS Optimus Foundation initiated the project and plays an active role as facilitator and coordinator. The research team is expected to coordinate its work closely with the Foundation while the project proceeds. The Optimus Studies are supported and reviewed by international and local experts. For more information please visit [www.optimusstudy.org](http://www.optimusstudy.org) and [www.ubs.com/optimus](http://www.ubs.com/optimus).

#### **1.1. The Optimus Study methodology: a threefold approach**

##### *1.1.1 Population Survey: Estimating the magnitude and impact of the problem*

The population survey aims to collect lifetime and previous-year prevalence of sexual abuse experiences for nationally representative samples of youths 15–17 years of age as well as information on other types of maltreatment, risk factors, protective factors, and consequences of abuse. In order to ensure cross-national comparability, a preexisting glossary with operational definitions and measures for core variables is provided. Some of the assessments must be done in school settings to enable comparisons with youth in other countries. However, as the sampling must reflect the local context, additional sampling and operationalization may be necessary to ensure full inclusion of different segments of the population, such as out-of-school children. Sample size needs to be large enough to be able to identify meaningful differences in exposure between countries and among important segments of the target country population.

##### *1.1.2 Agency Survey: Understanding the service system and practices of case management*

The agency survey aims to provide an understanding of the agencies that respond to victims of sexual abuse and describe how cases are handled once they come to the attention of officials in these agencies. It includes a comprehensive landscape analysis of agencies and legal framework related to child protection. The agency survey must include a count of new abuse cases brought to the attention of officials over a defined period of time in a representative sample of agencies that may have some involvement in such cases. Relevant agencies include state child protection services, NGOs with specialized services, hospitals, police, and criminal justice authorities. Cases must be reported as rates per 1000 and provide a baseline for comparison to rates found in the population survey. This will enable an understanding of reporting practices within the country and how far agencies are able to respond to cases of sexual abuse experiences.

### 1.1.3 Knowledge Translation: Closing the gap between research, policy and practice

The goal of the study is to have an influence on the policy and practice community. Thus the study design must include a plan to involve policy- and practice-relevant stakeholders in order to ensure uptake of research results and to advance the field of child protection. The study must also develop advanced plans about how to publicize and disseminate the results to achieve this effect and include a list of relevant target group and planned measures. The results must be organized and presented in ways that serve decision-makers' information needs and provides them with clear recommendations regarding interventions, prevention, and practice.

## 2. Call for pre-proposal: expertise and feasibility

The Optimus Study has been successfully conducted in Switzerland and China -> [www.optimusstudy.org](http://www.optimusstudy.org).

The Optimus Foundation wishes to expand study activities to Latin America between 2011– 2015 and wishes to commission research to replicate and adapt the methodology in one country in Latin America.

The current competitive call is for pre-proposals that will enable the Foundation to assess the capacity of proposed research teams as well as to assess the feasibility and the potential benefit of the team's proposal in one Latin American country.

The selection and implementation process will follow a four-phase procedure:

Phase 1: Expertise and feasibility pre-proposal (current call)

Phase 2: Full proposal

Phase 3: Pilot study

Phase 4: Full study and dissemination

The following elements must be included in pre-proposals responding to the current call:

### 2.1. Requirements for submission of an expertise and feasibility pre-proposal

One country in the region of Latin America must be chosen as a focus.

Collaborations between international research centers are welcome, however, local capacity must be demonstrated in the plan. Proposals should feature clearly identified expertise and leadership for each of the components (Population Survey, Agency Survey, and Knowledge Translation) – and demonstrate mechanisms for coordination between the components. Proposals may include separate teams for the different components.

The funding cap for the overall project is around 1'000'000 Swiss Francs.

The pre-proposal must include the following elements in max 1'500 – 2'000 words:

- Selection of one country in the region of Latin America
- Description of prior studies on child abuse and maltreatment done in this country
- A brief overview of existing policies and practices
- Description of a preliminary operational plan for conducting each of the three components of the Optimus Study (Population Survey, Agency Survey, Knowledge Translation) as well as their local feasibility
- Justification as to why this study would bring added value to this country considering prior scientific work and existing policies and practices
- Description of prior social and health scientific studies that would confirm in this country context and feasibility or research and knowledge mobilization of the types contemplated in the Optimus Study

- Description of how you would go about leveraging results for policy and practice. Elaborate on prevention readiness of the country.
- Description of relevant team expertise regarding each of the three study components (where applicable, please submit letters confirming the support of any teams who have agreed to collaborate in this pre-proposal)
- Please submit an example of a successful dissemination and knowledge translation of a project that you have conducted
- Description of anticipated challenges to conducting the project
- An approximate timeline for conducting a pilot study in 2012 (over a 6-month period, in order to map out agencies, describe case trajectory, test the feasibility of the population survey, and obtain human subject approval) and a full study in 2013–2015
- An initial estimate of the budget, divided up according to the three study components
- Demonstration of capacity to manage the budget and a list of prior experiences handling comparable research funds, including a plan for managing fluctuations in the exchange rate.
- A list of previous large grants received, along with relevant publications from the research centre/s, and CVs from team leaders.

**The deadline for submission of this pre-proposal is 17.00 CET, 31 August 2011. The initial selection process will be completed by the end of September 2011. A number of applicants will then be invited to** submit a full proposal by the end of October 2011. Limited funds are available to selected teams to cover certain costs involved in the elaboration of the proposals and the negotiations with the foundation.

**Please send in your application by 31 August 2011, 17.00 CET, to**

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**For questions** contact the project manager at the UBS Optimus Foundation

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**UBS Optimus Foundation:  
A decade of international work in child protection**

Established ten years ago by UBS, the UBS Optimus Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization whose philanthropic work is made possible by the donations of clients. The foundation has been active worldwide in the protection of children for many years. It pursues innovative projects along its value chain to achieve the maximum leverage. It trains its focus on subjects that attract little or no financing from other quarters, developing them further or replicating them in other locations. These include a prevention project in Scotland that seeks to change the attitudes of young men to violence against women and to encourage young women who have been the victims of violence to talk about their experiences. Another is the interactive prevention project "My body belongs to me", which is now being launched in Mozambique with attention to cultural differences after a successful pilot in Germany and Switzerland.

It is hoped that the foundation's Optimus Study will also close this gap. Because only when scientifically collected data on the occurrence of sexual violence against children is available, can the impact of prevention and intervention projects be appraised in the future.

[www.ubs.com/optimus](http://www.ubs.com/optimus)



UBS Optimus Foundation