

Questions to Consider at the Outset of Research

- 1.) Is your literature review thorough? I.e., does it cover the “who, what, where, when and why” of your research?
- 2.) What is the underlying theory of change driving this work? Is this theory based on existing literature or did you come up with it on your own?
- 3.) What is/are your specific hypotheses and/or research questions?
- 4.) What are the broad implications of this research?
- 5.) What data collection methods are you using (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations)?
- 6.) Will your analysis be qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods? Why?
- 7.) What is your planned sample size? If using a quantitative approach, can your sample size support the type of analysis you are planning to conduct?
- 8.) If using a quantitative approach, what are your independent and dependent variables?
- 9.) Will you build a counterfactual (comparison) into your study? If yes, what will it be? If no, why not?
- 10.) What biases might you have as you design and conduct this research? How will you ensure that the research is conducted as objectively as possible?
- 11.) What biases may be present in the data as a result of the study design? How might these biases affect the conclusions you are able to draw from the data?
- 12.) What are the limitations of this study? How might those limitations be addressed in future research?
- 13.) If this research yields actionable findings, what are your short- and long-term next steps (e.g., will these data be adequate for publication, or perhaps pilot data for a larger study? What kind of research would naturally follow from this work?)
- 14.) How could this intervention/program be scaled-up? (e.g., do you know of colleagues here or at other institutions doing similar work? Is there potential to collaborate on a multi-site study?)