



UKRI/AHRC GCRF Urgency Grants Scheme Highlight Notice for Innovation Awards / Case Studies on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Persons with Disabilities

Eligibility and Funding for this highlight notice is the same as for the AHRC Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Urgency Grants pilot scheme, subject to the modifications outlined below, including amended funding limits and extended provisions for cross-disciplinary proposals across UKRI subject remits.

This highlight notice document should be read in conjunction with the AHRC GCRF Urgency Grants pilot scheme call documents at <https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/calls/gcrf-urgency-grants-pilot-guidance-pdf/> particularly with regard to the eligibility requirements and guidance on costings outlined in that call documentation.

Please note that the eligibility requirements for international researchers outlined in the [UKRI GCRF/Newton Fund Agile Response call to address COVID-19](#) and the AHRC GCRF Urgency Grants pilot scheme apply to this highlight notice and therefore proposals will only be accepted from LMIC country Principal Investigators from an organisation that leads or has previously led and held UKRI grants as the lead research organisation. All applications led by organisations outside of the UK must be able to provide a UKRI grant reference for a grant led and held by the organisation or they will not be eligible to apply as the lead research organisation under this highlight notice.

Project length: up to **6 months**, with awards expected to **start by 1 February 2021**

Closing date for Expression of Interest: 22 September 2020 – Applications which pass through the Expression of Interest phase will be invited to submit a full proposal by early October 2020.

Award range: Applications for up to **£100,000 (fEC)** per innovation award / case study are invited.

Aims of this Highlight Notice

UKRI, with AHRC taking the lead on behalf of Councils across UKRI, working in partnership with the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF) wishes to bring together UK and Low and Middle Income Country (LMIC) cross-disciplinary research expertise with UNDP and UNPRPD members country offices as relevant, governments, civil

society (in particular those representing persons with disabilities) and persons with disabilities to co-produce a cluster of innovation awards / research case studies. The aim of these awards / studies is to build the evidence base about the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on persons with disabilities, to explore the development of new participatory, co-produced and other mixed research methods and approaches drawing across disciplines for undertaking situational analysis in developing countries and to inform the development of strategies for disability inclusive recovery from the pandemic and 'building back better' to a more disability inclusive world.

The AHRC is leading on this collaboration with UNPRPD MPTF on behalf of UKRI but this highlight notice is open to applications across all relevant disciplines and cross-disciplinary/ cross-Council proposals are welcomed.

Context

A recent post (27 May 2020) by the United Nations notes "*Persons with disabilities face the same risk from the COVID-19 crisis and its impact as the rest of the population, but the danger experienced by those with disabilities is compounded by many other factors, such as pre-existing health conditions, and inaccessibility to education, health care and other essential services, social protection and income security, mental health services, and communication technologies. In addition, intersecting forms of discrimination further worsen the situation of persons with disabilities on the basis of gender, socio-economic status, legal status- including as migrants and refugees, as well as race, ethnic or religious identity; all these factors have subjected them to even more hardships and unequal treatment. In other words, disability and structural inequalities, which characterized societies before the crisis, are being exacerbated by the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 crisis*".

Expectations for Innovation Awards Under this Highlight Notice

Awards supported under this highlight notice will be expected to:

- support the development of innovative, scalable and transferable research approaches for conducting rapid, participatory, disability-specific situational analysis and enhance understanding of the impacts of the evolving coronavirus pandemic on the livelihoods, wellbeing and experience of persons with disabilities in case study LMICs. Proposals should seek to develop approaches that are scalable and transferable as a part of a wider framework for undertaking systematic situational analysis but should also be informed by, and adaptable to, local cultural contexts. Proposals should seek to produce new evidence, data, analysis, perspectives and/or insights that can inform strategies for disability-inclusive recovery.
- bring together UK and LMIC research expertise in an equitable partnership, drawing across disciplines, and local partners from the disability community and working across sectors to co-produce context-specific situational analysis and encourage the development of collaborative working and inclusive participatory research approaches between relevant organisations, groups and diverse persons with disabilities at the national/regional level;

- support work towards strengthening the diverse voices of persons with disabilities at the national/regional level, tackling stereotyping, social stigma and exclusionary cultures and supporting empowerment, in the contexts of the coronavirus pandemic and the processes of recovery from it and recognising specific local cultural, social and economic contexts;
- be willing to work collaboratively with other project teams, the coordinating team, UNPRPD-supported national programmes, the wider UKRI portfolio and UNPRPD Technical Secretariat to support the development of common analytical frameworks, explore issues of scalability and transferability, share learning and experience and contribute to collective outputs;
- apply a broad definition of persons with disabilities in conducting their research in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which states, “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”;
- draw as appropriate on multi-method and multi/cross-disciplinary approaches, the precise mix of disciplinary expertise, data, methods and research approaches is for applicants to propose in the light of local contexts, access to data and the potential for research innovation and added-value etc. with a particular encouragement to proposals which include an element of experimentation with, or further development of, innovative participatory research methods;
- consider both direct and indirect impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on, and the experience and responses of, persons with disabilities, including access to services, family relationships and community support, culture and social and economic support and impacts in terms of, for example, wellbeing, livelihoods and mental health and on carers and service providers;
- examine the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic in the context of longer term intersections between disabilities, gender and wider inequalities and marginalisation within societies and the diversity of experiences between different groups of persons with disabilities as well as, where appropriate variations between regions, rural/urban, displaced populations, age groups, socioeconomic status, legal status, different living and care settings, etc.; [In this regard it should be noted that full proposals will be required to submit a gender equalities statement and that a 2017 [UN women issue brief](#) noted that *“In low and middle-income countries, women are estimated to comprise up to three-quarters of persons with disabilities. Poverty and marginalization are compounded when gender and disability intersect. Women and girls with disabilities face multiple barriers to realizing their rights: environmental, physical and informational accessibility issues, including lack of resources and inadequate access to services, as well as widespread discrimination, stereotyping and social stigma”*.]
- contribute insights on how the voices of persons with disabilities and learning from their current experiences, could feed more effectively into learning and disability inclusive recovery from the pandemic and the situationally specific strategies, policies and provision of services that could be put in place to effectively support persons with disabilities as the pandemic evolves and/or societies start to emerge from it;

- include appropriate partnerships, collaborations and communication/dissemination plans to support the outputs of the study reach relevant regional/national/local policy, civic, practice and public audiences and are disseminated more widely through academic and other media as appropriate;
- seek to build capabilities in LMIC countries for co-producing disability research and analysis, produce outcomes of benefit to local partner organisations and leave a sustainable research legacy of value to future disability inclusive development;
- be guided by the following cross-cutting principles laid out in Article 3 of the CRPD:
 - ❖ Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons with disabilities.
 - ❖ Non-discrimination.
 - ❖ Full and effective participation and inclusion in society.
 - ❖ Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and human diversity and humanity.
 - ❖ Equality of opportunity.
 - ❖ Accessibility.
 - ❖ Equality between men and women.
 - ❖ Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

Applications for other research projects addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities which do not meet the above criteria may be submitted to other UKRI funding calls as appropriate, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria for the relevant call. We would be happy to involve any other projects funded by UKRI this way in any networking activities as a part of the UNPRPD partnership should they wish to be involved/contribute in this way.

Geographical Focus / Scope for Projects

We would welcome proposals for innovation awards /case study research focused on at least one LMIC/DAC List country amongst the 39 countries with which UNPRPD has established a joint national programme as detailed on the [UNPRPD website](#), with the exception that we do not expect to fund projects focused primarily on China or India. In addition, the UKRI-funded Disability under Siege Network plus will lead on case study work in its areas of focus in the Middle East, notably in Palestine (Gaza and West Bank) from the UNPRPD list of countries, as well as Jordan and Lebanon. We wish to fund innovation awards/research case studies addressing a range of different continents and LMIC contexts. Where appropriate, in addition to innovation awards /case studies focused on a single country, awards/studies could address regions within countries, cross-border areas or compare/contrast several countries (this can include other LMIC countries as long as at least one of the countries of principal focus is a country with which UNPRPD has established a national programme).

In addition, we would particularly welcome proposals addressing any of the following three LMIC countries below with which UNPRPD has agreed inclusive country-specific COVID 19 response and recovery plans and situational analysis, to which the innovation awards /case study research funded through this highlight notice would enhance, complement and add value:

1. Cambodia
2. Nepal
3. Zimbabwe

UNPRPD anticipates funding a further cohort of national recovery plans in the autumn of 2020. Projects funded through this highlight notice in countries which have included a recovery plan within UNPRPD programme outcomes will be expected to work in collaboration with those national plans and local UNDP and UNPRPD members country offices as relevant to ensure that their work enhances and adds value to them.

Expected Outputs and Requirements for working as a part of a Co-ordinated Partnership Programme

Projects funded under this highlight notice are expected to inform inclusive future planning at a national/regional level for recovery from the pandemic and to contribute to shared learning, experience and expertise across contexts to develop broader frameworks for building disability inclusive recovery and futures.

The UKRI-funded Disability under Siege Network plus will act in a co-ordinating role for this phase of activity under the partnership, working with other UKRI-funded projects as appropriate. The AHRC, working with UKRI and UNPRPD MPTF, is establishing an advisory group to advise on the future progress of this initiative, emerging outcomes and next steps.

Supported innovation awards / case studies will be networked and will be expected, as a condition of funding, to work in collaboration with each other, the UKRI-funded co-ordination team [led by Professor Dina Kiwan and Ms Vera Kubenz {University of Birmingham} and colleagues at the UKRI- GCRF-funded Disability Under Siege Network plus award] and UNPRPD Technical Secretariat to support the development of wider frameworks and research methods for disability inclusive analysis and recovery strategies. This is expected to involve participation in workshops to develop frameworks, share learning and experience and discuss emerging recommendations for policy and practice, as well as the sharing/reporting of interim – as well as final - analysis and findings.

In addition to contributing to collective outputs, each innovation award / case study will be expected to lead to published research outputs (e.g. journal articles), an accessible report summarising its evidence and findings and a policy briefing paper as well as open access to any data collected (subject as appropriate to appropriate consent / privacy / anonymity/ ethical / safeguarding requirements).

Application and Award Process

Please ensure that you read the [call documentation](#) for the AHRC GCRF Urgency Grants pilot scheme and in particular the institutional/ applicant eligibility requirements and guidance on costs which apply to applications under this highlight notice. However, please note the different funding limit (£100,000 fEC) and award duration (6 months) which applies to this highlight, the removal of arts and humanities remit requirements and the COVID-19 response exclusion for the purposes of this highlight notice.

To apply under this highlight notice, applicants should complete and submit an **Expression of Interest (EOI) form** available at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UrgencyHighlightInnovation/> by **16:00 22nd September 2020**

EOIs will be checked by the AHRC for fit to this highlight notice and eligibility under the call. Applications which pass through these checks will be invited to submit a full application through the UKRI Joint Electronic Submission Service (Je-S). This invitation will provide applicants with more detail of how to apply through Je-S.

All full applications invited following the EOI stage under this highlight notice will be considered by a single expert UKRI panel established to consider applications through this highlight notice in collaboration with UNPRPD.

Please note that applicants under this highlight notice will not normally receive individual feedback on their proposal. In addition, there will not be a PI response (opportunity for the applicants to respond to peer reviewers' comments prior to panel) stage under this call. However, you may be asked for more information before a grant is confirmed and so awards may be offered subject to specified conditions being responded to, addressed or met.

Awards will be issued by the AHRC in accordance with UKRI terms and conditions but the additional provisions for funding researchers in low or middle income countries will apply as outlined in the call documents for the AHRC GCRF Urgency Grants pilot scheme.

Expected timetable for activities under this highlight notice.

31 July 2020	Launch urgency highlight notice
22 September 2020	Closing date for submission of Expressions of Interest (EOIs) via Smartsurvey
w/c 29 September 2020	Feedback on EOIs invitations to submit full proposals
10 November 2020	Closing date for invited full proposals to be submitted through UKRI Joint Electronic Submission Service (Je-S)
w/c 14 December 2020	Expert Panel meeting considers proposals

w/c 4 January 2021	Notification of outcomes of full applications
1 February 2021 (inclusive)	Projects start
February 2021	'Inception meeting' (virtual) for projects organised by co-ordination team
April 2020	Interim Reports / workshop (dates to be confirmed to award holders)
June- July 2021	Workshop to share results of projects. Projects end / report.
August 2021	Synthesis / Dissemination activities led by co-ordination team