Pre-call Announcement:

GCRF ‘Conflict Intersections’ Global Partnership Development Awards: Prevention and Resilience at the Intersections between Conflict, Fragility and Wider Development Challenges and Risks

Summary

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), working in collaboration with other Research Councils within UKRI, is planning to announce a new funding call in early 2020 for Partnership Development awards under the Global Challenges Research Fund’s Collective Programme. This call will support the development of equitable partnerships and an interdisciplinary community to explore the intersections between conflict and fragility (SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions & GCRF Conflict portfolio) and wider development challenges (and other SDGs and GCRF portfolios) such as health, environmental resilience, sustainable cities and food systems, as well as cross-cutting development issues such as gender, inequalities, poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods.

The call will launch in early March 2020 with a closing date in late spring 2020 and projects expected to start from autumn 2020. Approximately 20 awards of varying sizes up to £200,000 (fEC) and between 12 and 24 months duration will be supported.

This call is part of the interdisciplinary GCRF Collective Programme being delivered by UK Research and Innovation. This cross-portfolio call will contribute to the GCRF Security Protracted Conflict, Refugee Crises and Forced Displacement portfolio and to the other portfolios steered by the GCRF Challenge Leaders (https://www.ukri.org/research/global-challenges-research-fund/gcrf-challenge-leaders/). Conflict portfolio Challenge Leader, Dr Neelan Raina, is currently undertaking further development and consultation activities to feed into the finalisation of the call details. The call will be designed to complement other cross-portfolio Collective Programme calls such as those on education in conflict and equitable resilience.

AHRC is managing this call on behalf of UKRI and it is intended to support the development of highly collaborative, interdisciplinary, international research partnerships. Applicants from any discipline are encouraged to apply as a part of cross-disciplinary teams.

Focus of the Call

The poorest and most vulnerable people face multiple challenges simultaneously. Development approaches, despite the breaking of silos, are often designed to resolve one problem or create problem driven solution around specific challenges only. This call aims to address the cross sections between challenges such as conflict, fragility, violence, human rights, access to justice and identity politics and other challenges such as climate and environmental change, gender gaps, migration, inequality, public health challenges, access to education and training, heritage at risk, and disasters, amongst others.

Thus this call invites research on groupings of intersecting challenges, which supports community driven, inclusive and innovative approaches to preventative and resilience building measures in developing country contexts affected by both conflict, fragility and violence and in contexts where the power of communities to bring about positive change is limited.
Therefore the call will have a particular focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable and at risk groups facing multi-dimensional, intersecting and compounding risks and challenges, including those which cross borders and/or are multi-scalar and multi-temporal. It will support the development of:

- contextually informed research engaged with local cultures, histories, knowledges and communities;
- equitable partnerships, cross-national collaboration and reciprocal learning; and,
- inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral research innovation.

In so doing it will seek to develop the convergence research\(^1\) capabilities needed to address complex and fluid challenges at the intersections between conflict and fragility and wider development challenges and to co-design tailored, innovative, contextually-appropriate, responses which address the underlying drivers of fragility and factors of resilience and meet the needs of vulnerable and at risk groups. It also welcomes radical and new thinking which allows new insights and creative solutions to emerge.

Potential cross-cutting themes will include:

- tackling gender and other inequalities;
- addressing the risks of conducting collaborative research in contexts of conflict, fragility, violence, crises and other intersecting risks, and in contexts of extreme poverty, inequalities and vulnerabilities;
- inclusive engagement with at-risk, vulnerable or marginalised communities, and/or with specific groups such as young people, ageing populations, etc., to support the co-design of culturally informed responses and as foundations for social innovation, civic engagement and community-driven development;
- building a stronger evidence base including tackling the challenges of evaluating the sustainability and effectiveness of preventative and resilience-building approaches over time in complex interconnected systems;
- learning across borders, sectors, professions and contexts and from the past; supporting improved cross-organisational and collaborative working; strengthening coherence across preventative, resilience building, humanitarian, relief, and emergency response, recovery and longer term development strategies; and the development of more integrated policies, practices and service design.

**Aims of Partnership Development Awards**

Awards will be expected to support:

- Development of equitable partnerships between UK and LMIC researchers and other development and local LMIC partners as appropriate with the aim of catalysing the creation of sustainable, balanced, equitable relationships and partnerships which foster learning and knowledge exchange that is reciprocal with clear mutuality of benefit for all collaborators;
- Cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral creativity and innovation bringing together expertise in:

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\(^1\) For more information see US National Science Foundation’s description of ‘convergence research’ at: [https://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/convergence/index.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/convergence/index.jsp)
• local contexts, knowledges, cultures and histories, including where appropriate those that cross borders, and the contextual factors that have contributed to extreme poverty, inequalities and vulnerabilities;
• the dynamics of cycles conflict and fragility, including contextual understanding of conflict histories, identities and violence, governance, human rights and access to justice, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and/or transitions from conflict as appropriate; and,
• inter-connected development challenges such as environmental change, health, urbanisation, food systems, sustainable livelihoods, etc.
➢ innovation and methodological development, drawing across disciplines and fields as appropriate, to support advances in areas such as:
• approaches for integrated research to understand complex, multiple, intersecting, dynamic challenges, working across borders and boundaries and/or combining diverse expertise knowledges and/or data;
• working with at risk or vulnerable groups in contexts of conflict, fragility, violence.

Partnership awards will provide opportunities to explore new research agendas, exchange knowledge insights and ideas, and build networks and partnerships with researchers and non-academic groups in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) as a foundation for future research innovation. They will also allow researchers to work collaboratively across cultural, linguistic, sectoral and international boundaries and blend scientific, cultural, policy and practice-based research and to build bridges with humanitarian, disaster management and development policy and practice.

**Eligible activities**

Eligible activities under Partnership Development Awards include (in variable combinations):
• establishing inter-disciplinary collaborative partnerships, teams or consortia;
• small scale, pilot, proof of principle, exploratory, inter-disciplinary, higher risk projects to explore innovative boundary crossing collaborations;
• developing research strategy and agendas to strengthen research activity and innovation across the field;
• international knowledge sharing across research departments, between Institutions and across sectoral boundaries;
• capacity building including inter-disciplinary skills enhancement and career development;
• widening/extending the disciplinary breadth of existing teams/partnerships (e.g. through placements, embedding, ethnographic research, etc.);
• establishing foundations for research collaboration such as building of research/stakeholder networks, development of research protocols, collecting ‘baseline’ data, building trust and understanding shared values, developing collaborative/inclusive working practices including issues around gender and equalities and language/translation, strengthening processes for safeguarding or risk management, ethical reviews, developing evaluation methods, collaboration and IP agreements, ensuring appropriate local consent, access and permissions etc.
• engagement/consultation/co-design with local communities, groups and/or intended users or beneficiaries;
• scoping potential for shared use of data, collections, fieldwork, facilities or other resources with a defined sustainable research outcome;
• cross-disciplinary (and cross-cultural/language) literature reviews, research synthesis, evidence analysis or integrative data sharing and analysis.
Please note that capital or infrastructure expenditure (e.g. to build, develop or maintain research or other facilities), and funding for PhD studentships, will not be eligible costs for this call.

**Eligibility to apply under the call**

It is envisaged that applications under this call may be submitted by researchers based at either:

- UK Higher Education Institutions, or Independent Research Organisations eligible to receive funding from the UK Research Councils. International co-investigators will be eligible under this call. All UK-led applications will be expected to have a balanced international leadership team consistent with the principles of equitable international partnership working, and to include a *minimum* of at least one named international co-investigator based in a research organisation in a low or middle income country. It will be the responsibility of the UK lead organisation to ensure that appropriate and proportionate due diligence and financial assurance processes are in place for international co-investigators and collaborating partners funded under the award.

- LMIC based (ODA DAC list), universities and ‘not for profit’ research organisations which either have completed UKRI due diligence processes and/or are confident that they would fully meet UKRI due diligence and financial assurance requirements. Research organisations which have not already completed these processes and which are proposed to lead a project which is recommended for an award under the call will need to provide information as outlined in the [UKRI International Due Diligence Questionnaire](#) and will need to fully complete UKRI due diligence procedures before an award can be made. In some cases AHRC / UKRI may seek information / clarification on eligibility at an earlier stage in the processing of applications. All LMIC-led applications will need to involve substantial collaboration and partnership with UK researchers and have a balanced international leadership team consistent with the principles of equitable international partnership working, and include a *minimum* of at least one named co-investigator based at a UK research organisation eligible to receive funding from the UK Research Councils.

Applications led by, or with significant involvement of, early career researchers of post-doctoral or equivalent standing, will be welcomed. Where appropriate research organisations submitting applications led by early career researchers are encouraged to support such applications through, for example, appropriate provision of mentoring, advisory, professional development, expert / project management support services, tailored to the career development needs of the early career researcher(s) and to supporting delivery of the proposed partnership development activities.

Where appropriate, collaboration with International organisations, NGOs, think tanks, development agencies, humanitarian assistance groups, cultural, heritage and creative sector organisations and other policy, professional and/or practice organisations is encouraged. This can include partners from country/field-based offices if emergent ideas allow them to be knowledge leaders or brokers for solutions that can either be tested or scaled up. Depending on their role within the partnership development award, the partners from outside research organisations can be involved in applications as project partners, funded collaborators, sub-contractors or in advisory roles.

Please note that given that a key aim for these awards is to support the long-term sustainable development of equitable partnerships with ODA-eligible countries on the DAC list, proposals focused primarily on upper middle income countries expected to graduate from the DAC list over the next few years are unlikely to be prioritized under this call; this includes: Antigua and Barbuda; Panama; Palau; Argentina and China. Researchers from such countries may be involved in proposals,
for example focused on wider learning across LMIC contexts, on the same terms as ‘developed country’ international co-investigators. Proposals focused on other Upper Middle Income countries will be eligible but should pay particular attention to their impacts on reducing extreme poverty and inequalities in those countries and/or their potential contribution towards addressing cross-border issues and/or to the development of other countries on the DAC list and/or to South-South or global learning.

**Opening dates:**

Call opens: March 2020

**Closing dates**

Closing date: expected to be early June 2020

**How to make an application**

Applications for the funding call will have to be submitted (in English) through the Research Councils’ Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system.

A single call for full applications is envisaged with a one-stage review process by an expert cross-disciplinary international assessment panel.

Applicants under this call will need to complete an ODA Compliance Statement and [Gender Equalities Statement](#) in line with standard UKRI requirements and to provide assurance that appropriate safeguarding, risk management and ethical processes are in place and that any relevant UN or other international research protocols and best practice guidelines will be observed.

**Further Information**

Full information about the call will be made available in February/March 2020.