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Summaries for the successful projects in the GCRF/Newton Fund Agile Official Development Assistance call, round 1

People's PPE: dealing with a crisis by building livelihoods

University of Sheffield; London College of Fashion, UAL; UNHCR; AI Albayt University, Jordan; University of Petra, Jordan.

Since March, researchers have been working with the UNHCR to make PPE for Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp (and its population of approximately 80,000 Syrians) using digital printing and sewing capabilities to co-create innovations such as prototype laser-cut and 3D-printed face shields, masks, shields and gowns.

The funding will enable the team to run an interdisciplinary co-production project, both designing PPE for production in refugee camps and the host community, and researching how the availability of PPE affects camp residents' attitudes and behaviours to the risks from health threats. In Jordan, researchers will be trained in the design, manufacture, and use of reusable PPE.

The UNHCR made this [short film](#) about the project's work to date.

Building the capacity of reliable diagnostic & epidemiological tools to confront the spectre of a COVID-19 epidemic in refugee communities in northern Uganda

University of Salford; Gulu University, Uganda; Gulu Regional Hospital; Uganda Virus Research Institute; Makerere University, Uganda; University of Liverpool.

This project is focused on building capacity for Covid-19 diagnostics and molecular epidemiology in post-conflict northern Uganda, then applying these to help control the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in South Sudanese refugee settlements and neighbouring Ugandan communities in the region.

These aims will be met by sharing experience gained by scientists managing the pandemic over the last 6 months in the UK with Ugandan colleagues then working with them to establish and showcase laboratory and bioinformatic expertise.

The project will not only offer immediate support to Ugandan pandemic control efforts but will also explore the disease's epidemiology and its risk factors in displaced and/or poor communities, which are very different from those primarily studied to date, predominately in industrialised countries.



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COVID-19 child abuse prevention emergency response

University of Oxford; University of Cape Town, South Africa; University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa; University College London; Bangor University.

This project will reach over 70 million families with Covid-19 child abuse prevention resources. A billion children living in countries eligible to receive ODA are cycling in and out of school due to Covid-19, increasing pressure on their parents and carers alongside heightened stress, illness and financial insecurity. UNICEF reports a global escalation in child abuse.

In response, the [UKRI GCRF Accelerate Hub](#) led a rapid coalition of WHO, UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence, UNODC, USAID and the CDC, co-developing open-source COVID-19 parenting resources, condensing evidence from our research into child abuse prevention programmes in Africa and Asia. This project will enable greater reach and evidence including text message and app-based support for families across the world.

Read an [article on the UKRI website](#) to learn more about the parenting in a pandemic project.

Barcoding Galapagos: retraining unemployed eco-tourism workers to help

University of Exeter, Galapagos Science Centre, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador

The team will train and employ local naturalists guides who have lost their livelihoods in eco-tourism due to the coronavirus pandemic to sample and curate the biodiversity of Galapagos using the latest genetic fingerprinting techniques. This novel initiative to barcode an ecosystem – everything from birds to plankton – using molecular genetics puts science at the forefront of socio-economic wellbeing and acts as an important reminder of the long-term benefits of sustainable natural resources.

Prof Jaime Chaves of the University of San Francisco de Quito said: “This is the first barcode project in the Galapagos of this magnitude. All the data will be generated entirely by local people and 100% of it will be processed within the islands! I do not think there is anything like this project anywhere in the world.”

Training and research programme to support primary healthcare workers’ remote appointments with patients in Africa

King's College London; St Francis University College of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzania; African Population and Health Research Centre, Kenya; Makerere University, Uganda; University of Ibadan, Nigeria; University of Birmingham; University of Warwick

During the pandemic, remote healthcare by phone or internet is advised by the World Health Organisation rather than face-to-face appointments, but this is difficult for some countries in Africa where there is limited digital infrastructure and patients often live in remote areas. The



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project team has developed a training programme for health workers that enables them to deliver trusted and safe care using the phone or limited internet availability.

Trials in Nigeria and Tanzania will involve 40 health clinics. The aim is to increase the number of phone and online appointments for patients with long-term conditions and to test if these remote appointments are as acceptable, safe and trustworthy as face-to-face ones.

Dr Olugbade Omotajo, Director of Primary Health Care and Chief Epidemiologist of Ido Local Government Health Authority in Nigeria said:

“Having the healthcare needs of our patients being attended to without their being physically present at health facilities has the potential of reducing the risk of viral transmission and other communicable diseases, as well saving them time and money that would have been used for transportation to the healthcare facilities.”

Read an [article on the KCL website](#) to learn more about the project.

Stitching Back Better in the Global Garment Industry, Cambodia

Royal Holloway, University of London; Cambodia Development Resource Institute, University of Nottingham.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having significant repercussions on the global garment industry, of huge importance not only to Cambodia's economy, but also to its 1 million workers, 80% of whom are women. Many garment factories are interrupting production with the effect that 1/4 of workers have been dismissed or suspended.

This research will track and amplify the experiences and coping mechanisms of 200 women workers as they navigate the financial repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, generating new knowledge of risk and resilience factors, and putting women at the centre of decision-making; 'stitching back better' by creating just and resilient garment supply chains.

Developing a short- and long-term model for managing the COVID-19 pandemic and future infectious disease outbreaks - Zambia

Birmingham City University; Lusaka College of Nursing and Midwifery, and Ndola College of Nursing, Zambia.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have a short, medium and long-term impact on healthcare delivery and workforce for Zambia. This project will look at solutions to address the effects of diverting resources to tackle Covid and future outbreaks from other areas of healthcare. In Zambia, the nursing work-force are the only professional group who are present at every stage of the patient pathway, from initial contact in a rural health clinic or emergency and trauma services through inpatient services to discharge and rehabilitation. As a result, individually they have more patient contact than all other professional groups combined. This project will work with nurses to understand how best to increase their capacity, leadership, management and clinical decision-



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making to prevent healthcare systems becoming overwhelmed and to enable nurses to identify and respond appropriately to the rapidly changing health needs that arise during outbreaks of infectious diseases and pandemics.

Read more on the team's work on Covid-19 and healthcare workers in [this blog](#).

Improving COVID-19 and pandemic preparedness and response through a multi-hazard early warning system, Sri Lanka

University of Huddersfield; Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services, Sri Lanka; University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka; University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Many countries now recognise the need for improved pandemic preparedness, but its underlying factors, vulnerabilities and impacts go far beyond the health sector, and in Sri Lanka it is overwhelming government and response agencies. This study will address how to cope if a major natural hazard occurs during the COVID-19 pandemic and how pandemic preparedness can make use of the existing infrastructure for tackling other natural hazards. The project team will focus on the pandemic-natural hazard hybrid scenario, seeking to improve early warning and preparedness for such an event, as well as the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information. This study has been designed in close collaboration with Sri Lankan health and disaster management agencies.

Children's learning and development in the time of Covid19: Evidence from an ongoing longitudinal study; Ghana

Imperial College London; University of Pennsylvania; New York University; Innovations for Poverty Action, Ghana.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related social and economic downturn are undermining children's education in low- and middle-income countries through school closures, unequal access to remote-learning activities, and increased household food insecurity and poverty. Groups at greater risk, including girls and children from the poorest families, will likely be disproportionately affected, amplifying existing educational inequalities. Building on an existing longitudinal study, this research will look at the pandemic's repercussions on children's education and broader development for Ghanaian boys and girls aged 10-12 years through interviews with children, parents and teachers. The results will provide new academic and policy insights for Ghana and broader global educational efforts in the wake of the pandemic.

For more on the team's work, read [this blog](#) on the pandemic's long-term repercussions for children in Ghana.



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Covid-19, social distancing and violence against women in Brazil

University of York and University of Sao Paulo

Domestic violence against women is a major issue in Brazil and tends to disproportionately affect those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pandemic social distancing measures have been linked to an increase in domestic abuse globally. This research seeks to understand how these measures affect domestic violence against women in Brazilian cities and to assess the resulting costs to victims and society. It will also examine how public policies in Brazil aimed at mitigating the negative consequences of social distancing influence domestic violence, and how these policies could be refined to better protect vulnerable women.

An assessment of how changes to legislation in Mauritius is impacting domestic and migrant workers

University of Strathclyde, University of Mauritius

Recent legislation in Mauritius in response to the pandemic has affected the rights of both domestic and migrant workers: the hardest hit are those in tourism and hospitality, textile factories and the informal economy, who are facing reduced compensation, the withholding of annual leave, the termination of contracts and the exemption from negotiations with trades unions for employers reducing their workforce.

The research team will collect survey data from 1200 domestic and Bangladeshi migrant workers and conduct stakeholder interviews to produce evidence-based datasets and a detailed report in order to inform the Government's review of its changes in December 2021.

Internally displaced people and COVID-19: local low-cost COVID-19 solutions for settlements in Zimbabwe

University of Nottingham, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, University of Zimbabwe, Women's University in Africa, Zimbabwe; National Age Network of Zimbabwe; University of Wolverhampton.

Internally displaced people (IDPs) in Zimbabwe live in informal settlements where they have limited access to public health information and are therefore particularly at risk from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This UK-Zimbabwean team aims to adapt locally developed low-cost solutions to fit IDPs' needs. This includes developing a public health education programme and adapting low-cost innovations such as sanitisers and facemasks (developed by Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University) as well as training women to make these products.



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African elections during the COVID-19 pandemic

University of Edinburgh; Center for Democratic Development, Ghana; Open University of Tanzania; Echelle, Central African Republic

Elections risk the spread of COVID-19: the International Foundation for Electoral Systems identified more than 40 stages where people assemble or objects are transferred during the electoral cycle. Despite these risks, several elections have taken place in Africa during the pandemic, including in Mali, Guinea, and Burundi. Nine more are due to take place in 2020 and 18 are scheduled for 2021.

Reducing the risks of increased transmission during these elections is paramount, particularly as the World Health Organisation has recently declared the pandemic is accelerating on the continent. By following three elections in Tanzania, Ghana and the Central African Republic from beginning to end, this research will look closely at each stage of the electoral process and how the risks of transmission have been mitigated, if at all. The findings will be valuable to other low-and middle-income countries with upcoming elections.

Fast-track vaccine cold-chain assessment and design for mass-scale COVID-19 vaccination, Bangladesh

University of Birmingham, Brac University, Bangladesh; Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology; Herriot-Watt University

Universal vaccine access is an existing major challenge in low-income countries, mainly due to the lack of robust cold-chains, resulting in loss of potency for over 25 per cent of vaccines. Mass vaccination for COVID-19 globally will require a new fast-track approach to assess, re-engineer and build upon available cold-chain logistics assets and systems, to deliver the vaccines at scale and speed never before considered, this is exactly what this research looks to do, using Bangladesh as a case study and disseminating findings globally to help inform the development of robust cold-chains throughout the world.

Learn more about the team's work in an [article](#) by Professor Toby Peters, University of Birmingham and Professor Phil Greening, Heriot-Watt University.

Socio-economic and health impact of Covid-19 on international female migrants and their left-behind families in Indonesia

University of Portsmouth; University of Brawijaya, Indonesia

There are no studies on the impact of Covid-19 on the 1.3 million women from Indonesia working abroad, mainly in the Middle East and South East Asia, as maids and carers in private homes. Leaving their families behind, they are vulnerable to neglect, e.g. loss of access to health care, unemployment, wage cuts and delayed wages.



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The study of the socio-economic and health impact of Covid-19 on international female migrants and their families in Indonesia will collect this data and make policy recommendations to the Indonesian government to minimise potential negative consequences.

Building an Early Warning System for community-wide infectious disease spread in Africa using wastewater

University of Bath; Stellenbosch University, South Africa; University of Lagos, Nigeria

Individual diagnostic testing is of paramount importance for short-and long-term management of this pandemic, but limits on capacity (both of kits and trained workers) mean healthcare settings are prioritised over the community. This project aims to address the issue of limited Covid-19 testing capacity in Africa by leading a project to measure the levels of RNA of SARS-Cov2 in domestic wastewater, which can help reveal the health status of a population. By studying wastewater, near-real time information about infection prevalence in Africa – in Cape Town and

Lagos initially – can be accessed, enabling rapid identification of Covid-19 hot spots, and helping to shape decisions around entry and exit from ‘lockdown’ periods’

Identifying and mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on legal and sustainable wildlife trade in Kenya and Cameroon

University of Birmingham; the Centre for International Forestry Research, Cameroon and Kenya; Northumbria University; University of Sheffield; University of Manchester.

To contain COVID-19, there has been a clampdown on wildlife trade, which is a key source of livelihood and food security for hundreds of millions of people in low- and middle-income countries. Wildlife markets have been closed, new bans on wildlife trade are being enforced and governments are proposing drastic changes to wildlife trade regulations. These reforms aim to safeguard global public health and global food systems, yet they disrupt wildlife supply chains that meet peoples’ food security and economic needs. The clampdown on global wildlife trade also risks pushing trade underground with implications for public health, conservation and crime. The aim of this project is to develop evidence-based guidelines for regulating wildlife trade to address the risks of COVID-19 without undermining legal and sustainable wildlife trade economies.

Poverty, vulnerability and crime: what does COVID-19 mean for Nigerian street vendors?

University of Sussex; University of Abuja, Nigeria; Federal Ministry of Justice, Nigeria

How do we reconcile strict lockdown and social distancing measures with the harsh socioeconomic realities of low-income countries such as Nigeria? This project brings together a team of UK-and Nigeria-based researchers and policymakers in Nigeria to understand the current and future consequences of COVID-19 on street vendors, who account for more than 70



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per cent of the country's urban employment. While among the worst-affected by lockdown measures, their plight is seldom considered in government planning and decision-making. The project will explore the impact on them, focusing on their socioeconomic experiences, coping strategies and susceptibility to crime, as well as their perspective on what government can do to assist them.

Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on cancer care in Vietnam

Queen's University, Belfast; Hanoi University, K3 National Hospital Hanoi, Danang Oncology Centre, Can Tho Oncology Hospital, Hue Medical and Pharmaceutica, Oncology Centre Hue, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne

It is vital for cancer patients and their informal carers to receive uninterrupted support; the pandemic has demonstrated the need for flexible, high-quality health services that can be delivered remotely.

An international team has developed a prototype for a digital platform in Vietnam to offer support on the psychological and social aspects impact of cancer for both patients and their carers' health. An interdisciplinary network of partners in five regional cancer centres will develop digital modules to measure mental health, quality of life and health literacy.

Entrepreneurial resilience and recovery during and after the Covid-19 crisis

Imperial College Business School; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok; Asia School of Business, Kuala Lumpur; Wuhan University School of Economics and Management.

The team will study entrepreneurial responses and business model practices to inform a resilient adjustment to the Covid-19 crisis and for a robust post-crisis recovery in low-and middle-income economies in Southeast Asia and China. The project will inform policy and entrepreneurial practice so governments can avoid a 'race to the bottom' response and over-competition for dwindling resources, and instead encourage a 'community pulling together' response to buffer its members against the shock.

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