

## AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

### Call for Expression of Interest for Research Grant Foundation for Health and Empowerment (F4HE) Project

Foundations for Health and Empowerment (F4HE) is a five-year (2020-2025) project that will improve the health and wellbeing of women, girls, their families, and their communities in five countries: Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. It is executed by Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC) and implemented by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) units in each country, in partnership with the Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS), Aga Khan Education Services (AKES), Aga Khan University (AKU), University of Central Asia (UCA), and Population Council, in collaboration with local governments, communities and civil society organizations (CSOs). F4HE aims to enhance equitable development for women, girls, families, and communities in targeted regions of its implementation countries. F4HE will reach and serve rural and marginalized communities in Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, where sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) and nutrition indicators are abysmal, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like breast and cervical cancer and mental health issues are rapidly increasing.

F4HE is comprised of four components: Foundations for Health (F4H), Foundations for Children (F4C), Advancing Gender Equality through Civil Society (AGECS), and Advancing Canadian Champions for Development (ACCD). Through these interrelated components, F4HE will strengthen the delivery of quality, gender-responsive, and inclusive maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, sexual, and reproductive health (SRMNCAH), and early childhood development (ECD) services, reduce gender and social barriers to utilization and uptake of SRMNCAH services, and ECD, and engage international stakeholders in gender-

sensitive and evidence-based research, dialogue, and development programming.

The Research Committee for Foundation for Health and Empowerment (RC for F4HE) is pleased to announce Research Awards for

Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan.

1. The call for proposals is open to all eligible academic and research institutions and AKDN agencies working in the above countries or those interested in producing knowledge on one or all the countries of interest, in collaboration with AKU faculty either as principal investigator or as co-principal investigator.
2. In the first stage of the call, we invite expression of interest (EOI), and in the second stage, the applicants of short-listed EOIs will be asked to submit a full proposal.

Preference will be given to those Expression of interest aligned with the F4HE's core areas of work in the four countries (see <https://www.akfc.ca/our-work/foundations-for-health-and-empowerment/>).

The Research Committee for F4HE seeks Expression of interest for researching the following broad topic areas:

1. Sexual and reproductive health
2. Maternal health
3. Newborn health
4. Early childhood development and child health
5. Adolescent wellbeing and health
6. Gender equality and gender-based violence

7. Non-communicable diseases and mental health.

### General Information for the Applicants

1. All grant applications shall adhere to the eligibility and ethical review system of AKU
2. All short-listed proposals will go through the ethics review committee (ERC) of AKU, and the research checklist will be initiated via the research office of AKU
3. Where applicable, applicants will follow the local requirements for the ERC approvals
4. The research teams are encouraged to work within AKDN owned and supported 'infrastructure' and utilize related human resources (e.g., health facilities, ECD centers, community-based platforms).
5. Where relevant and fiscally possible, applicants are encouraged to leverage opportunities for collaboration with external research bodies.
6. Where possible and relevant, applicants are encouraged to include capacity building opportunities for local research partners in their proposals
7. Research proposals should ensure planned and budgeted mechanisms for the dissemination of results
8. The data collected through the research will be available for use in public domains once publications are made within a year of the project's conclusion.

This funding opportunity will support research that combines epidemiologic methods, digital technology, and data science approaches to understand better the health and service needs of women, adolescents, and children in equitable and respectful manners.

### Funding Information

The maximum research period is three years. The budget limit is up to US dollars 200,000. Apply by November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Review and Award Cycles

- Scientific Merit Review for Expression of Interest: December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021
- Request for complete proposals for Selected EOIs: January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022
- Scientific Merit Review for Full proposals: February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Start date of Research projects: March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Submission Guidelines:

Interested applicants should send their Expression of Interest by **November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021** as per the given template to Dr Sarah Saleem at [sarah.saleem@aku.edu](mailto:sarah.saleem@aku.edu).

For any additional information or enquiries, please write to [rahim.azami@akdn.org](mailto:rahim.azami@akdn.org).