University of Gondar/Queen’s Research Grants for Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Request for Proposals – April 2017

The University of Gondar in Ethiopia (UoG) and Queen’s University in Canada (Queen’s) are soliciting proposals for collaborative research projects. These projects will be funded by the MasterCard Foundation via the Scholars Program and its joint partnership between Queen’s University and the University of Gondar. We anticipate that this research will advance practical knowledge and measures for (a) inclusion within primary, secondary, or tertiary education and/or (b) improved community-based rehabilitation (CBR) practices that enable access to and quality of schooling for young people with disabilities. Research should be relevant to Ethiopia specifically or the continent of Africa more generally. A key focus of the research will be on knowledge translation and practical applications to the fields of inclusive education and CBR. As part of this project, we will fund eight proposals with a maximum budget of up to $60,000 USD per proposal.

Eligible Topics

This research will answer questions related to access, quality, and relevance of education or CBR programming for people with disabilities and will address gaps in research and practice in Ethiopia and regionally. Some examples of types of projects this RFP will fund include (but are not limited to):

- Accommodations for people with disabilities in post-secondary education in Ethiopia/Africa
- Educational technology / appropriate technology in Ethiopia/Africa
- Disability and inclusive education policy creation and implementation at UoG and other MasterCard Foundation partner universities or in Ethiopia/Africa
- Social determinants of health and disability and impact on inclusive education in Ethiopia/Africa
- Transition to work, livelihoods, and link between education and accessible employment in Ethiopia/Africa
- Impact of CBR programming on access to education for young people with disabilities in Ethiopia

We anticipate that the knowledge gained through these projects will enrich course content, global understanding, and will advance Ethiopian and regional understanding of and priority for inclusive higher education and CBR implementation. The increased knowledge from these projects could impact national policy and programming, which could have great benefit for the estimated 17.6 million people with disabilities living in Ethiopia and/or people with disabilities in other African countries. Our vision for the dissemination of the research on inclusive education is that it will also have a transformative impact on educational approaches, university policy, and program implementation for the Foundation’s 28 partners (universities and NGOs) who currently support over 19,000 enrolled Scholars.

Eligibility Requirements

- Research must demonstrate potential to advance knowledge about inclusive education or community-based rehabilitation in Ethiopia, Africa, or within the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Partner network.
- Each project must have at least one named Co-PI with an academic appointment at Queen’s University.
- Each project must have at least one named Co-PI with an academic appointment at the University of Gondar.
- All researchers must adhere to relevant MasterCard Foundation policies, particularly on issues related to child protection, privacy, ethics and meaningful involvement of PWDs and other relevant stakeholders.
- Research projects must provide opportunities for learning and engagement of (a) University of Gondar faculty completing Master’s or PhDs at Queen’s; and/or (b) MasterCard Foundation Scholars completing Undergraduate and Master’s degrees at the University of Gondar.

Additional Information

Multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplin ary projects are encouraged.

A major defining aspect of successful research projects will be practical approaches to knowledge-translation for inclusive education for young people with disabilities in Ethiopia and/or for CBR practice within Ethiopia.

We expect that research conducted through successful proposals and beyond will be showcased at an interdisciplinary conference on inclusive education and CBR in 2021/2022. This conference will be organized in collaboration with Queen’s and UoG personnel and will increase the networking and organizing capacity of faculty and students, expose students to international research, and enhance the international reputations of both institutions as it relates to disability and development.

All project co-PIs will be expected to adhere to Queen’s University policy/guidelines on authorship.

Selection Process

Proposals will be solicited, reviewed, and selected on an annual basis. Solicitation will begin with a RFP that will be disseminated in April of each year. The deadline for proposals will be in September, with results communicated to all parties no later than the end of December each year.

Proposals will be peer-reviewed by a panel of experts, with representation from two UoG faculty members, two Queen’s faculty members, and a MasterCard Foundation representative. This review panel will be nominated by their respective institutions and will change from year-to-year, to ensure that every reviewer has a strictly arms-length relationship with every proposal under consideration. Every member of the committee will have no prior working relationship with any of the PIs who have proposals under review.

Each reviewer will independently read and rank each proposal based upon the review criteria (Appendix I) they will submit their independent reviews to the Queen’s Student/Faculty Liaison at least 1 week prior to the scheduled review meeting. At the review meeting, each proposal will be discussed by an arms-length committee, which will arrive at a consensus on scores. The highest scoring proposal will be awarded the funding, and decisions will be communicated to all applicants promptly. If applicants decline the funding, the next highest scoring proposal will be funded. The granting committee will target funding one proposal per year, however, if there are particularly meritorious projects in the early years of the program, there is the potential for more than one proposal receiving funding in a given competition. The annual competition will run until all eight projects are funded.
Proposal Guidelines

- Each proposal may not exceed 10 pages, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, with 1-inch page margins (excluding references).
- Sections to include in the proposal are: Background, Statement of the Problem, Methods, Anticipated Results/Outcomes, Timeline/Critical Path, Research Team, Engagement of Faculty PhD students and UoG MasterCard Foundation Scholars, Knowledge Translation Plan.
- Each proposal should include a Budget and Budget Justification document, not to exceed 3 pages (in addition to the allowable 10 pages above).
- Each proposal must also include a 5-page (maximum) C.V. for every Investigator listed in the application.
- Each proposal must clearly outline the research team strategy for authorship and ownership of data arising from the funded research.
- Proposals must be submitted by email to the project Co-Director Heather Aldersey (hma@queensu.ca) by 5:00 pm EST on Monday, September 18, 2017. (Future proposal rounds will be submitted to Faculty/Student Liaison based at Queen’s, but this position is currently vacant).

Cost Guidelines

We anticipate that each successful grant will be accorded up to $60,000 USD total over a maximum two-year period.

Allowable expenses will be in accordance with overall MasterCard Foundation budget guidance on allowable expenses. Research projects will be outlined in MOUs signed by the co-PIs. Reporting of Ethiopian expenses will be through the UoG MasterCard Foundation Part B office, and reporting of Canadian expenses will be through the Queen’s MasterCard Foundation project office. Reporting responsibilities will be clearly laid out in the project MOU for successful projects.

Examples of costs that we anticipate might be included in the project budget requests include (but are not limited to): specialized software for survey creation, data collection, and data analysis; wages for research assistants; telephone or skype credit for interviews and arranging of logistics and coordination and communication amongst the research team; costs for specialized equipment needed to conduct the research (e.g., rehabilitation devices not owned by the university); costs to transcribe and/or translate data; open access publishing costs; and transportation costs for data collection.

Reporting

- Researchers will be required to submit narrative and financial reports every six months, and a final report upon completion of the project.
- Original receipts / boarding passes must be retained and submitted to the relevant project office (Ethiopia for Ethiopia-based expenses; Canada for Canada-based expenses).
- The MasterCard Foundation may request additional reports from researchers to assist in informing programmatic areas related to disability inclusion.
**Conflict of Interest**

In the initial year of the research project launch (2017), no Queen’s/University of Gondar MasterCard Foundation staff member will be eligible to submit a proposal as the lead PI from his or her institution. Given the potential for direct application of knowledge gained from the research directly for project implementation, MasterCard Foundation project staff at Queen’s and UoG may be eligible to apply to the research project competition in subsequent years.

Although MasterCard Foundation project staff will be eligible to submit applications as co-PI starting with the 2018 RFP, they will hold the burden of proof to demonstrate ability to lead a research project outside of, and in addition to, their expectations as staff on the MasterCard Foundation project. It may be challenging for someone working 100% for the MasterCard Foundation project to be able to demonstrate this capability and this should be taken into consideration – both by the potential applicant and by the selection committee.

In every year of the project (including the initial year) the arms-length selection committee’s decisions will be independent of MasterCard Foundation project staff. MasterCard Foundation project staff may offer support in the coordination of the process (e.g., collecting applications, arranging selection committee meetings, communicating results) but will not participate in or influence decision-making in any way. Any questions asked to MasterCard Foundation staff about this initiative will be posted on the project website under FAQs, to enable all potential applicants to receive equal benefit from the answers. If MasterCard Foundation staff members plan to submit applications as co-PIs, they will completely recuse themselves from the research project coordination process at the date of the publication of that year’s RFP and will not be involved in any coordination activities in the year of application. Every effort will be made throughout the selection process to ensure that MasterCard Foundation project staff do not receive unfair advantage over other applicants.

If the successful applicant is a MasterCard Foundation project staff member, he or she cannot receive additional payment as part of their work on the research project. Other financial implications (such as travel) would need to be explicitly detailed to ensure the best value for the money and to eliminate redundancies (e.g., extending travel planned as part of regular duties to incorporate research-related travel).

Any applicants proposing research involving MasterCard Foundation Scholars at the University of Gondar as subjects or informants, must clearly articulate potential conflict of interest (e.g. someone who is involved in supporting a Scholar on a counselling basis, also studying them for one of the research pieces) and identify steps they will take to mitigate potential conflicts. These steps would need to be approved by the MasterCard Foundation prior to commencement of data collection.

**Questions**

Questions or concerns related to this RFP or the research project selection process can be directed to project co-Directors, Heather Aldersey (Canada): hma@queensu.ca or Solomon Mekonnen (Ethiopia): solomekonnen@yahoo.com
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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Is the literature review relevant and focused? Are the issues clearly and concisely stated? Does the literature reviewed build logically to the question(s)? Are the proposed research questions clearly articulated, and flow logically from the review of literature and presentation of the problem? Does the background section justify the need for the work?</td>
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<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Is the selected topic for research in line with the given thematic area? Are projects relevant to Ethiopian or broader African contexts?</td>
<td>/8</td>
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<td>Methods</td>
<td>Are the methods selected appropriate to answer the research question identified? Do the methods allow meaningful integration of Queen’s Master’s and PhD students and UoG MasterCard Foundation Scholars? Will methods involve the active participation of people with disabilities and other relevant community stakeholders to define research priorities, conduct research, and/or apply knowledge gained?</td>
<td>/10</td>
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<td>Anticipated Results/Outcomes</td>
<td>How will the outcomes inform/improve inclusive higher education in Ethiopia? How will the outcomes inform/improve CBR practice in Ethiopia and beyond (within Africa)?</td>
<td>/10</td>
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<td>Research Team</td>
<td>Does the team include adequate members to do the proposed work? Is there clear evidence of collaboration between team members? Does the team have the capability to conduct the research proposed? Is there appropriate distribution between Queen’s and UoG? Is there a relative gender balance within research teams or commitment to address this within student/Scholar involvement?</td>
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<td>Engagement of UoG Queen’s students and MasterCard Foundation Scholars</td>
<td>How many opportunities are there for PhD student dissertation opportunities? Have these students already been identified? How many opportunities for MasterCard Foundation Scholars to be involved? What is the nature of the involvement?</td>
<td>/15</td>
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<td>Knowledge Translation Plan</td>
<td>Will the project translate into meaningful action/change/implementation on the ground? How will knowledge be disseminated to the wider MasterCard Foundation Partners Network? How will knowledge be shared with affected individuals, institutions and PWD organizations?</td>
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<td>Budget / Budget Justification</td>
<td>Are costs reasonable (e.g. not over or underestimated)? Can the project reasonably be conducted with the resources available? Are all expenses clearly justified? Are expenses consistent with MasterCard Foundation policies?</td>
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