

CREATING HOPE IN CONFLICT: A HUMANITARIAN GRAND CHALLENGE



Photo Credit: Jean Luc Habimana for The Rainmaker Enterprise.

THE CHALLENGE

In the Syrian conflict, a crisis in its 9th year, 5.5 million people have fled and over 11 million people remain with humanitarian and protection assistance needs. In Yemen 24.3 million people lack access to basic essentials. Armed violence hinders the delivery of life-saving assistance around the world, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan and Libya. As the length and complexity of armed conflicts increase, humanitarian needs are growing and the humanitarian system needs to find new ways to support people affected by conflict. We need new solutions that respond to the needs of vulnerable, inaccessible communities – yet, less than one per cent of humanitarian aid is focused on investing in the innovations necessary to reach them.

THE SOLUTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the Government of the Netherlands, and Grand Challenges Canada are partnering on *Creating Hope in Conflict: A Humanitarian Grand Challenge*. Through this Grand Challenge, we seek to support groundbreaking, local solutions that will significantly improve - and in many cases, save - the lives of vulnerable people affected by conflict. Our goal is to find solutions that allow communities to respond more nimbly to complex emergencies and create better lives for themselves.

THE APPROACH

We seek life-saving or life-improving innovations with the potential to create wider changes within the humanitarian sector, that can engage the private sector and that involve input from affected communities, to help people hardest-to-reach in humanitarian crises. Through a combination of funding, capacity-building services, and research, the Humanitarian Grand Challenge seeks to:

- Identify, test, and scale solutions to the world's most intractable problems in conflict settings.
- Advance the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.
- Build the case for private sector engagement in conflict settings.



KEY FOCUS AREAS

Safe Water and Sanitation: We seek bold ideas, technologies and approaches that address challenges in clean water supply and access. Funding is available under Transition to Scale ONLY.

Energy: We seek bold ideas to generate energy. Particular interest in alternative energy solutions that can be set up and maintained in conflict situations, and that power life-saving or life-improving services such as schools, hospitals, and marketplaces, on or off-grid.

Life-Saving Information: We seek bold ideas that use and improve access to information and data at the local level, and provides more effective two-way connections between affected populations and humanitarians.

Health Supplies and Services: We seek bold ideas that strengthen healthcare infrastructure and increase the capacity and skills of healthcare workers in conflict affected settings.

TARGET POPULATION

We seek innovations that focus on people who are particularly vulnerable in conflict-affected humanitarian crises. This includes people who are particularly vulnerable due to their gender, sexuality, religion, age, or income; people with disabilities, chronic health conditions; as well as people who are stateless, minorities, or unable to evacuate to safety. We are particularly interested in funding locally-led innovations.

CALLS FOR INNOVATION

The first call for innovation closed in April 2018. Of the 615 applicants, 25 finalists were selected; 22 Seed projects were awarded grants of \$250,000 over a twenty-four (24) months period, and a total of \$3,700,000 have been awarded to 3 Transition-to-Scale projects over a twenty-four (24) months period. The second call for innovation closed in July 2019 and focused on providing, supplying, or locally generating: 1) clean water and sanitation 2) energy 3) life-saving information or 4) health supplies and services to help conflict-affected people. The 2019 call received over 648 applications from 80 different countries; 58% of which came from lower- and middle-income countries, a 10% increase from our first round. We also saw a 65% increase in applications from the Middle East and North Africa region, and a 16% increase from sub-Saharan Africa. The second call for innovation resulted in 24 Seed projects and 3 Transition-to-Scale projects, in which over \$7 million in funding was awarded.

In October of 2020, we announced our third call for innovation.

AWARDS

SEED FUNDING: up to 15 Seed projects are expected to be awarded under this call for innovation. Successful proposals for seed funding will each be awarded grants of up to \$250,000 over a maximum of eighteen (18) months to support the validation and testing of new approaches.

TRANSITION TO SCALE FUNDING: up to 8 Transition-to-Scale projects are expected under this call for innovation. Successful proposals will each be awarded grants of up to \$3,000,000 with technical support over a maximum of eighteen (18) months to support the refinement, testing, and implementation of innovative solutions that have already achieved proof of concept.

AWARDEES of all calls for innovations under this Grand Challenge are eligible for a host of benefits including Seed or Transition to Scale Funding, publicity and marketing promotional support, exclusive industry, investor, and partner networking events, solution development acceleration support, mentorship opportunities, and partnership brokering support.

APPLY TODAY

We seek life-saving or life-improving innovations to help the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach people impacted by humanitarian crises caused by conflict.

All types of organizations, including local and international NGOs, academics, private sector institutions are eligible to apply for funding. Applicants must understand the context they are working in. We are particularly interested in funding locally-led innovations. Local responders are often better placed to reach affected people in insecure settings, but lack the funding, resources, or the capacity to provide aid in hard-to-reach places.

Apply by November 16, 2020 at bit.ly/HGC-RFP.