

FONDATION
croix-rouge française



| Pour la recherche humanitaire et sociale

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

“Humanitarian Transition: the stakes of autonomy”

2019 Call for applications



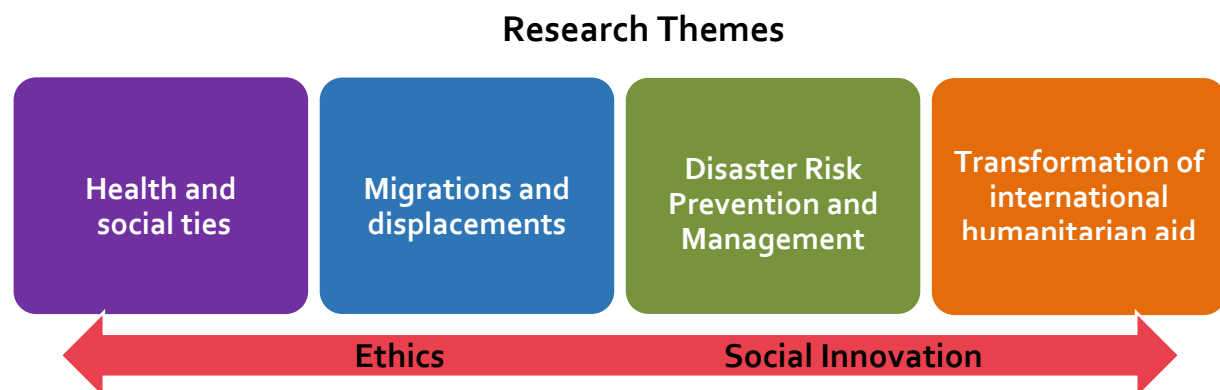
PRESENTATION

The activities of the French Red Cross Foundation are centered on a conviction: in order to best respond to suffering and to prevent its causes, it is necessary to understand the contexts in which it occurs, and to take the time to analyse the dynamics at play, whilst working as closely as possible with affected populations. In order to encourage and guide this effort of reflection and innovation, the Foundation is launching its second **call for applications for postdoctoral fellowships in the humanities and social sciences on February 6th, 2019.**

The call includes:

- **The “Humanitarian transition call”**. This call invites researchers to address the changes affecting international humanitarian aid in its different dimensions, using a variety of social science approaches. Applications from researchers from the concerned countries or regions will be given precedence.
- **The “partner calls”**. These calls aim to achieve a deeper understanding of human vulnerabilities, the responses provided, and the changes in social and humanitarian action, in order to better manage or prevent them. They focus on more specific subjects, whose aims correspond to the themes and reflections shared by the Foundation and its partners, who are committed to research with the same conviction as to its necessity.

In addition to the **four priority research themes**, there are two horizontal themes, ethics and social innovation, which both help to structure the inevitable questions arising from unprecedented situations which require new choices, and to orientate these questions towards the development of new responses to new or unfulfilled social needs, through the involvement and cooperation of those concerned, namely the service users.



Each researcher can submit up to **two applications**, one for the “Humanitarian transition call” and one for the “partner calls”. However, each candidate will receive only one fellowship and may, if necessary, have to choose.

CALL ON "HUMANITARIAN TRANSITION: THE STAKES OF AUTONOMY"

The French Red Cross Foundation, a research organisation dedicated to humanitarian and social action, carries the will of the French Red Cross to commit to an effort of analysis with regard to suffering and ways of addressing it, anticipating the needs of vulnerable populations in France and in developing countries, and supporting new models for operations, training and capacity reinforcement. As such, the Foundation has decided to launch a call for applications for a postdoctoral fellowship on the transformations of international humanitarian aid.

1. Research Theme

Humanitarian aid is increasingly coming under attack as a representation of the Western essence of solidarity between developed and developing countries, based on well-defined principles and international law and relying on funding from the richest countries. The so-called "aid-recipient countries" are expressing a growing will for autonomy in the management of actions affecting their populations. They no longer wish to depend on international aid, which is seen as too asymmetrical and far removed from the concept of partnership, and as favouring neither development nor poverty reduction. Some countries which formerly received international humanitarian aid now play an active role in the management of humanitarian interventions within their territory. Others are regaining control of project implementation, funding streams, and images and narratives which concern their populations, some going so far as to bring about a real "state humanitarianism". Elsewhere, the rise of new sponsors is reconfiguring relationships, aiming to make inroads into the international and media fields, which have long remained the preserve of Western countries.

The humanitarian field has become a stage for "inverted innovations", especially in Africa, a real laboratory of humanitarian alternatives where local initiatives can be observed everywhere. Private insurances such as *African Risk Capacity* (ARC), launched by the African Union, have been created to insure states against the risk of natural disasters and damages caused by extreme weather episodes. There are increasing numbers of local, denominational and community NGOs, who, like their states, are expressing the will to take back control over the aid delivered to their own populations in their own countries, and to be fully in charge of operations. These NGOs are also increasingly powerful, such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), which was the first NGO in the world to count more than 100 000 employees. The use of new technologies is also developing, by means of programmes designed in close collaboration with national states (delivery of blood by drones in Rwanda, the IEDA project in Burkina Faso, etc.) In the light of their apparent potential for autonomisation, these innovations from beneficiary countries raise the question of the

role and place of international actors, by opening up new possible courses of action outside of the traditional system of international solidarity.

This new situation has rendered the field of humanitarian international action more complex, even as it must manage needs on an unprecedented scale, namely linked to demographic pressures, the uncontrolled growth of peri-urban areas, protracted crises and armed conflicts, chronic underdevelopment, and increasingly frequent and destructive natural disasters due to climate change. Above all, these difficulties require humanitarian aid to change substantially, since they reveal a transition period which was not anticipated and which represents the evolution from a paradigm of Western-centric solidarity in terms of resources and practices, to a new and much more complex multipolar model linked to concepts of human development, sustainable development, social change and the confluence of sometimes divergent interests from a variety of actors (sponsors, businesses, institutions, media, etc.).

Arriving at a more “local” and decentralised response to humanitarian needs has therefore appeared on the political agenda as a possible response to the problems facing international humanitarian aid, and the need to reform it. Between 2009 and 2013, local and national NGOs received only 1.6% of humanitarian aid allocated by international sponsors to NGOs, which represents 0.2% of total humanitarian aid, according to research carried out by *Development Initiatives (Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014)*. The report by the General Secretary of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, and the Great Bargain which resulted from it, called for responses to be “as local as possible, as international as necessary”, with the international humanitarian system committing more to investing in the capacity of local organisations to work together with their international counterparts.

The “localisation of aid” is generally defined as a collective process involving different parties implicated in the humanitarian system (donors, United Nations agencies, NGOs) aiming to return local actors (local authorities or civil societies) to the centre of the humanitarian system, with a more significant and more central role. As well as allowing for a more efficient and effective humanitarian response; the long-term goal of “localisation” is to reinforce the resilience of communities affected by crises by establishing links with development actions. In practice, in the field, certain international humanitarian actors, such as Alima, for example, have been developing new operational models (in terms of partnerships, skills-transfer, access to funding, human resources, governance, etc.), and powerful innovations in the response to the needs of affected populations, such as cash transfers, in order to be more efficient. Other actors are now working to identify innovative funding solutions which aim to reinforce humanitarian interventions carried out locally (START Fund Bangladesh, Oxford Myanmar).

There is, however, no clear consensus regarding the meaning of a truly “local” response, in theory or in practice, and there are very few incentives to promote such a response in the framework of a system that is built around the concept of structural and cultural centralisation. As a result, although they are on the rise, initiatives along these

lines remain marginal, and the first lessons drawn from the discussion about the “localisation” or “fragmentation” of aid show the heated debate surrounding the way in which the articulation of the “local” and “global” dimensions of the international solidarity system translates in the field in terms of efficiency, of coordination between external and internal aid mechanisms, and of the relevance of aid to the needs of the populations. These highlight the necessity:

- 1) of overcoming the ignorance - and thereby certain stereotypes - surrounding local humanitarian actors (difficulties, practices, points of view, values...), especially the ways in which the system of transnational actors and organisations impact on their methods of functioning and on their actions;
- 2) of understanding the realities and effects of autonomisation strategies implemented by international actors in the stated context of the “localisation of aid”;
- 3) of grasping the conditions for the emergence of institutional and operational innovations in beneficiary countries and their impact on populations, on the traditional international solidarity system, and on its actors;
- 4) and finally, of studying how such initiatives - wherever they come from - can be capitalised on in order to create the conditions for the development of local actors and transnational networks in different contexts.

The aim of the “Humanitarian Transition” call is to enable an understanding of these new models which would allow for consideration of an autonomisation of local aid actors, and more generally, of the tenets of humanitarian transition, which prefigures a new paradigm, by understanding the conditions of its realisation in different countries. It is an invitation to explore the obstacles and perspectives of locally-directed action and to suggest directions for reforming the contemporary humanitarian response. Participants are especially encouraged to examine examples of best practices, particularly with regard to community engagement, the link between emergency aid and development, and between humanitarian and social action. As in many sectors undergoing periods of extreme change, the ethical approach can become a guide for action, as well as an object of study for researchers. This is why we will particularly be looking for proposals that shed light on the ethical dimension, and methods of applying it in the field.

2. Geographic Research Areas

These themes can be addressed in a geographical area made up of one or several countries. The Foundation has identified **14 priority countries** for the purposes of this call:

Benin	Lebanon
Burkina Faso	Madagascar
Cameroon	Mali (resident researchers only)
Côte d’Ivoire	Morocco

Ethiopia
Guinea
Kenya

Niger (resident researchers only)
Senegal
Togo

The target countries represent empirical starting-points for research. They do not refer to nationality criteria for eligibility.

Access to the field will be conditional on a precise risk evaluation submitted with the application and updated before departure, with prior reference to the recommendations of the French Foreign Ministry.

APPLICATION CONDITIONS

The funding provided by the French Red Cross Foundation is intended to cover the cost of one year of research in the framework of an individual postdoctoral fellowship. These fellowships are bestowed according to a basic scale, equivalent to **17 000 euros for one year**.

It is possible to submit up to two applications, one for the general call and one for the partner call. Nevertheless, each candidate can only receive one fellowship and, if necessary, will have to choose.

Researchers fulfilling the following conditions may apply:

- be a holder of a doctorate (French doctorate, PhD or foreign doctorate in political science, anthropology, sociology, economy, law, history, philosophy, ethics), or medical science (medicine, public health);
- have defended their doctorate less than 10 years ago;
- not occupy another permanent position more than 50%;
- contribute to advancing research on the themes and in the geographical areas predefined by the Foundation, or have published work in other fields demonstrating an ability to carry out quality research.

There is no condition of nationality. The Foundation does give precedence to application from researchers residing in the priority geographical research areas.

Projects with a multi-disciplinary approach are strongly encouraged.

In general, the applicant should:

- present their research project in French;
- be nominated by an academic or research establishment;
- support the application (value of proposed research);
- be aware of the eligibility criteria and arrangements for using the funds allocated by the Foundation, as detailed in this document;

- pre-register, in accordance with the following paragraph, **by March 21st 2019 at midnight**;
- apply, in accordance with the following paragraph, **by April 18th 2019 at midnight**.

PREREGISTRATION AND APPLICATION

The management of applications is carried out by the Foundation, by means of an online platform accessible from the Foundation's website. Once the applicant has created their account, they can apply for the different fellowships and keep track of their applications, not exceeding two: one for the general call and one for the partner call. Each application submission has two stages:

A. Preregistration

The applicant fills in a first form made up of information relative to their profile (qualifications, background and professional situation) and their project (title, research country, aims, topic, scientific and social issues and value, proposed methodology, etc.), and attaches the following documents:

1. an up-to-date CV detailing the candidate's university and professional background;
2. a copy of the diploma of the doctorate, or for future doctors, a document from the graduate school certifying that the defense will take place before June 30th 2018;
3. a letter of motivation;
4. proof of address.

The launch date of the call marks the opening of preregistration online, which will close on **March 21st 2019 at midnight**. After this deadline, no further supporting documents may be added to the files. Incomplete applications will be automatically rejected.

If all of the information has been provided (required fields filled in), the applicant can confirm their preregistration and submit their file for evaluation, the results of which will be communicated to them. Preselected applications at the end of the preregistration period can then be put forward as applications.

B. Applications

The preselected applicant fills in a second form made up of information concerning their research project (literature review, aims, topic, value of research for the understanding of the humanitarian/social world and its issues, proposed methodology, calendar, etc.), including an evaluation of the security risks attending it, and attaches the following documents:

1. a timeline;
2. a copy of the thesis defense report (if the thesis has been defended);

3. a letter of recommendation from the head of the laboratory or research institution hosting the post-doctoral student (optional);
4. a reference from a scientific tutor (optional);

Online applications will be open **between March 22nd and April 18th at midnight**. After this deadline, no further supporting documents may be added to the files. Incomplete applications will be automatically rejected.

If all of the information has been provided (required fields filled in), the applicant can confirm their application and submit their file for evaluation, the results of which will be communicated to them.

C. Evaluation and Selection Procedure

Applications will be evaluated by groups made up of associate experts, the Foundation team, and members of the Foundation's Board and Scientific Council (SC). Only those applications which have been preselected at the close of the preregistration period can then submit an application. On the basis of these different evaluations; selection committees including representatives of partner organisations will establish selection proposals which will be submitted to the Foundation's Board, who will draw up the final selection during the course of a meeting which will take place on **June 19th 2019**. Applicants will be informed of the results the following day.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- The Foundation does not provide laureates with any financial or logistical support beyond the bursary which is awarded them. Each laureate is solely responsible for their logistical management and material work conditions.
- Each researcher commits to respecting the conditions, and to signing the chart and the Foundation's funding award agreement.
- The laureates commit to respecting the laws and regulations of the research country or countries, especially with regard to their entering and leaving the territory, and taking out public liability insurance, medical and repatriation coverage in case of travel abroad, and any compulsory payroll tax in force in the country of residence.
- The laureates commit to respecting the Fund's scientific calendar with regard to the deadlines for sending stage reports and working papers. Laureates will have the opportunity to present their work orally as part of study days organised by the Foundation.
- Should articles or books be published by the laureate on the basis of this work, the funding or co-funding by the French Red Cross Foundation and its partners will be mentioned. Conversely, should the work carried out by the laureate be disseminated or used by the Foundation and its partners, which the laureate

would have to consent to in advance, the author will be cited, and retain ownership of their work.

- The payment of the bursary by the Foundation is carried out in four instalments: three instalments of 5 000 euros, the first of which is paid at the beginning of the research, and the remaining 2000 euros on receipt of the working papers.
- The research period begins on September 1st and at the latest by September 15th, of the year that the fellowship is awarded. Nevertheless, the payment of the first instalment of the bursary is conditional on the laureates' confirmation to the Foundation of the start of their research. Any delay beyond September 15th must be justified and will lead to a delay in the first payment, until such a confirmation is received. Any delay in the beginning of the research work, the dispatch of intermediary reports or working papers, and any change in the conducting of the research which, by its unjustified nature or scope, calls into question the project's feasibility within the timeframe and form (topic, methodology, etc.) of the initial project submitted in the course of the laureates' application will lead to the cancellation of the funding.
- The payment of the second and third instalments of the bursary will depend on the expressly reaffirmed commitment of the laureates to pursue their work, by means of the dispatch of two stage reports in accordance with the dates indicated in the Foundation's scientific calendar. The laureates must inform the Foundation at the earliest opportunity of any early termination of their research. In the absence of the reaffirmation of expressed commitment to pursuing their work in the aforementioned conditions by the dispatch of two stage reports in accordance with the agreed dates, the payment of the bursary will be stopped. The Foundation reserves the right to ask for the total or partial reimbursement of the amount of the bursary already paid.
- The laureates commit to communicating any possible situation of conflict of interest to the Foundation.
- It is understood that the views and opinions expressed by the laureates in articles or books drawn from this research engage them alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the French Red Cross Foundation or its partners.
- If, during the interval separating the attribution of the bursary and the beginning of the research work, an unforeseeable event should occur in the research country or countries, which in its severity might modify the work context, the Foundation reserves the right to suspend the bursary at any moment. The decision to suspend will take into account different parameters (including the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the country of residence, the presence or retreat of transnational NGOs, the ICRC and UN agencies in the area).

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

February 6th 2019	Launch of the call for applications for postdoctoral fellowships
March 21st 2019	Deadline for preregistration (midnight)
April 18th 2019	Deadline for applications (midnight)
June 19th 2019	Board meeting for selection
June 20th 2019	Results are announced
July-August 2019	Signing of the chart and funding award agreement by laureates
Sept. 1st - 15th 2019	Research begins

Please address any questions relating to the call to:

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