

University of St Andrews

SFC Official Development Assistance (ODA) Funding AY 2019-20 Report

1. Institutional research context

The University of St Andrews' Global Challenges Forum was formed in 2018 and builds on the University's commitment to the Global Challenges agenda. The forum supports the University's extensive GCRF challenge-led research base, funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) QR Grant, and contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Supporting the SFC's objective *'to invest in excellent research and innovation that adds to current knowledge, delivers economic and societal value, enhances Scotland's international reputation and attractiveness, and makes the world around us prosperous, healthier and more sustainable'*¹, the University of St Andrew committed its support to the St Andrews Global Challenges Forum's 3-year strategy *'to improve the economic activity and strength of ODA countries by strengthening capability for research and innovation in developing countries and the UK, as well as building structures which will enable agile responses to emergencies and opportunities'*. Endeavouring to consolidate and deepen on the Forum's first two years of the strategy, the Forum's focus went from supporting 49 projects in 48 countries with average awards of £16.5k (2018-19) to 24 projects in 20 countries with an average award of £36.9k per project (2019-20). Also, a fourth priority theme was added to the Forum's existing three:

- Energy and innovation
- Global health and inequality
- Sustainability and environmental change
- Cultural heritage (elevated from underlying theme in 2019-20)

Underlying themes, embedded within these main priorities, include (a) sustainable livelihoods, (b) promoting justice and humanitarian action, (c) secure and sustainable food systems, (d) gender equity and (e) rapid urbanization.

The 24 projects supported in 2019-20 align with the University's six priority areas for collaborative working across disciplines (see the University of St Andrews Strategy 2018- 2023²) as follows (Fig. 1):

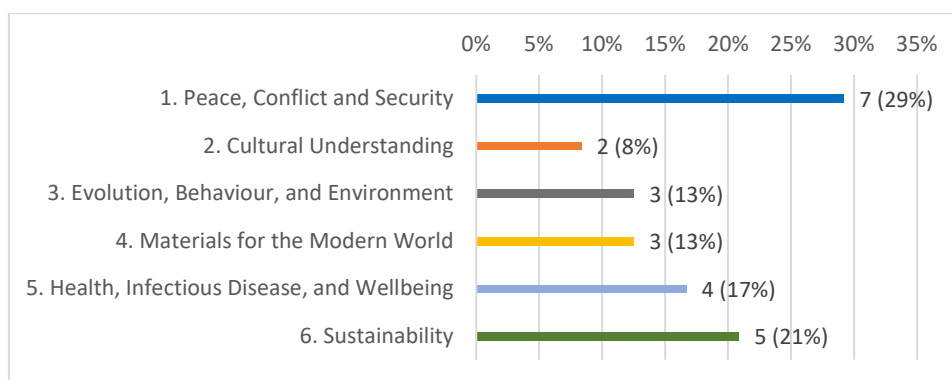


Figure 1. Interdisciplinary themes

¹ http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/StrategicFramework/Scottish_Funding_Council_Strategic_Framework_2019-2022.pdf

² <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/university-strategy/world-leading/>

Our strategy for the SFC GCRF also aligns with the University Strategy pillars³ of Diverse (9 projects), Entrepreneurial (9 projects), and World-leading (6 projects), whilst all funded projects engage in different ways with the strategy's Global pillar. Most importantly, our SFC GCRF strategy and processes aligns with the University strategy's social responsibility principle to '*act ethically, transparently, sustainably, and for the wider public benefit at all times.*'⁴ Finally, our SFC GCRF activities fulfil a key University objective to '*promote areas of world-leading research that provide international leadership, engage with big societal questions, have the highest level of integrity, and the potential to resonate externally.*'⁵

Continuity, building on success and establishing agendas: The 2019-20 funding of £ 925,290 continued to progress and deepen projects funded in previous years. Some projects ceased being funded under SFC GCRF due to the completion of objectives or progression to larger follow-on grants (more than £5.25M by the end of year 2). As we moved towards the end of our 3-year strategy, the primary objective has been to support maturing projects by working to consolidate research themes and deepen successful projects to increase ODA benefit, value for money, and to ensure lasting legacy. Our secondary objective has been to make a concerted effort to support new ideas and rapid response needs. As the block grant (based on REG allocations) funding has grown, St Andrews' Global Challenge research strengths by topics (fishing and coastal communities; global health, particularly TB, HIV and antimicrobial resistance; cultural heritage preservation and sustainable livelihoods; and energy security) and by region (East and sub-Saharan Africa, Amazonia and Southeast Asia) have naturally evolved as key foci.

To date, the SFC 2019-20 funding has seeded £6.31M in follow-on applications and has leveraged £1.95M in additional funding.

2. Progress with your GCRF strategy

We are aware that the poorest countries require longer lead-in time for effective change and are monitoring and developing strategy for stimulating ODA links through grants for networking and dissemination including developing regional activities. Our 2019-20 projects supported all 17 UN [Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#) in some capacity – most projects addressed more than one goal. The full break down, self-declared by the PIs (Fig. 2).

The aims set out in the University of St Andrews GCRF strategy, along with progress, are:

- *Immediate and/or potential economic benefit to DAC-listed partners:* all funded projects were selected on their potential to realistically enhance well-being and economic benefits in the partner countries. Seventeen (71%) of the funded projects are delivering routes for economic growth for local communities by providing the means for self-sufficiency through farming, fishing, trade or tourism; by helping communities struggling with the devastation to their livelihoods as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; or by up-skilling local and/or indigenous groups. What is clear is the level of commitment of the PIs to, and the strength of the relationships they have built within, the local communities.

³ <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/university-strategy/>

⁴ <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/university-strategy/university-social-responsibility/>

⁵ <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/governance/university-strategy/world-leading/>

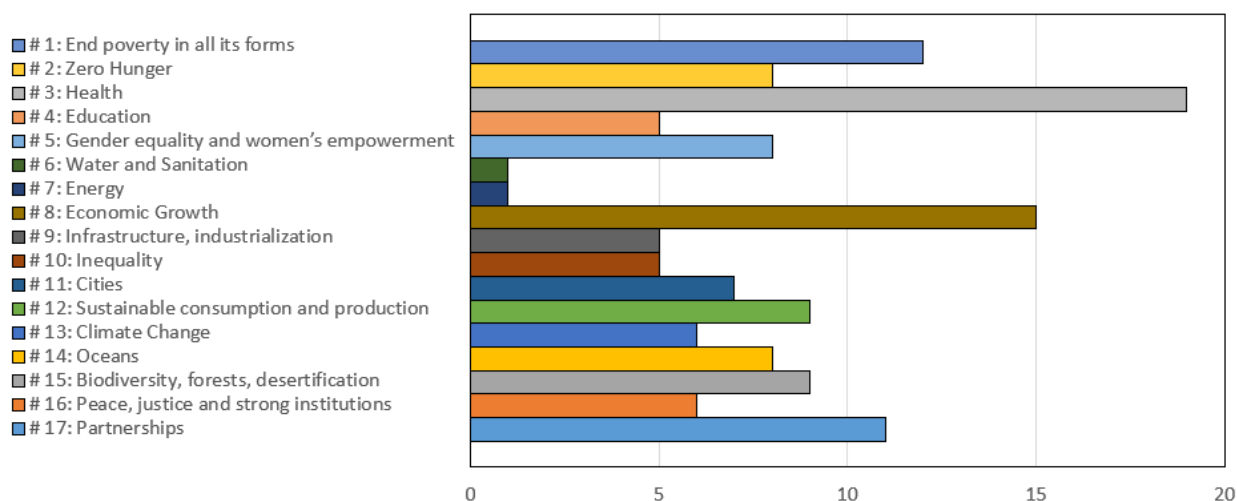


Figure 2. SDGs covered by 2019-20 projects

Table 1: Project support by level of development

	2019-20		2018-19
<i>Least Developed Countries (LDC)</i>	19	48%	36%
<i>Lower Middle Income Countries (LMIC)</i>	13	32%	32%
<i>Upper Middle Income Countries (UMIC)</i>	8	20%	32%

We are proud that, in this reporting year, support has shifted by 12% overall from UMIC to LDC, see Table 1.

• *Establishment and strengthening of formal links with scientists, commercial companies and end users in DAC-listed countries:* all funded projects worked closely with in-country partners with the beneficiaries of many projects. Project beneficiaries are very dependent on the work they support, so can fall into more than one category. Governments and NGOs were the main beneficiaries (24% and 21% respectively), with medical professionals, academics & education, and local communities (15% each) from the project work (Fig. 3). The split, which shows movement to more mature (developed) impact by influencing governments, NGO, practitioners and building capacity in the communities with which we work, reflects the Forum’s commitment to consolidate themes and to bring together existing projects strategically, focusing on projects which could deliver the most immediate and demonstrable changes.

As a result, projects have, for example:

- Produced, and disseminated (using national TV/radio and social media) a series of public-facing broadcasts to transmit crucial, accurate scientific messages on Covid-19 in addition to TB-HIV work.

- Documented the last remaining stand of native woodland on Malosa plateau, which is under imminent threat of biomass burning via deforestation and fed this to the National Parks tourism strategic advisory group for the Malawian government.
- Supported antiquities preservation in Tanzania which has unearthed previously undocumented local artifacts and knowledge and has led to governmental action to monitor its cultural heritage.
- Collaborated with industry partners in Kazakhstan which has led to the creation of a successful international multidisciplinary research hub and upskilled local workers with specialist analyst knowledge.
- Addressed dry forest conservation and deforestation by developing novel technology for assessing biodiversity and ecosystem quality to inform landuse policy, by integrating novel imaging systems from RAL-Space and field sampling methods from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

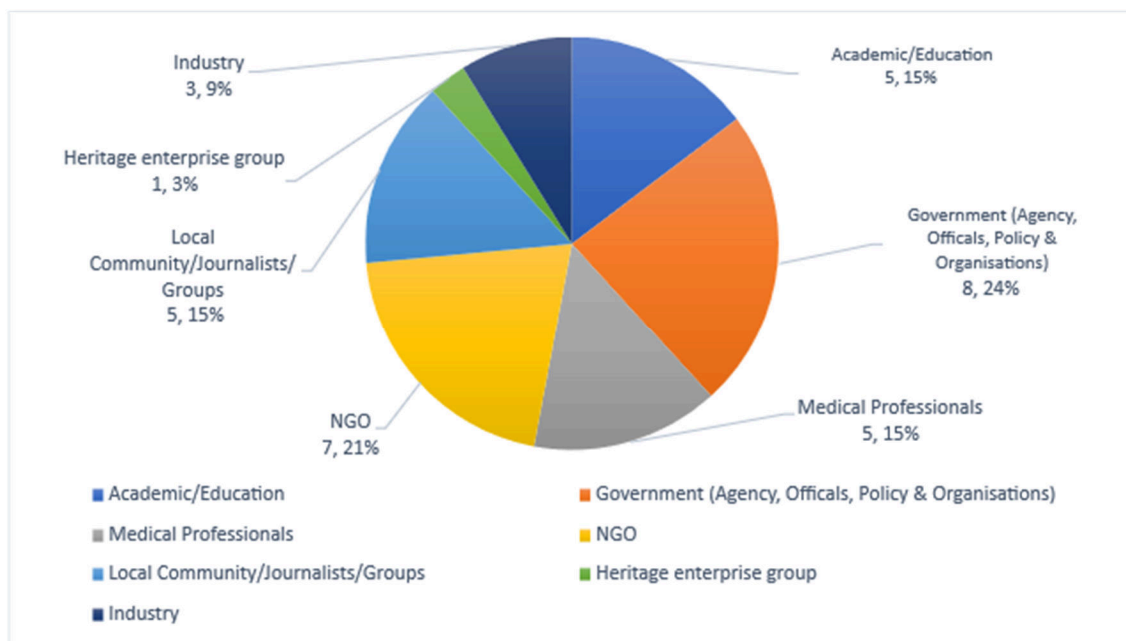


Figure 3. Project beneficiaries

• *Establishment of ‘communication-based’ and fact-finding networks in ODA countries:* this is a longer-term objective of the Global Challenges Forum as we continue to support PIs to connect and expand connections within and between ODA countries. Some projects are already making strides in this area:

- engaged with residents, governmental and non-governmental officials involved in public health of internally displaced peoples’ camps in Somaliland,
- aided the development of networks with practitioners and curators of Maori musical heritage in Samoa enabling wider engagement and ongoing collaborations,
- engaged in physical and online communication and dissemination of research with local groups, academic leaders and government officials to better understand increasing deforestation and a decline in forest canopy in Guatemala,
- established collaboration with local government and NGOs for the successful coordination of releases of endangered species in Namibia, and

- developed novel online collaboration due to the Covid-19 situation. This has led to the formation of south-south and north-south research analysis partnerships or working groups, for co-producing outputs and for applying for further research funding.

• *Establishment of 'communication-based' and fact-finding networks in the UK, with the aim of producing benefit to DAC-listed countries:* the forum has been adjusting to the new working landscape that the Covid-19 pandemic has presented. For example, return migration research in Alto Piura, Peru, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a press release by the University of St Andrews which was distributed to Peruvian NGOs and the Ministry of Social Inclusion as well as the UK Embassy in Peru and the Peruvian Embassy in London. It was presented in the Royal Geographical Society "Monday Night Lectures" series. In addition, as part of this year's budget, we invested in a dedicated Coordinator whose job is to nurture cross-project learning and dissemination of our SFC GCRF-funded activities through traditional and social media. The role also serves one of our three consolidator awards, Global Cultural Heritage. The consolidator role is key to the organisation of a series of workshops and seminars (primarily online, but eventually in-person, when possible) to exchange best practice in research, knowledge and experiences of various cross-cutting topics in our portfolio of work. Together, the events and dissemination activities will build to the delivery of a final conference with the aim of developing a road map for self-determination of cultural heritage for community sustainability.

Links with Scottish HEIS: Our SFC GCRF portfolio of projects has continued to build and deepen Scotland-wide collaborations across all our priority themes. Our work has benefitted from increased networking between academics.

- Under our Global Health theme, interdisciplinary TB work in Uganda fostered links with University of Edinburgh, strengthening Scottish inter-institutional TB research.
- In Sustainable Environments an emerging partnership is developing between St Andrews and Heriot Watt University on the development of carbon credit schemes for mangroves and seagrass.
- Fisheries research in Lake Victoria generated collaboration between SFC GCRF funded PIs in the Universities of Strathclyde and St Andrews and the Scottish Association of Marine Science.
- Additionally, when fishing training on Lake Victoria benefitted from the integral involvement of Marine Scotland Science's fishing skipper, this work has built links with Marine Scotland and the commercial fisheries sector. As a direct result, a new pelagic fishing net for Lake Victoria was designed and is being made by the Scottish company Jackson Trawls Limited (based in Peterhead; <http://www.jacksontrawls.co.uk/>).
- Under our energy and innovation theme training experiences were shared locally in Scotland when the Contextualised Diabetic Retinopathy Training and Screening Package for Low resource Settings project networked with ophthalmology training programmes in Tayside and Lothian.
- Under our heritage theme, the Digital Heritage Database Training model, used to train three members of the Department of Antiquities in Tanzania, was trialled in Malawi by the African Lakes project, an organisation that works with Scottish philanthropists to raise development investment.
- In the area of human rights, we connected the Scottish International Development Alliance with our Somali and Somalilander partner organisations. In these diverse ways, an increase in our Scotland-wide networking has gone hand in hand with our aim to stimulate further collaboration between ODA country settings.

These goals and ways of working guided our approach as an institution towards GCRF research management 2019-20. A senior member of our University Research and Innovation Services (RIS) team

(Laura Bates) has continued to play an active role in the Scottish SFC GCRF research managers group. As a result of this involvement, the University funded two senior research managers and eight research management staff from project partner institutions in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Malawi, to participate in the Managers and Administrators Workshop held in Cape Town, South Africa in February 2020. Led by Glasgow colleagues, and including, along-side St Andrews, staff and associated partners from Stirling, Strathclyde, Glasgow, Dundee and Heriot-Watt Universities, this initiative brought together 80 participants from 51 institutions across 12 countries to build capacity and share experience if the context specific challenges of research management.

• *Students and local personnel in DAC-listed countries trained by researchers from the University of St Andrews – noting the areas where there are gaps in knowledge or skills shortages in the DAC-listed country concerned:* 18 of the 24 funded projects had training elements which resulted in a total of 1,109 people from DAC-listed countries receiving training.

Many planned in-person training events had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions which led to more meetings and training sessions online and more legacy materials for reuse. Examples of training include:

- three weeks fieldwork at various sites in Tanzania delivered skill training to 20 participating students and junior staff from the University of Dar es Salaam and Department of Antiquities,
- online resources in the Pacific and among Pasifika diasporas which attracted more than 15,000 public views to date,
- 3 online training events on using statistical and other analysis tools which have each trained approximately 35 academics from KEMRI, Kenya; Makerere University, Uganda; and Catholic University Mwanza, Tanzania in research methods and to facilitate real-time parallel coding of data by analysts in different locations,
- in Liberia, professional members of the cyclists' federation, FOMTUL, received training and were engaged to write, record, and produce nationwide radio broadcasts for disseminating the research. In addition, a nationwide counter-stigma bumper sticker campaign which included 5000 youth cyclists and members of FOMTUL.
- in Peru, a workshop with approximately 80 public participants drawn from NGOs, local government, students, academics and the interested public,
- also in Peru, 24 professionals and students were trained in fieldwork techniques and analysis. This capacity building included training for secondary school children in oral histories and storytelling methods via digital curricula developed in response to Covid-19 restrictions, which won regional and national-level Innovation in Education awards in Peru. These added value to current research in terms of contributions to publications, and other academic outputs.

Additional value to the academic community and research areas as per the number of academic publications and presentations/conference proceedings:

- 34 publications
- 50 academic presentations / conference proceedings
- 20,000 social media interactions (Public audiences for project's online resources in the Pacific and among Pasifika diasporas: estimated to date at 15,000 and Nationwide counter-stigma bumper sticker campaign: 5000 youth cyclists, professional members of the motorcyclist labour federation, FOMTUL. Cyclists engaged also attested to countless passengers being impacted by the effort.

• *Leveraged follow-on funding*: To date, the SFC 2019-20 funding has resulted in over £6.3M in submitted follow-on applications and has leveraged £1.9M in additional funding from different funding bodies, including the Defra, British Council, MRC/NIHR, AHRF, NERC, STFC, National Geographic, and includes £917k from MRC/NIHR GECCO COVID-19 and Antimicrobial Resistance in East Africa.

The University has to date co-funded six of its GCRF PhD Studentships. All PhD Studentships are required to be linked to past or existing SFC GCRF work. The first cohort of three PhD from sub-Saharan Africa, Amazonia and the Pacific Rim are finishing their first year and are being joined by the second cohort of three PhDs from Rwanda, Kenya and Iran.

Changes to the 3-year GCRF strategy: In as much as we have adhered to the aims and objectives set out in our 3-year GCRF strategy, we continue to fine-tune elements of it to make best use of the funds available and to incorporate on-going reflection and expertise from dialogue with our Advisory Panel and partners.

In this way, we seek to realise the overall aim of the St Andrews Global Challenges Forum, which since the start has been to leave a research legacy by ensuring a small number of ‘big ideas’, which coalesce the strengths of St Andrews GCRF challenge-led research, to take hold and flourish.

Strategy for the distribution of SFC ODA GCRF funds: As a result of our continued objective of supporting projects with the strongest demonstrable expertise to deliver maximum benefits to the global poor, over our expectation that this would be done by equal measure across themes, our split of funds by theme was more heavily weighted to “Sustainability and environmental change”, see Table 2.

Table 2: 2019-20 split of funds (value)

Theme	Open call	Rapid response*
Energy and innovation	8%	0%
Global health and inequality	20%	3%
Sustainability and environmental change	47%	4%
Cultural heritage	17%	1%
Total	92%	8%

*includes unanticipated and contingency projects

In order to consolidate identified themes with the intention of deepening benefit and legacy, our strategy aim was to allocate funding as follows:

- 50% - consolidating stream (by invitation) – to deepen thematic expertise (see below);
- 30% - New open call (Projects up to £80K);
- 15% - rapid response and dissemination/knowledge/experience sharing;
- 5% - part-time consolidator and coordinator posts, and other costs.

However, due to the reduced funding we received in Autumn 2020, and the fact that the application process was complete for 80% of our previously anticipated funds, it was necessary to downscale our rapid response allocation to 7%.

In order to maximise shared experience, we intend:

1. to host a series of knowledge sharing virtual mini workshops across projects and teams/partners around challenge settings, tools and methods, audiences and partners
2. to host an international conference centred around GCRF projects to allow GCRF projects to disseminate results, to promote activity and to leave a long-term legacy of achievements.

Specifically, the conference aims to connect individuals and groups around the globe to share in the success of the programme. The 100% digital conference will be open to all and archived for legacy. The idea of this conference was raised at a recent Scottish ODA Managers meeting (June 2020) and all attendees supported the idea. The budget will include funding for a 0.5FTE IT specialist and facilitator to support 1 and 2.)

Consolidating streams – to deepen thematic expertise

- Interdisciplinary work on AMR and TB at the Medical School/Social Science interface (HUB)
- Interdisciplinary work on Heritage Culture (HUB)
- Catalyst funding: Six PIs were invited to re-work Spring 2020 PhD proposals as 1-year research projects with named PhD candidates as ODA ECR collaborators

As noted in this report, as an institution we continue to optimise our due diligence and other processes to ensure the completion of projects within the timescales for spend. We also have included safeguarding and gender equality as separate application questions to ensure that they are considered at the project planning stage in line with UKRI guidance.

3. Impact of COVID-19

Covid-19 pandemic lockdown directly affected the performance and productivity of 23 out of 24 GCRF projects (96%) supported in 2019-20. Closure of facilities and travel restrictions in different ODA countries and the UK have resulted in interruptions to planned partner visits, field visits, workshops and training programmes, leading to some of the training workshops and conferences to be postponed without confirmed future dates or to be cancelled completely. Strict social distancing measures have made in-person engagement, research on the ground and dissemination of results very challenging, requiring some projects to be redesigned and adopting new techniques and methods. In some cases, money spent on travel could not be reclaimed, though it is hoped that this work can continue in 2021. In one instance, the project partners were in the healthcare profession and were needed in front-line care.

Despite these challenges, many of the projects did go ahead by innovatively changing direction of moving work online or training in-country researchers to do fieldwork, which would have been completed by St Andrews academics. Cases where continuation was impossible were also largely due to limitation of internet, technological infrastructure and other resources in certain ODA communities.

Select examples where projects used ingenuity to overcome Covid-19 obstacles are:

- TB-HIV project learned valuable information about TB medication which does not reduce the effectiveness of HIV treatment and also disseminated multi-media public health information broadcasts within the communities to combat "myths" and "misinformation" about Covid-19 virus transmission and treatment.
- In Somalia, emphasis shifted from researching climactic drivers in Internally Displaced People's (IDP) camps in Somalia, and day-to-day inequities faced by residents of the camps, to how Somalilander public health policy has reacted to Covid-19 in the camps. A challenge of the work was that it was viewed with scepticism by governmental and non-governmental officials who felt it might potentially scrutinize them as they tried to operate in lockdown circumstances. Therefore, the researchers felt that the study was not as successful in engaging with governmental and nongovernmental organisations as it would likely have been in a pre-Covid time.

Some PIs were able to re-purpose these funds for other effective measures related to the projects or responded to situations that arose.

(1) [Community Capabilities and Marine Protected Area Governance](#): Scaling up and Capacity development (XFC092)

Watamu, on the Kenyan coast, is home to Watamu National Marine Park (“Haven of the Green Turtle” and a Marine Protected Area). It is an area that relies heavily on the tourist industry and where many live a hand-to-mouth existence. In an area already experiencing economic insecurity and with no social security, the Coronavirus pandemic has meant the loss of all tourism and caused extensive job losses, in both the formal and informal sectors. Many are struggling to afford food. As a result, pressure has increased on the already fragile marine environment, with people engaging in illegal fishing, such as the use of poison, and over-harvesting. The project employed a team of ‘Marine Scouts’ to monitor the marine and coastal ecology, take part in clean-ups and discourage illegal activity, help prevent ecosystem degradation while also building understanding of conservation, including skills development and certification which could help lead to future employment. The project also helps to tackle poverty by offering financial inducements for local people to complete mobile phone livelihood surveys. Each survey pays enough for a household to buy 10 kg of rice, enabling communities to purchase basic food supplies.

(2) [Fishing and farming in the desert](#): a platform for understanding how to respond to El Niño in the context of climate change in Sechura, Perú (XFC090)

As part of the project, we originally intended to pilot different forms of data collection about desert-El Niño food systems with the Peruvian NGO PRISMA and Instituto Educacional Daniel Alcides Carrión (IE DAC) secondary school. In March 2020, lockdown and the suspension of classes left the 154 schools and 21,059 students, from the Unidad de Gestión Educativa (UGEL: Sechura School Board), abandoned with no educational support; 6,185 of these were secondary students. The digital divide affected the ability of non-metropolitan schools, like those in the Sechura desert, to engage online, adding to the challenge of ensuing “inclusive and equitable quality education” (SDG4). In response, the project changed direction to purchase computer tablets and data packages for the IE DAC’s school director, social studies teacher and 10 students (just under 10% of the secondary enrolment) and delivered a six-session, online curriculum around environmental storytelling. Setting the program up was logistically very challenging and required local RA, Oliver Calle, working with PRISMA to go to [great lengths to deliver the tablets](#) under lockdown restrictions.

Following the successful implementation of the online curriculum: “RECUST ‘(Recopilar, crear y utilizar storytelling’ [collect, create and use storytelling])” the joint efforts of the school and project were recognised in the form of two prestigious education prizes in Peru. In September 2020, RECUST won first prize in the Sechura School Board’s Annual Education and Innovation Competition. Soon after, in December 2020, the IE DAC and social studies teacher became one of 84 winners in the Peruvian National Education Development Fund’s (FONDEP) annual Innovation competition for their RECUST from a total of 1,332 submissions across Peru.

(3) [Digitizing Cultural Heritage](#) for Sustainable Preservation and Development in Tanzania (XFC087)

For year 2 of this project, several in-country training sessions to build in-country capacity to address heritage site loss and damage through natural and anthropogenic change had been arranged. The training was to engage with the University of Dar es Salaam, government official from the Department of Antiquities and Tourism and with people living in and around the heritage that is the focus of our work on the Swahili Coast. Due to the pandemic, the visit was immediately put on hold and a rapid revision of the project plans had to be made. A strategy swiftly developed to enable the progress of the project while, most importantly, enabling the

community at Kilwa Kisawani World Heritage Site (the focus for this stage) to be supported at a time when their livelihoods were being devastated. In year 3, the plan had been to construct a focal point for the project at Kilwa in the form of a small museum that would be staffed by members of WAUMAI, a women-run heritage enterprise group. During the summer, members of the community came together to build the small museum and to provide its cultural heritage content by offering their stories to be recorded at the museum. It has two-fold benefit in that it provides an outlet for the women to sell their basketry and weaving (based on their intangible heritage) and is a place for tourists to the region to engage with knowledgeable local guides to the site. In both ways, the museum both provides income to the local community and preservation for the historic site.

We sadly note that two ODA colleagues succumbed to Covid-19: Noel Lasway, from Tanzania, and Luis Repetto Malaga, from Peru.

4. Detailed list of funded activities

Please see separate Excel spread sheet for this information.

5. Gender equality

How the University is progressing gender equality through its research

The University has an Assistant Vice-Principal (Diversity), who holds a research budget (the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Fund), and supports the University's commitment to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of the St Andrews experience. The AVP and the Principal lead the University's commitment to the Diverse St Andrews strategic agenda through a variety of existing and new initiatives. For example, a portfolio of courses, Dignity & Inclusion at Work, is offered by the University. The course portfolio covers a range of awareness, support and training sessions related to equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing issues in the workplace. The courses, designed for all staff, can be taken in stand-alone form or as part of a portfolio which secures a certificate of recognition once all courses are completed. There are specific courses for those in management and leadership positions, including those related to research. The AVP and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion team more generally work with Schools and Units to ensure that staff from diverse backgrounds have access to research time and resources, and to equal and fair treatment through workload model mechanisms, research and impact (paid) leave and research leadership opportunities. The University also co-ordinates several mentoring schemes for staff, including mentoring in relation to research roles and activity.

How the University is embedding gender equality specifically within its ODA/GCRF activities

For our underlying theme of 'issues of gender equity' we monitor the gender split of all funded projects. This year, seven projects, funded to the total value of £333,593 (38% of the overall budget) self-declared to be addressing SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, to some degree. In addition, 42% of projects had a female PI.

Through the SFC GCRF, we also encourage early career PDRA on fixed-term contracts to apply, in their own right, as PIs.

Information about gender equality in the context of specific GCRF projects

Our application process specifically asks about and is in part awarded on the gender equality of the work. We are therefore pleased to say that all our projects are based on their consideration of gender equity. Some which have specifically contributed to gender equality are:

(1) Recovering Samoan Instrumental Music to Promote Cultural Heritage and Enterprise (XFC091)

The intention was to record as much data as possible from village elders, regardless of their gender. Gender is likely, however, to play a significant part in the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of the findings, since cultural knowledge (including musical knowledge) is often gender-specific in Polynesian cultures (certain instruments or songs are, for example, known and performed by men or women or are played at specific occasions for one gender only). An important aspect of gender equality has been the management of the project by female academics at NUS and discussions on this subject have been part of the professional development of the Samoan project partners.

(2) Aamusnaan Maya Initiative: Empowering Local Media Engagement in Internally Displaced Peoples Camps in Hargeisa (XFC098)

The survey produced for this study was designed to look at the daily socio-economic and public health challenges faced by women, who are often the heads of their households in IDP camps. The produced survey results also showed 70% of respondents were women. A section of the final report is dedicated to gender disparities and the challenges faced by women and children.

(3) Digitizing Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Preservation and Development in Tanzania (XFC087)

Specific support of woman enterprise groups at both major Swahili coastal sites, namely Kilwa Kisiwani and Bagamoyo, have ensured that previously disadvantaged sectors are recognized in the projects. Also, the three trained graduate students at the University of Dar es Salaam, two in mapping of heritage sites and one in setting up museum exhibitions, are all females and continue to excel.

(4) Fishing and farming in the desert: a platform for understanding how to respond to El Niño in the context of climate change in Sechura, Perú (XFC090)

The conceptualization of the project and research questions actively considered the gender relations associated with farming and fishing and with women's roles in supporting households during crisis moments.

(5) Going back to my rural roots: Covid 19 and return migration in northern Peru (XFC110)

Gender dimensions of return migration were a key theme in the research design and the sample of interviewees was balanced by gender and age in order to ensure women's and men's voices from different cohorts were included.

Gender equity has an important place in our future strategy development as part of our broader commitment to issues of intersectionality, highlighted powerfully in 2020 by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. We have included the following headline statement on our webpages:

"As academics working in ODA countries on Global Challenges projects, we stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, and with disadvantaged communities across the globe. We recognise that universities, and the research and teaching that takes place there, have been part of a wider systemic framework that has seen minority voices silenced, and that has seen racism go unaddressed. In all our projects, with all our partners globally, we are actively working to promote academic practice that is centred upon equity and that acknowledges injustices with current structural privilege. We commit to continue to prioritise projects that support equitable attitudes and recognise that we still have more to learn together through our collaborations."

We anticipate that this 'living' document will serve as a departure point for reflection with researchers and partners going forward.