



**CHANGING
THE STORY**

MOBILITY FUND: A CASE STUDY REPORT



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

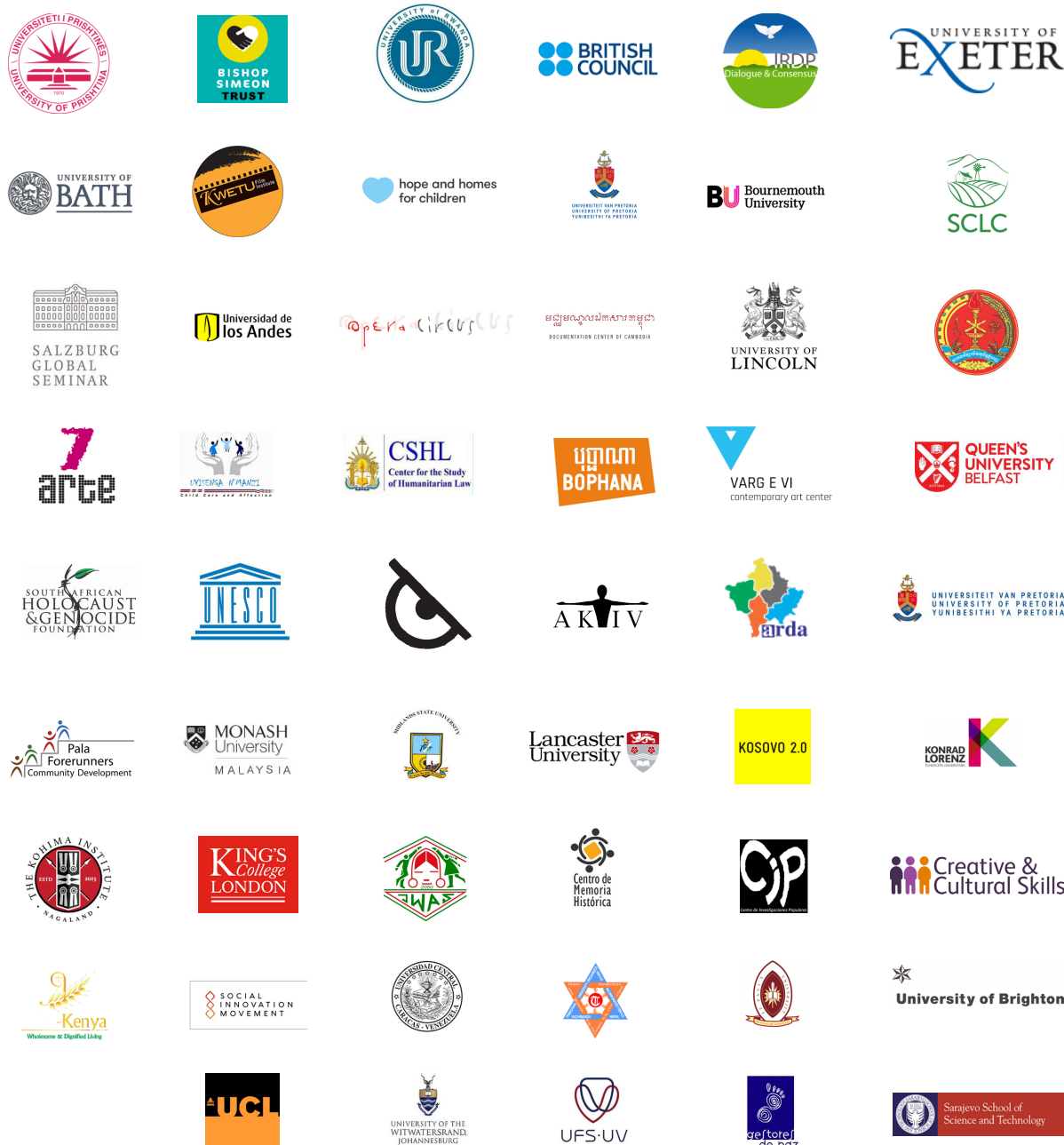


Global Challenges Research Fund



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

PROJECT PARTNERS



OTHER PARTNERS:

Dreamz Unlimited School of Drama and Film, Cultural Heritage Without Borders, Kino Armata, Basilwizi Youth NGO and BaTonga Community Museum

LEAD INSTITUTION



CORE FUNDERS



Changing The Story: Building inclusive civil societies with, and for, young people is a four-year international, multi-disciplinary project, aimed at supporting the building of inclusive civil societies with, and for, young people in 13 post-conflict countries. It is a collaborative project between universities, International Non-Government Organisations, artists, grassroots Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and young people.



In 2019, Changing the Story (CTS) launched a Mobility Fund, offering financial support of up to £1000 designed to enhance the mobility and professional development of CTS grantees based in the 13 project countries (researchers, practitioners and youth partners).

Regular contact with the CTS network revealed a real need and appetite for support for CTS' grantees based in the Global South in terms of their own mobility, given that the high cost of travel in and between countries is considered by the network to be a barrier to accessing personal and professional development opportunities.

The mobility fund supports travel, subsistence and conference fee costs for activities that are in addition to those outlined in the original project application. Applicants must evidence how the fund will contribute to the development of their Changing the Story project as well as their own personal and professional development long-term.

The fund has proven hugely popular, providing excellent networking, knowledge exchange and additional research dissemination opportunities, beyond what grantees originally envisaged at the project application stage. This reports captures some of the opportunities and experiences made possible by the fund, which remains open until June 2021.

THE MOBILITY FUND IN NUMBERS

14**Applications Submitted****9****Applications Funded****5****Youth-Led Applications
Funded****4****Grants Awarded to Early
Career Researchers**

GRANT LOCATIONS





Changing the Story has awarded funding to nine applications since the fund was launched in Autumn 2019.

Funded activities include:

- Invitations to speak on specialist panels at international conferences such as the Human Development and Capability Association Conference at University College London and the International Studies Association Annual Conference in Hawaii.
- Participation at Changing the Story Network meetings in Bogota, Colombia and Lancaster, United Kingdom.
- Youth-led film screenings and filmmaking workshops in Dorset and London, United Kingdom, as well as Bangalore and Nagaland, India and Thysput, South Africa.

To date, of the nine activities awarded funding, six are complete. One activity has been cancelled due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and two postponed.



SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH-LED RESEARCH DISSEMINATION

FIVE Mobility Fund Grants have been awarded to young Changing the Story grantees' from four projects: the Phase 1 Colombia project and the Phase 2 Early Career Research projects in India, Bosnia and Herzegovina and South Africa. In each case, the applications submitted were youth-led, guided by the grantees' interest in continuing their research beyond the funding period of the commissioned project.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, young filmmakers screened their films for the first time at a youth film festival in the UK and led a filmmaking workshop at King's College London to an audience of 50 practitioners, academics and youth activists. The activities provided the young filmmakers with an opportunity to develop and expand their skills in advocacy, build their confidence in public speaking, shape the planning and delivery of workshops and to fine-tune their bespoke dissemination strategies with specialist audiences.

“ I’ve re-discovered myself through this process. This is something that I wanted to do but I had not been allowed to

”

Young filmmaker on the participatory action research process.

In Colombia, a youth music group from Chocó participated on a panel at the Peace in a Small Scale International Conference in Bogota. The group were invited to speak about their work on the Phase 1 Colombia project 'Tales of the Senses', in which they recorded the sounds of Chocó, as well as perform live at the conference.



In India, three young researchers will screen their documentaries to a community of filmmakers in Bangalore and to local audiences in Nagaland. The filmmakers intend to use these opportunities to explore new approaches to filmmaking and spark discussions within their communities about some of the difficult issues they have documented.

In South Africa, Ilizwi Lenyaniso Lomhlaba, a co-creator collective, made the journey from Graaff-Reinet to Thyspunt to meet with a Khoes (or Khoisan) community that has been fighting nuclear development on the Eastern Cape Coast. The exchange provided an opportunity to build bridges with other activists in South Africa also mobilising for land and environmental justice. Ilizwi Lenyaniso Lomhlaba made a documentary film to capture the experience.





SPOTLIGHT ON DEVELOPING RESEARCH CAPACITY

A second emerging theme is the opportunity the fund has created for Early Career Researchers across the network to communicate their research to new academic audiences, develop new research skills and expand their network of potential collaborators.

Mobility Funding has supported early career researchers to attend four international academic conferences and participate on two specialist panels helping their work on youth-centred civil society become more visible to a global audiences.

The opportunity to network, reflect critically on their research and to learn from other academics similarly interested in arts-based methodologies was described by the early career researchers' as important for their ongoing professional development.

“ Meeting with these creative minds in this space was not only refreshing, but also allowed for critical reflection. It is such reflections that brought self-awareness, helping me understand and recognise how I could become a change maker in my spheres of association.

”

Early Career Researcher on their mobility fund award.



SPOTLIGHT ON NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

The final emerging theme is the opportunity the fund has created for those within the network to connect independent of events organised by the central CTS team. One Early Career researcher was able to travel from South Africa to the UK to connect with grantees' from three Changing the Story projects, and exchange knowledge about “**their collective experiences across the fields of education development, health, policy and gender, as well as possibilities for future collaborations.**”

“ This amazing trip ended up with new collaborations, friendships and intellectual growth!

Early Career Researcher on their mobility fund award

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Through another Mobility Fund award, an Early Career Researcher from the network submitted a proposal to participate on a panel at an international conference alongside seven Changing the Story grantees from four projects. These collaborations have been established in part, because of the emphasis CTS places on creating frequent and varied opportunities for physical and digital engagement through which the network can share learning and best practice.

In another example, two Early Career Researchers from Venezuela were awarded funding to attend the Changing the Story Network meeting in Colombia alongside CTS researchers from the Latin America region and around the world. The recipients of the award spoke of the personal and professional value of engaging in academic discussions in a space outside of Venezuela, which in their words has encouraged them to think about how to address "Venezuela's conflict of democracy and human rights caused by the totalitarian government regime." The fund also enabled the researchers to put their own research into perspective:

“ Being part of this meeting made us think about the possible future for young Venezuelans, especially in relation to the topics presented: peace, freedom, the vision of the nation, daily life and territoriality. ”



The mobility fund has facilitated partnership work across the network, creating space for new ideas and new connections and dialogue to be developed and sustained – this is contributing to the broader Changing the Story project legacy beyond the funding period.



CONCLUSION

The Mobility Fund was developed out of feedback from partners on the need to support travel opportunities and reflects CTS' values of decolonising knowledge, amplifying youth voice, network and capacity building and cross-sector working.

The mobility fund remains open until December 2021. In the wake of COVID-19, new barriers exist but we welcome new applications once travel restrictions are lifted. In particular, we hope to see more applications that look to connect the CTS Network, particularly South-South connections, more youth-led applications that provide young people with opportunities to expand on the work they are interested in and more applications that enable researchers to build their networks, with an eye to future research that continues the legacy of Changing the Story.



CHANGING THE STORY

We would also like to extend a huge thank you to our Project Steering Group members, including our chair Prof. Frank Finlay.

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