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Multi-million pounds backing for scientists to tackle tobacco-related harm in Asia and Africa

A team of researchers, led by the University of Stirling, has been awarded £3.4 million from the [Global Challenges Research Fund \(GCRF\)](#) Research Councils UK Collective Fund to reduce tobacco-related harm in low and middle-income countries in Asia and Africa.

Led by Professor Linda Bauld, the multi-disciplinary four-year project involves six UK universities from the [UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies](#), eight overseas partners in seven countries and [Cancer Research UK](#).

With nearly 80% of the world's 1 billion smokers living in low and middle-income countries, the experts hope to bring down smoking rates in developing countries. They aim to conduct research to inform tobacco taxation, tackle the illicit trade in tobacco and target tobacco companies' efforts to undermine governments' attempts to reduce smoking.

Professor Bauld, Director of the University's [Institute for Social Marketing](#) and Cancer Research UK Cancer Prevention Champion, said: "As smoking dwindles to a minority activity in the UK, the number of smokers is still increasing elsewhere. Smoking kills more people every year than HIV, tuberculosis and malaria combined. By 2030, it's predicted that more than 80% of tobacco-related deaths will occur in low and middle-income countries.

"The tobacco epidemic was created in the developed world, where smoking rates sky-rocketed in previous decades. It took us many years to work out how to bring them down, through research, advocacy, communicating health risks, and introducing evidence-based policies. This funding will allow us to work with countries that are now at the forefront of efforts to combat the world's biggest preventable causes of death."

The scheme is part of one of the most ambitious international research programmes ever created, with £225 million invested across 37 interdisciplinary projects.

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The experts will work with researchers the South Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries of India, Bangladesh, South Africa, Uganda, Gambia and Ghana to offer training and research support.

They will also partner with local academics to develop and implement approaches to tackling Asian and African nations' tobacco consumption.

Alison Cox, Cancer Research UK, said: “Smoking causes more preventable cancers worldwide than anything else. This award provides a unique opportunity to bring together CRUK’s existing international tobacco control research programme with substantial new investment from RCUK to make a significant contribution to research capacity to prevent cancer sooner in countries where the need is greatest.

“We are particularly pleased to see a strong focus in the programme on research to address the affordability and availability of tobacco in LMICs, as our own studies and those of our global partners have shown that addressing both supply and demand is crucial if we are to see real reductions in smoking rates.”

Full list of research partners:

- UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies (UKCTAS): Universities of Stirling, Nottingham, York, Edinburgh, Kings College London and Bath.
- Cancer Research UK
- The ARK Foundation, Bangladesh
- Manipal University, India
- The Public Health Foundation of India
- The University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Makerere University, Uganda
- The MRC Unit, The Gambia
- Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

Additional Information

- More details on each of the 37 grants can be found in the [Growing research capability to meet the challenges faced by developing countries](#) brochure.
- Find out more about the Institute of Social Marketing: www.stir.ac.uk/health-sciences-sport/research/groups/social-marketing.
- Find out more about the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies: www.ukctas.net/index.html.
- Find out more about Cancer Research UK’s international tobacco control programme: <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/funding-for-researchers/applying-for-funding/funding-committees/international-tobacco-advisory-group>

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- Find out more about tobacco consumption via the World Health Organisation:
www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs339/en/

University of Stirling

The University of Stirling is ranked fifth in Scotland and 40th in the UK for research intensity in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework. Stirling is committed to providing education with a purpose and carrying out research which has a positive impact on communities across the globe - addressing real issues, providing solutions and helping to shape society.

Interdisciplinary in its approach, Stirling's research informs its teaching curriculum and facilitates opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration between staff, students, industry partners and the wider community.

As Stirling celebrates 50 years, it retains a pioneering spirit and a passion for innovation. The University's scenic central Scotland campus - complete with a loch, castle and golf course - is home to more than 14,000 students and 1500 staff representing around 120 nationalities. This includes an ever-expanding base for postgraduate study. [@stiruni](http://www.stir.ac.uk)

Research Councils UK (RCUK) is the strategic partnership of the UK's seven Research Councils. Our collective ambition is to ensure the UK remains the best place in the world to do research, innovate and grow business. The Research Councils are central to delivering research and innovation for economic growth and societal impact. Together, we invest £3 billion in research each year, covering all disciplines and sectors, to meet tomorrow's challenges today. Our investments create new knowledge through: funding research excellence; responding to society's challenges; developing skills, leadership and infrastructure; and leading the UK's research direction. We drive innovation through: creating environments and brokering partnerships; co-delivering research and innovation with over 2,500 businesses, 1,000 of which are SMEs; and providing intelligence for policy making. Find out more about our work at www.rcuk.ac.uk.

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

GCRF is a £1.5 billion fund that supports cutting-edge research which addresses the global issues faced by developing countries. It harnesses the expertise of the UK's world-leading researchers, focusing on: funding challenge-led disciplinary and interdisciplinary research; strengthening capacity for research, innovation and knowledge exchange; and providing an agile response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need. It forms part of UK Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment and is overseen by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and delivered through 17 delivery partners including the Research Councils, the UK Academies, the UK Space Agency and funding bodies.

Logos for participating partners

