

## Summary Report

*SFC Global Challenges Research Funding – Strengthening the Regional Engagement Role of Universities in Africa and Asia (SRERUAA)*

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Funding Amount: £29,500 – SFC GCRF

### Background

This summary report provides an overview of the outcomes and outputs of the SFC funded GCRF networking project SRERUAA. The project was concerned with the regional engagement (third mission) role of universities, namely those activities that lie outside the core missions of research and teaching. Examples of these substantive aspects of regional development may include, for example supporting SMEs, regional innovation, health and well-being, creative arts and industries, iconic ‘mega-’ or hallmark events, ecological sustainability, social inclusion (including of migrants and refugees) and ‘short-cycle’ higher education.

The countries chosen for collaboration were DAC listed countries (**Tanzania** (least Developed) **Zimbabwe** (Low Income Country), **Philippines** (Lower Middle Income) and **South Africa, Iraq and Iran** (Upper Middle income); and, the key partners in each country were already connected with the Glasgow team who had worked with all key collaborators in substantive ways. In addition, the resulting project team had a multi-disciplinary focus and featured partners from education, sociology, law and child rights, clinical psychology, and the natural sciences including chemistry, ecology and bioenergy.

SRERUAA would build upon substantial experience that already exists within the University of Glasgow, developed within the Pascal Universities for Regional Engagement (PURE) project which was led by Osborne from the Pascal Observatory (European Centre) with the School of Education. PURE provided valuable insights into the possibilities of developing common, but regionally sensitive, methods for universities and regional governments to better understand the nature, quality and extent of their current engagements, and the potential for growth (<http://pure.pascalobservatory.org>).

### Funded Activity

A number of complementary activities formed the core of the SRERUAA networking project. The first involved the creation of a Regional Profile instrument adapted from indicators developed in PURE to provide an overview of relevant domains in relation to regional engagement. This was distributed to partners and once completed returned to the Glasgow team to make a start on collating and synthesizing the information contained within the Regional Profile prior to the two-day meeting to be hosted in Cape Town.

The regional profile contained a number of domains including: for contextual purposes an overview of the specific economic, cultural social and environmental challenges faced in each selected region; an overview of the university and HEI sector including structure, governance, recent developments and priorities for the sector; and, regional aspirations which included the current role of HEIs, engagement with regional/national authorities and current activity in a number of spheres covering

sustainable development, lifelong learning, innovation and research and the specific challenges which they would like to concentrate on.

Each of the partners delivered a presentation to allow all other partners to gain a more detailed understanding of the specific and particular local context with which to situate the issues raised in the Regional Profile followed by a period of discussion and each day ended with a plenary hosted by Chris Duke, Academic Director of the PURE project, where the main points of the day were discussed.

### **Outputs**

A number of outputs were delivered or still in preparation. The main output of the network meeting was the submission of a bid to the *British Academy* under its *Global Challenges Fund: Cities and Infrastructure*, to allow the network to develop regional engagement activities to address specific challenges identified in the Regional Profiles and discussed at the network meeting. Other outputs already delivered include an Adapted Tool to undertake regional profiles in relation to engagement; and, the creation of a dedicated web space to host the SRERUAA Network which contains an overview of each of the network members and associated presentations delivered by each of the partners in Cape Town.<sup>1</sup> Outputs currently in preparation include a Report synthesising the individual Regional Profiles to map out and scope synergies across partners in relation to challenges faced and the potential role that multi-disciplinary collaborative networks can play in strengthening regional capacity to address societal challenges at a regional level.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/news/series-reports-strengthening-regional-engagement-role-universities->