

Grant for Innovation in Conflict Transformation

Engaging Actors with Radical Religious Narratives in Conflict Transformation

Background and Aims

Our 2015 GIC call aims to explore approaches to constructively engage in conflict transformation social and political actors who have been branded by others as religious radicals or extremists.

Arguments based on religion are often misused to justify the use of force both between and within communities. Even though there is no causal link between biases fuelled by religion-based arguments and the spread of violence, the former can provoke the latter. Drawing on the rhetoric of religious difference tends to distort the causes and contours of social grievance and political conflicts, while creating confrontational collective identities. This may undermine the solidarity and cohesion *within* larger religious and social communities. Recent events in Europe have revealed that religious mobilisation is not confined to a distinct religious community, society or country. Moreover, communities are often stigmatised by others as radical simply for a religious belief or due to activities by some individuals or sectarian groups.

But how can the political impact of narratives, based on biased perceptions of religious differences, be removed? How can actors who consider the use of force a legitimate (or the only effective) means against others who have different religious beliefs be encouraged to opt for nonviolent alternatives? And how can religious mobilisation that seeks to justify the use of force be addressed and contained? We believe that transformative approaches *within* social groups and communities, based on shared values and religion, can help answer these questions, but that such approaches are not yet sufficiently understood and explained.

For this reason, this call focuses on *peer-group approaches* and the *support for peer-group approaches within a religious and social community* that develop nonviolent and inclusive alternatives to violence based on religious mobilisation.

Call Themes

We invite project proposals that address one of the following three themes:

- a) Engaging with *organisations* alleged by others to have radical religious narratives in formal negotiations and/ or collaborative political initiatives of peace- and state-building.
- b) Exploring how *peer-group* dialogues or initiatives within religious communities (e.g. Sunni-Sunni, Buddhist etc.) can help mitigate biases and contribute to processes of inclusive conflict transformation.
- c) Elaborating innovative *peer-group* initiatives to counteract the religious mobilisation of hatred and exclusion with a particular focus on Germany.

Funding Conditions

- ≡ The submitted proposal must fully address one of the three aforementioned themes and mention in the Letter of Inquiry which theme it relates to.
- ≡ The earliest starting date for projects submitted for this call for proposals is 01 January 2016.
- ≡ The maximum project duration is limited to 24 months. Shorter project duration is possible.
- ≡ The maximum amount of funding per project is EUR 50,000.00. Smaller budgets and cost efficiency are appreciated.
- ≡ Matching funds are considered advantageous, though not obligatory.
- ≡ Proposals must fully comply with the aims of the Grant for Innovation in Conflict Transformation and adhere to the formal guidelines as specified on our website www.berghof-foundation.org.

Initial Applications for this call can be submitted through the Berghof Foundation's [online grant application form](#) from **16 February 2015** until **16 March 2015 (15.00 CET)**.

If you have any questions about the application process, please consult www.berghof-foundation.org. If your question is not answered there, send an email to grants@berghof-foundation.org.