

# INEQUALITIES RESEARCH

Generating  
knowledge to reduce inequalities

Call for proposals  
2nd April 2025

**GRANTING SCHEMES 2025 -**  
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Fondazione  
**CARIPLO**

TUTE SERVARE MUNIFICI DONARE • 1816



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## 1. PREMISE

The INEQUALITIES RESEARCH - Generating Knowledge to reduce inequalities call is a call with a deadline that fits into the Fondazione Cariplo line of action: "Reducing inequalities by intervening on different forms of poverty and fragility."

## 2. BACKGROUND

The constant proliferation of inequalities has been widely recognized as one of the main obstacles towards people well-being, social cohesion, and progress<sup>1</sup>.

Health, education, income, geographic origin, personal security, access to employment and ability to participate in decision-making are just a few examples of the possible dimensions of inequality that nowadays tend to occur increasingly according to an additive and complex logic. This already articulated situation has been further aggravated by the most recent international crises related to the pandemic and wars in Ukraine and Palestine, worsening the profile of inequality at multidimensional level<sup>2 3</sup>.

In 2023, just over 2.2 million households (8.4% of the total) and nearly 5.7 million individuals (9.7%) were living in absolute poverty, with a higher incidence among households with at least one foreign member (30.4%) compared to those composed solely of Italians (6.3%). Relative poverty affected 10.6% of households (over 2.8 million) and 14.5% of individuals (8.5 million), showing a slight increase compared to 2022. Children in absolute poverty accounted for 13.8%, a figure that has risen since 2014.

Overall, in 2023, 22.8% of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This figure showed a slight decrease compared to 2022 (24.4%). However, there was a slight increase in severe material and social deprivation (4.7%). In 2022, the average household income increased nominally (+6.5%) but declined in real terms (-2.1%) due to inflation, while the income of the wealthiest households was 5.3 times higher than that of the poorest.<sup>4</sup>

With its peculiarities, Italy has the potentiality to elicit reflections and valid models at international level. In fact, our country, not only for its geographical characteristics, has been broadly recognized as a complex mosaic of realities housing cities and rural areas, large metropolises, small towns, and inland areas.

Among the main challenges we are facing there certainly is the development of a more equitable and accessible society. A society like this would recognize to all individuals - regardless of their economic, social, territorial, cultural and / or gender conditions - full dignity in terms of citizenship. In such a context, all citizens can actively contribute to the development of their territories and communities from social, civil and cultural perspectives.

## 3. AIMS

Through this call for proposals, Fondazione Cariplo aims to support multidisciplinary studies geared toward:

- understand and map the nature, prevalence and relevance of different dimensions of inequality;

<sup>1</sup> Please see for example: Oxfam (2014). Even it up: Time to end extreme inequality.

[https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/cr-even-it-up-extremeinequality-291014-en.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/cr-even-it-up-extremeinequality-291014-en.pdf);

Piketty, T. (2014); Capital in the twenty-first century. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; World Bank (2016). Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality, Washington: World Bank Publications.

[https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0958-3\\_ch1](https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0958-3_ch1);

[https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/inequality/the-framework/media/mif-](https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/inequality/the-framework/media/mif-framework-0719.pdf)

[framework-0719.pdf](https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/inequality/the-framework/media/mif-framework-0719.pdf) e Stiglitz, J. (2012). The price of inequality: how today's divided society endangers our future, New York: W.W. Norton and C.

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam Report 2024. Disuguaglianza: il potere al servizio di pochi".

<sup>3</sup> <https://unric.org/it/un75-i-grandi-temi-disuguaglianza-comesi-coltmare-il-divario/>.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/REPORT\\_POVERTA\\_2023.pdf](https://www.istat.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/REPORT_POVERTA_2023.pdf).

- define the main problems related to inequality;
- stimulate reflection on how different forms of inequality relate to the structural changes that characterize our societies;
- foster the development of shared agendas aimed at building more inclusive societies.

In order to enhance the spillovers of the research activities of funded projects, Fondazione Cariplo requires that a dialogue with civil society and/or public decision makers be activated. This orientation may be pursued through:

- the production of project deliverables including recommendations and/or policy briefs<sup>5</sup> ;
- the realization of meetings dedicated to the dissemination and transfer of results with stakeholders.

Considering the complexity that characterizes how societies are experiencing inequalities, projects are requested to embrace a multidimensional approach and in turn combine at least two dimensions inequality.

In addition, projects are required to clearly explicit their geographical focus, and explore if and how geographical inequalities impact on their studies (cities and rural areas, internal areas). This approach is meant to encourage a better understanding of how inequalities emerge, exist and interact between each other.

Research rationale should include the study of the state of the art and the collection and analysis of primary data and, where necessary, secondary data derived from other publications and studies.

Applicants should pay attention on both the originality of their projects and the definition of a clear match between the methodological approach and research objectives<sup>6</sup>. In addition, it is desirable that proposals foster integration between different disciplines and skills, also using diverse and complementary methodologies. Indeed, this call encourages multidisciplinary studies.

Although the call focuses on Italy, comparison across different contexts is welcomed. In all cases, it is necessary to provide clear evidence of the research impact at national and/or local level.

<sup>5</sup> Policy briefs can be considered short pieces of writing that aim to stimulate debate on issues of current concern and public interest. Policy briefs are traditionally intended for policymakers and are characterized by a strong advocacy value.

<sup>6</sup> It is emphasized that proposals can either adopt a deductive approach, and thus from general principles allow for the explanation of particular phenomena, or an inductive approach,

Proposals presented in partnership are required to clarify how each partner will contribute with its unique skills to the project and how partners complement the leading body. In line with the characteristics of the call, Fondazione Cariplo accepts proposals presented in partnership with third sector organizations.

In addition, projects must represent a professional opportunity for young scholars/researchers and adopt mechanisms aimed at promoting gender equality in research.

Finally, with this call Fondazione Cariplo aims to promote initiatives fostering communication and interaction between researchers and civil society. Researchers must propose a communication plan inclusive and open to all stakeholders differently implicated in and by the study. Planned activities are meant to foster the development of a dual exchange of information between science and society. Ultimately, to encourage the transferability of research results into local policies, it is mandatory to include policy makers among the main targets of communication activities.

## 4. GUIDELINES

### 4.1 Eligible organizations

For the purpose of this call, we consider eligible any public or private non-profit organization conducting scientific research.

The call is also open to third sector organizations with the role of partner or leader<sup>7</sup>.

The project must be carried out by an operational structure located in the Foundation's reference area. The actions referring to any partners can also be carried out in other structures outside the Foundation geographical context.

Participating this call, organizations accept the grant portability for all Principal Investigators (PIs) of all the involved units (leading organizations and partners). Any change in the host institution needs to be approved by Fondazione Cariplo according to the "Guidelines for presentation" ("Guida alla presentazione dei progetti su bandi") and the

and thus through the analysis of particular case studies lead to the definition of general principles suitable for understanding other similar phenomena as well.

<sup>7</sup> It seems useful to mention here that the budgets of private nonprofit organizations must be prepared in accordance with the criteria referred to in the "Guide to the submission of projects on calls for proposals" (section 6.1).

“General criteria for granting contributions” (“Criteri generali per la concessione dei contributi”).

#### 4.2 Admissible projects

To be eligible projects must present the following characteristics:

- fall within the call’s research priorities;
- engage, train and develop young researchers<sup>8</sup>;
- promote gender equality in the careers of researchers<sup>9</sup>;
- provide detailed measures to transfer research findings to civil society and/or public decision makers.

Unit leaders (lead and partner):

- must submit only one project proposal on this call for proposals<sup>10</sup>;
- should not be unit leaders in projects still being funded under previous editions of this call.

Fondazione Cariplo will guarantee the coverage of 100% of the project costs; therefore, the requested contribution must correspond to the total cost, in compliance with the eligibility criteria and the ceilings listed below:

- A03 – “Equipment and software”. This entry should not exceed the threshold of 20% of total project cost. It covers the costs for newly acquired equipment and software. All costs must be clearly motivated in relation to the project needs. A03 include renting costs as well as building work expenses meant to cover new equipment installation;
- A04 – “Other amortizable costs”. This entry can include patent costs and the costs covering equipment rental;

- A05 – “Structured Staff”. This item must not exceed the threshold of 30% of the total project costs and must only concern the remuneration of the structured staff belonging to third sector organizations. In this regards A05 covers the hours worked specifically on the project in addition to the normal business or service;
- A06 – “Temporary staff”. This entry is dedicated to research personnel costs. Please note that costs for administrative staff are not allowed;
- A07 – “Sub-contractors and consultants”<sup>11</sup>;
- A08 – “Materials and supplies”. This entry cannot include costs related to office supplies and photocopies;
- A09 – “Overheads”. This entry cannot exceed the threshold of 5% of total project costs;
- A10 – “Travel, publication and dissemination costs”. A10 is dedicated to cover research personnel’s travel expenses and conference fees, scientific publications and all communication activities.

Requested funding should range from 100,000 to 200,000 euros.

Proposals should provide the following mandatory documents:

- Letter of agreement;
- Partnership agreement<sup>12</sup>;
- Project Form, PDF format;
- Project Communication plan<sup>13</sup> Form, PDF format;
- Budget Form, Excel format;

All documentation must be prepared using the forms available in the “Bandi” section of the

<sup>8</sup> The term young researcher in this call refers to graduate students, doctoral students and postdocs who are not older than 35 years of age on the call deadline date.

<sup>9</sup> Useful tool on gender issues is the “Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs)” published by Directorate-General for Research and Innovation.

<sup>10</sup> Should more than one project proposal be received on the same call, only the first one received will be considered eligible. It is reiterated that this criterion concerns the heads of the lead unit and the heads of any partner units.

<sup>11</sup> Also included in this expense item are any costs for the certification of the licensed professional registered with the Register of Auditors. In this regard, it is recommended that reference be made to the “Guide to Reporting” and the “Guidelines for the Engagement of Auditors”; both documents

can be found on the website. For the sole purpose of the calculation aimed at ascertaining whether or not there is an obligation to acquire the Report of the licensed professional registered with the Register of Auditors (audit), it should be noted that, excluding third sector organizations, the amount to be taken as a reference is obtained by multiplying the costs included in the Economic Plan (sum of items A06, A07, A08, A09 and A10), by the coefficient 1.25. In any case, it is anticipated that in the event of funding, the Foundation will confirm to the individual beneficiaries any obligation to meet this fulfillment.

<sup>12</sup> The partnership agreement will be a mandatory document only if there are project partners and must be drafted based on the forms available online for download.

<sup>13</sup> The communication plan should be drafted based on the form made available for the call for proposals.

Fondazione Cariplo website and in the reserved area.

With the participation to this call, organizations acknowledge, agree and irrevocable accept

“Intellectual property rights policy”, “Open access policy” and “Acknowledgement guidelines for academic papers”. Please note that these documents are available online for downloading.

It is reminded that all publications that will result from the project results must bear the affiliation of the organization with which the project proposal was submitted.

In addition, for the purpose of preparing the proposal, it is also suggested that you read the FAQ specifically drafted for this call for proposals.

#### 4.3 Criteria

Proposals' evaluation will be performed as indicated in “Guida alla presentazione dei progetti su bandi”. Projects final score will be calculated according to the following criteria.

##### 1. EXPOSITION (weight 5%)

- knowledge of the state of the art;
- adequate discussion of the academic context;
- relevance and positioning of the project with respect to the academic debate;
- clear formulation of the objectives and the strategies adopted.

##### 2. APPROACH (weight 20%)

- clear project design and a good match between the project's aims, the timing considered necessary to carry out the research activities and the requested resources;
- appropriateness of the multidimensional strategy proposed and proper integration in the project design of two or more dimensions of inequalities;
- adequacy of methodologies and strategies proposed with respect to the research objectives;
- well integration of qualitative and quantitative methods;
- adequacy of the multidisciplinary approach in terms of proper integration between different disciplines and skills.

- Integration of the gender dimension within the research methods used.

##### 3. ORIGINALITY (weight 15%)

- project's originality and innovation.

##### 4. impact (weight 25%)

- clear definition of the impact of the research in terms of developing new knowledge and increase our understanding, analysis and success to reduce existing forms of inequalities;
- contribution of the proposal in the identification of appropriate indicators to measure inequalities and their interactions;
- development of new networks or enrichment of existing ones;
- contribution of the proposal in the formulation of policies and / or solutions aimed at reducing inequalities with particular attention to Fondazione Cariplo geographical context of reference.
- adequacy and quality of measures to transfer research findings to civil society and/or public decision makers with a view to maximizing the generation of social spillovers and fostering the development of more inclusive societies.

##### 5. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, RESEARCH TEAM AND ENVIRONMENT (weight 10%)

- track record and adequacy of the Principal Investigator (PI) and of the competencies shared between team members (leading organization and partner);
- PIs' scientific and managerial leadership;
- well integration of the team within the national and international research contexts;
- synergic integration of competencies and knowhow of the different institutions;
- presence of adequate equipment (software etc) in relation to the project.

##### 6. YOUNG RESEARCHER ENGAGEMENT (weight 5%)

- engagement of young researchers in the project also in roles of responsibility;
- training programs for young researchers

##### 7. GENDER EQUALITY (weight 5%)

- provision, with exceptions to be adequately justified, for equally gendered research teams;

##### 8. DISSEMINAZION (weight 5%)

- adequacy of the communication plan;
- appropriate involvement of civil society and public decision makers as the main target audience for research communication activities.

## 9. BUDGET AND DURATION (10%)

- budget suitability and coherence with the project timeline. Whether present the evaluation of partners and subcontractors' contribution should be assessed here.

It should be noted that the merit assessment of projects is carried out through peer review. In particular, projects are sent to qualified experts. To carry out their activities reviewers are requested to follow specific rules and procedures aimed at excluding conflicts of interest, prejudices ideological, personal pressures and self-referentiality. The offices will express an opinion limited to the consistency of the Economic Plan and the adequacy of the Communication Plan.

### 4.4 Non eligible projects

Proposals will be considered non-eligible in case they are not in line with "4.2 Eligible projects" and/or fall in any of the following categories:

- projects purely descriptive;
- projects aimed to set up new research centers, and/or laboratories, and/or animal facilities;
- projects without clear social and policy implications.

In addition, the Foundation will not consider the resubmission of a project that has already been submitted twice in previous editions of this call

### 4.5 Presentation iter

The deadline for proposals' submission no later than 5 p.m. on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025.

Submissions of applications for the current calls are always allowed within 30 minutes after the call deadline.

## 5. BUDGET AVAILABLE AND ELIGIBLE AND NON ELIGIBLE COSTS

The budget available for this call is 2.3 million Euros.

Please note that eligible and non-eligible costs are detailed in section "4.2 Eligible projects".

## 6. COMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Fondazione Cariplo, as a private entity, has full power to decide on the allocation of the budget. The text of the call and all the necessary documents are available at Fondazione Cariplo website: [www.fondazionecariplo.it](http://www.fondazionecariplo.it).

For the purposes of peer review process, any personal data reported in the detailed description of the project may be transferred to non-EU countries or organizations, in compliance with EU Regulation 2016/679. For more information, before submitting an application, please have a look at the new privacy policy on the processing of personal data and the transfer of personal data to countries or organizations outside the European Union.

## 7. SUMMARY\*

Call	Inequalities research
Type	Call with deadline
Deadline	2nd April 2025
Available budget	€ 2.300.000
Aims	Generate new knowledge to reduce inequalities and foster the development of more inclusive societies
Target	Public and private nonprofit organizations
Grant request limits	Between € 100.000 e € 200.000
Contact	Scientific and Research Area contacts available at <a href="http://www.fondazionecariplo.it">www.fondazionecariplo.it</a>

*\* The data in the "Summary" are a snapshot of the key elements of this Call. Please read carefully the full text of the Call for all details.*