

# **Dynamics of inequality across the life course: structures and processes**

## **NORFACE DIAL Programme**



**NORFACE**

**NETWORK**

# NORFACE

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- NORFACE is a collaborative partnership of national research funders in the area of social and behavioural sciences, constructed in **2004**
- NORFACE stands for ***New Opportunities for Funding Agency Co-operation in Europe (in the Social Sciences)***
- The NORFACE partners together provide funding for **excellent, multidisciplinary research cooperation** among European research groups

# So far...

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Three trans-national research programmes with support of the European Commission:

- 'Re-emergence of Religion as a Social Force in Europe'
- 'Migration in Europe – Social, Economic, Cultural and Policy Dynamics'
- 'Welfare State Futures'

*In addition: interagency learning, developing best practices on transnational calls.*

# New NORFACE programme

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- Fourth NORFACE programme with the title “*Dynamics of inequality across the life course: structures and processes*” (acronym: DIAL) launched in December 2015
- The following countries have committed to NORFACE DIAL:  
Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom
- More information on the participation of France in this call will be posted on the NORFACE website as soon as possible
- Researchers from other countries and stakeholders are invited to participate as co-operation partner.
- FNR from Luxembourg has reserved budget to support Luxembourg based researchers participating as a co-operation partner.

# Rationale for DIAL programme

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- **Existing and rising inequalities** pose fundamental challenges to European societies and economies.
- To inform policy development, need a focus on **understanding** the dynamics of inequalities as they unfold over the life course, across different dimensions of inequality, and across different dimensions of identity.
- **Innovative, curiosity driven research** that builds on extensive current knowledge on life course inequalities.
- A focus on **causal processes** in relation to these inequalities, **the impact** of inequalities, and the identification of opportunities for **policy intervention** to reduce inequalities.
- An examination of those crucial points in the life course and of those crucial demographic events that can **precipitate or mitigate** the risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- An ambition to offer possibilities for **alleviating** inequalities and the social problems arising from inequalities.

# Research themes – focus on the lifecourse

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The programme is structured around four themes that reflect transitions and trajectories at key stages of the life course:

- 1 Early life influences and outcomes;**
  - 2 Early adult transitions into tertiary education, vocational training and economic activity;**
  - 3 Labour market and family trajectories, and the growth of inequality;**
  - 4 Labour market participation in later life and retirement.**
- Emphasis on the interactions and interdependencies between these four key stages rather than treating them as independent;
  - Interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the relationships between different dimensions of inequality – education, employment, income, housing, living standards, civic and social inclusion, health (including mental health) and wellbeing, etc.;
  - Focus on different population groups (gender, social class, age, ethnicity, religion, nationality and migration status, etc.) and intersections between them;
  - A motivation to work in participation with research users in order to have a meaningful impact on policy development.

# Research themes – focus on the lifecourse

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- Early life influences and outcomes:
  - Biological, cognitive, psychological and social development within a social context (how social inequalities shape ...);
  - Transitions into pre-school, school readiness, transition into and progression through primary school.
- Transitions out of compulsory schooling – economic activity, vocational training, into and through tertiary education:
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills;
  - Flexible labour markets;
  - Marginalisation and exclusion of some young people;
  - Leaving childhood home;
  - Partnerships, cohabitation and fertility.
- Trajectory through the labour market, family formation and the growth of inequality:
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, lifelong learning and on the job training;
  - Fertility, marital dissolution;
  - Mental and physical health.
- Labour market participation and exit in later life (complexity of retirement) and relationship with the lifecourse – health and inequality.

# Research ambition

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- Globally excellent research which holds the promise of theoretical, methodological and empirical advance.
- Promote research based knowledge and insight which has social, practical and policy relevance.
- Conduct interdisciplinary, mixed method and comparative analysis.
- An emphasis on cause, moving beyond existing description:
  - Understanding causal processes/dynamics is essential for the development of policy focused interventions;
  - A focus on key stages of the life course where causal understanding can lead to meaningful policy development;
  - And the opportunity of studying international variation to identify causal processes;
  - But need to think about cause in an interdisciplinary context – not just about statistically robust, longitudinal analysis or econometrics, also about causal narratives and the testing and development of theory;
  - For example, the importance of subjective perceptions of inequalities and how these shape decision making and objective outcomes.



# Research ambition

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- The systematic investigation of across and within country differences will enable a clearer understanding of the impact of institutional and policy effects.
- Provides an opportunity to exploit specific national variations in economic, demographic, cultural and policy context in order to achieve a more critical analysis of causal processes and opportunities for policy development.
- The ambition of this programme will require interdisciplinary and mixed method (quantitative and qualitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal) work.
- And a need to connect different levels of influence (individual to social), different stages of the life course, different population groups, different dimensions of inequality and a range of outcomes.
- Important to consider demographic, economic, political, social and cultural change and destandardisation of the life course:
  - Changing employment trajectories and increasing risks of insecurity;
  - Rising life expectancy and ageing populations;
  - High levels of migration and post-migration settlement;
  - Increased labour force participation of women, reduced family sizes and increased complexity of family forms.

# Research ambition

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- Applicants are encouraged to take full advantage of existing data sources, exploiting the strong data infrastructure for social, behavioural and economic research that exists across several European countries.
- The programme may support the collection of new data, be that quantitative or qualitative, only where existing data does not exist to address key questions.

# Capacity building

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- Capacity building within and across the NORFACE countries is central to this programme. The focus is on building research capacity and collaboration through:
  - Research training targeted at early and mid-career researchers, including doctoral students, taking full advantage of existing training opportunities;
  - Research training involving longitudinal, interdisciplinary, mixed methods and international working;
  - Research training involving working with research users in the design, implementation, dissemination and broader use of the research;
  - Building international networks and taking advantage of existing networks to increase the potential for effective international comparative research;
  - Developing networks with and between research users across the NORFACE countries.

# Process

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- The total funding requested from NORFACE must not exceed € 1,500,000 across all participating partners
- Each project team should consist of three or more national teams of supporting NORACE partners
- Projects can be proposed that last up to 36 months.
- National eligibility requirements apply!
- Budget available is set at a minimum of 15 M€. EC support may also be available for this programme.

# Process

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- Two stage procedure: Outline & Full proposals
- Deadline submission Outline Proposals is **March 30 2016, 13.00 C.E.T.**
- Instructions to submit a proposal will be published on the NORFACE website
- Applicants invited to the second stage will receive a notification by July 2016 inviting them to submit a Full Proposal

# Thank you

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- For more information, please visit [www.norface.net](http://www.norface.net)
- The DIAL programme text, call for proposals, national eligibility requirements, outline proposal template and frequently asked questions are published on the NORFACE website