

### College of Humanities Ethics Proposal Template

**Title of Project:** *Imagining Futures through Un/Archived Pasts*

Project Website: <http://imaginingfutures.exeter.ac.uk/>

**Name of Applicant:** Prof. Elena Isayev

**Email Address:** e.isayev@exeter.ac.uk

**Role of Applicant:** Principal Investigator/ Professor of Ancient History and Place

**Department:** Classics and Ancient History

**Applicant Declaration:** I confirm that I have read the University of Exeter's [Code of Good Practice in the Conduct of Research](#) and [Research Ethics Framework](#).

X

**Name of Supervisor/PI** (if applicable):

**Names of other Researchers/Collaborators** (if applicable):

This is a multi-partner, International Project. For a full list of all partners and collaborators please visit: <https://imaginingfutures.exeter.ac.uk/>

**The Co-I's are:** Peter Campbell (Cranfield University), Elena Fiddian- Qasmiyeh (University College London), Kodzo Gavua (University of Ghana), Mick Finch (University Arts London (Central St. Martins)), Howayda Al-Harithy (American University of Beirut), Nancy Rushohora (Stellenbosch University), Valence Silayo (Tumaini University Dar es Salaam College). This Main Project Ethics Proposal document will be shared with each of the above Co-Is. It is requested that all Co-Is are named on the University of Exeter Certificate of Ethics Approval, which will also be shared with them.

**Estimated Start Date:** 22 February 2021

**Duration of Project:** 31 May 2024

A favourable ethical review will be granted for two years with the option of being extended after a mid-term project review.

**Lay Summary of Project:**

*Provide a brief summary of the project outlining the broad aims, background, key questions, research design/approach, the participants in the study and what they will be asked to do, and the importance or relevance of the project. This description should be in everyday language, free from jargon, technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.*

Archives are sites of negotiation about visions of the future. Decisions of what is to be collected, accessed or preserved tend to privilege certain narratives over others. It is about whose story will continue to be told and how, and whose silenced. These questions are acute in moments of post-conflict, displacement and reconstruction. Our Network depends on linking expertise from contexts where these issues are paramount: in Lebanon, Tanzania, Ghana, South Africa, and potentially Syria. These are our starting points to explore and build methodologies of egalitarian archiving practice that allows for co-existence and recognition of multiple experiences of the past, with dialogue across generations, gender, class, ethnicities, status categories and multiple stakeholders.

Imagining Futures embraces archives as intrinsically constructed and multi-vocal. This is crucial as we seek to address legacies from difficult and contested pasts. We test dissensus methods that facilitate open dialogue and challenge a singular 'we'. Acts of archiving that draw on local knowledges and joint decision-making in what is to be remembered or forgotten, have a unique authority. They counter stereotypes, gentrification, discrimination, and the lack of appreciation for shared histories and of community's place in the global context. We use the intrinsic power of the archive for its capacity to build confidence, enhance understanding and reveal co-existing narratives, to reduce conflict within and between groups, enhancing the potential for sustainable peace.

The Network provides an opportunity for convergence and co-creation of knowledge, from geo-political contexts that rarely get to share ideas and experiences directly. Each represents a different point in a future: the crisis in the Middle East, the long-term post-conflict reconciliation in Africa, and the colonising past of Europe. Within each of these moments the archive has a distinct power. We examine its role and articulate archiving practices that contribute to a future which promotes, not suppresses, just, peaceful and inclusive societies. The urgency for new approaches stems from the situation in the Middle East, and seeks to capture, support and enhance methodologies arising from contexts of post-conflict reconciliation in Africa. In this moment of intense post-war reconstruction, funded by billions in foreign aid (\$1.2 b for Syria), to fuel revitalisation and stability, is where the potential for our project is most critical. Master-plans have led to rapid urbanisation (from 50-80% in Syria), favouring a small sector of society, at the cost of local needs, interests, and non-monumental cultural sites. Well-meaning initiatives can become acts of violence by rupturing communities' crucial links between the intangible lived heritage and the tangible. This insensitivity contributes to further destruction, displacement and reification of sectarian divisions. It also excludes interests of millions who live in precarious conditions as refuge and asylum-seekers, with many in camps.

Our aim is to facilitate the opening-up and sensitive use of existing archives to create new ones and articulate methods for egalitarian archival practices that respect multiple and divergent

narratives. This will be achieved through 4 investigative Labs across diverse socio-political and temporal contexts in Ghana, Tanzania, two of them in Lebanon, and essential activities beyond them, such as the Commissions. Through engaging with existing archives, special and non-traditional archives in-situ, creative open digital tools, open-studio events with different publics, our goal is to build towards a co-produced policy manifesto, in dialogue with governing bodies and supra-state organisations as e.g. ICCROM. Our wider ambition, through exposing cultural practices as important sites of negotiation, is to advocate for culture to be officially recognised as a humanitarian need.

### **Research Methods:**

*Please explain how data will be collected (e.g. via interview, observation, questionnaires, creative activities). Please give as much information as possible about the kind of data you wish to collect (e.g. what kinds of questions will be asked in an interview or survey) and how this relates to the overall research project.*

**NOTE:** This Section is to be read with the following Accompanying KEY Documents:

- 1) Ethics GRID
- 2) GRID KEY
- 3) Forms Folder Containing DRAFT Consent Form Templates
- 4) Forms Folder Containing DRAFT Information Sheet Templates

Folder of Additional Documents – that are sent to any project Leads Includes:

- 5) Data Management Plan for Project
- 6) Appendix of Data Protection Particulars
- 7) Overview of Ethics and Safeguarding Information
- 8) Gender Equality Statement
- 9) Covid-19 Safeguarding Appendix

AND

- 10) The Sub-Project Template

### **The Project Statement on Ethics, Safeguarding and Risk**

The Project strives to develop ethical approaches that uncover the creation, denial, destruction or misrepresentation in archiving practice with a team experienced in working in diverse, fragile and vulnerable contexts with ethical and equitable practice. Ethical issues will be overseen by PI and Project's 'Ethics, Safeguarding & Reporting' group, including disclosure of research to potential participants; achieving informed consent for use of any non-public archive; sensitivity to and respect for local lives, customs and practices; guarantee of anonymity of vulnerable persons. Risk assessments will draw on local Co-Is, NGOs, UN contacts & FCO information. Risk here is also related to complex meanings of place and emotional trauma that contested histories or futures may raise. In preparing our Ethics 'package' we have drawn on on the ethics forms and work of the other GCRF/UKRI Network+ teams, with whom we have consulted, and whose ethics 'packages' have been approved by their institutions and the UKRI/AHRC. We adhere to ethics codes, as per AHRC guidelines, IASFM & EU Commission codes for working

with refugees & asylum-seekers & of Co-Is & PI's HEIs  
([www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/codesandpolicies/](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/cgr/researchethics/codesandpolicies/)).

## **Project Activities, Participant Groups and Levels of Confidentiality in Sharing Knowledge and Personal Data.**

### Project Network Context

*Imagining Futures* is a Network, as such it encompasses various projects, and anticipates supporting and funding future initiatives. Some of these are to be run under the auspices of Partner Institutions, and others directly through us. In both cases we would expect project leads to either share with us their ethics process and the relevant documentation to indicate approval, and / or to complete the forms and templates which we have as part of the *Imagining Futures* Ethics Package, that is being submitted as part of this application. The Project team will ensure that all sub-projects conform to the parameters of the above Project Statement of Ethics, Safeguarding and Risk, and University of Exeter will therefore be kept informed of the ethics approvals steps undergone for all projects, but this ensures that there is sufficient flexibility for all international partners to use discretion and adapt to their own local requirements and circumstances. To facilitate this, when appropriate, the overseas Co-I should obtain an ethical review from their home or partner institution if possible. This should be logged with the Exeter Ethics Committee. If no external review is available, the Co-I can rely on ethics review from Exeter to assure research integrity.

As is noted below, the attached templates will be refined and tailored as required in order to ensure they suit all project- and participant-specific needs. We will forward the revised templates to the Co-Chairs, who will be able to review them on an ad hoc basis between Committee Meetings and approve via Chair's Action. This process is necessary to allow us to run the diverse projects, which often require rapid mobilisation, due to the contexts in which we work.

We also include with this application a sub-project template, which would draw on the other documents. This concerns any projects that will be carried out as part of the *Imagining Futures* Network. This Template is a simplified version of the main application. It does not exclude any elements, but includes shortcuts to them in this Main Ethics Application, and its templates and documents. Each sub-project application will be shared together with the participant information sheet and consent form with the Ethics Committee Co-chairs for their review. It is anticipated that this will take place outside the committee schedule in order that there should be no hold-up to the Project. We recognise that particularly high-risk projects may need to be subjected to more thorough review processes.

### Project Activities

The broader categories of activities that we anticipate are included in the ETHICS GRID and are explained in more detail in the attached KEY to the Grid. Further detail has been included as examples in the accompanying Consent and Information Sheet Templates – the list of which is also on the KEY. Included in the KEY – are also the anticipated different levels of Confidentiality, and the accompanying statements, that we would anticipate being included under each, depending on the assessment by the project lead of the needs of the specific activity or project.

The GRID indicates what we anticipate the level of Confidentiality to be, depending on the participant and activity, on it we also list the Forms (Consent, and Information Sheets) that would be most relevant for each of the activities, and types of participants. As sub-projects are developed, we will continue to refine definitions as required.

We also appreciate that there may be activities we have not anticipated within the ETHICS GRID/KEY, that may be considered as an amendment to the Project. Should circumstances arise where activities do not fit within the foreseen parameters, we will liaise with the Research Ethics Committee Co-Chairs. If needed we will seek their advice on whether a change may be seen as minor and can be handled on an interim basis, or if they are more substantial, for example the addition of a new Co-I or cohort, a change in risk etc, which would require a more thorough resubmission.

### Participant Groups

You will see that we have included an Information sheet for either a Teacher of a Representative or head of the Community. This is not to over-ride individual gaining of Information about the Project or Consent, but to allow for a bridge and introduction to the project, where the consent given, may be in an oral form, and with a recorded element. The following are examples of questions that may be asked orally of each individual following an explanation by the intermediary:

Have you been given information sheet and understood you can withdraw at any time?  
Do you understand how your information will be shared and used (as per document X)?  
Are you happy to participate in the activity on this basis?

This is to ensure Egalitarian Partnerships, and also to support this, the forms will be translated into appropriate languages if need be. Templates (inclusive of guide notes) will also be available on the Project Website.

### Levels of Confidentiality in Sharing Knowledge and Personal Data.

We recognise that some of the projects will be dealing with histories of violence, whether directly with participants through field research or in archival repositories ethical concerns are paramount. The team will take utmost care to avoid exposing vulnerable populations to any form of harm or trauma and will follow [Ethics Guidelines](#) for these, of the UK Association of Social Anthropologists. When research involves active participation of local communities, or sharing of potentially sensitive information, full consent will be sought from all participants, who will be presented with clear written and verbal statements in their local languages explaining: project objectives; how data will be collected, used, visualized and stored; and strategies through which it will be disseminated prior to any publication or study.

We also recognise that anyone can be in a potentially vulnerable situation. As all people have different levels of vulnerability we will not be making specific Templates for this, but making sure we consider this as part of any risk assessment.

Accompanying consent forms will ensure participants can withdraw at any point. Anonymization for persons where it is required, or wanted, will be guaranteed through the removal of personal identifiers across all stages of the research projects. If anonymization is not an option,

pseudonymization will be offered if possible. If people are identifiable, this will be explained clearly and explicitly.

The methods of how we will do this are detailed in the templates themselves and in two documents that accompany the project:

**Data Management Plan** - submitted with Project Application & Accepted by the AHRC/UKRI  
**Appendix of Data Protection Particulars** - the Project's Contracts with Partners, and approved by the university of Exeter Legal Team.

**Researcher Statement and Experience:**

*Please provide a summary of the ethical considerations raised by the data collection, analysis and dissemination and explain how you intend to deal with them. You may also include an account of your prior experience of work in this area (e.g. previous ethics training or experience in working with participants).*

The PI, Co-Is, their teams and partners have extensive experience of ethical and equitable practice in working in diverse and vulnerable contexts. They are well informed on codes of conduct, risk management, and safeguarding in their localities and adhere to ethics codes of the AHRC, their HEIs, IASFM & EU Commission codes for working with refugees and asylum-seekers. Issues of ethics will be overseen by the PI and the project's 'Ethics, Safeguarding and Reporting' group. It is not only the core team that has this experience, but also our advisory board members, one of whom is a key member of the TRC in South Africa, another is a key member of ICCROM.

Our experience draws on geo-political contexts in the ODA countries of Ghana, Tanzania, Lebanon, Baddawi Camp, with colleagues also from Syria and South Africa. Some of these contexts are extremely fragile, and archiving can become a further act of intrusion, disempowerment and control. In the absence of incentives for socially-conscious solutions and recourse to local knowledge, the colonial, western, male gaze that has been historically pervasive, both in the subject of what is archived, and its form (visual or text-based), will continue to frame policies of preservation and reconstruction. Well-meaning initiatives can become acts of violence, rupturing communities' lived in/tangible heritage.

An Ethics Advisory Group will be established to help to flag ethics and safeguarding issues, and to ensure the creation of a smooth and fit-for-purpose ethical process. A temporary group already exists, led by the Project PI, with the help of a member of the Project Advisory Group and/or a Co-I. We will liaise with the HUMS Research Ethics Committee when setting up the group and before delegating authority.

**Location:**

*Please state where data collection will take place. If the project takes place outside of the UK, please explain how you will take into account possible cultural differences regarding ethical protocols and conventions. Please state whether the information sheet and consent form will be translated (if applicable).*

As indicated above we are working across numerous diverse contexts, most of which are overseas. As indicated above local cultural contexts, and led by local Co-Is or commissions, are

at the core of what this project is trying to do. Hence, where appropriate the use of intermediaries, such as community representatives or leads. The information sheet and consent will be translated to local languages by our researchers. The data collection will take place both in and out outside the UK. It is expected that the bulk of this will be in Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, UK and Lebanon. Again, any changes to the information sheet and consent forms will require approval before proceeding by the Researchers institution in the first instance and then our ethics committee. The Information sheet will be translated into Swahili and Arabic, in the first instance, and any other relevant languages as they become appropriate.

### **Definition of Participants and Recruitment:**

*Please define the status of participants in relation to your project and its aims, commenting on the number of participants required for your study, their age, and other exclusion/inclusion criteria (e.g. gender). Outline your recruitment methods and explain how you will ensure that participation is voluntary and free from coercion. You should also comment on financial inducements (if applicable). Please also include a consideration of the potential benefits of the research for participants and plans for feedback. If you intend to include participants who are under 18, or people with learning or communication difficulties, NHS patients, individuals at risk of psychological distress or people who are otherwise vulnerable, participants in custody, or people involved in illegal activity, please indicate why this is necessary for your research, and outline the steps you will take to ensure informed consent can be obtained. If your work involves research with animals, please give further information taking into account [NC3Rs guidelines](#).*

Participants are individuals who engage in workshops or other activities, or provide data for research. Participants are likely to be members of the communities and organisations we work with. They are likely to be a diverse group of people, of diverse backgrounds, gender, and age. It includes school children (ages 8-18) to community leaders (18-80+). Some will have been or are experiencing displacement or trauma. Their involvement would be voluntary and there may be a participant payment issued as a way of compensating for the time spent. They will have the right to withdraw at any time, and to withdraw their information and contribution. This will be made clear to participants, as well as their right to be anonymous. All this is detailed on the Templates, and articulated on the GRID.

### **Anonymity:**

*Please state if and how data will be anonymised. If anonymity is not guaranteed, please explain why anonymization is not an option and outline any possible risks for participants as well as third parties (if applicable). You should also outline any necessary safeguarding measures you intend to implement.*

Please see above, the GRID, KEY to the GRID, and the accompanying documents, of the Data Management Plan and the Appendix. Safeguarding participants is paramount and where very sensitive data is collected anonymity will be guaranteed: it will not be left to the choice of the participant. Information about third parties that is not yet in the public domain will also be removed.

### **Informed Consent:**

*Please explain how you will provide participants with information about the project and how informed consent will be obtained (e.g. via signing and returning a consent form; verbal agreement; recorded agreement for interview; returning an anonymous survey; via third person*

*with lawful authority to consent). If you are working with people unable to offer informed consent (e.g. children), please explain how assent will be obtained.*

We will be using the participant information sheet\* and consent form\* attached. Consent will need to be recorded by signing and returning the form (as a participant or third person with lawful authority to approve) or will be given verbally where this is not possible. Consent for activities with children will be sought from parents or legal guardians as applicable.

Please see above, the GRID and the accompanying documents, of the Data Management Plan and the Appendix.

\*We will continue to refine the Information sheets and Consent forms as sub-projects (either start-up projects or commissions) are developed and we gain more input from local sources, in order to ensure they meet all location- and commission-specific requirements. This will include ensuring the language used is targeted to the particular audience and user-friendly, and may include visual or audio elements. As noted above, where activities are to be carried out under the auspices of Co-Is and Project Partners, the leaders will be affiliated to Institutions or Organisations, which will have their own templates, and ethics policies to use. These will be shared for information with the University of Exeter.

#### **Data Protection and Storage:**

*Please detail your data management plan: how will you ensure that participant data is kept confidential? How will data be stored securely and how long will it be retained? Which other researchers or collaborators will have access to the data (before and/or after it has been anonymised)? Please confirm that you will inform participants about their right to withdraw data up until the point of publication, and confirm that you will not use data for future publications once a participant has decided to withdraw. Please note that data should be stored in password-protected files on password-protected computers. If cloud services need to be used, the University recommends using OneDrive or SharePoint.*

Please see above, the GRID, Templates and especially the accompanying documents, of the Data Management Plan and the Appendix.

Any data entering the UK or EU will be managed in accordance with GDPR requirements. It is anticipated that much of the data will remain and be edited in the country where it originated, but all consent forms and ethics-related statements will ensure there is time for participants to withdraw raw data within a specified timeline.

In addition to the full Data Management Plan, the Project team will create a simple user-guide for anyone working on a Project-related activity who is in a position to collect data, to include how to classify data, how they may store and share data, and what are their responsibilities with respect to data management.

#### **COVID-19 Safeguarding:**

*Please indicate the level of risk regarding COVID and infection, and briefly detail what measures you are putting in place, relevant to the context of the project, to ensure safety of yourself, your team, and anyone you may be coming into contact with.*



The current world situation means that we need to be conscious of the risks associated with COVID-19. Our primary concern is to ensure we keep the researchers, their teams and any individuals we may be coming in contact with safe. We have therefore requested that this is taken into consideration for any project, and what has been put in place to ensure such safety as appropriate to each specific context. For the purposes of the project we would not carry out any activity that goes against the official advice of the UK government, foreign office, or the Country specific government or Foreign Office (or equivalent).

**Funding Sources:**

*Please specify any sources of funding and outline any conditions attached to the funding which would have an impact on the application.*

UKRI – GCRF / AHRC Network plus grant  
UKRI - GCRF / AHRC Inception award  
UKRI - GCRF / AHRC Development award

**Other Relevant Information:**

*Please add any other relevant information that will help the Committee to review your proposal.*

**We include a draft OVERVIEW document of our Ethics and Safeguarding Principles, that is sent to people applying for project funding from us as well as Gender Equality Statement.**

*Please note that this proposal should be submitted together with the participant information sheet and consent form templates.*