Call for Expressions of Interest

Call for applications for PhD research fellowship in the West and Central African partnership for Health Policy and Systems strengthening to support maternal, new born, child and adolescent health: IDRC Project #108237 -

Location: Dodowa Health Research Centre, Research and Development Division, Ghana Health Service; University of the Western Cape South Africa, University of Cape Town, South Africa and other partners

Closing date: 30th September 2016

Vacancy: PhD-fellowships within the research program “West and Central African partnership for Health Policy and Systems strengthening to support Maternal, New born, Child and Adolescent Health”

The program

High rates of maternal death and teen pregnancy persist in West and Central Africa. Research and programming efforts are not sustainably reducing these rates. The challenge is how to link the evidence on useful health interventions with evidence on how to effectively deliver the interventions within the health systems of West and Central Africa. This project aims to build the foundation for delivering better maternal, new born, child and adolescent health care by addressing this gap and enhancing the capacity of researchers and leaders. This includes exploring interventions to strengthen the health policy and systems foundations on which these programs rest. A partnership of leading West and Central African health researchers and institutions has designed this project through a series of regional dialogues. The collaborating partners include the Ghana Health Service, West African Health Organisation, L’Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Population, African Media and Malaria Research Network, Université de Yaoundé 1, Laboratoire d’étude et de recherches sur les dynamiques sociales et le développement local, College of Medicine University of Nigeria Enugu Campus and the Ghana
Institute of Management and Public Administration. Eleven other institutions are members of the partnership. The partnership covers nine countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. As part of the South-South collaborative approach this program partners with CHESAI and CHEPSAA (Consortium for Health Policy and Systems Analysis in Africa), partner consortiums led from the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape in South Africa.

Monitoring and evaluation are essential component this project. The methodology for the evaluation will be mixed qualitative and quantitative including a realist evaluation approach to investigate beyond the impact of the program, towards building explanations for what mechanisms underpinned the outcomes observed as a result of the program, given the contexts in which the program was implemented. Qualitative and quantitative documentation of the processes and outcomes of the program will be undertaken. The program Monitoring and Evaluation is integrated with capacity building for Maternal, New born, Child and Adolescent health and Health Policy and Systems in the sub-region through the doctoral level training of young researchers from Anglophone and Francophone countries and institutions in the sub-region. The PhD fellows /researchers in Maternal, New born, Child and Adolescent health and Health Policy and Systems research will develop their thesis projects as sub-projects of the larger monitoring and evaluation. Participation in the project is a full time commitment for four years. The successful fellow will be based in the project office, which is currently located in the Dodowa Health Research Centre of the Ghana Health Service. They must be prepared for participation in relevant regional activities and travel within the West African sub-region. They must also be prepared to spend time taking relevant short and other academic courses depending on where the PHD is registered.

Requirements:
The successful candidate will have a minimum of:
1. A research Masters degree of relevance to the theme of the program and the proposed approach to monitoring and evaluation.
2. Affinity with scientific field, research interest
3. Intense interest and proven experience in scientific exploration in at least one of the three related subject fields of this program:
   3.1. Health policy and health systems research
   3.2. Maternal New born and Child Health Research
   3.3. Public Health
4. Willingness to work in a team and a strong ambition to accomplish the research goals of the project
5. Creative personality;
6. Good academic results /transcripts;
7. Excellent communication skills;
8. PhD candidates are required to submit evidence of ability to complete a PHD in an Anglophone institute e.g. an internationally recognised Certificate of Proficiency in the English Language (TOEFL or British Council, IELTS) or equivalent
9. Fluency in French as well as English will be an advantage
10. Good collaborative skills and preferably experience with project management
11. Willingness to reside and work within West and Central Africa and to travel for periods of 3 – 6 months for training and writing
12. Perspectives on future use of PhD skills in West and Central Africa
13. Full time availability from 01.01.2017 for a period of four years. Candidates must provide evidence that can be verified about their ability to devote four years full time to this project.
14. Candidates must not be older than 45 years at their last birthday

Responsibilities
The PhD researcher’s tasks will be to study and report on their selected research question within the context of this project by qualitative or quantitative methods or a combination depending on their chosen area of research. The interconnected sub-studies will require intensive interaction with the project coordinating team, research collaborators and the other PhD researcher(s) in the program.
The fellow(s) /researcher(s) will be offered a four-year scholarship, which is expected to result in a PhD. An evaluation discussion takes place after 1 year: the supervisors will determine whether they have trust that the research project indeed will lead to a PhD within 4 years.

The candidate commits him/herself to work a minimum of three years in the West and Central African sub-region after completion of the PhD.

**Financial matters**

The total value of the scholarship exclusive of research costs is USD 34,477.

**Contact and application**

Candidates should send their application letter, curriculum vitae; minimum of 3 names and e-mail addresses of references; publications (if applicable) before 30th September 2016 by email to aku.kwamie@gmail.com with a copy to sellydel@yahoo.com

Please provide the following information in your application in addition to any other information you may want to provide:

1. Name
2. Highest educational qualification attained
3. Year of attainment of highest educational qualification
4. Awarding institution
5. Sex (Male or Female)
6. Age
7. Birth date
8. Nationality
9. Current position and employer (if any)
10. Current residence
11. English language fluency (if any)
12. French language fluency (if any)
13. Research experience
14. Any peer reviewed publications
15. Any other publications
16. Disciplinary area of undergraduate degree
17. Awarding institution
18. Write and attach a reflective (maximum 2 pages/1000 words) on why this area of work is important to you and what you aspire to achieve/learn through doctoral studies?

Please note that all shortlisted candidates must attend a selection interview with an independent review panel. The date of the interview will be communicated after short listing. The selection interview is mandatory to support the final selection of candidates.

More information on the project can be obtained from Irene.agyepong@gmail.com or aku.kwamie@gmail.com