

PhD Studentship in International Development, Wellbeing and Poverty: Further Particulars

Centre for Development Studies, Department of Social and Policy Sciences,
University of Bath

Start Date: September 2010

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Closing Date for applications: Tuesday 8th June 2010

Apply by e-mail to C.J.Adams@bath.ac.uk,

The Studentship

Applications are invited for a three year MPhil/PhD studentship in International Development at the University of Bath, to start in September 2010. This University Research Studentship is attached to the research project '**Assessing Wellbeing for the Alleviation of Poverty**' funded by ESRC/DFID 2010-2013. The project aims to identify how poverty affects wellbeing and how different constellations of wellbeing in turn affect people's movements into and out of poverty. Fieldwork in Zambia and Nepal will involve a short wellbeing survey with 700 respondents and in-depth qualitative case studies.

Applicants should hold a Masters degree in International Development and/or Wellbeing. A background in Psychology and previous experience of research in South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa would be an advantage. The studentship will involve twelve months fieldwork, so applicants must be able to stay in rural Zambia and Nepal for extended periods.

The studentship provides tuition fees at home/EU rates (£4000 p.a.), a maintenance allowance of £13,290, plus £1,000 p.a. for training support. International candidates are welcome to apply, but will need themselves to cover the difference between home and overseas fee rates.

Applications should be sent by e-mail to C.J.Adams@bath.ac.uk, by 12 noon on the closing date. They should include a cv and short statement (maximum two pages A4) which sets out your interest and experience in researching wellbeing and international development, and any particular focus that you would hope to pursue within the overall project agenda. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed on Friday 18th or Monday 21st June.

The Project: Assessing Wellbeing for the Alleviation of Poverty

This research aims to identify what promotes wellbeing within poor communities in two developing countries. It will demonstrate how poverty affects wellbeing and how different constellations of wellbeing in turn affect people's movements into and out of poverty. It builds on extensive research into wellbeing at the University of Bath since 2002, and most recently a collaborative academic/NGO pilot in Nepal and Zambia. The wellbeing literature suggests that in situations of poverty economic factors have greater impact on levels of wellbeing than they do where people are affluent. Our research confirms this. However, it also shows that directions of influence do not flow only one way. Other wellbeing domains influence material poverty, people's capacity to improve their economic status, and their resilience faced with economic shocks. Social and personal relationships seem to play a particularly critical role.

The proposed research tests the model developed through the pilot project with the same partners and research sites, but a larger sample over a longer time period. Drawing on the sociology of development and psychology, it adopts a mixed method, cross-cultural longitudinal approach, with qualitative and quantitative data collection across a two year interval. 700 respondents will be surveyed (350 in each site). These will include 300 married couples and 100 women heading households, a group often identified as especially vulnerable. Statistical tests will assess the validity and reliability of the model. In-depth case studies will gain a deeper sense of people's own understanding and experience of wellbeing. The research will identify differences by gender and age and identify causal pathways between poverty and different domains of wellbeing over time. It will test the hypothesis that social and personal relationships constitute critical drivers of wellbeing in developing countries. It will analyse the significance to wellbeing of marriage partnerships and dynamics between marriage partners over time. It will explore whether similar patterns are found across two contrasting social and cultural contexts. Finally, it will suggest new frameworks for analysis, which capture the relational, person-centred character of wellbeing (myself, my family, my community) while recognising also power and social difference (by class, gender, age, ethnicity).

The project is rooted in research-policy engagement. The NGOs are committed to incorporating wellbeing into their programmes: the research will both inform and be informed by this process. Annual workshops with regional and national development communities and academic seminars will achieve wider impact. Country level advisory groups will also be used to engage interest throughout and ensure broader practical and policy concerns and insights are fed into the research process. A handbook for development practitioners will be produced and 1-2 page briefings bi-annually. An active website will share information on wellbeing initiatives worldwide, and provide a 'help-point' for development policy-makers and practitioners with questions about wellbeing. A final workshop will be held in London.

Wellbeing and International Development at the University of Bath

The University of Bath is a pioneer in the field of wellbeing and international development. For CDS this began with Economic and Social Research Council funding to establish the Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Group, to undertake a large-scale, four country interdisciplinary study, 2002-2007. It now continues with an ongoing programme of

research, engagement and teaching. Research has involved studying religion and wellbeing in India and Bangladesh (www.rad.bham.ac.uk/index.php?section=19#mod_89) within the DFID funded Religion and Development Research Programme Consortium; and action research into using wellbeing in monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, with Oxfam Hong Kong, 2009. Teaching includes an MSc in Wellbeing and Human Development, and a Continuing Professional Development Unit in Wellbeing Assessment. CDS also hosts the WeDNetwork, a forum for exchange of information on initiatives worldwide on wellbeing in developing countries <http://www.welldev.org.uk/wed-new/network/index.html>. Health and wellbeing is a significant focus of work for colleagues at Bath beyond CDS also, especially in the Departments of Health and of Psychology.

Research at the Centre for Development Studies

Bath has been a leading UK centre for research and postgraduate study in development studies for more than thirty years. It aims to contribute to combating global poverty and injustice by combining primary research into the reality of global poverty and inequality with critical engagement in development practice and policy making. It includes staff in economics, sociology, social anthropology, politics and human geography.

Four guiding principles are

- to link theory with practice, and research with action
- to understand processes as well as outcomes of change
- to relate local, national and international levels of analysis
- to promote interdisciplinary research that builds on strong disciplinary foundations

CDS is concerned with development in an interconnected world, with ongoing research activities in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South and South East Asia. Themes include: poverty and policy; wellbeing and collective action; markets and microfinance; gender, youth and childhood; religion and identity; conflict and natural resources. We have around 30 MPhil/PhD students in International Development. For a list of current students and projects, see <http://www.bath.ac.uk/soc-pol/postgraduate/phd/phd-list.html>. For further information on current projects see <http://www.bath.ac.uk/cds/research/projects-activities.html>.

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences is an internationally-recognised research-intensive Department with a strong focus on policy and practice and a commitment to contribute to social well-being and social justice. In addition to International Development we draw together academic staff with backgrounds in Social Policy, Sociology, Social Work and and work closely with colleagues in Psychology, Economics and Health. Social Policy and Social Work was cited second in the country in the latest RAE. The Department has approximately 45 Mphil/PhD research students in Social Policy, Sociology, and Social Work.