Post-Doctoral Position

Please do not submit an application to this posting. TO APPLY FOR THIS POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY, FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS BELOW IN "APPLICANT SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS"

Department Name/Job Location
The position is in the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis with possibly travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Study

Project Summary
The Education Equity and Quality for All in Afghanistan and Pakistan (EEQAP) research project is funded by The United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for International Development. The project brings together several investigators from different organizations: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) Afghanistan, National Rural Support Program (NRSP), Pakistan, Brown school, Washington University, USA, Lahore School of Economics, Center for Evaluation and Development, Germany, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Disadvantaged children in Low Income Countries (LICs) particularly children with disabilities are increasingly accessing schools, but not learning effectively due to social exclusion within the classroom and poor teaching methods, that perpetuate inequality.

Our project explores ways to improve child learning outcomes:
- both what are called “basic cognitive skills” (reading, writing, mathematics, simple logic)
- and non-cognitive or psychosocial skills (learning to be, learning to be together with others, learning to take initiatives, participates, defend your own views...)

Promoting processes of accountability (to parents and children) is recognised as a way of promoting quality and equity in education.

We are developing, implementing and evaluating a social accountability intervention - combined with inclusive education training - engaging parents, teachers and children.

We are assessing the intervention’s impact on:
- basic cognitive but also psychosocial skills of learners
- as well as parent’s expectations and engagement,
- and teachers’ confidence with regards to inclusion of all children in the classroom.

Three partners,
- National Rural Support Programme in Pakistan (NRSP)
- Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), and
- Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC)

that run Government schools (GS) and Community Based Schools (CBS) in remote areas.

We identify together the factors that can promote or hinder a meaningful learning experience.

We use Community Based System Dynamics (CBSD) – a participatory approach promoting local ownership in the process of understanding complex systems from the feedback perspective of system dynamics.
We carry out Group Model Building (GMB) sessions with school Management Committees (SMCs) and Village Education Committees (VECs) – a specific CBSD method- to identify insights about social accountability reforms.

SMCs and VECs are supported by SCA/NAC/NRSP to implement changes based on these insights in intervention CBSs.

A randomised control trial (RCT) evaluates this intervention. Qualitative methods validate psychosocial assessment tools and explore stakeholders’ perception of education. In stage 1, investigators (i) deciphered existing mechanisms of accountability and monitoring being used in CBSs (ii) trained teachers, 4 NRSP and SCA teams of 3 facilitators and 2 coordinators each on inclusive education and (iii) trained SCA/NAC/NRSP teams on GMB to facilitate sessions in 80 randomly selected intervention schools. In stage 2, SMCs members (principals, staff, teachers and parents) are participating in separate GMB sessions to design a relevant school social accountability system and identifying leverage points on which to focus the intervention. In stage 3, each school, with the support from SCA/NAC/NRSP teams and the investigators are implementing the intervention. In stage 4 the investigators are measuring the impact of the social accountability intervention on learning outcomes using a cluster RCT with two waves of interviews: baseline survey in all 160 schools from staff, teachers, students in classes 3 to 5 and parents in year 1; end line survey are taking place at the beginning of year 4. In depth interviews and FGDs, games and audio-visual activities with children are now taking place. In stage 5, the investigators will develop capacity in countries (universities, education NGOs) and disseminate findings to a broad audience in various formats through academic, policy makers and practitioners’ networks.

**Essential Functions/Position Summary**

The successful candidate’s major responsibility is to coordinate the intervention in community based system dynamic under the supervision of the principal investigator.

The postdoctoral research associate is knowledgeable in Community Based Systems Dynamic (CBSD) or Systems Dynamic for social sciences and contribute to the following:

- Review reports of CBSD workshops and Inclusive education trainings;
- Review qualitative material;
- Manage and participate in analysing quantitative data from baseline and endline surveys;
- Supervise the translation in English of qualitative interviews and FGDs;
- Participate in analysing qualitative data from interviews and FGDs;
- Responsible for CBSD and survey data checking;
- Assist investigators and SCA/NAC/NRSP coordinators in the training of the endline survey staff;
- Support SCA/NAC/NRSP coordinators in:
  - supervising the operations of the CBSD training
  - overview financial records for the training as well as for the facilitation sessions in the 102 intervention schools and for the survey in all 204 schools;
  - monitoring the deployment of the facilitation teams in the schools assigned to them;
  - monitoring the deployment of the survey teams to the schools assigned to them;
  - monitoring relationships with Provincial government staff in the assigned survey areas to facilitate safe and complete survey operations in each of the regions;
  - monitoring action plan implementation in all intervention scholls;
  - monitoring school endline survey operations within the assigned areas to ensure survey coverage and quality data;
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carrying out in-depth semi structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs)
with a subsample of 50 SMC members (including parents and care-givers) and 50
teachers;
ensuring that education facilitation teams receive appropriate and timely logistics,
administrative and financial support;
ensuring that survey teams receive appropriate and timely logistics, administrative and
financial support;
establishing for the regions and then execute a Quality Assurance/Quality Control plan
to ensure high quality of work of the education facilitation and survey teams;
monitoring the security situation in the school areas;
ensuring communications with the SCA/NAC/NRSP.

- Support the investigators in applying study tools with children such as games with picture cards,
drawing exercises, a photo-elicitation exercise and a collaborative video process to identify how
children perceived their learning experience;
- Liaise with Education department and with SCA/NAC/NRSP regional management teams;
- Contribute to writing of reports, policy briefs and scientific articles.

The postdoctoral research associate will work directly with the research team of Dr. Jean-Francois
Trani. The study is expected to last 4 years. The postdoctoral position has a started date as soon as the
possible.

Required Qualifications
Applicants must have a PhD in social sciences: preferably Systems Dynamic applied to social sciences or
Applied/Development Economics but also Social Work, Public Health, Education, Sociology or a related
discipline.

Preferred Qualifications
- Knowledge and experience using Systems Dynamic;
- Practical experience with data collection and management;
- Experience using SAS, STATA, R or similar software packages to work on quantitative social
  science projects;
- Knowledge of focus group discussions and other qualitative methodologies;
- Proficient in the design and use of quantitative methods of research, particularly monitoring and
evaluation;
- Experience in developing countries, preferably in Central Asia and/or Islamic contexts;
- Good understanding of gender issues and power structures at the community level;
- Objectivity and ability to operate systematically with minimal supervision;
- Result-oriented and committed to respecting deadlines;
- Urdu, Dari and Pashto is appreciated.

Applicant Special Instructions
Interested candidates should send a CV, cover letter, and brief writing sample to:
Jean-Francois Trani
Associate Professor
Brown School
jitrani@wustl.edu
[o] 314.935.9277  [c] 314.412.0077
Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Questions can be directed to the above email address or phone.

**Salary Range**
The salary range for this position is commensurate with experience.