

Global TIES for Children

Transforming Intervention Effectiveness and Scale

2016-2017 Additional Insights International Research Fellowship

New York University and the Institute for Human Development and Social Change's international research center, Global TIES for Children: Transforming Intervention Effectiveness and Scale, are pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the second year of our Additional Insights International Research Fellowship. Led by Dr. Larry Aber, with support from the Hewlett Foundation, the Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund at the World Bank, and Innovations for Poverty Action, we are seeking applicants from around the world who are interested not only in whether interventions improve the lives and well-being of low-income women and children, but for whom, why, and where they do so. This fellowship seeks to generate actionable evidence through using advanced research methodologies to evaluate variation in, and mechanisms of, program impact while also investing in future research leaders through mentorship, professional development, and training activities.

About the Fellowship

The Additional Insights International Research Fellowship is a rigorous, multi-disciplinary program for emerging scholars (advanced doctoral students through early career research scientists) in the applied social sciences. This fellowship capitalizes on existing and under explored resources – the many hundreds of impact evaluations conducted in low- and middle- income countries over the past decade – and seeks to 1) build our knowledge base as a field about the factors influencing program success and 2) train a new cohort of scholars on how to best approach such questions within experimental designs.

The fellowship targets programs that seek to improve women's economic empowerment and/or children's development (education, early childhood, socio-emotional, mental health) in low- and middle- income countries. Participating scholars will be trained in rigorous, settings-level¹, secondary data analytic techniques and supported in answering a research question of their own selection to better understand for whom, why, and where such programs work. Fellows are expected to produce a paper suitable for publication on their question(s).

Answering such questions concerning variation in and mechanisms of program impact, is crucial to guiding the replicability and scalability of successful program and greatly increases the returns yielded from (very expensive) large-scale interventions. We believe that this work, and the fellows selected and trained through this program, will push forward the field in its use (and sharing) of large-scale intervention data toward greater insights, and thus better outcomes, in women's economic empowerment and child development in low- and middle-income countries.

¹ Settings-level analytic techniques refer to analyses that look beyond individual outcomes; nest individuals within families/schools/communities; and/or expressly evaluate the role of context on outcomes and trajectories.

Program Structure

This fellowship has a two-stage application process (see below for application requirements). Initial applications are *due January 15th, 2016*. Finalists for participation in this fellowship, based on this application, will be notified by Monday, February 1st, 2016.

These finalists will then be asked to propose specific research question(s) related to women's economic empowerment and child development. This proposal must use publicly available data from impact evaluations conducted in low- or middle-income countries. We will provide a list of online data repositories to aide in data selection.

In addition to research proposals, finalists will be asked to demonstrate sufficient statistical skills to support participation in a week of advanced statistical training. The training will include a refresher on multi-level modeling before quickly progressing into more advanced analyses. As such, applicants must demonstrate competency up to multi-level linear regression models. We will provide an online assessment tool, along with an accompanying refresher course for those who need it. Applicants must submit certification of proficiency which will be provided electronically after successfully completing the assessment tool.

These research proposals, and the certificate of proficiency, will be due on Monday, March 21st, 2016. From these proposals, ten fellows will be selected for the 2016 fellowship. Fellows will be notified of this decision in early April 2016 and supported in clarifying and fine-tuning research questions as needed in April and May.

In the summer of 2016, fellows will participate in a week-long Summer Training Institute at NYU New York City. This summit is tentatively scheduled for the week of July 25th. The Summer Institute will be composed of mixture of methodological presentations, plenary addresses, and statistical workshops, with a high degree of individual support to researchers' specific analyses. Presentations and workshops will be led by researchers and statisticians trained in the use of secondary and settings-level analytic techniques. The focus is on furthering fellows' understanding of variation in program impact and why it is critical to understand and assess; strengthening fellows' analytic skills; teaching specific techniques for secondary data analyses; and creating a structured, supported setting in which fellows can begin work toward answering their research questions. There will also be networking opportunities to strengthen the connection and support system between fellows as well as further introduce fellows to trainers and faculty here at NYU NYC. It is expected that fellows will return home fully launched into their own research and well-positioned to complete a paper on their proposed questions.

In the year following the 2016 Summer Institute, consultation will be available to further support fellows in finishing and presenting and/or publishing on their research.

Financial Support

Fellows will receive modest financial assistance in support of this work as well as a small honorarium on completion of their research. There are two levels of support. At the start of the fellowship, fellows from low- and middle-income countries will receive \$8,000 and fellows from high income countries will receive \$3,000 in support of the work itself. Upon completion of their research, all fellows will receive a \$2,000 honorarium.

Additionally, all eligible travel, lodging, and meal expenses for attendance at the 2016 Summer Institute in Abu Dhabi will be covered. There is not specific coverage allocated for technological supports, such as statistical software, but the amount of financial support was established with such concerns in mind and should be viewed as an unconditional transfer toward supporting fellows' time as well as additional research needs.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants should be current doctoral students, post-docs, or early career researchers and have a clear and demonstrable interest in conducting research on interventions to strengthen women's empowerment and/or children's development in LAMICs. Additionally, applicants must commit to attending the week long Summer Institute in New York City in July 2015 and conducting additional research after their return home toward a paper suitable for publication on their proposed research question(s).

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants will demonstrate a keen interest in women's economic empowerment and/or child development in low- and middle-income countries as well as a desire to learn and the capacity to perform high level statistical analyses in variation in program impacts.

Finalists for the fellowship will be further assessed according to their proposed research question(s): its feasibility; the relevance of the question to informing work targeting women's economic empowerment and/or child development; and the proposed use of rigorous secondary analyses of data from completed impact evaluations.

Priority will be placed on selecting a diverse group of fellows who can best learn from and inform each other's experiences.

Application Instructions

Applications should be submitted as a single pdf file including the applicant's CV and a 300-400 word response to each of the following questions:

- 1) *Why are you interested in better understanding variation in program impacts and why do you think this is a fruitful direction for the field of applied social science as a whole?*
- 2) *What experience do you have with experimental analyses, multi-level modeling, and/or other advance analytic techniques?*
- 3) *Please discuss how your research interests align with those of promoting women's economic empowerment and/or child development.*

Applicants should also arrange for two letters of recommendation to be submitted – also by January 15th, 2016 – on their behalf.

All application components must be received via email, addressed to Kate Schwartz, Project Director, at kjs440@nyu.edu by 5pm EST, Friday, January 15th.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, in advance of this deadline, with any further questions. We welcome your interest and look forward to your application.