

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

### Postdoc Positions at the International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) in the Social or Agricultural Sciences

**Application Deadline:** 31 October 2017

**Scholarship Start:** 1 January / 1 July 2018 (exceptions possible)

**Scholarship Duration:** 6 or 12 months

The ICDD is an interdisciplinary and international scientific network of excellence with the head office located at the University of Kassel (Germany) and partner universities in Latin America, Africa and Asia. It co-operates closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and various NGOs. The ICDD is funded by the programme “ex)/(ceed – Higher Education Excellence in Development Cooperation” launched by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In the framework of its Graduate School of Socio-Ecological Research for Development, the ICDD invites PhD degree holders from ODA recipient countries (countries eligible for Official Development Assistance of the OECD, see list attached) to apply for a postdoc position in a particular academic field at an ICDD partner university:

- Universidad Autónoma de Yucatan (UADY), Mexico, in agricultural science;
- Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp), Brazil, in economics;
- University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana, in development studies;
- Egerton University (EGU), Kenya, in agricultural science;
- University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), Pakistan, in agricultural science;
- University of Kassel, Germany, in agricultural science;
- University of Kassel, Germany, in the social sciences;
- Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), India, in labour studies;
- University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), South Africa, in sociology.

#### Background

The ICDD contributes to the global fight against hunger and poverty through research and education on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #8 – to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. A special focus lies thereby on the world’s more than 800 million people living in rural areas who face food insecurity. The concept of decent work is ILO’s strategic response to globalization. It highlights four key dimensions of fair globalization: 1. Full employment (including enterprise creation), 2. Respect for basic workers’ rights, 3. Social protection and 4. Social dialogue. The decent work agenda received a strong boost in 2005 when the UN World Summit proclaimed decent work for all to be part of the Millennium Development Goals. Against the background of continuing widespread unemployment, underemployment and unfair working conditions, full employment and decent work for all also entered the subsequent SDG agenda and remain in the focus of the ICDD.

One of ICDD's main objectives in this context is to generate and transfer knowledge on creating and improving work and income opportunities in rural and urban regions of developing countries in light of globalization, climate change and urbanization. One of the ICDD's main facilities for the interdisciplinary generation of knowledge is the Graduate School of Socio-Ecological Research for Development. The successful applicant will become postdoc fellows of this school. While the ICDD encompasses various disciplines such as agricultural science, political science, sociology and economics, it is strongly committed to promoting inter- and multidisciplinary approaches. Hence, it particularly invites applications seeking to develop or include such a research perspective. The ICDD supports research in five thematic areas. The proposed postdoc project must relate to at least one of these:

### **1) *Decent work along agricultural value chains***

Postdoc projects within this research area focus on the concept of the value chain (or production networks) in relationship to decent work. This relation has gained increasing attention in international political economy, management studies, and agricultural sciences. Yet, a number of issues remain unresolved. For instance, much research has dealt with the issue of economic upgrading, i.e. the process by which economic actors move from low-value to relatively high-value activities in global production networks. Social upgrading, i.e. enhancing the protection and rights of workers with positive spill-over effects for their dependents and communities, has received comparatively little attention up to now. Moreover, much research on agricultural value chains focuses on a particular local context or on a single agricultural commodity. Seeking to enhance this type of research, the ICDD thus invites project proposals developing a comparative research framework and/or looking at various commodity chains.

### **2) *Organising the informal economy***

The informal economy is marked by acute decent work deficits and a disproportionate share of the working poor. It encompasses own-account workers, employers employed in their own informal sector enterprises, contributing family workers, workers in unregistered businesses, and workers who are excluded from standard employment benefits and protection such as pension coverage and medical insurance.

Postdoc fellows in this research area should be interested in analysing factors underpinning the persistence of decent work deficits in the informal sector, e.g. limited governmental or social resources, in order to contribute to strategies for enhancing social and labour protection. Alternatively, postdoctoral research projects explore actors, strategies or instruments contributing to the social inclusion (e.g. building social protection nets for specific industries or types of labor) or the organisation of informal workers.

### **3) *Extractivism and rural welfare***

Rising commodity prices brought resource-led development strategies back on the political agenda. During the last decade high economic growth was achieved in regions rich in natural resources in Central Africa or Central Asia and linked to the expansion of (innovative) social

policies in Latin America. On the downside, the model is based on the exploitation of nature and due to its impact on the environment the intensity of socio-ecological conflicts is rising. Economically, it tends to hamper the diversification of the economy, the volatility of the commodity prices renders the model highly prone to crises, and the expansion of social policies becomes fragile by depending on the income from natural resources.

However, little is known about (neo-) extractivism's impact on labor conditions and productivity gains. Research projects within this thematic area analyse extractivist development models against this background and may touch upon (one of) the following questions: In what way do (neo-) extractivist regimes promote or hinder productivity gains and progress in decent work? How are extractivist policies decided, implemented and regulated by state and non-state actors ("governance of extractivism")? Which best practice policy reforms in extractivist economies can promote the diversification of the economies and the transformation towards post-extractivist economies? What regulations and regulatory mechanisms are necessary to achieve economic and in particular social upgrading in the extractivist sector?

#### **4) *Rural-urban linkages: transformation processes, livelihoods, and social protection***

The strong dependence of cities on their surroundings in ecological, social and economic terms has long been neglected. Also, little research has explicitly addressed the changes in agricultural land use and agricultural households' livelihoods associated with urban expansion and their consequences for the surrounding rural agro-ecosystems.

Postdoctoral research in this thematic area should focus on how poor people's livelihoods are affected by spatial, ecological, agronomic, economic, and social transition processes along the interface spanning from the city to its remote rural hinterland, mainly using the example of cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Two more concrete issues stand out in this context and could be addressed in postdoc projects: 1. Social Protection in Rural Areas: In many developing countries rural areas are important as an informal form of social protection for urban workers. Rural subsistence production including the care labor of women subsidizes the daily and intergenerational costs of waged labor largely concentrated in urban communities. How do fluctuations in the urban wage market affect the livelihoods of rural households? How can rural households' urban connections be taken into account when constructing policy for rural social protection? What impact do these "shared livelihood" strategies have to union policy and organizing strategies?

2. Access to credit in rural and peri-urban areas: Credit stimulates growth because it bridges the time until investments bear fruits. However, a large body of literature on agricultural lending has highlighted the challenges for providing especially smallholders with financial services. Micro-finance institutions have overcome some of the obstacles but their loans are mainly used for micro-scale activities or family needs and not so much for agricultural machinery. Will communication technology and the ever expanding cities change this situation? Does better access to credit translate into productive investments, given that loans are frequently not used for consumptive uses?

### **5) Rethinking development cooperation**

While development cooperation can be an instrument for promoting decent work, it is in danger of overlooking conflicts of interest. Therefore, a more sensitive perspective is necessary which includes strategies of empowerment. Apparently easy solutions – more market access, more investments, more technology – overlook complex social realities. A rise in productivity for one group may leave the working conditions of another group unaffected or even lead to a deterioration in living standards for this group. The principle that development cooperation should be ‘people-centered’ requires that their different positions, needs, and interests be taken into account – and that they have the right to articulate them and be heard. Yet, organized interventions in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement have always benefitted some groups more than others, and these others have often complained and protested.

Postdoc fellows interested in this thematic area could reflect on this fact and engage in rethinking aspects or cases of development cooperation accordingly. If the aim is improving the livelihoods and working conditions of the poor, they could explore the different social groups, their interests and their political conflicts. What is beneficial for the working conditions of middle-class farmers may not be beneficial for smallholder farmers, what is beneficial for them may not be beneficial for landless male labourers, and what is beneficial for the latter group may not be beneficial for their wives and daughters. So, an agenda for development cooperation in rural areas which attempts to improve livelihoods and create decent working conditions may not only perceive different socio-economic positions and address conflicts of interests between different social groups (‘political interventions’), but also engage farmers’ voices (‘people-centered’) and devise strategies of empowerment for weaker political groups.

### **Postdoc position**

The successful applicants will be based at the ICDD partner university they chose (see list above). Apart from conducting or preparing an own research project, they will get involved in the supervision of postgraduate students at the PhD or Master level and/or in an ICDD research project. Moreover, postdoc fellows will participate in the lively academic exchange and activities within the ICDD network.

The postdoc scholarship will be awarded according to the scholarship regulations of the DAAD programme *ex)/(ceed* for the period of 6 or 12 months. The scholarship includes a monthly living allowance according to country-specific and DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) standards as well as the possibility to apply for the coverage of travel costs for conducting field research or participating in conferences.

## Application Requirements

- a completed PhD degree, with excellent results, in a discipline related to the above topics; the applicant's PhD degree should not have been conferred more than two years ago (candidates who have already submitted and/or defended their PhD thesis can also apply, if the PhD degree is completed by the start of the scholarship period);
- a high proficiency in English (CEFR level: C1 or above), demonstrated by one of the following language certificates: TOEFL, with a minimum score of 550 PBT (paper-based test)/80 IBT (Internet-based test); IELTS 6.5 or above; the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English or an equivalent (native speakers and applicants who have completed one of their academic degrees fully in English do not have to provide an English proficiency certificate);
- academic or vocational experience in one of the disciplines related to the thematic field of development and decent work;
- citizenship of an ODA recipient country (see list attached).

## Application Procedure

The application process involves three elements:

### 1.) *Application package*

Please assemble the following documents in a single PDF file:

- application letter (one page max.), indicating for which ICDD partner university the candidate is applying, and explaining why the candidate applies for a postdoc position at the ICDD;
- detailed academic curriculum vitae (including the academic background, the list of publications, professional and teaching experience [if applicable], names and contact details of two academic referees);
- an outline of the planned postdoc research project (about 1500 - 2000 words), including the expected outcome (e.g. journal article/s, publication of the revised PhD thesis, ...);
- a summary of the PhD thesis (about 1500 - 2000 words);
- scanned copy of an English proficiency certificate, if required;
- scanned copies of the following documents in the original language **with translations attached, if the language of these documents is not German, English, French, Spanish or Portuguese:**
  - the certificate of the recognised PhD degree (if the PhD thesis is submitted and/or defended already, but the final certificate still pending, proof of thesis submission/defence must be submitted, e.g. a letter from the PhD office or supervisor, testifying the date and likelihood of its successful completion by the date of the scholarship start);

- the certificate and transcript of records of your recognised Master and Bachelor degrees, listing all subjects and grades;
- if applicable, certificates of additional studies and on the completion of these studies;
- scanned copies of certificates of previous professional/vocational experience if applicable.

The items of the application package should be assembled according to the sequence listed above, with the application letter as the first page, followed by the CV etc. All items of the application must be assembled in one pdf document (use e.g. a pdf creator or your word processing programme). Applications consisting of multiple files cannot be accepted!

## **2.) Completion of the online application form and upload of your application package**

For completing the online application form and uploading your application package (single pdf file, max. 50 MB), you need to register at first with your name and email address at the following website (online survey tool of the University of Kassel, Germany):

[www.uni-kassel.de/go/icdd-postdoc-online-application-form](http://www.uni-kassel.de/go/icdd-postdoc-online-application-form)

Once you have registered, a personalized link will be sent to you by email, with which you can then access the online application form. Completing the online application and uploading your application package is possible until the application deadline: **31 October 2017**.

## **3.) Letter of recommendation**

Apart from the application, a letter of recommendation from your PhD supervisor, respectively from a member of the PhD committee, must be provided. If the PhD thesis is not (yet) graded, the letter should include an assessment of your PhD thesis (e.g. in relation to the overall quality of PhD theses at your institution or those supervised by your supervisor). The referee must sign the letter, which should be sent as a scanned copy from the referee's email account to:

[ref-postdoc@icdd.uni-kassel.de](mailto:ref-postdoc@icdd.uni-kassel.de)

The letter of recommendation must also arrive at the ICDD **no later than 31 October 2017**.

**For specific questions regarding the application process or the fellowship position, please contact:**

Mr. Christian Möllmann (ICDD, Germany), phone + 49 (0)561 804 7395,  
[graduateschool@icdd.uni-kassel.de](mailto:graduateschool@icdd.uni-kassel.de)

**For further information on the ICDD and its Graduate School:**

[www.icdd.uni-kassel.de](http://www.icdd.uni-kassel.de)

**DAC List of ODA Recipients**  
**Effective for reporting on 2014, 2015 and 2016 flows**

Least Developed Countries	Other Low Income Countries (per capita GNI <= \$1 045 in 2013)	Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories (per capita GNI \$1 046-\$4 125 in 2013)	Upper Middle Income Countries and Territories (per capita GNI \$4 126-\$12 745 in 2013)
Afghanistan Angola Bangladesh Benin Bhutan Burkina Faso Burundi Cambodia Central African Republic Chad Comoros Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Equatorial Guinea <sup>1</sup> Eritrea Ethiopia Gambia Guinea Guinea-Bissau Haiti Kiribati Lao People's Democratic Republic Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi Mali Mauritania Mozambique Myanmar Nepal Niger Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Sierra Leone Solomon Islands Somalia South Sudan Sudan Tanzania Timor-Leste Togo Tuvalu Uganda Vanuatu <sup>1</sup> Yemen Zambia	Democratic People's Republic of Korea Kenya Tajikistan Zimbabwe	Armenia Bolivia Cabo Verde Cameroon Congo Côte d'Ivoire Egypt El Salvador Georgia Ghana Guatemala Guyana Honduras India Indonesia Kosovo Kyrgyzstan Micronesia Moldova Mongolia Morocco Nicaragua Nigeria Pakistan Papua New Guinea Paraguay Philippines Samoa Sri Lanka Swaziland Syrian Arab Republic Tokelau Ukraine Uzbekistan Viet Nam West Bank and Gaza Strip	Albania Algeria Antigua and Barbuda <sup>2</sup> Argentina Azerbaijan Belarus Belize Bosnia and Herzegovina Botswana Brazil Chile <sup>2</sup> China (People's Republic of) Colombia Cook Islands Costa Rica Cuba Dominica Dominican Republic Ecuador Fiji Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Gabon Grenada Iran Iraq Jamaica Jordan Kazakhstan Lebanon Libya Malaysia Maldives Marshall Islands Mauritius Mexico Montenegro Montserrat Namibia Nauru Niue Palau Panama Peru Saint Helena Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Serbia Seychelles South Africa Suriname Thailand Tonga Tunisia Turkey Turkmenistan Uruguay <sup>2</sup> Venezuela Wallis and Futuna

(1) The United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/L.20 adopted on 4 December 2013 decided that Equatorial Guinea will graduate from the least developed country category three and a half years after the adoption of the resolution and that Vanuatu will graduate four years after the adoption of the resolution.

(2) Antigua and Barbuda, Chile and Uruguay exceeded the high income country threshold in 2012 and 2013. In accordance with the DAC rules for revision of this List, all three will graduate from the List in 2017 if they remain high income countries until 2016.