Governance and Local Development Institute

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Call for Junior Social Science Researchers Based in the MENA Region:

6-month Paid Internship for Master's Degree Graduates

Location: Remote
Note: Applicants should have a master's degree or equivalent and should be based in the Middle East and North Africa
Duration: 6 months
Application deadline: 3 April 2023

About the project partners:

The Governance and Local Development Institute (GLD) was first established at Yale University in 2013 and relocated to the University of Gothenburg in 2015 to explore variations in governance and local development in order to promote human welfare globally. GLD seeks to develop insights into the role of state and non-state actors, consider the relationships between local-level factors (e.g., elite dynamics, ethnic diversity, poverty, gender relations, etc.) and governance, and provide policy-relevant findings on scientifically rigorous research.

Alternative Policy Solutions (APS) is a nonpartisan public policy research project at the American University in Cairo (AUC). Using a highly collaborative and inclusive approach, APS develops policy solutions that realize public aspirations and support policymakers in collaboration with national stakeholders and international experts. To date, and in collaboration with more than 100 international and local experts, APS is proud to have developed policy papers, produced short films, podcasts, and commentaries, and hosted public events on critical policy issues such as education, transportation, urban development, healthcare, and climate change.

حلول للسياسات البديلة ALTERNATIVE POLICY SOLUTIONS

About the project:

The "Governance and Local Development in the Middle East and North Africa" (GLD in the MENA) project aims to bring together junior researchers from the MENA region to engage in training, workshops, and research. The selected researchers will have the opportunity to present their work to researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners – upon completion of the internship program – at a conference in Cairo in January 2024. The project aims to promote policy-relevant research in three research areas (described below) through writing policy briefs, reports, and papers.

To fulfill these aims, GLD and APS are offering a paid internship for junior researchers in three research areas (described below in the project details section).

Assignment:

This internship offers junior researchers from the MENA region a learning opportunity in their early research careers. We will select 2-4 researchers for each research area. The selected researchers will engage in weekly online training sessions (e.g., on producing annotated bibliographies, literature reviews, research design, writing academic papers and policy briefs, giving presentations, etc.), participate in GLD virtual workshops, and research one of the three themes described below. Finally, the researchers will present their findings in virtual workshops and at the final project conference in Cairo in early 2024.

What we offer:

The research positions are full-time, remote, 6-month paid internships. Researchers will work with teams at GLD and APS and have the chance to be part of a project network with senior researchers, research fellows, policymakers, and development practitioners from the MENA and Nordic regions and to engage with GLD and APS's global networks of scholars and practitioners.

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Eligibility:

- A completed master's degree in a relevant field
- Proven record of academic achievement.
- Good research and analytical skills.
- Interest in bridging research and policy, focusing on one of the three research areas described above.
- Proven excellence in English and Arabic (written and spoken).

Proven familiarity with quantitative and qualitative research methods and previous experience with research in one of the three research areas is meritorious but not required.

How to apply:

Please apply through this form.

The application should include the following:

- CV, including a list of two references (with contact information) from whom letters of recommendation can be solicited.
- Letter of intent outlining why you are applying for this internship and how it aligns with your career goals.
- Research outline identifying which of the three research areas you have selected and detailing your preliminary research plans.
- English writing sample or samples. Please submit at least one solo-authored paper.

Contact information:

If you have any questions regarding this opportunity, you can email: Ghadeer Hussein at ghadeer.hussein@gu.se
Shortlisted applicants will be notified within three weeks after the application deadline.

Scan the QR-code to apply for this internship!

Project details: The GLD in the MENA project is comprised of three research areas

The Role of Kith and Kin: How the importance of family, friendship, and the nature of kinship structures in local governance practices varies across the region.

The 'kin contract' is a social process that "mediates citizenship" (Alkan, 2022). Obligations to kin shape political participation (Dorff, 2017; Lust, 2009) and help explain bureaucratic practices that violate state rules (e.g., 'corruption') (Akbari et al., 2019), and may facilitate the integration of refugees into host communities (Alkan, 2022). The guiding questions for this research area are: (1) Under what conditions does kinship shape individuals' choices, e.g., potentially varying according to gender, social class, etc.? (2) To what extent, if any, do obligations to kin differ from those to individuals in other networks, e.g., friends, professional or religious networks? (3) How does the definition of 'close kin' – those over which such obligations hold – vary? And (4) Are individuals obligated to favor only close relatives or those with more extended family ties, and how does this affect political participation and outcomes?

Social Engineering: Mapping out the extent to which social engineering occurs across the region and examining what drives the changes and effectiveness at a local level.

As defined by Scott in Seeing Like a State, "social engineering" is the process of using "coercive power to bring these high-modernist designs into being" (1999). It is often a state-led project, branded as modernization and development, and closely associated with nation-state building. Historical examples of social engineering include Mao's cultural revolution in China, the 1920s Bolshevik revolution in Russia (Podgórecki et al., 1996), and the secularization and Westernization projects associated with the establishment of the Republics of Turkey (Yilmaz, 2018) and Iran. This research area studies contemporary practices of social engineering in the MENA region by focusing on three themes: (1) Nationalism and the making of modern citizens (e.g., in the Gulf region, where governments are actively reshaping citizenship, and Saudization and Emiratization and what those projects entail in relation to citizenship rights and expectations), (2) Gender roles and women's participation in the public sphere (e.g., workforce and political leadership) and

examining states' efforts to encourage women's participation through gender quotas in parliaments and labor markets, and (3) Strengthening the secular or religious character of the state and its citizens.

The guiding questions for this research area are: (1) What factors contributed to the states' efforts to shape society (e.g., to shape understandings of citizenship, gender relations, or religious/secular identities)? (2) What policies did the state implement in the attempt to do so? (3) Which stakeholders were in favor of these changes/benefitted from them? (4) Who opposed the changes, and what strategies did they use to resist them? (5) To what extent has the state successfully achieved these goals? (6) What types of communities or individuals have been most likely to adopt the changes, and which have been the least likely to do so? What explains this?

Climate Change and Sustainability: The uneven effect of water shortages and other climate change impacts on societies and how local communities embrace or reject sustainability efforts and local adaptations to climate change in the region.

Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) is defined as "…a community-led process, based on communities' priorities, needs, knowledge, and capacities, which should empower people to plan for and cope with the impacts of climate change" (Froehlich and Al-Saidi, 2017, p.243). The authors differentiate between hard and soft climate change adaptation. "Hard adaptation mostly focuses on infrastructure and economic production; soft adaptation aims to increase the communities' knowledge and awareness of environmental changes and impacts" (2017, p. 236). This research area examines local variations in climate change adaptation in the region. The guiding questions of this research area are: (1) What are the community-based adaptation strategies related to agriculture, which supports the livelihood of one-third of the region's population and contributes 13 percent to the region's GDP (Waha et al., 2017, p. 1632)? (2) Climate change-induced internal migration is increasing (ibid, p. 1634); to what extent does this migration impact local communities (i.e., gender roles, women's participation in the labor market, ethnic minorities, etc.)? (3) To what extent has climate change impacted land and water governance at the local level in the region?

Bibliography

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