

CIF Internship Program 2015

Introduction

Curatio International Foundation (CIF) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, established in 1994. Since its formation the organization has been actively focusing on reforming health systems in transition economies of Former Soviet Union and beyond, specifically in the Southern Caucasus (since 1995), Central Asia (since 1998), North Africa and Middle East (since 2004).

CIF contributes to the reforms in the public health system with the belief that health, more than any other aspect of social care, determines the quality of community life. We believe that an easy access to the essential health services is vital for having well developed and prosperous community members.

CIF aims to influence public policy with the purpose of increasing the efficiency and sustainability of health systems through improving management, financial access, and quality of health care. Therefore, CIF conducts unbiased analyses of the most critical issues regarding health systems and policies, and renders recommendations aimed at improving functionality and adequacy of policies.

CIF works in collaboration with a network of national and international professionals and researchers in order to bridge the gap between what is known about the problems at hand and what has to be done in order to solve them.

For additional information please visit www.curatiofoundation.org

Internships

Since 2002 CIF attracts interns from around the world who are studying at masters or Ph.D. level and who are interested to have first-hand experience in the real-life setting and to contribute to the research projects implemented by the organization.

Timing of the Internships

- Summer internship (June through September) from 1 to 4 month
- Winter internship (December through February) from 2 to 8 weeks

Who can apply

- Master level students
- PhD Students

Terms of the Internships

CIF provides following to the interns:

- Office space and access to internet communication and office equipment;
- Access to on-line library with more than 8,000 information resources and in 30 different languages;
- Internship coordinator, who provides continuous guidance around the research topic and support to an intern during their stay in Georgia and after their departure, during scientific paper preparation;

- Logistical support prior to arrival to Georgia and during their stay, which includes following but not limited to: acceptance letter to facilitate obtaining travel grants from different donors, support for accommodation in Tbilisi-Georgia, guidance for travel, etc.
- Block grant in the amount of 500 USD will be provided to intern arriving for the period of 8 or more weeks. Shorter internships will receive 300 USD as a one-time payment. The Grants are indented to supplement lodging expenses.
- Grants are issued upon completion of the internship outputs.

The Benefits to Interns are:

- Ability to apply knowledge and research skills on practice and satisfy project requirements at their school;
- Contribute to and be one of the authors of a scientific paper published in a peer reviewed journal with high impact factor;
- Interact with the professionals continuously involved/contributing to policy making process;
- Visit country of Georgia well known for its beautiful nature, history, culture, hospitality, wine and cuisine.

Intellectual property

A scientific paper production will be regulated by an International Research Exchange Agreement between CIF and the intern that articulates CIF's position on the intellectual property.

Interns will be given right to use the data for their dissertation or course paper, per university's requirement, but the rights will be ONLY transferred for the pre-agreed scientific work which will be elaborated in the International Research Exchange Agreement between CIF and the intern.

Responsibility of Intern

In close collaboration with CIF researchers interns are expected to contribute to and be co-author of at least one scientific paper, which will be published in international peer-reviewed journal.

Application Process

Applications are accepted twice during a year

- Deadline for application for **summer** internship is March 11
- Deadline for application for **winter** internship is October 31

Interested candidates are required to submit following documents via e-mail

(internship@curatio.com):

- Motivation letter, indicating which research topics they have selected (see the list of research themes currently in implementation at CIF) and how they can contribute to the research project;
- Detailed Curriculum Vitae (Please use our template <http://www.curatiofoundation.org/?sqlangid=3&pg=29&id=221>)
- Support letter from their school indicating applicants capabilities relative to the requirements stated in the research themes section for the selected research topic.

Selected candidates will be notified:

- By **March 14** for summer internship. If the deadline for the summer internship grant application at school is earlier than March 14th, applicant should make sure to submit an application for this internship before the March 11 deadline and request in the Motivation Letter selection decision by concrete date (counting at least 3 days for the selection process).
- By **November 5** for winter internship

The List of Research Themes for Summer Internship 2015

For 2015 Summer Internship Program Curatio International Foundation (CIF) offers the following research topics:

1. Transition from the Donor Support and Sustainability of Health Systems

Global Health Initiatives, bilateral and multilateral donors have allocated considerable resources to low and middle-income countries to respond to public health threats. The Global Fund (GF), PEPFAR, PMI, GAVI are among the major donors to many developing countries. In recent years the economic crises led to slowdown in financial commitments. Number of countries had already graduated from the donor assistance and other countries are expecting graduation.

Sustainability of public health gains achieved with help of donor assistance over the past decade is at a risk unless the transition from external support is well planned and effectively implemented. Due to fragile public finance systems, weak institutional capacities of NGOs and public institutions many countries are not well prepared for this changing environment. Consequently, managing the transition from the donor support and maintaining and/or enhancing the sustainability of the national programs become crucial.

Although donors and local stakeholders well understand importance of the sustainability, there is a gap in conceptualization of this phenomenon. A number of frameworks reflecting deferent perspectives have been proposed. Many factors make it challenging to study sustainability and draw conclusions, primarily because sustainability deals with the health systems that are increasingly recognized to be complex adaptive systems. Curatio International Foundation is working with partners to conceptualize and operationalize the transition and sustainability with the objective of helping countries and country programs in better planning and preparation.

Intern(s) are invited to join the CIF team and undertake literature review on ***Transition from external assistance and Sustainability of health programs in Low Middle Income Countries***. More specifically literature search should focus but not limited to the following: Definitions, concepts, frameworks, research design methods, analytical approaches. Literature review should help to understand factors that influence transition and affect sustainability.

Intern is expected to undertake:

- Thorough desk research of published literature. Systematic review papers are priorities.
- Synthesize the information and produce the review according to the framework elaborated jointly with CIF.
- Prepare a presentation highlighting findings of the literature review.

Interns are expected to have following capabilities/experience:

- **Literature review skills/experience.** Ability to undertake comprehensive systematic search, critical evaluation of publications, thorough analytical and summative literature review skills, covering methodological issues and topics related to the research objective, ability to develop clear and cohesive structure with accurate citations.

Those interested in this topic and if accepted in the internship program, **are strongly encouraged** to take additional training courses on a literature search and review prior to arrival in Georgia. Applicants will be expected to adequately reflect in their application/motivation letter any weakness they have in proficiency of required skills and describe how they intend to advance their knowledge and skills prior to undertaking internship. Failure to do so will have negative impact on internship evaluation, if accepted in our program.

2. HIV/AIDS and Behavioral Issues

CIF conducted several rounds of **Bio-Behavioural Surveillance (BBS) surveys among key populations such as people who inject drugs (PWID), female sex workers (FSW), men who have sex with men (MSM) and prisoners** in various cities of Georgia. Objective of the Bio-BBS is to measure prevalence of HIV and other diseases among various risk groups, provide measurements of key HIV risk behaviours, evaluate outcomes of national response – preventive interventions and generate evidence for advocacy and policy-making.

During 2014-2015 CIF carries out BBS studies among 1800 PWID and 450 MSM in major cities of Georgia.

The datasets, study tools and study reports of the previous studies are available in English. Based on the available data CIF intends to produce papers for high impact peer reviewed journals.

Suggested research / publication topics include:

- 1) Evaluation of preventive intervention effectiveness among high risk groups using Propensity Score Matching (PSM) or Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM) methods.
- 2) Influence of drug types, injecting abroad on risk behaviour among PWIDs

Interns will be expected to contribute to any of the following activities, depending on their interest:

For research topic 1:

- a. **Quantitative statistical data analysis using PSM or CEM techniques;**
- b. Prepare methodology section with detailed description of the model, performed analyses. Prepare analytical tables, graphs.
- c. Prepare a presentation on the results of the analyses.

For research topic 2:

- d. **Literature review**, specifically: Thorough desk research of published literature. Review should cover peer reviewed publication as well as grey literature (study reports, manuals, conference proceedings, etc.)
- e. Synthesize the information and produce the review according to the framework elaborated jointly with CIF.
- f. Prepare a presentation highlighting findings of the literature review.

Interns could contribute to the specific sections of the paper (depending on their interest and capabilities) that will be published in peer-reviewed journal. Interns will be named as co-authors on these papers when prepared and depending on the quality of their output.

Therefore students interested in HIV and behavioural issues with good literature review OR quantitative analysis skills OR scientific paper writing skills will strongly benefit from participating in this program.

Interns are expected to have one or several **following capabilities/experience**:

- **Literature review skills/experience.** Ability to undertake comprehensive systematic search, critical evaluation of publications, thorough analytical and summative literature review skills, covering methodological issues and topic related, ability to develop clear and cohesive structure with accurate citations.
- **Quantitative analytical skills/experience.** Theoretical and practical skills in regression analyses are required. Knowledge of *Propensity Score Matching* or *Coarsened Exact Matching analysis* will be requirement.
- **Scientific paper writing skills/experience**

Applicants interested in this research topics, however, not having proficiency in the skills they are interested to use **are strongly encouraged** to upgrade their theoretical knowledge and practical skills prior to the internship term by enrolling in respective courses in their schools. Applicants will be expected to adequately reflect this weakness in their application/motivation letter and describe how they intend to advance their knowledge and skills prior to undertaking internship. Failure to do so will have negative impact on internship evaluation, if accepted in our program.