FELLOWSHIPS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

Georg Arnhold International Summer Conference
August 29 to September 2, 2022 in Braunschweig, Germany

Selected fellows this year will conduct and/or support research projects within one of two priority areas that intersect with this year’s conference theme: Decolonizing Peace Education.

An overview of these research agendas is outlined below, with examples of potential research projects fellows may engage with. Please note this information is subject to change as our projects evolve over the coming year.

EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENDA

In 2015, approximately 28 million children around the world were forcibly displaced due to violence and conflict (UNICEF, 2016). These children have suffered multiple, prolonged adversities, which neuroscience shows can cause a toxic stress response that inhibits brain development and has long term effects on behavior, relationships and abilities to learn.

We know from research in stable contexts that this damage can be reduced or reversed by quality educational opportunities that include social-emotional learning. Yet we have little evidence about whether this holds true for children in conflict settings. Without evidence of what works for crisis affected children, our education programming is often based on intuition and assumption rather than data. We owe it to the children we serve to do better. We have a humanitarian imperative to learn how to ensure crisis-affected children don’t miss out on their right to an education—and on their chance for a better future.

The IRC aims to design, pilot and generate evidence on the most cost-effective models for improving access to education opportunities and delivering quality, safe education. We need to know: What works to improve access, learning and wellbeing, how, for whom, under what conditions, and at what cost? To this end, the IRC will design, pilot and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of interventions that aim to improve 1) access to quality education and 2) learning, social-emotional development and wellbeing for children in contexts of conflict and crisis.

Examples of potential research topics for fellows include:

1. Conduct/support needs assessments, formative research, and/or implementation research for PlayMatters, a project in Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia that is focused on holistic learning outcomes including social emotional learning with linkages to peace education.

2. Conduct/support country scans to identify education research projects and priorities within Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Bangladesh, and/or Myanmar. For example, one area of interest which a fellow may explore is the degree to which a new curriculum has elements to foster peace or conflict in South Sudan.

POWER RESEARCH AGENDA

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention programming addresses the root causes of conflict and works to reduce the risk of violent conflict occurring or relapsing. The IRC employs a diverse toolkit of solutions to build peace in conflict-affected communities working across sectors and the arc of crises from emergency response to recovery and development. Our
peacebuilding efforts focus on the following core areas of impact: 1) strengthening bridges between divided groups; 2) strengthening state and society relations; and 3) strengthening local capacities to anticipate, prevent, and manage conflict.

The IRC’s Power Research Agenda focuses on four strategic research themes: 1) systems strengthening; 2) client power and client responsiveness; 3) inclusive cities; and 4) peacebuilding and social cohesion. Fellows may have the opportunity to work specifically within the client power and client responsiveness and/or peacebuilding and social cohesion research themes. The client power and client responsiveness theme is focused on the identification of best practices for client engagement in service design, through this research we aim to ensure our clients have greater influence over program design and delivery and that people lead their own recovery and development. The central objective of our peacebuilding and social cohesion research is to design interventions that aim to eliminate structural violence by addressing societal inequities, grievances, social injustices, exclusion, and weak conflict management.

Examples of potential research topics for fellows include:

1. Conduct a comparative analysis of the main learnings from IRC’s peacebuilding projects in different contexts (e.g. South Sudan, Mali, Libya).
2. Conduct a learning exercise of the Learn to Lead curriculum (Libya, South Sudan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Iraq BMZ). This process aims to build different lessons about how to improve the content of the curriculum and how to deliver the curriculum in fragile conflict-affected areas.
3. Support research related to youth and capability development and safety and security in Maiduguri, Nigeria.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please note! The questions will be part of the online application form!

1. Are you interested in being considered for a Fellowship at the IRC?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

2. If so, please elaborate on your motivation for your application and answer the following questions (up to 250 words):
   a. Why are you interested in participating in the workshop?
   b. How would a fellowship with the IRC further your research and/or career?

3. Please elaborate below your experience related to humanitarian research (up to 250 words)
   a. Please specifically describe your role in both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis on previous research studies.
   b. Please describe any previous programmatic or research experience within humanitarian settings affected by conflict or disaster.

4. Please elaborate below your experience related to peacebuilding research and projects (up to 250 words)
   a. What do you think are under-explored areas in peacebuilding research?
   b. Could you please describe your experience designing and implementing peacebuilding (research) projects?
   c. What are the approaches that you consider more useful to implement peacebuilding projects in fragile conflict-affected areas?
   d. What do you think can be the role of INGOs in decolonizing peace education?