

Postdoctoral Research Position

Transformational Localisation, Health Systems, and Gender Equity in International Development

Applications are invited for a **Postdoctoral Research Position** running from **November 1, 2026 to June 30, 2029**. The successful candidate will join an interdisciplinary research project examining transformational localisation, gender equity, and health systems resilience in international development, with a particular focus on midwifery leadership in Malawi and South Sudan. The position offers an exciting opportunity to contribute to applied, policy-relevant research in partnership with Canadian and African midwifery associations, with findings that will directly inform international development programming.

Position Details

- **Host institution:** The Postdoctoral Researcher will be jointly hosted by the Department of Political Science and the Guelph Institute of Development Studies at the University of Guelph.
- **Funding:** This position is funded through a Mitacs Accelerate grant in partnership with the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM).
- **Salary:** \$53,000 per year plus benefits
- **Research support:** The Postdoctoral Researcher will have access to up to \$60,000 in additional research funds to support activities associated with the project.
- **Work arrangement:** The Postdoctoral Researcher may work remotely or in-person at the University of Guelph, as appropriate.
- **Travel:** International travel to Malawi is expected as part of the research activities and partnership engagement.
- **Supervision:** The Postdoctoral Researcher work closely with staff from the Canadian Association of Midwives, as well as work under the academic supervision of Dr. Andrea Paras.

About the Project

The TRUST project aims to strengthen resilient, gender-responsive health systems in Malawi and South Sudan by improving the agency of women and girls, including marginalized groups, to exercise their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), with a focus on midwifery leadership, community engagement, and inclusive, rights-based quality health care.

Simultaneously, the TRUST project also focuses on strengthening the health professional workforce, expanding access to quality, gender-responsive SRHR services, and empowering women and girls to make informed health decisions, enhancing the adaptive capacity of health systems in Malawi and South Sudan. By investing in skilled health professionals and promoting inclusive, rights-based care, TRUST will help ensure that health systems can respond flexibly and effectively to both acute crises and ongoing challenges. This approach not only advances gender equality and improves health outcomes for women, girls, and marginalized groups, but

also aligns with WHO's call for inclusive leadership, whole-of-society engagement, community participation, and strengthened social accountability.

This 5-year project, supported by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, is led by CAM in close collaboration with its project partners, the Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAMI) and the South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association (SSNAMA) and implementing partners which include Farm Radio Trust (FRT), Farm Radio International (FRI), the Association for Media and Development of South Sudan (AMDISS), CARE Canada, CARE South Sudan, and the Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians of South Sudan (AGOSS).

As part of the TRUST project's research and learning agenda, the Postdoctoral Researcher will lead a research program exploring how gender-responsive, transformational localisation can strengthen North–South partnerships and support sustainable health system change. Specifically, the research will examine how locally led midwifery associations contribute to health system resilience in Malawi and South Sudan and identify effective strategies for applying a transformational localisation framework within international development partnerships.

Working collaboratively with CAM, AMAMI, and SSNAMA, the Postdoctoral Researcher will investigate how locally led professional associations build leadership capacity and resilience, and what forms of accompaniment and partnership are most effective in supporting their long-term aspirations and institutional development. The research findings will directly inform implementation of the TRUST project during its final years and contribute more broadly to scholarship and practice on localisation, health systems strengthening, gender equity, midwifery leadership, and equitable global partnerships.

Responsibilities

The successful candidate will:

- Support the research activities associated with the TRUST learning agenda by working closely with the Canadian Association of Midwives, the Association of Malawian Midwives, and the South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association throughout the research process.
- Conduct literature reviews, data collection and generation (including through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participatory workshops and collaborative learning activities), analysis, and interpretation.
- Travel occasionally to project locations (primarily in Malawi) to coordinate and engage in primary data collection and in-person participatory exercises.
- Develop and implement high-quality research outputs and knowledge mobilization products to share findings with academic, policy, practitioner, and community audiences.
- Present research findings to diverse audiences, including scholarly, development sector, and partner organizations.
- Contribute to project meetings, planning activities, and collaborative and evidence-based decision-making.

- Liaise with University of Guelph course instructors to facilitate two course-embedded research partnerships that will contribute to the overall project.

Required Qualifications

Applicants must have:

- A PhD (completed at the time of appointment) in a relevant social science discipline, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, International Development, Global Health, Health Policy, Public Health, Gender Studies, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience conducting high-quality qualitative or mixed-methods research using participatory, feminist, and decolonial research methodologies.
- Demonstrated experience facilitating participatory research workshops and collaborative research processes.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and engagement with contemporary debates in the international development sector related to localisation, decolonisation, equitable partnerships, and locally-led development.
- Demonstrated experience managing research projects, including coordinating multiple activities, budgeting, meeting project timelines, and working collaboratively with diverse partners across countries and contexts
- Demonstrated experience using a variety of knowledge mobilization approaches to communicate research findings to scholarly, policy, practitioner, and community audiences.
- Explicit commitment to employing decolonizing, equitable, inclusive, reciprocal, transparent and mutually respectful methods and processes, in alignment with CAM's international partnership principles.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work both independently and collaboratively within interdisciplinary and international teams.
- Excellent organizational and time-management skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities and meet project deadlines.
- Strong leadership, initiative, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to travel to project locations in Malawi.

Preferred Qualifications

Preference will be given to candidates with one or more of the following:

- Experience conducting research in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in East and/or Southern Africa.
- Experience conducting research in nexus or humanitarian–development contexts.
- Knowledge of health systems strengthening, sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternal health, and/or midwifery.
- Experience working with civil society organizations, professional associations, or international development partnerships.

- Experience using participatory action research, co-design, or other collaborative and community-engaged research approaches in international contexts.
- Experience translating research findings into policy, practice, or organizational change.

What We Offer

This Postdoctoral Research Position provides an opportunity to conduct meaningful, collaborative research that will directly inform international development programming while contributing to growing global conversations on equitable partnerships, localisation, gender equity, and health system resilience. The successful candidate will work closely with leading researchers, domestic collaborators and international partners, and will have opportunities to publish, present internationally, and build a strong network across academic and practice communities.

Application Process

Applicants should submit:

- A cover letter describing their interest in the position and relevant experience;
- A current curriculum vitae;
- A sample of scholarly writing;
- Contact information for three academic or professional references.

Review of applications will begin on **September 1, 2026** and will continue until the position is filled. The appointment term is **November 1, 2026 to June 30, 2029**.

The successful applicant must be authorized to work in Canada (as a citizen, permanent resident or valid work permit holder) by the start date and for the full duration of the appointment.

We encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds and are committed to fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive research environment.

Please direct all inquiries and application materials to: Dr. Andrea Paras (aparas@uoguelph.ca).