



Cambridge ESRC DTP Knowledge Exchange Studentship 2020: *Characteristics, expectations and aspirations for work amongst marginalised young people in low- and middle-income countries.*

The University of Cambridge ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership [DTP], in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva, is pleased to offer a studentship available for admission in October 2020 in the Department of Geography. This studentship is fully funded.

The studentship is open as either a one-year masters followed by three-year doctoral programme or a three-year doctoral programme. Suitable Masters level qualifications are required should a student wish to enter at the PhD level. The project will be co-supervised by Dr. Anna Barford (Department of Geography), Professor Bhaskar Vira (Department of Geography), Professor Niall O'Higgins (ILO), and Dr. Adam Coutts (Department of Sociology), with additional supervisory support offered by Dr. Brendan Burchell (Department of Sociology). The project sits within the Infrastructural Geographies Thematic Research Group in the Department of Geography.

ESRC DTP students will acquire a unique set of skills that will equip them for high-profile careers as leading social scientists, in academia or in other government, industrial, commercial and third sector organisations, either in the UK or elsewhere. Specifically, this graduate programme involves periodic placements at the ILO, primarily in Geneva, overseen by Professor Niall O'Higgins.

Applications are encouraged from students with undergraduate degrees in subjects including (but not limited to) Geography, Sociology, Psychology, Economics, Politics, Law, and History.

Project description

The lack of decent and living wage employment available to young people in lower-income countries poses a major global challenge¹, due to poverty, frustrated aspirations, and the waste of potential for personal and societal development. Not finding quality work can have scarring effects throughout a young person's life^{2,3,4}, such as consistently low earnings. The need to address this challenge is enshrined in Sustainable Development Goal 8: *decent work for all*.

Amongst young people, NEETs (those Not in Education, Employment or Training) are particularly hard to reach and are therefore poorly understood. Young NEETs are a highly heterogeneous group, in which young women are over-represented. Many young women face gender-based discrimination and manage domestic responsibilities, which block them from paid employment.

¹ Anna Barford & Rachel Coombe. 2019. *Getting by: young people's working lives*. Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.39460>

² Paul Gregg. and Emma Tominey. 2004. The Wage Scar from Youth Unemployment. *CMPO Working Paper Series* No. 04/097.

³ Wiji Arulampalam, Paul Gregg and Mary Gregory. 2001. Introduction: Unemployment Scarring. *The Economic Journal*. Vol. 111, No. 475, pp. F577-F584.

⁴ Niall O'Higgins et al. 2017. The quality of work: Informal employment in low and middle income countries, in Niall O'Higgins. *Rising to the youth employment challenge: new evidence on key policy issues*. Geneva: ILO.

The research will involve two phases. (1) detailed analysis of data from the Labour Force Survey and ILO surveys on Youth Aspirations and the Future of Work. (2) Qualitative, interview-based case study research, to understand youth perspectives, experiences and aspirations. The findings will make a major contribution to formulation of international policy that promotes the employment prospects of marginalised young people.

The exact programme of research will develop according to the interests and skills of the student and guidance of the supervisors through the project, but indicative research questions include:

- What are key characteristics and determinants of different 'types' of NEET and how do these vary nationally and internationally?
- What determines the gender imbalances in NEET in different countries?
- How do the aspirations and expectations of NEET's in low- and middle-income countries vary according to individual, local and national factors?
- How do family responsibilities interact with employment aspirations of young NEETs?
- Do the expectations and aspirations of young women reflect their current status?

Training opportunities: The student will be provided with training in social science research skills, including techniques for analysis of micro-data and for collection and analysis of qualitative information. This training will be provided both at the University of Cambridge and at the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin. In Cambridge, training is provided through the Department of Geography's MPhil and PhD programmes, and also at the University level through the Social Sciences Research Methods Programme and the Researcher Development Programme.

Working with the ILO and the University of Cambridge: This programme offers an opportunity to gain a PhD alongside practical experience gained through periods spent at the ILO (primarily in Geneva). The ILO has a focus on understanding which types of policy and programme initiatives are best suited to particular contexts, so as to promote the access of young people to decent work opportunities. This doctoral programme will represent an integral part of knowledge building within the ILO. It will also link beneficially to a wider programme of research underway within the University of Cambridge, that is concerned with the decent work deficit for young people in lower income countries⁵.

A full ESRC DTP studentship will cover fees and provide £15,009 p.a. in living costs (current 2019 rates). DTP students also receive a personal allowance for additional training costs, and can apply for further funding to pursue fieldwork, academic exchange, and collaboration with non-academic partner organisations.

Cambridge ESRC DTP studentships are currently open to students who meet UK or EU residential criteria and the required academic conditions. Full studentships are open only to those meeting certain residency requirements. You can find out more here: <https://esrc.ukri.org/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/prospective-students/>

What to do next

You can find out more about the Cambridge ESRC DTP at: <https://www.esrcdtp.group.cam.ac.uk/about/onoffer> and read about some of the opportunities that will be available to you.

You can find out more about the Department of Geography at <https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk> and the International Labour Organization at www.ilo.org. Please address any questions about this

⁵ <https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/decentwork/>

studentship to Dr. Anna Barford at ab423@cam.ac.uk and Professor Bhaskar Vira at bhaskar.vira@geog.cam.ac.uk.

All Cambridge ESRC DTP applicants follow the University's standard admission process. Applications for this studentship should be made to the Department of Geography. Please go to our [Graduate Admissions Portal](#) to start your application and ensure you indicate that you wish to be considered for funding in the Funding section of the online application form.

The closing date for applications will be 7 January 2020 (early applications are encouraged).