

JOB OPENING

The Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) is an interdisciplinary research centre of the University of Bern. Its overarching goal is to produce and share knowledge for sustainable development in cooperation with partners in the global North and South.

We are seeking a

Full-time PhD candidate in Governing Commons in Agrifood Systems

As a successful candidate, you will be part of a large research project entitled “Commonification: transition pathways for urban sustainability (COMMONPATHS)”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (<http://commonpaths.unibe.ch>). The project aims to better understand the emergence, organization, effects, and conditions of success of three commonification processes aimed at (1) greening cities, (2) creating affordable housing, and (3) supporting community-based agrifood initiatives. By focusing on the governance of these three resource systems, COMMONPATHS aims to analyse the conditions under which these movements contribute effectively to strong urban sustainability. COMMONPATHS goes a step further and argues that self-organized collectives may even be forms of social-economic organization that can make transformations toward a postgrowth organization of society socially, ecologically, and economically acceptable.

Under the guidance of the senior project members, who are based at the University of Bern, the University of Lausanne, the University of Leeds, the University of Ghana in Accra, the Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Hague, and the University of Vienna, you will conduct your main research in Switzerland and Ghana. You will be affiliated with the Sustainability Governance Impact Area of CDE at University of Bern (co-led by Christoph Oberlack and Elisabeth Bürgi) and work closely with partners at the other universities involved in COMMONPATHS.

DUTIES

- Conduct a PhD in Geography and Sustainable Development
- Conduct comparative case studies in Ghana and Switzerland, analysing how community-based initiatives in agri-food systems are governed, how they evolve over time, how they manage resources, and how they are embedded in large institutional regimes (e.g. public policies, property rights systems)
- Conduct field research in Ghana and Switzerland over extended periods of time (for about 1 year in total; more if desired)
- Collaborate closely with colleagues and partners of the COMMONPATHS project in Switzerland, Ghana, and beyond; participate in project publications, research workshops, and other events; build a network with practitioners; and contribute to the project’s overall communication strategy
- Present your research at scientific conferences
- Publish results in international peer-reviewed journals

REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree in (Human) Geography or related social sciences/sustainability sciences
- Methodological skills in comparative analysis (semi-structured interviews desired); experience in institutional analysis (e.g. Institutional Analysis and Development, or Institutional Resource Regimes) is a plus
- Excellent language skills in English.
- Practical or research experiences in Ghana or Switzerland and/or in community-based initiatives are a plus
- You must be a team player, who can work in a precise, engaged, and self-organized manner

WE OFFER

- A highly motivated, dynamic, and intercultural research environment, committed to inspiring sustainable futures
- The chance to become an integral team member in the Sinergia-funded COMMONPATHS project
- Close and supportive supervision and collaboration of the project leaders and partners for your PhD research
- Participation in the International Graduate School North-South (www.igs-north-south.ch)
- A fully-funded PhD position for 46 months, with a budget for fieldwork
- Employment conditions and remuneration in accordance with the standards of the University of Bern, Switzerland

DETAILS

Location: CDE, University Bern, Mittelstrasse 43, 3012 Bern; with extended presence and fieldwork in Ghana and Switzerland

Starting: 1 March 2023 (or as agreed)

Duration: 46 months

Application documents: Please send your letter of motivation, CV with academic/professional certificates, and contact details of two references (no reference letters needed at this stage) as a single PDF to:
personaladministration.cde@unibe.ch.

Additionally, please send us your Master's thesis in a separate PDF document.

Please indicate in the motivation letter for which of the two PhD positions you are applying (Position 1 or Position2).

Apply by: 20 November 2022

For more information: Prof. Dr. Christoph Oberlack, christoph.oberlack@unibe.ch

CDE values diversity and is committed to equal opportunities; applications are welcome from all suitably qualified candidates who meet the stated criteria.