



**Readvertisement - TWO PHD POSITIONS WITHIN THE UR-SWEDEN RESEARCH TRAINING  
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME:**

***Undernutrition – an interdisciplinary programme focusing on children and their mothers at the College  
of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS) at the University of Rwanda (UR)***

**Academic year 2021-2026**

The overall research-training sub-programme will address the complexity of undernutrition in children and their mothers with an extensive interdisciplinary undertaking by the University of Rwanda in collaboration with complementary specialists from five universities in Sweden, involving a number of scientific disciplines working in close collaboration. It is planned as four interlinked research projects combining Health issues, Agricultural practices and Environmental matters with Geospatial Information Technology and Innovation opportunities.

We welcome applicants from the field of obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, nutrition, public health, or other related fields in medicine to apply for one PhD position at Umeå University, Sweden (PhD 1) and one PhD position at University of Gothenburg, Sweden (PhD 2).

As a PhD student, you will make yearly visits to Sweden for PhD courses and supervision. The planning of these visits will take into account the requirements and needs of the PhD student's education as well as the requirements of the PhD project. Supervision will be given on-site and online from the Swedish main supervisor and supervisors at UR, and other researchers within this program. Each PhD will be supervised by experts in at least two of the fields of science represented in this sub-programme.

While in Sweden, you will attend research training as courses, seminars, journal clubs, and national and international conferences. Interaction with other PhDs from Sweden and other countries is part of the experience.

Studies are expected to start in 2021 and last for 5 years, taking into account that the candidate is expected to contribute in teaching at UR, equivalent to maximum 20% of a full-time position. The maximum time to be spent in Sweden is 29 months/5 years, and not more than 7 months in one year, (sandwich mode) and there is an obligation to return to Rwanda after graduation.

Other side activities, assignments, consultancies, or employments are strongly discouraged during the PhD period. The PhD candidate should be prepared to work full time on his/her project and not be in possession of another fellowship for PhD studies.

According to the gender equality component in the program, applicants of under-represented sex (most often females) are encouraged to apply. As per the policy, male applicants below the age of 40 years and female applicants below the age of 45 years are given priority for PhD positions in case of merits being equal.

This call is part of the Research Training Programme (2019-2026) funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), aiming to strengthen research capacity at the University of Rwanda (UR).





---

Below the two positions are described in more detail:

**PhD Position 1. *Developing, implementing, and evaluating a pilot Rwandan Medical Birth Register at Umeå University, Department of Clinical Sciences, Obstetrics and Gynecology, and UR, College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS)***

**Programme description**

Welcome to apply for doctoral studies at Umeå University. The main supervisor, Professor Ingrid Mogren, is affiliated to Umeå University, Sweden, and co-supervisors are affiliated to the University of Rwanda, University of Gothenburg, and Lund University, Sweden. We invite applicants for conducting a PhD in *Public Health* or *Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

*Study context*

Medical Birth Registers worldwide have proven invaluable in providing trustworthy information to health sectors, governments and to researchers on outcomes of pregnancy and childbirth. This project aims to develop an electronic pilot Rwandan Medical Birth Register in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, with the potential of nationwide implementation in the future.

*Outline of the study*

*Design:* The overall study design is to develop, implement and evaluate a pilot Rwandan Medical Birth Register through four different sub-studies. The pilot Rwandan MBR software programme has been constructed during the last years. The first part is to evaluate the pilot MBR in a pre-field setting before the implementation. The next step is to implement the MBR, meaning training of health professionals in registration of data from different data sources, applying codes for maternal and fetal/child health conditions, and overall management of a MBR at selected health facilities.

*Data collection and data analysis:* Eight health centers and two district hospitals in the Northern Province have been selected. Data on maternal background characteristics, geographic location, and maternal and fetal/child health outcomes will be collected. The implementation of an electronic MBR will be evaluated in quantitative and qualitative studies, i.e., monitoring the implementation process, investigating data quality, exploring health professionals' experiences of handling a MBR, and investigating normal/adverse pregnancy health outcomes in registered data. Thus, four sub-studies will be undertaken in this PhD project and these will form the main part of the doctoral thesis.

*The role of the PhD*

The PhD student will have a significant role in implementing the pilot MBR in the field, as well as provide support to health professionals/data managers managing the MBR. The PhD student will primarily be collaborating with the PhD student enrolled in pediatric nutrition. The data collection in the MBR will continue throughout the entire study period.

**General Eligibility criteria as stipulated by the UR policy.**

**The eligibility criteria are now widened as this is a re-advertisement:**

According to UR Scholarships policy 2.1.1.2: Candidates from outside UR are eligible to apply in areas where UR has failed to attract internal applicants in the first call, provided that immediate employment can be justified by the beneficiary College and negotiated with the University management.



If justified and negotiated, a candidate from outside UR shall provide a proof that leaving her/his current employment will be possible (demonstrated by a recommendation from the current employer). Applicants should have 75% in the previous year's evaluation report.

**The applicant must be:**

- i. UR employed staff or external candidates, such as persons on temporary contracts, persons from collaborating government institutions, including the Ministry of Health and other universities, and staff within the health care sector.
- ii. Citizen of Rwanda;
- iii. Holding a relevant MSc degree from UR or any other university;
- iv. Ready to spend a maximum of 29 months in Sweden in multiple visits;
- v. Ready to continue working at the University of Rwanda after completion of the PhD studies for a specified period of time.

**Specific eligibility criteria**

*Essential criteria:*

- vi. The candidate is a medical doctor, having some clinical experience in obstetrics, including assessing maternal and fetal/child health conditions;
- vii. The candidate should hold a MSc degree in a obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, public health, or any other related field within medicine;
- viii. The candidate must be proficient in English.

*Desired criteria:*

- ix. Basic skills in epidemiology, biostatistics, data analysis, and qualitative methods.
- x. Basic skills in ICT tools.

How to apply is described further below:

**PhD POSITION 2. *Studying the complex interplay between maternal and child health, and nutrition, and the risk of adverse child health outcomes***  
**at University of Gothenburg, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, and UR, College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS)**

**Programme description**

Welcome to apply for doctoral studies at the University of Gothenburg (GU); preferably, you are a medical doctor with a background in *Nutrition, Pediatrics or Public Health*. The main supervisor, Associate professor Kristina Elfving, is affiliated to the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and co-supervisors and collaborators are affiliated to UR, GU, Lund University, and Umeå University, Sweden.

*Study context and outline*

The PhD project consists of two field studies. (a. and b.)

- a. A cross-sectional epidemiological study. The specific focus for the present PhD position will be to investigate the role of perinatal factors including low birth weight, maternal and child diet, infant feeding practices, food insecurity, childhood illnesses and function as risk factors for malnutrition in childhood (stunting).





- A household survey will be conducted in five districts of the northern province of Rwanda, where 630 households visited and the study population will be children (n=630-650) aged 1-36 months and their mothers.
- b. The MBR pilot study aims to develop, implement and evaluate a pilot electronic Rwandan Medical Birth Register with data collected in eight selected health centres and two district hospitals in the Northern Province of Rwanda. For further information on study context and outline it is described under the call for “PhD position 1”. The specific focus for this PhD position will be to describe and analyse neonatal outcomes and corresponding risk factors.

#### *Role of the PhD*

The main scientific areas of the proposed PhD programme are nutrition, pediatrics and epidemiology. Continuous interdisciplinary scientific collaboration with the other areas of the sub-programme- (e.g. Public health, agriculture, animal science, and GIS) is key throughout the PhD programme, including field study, data collection, data analysis and reporting. The PhD student will take part in the data collection for both studies, an epidemiology study on undernutrition (a) as well as the implementation of a pilot MBR study (b). The PhD student will also provide support to health professionals managing the MBR and collaborate closely with the other PhD student enrolled in the MBR project (see above). The PhD student will in addition to collecting data, compile, analyse and report study results in four different papers to be published in international peer-reviewed journals, and these form the PhD thesis.

#### **General Eligibility criteria as stipulated by the UR policy.**

**The eligibility criteria are now widened as this is a re-advertisement:**

According to UR Scholarships policy 2.1.1.2: Candidates from outside UR are eligible to apply in areas where UR has failed to attract internal applicants in the first call, provided that immediate employment can be justified by the beneficiary College and negotiated with the University management. If justified and negotiated, a candidate from outside UR shall provide a proof that leaving her/his current employment will be possible (demonstrated by a recommendation from the current employer). Applicants should have 75% in the previous year’s evaluation report.

The applicant must be:

- i. UR employed staff or external candidates, such as being employed at other universities, collaborating government authorities, including Ministry of Health, UR staff on temporary contracts, external MSc or even PhD holders.
- ii. Citizen of Rwanda
- iii. Holding a relevant MSc degree;
- iv. Ready to spend a minimum of 29 months in Sweden in multiple visits
- v. Ready to continue working at the University of Rwanda after completing the PhD studies for a specified period of time.

#### *Essential criteria:*

- i. The candidate is preferably a medical doctor.
- ii. The candidate should hold a MSc degree in a relevant field, such as nutrition, pediatrics or public health;
- iii. The candidate must be proficient in English.





*Desired criteria:*

- i. Clinical experience in pediatrics (in particular neonatology), and nutrition.
- ii. Skills in epidemiology, biostatistics, data analysis, and other quantitative methods.
- iii. Basic skills in ICT tools.
- iv. Experience with register-based studies as well as epidemiology is an advantage.

**How to apply for PhD position 1 and/or PhD position 2**

Interested applicants should submit the following:

- i. An application letter for the position indicates which of the two positions you are applying for, it should be **PhD 1. A pilot Rwandan Medical Birth Register** or **PhD 2. Nutrition**.
- ii. A personal motivation statement for the programme of study. This statement should demonstrate commitment, motivation and reasons for interest in the programme (max 2 pages).
- iii. Current CV (maximum of 3 pages) with full name, e-mail, date of birth, sex, formal education at xx university (please specify), including full specification of the Masters' degree specialization, teaching experience, previous experience relevant to the programme, present position, scientific publications and/or any other academic experience that may be relevant.
- iv. Recommendation letters from two academic or professional referees, from people who can comment on the candidate's intellectual curiosity and academic ability to pursue research, leading to a PhD in the specified thematic area: one of the recommendation letters should be issued by a previous academic supervisor, preferably the Master's degree supervisor.
- v. Applicants from a College at UR need to inform the Principal about applying for this position; and attach a confirmatory letter from the Principal, who received this information.
- vi. Applicants from collaborating government institutions must attach letter from the employer, ensuring the candidate gets study leave for the entire period if chosen for the scholarship;
- vii. Certified copy of the relevant highest prior degree (e.g. Master's degree for PhD applicants).
- viii. Copies of valid identification card or passport.
- ix. Copy of the Master thesis.

Please send the above (scanned and saved in one document) to the following emails: UR CPGS email: [ur-cpgscholarship@ur.ac.rw](mailto:ur-cpgscholarship@ur.ac.rw) with a copy to the subprogramme team leaders Theoneste Ntakirutimana; [ntakirutimana@nursph.org](mailto:ntakirutimana@nursph.org) and Gunilla Krantz; [gunilla.krantz@socmed.gu.se](mailto:gunilla.krantz@socmed.gu.se). Please name the application folder with your name and PhD1 or PhD2 depending on which position you apply for "[document name]".

**Submission deadline**

The deadline for application: November 26, 2021

**Contact details for more information:**

For further information on PhD 1, *A pilot Rwandan Medical Birth Register*, please contact Professor Ingrid Mogren, Department of Clinical Sciences, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Umeå University, Sweden: [ingrid.mogren@umu.se](mailto:ingrid.mogren@umu.se).

You are very welcome to request a zoom meeting with Professor Ingrid Mogren for information exchange.



For further information on *PhD 2. Nutrition*, please contact Assoc. Professor Kristina Elfving, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of Gothenburg, Sweden: [Kristina.elfving@gu.se](mailto:Kristina.elfving@gu.se)  
You are very welcome to request a zoom meeting with Assoc. Professor Kristina Elfving for information exchange.

Done at Kigali, 03, 2021



**Prof. Nosa O. EGIEBOR**  
**Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research**  
**University of Rwanda**