

**Faculty:** William Masters, Professor, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

**Project Locations:** Boston, MA and Lilongwe, Malawi

**Dates:** June 1- July 31, 2020 (flexible)

**Project Title:** Innovative Methods and Metrics for Agriculture and Nutrition Actions (IMMANA)

**Project Details:** Innovative Methods and Metrics for Agriculture and Nutrition Actions (IMMANA) is a research initiative led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in partnership with Tufts University and School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. IMMANA's objectives are to: stimulate the development of innovative methodological approaches and novel metrics in agriculture and food systems for improved health and nutrition; build a cadre of emerging leaders skilled in developing and applying cutting-edge methods and metrics; facilitate learning, sharing and new interdisciplinary research collaborations; and develop scientific evidence to inform policies and investments in agriculture and food systems for improved nutrition and health. Under Phase 1 the ANH Academy provided world-class learning labs, constituted expert technical working groups and created platforms for researchers of all levels to share cutting-edge evidence. Phase 2 builds on these activities with the establishment of a new synthesis centre to facilitate systematic reviews, synthesise tools, methods, metrics and data, as well as a comprehensive programme to strengthen the capacity of researchers to undertake ground-breaking work linking agriculture, nutrition and health. Underpinning these initiatives is a research uptake and communications platform that ensures rapid sharing, development and use of the best tools and approaches emerging from IMMANA Grants, Fellowships and the wider world of research and practice.

**Tasks and Responsibilities of Research Assistant:** One objective of the Tufts-based IMMANA team is to create a web-based tool to connect researchers with the data and resources to carry out data syntheses related to agriculture, nutrition, and health. We call this tool the SCANR Hub, or the Synthesis Center for Agriculture and Nutrition Research Hub. The SCANR Hub will connect users with resources and provide expert critical perspectives for each stage of the research process. The Hub is currently under development and will be in beta form by June 2020. The RA will help to prepare the beta version of the SCANR Hub by adding and editing site content, proofreading existing site content, and checking links. They will also test and give feedback to the rest of the team on the site's content and usability. In June and July 2020, our team will present and seek feedback on the SCANR Hub through a learning lab and other side meetings at the ANH Academy Week in Lilongwe, Malawi. The RA will assist with planning and logistics for these consultations and will also attend and participate in the events. After the Academy Week, the RA will synthesize feedback received from the consultations and propose next steps to improve the SCANR Hub. During the ANH Academy week, the RA will also be expected, along with all other team members, to contribute to hands-on support of conference operations. This could include helping participants at the registration desk, directing participants to sessions, taking notes during research sessions, and/or contributing to logistical operations of the learning labs, panels, poster presentations, and conference activities. These duties will include attending conference sessions related to the RA's academic and research interests, attending networking events, and meeting conference attendees from diverse organizations and backgrounds. The RA will also develop and implement a small project related to the SCANR Hub, which can be tailored based on their interests and capacity. For example, the Hub will include case studies of how the web tool can be applied to solve research and policy problems related to agriculture, nutrition, and health. The RA could choose a research question or data set related to

agriculture, nutrition, and health and develop a short case study and related materials to be showcased on the website.

Through work on the SCANR Hub the student learns about research design and capacity development for early career researchers. The student would work with Elena Martinez, PhD student, to help to prepare the beta version of the SCANR Hub by adding and editing site content, proofreading existing site content, and checking links. They will also test and give feedback to the rest of the team on the site's content and usability. In June and July 2020, our team will present and seek feedback on the SCANR Hub through a learning lab and other side meetings at the ANH Academy Week in Lilongwe, Malawi. The RA will help prepare these stakeholder consultations, attend and participate in Academy Week events, and assist with modest planning and logistics. After the Academy Week, the RA will synthesize feedback received from the consultations and propose next steps to improve the SCANR Hub. This work is connected to the conference because consultations will be happening at the conference. We see the modest logistics tasks as an added benefit – the student would get to know the team (PhDs, postdocs, senior researchers at Tufts and LSHTM), network, and form relationships in the global ANH research and implementation space. Another educational outcome is that the student would see how research conferences are run, attend the conference and have opportunities to meet wide variety of researchers, policymakers, and donor organizations from all over the world. This type of simultaneous learning and application may not be available through undergraduate studies and provides the student the opportunity to form career networks. They will also learn about new applications of economics, nutrition, agriculture, and health.

#### **Qualifications:**

1. Prior knowledge of and interest in the research process and how data can be used to stimulate policy initiatives
2. Competency working within a web development platform. This does not imply the student should know how to code, as the student would be focused on site content.
3. Competency traveling internationally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries is recommended but not required
4. This opportunity is ideal for a student who has taken related coursework. This doesn't need to be nutrition-focused, but some knowledge of the research process in social sciences would be helpful.

#### **Description of Field Site and Housing in Malawi:**

The student will stay in a hotel in Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi, within walking distance of the convention center. The hotel is equipped with all necessary security amenities. The conference will be located at the convention center. The student will also attend stakeholder meetings at various professional offices in the city.