

We are applying to mentor an early career female researcher to participate in a project entitled *Food and nutrition security contributions from African Great Lakes fisheries*. The purpose of this project is to improve the assessment, quantification, and broad understanding of the contributions that African Great Lakes fisheries make to food and nutrition security in the region. While it is generally known that these large water bodies serve as important sources of food and livelihoods, substantial data and knowledge gaps exist in quantifying the magnitude of those contributions, identifying underlying drivers, and advocating for appropriate policies.

Recent innovative work on ocean fisheries has integrated data on fishery yields with information on the nutrient content of different fish species, more clearly illuminating the magnitude of nutritional contributions of fisheries, especially with respect to the provision of essential micronutrients and fatty acids. As groundbreaking as this work was, it excluded inland fisheries, which account for more than one tenth of global fish production. The early career scholar will work to fill this gap by integrating data on nutritional content, fisheries, and value chains and trade for African Great Lakes and interfacing it with additional socioeconomic datasets. She will also have the opportunity to engage in fieldwork around one or more Great Lakes of her choice, conducting a series of interviews and/or household surveys to situate analysis within local and regional political, social, and cultural contexts.

This project contributes to AAP thematic area 1. Agri-food Systems, with strong links to thematic area 6. Health & Nutrition. While agri-food systems often refer to terrestrial food production systems, our project responds to recent calls to conceptualize fisheries as food systems.¹ A food systems perspective on fisheries underscores the importance of fish as a low-cost, micronutrient-dense animal source protein and helps to illuminate the often-hidden contributions of fish to addressing malnutrition, childhood stunting, maternal health outcomes, immune system function, and even non-communicable disease burden.¹

The early career researcher will play an integral role in the project, through data collection, analysis, preparation of at least one peer-reviewed publication, and policy communication and networking activities. Through fieldwork, the researcher will also develop and enhance skills in social science data collection and analysis techniques including survey and semi-structured interviews. These fundamental skills will be complemented by innovative approaches to GIS analysis and database management, and spatial data visualization and communication techniques. This technical expertise will be married with the overarching mission of developing skills and experience in communicating for scholarly and policy impact through activities such as preparation of a peer-reviewed publication, developing an impactful policy brief, and participating in relevant workshops and policy fora. Finally, the researcher will be able to develop connections with project partners and collaborators from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and WorldFish, among others.

¹ Bennett et al. (2018). Contribution of Fisheries to Food and Nutrition Security: Current Knowledge, Policy, and Research. NI Report 1802. Durham, NC: Duke University, <https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/publications?topics=34>.