

Tufts University Job Description

All interested parties should e-mail a letter of interest and a resume to Shelley Marcus shelley.marcus@tufts.edu and Elizabeth Ignowski elizabeth.ignowski@tufts.edu

Summary Information

Position Title: Field Research Director

Job to start immediately and be located in Boston, MA, USA for approximately 2 months, and Burkina Faso, Africa for 3+ years.

Department Overview:

The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, established in 1981, is the only self-governing graduate and professional school of nutrition in North America. Its mission is to improve the nutritional well-being of people worldwide through:

- the creation of new knowledge
- the application and dissemination of evidence-based information and
- the education and training of future leaders in the field

This mission is fulfilled by bringing together experts from the areas of clinical nutrition, social and public policy, and biomedicine. Faculty at the school include biomedical scientists, economists, epidemiologists, nutritionists, physicians, political scientists and psychologists who focus on a myriad of issues with the common thread of nutrition and its role in fostering the growth and development of human populations.

The Friedman School of Nutrition is seeking a full-time Field Research Director to work on a project relating to the assessment of the quality and programmatic uses of fortified food products used in U.S. Title II food aid programs. The project, called the Food Aid Quality Review, (www.foodaidquality.org) is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of Food for Peace (FFP).

The project was established in April 2009 to review the quality of Title II food products and programming through literature review, expert consultation, industry consultation, survey methods, and studies. The project completed its second year of research in April 2011 and submitted a final report to USAID with recommendations on changes to U.S. food aid products and programming. The next phase of the Food Aid Quality Review will involve presenting findings and recommendations, implementing many of the recommendations, and testing recommendations through follow-on studies or trials.

Position Overview:

The Field Research Director will work closely with the Principal Investigator (PI) and co-PI of the Food Aid Quality Review as well as the in-country collaborators ACDI/VOCA and Save the Children to implement a study to assess the effectiveness, cost, and cost-effectiveness of recommended changes to Corn Soy Blend. The study will compare:

- 1) Corn Soy Blend 14 (with whey protein concentrate and enhanced micronutrient profile), prepared with fortified vegetable oil (FVO)
- 2) An appropriate Lipid based Nutritional Supplement (LNS/RUSF)
- 3) Supercereal Plus (CSB++), the FBF used by WFP, which has an enhanced nutrient profile, dairy ingredient (non-fat dry milk), and oil already embedded into the CSB
- 4) Supercereal/CSB+ with FVO

Objective: To test the effectiveness of four supplementary foods in the prevention of MAM and stunting in normal programmatic settings.

Study Design

The studies will be cluster-randomized trials collecting information on participating children. Locations (communities, clinics) will be assigned to one of the four arms. Enrollment of children will be ongoing until the required sample size is reached. These studies are effectiveness trials, meaning that the programs' operation and the beneficiary households' compliance with recommendations regarding prevention will be studied along with consumption of the food provided as determinants of the differential impact measured in the four arms of the study.

Prevention of MAM and Stunting

The comparison will be based on the preventive model: distribution of the food supplement to at-risk children 6-23 months. All study arms will deliver the same services to children and their households, except for the difference in the food supplement and message that goes along with that particular supplement. The study will follow children from age six months (when distribution of food supplement intended for children's consumption is initiated) to 23 months. We will follow-up with children 6 months and 12 months after completion to assess health status. Total duration of the study depends on the rate of enrollment but is expected to be about 4 years with an optional additional year to analyze data.

Primary outcomes to be measured are incidence of MAM and incidence of stunting. Cost effectiveness will assess differences among the four study arms in cost per case of MAM, per case of stunting, and per case of linear growth faltering averted (that is, relative to the intervention with the highest rates).

The research will take place in communities surrounding Kaya, Burkina Faso.

In collaboration with the PI, the Field Research Director's responsibilities will include:

1. Taking overall responsibility for management and coordination of all tasks related to the research in the field.
2. Coordinating with procurement staff to ensure new commodities are in the pipeline, transported, and stored properly in the study country.
3. Taking the lead in drafting protocol and documents for the Tufts and national Institutional or Ethical Review Boards; work closely with PI and Research Coordinators to ensure satisfactory completion of the process. Work with PVOs to select sample communities and sample food distribution locations.
4. Developing training materials for health care workers and for beneficiaries.
5. Developing data collection instruments (questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, etc.).
6. Taking the lead in identifying and contracting a local research firm to assist in data collection (baseline through follow-ups) and supervise their activities. This includes the administration of questionnaires, conduct of focus groups, and taking height, weight, and MUAC of beneficiary children.
7. Conduct (or contract with a local researcher to conduct) a market analysis to assess availability and costs of commodities in the market.
8. Ensure proper study implementation: community sensitization of new food assistance products, training Health Care Workers on how to instruct beneficiaries to cook and consume food assistance products, supervising data collection.
9. Work with clinics/communities to take accurate measurements of beneficiaries (height, weight, MUAC).
10. Work with the Tufts team to analyze data on an ongoing basis.
11. Write quarterly progress reports throughout the project with interim results.
12. Work with research assistants to monitor and record the costs of each arm of the intervention.
13. Maintain regular coordination with the implementing PVOs in country
14. Maintain regular coordination and submit regular progress reports to the PI and study coordinators.
15. Work with the Tufts team to write reports on the results of the study.
16. Work with the Tufts team to write a report on the results of the pre/post study.

Position Qualifications:

Basic Requirements:

Candidates must meet basic requirements to be considered for this position.

Required education: MS/MPH in food policy/nutrition

Years of related experience required: 3-5

Special licenses required: No.

Required computer/technical skills: Familiarity with Microsoft Office Suite. Familiarity with data analysis programs (such as STATA or Nvivo) and GIS programs (ArcGIS).

Other (Describe – i.e., lifting, domestic/foreign travel, foreign language): Willing to live and travel internationally, between Boston, MA and Burkina Faso. Field research experience required. Proficient in French. Experience with IRB approval process. Ability to lift 20 pounds with or without accommodation.

Preferred Qualifications:

Ph.D. in food policy or nutrition plus 1-2 years experience. Experience conducting research in less developed countries in nutrition, health, or related programs at the community level. Experience with USAID, Title II programs. Excellent organizational and managerial ability, attention to detail, and ability to multitask; excellent research skills; excellent writing and editing skills.

Special Work Schedule Requirements

This position will be full time beginning in Boston, Massachusetts (USA) for approximately 2 months of training, and will then locate to Burkina Faso for approximately 3 years during the period of study implementation and data collection, with trips to the US periodically. The needs of field research are erratic; there will be periods of intense activity as well as regular internal travel to research sites in the country.

The remainder of the time (approximately 1 year), the Field Research Director will be based in Boston, Massachusetts, at Tufts University. During analysis and report writing (in Boston), the schedule will be more predictable but still may require overtime when reports are due.

The percentages devoted to each category of activity will change depending on the stage of the project. Thus, for example, the percent devoted to “support for design and management of the study” is listed as 40% but will be close to full time (80-90%) while the study is in the field. The percent devoted to “data management and analysis” will be close to full time once the field work is completed. These percentages are approximate based on consideration of the 4 -5 year time horizon of the project.