

WMFG Undergraduate Research Fellowships at the Center for Microfinance / University of Zurich

Fall / Winter 2010

The Center for Microfinance (CMF) at the University of Zurich's Swiss Banking Institute, in collaboration with the World Microfinance Forum Geneva (WMFG), offers a fellowship program for Bachelor and Master students in Banking and Finance, Economics and Business Administration. The fellowship aims to strengthen knowledge transfer between academic institutions and the microfinance industry and to promote research collaboration.

As WMFG fellows, students have the opportunity to conduct research for their Bachelor or Master thesis at the CMF with direct relevance to the microfinance industry and WMFG network. They benefit from academic guidance through the CMF, and additional substantial inputs, access to data, and a chance to present their research results at high-level meetings, from the WMFG.

About WMFG

WMFG is a Swiss association devoted to assisting high level stakeholders in their decisions on responsible investment in inclusive finance. It aims to strengthen Switzerland's position as the leading country in sustainable finance. Its vision is to be the best global platform that promotes responsible investment in inclusive financial markets, its mission to assist high level stakeholders in their decisions regarding investment in inclusive finance.

WMFG pursues its mission through Working Groups consisting of leading stakeholders in inclusive finance that share a particular area of concern. These groups are platforms for constant networking and learning, as well as in-depth exchange of expertise. Working Group Partners and Members may be competitors from the same sector who see the benefit of working together on certain issues, or they may be representatives of different types of organizations that have a shared interest. They sign up for 2-3 years and contribute time and resources to the achievement of the group's goals.

About the Center for Microfinance at the University of Zurich

The Center for Microfinance is the center of excellence in applied academic research, advisory services, teaching and executive training about microfinance at the University of Zurich. Its mission is to improve knowledge on the mechanisms of microfinance and quality assurance of microfinance investments.

Located at the Swiss Banking Institute, it focuses on the areas of financial and social performance of microfinance institutions and strengthening of relationships between investors, financial markets and the microfinance industry. Its position within a leading research institution and its proximity to several global microfinance investment market leaders and investors based in Switzerland allows it to combine independent research with responsiveness to the latest trends in the microfinance industry.

What the fellowship offers

WMFG aims to produce high quality research that will help to promote inclusive financial markets. To help achieve this goal, it offers fellowships to students of a small number of academic institutions with proven expertise in inclusive finance. While the fellowship is unremunerated, it offers a number of advantages to the research fellows:

Advantages of the fellowships include:

- Pursuing a Bachelor or Master thesis at the CMF / University of Zurich while also:
- Working on a cutting edge and practical research topic that is considered pertinent by the leading actors that form part of one of WMFG's working groups
- Receiving scientific guidance and support through the CMF
- Having access to WMFG's library of resources on the intranet of the working group that has requested the research
- Having access to some of WMFG's other contacts where these could be helpful for the execution of the research
- Presenting the research at a meeting of WMFG's working group, and obtaining its valuable comments and feedback on the methodology and outcomes
- Enjoying an excellent opportunity to meet industry representatives and scientific researchers, and to establish professional contacts
- Featuring on WMFG's website as a fellow, with photograph and small biography
- Obtaining a certificate of fellowship and the possibility to include the fellowship on the fellow's CV

If the quality of the work is high enough, the following additional advantages are possible:

- Publication of the research
- Dissemination of the publication in the microfinance community
- Exposure of the publication in the media
- Eligibility for a Post-graduate Fellowship with WMFG that includes an opportunity to gain work experience combined with further academic advancement in the area of inclusive finance

Research areas

Research areas for the thesis work of WMFG fellows are defined by WMFG Working Groups.

Specific research topics for the thesis work drawn from the research areas are elaborated jointly by the WMFG project manager for the respective working group and the CMF scientific adviser. WMFG fellows will be able to select among a small number of research topics.

Examples of Research Areas

- Institutional investment in inclusive finance
- Investor-friendly regulation for inclusive finance in China
- Inclusive finance in Switzerland
- Inclusive finance and corporate governance
- Islamic inclusive finance in the Middle East

Application Process and Deadlines

To become a WMFG fellow, students are required to have a strong interest in microfinance and its role in economic development. Basic knowledge of statistics and empirical methods including econometrics is required. Students should be willing to travel to the WMFG if necessary.

Interested students should send an application in English as early as possible, to the CMF, attention Dr Annette Krauss, at the e-mail address below. The fellowship decision will be made and the thesis topic will be defined within four weeks after receipt of the application.

The application should include the following information:

- Cover email and motivation for the application
- Interest in research area
- CV
- Leistungsausweis (transcript of records) of BA / MA studies in banking and finance, management, or economics, at University of Zurich

For more information please contact Dr Annette Krauss at the CMF, cmf@isb.uzh.ch