

Research Assistant, Humanitarian Access and Negotiations

Vacancy Announcement

November 2018

1. Overview

Conflict Dynamics International (<http://www.cdint.org/>) seeks to hire an exceptional and highly-motivated Research Assistant to work in Cambridge, MA, for its Humanitarian Access and Negotiations program. The Research Assistant will be a member of a small, dynamic team that develops high-quality guidance materials for humanitarian practitioners and implements capacity building programs for professionals in contexts around the world. The Research Assistant will conduct research on trends and innovations in the field of humanitarian access and negotiations; contribute to publications and articles; contribute to grant proposals; edit documents; and provide desk support for remote presentations and field engagements. The Research Assistant will play an important role in guaranteeing excellence and rigor in Conflict Dynamics' publications, presentations, and engagements.

The position is to begin immediately, for an initial period of 6 months, with the possibility of extension, should it be mutually agreeable. The level of effort is 16 hours per week. Some domestic and international travel may be required (*if this is the case*).

2. Background

Conflict Dynamics International is an independent, not-for-profit organization that works to prevent and resolve violent conflict, and to alleviate human suffering resulting from conflicts and other crises around the world.

Conflict Dynamics was founded in 2004 and strives to fulfill its mission to alleviate human suffering through working with practitioners to build their capacity to negotiate with parties to armed conflict and improve access to populations in need. Conflict Dynamics has a proven track record in the provision of high-quality practical guidance and trainings which participants have overwhelmingly reported have improved access for their organizations.

Conflict Dynamics' Humanitarian Access and Negotiations program operates on a dual track of supporting humanitarian practitioners while also engaging access influencers, including government and opposition group representatives. Guidance and trainings are designed to enable humanitarian actors to improve their access and negotiations through methodological processes firmly rooted in humanitarian principles and international laws and norms. Since the inception of the program, Conflict Dynamics has partnered with various organizations, notably the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and produced leading resources such as [The Handbook on the International Normative Framework](#) and [The Practitioners' Manual](#).

Conflict Dynamics' Humanitarian Access and Negotiations program currently has programs of work scheduled in Cameroon, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan with the potential to expand into different

countries and contexts. In addition, the team conducts research in thematic areas exploring emerging issues and challenges for humanitarian professionals.

3. Scope of work

The role of the Research Assistant is to support the Humanitarian Access and Negotiations program, in particular through context analysis of various conflict settings where the organization is involved, engage in specific research projects, contribute to publications and articles; contribute to grant proposals; edit documents; and provide desk support for remote presentations and field engagements.

The duties and responsibilities of the Research Assistant may include:

Applied research

1. Undertake context analysis and mapping of key stakeholders.
2. Research, draft, and contribute to Conflict Dynamics' series of publications which cover emerging trends and areas of interest in the field of humanitarian access and negotiations. This will include ensuring the first two *Access Briefs* on [Humanitarian Access and Technology](#) and [Negotiating Humanitarian Access](#) are up to date, as well as identifying topics and contributing to future editions.
3. Support the implementation of trainings and workshops in different locations by conducting background research and contextualizing the humanitarian environment in various countries and conflicts.

Writing and editing

1. Examining HAN trainings data from Conflict Dynamics' research projects and producing a practical resource to be shared externally.
2. Work alongside team members to review the 2018 program of work, with the objective of drafting an internal lessons learned paper to inform future projects and collaborations in the field.

The Research Assistant will also conduct other tasks as agreed with Conflict Dynamics.

4. Experience, skills, and qualifications

The following are indicative skills, experience, and qualifications for the Research Assistant position:

- Graduate degree (Master's or equivalent) in progress or completed in international conflict resolution, international relations, political science, law, or a related social science field.
- Professional experience working on issues related to international humanitarian law, conflict resolution, humanitarian access, and other related fields.
- Field research experience/application in situations of conflict or political transition, preferably relating to East Africa and/or the Middle East.
- High quality analytical and qualitative research skills.

- Excellent writing skills (English), with experience drafting for a variety of audiences.
- Knowledge of French is a significant advantage, as one of the contexts of support is a francophone environment.
- Excellent organizational and presentation skills.

5. Qualities

Some of the qualities Conflict Dynamics seeks in the Research Assistant include:

- Rigorous, systematic thinking.
- Diligence, reliability, and consistency, with an eye for detail.
- Commitment to Conflict Dynamics' mission and ethos.
- Commitment to research ethics and integrity.
- Ability to juggle diverse tasks across themes and contexts.
- Ability to draw lessons and translate them across projects.
- Ability to draft and edit under tight deadlines.
- Ability to communicate complex ideas succinctly and without jargon.
- Ability to give and receive constructive criticism.
- Ability to work with a mobile team across contexts and time zones.

6. Duration and level of effort

The position is for an initial period of 6 months, with the possibility of extension, should it be mutually agreeable. The Research Assistant should be available for a range of 16-20 hours per week.

7. Location

The Research Assistant will be based at Conflict Dynamics' Head Office in Cambridge, MA, and must have prior authorization to work in the United States. Some domestic and international travel may be required (*if this is the case*).

8. Reporting and management

The Research Assistant will be supervised by the Humanitarian Action Senior Program Manager, working directly with the Humanitarian Action Program Associate in the Cambridge Office and other staff as necessary.

9. Compensation

The Research Assistant will be commensurate with experience.

10. Application procedure

Applicants should send a cover letter, Resume/CV, and recent writing sample (no longer than 5 pages) by email to internship@cdint.org by **23 November 2018**. Applicants should save the letter, CV, and brief writing sample in the following format - '**FirstNameLastNameLetter**' –

'FirstNameLastNameCV' – 'FirstNameLastNameSample'. The cover email should reference "HAN Research Assistant Vacancy." Only candidates with pre-existing authorization for employment in the United States should apply.

Shortlisted candidates will be required to provide the names of three references. Interviews will be conducted with the Senior Program Manager via Skype in November 2018.

**** NOTE: ONLY SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES WILL BE CONTACTED ****

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