

Call for Applications: Professional Development Training

- **Advanced Research Design for Multi-Method and Policy-Oriented Research:** March 30 -April 9, 2016
- **Interpretive Methods and Ethnography:** April 11-15, 2016

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is offering professional development training in: Advanced Research Design for Multi-Method and Policy-Oriented Research (10 days), and Interpretive Methods and Ethnography (5 days). This training is relevant to PhD students, academics and researchers interested in enhancing their skills in the design of research that lends itself to a multi-method approach relevant to social policy and/or governance. Applicants can be working in think tanks, universities, policy-research oriented NGOs, and government departments.

The training is unique in using participant's research and small group work to explore design innovations in multi-method research that engages public policy. The training emphasises the design of mixed methods strategies, and explores some of the different ways and moments throughout the research cycle that researchers could engage with different policy actors. It is applied and participant centred. *Expect to work a lot!*

PASGR is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organisation established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently engaged in more than 12 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of women and men. In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organisations, business and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy relevant research; designs and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors; and facilitates the development of collaborative higher education programmes.

Course Content & Structure

The training will be run in two blocks:

Block I: Advanced Research Design (10 training days with a one-day break)

Block II: Interpretive Methods and Ethnography (5 training days)

The Interpretive Methods and Ethnography module is open to participants who have previously done PASGR's Advanced Research Design course (ARD). Those selected for this 2016 ARD course (Block I) will automatically qualify to be registered for the Interpretive Methods and Ethnography module, if interested.

The programme is residential. Certificates of Completion will be issued on successful attendance of all modules; as well as completion of all required course/peer reading reviews and assignments.

BLOCK I: ADVANCED RESEARCH DESIGN MODULES (March 30-April 9, 2016)

- **Multi-Method Research (3 Days)**

There is a growing interest in mixed method research among social scientists due to its relevance for policy oriented research. The practice of mixing methods has emerged as a suitable complement to the dominant quantitative and qualitative paradigms. This module provides insights into the mixed method paradigm and its practical reach for policy engaged research. It examines the basic assumptions of the mixed method tradition and its fundamental principles.

The module further discusses processes of mixing and sequencing of methods within a mixed method research design. The final sessions of the module provide hands-on opportunity for participants to critique selected mixed method studies while building skills to be able to apply the insight gained into working towards their own mixed method research.

- **Critical Policy Engagement (3 days)**

Researchers engaged in policy-related work stand to benefit if they involve policy actors in the various stages of their research project, interest policy actors in the work they are doing and solicit feedback from them to enrich the research design. This module aims to enhance the capacity of researchers to strengthen their relationship with research policy actors in order to improve on their research design and the chances that their findings will be used to influence policy. The module helps participants develop knowledge and skills related to building relationships with various policy actors and decision makers. It refines participants' ability to communicate research ideas, instruments, design, data and findings and equips them with skills to discern the most important message(s) they want to communicate to the relevant policy actors at critical moments in the research process.

- **Designing Social Inquiry (5 Days)**

The module's first goal is to develop participants' *critical* engagement with the existing state of knowledge in their respective fields and the empirical phenomena of their research concern by questioning widely accepted definitions of the problem, the categories or techniques used for its analysis, and the interpretations possible.

The module's second goal is to teach participants to turn ideas or assumptions into researchable questions. This involves making explicit not only one's own possible explanations or hypothesis, but also rival ones that exist in literature, or circulated through other media. An important part of this process is explicitly and carefully defining the key concepts in a study. The third goal is to introduce participants to advances in concept formation and illustrate how concepts can be modified, redefined, or created to capture with great accuracy the empirical events, actors, or processes being investigated.

BLOCK II MODULE: Interpretive Methods and Ethnography (April 11-15, 2016)

Interpretive social science rests on the idea that unlike the world of physical objects, the social world is made up of thinking, feeling beings engaging in meaningful action. To understand the social world, then, we must grasp the point of view of the actors who inhabit it. Interpretive methods, used by various branches of the humanities and social sciences, frequently play a role in concept and theory generation, and can be used in conjunction with comparative case studies, action research, and network analysis. They can also be used, at various stages of a research project, to inform or complement quantitative methods.

Interpretive methods are particularly central to ethnography and anthropology, on which we focus here. In particular, this module provides training in two of ethnography's core techniques: participant observation and semi-structured interviewing. Participants will also practice coding and analyzing the data generated by these techniques.

Through a combination of presentations, applied learning (practical experience), group work and feedback, the participants will develop an appreciation for the different ways in which interpretive social inquiry can contribute to policy-oriented research.

Target Applicant Profile

These are high level professional development courses for **active and committed** researchers – individuals who have a track record of successive research projects as lead or participating researchers, funded independently or by recognised research funding bodies. It will also appeal to those interested in broadening their knowledge and skills in methodological tools for policy-oriented governance research.

In past years, faculty who teach research methods have incorporated PASGR's Multi-Method Research Course material into their courses. It may also benefit university teaching staff engaged in PhD or post-doctoral research.

PASGR is especially interested in receiving applications from female researchers and researchers working in conflict or post-conflict environments. Applications will be considered for only those African researchers residing in the continent.

Cost

PASGR will cover costs related to course delivery, materials and lunch during the course.

Participants will be expected to cover their transport to the training location in Nairobi, Kenya. They will also be required to cover their individual costs towards travel insurance, full-board accommodation at the course venue (USD56 per day) and any other incidental expenses.

Scholarships will be offered to few individuals on a competitive basis.

Please note: PASGR will not provide participants with a per diem.

Dates and Location

The delivery location is in Nairobi, Kenya. The training will run from March 30 to April 9, 2016 for Block I modules, and from April 11-15, 2016 for Block II module.

Prior to confirmation of attendance, all selected applicants will be required to show proof (e.g. in the form of a flight ticket) that they will be in Nairobi by March 29, 2016 or April 10, 2016 (depending on course being applied for).

The actual training location will be communicated to selected participants.

How to Apply

Interested applicants must submit a duly filled application form and updated CV. The application form can be downloaded from:

- Advanced Research Design: <http://www.pasgr.org/?p=11213>
- Interpretive Methods and Ethnography: <http://www.pasgr.org/?p=11215>

The application form and CV for **Block I: Advanced Research Design** should be uploaded to the following link: <http://selectiontool.pasgr.org/Proposal/Submit/c3fcf9ac-ee27-4df0-a4d1-cdf2e9e4ac3e>

The application form and CV for **Block II: Interpretive Methods and Ethnography** should be uploaded to the following link: <http://selectiontool.pasgr.org/Proposal/Submit/cc15f10e-3cf3-4020-8afa-12af271a5458>

*NB: Applicants for Block I modules should **only** apply for that Block even if they are interested in Block II module.*

The deadline for submission of both documents is **Monday February 22, 2016**.

For questions and/or clarification, email nirungu@pasgr.org

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