



The Institute of Geography of the University of Bern commits itself to a geography embracing social and physical sciences to contribute knowledge for societal transformation. It understands that interdisciplinarity is required to analyze human-environment interactions and to address current challenges toward a sustainable world.

We invite applications for:

Two PhD positions (full time) in Intersectional Political Ecologies of the Urban Commons

As a successful candidate, you will be part of the interdisciplinary research project “Commonification: transition pathways for urban sustainability (COMMONPATHS)”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation ([commonpaths.unibe.ch](https://www.commonpaths.unibe.ch)). Focusing on case studies in Switzerland and in Ghana, the project aims to better understand the emergence, organization, effects, and conditions of success of three commonification processes aimed at (1) greening cities, (2) creating affordable housing, and (3) supporting community-based agrifood initiatives. By focusing on the governance of these resource systems, COMMONPATHS aims to analyze how and under what conditions these movements effectively contribute to strong urban sustainability and the transformation toward a post-growth society.

Under the guidance of the senior project members of the project, who are based at the University of Bern, the University of Lausanne, the University of Leeds, the University of Ghana in Accra, the Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Hague, and the University of Vienna, you will conduct your main research in Switzerland and Ghana. You will be affiliated with the research group of Prof. Jean-David Gerber and work closely together with partners at the other universities involved in COMMONPATHS.

Tasks

- Undertaking a PhD in Geography.
- Conducting fieldwork in Ghana (PhD1) and Switzerland (PhD2) over extended periods of time (for about 1 year in total; more if desired) for analyzing 1) the human-environment relations enacted through new commons institutions; 2) the power inequalities related to gender, race and class within new commons institutions and vis-à-vis state and market actors.
- Collaborate closely with colleagues and partners of the COMMONPATHS project in Ghana, Switzerland and beyond; participate in project publications, research workshops, and other events; build a network with practitioners; and contribute to the project’s overall communication strategy.
- Present your research at scientific conferences.
- Publish results in international peer-reviewed journals.

Requirements

- An excellent Master's degree in Human Geography, Gender Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Environmental Studies or related social sciences/sustainability sciences
- Demonstrated methodological skills in qualitative research. A record in feminist political ecologies and/or intersectional frameworks is a plus
- Excellent language skills in English is a must and German/French is a plus for PhD2
- Practical or research experiences in Ghana (PhD1) or Switzerland (PhD2) and/or in community-based initiatives are desirable
- Team orientation; ability to work in a precise, engaged, and self-organized manner; willingness to work in an interdisciplinary field

What we offer

- A highly motivated, dynamic, and intercultural research environment, committed to shaping sustainable futures
- The chance to become an integral team member in the Sinergia-funded COMMONPATHS project
- Close and supportive supervision and collaboration of the project leaders and partners for your PhD research
- Participation in the [Graduate School Gender Studies](#) of the University of Bern
- Fully funded PhD position for 46 months, including fieldwork budget. Remuneration is according to [Swiss National Science Foundation standards](#).

Details

- *Location:* Institute of Geography, Hallerstrasse 12, 3012 Bern, Switzerland; with extended presence and fieldwork in Ghana (PhD1) and Switzerland (PhD2) and close exchanges with the project team members
- *Starting:* 1 October 2023 (or as agreed)
- *Duration:* 46 months
- *Application documents:* Please send your letter of motivation, CV including a copy of university transcripts, and contact details of two references (no reference letters needed at this stage) together as a single PDF document to: deniz.ay@unibe.ch. Include your Master's thesis in a separate PDF document. Please indicate in the motivation letter for which of the two PhD positions you are applying (PhD1 or PhD2).
- *Application deadline.* For full consideration, please submit your materials by September 15, 2023. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis after that deadline until the position is filled.
- *For more information:* Prof. Miriam Tola (miriam.tola@johncabot.edu) or Prof. Jean-David Gerber (jean-david.gerber@unibe.ch).

The Institute of Geography values diversity and is committed to equal opportunities; applications are welcome from all suitably qualified candidates who meet the stated criteria.