

**Open call for one postdoctoral contract associated with ERC Starting Grant  
AfDevLives to study the afterlives of development interventions  
with emphasis on oral history, storytelling, and narratives**

The Centre of International Studies (CEI) at Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal) announces the opening of a competition for 1 postdoctoral contract in the area of African Studies or related fields. The position is offered in the context of the ERC Starting Grant "AfDevLives: The Afterlives of Development Interventions in Eastern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique)" (Ref. 101041788), hosted by CEI-Iscte and led by Dr. Yonatan N. Gez.

AfDevLives studies the legacies of development interventions and their long-term impact on local communities. Exploring links between the past, the present, and the future, it revisits interventions' representational and material remains from below, as experienced and re-appropriated locally over time. The selected candidate will develop methodologies related to oral history, storytelling, and narratives about the afterlives of development in line with the project's objectives. Together with other team members, they will partake in the creation of a new phenomenologically inspired participatory approach designed to reflect the close connection between people and their physical environment. The selected candidate will be based in Lisbon and will conduct multiple rounds of fieldwork around a selected case study (or case studies) in Eastern Africa (Kenya/Tanzania/Mozambique). Acknowledging the sensitive topic and applied potential, Project AfDevLives is deeply committed to benefit sharing and science communication. The selected candidate is expected to reflect these values and, next to their academic work and outputs, assume an active role promoting the project's non-academic goals, including the training of others in the methods developed.

NB:

- This call is one of [three concurrent calls](#) for postdoctoral fellows in the framework of Project AfDevLives. Candidates are allowed to apply to multiple positions, in which case they must adjust their application and especially their essays (see application requirements below).
- Although the position is framed as a postdoctoral contract, there is no limit on the date of completion of the candidate's doctoral thesis. Note, however, that the selected candidate will need to have obtained her/his doctoral diploma by the starting date of their contract.
- Special consideration will be given to equally qualified candidates from the Global South as well as from Ukraine.

**Scientific area:** African Studies or related fields

## 1. Application

The competition is open between 1 November and 31 December 2022 (midnight). Applications and supporting documents will be submitted by email to both [recruitment.cei@iscte-iul.pt](mailto:recruitment.cei@iscte-iul.pt) and [afdevlives@gmail.com](mailto:afdevlives@gmail.com), and will carry the subject line 'ERC\_PD3\_[candidate's name]'. Incoming applications will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. To avoid problems, candidates are encouraged to verify that their application has been acknowledged.

## 2. Type and duration of the contract

The call is aimed at one candidate. Should no suitable candidate be found, the selection committee reserves itself the right to conclude the call without admitting any candidate. Similarly, in the case of multiple, highly suitable candidates, the committee reserves itself the right to expand the call to more than one position.

The selected candidate will be hired for 18 months, with the possibility of renewal up to a total of 36 months. The contract will start by 1 April 2023 the latest, with preference for a starting date as early as possible. The remuneration scale is set out in [Annex II to Regulation 912/2022 of Iscte](#) (index 195 full-time of 'Investigador Auxiliar' category).

In the case of candidates arriving from outside Portugal, the date of relocation to Lisbon may be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Specific questions may be addressed directly to the project's PI, Dr. Yonatan N. Gez ([afdevlives@gmail.com](mailto:afdevlives@gmail.com)).

## 3. Necessary requirements:

- A doctorate in a field relevant to the position (e.g., social anthropology, sociology, socio-linguistics). While the project is geared towards the social sciences, candidates with relevant humanities background (e.g., history, literature) are welcome to apply.
- Willingness to relocate to Lisbon and to conduct multiple fieldwork rounds in Eastern Africa (Kenya/Tanzania/Mozambique)
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to work in a team
- Excellent knowledge of English

## Assets:

- Established familiarity with Eastern Africa

- Experience in working with, and possibly developing, creative research methods and approaches related to storytelling, oral histories, and narratives (e.g., participatory approaches to community histories, object biographies, study of rumours)
- Ethnographic experience, possibly involving participatory methods
- Established knowledge of the international development sector (e.g., through academic research, employment history, and/or voluntary work)
- Experience with academic collaborations and with interdisciplinary research projects
- Experience publishing in peer-reviewed academic outlets
- Knowledge of relevant languages including Swahili, Portuguese, and/or other languages spoken in Eastern Africa

#### 4. Application documents

Applications must include the following documents:

- Cover letter (1-2 pages) summarizing the candidate's relevant background and skills as well as their interest in the project
- Essay (1-2 pages, excluding bibliography and images if relevant): **"Which research approaches and methods related to oral histories, storytelling, and narratives would you propose to develop that will align with Project AfDevLives' rationale and objectives?"** Candidates may draw on their own experience as well as on academic literature. They are welcome to suggest creative and 'out of the box' approaches but should pay attention to potential risks and consider mitigation strategies. In preparing their essays, candidates are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Project AfDevLives' rationale and objectives (see sections 6 and 7 below)
- Complete academic CV and publication list (if available)
- Two writing samples (e.g., PhD chapter, academic publications if available)
- University grade sheets and proofs of academic degrees. Copies of additional diplomas and training certificates, as well as proofs of employment history, are welcome but not mandatory.
- Two letters of recommendation, addressed to Dr. Yonatan N. Gez and the selection committee. In the interest of confidentiality, referees may submit their letters directly to the project's email address ([afdevlives@gmail.com](mailto:afdevlives@gmail.com))

The application will be written in English. All application material, including letters of motivation and recommendations, must be submitted in PDF format.

## 5. Evaluation criteria

Candidates that meet the application conditions will be scored on a scale of 0 to 100 based on the submitted documents. Assessment will be made based on the following evaluation criteria:

Criterion A: Motivation and vision for the position: 40%

Criterion B: Relevant academic experience and merit: 40%

Criterion C: Non-academic experience and additional skills (e.g., languages): 20%

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an online interview (dates TBD)

## 6. About the project

International development involves ideologies and activities ostensibly directed towards the improvement of well-being of populations in the Global South. Mainstream development interventions emphasize forward-looking ideas of progress and advocate for novelty. In so doing, however, the sector is often myopic, as evidenced by countless unintended consequences that stretch beyond interventions' official life cycle. Whether deemed as success or failure, such interventions leave behind a long trail of tangible and intangible traces. Project AfDevLives explores how development interventions' representational and material remains are experienced, utilized, and re-appropriated by local actors over time, and how such active immanence of the past affects people's life-worlds. It weaves together three temporal gazes: prospective (development's blueprints); retrospective (sediments of the past, shorthand as interventions' 'afterlives'); and present-time lived experience. Consciously de-centering formal development discourse and temporalities, the project develops and applies a phenomenological framework oriented around the embodied interweaving of people, objects, and space. Using an interdisciplinary approach centered on social anthropology, research will be conducted in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique, neighbouring Eastern African countries that are among the highest recipients of development aid and whose past and present hold both continuities and ruptures. The project will unfold via an iterative process involving four complementary work packages: Movement, Image, Storytelling, and Synthesis. Working across work packages, countries, and case studies, the project will pursue three categories of objectives: conceptual (methodological toolkit), empirical (based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork), and practical (aimed at the development sector, local heirs of interventions, and the public at large). The project will result in a robust set of outputs.

## 7. Additional references:

- <https://blog.cei.iscte-iul.pt/erc-grant-yonatan-development-east-africa/>
- <https://erc.easme-web.eu/?p=101041788>
- Gez, Yonatan N. 2021. "The Afterlives of International Development Interventions: A Site-Specific Approach." *Journal of Development Studies* 57(9): 1511-1526
- Gez, Yonatan N., Fouéré, Marie-Aude, & Bulugu, Fabian. 2022. "Telling Ruins: The Afterlives of an Early Post-Independence Development Intervention in Lake Victoria, Tanzania." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*: 1-26.