



Leibniz-Institut  
für Präventionsforschung und  
Epidemiologie – BIPS

## Job Announcement

The Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research and Epidemiology – BIPS GmbH is a vibrant epidemiological research institute in the Northwest of Germany. The Department 'Prevention and Evaluation', headed by Prof. Dr. Hajo Zeeb, is offering a position as a

### PhD student: Applied systems research for obesity prevention

Salary Scale 13 of the German Public Sector Salary System (TV-L)  
25,48 hours/ week (65 %) starting as soon as possible for the duration of 3 years

The Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research and Epidemiology – BIPS is one of the leading epidemiological research institutions in Germany and a member of the Leibniz Association. The PhD project will be jointly supervised together with Ghent University, Belgium as part of the GrowH! project. It is planned to conclude a Cotutelle agreement between the University Bremen and the University Ghent for this PhD project aiming to provide a doctoral award from both universities.

*Growing Up Healthy: Obesity prevention tailored to critical transition periods in the early life-course (GrowH!)* is an international research project, financed under the umbrella of the "Joint Programme Initiative – Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life" framework (see <https://www.healthydietforhealthylife.eu/>)

The GrowH! consortium consists of a network of experts and public health workers in different countries – Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Belgium and Canada. The GrowH! project focusses on childhood obesity prevention in Europe and encompasses a complementary set of scientific activities – statistical modelling to explore hypothetical interventions; implementation and evaluation of innovative participatory intervention approaches; and development of a systems approach framework to integrate the findings from the participatory research into an evidence based policy strategy (<https://growh.eu/>).

The PhD student will be engaged in this research project, supervised by Prof. Hajo Zeeb, University Bremen and Prof. Stefaan De Henauw, University Ghent and will work closely together with the GrowH! international team of experts in health behavior, epidemiology, public health, health promotion and biostatistics. The main focus of the PHD will be on integration of newly collected evidence into an obesity systems framework, using systems mapping methodology in two regions (one in Germany and one in Spain). In a second phase, the PhD will engage in the development of evidence informed policy guidance and tools for wider use at a systemic scale in Europe. The PhD candidate will also support coordination of the "GrowH! obesity system expert panel" that will be set up at the European level specifically to support the development of the systems approach framework.

#### Tasks:

- The PhD fellow will be engaged exclusively in academic research, i.e. all necessary activities aimed at collecting data, reviewing literature, networking with experts and engaging in scientific output in the form of study reports, peer-reviewed papers and scientific documents for policy supportive purposes.
- The PhD fellow will work in a team of experts based in different research institutions in Europe and will act as a bridge in the exchange of information between them.
- The PhD candidate will be based primarily in Bremen (i.e. contract agreement with the Leibniz Institute for Prevention Research and Epidemiology – BIPS). However, the PhD project will be set up as a joint (Cotutelle) PhD trajectory with a binational panel of supervisors. To this end, prolonged research stays in Belgium (cities of Ghent and Brussels) will be necessary and the details of this work scheme will be agreed upon with the selected candidate as part of the recruitment procedure and based on a fair trade-off between the specific background and possibilities of the candidate and the imperatives of the project.
- Participate in the structured doctoral programme at BIPS.
- Publish project-related research in peer-reviewed international journals.

#### Requirements:

- Excellent Master's degree featuring in the broad spectrum of (public) health sciences and related sciences relevant for public health.
- During your (under)graduate studies and/or previous professional experience, you have acquired some/profound knowledge and skills along the lines of this non-exhaustive list of keywords: Overweight/Obesity; Epidemiology; Public Health; Health Promotion; Socio-Ecological framework for Health Determinants; Sustainable Development Goals; Equity in Health; Participatory Research methods; Evidence Informed Health Policy; Systems Theories.
- Willingness to engage in acquiring profound theoretical knowledge and skills needed to advance a systems approach for obesity prevention.
- Excellent team player, with good communication skills, initiative and exhibition of a pro-active attitude in view of the scope of the work.

- Strong affinity with established scientific methodology and a strong drive for producing evidence based scientific output, for high level scientific journals as well as for project reporting purposes.
- Strong interest in translating scientific findings to various relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, health professionals and a wider public.
- Strong research orientation and methodological skills.
- Excellent English language skills verbally and in scientific writing.
- Initiative, motivation, commitment, and scientific curiosity.

**Desirable:**

- Having (some) experience with qualitative research methods, systematic and/or scoping reviews, database management and statistics, engagement with stakeholders in the field of public health (policy).
- Pre-existing knowledge and/or prior experience in systems approaches for obesity or other public health problems.
- Fluency in German and/or Spanish.

**What we offer:**

We offer a structured PhD program, exciting research topics, a stimulating international environment, close ties to the University of Bremen and an engaged, supportive and cooperative team. Our national and international collaboration networks can be used for academic exchange. You will get access to data and all facilities needed to finalize a PhD successfully.

Severely disabled applicants will be given priority conditional on equal professional and personal qualifications. The Institute strives to promote its employees' work-life balance and has been certified for its family friendliness (audit "berufundfamilie"). We also offer additional support for international scholars to relocate to Germany through the Welcome Center of the UBremen Research Alliance.

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Additional information can be found on our homepage: <https://www.leibniz-bips.de/en>.

Please send your application in English or German with the usual documents quoting the reference number **A 21/15** by **July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021** by email as a pdf to: [bewerbung\[at\]leibniz-bips.de](mailto:bewerbung[at]leibniz-bips.de)

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