



Position Name:
Research Specialist

Who we are:

MSA is a socially driven global consulting firm. We provide innovative solutions for the private sector, government, and civil society to improve, measure, and communicate the economic and social impacts of their investments. We believe market dynamics have a strong impact on how people live their lives. Our vision is to improve economic systems in order to reduce poverty. We recognize complexity and as such, use a systems approach to design solutions that work within dynamic environments. We work collaboratively with our clients, serving as brokers of creativity to help catalyze systemic change.

We take a bespoke approach to every engagement, developing tailored services for clients around action research, monitoring, strategic advisory, evaluation and thought leadership across five topic areas: market systems development, jobs and trade, economic empowerment, financial inclusion, and impact investing.

Since 2009 we have worked with a wide variety of clients and partners in dozens of countries across six continents.

Our work:

At MSA, our staff build results measurement systems for development programs, social enterprises, and impact investors; research power dynamics and their influence on market behaviors; train client staff to think more systemically about the problems they seek to address; pitch MSA's services to new potential clients; write thought pieces; and brainstorm new approaches to old problems. Regardless of task, our focus on disrupting the status quo demands critical engagement.

MSA 's VALUES

EXCELLENCE

We believe in what we do – it's why we're here. Our work reflects our passion.

DISRUPTION

We're here to do development differently – more empowering, more systemic, with more proof.

HUMILITY

We see self-awareness as a prerequisite to learning.

HUSTLE

Good things don't come to those who wait. We drive networking and new business the same way we drive innovation – restlessly.

COLLABORATION

We're better together, drawing on each other's viewpoints and experiences to deliver for clients. Working in teams is core to our identity.

CELEBRATION

We work hard and life gets hectic – we take time to celebrate and enjoy it. Otherwise, what's the point?

Who we want:

MSA seeks a driven professional with strong economic development, private sector development, or market systems experience to join the team in the position of Research Specialist, in either Denver, Colorado; Toronto, Canada; Washington DC; or remote location for the right person. MSA is growing – this opportunity offers significant potential for the successful candidate to grow with us, assuming progressively greater responsibility with MSA.

The nature of the role:

This is a full-time position that will liaise with a Functional Team Lead. The role is 90% technical with the remaining 10% spent between strategic and other internal tasks. We hope to find someone who wants to learn quickly and grow with our firm.

Key Areas of Responsibility:

- **Secondary research and literature reviews.** Conduct in-depth secondary research to and review relevant literature to inform key research questions and complement primary data collection where it is required. This applies to MERL-focused engagements and wider engagements with MERL components. Exposure and knowledge of the latest and most useful literature that can be consulted for different engagements will be especially helpful.
- **Data analysis, and mentorship and oversight of data analysis.** Providing high quality in-depth data analysis that enables action, informs better decision-making, and ultimately improves outcomes and impact is a key responsibility. Additionally, oversight of data analysis - done by other team members - to ensure high-quality MERL products are delivered to clients is a key responsibility area for the Research Specialist. This may include, but not limited to reviewing engagement inception reports, research plans, data collection tools, data summaries prepared by Research Specialists or project consultants, providing training in the use of qualitative analysis computer software (such as NVivo), providing or supporting enumerator trainings, correcting for issues that arise in data collection etc. They will work collaboratively with in-country research firms and consultants to ensure quality standards are met throughout the data collection process across the MSA team
- **Methods improvement and development.** Improving on existing research methods and developing new methods that enable action, inform better decision-making, and ultimately improves outcomes and impact is one of the main responsibilities of the Research Specialist. They will be expected to systematically look for ways and opportunities to improve on existing methods and, where relevant, propose new, more appropriate, robust, credible and right-sized methods for different client engagements. Examples of methods improvement and development include introducing refinements and new frameworks for assessing social norms within the Behavioral Analysis and Norms Diagnostic (BAND) tool.
- **Report Writing.** Building from the above responsibility areas, the Research Specialist will write reports (documents and presentations) that synthesize findings and present recommendations to enable evidence-based actions in line with MSA's mission. They will also review reports written by Research Specialists and/or consultants on specific project deliverables, such as market assessments, baseline,

midline and endline studies. Smooth and productive collaboration with other technical teams within MSA is an enabler for this responsibility area.

- **Produce learning products and institutional guidance.** One of the Research Team's main mandates is to cultivate a learning practice and excellence in monitoring, evaluation, learning and evaluation through producing learning products, organizing learning convenings, and producing trainings and guides. This includes guidance on ethical, inclusive and gender-sensitive research practices across all research stages, as well as data protection and responsible data management. The Research Specialist will proactively look for opportunities to synthesize learning across different engagements that improves MSA's own work and / or our clients, or even more broadly in the field.
- **Effective organization and collaboration.** The Research Specialist is expected to be able to prioritize, implement and deliver high-quality work within tight timelines with minimal supervision. Collaboration is one of our core values that drives our mission and growth. The Research Specialist will collaborate extensively internally as well as with external stakeholders.

We are looking for someone who finds fulfillment in:

1. **Being a research and data nerd.** We want someone to join the team who loves qualitative research and enjoys analyzing this data. This person loves research methods, designing surveys, good interview and focus group discussion guides, training interviewers, collecting data in-country, and all of the deep analysis that follows. Knowing how to do all of this from a market systems perspective is a major bonus.
2. **Understanding the perspective of the private sector.** Most of our work is in the space of market systems and private sector development, and the ideal candidate will be driven by supporting effective economic development programming.
3. **Workshopping and co-creation.** We do not do research for research's sake. We like action research that leads to better decision-making, project performance and eventual social impacts. All MSA technical team members enjoy working with our partners and clients to get better results. This means we need to be good listeners, get their buy-in and always think about how to engage with them in a process of co-creation.
4. **Skilled in right-sizing rigor.** The ideal candidate will work closely with stakeholders to define research questions and needs that will inform future decision-making. This means that the researcher needs to be capable of supporting stakeholders to use the best approach to answer research questions with sufficient rigour, precision and validity.
5. **Helping team members to do their work better.** We have projects that are solely dedicated to generating research insights for clients and for capturing or evaluating impact, using qualitative methods for behavioral analysis, norms diagnostics, and social network analysis. But, we also want to do a better job of integrating our measurement approaches across our portfolio. Someone who enjoys designing and communicating tools for our internal team to use, as well as supporting a variety of projects will enjoy this work.
6. **A focus on learning and practical application.** We want someone who not only likes to learn themselves and think outside the box but have ways to help our clients to continuously learn and utilize their data. We need people who enjoy distilling complex approaches into simple and practical activities to match on-the-ground realities. This means you see good data as a means to an end, to influence

interventions, to influence policy, to change practice and a means to create more meaningful social impact for all.

7. **Embracing complexity and adaptation.** We work on a lot of projects that measure changes at the systems level. We love this work. In order to actively do this work, you likely enjoy seeing the bigger picture of your work, thrive in complex environments, but have the ability to quickly distill complexity into useful tools and systems in order to get things done. You also enjoy helping those around you to digest complexity and help them navigate how they can practically play their part in achieving project goals.
8. **Completing high quality work.** We believe in what we do. Our work and productivity reflect our passion. We want another team member to believe the same!
9. **Working in a rapidly expanding company.** Our company is small, but we are growing rapidly. If you enjoy fast-paced working environments and engaging in strategic discussions, we are a good fit. If you are looking for a place to work with the same daily checklist and regular work, this is not the position for you.

Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in sociology, international development, anthropology, decision sciences, market research or related field.
- At least four years of significant experience designing and conducting qualitative research using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS).
- Experience using qualitative data analysis computer software (NVivo and/or others) and network analysis software services (such as Kumu).
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including experience drafting reports.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work and build relationships with team members and clients from diverse backgrounds.
- Strong primary and secondary research experience including research design and implementation, and knowledge of ethical practices and quality assurance.
- Ability to prioritize, implement, and deliver high-quality work within tight timelines and with minimal supervision.

Other desired characteristics:

- Graduate degree in sociology, anthropology, economics, or other relevant social science.
- Experience with USAID, leading private foundations, or FCDO specifically in market systems development, economic development and/or private sector development projects.
- Experience working for a consulting firm and managing consulting projects.
- Experience designing and leading trainings.
- Proficiency in another language, preferably written and oral French, Spanish, Arabic, and/or Portuguese.
- Experience working and living in developing countries.

Other information:

This is a salaried, full-time position that will report to a Practice Lead. It will require approximately 25-35% travel. The position will be based in either Denver, Washington DC, Nairobi, London, Toronto or Ottawa.

For reference, the salary range for this position is \$40,000 – \$60,000 USD if Denver based. For candidates based in another state or outside the US, MSA will consider rates aligned with local market rates. Where a candidate falls within this range is based on previous years of experience and versatility (i.e., number of required and desired characteristics as well as expected capability).

Application Details:

Deadline to apply is **October 13th, 2023**. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. To apply, please click on the job link - <https://marketshareassociates.bamboohr.com/careers/28> If you have not heard back within 2 weeks after the application deadline, please send a follow up email to recruitment@marketshareassociates.com. We want to make sure no emails get lost in cyberspace!

Please also include a cover letter (maximum one page) explaining your interest in this role and answering the following questions:

- 1) What do you see as the most important innovation in research approaches that support learning?
- 2) List the three things, in order of impact, that you would bring to MSA to take us to the next level.
- 3) Which of our values most resonates with you, and why?
- 4) What professional achievement are you most proud of?
- 5) Where are you based? Where are you legally authorized to work?
- 6) What is your location preference?
- 7) Where did you learn about this role?
- 8) If selected, how soon would you be able to start?