Call for Proposals: UnBox Researcher Fellowships

AHRC/British Council/ Science and Innovation Network - UK-India Joint Funding Initiative

Introduction

The UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council is delighted to announce a call for short term researcher fellowships in India. Applications are invited from researchers interested in undertaking a short term fellowship with one of a variety of hosts in India in the run up to the 2013 UnBox festival (6-10 Feb 2013) in Delhi. Successful applicants will form part of small teams working on research relevant challenges at each host for 3-4 weeks leading up to the festival. They will also attend the festival itself, where they will have the chance to bid for further AHRC small scale funding to continue collaborations formed. This opportunity is part of a collaboration with the British Council, UnBox festival and the UK's Science and Innovation Network.

The UnBox Festival

The UnBox Festival builds momentum around design thinking and interdisciplinary collaborations to drive sustainable innovation for businesses, society and culture in India. From 6-10 February 2013, several exciting events including performances, exhibitions and installations will be organized alongside the UnBox Conference. UnBox aims to further the practice of innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration through keynotes, discussions and workshops anchored by leading and emerging practitioners. For further information on the festival see the website: http://unboxfestival.com/ .

Fellowships

Prior to the UnBox Festival, researcher fellowships will be awarded to five selected applicants, each of whom will work at one of five separate India based host organisations.

Fellowships will provide the opportunity to be immersed in selected themes and team-based projects with a clear research dimension. Each of the fellowships will be 3-4 weeks in length. The fellows will work in a team of four or more members, comprising:

- UK researcher
- UK creative entrepreneur
- Indian creative entrepreneur, and
- Indian team member(s) drawn from the host organisation and their networks.

AHRC are aiming to select one UK researcher fellow per host. British Council and UnBox will be running separate but parallel recruitment processes to select creative entrepreneur fellows from the UK and India.

Fellowships will take place at one of five different hosts. Each has a different focus and suggested research themes. The title of each fellowship is listed below, further information is attached at Annex A:

- **unVEIL: Film and Digital Media for Open-governance**
- **unTILL: Augmenting Agriculture with New Technologies**

- **unPLAY: Gaming for Social Innovation**
- **unMAP: Culture and Heritage Preservation**
- **unBUILD: Sustainable Lifestyles**

Applicants should consider the detail on hosts provided in Annex A, select the one they feel most suits their experience, and indicate this in the application form. Each applicant can only apply for one host option.

Booster Funding

On the final day of the UnBox festival, teams formed through the fellowships will have the opportunity to bid for research focussed 'booster funding'. Teams will present their pitches to a panel of reviewers, followed by a more detailed written submission to AHRC and other potentially interested partners. Successful teams will be provided with detailed guidance for these additional funds before travelling to India, but it is expected that all applicants will be interested in this possibility of engaging in longer term collaboration, remotely or otherwise. Because of this possibility of bidding for further funding, researcher fellowship applicants should be able to demonstrate, within their initial proposal for the fellowship, either their experience of leading small scale research projects, or the skills they possess that would enable them to successfully lead a project of this type.

Eligibility

Applicants for the researcher fellowships must be researchers based at a UK Research Organisation eligible to apply to AHRC. They must be able to undertake a short term (2-4 weeks) fellowship at a 'host' organisation in India (during January/ early February 2013) and then participate in **UnBox Festival 2013**, in Delhi, India from 6-10 February 2013 i.e. immediately after the fellowship period ends. Applicants should note that there will be a possibility of bidding for further small scale research related funding at the end of the fellowship, and be interested in this opportunity. They should therefore be eligible to bid for AHRC funding, i.e. be of postdoctoral standing, or able to demonstrate equivalent experience. For further information see the 'academic eligibility' section (3.2.1) of AHRC's [Research Funding Guide](). They must also be based in a discipline within the arts and humanities subject domain. Applications from practice-based researchers are welcome, but should explain how practice might be an integral part of research aspects of the fellowship rather than, for example, just the outcome.

These fellowships present an exciting opportunity for open-minded creative-thinking researchers. They would suit either individuals with experience of working within a non-academic environment and/or cross-cultural setting, or equally someone new to these types of challenges who is keen to broaden their horizons and enrich their research experience. The details of the types of research challenges to be explored at each of the hosts are included at Annex A. In all cases we have highlighted the relevant areas of experience a suitable researcher might have.

It is worth emphasising that we do not intend for applicants to have had direct experience of working in *Indian settings*, although this would not be a disadvantage. We will be assessing the aptitude and attitude of the researcher and the experience of the types of research highlighted. We are seeking applications from individuals, but fellowships will be in a team environment where each member brings something unique

to the collaboration, therefore all applicants should indicate where they have experience of team working.

Applicants should be fit for travel in early 2013, hold a current passport, and foresee no difficulties in applying for an Indian visa. **Applicants must be able to commit to travel to India for the fellowship and the Festival for up to five weeks (early January 2013 to February 10th 2013).**

Assessment of Applications

Decisions will be made by a small assessment panel comprising of AHRC Peer Review College members and senior staff.

Key assessment criteria will be:

- Relevance of applicants' experience and skills to the fellowship hosts' aims and highlighted themes
- 'Added value' the fellowship offers to the applicants' current research
- Extent to which the fellowship would offer opportunities for the applicant to utilise and develop their skills, particularly their ability to engage with sectors and audiences beyond academia and to work in teams
- Ability to lead a small scale 'booster' funding project

The host that each applicant has highlighted will also provide written comments in advance of this assessment panel regarding their views on the applicants' suitability for their fellowship.   These written comments will form an important part of the assessment panel's overall assessment.

Practical Information

Travel and visa information: Following the announcement of the five successful candidates in mid-December we aim to have all travel arrangements and visa applications completed by w/e 21 December 2013, which means the visa application process will commence immediately after selection. Please read the information below carefully before submitting your application and let us know in advance if you think you will have any problems.

As well as the relevant forms/photos etc you will need to provide your passport for the visa to be processed.

Your passport must:

- Have at least two blank visa pages
- Be valid for at least 190 days beyond the exit date of 12/13 February (approx)

The time it takes to process a visa varies for each nationality. If you do not hold a UK passport this will not affect your application – we ask purely so that if you are successful we can send you the correct information about the visa process as we would like to have it completed by 21 December.

Travel insurance: Researchers will **not** be covered by AHRC/ British Council travel insurance – successful participants will need to arrange their own and claim back the costs for this.

Travel/accommodation: The British Council will arrange the return flight from the UK to Delhi. Participants will also take local transport within Delhi. Accommodation in Delhi will be arranged for successful fellows – it will be in a hotel/guest house.

Costs covered: Travel between the UK and Delhi, flights within India (to hosts outside Delhi), visa, accommodation, any research and production costs incurred as part of the fellowship and the UnBox conference fee. A basic subsistence of 800 rupees (approx £10) per day will also be provided to cover meals and local transport.

How to Apply

Please fill in the application form and send it, along with a 2 page CV, which must include relevant publication information and a statement of support from your Head of Department or equivalent to **K.Lambert@ahrc.ac.uk** by 17.00, **26th November 2012.**

All applicants will be informed of outcomes by w/e 14/12/12

In order to assist with planning, information provided in applications to AHRC for this scheme will be shared with other collaborating partners i.e. The British Council, UnBox and hosts in India.

Contacts

If you have any queries about the scheme or application process please contact Katie Lambert at the AHRC, k.lambert@ahrc.ac.uk or 01793 416049

Annex A: further detail on fellowship hosts

Fellowship Details

1. unVEIL

Film and Digital Media for Open-governance

PRS Legislative Research, based in Delhi, has been set up with the objective of making the legislative process better informed, more transparent and participatory. PRS provides a comprehensive and credible resource base to access Parliament-specific data, background information and analysis of key issues. PRS also engages with citizens, through various forums and both traditional and digital media. The target audience is young, active Internet users who may already be interested in governance and law.

The general idea of PRS's work is to use creative ways to present governance and law based information in a simplified, easy to understand form. This digital output (in the form of videos, or mobile phone apps or other technological avenues that can be explored) would seek to inform the audience on the nuances of law making and good governance.

The research undertaken at this placement would draw on extensive research material available at PRS to identify 8-10 issues/ideas to present to a target audience. This may take a variety of formats, including animation, film or creating compelling narratives around parliamentary information. The opportunity would particularly suit researchers with an interest in using practise based research (particularly visual and digital arts) to engage with the public. It may also suit researchers with a background in law and literature.

Website: www.prsindia.org

Location: New Delhi

---

2. unTILL

Augmenting Agriculture with New Technologies

Host organization ***Digital Green*** (DG) combines technology and community engagement to improve the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of small farmer livelihoods. Digital Green uses technology to reach out to its target audience: not only does it promote the use of technology to increase the efficiency of agricultural produce, it also uses film as a medium to spread expertise. Along with this work on the field, DG actively tries to engage an urban audience with the work it does, in order to connect the two. DG has also developed social networking games that are based on real life information of farmers: they have a database (farmerbook) that tracks each of the farmers it works with – on the technology adapted by them, their engagement with Digital Green, and real time updates on their current farming activities. DG is interested in developing ways to take this information back to the community for access and use through the course of this fellowship.

A research placement with Digital Green would appeal to arts and humanities researchers with experience of working with social media or film in relation to

community issues; with experience of reaching out to new and hard to reach audiences through digital media and/or with working across urban/rural settings.

Website: www.digitalgreen.org

Location: Andhra Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh

---

3. unPLAY

Gaming for Social Innovation

Host organisation **Quicksand** is a multi-disciplinary consultancy that brings user-centered design principles to the core of any innovation. A key strand of their work includes developing educational games using Kinect technologies to break age, class, language, and literacy barriers. They aim to engage their audiences in activities to communicate social messages.

Fellows will collaborate to develop new games that will be featured at a mini-arcade at UnBox.

Fellows will gain invaluable experience researching, developing, pitching, and presenting socially conscious video games that educate as well as entertain. It also presents a golden opportunity to network with peers in a real-life, full-spectrum development project.

Research could focus on a range of areas, and thus appeal to a wide range of arts and humanities researchers. Topics might include: the use of narrative in games-based scenarios; practise based creative (arts, digital, music, drama) researchers who are interested in the development of games for real world application. Another area to explore might be the reactions and responses of children and how these might feed in to further game development. Researchers who are interested in the work of games lab as described [in relevant link/annex] and feel they would have valuable contributions to their work are asked to put themselves forward.

Website: www.quicksand.co.in

Location: New Delhi

---

4. unMAP

Culture and Heritage Preservation

Project host **Cultural Resource Conservation Initiative** (CRCI) promotes India's cultural heritage through community participation. CRCI consistently tries to harmonize the imperatives of heritage conservation with the historic and current realities of the site. Towards this end, it works in active partnership with communities to develop appropriate strategies for conservation in both rural and urban areas.

Teams might work on the following:

- Developing a mobile phone app that will map important sites and places of historic importance along the Grand Trunk Road (one of South Asia's oldest and longest major roads), and build interactive ways of giving users information about each site. An important component of this might be the role of the research fellow in exploring narratives around these sites, and also using CRCI's existing database to recreate/rewrite stories that would be used by the app to make this plethora of information more accessible.

- Creating recognition of important sites along the GRT that remain neglected due to the lack of either community ownership or government protection, through improved signage. CRCI would be interested to collaborate with researchers who might work in collaboration with visual artists on these 'visual stories'.

- Exploring ways of promoting ownership of historical sites by the local population. A first step to this is researching and understanding ways in which everyday life can be integrated into the existence of these spaces.

The work of CRCI would appeal to a wide range of researchers, perhaps particularly those with experience of using historical and cultural information about heritage sites to bring them alive for communities. It would also suit those able to work with local communities through use of narrative and creative and performing arts in relation to these issues.

Website: www.crci.4t.com

Location: Sirhind, Punjab

---

5. unBUILD

Sustainable Lifestyles

People Tree is an independent arts and crafts business that combines a sense of social and ecological responsibility with the spirit of collective creativity.   People Tree is currently engaged in collaborating with chef Satish Warier, in setting up an arts, crafts and food space in Goa. They would like to develop this new venture into a demonstration space for a more ecologically active approach to art, food, crafts and heritage. "The larger aim of the project would be to increase community ownership and participation in the process of promoting sustainable tourism practices and policies in Goa – a region with a rich and diverse history as well as ecology, and in conserving its arts and crafts and its natural and built heritage".

Research within the People Tree fellowship may focus on practical issues surrounding the need to work in a sustainable way that both conserves and highlights the heritage of the immediate and broader setting (a Portuguese villa in Goa). This might particularly appeal to arts and humanities researchers with an interest in sustainable design, especially those who draw on traditional techniques and practice. It might also interest those with experience of working on community based heritage projects, particularly those that relate to food, ecological practices, craft or design.

Website: www.peopletreeonline.com

Location: Goa