

Shell funded project

**Royal
Geographical
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

● International leadership and capacity building for young people in field research

... This three year programme, launched in 2007, is supported by Royal Dutch Shell. It provides support in the following areas:

- building capacity and leadership skills for field researchers at an early stage in their careers in some of the world's poorer countries, particularly Ecuador, Indonesia and Uganda
- developing long-term partnerships with selected NGOs, universities and others, to help capacity building and deliver in-country training and support.
- establishing and sustaining networks of former researchers to mentor and provide exemplars and role models for the individuals involved in field research.
- encouraging the development of leadership roles in field research for Ecuadorian, Indonesian and Ugandan researchers.

The programme focuses on Ecuadorian, Indonesian and Ugandan individuals at an early stage in their careers in field research and who hold an undergraduate degree in geography or a relevant field science. Their field research work should make a contribution to the Millennium Development Goals relating to "ensuring environmental sustainability" particularly in the areas of:

- sustainable development
- reversing the loss of environmental resources and biodiversity
- access to safe water

This project provides a more equitable international involvement of individuals in their own field research projects and their own skills and capacities.

This will be achieved through the funding of field research bursaries, provision of online support and mentoring and in-country capacity building.

This work is a natural development of the Society's Geography Outdoors' activities, strengthening its international reach and the equitable involvement of participants from outside the UK and particularly in Ecuador, Indonesia and Uganda.



Activities:

The activities under this programme fall into four groups.

A. Making the most of past experience: support network and encouragement.

The project will:

- * Document our international network of experienced field researchers and institutions, drawing on our years of supporting young people in field research, techniques training and health and safety. This will form a basis of an international support network.
- * Extend our international network by identifying new partnerships with NGOs and universities based in developing countries, as required for this programme.
- * Identify at least 20 good examples of past and current field research projects that contribute to the Millennium Development Goals relating to environmental sustainability. These examples, highlighting their impact on communities and countries, will be documented and shared internationally online as a way of demonstrating how young people in particular can contribute.
- * Identify a network of individual young people from among past participants in the international projects, who have benefited from their involvement in field activities. We will enable them to share the benefits they have gained (online) as role models, to encourage others to participate.

B. Guidance and support for young people planning international field projects.


The project will:

- * Create an online bank of resources, advice and training that promote good practice in the following 5 areas: leadership and project planning; field research techniques; health and safety; building and sustaining international and intercultural partnerships; and exemplar ideas of field research relevant to Millennium Goals.
- * Build sustainable partnerships with identified NGOs and universities to support them in selecting, and training where necessary, the young people from the partner developing countries who wish to participate in international projects. The aim is to build capacity for a locally-based and sustainable source of advice and support for local young people.
- * Provide mentoring, by both local and international mentors drawn from our network, of the young leaders and involve them in an international network of participants.
- * Provide specific guidance, for all individuals involved, in international team work and equitable partnerships.

C. Delivering the independent field projects.

The project will:

- * Offer guidance with local partners and mentors, during the project planning phase.
- * Encourage applications to the Society's existing relevant grants schemes for such projects and provide additional financial support to cover field expenses for the participants from the poorer countries. We anticipate a minimum of 15 projects across the three countries to be supported over the three year timescale; it may well be more.
- * Undertake reflective evaluation with all the young people involved in the projects throughout the training, delivery and mentoring phases – the outcomes of which will be posted sensitively online.

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- * Profile the young leaders supported through this programme at relevant international fora and in appropriate publications.

D. Project evaluation:

- * Evaluate the programme with specific focus on the impact on individual young field researchers and the contribution of the programme to relevant Millennium Goals.
- * Evaluate our development of a new and more inclusive model of supporting field-based learning, with particular reference to its future sustainability and replication in other contexts and other countries.
- * Make the results of this programme available internationally, for others to learn from and as encouragement for others.

Impacts:

This programme hopes to provide demonstrable benefits in a number of ways. These include:

- The development of field research, leadership and cultural understanding skills among an international network of students and recent graduates at the start of their careers – especially those in the world’s poorer countries.
- Field projects that raise awareness of, and make a contribution to, achieving the Millennium Development Goals relating to environmental sustainability in some of the world’s poorer countries.
- A greater understanding of the need to achieve more sustainable approaches to natural resource management and a shared commitment to positive outcomes.
- A greater appreciation of the importance of environmental research and the tangible benefits of cross-cultural partnership between young people.
- The creation and piloting of a new sustainable model for supporting field activities and research which, we hope, will be transferable more widely internationally.

For more information about the Shell International Leadership and Capacity Building programme please contact:

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