Leeds Social Sciences Institute
PGR Placement Fellowship Opportunities

with JUST WEST YORKSHIRE

(2 days per week for 13 weeks from April 2011)

The Leeds Social Science Institute is launching a PGR Placement Fellowship Scheme for social science post graduate researchers interested in working in a research capacity in a range of local organisations. The Scheme encourages social science post graduate researchers to engage with the needs of external organisations and to build the knowledge gained from the placement into their future research plans.

The successful applicants will receive a bursary funded by University of Leeds Higher Education Innovation Fund.

Research Organisation: JUST West Yorkshire

Project Title: Project Related Work and Policy Analysis

Length of Fellowship: 2 days per week for 13 weeks

Proposed start date: April 2011

Location of Fellowship Unit 4, Carlisle Business Centre, Bradford

Project related work

1. Work with Young People
JUST is currently delivering a young women’s youth project entitled A-gender for Change that seeks to build bridges between young women in white inner-city Bradford districts and BME young women from predominantly Asian neighbourhoods. JUST have also received funding for a Young Radicals youth project which they will be delivering with their partner project looking in London (the Free Radicals project). The project will aim to inspire young people to become agents of change through using activism and peaceful resistance strategies to inform change.

Opportunities for placement

Potential Opportunities:

1. Researching the barriers facing young people in the current environment. They are seeking to understand the following in terms of young people’s experience in Bradford/Leeds:
   - how cyclical and generational poverty and deprivation impact on the aspiration, self-esteem and life chances of young women from deprived inner-city BME and White communities.
   - Does their ethnicity ultimately have an impact on the choices that young people exercise?
   - In the current environment with high levels of youth unemployment, and cuts in educational maintenance grants, what are the options and life-choices young women from deprived backgrounds are making?
   - What are the broader implications of the lack of access to employment, opportunities etc. for society in the medium and long-term?
JUST would like to use the evidence gleaned from this piece of work to work alongside young people to interrogate the current government policies on a ‘fair deal’ for young people.

2. Working alongside the co-ordinator for the Young Radicals project inform the development of the initiative through researching where young people are active (student unions, anti-fascist organisations, activist groups etc.), tapping into those networks and developing a proactive Youth Radical Network in the region. The placement will document the project and develop a tool-kit or a framework that can be rolled out to other regions.

STUDENT PLACEMENT OPPRTUNITIES: POLICY ANALYSIS

Potential Opportunities:

1. IMPACT OF PUBLIC SECTOR CUTS

JUST is keen to monitor the impact of public sector cuts on the lived experiences of vulnerable communities. This aspect of the placement will require the student to undertake the following:

- document the implementation of the public spending reductions, focusing in particular on the 5 West Yorkshire regions and different local authority approaches
- identity and interview representatives of particular social groups who analysis of data suggests will be adversely affected by the cuts e.g. a newly arrived refugee, a Pakistani family in an inner-city ward, a young person from a white inner-city estate, an older person of African/Caribbean heritage etc. This aspect of the research could be augmented with video interviews.
- Research current tools/ policy/ legislation that enable communities to hold elected representatives and public bodies to account including lobbying
- Produce a report the findings of which will be shared at a conference/ seminar

2. The PREVENT and Community Cohesion Agenda

The government is currently reviewing the Prevent agenda and early indications suggest that the Prevent element will come under the Home Officer and Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism’s purview. The emphasis looks likely to be on concentrating resources on cyber-access to ‘extremist’ material and a concentration of places like universities, colleges and schools where the government believes extremism and terrorism thrives. The Community Cohesion agenda will be within the purview of the newly created Department of integration.

JUST would like the student placement to undertake the following:

- draw on analysis of the Prevent programme under the Labour government and reflect on its implications for the approach proposed by the current government
- explore how the policy might be implemented in the settings deemed to be priorities and the perceptions of key implementers. This could involve some interview with key actors eg civil libertarians, mosques, communities, local government officers, universities, colleges, politicians and policy makers
- reflect on the implications of the new approach to tackling ‘extremism’ for civil liberties and human rights

3. White-flight – a documentary looking at the experiences in Kirklees and Bradford.

This placement will explore the phenomenon of ‘white flight’ and its implications for the community cohesion agenda, particularly the extent to which it places the burden of establishing and maintaining good race relations on less affluent communities.

The placement will require the student to

- assess how the community cohesion agenda is interpreted locally
• use geodemographic information to assess the phenomenon of ‘white flight’, and to supplement this with qualitative analysis of the accounts of key actors, eg estate agents, representatives of BME groups, Education Bradford and Kirklees etc.
• explore the implications of different perceptions and evidence of ‘white flight’ on neighbourhoods and communities
• develop a policy response to the challenges that community cohesion in Bradford and Leeds present.

Please note that there is flexibility around the topics or approaches that the student placement can focus upon provided they fall within the general remit of the organisation - the promotion of racial justice in West Yorkshire.

The majority of this work will be undertaken directly by the post graduate researcher. JUST will develop a programme of work for the students and provide suitable office accommodation.

SKILLS REQUIRED

• Proven qualitative and/or quantitative research skills
• Ability to translate research findings into practical policy proposals
• Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
• Ability to work with a wide range of academic and non-academic partners

BACKGROUND

JUST is a groundbreaking initiative set up by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in 2003 to promote racial justice in West Yorkshire. Since its establishment JUST has become a leading voice in the North promoting racial justice, civil liberties and human rights.

Context for our Policy, Campaigning and Research Work

JUST is concerned to promote civil liberties and human rights and to explore and challenge disenfranchisement, disadvantage and poverty experienced by Black and minority ethnic communities. JUST has critically engaged with a range of public policy agendas, notably the PREVENT ant-terrorist agenda, Equalities legislation, and reductions in public spending in West Yorkshire and the ‘Big Society’.

JUST complements its work using a number of tools:
1. Research - JUST have produced a number of reports looking at the issues highlighted above.
2. Films - JUST have produced a number of short films and documentaries which have included a half-hour assessment of Bradford’s response to the English Defence League, 2 short films on the impact of the Recession on West Yorkshire businesses and communities, a 10 minute film on community cohesion in the context of young people’s experience and a 15 minute film on police attitudes to young Muslims.
3. Events - JUST organise a programme of conferences, seminars and round table discussion groups throughout the year.

The post graduate researcher will be based with the JUST team at the Bradford and will work closely with policy officers within the Team to deliver the project. The student will also work with the Director of the Leeds Social Sciences Institute to evaluate the success of the placement and identify other opportunities for placements within JUST and partner organisations.
Where the student would be involved in working with vulnerable groups they would have to undergo relevant CRB checks. Any research involving the student in direct contact with the public (e.g. interviews) would also have to go be approved by the University Ethics Committee.

Leeds Social Sciences Institute will fund the placement through HEIF funds, providing a bursary of £1300, and the placement must be completed by the 31st July 2011.

This project supports the Institutes’ strategic objective to enhance partnerships between social scientists and the public and third sector, to maximise the impact of our research and to make a valuable contribution to society. It is also in line with the ESRC’s strategic objective to extend and deepen knowledge exchange networks across the public, private and third sectors.

The student will be able to use the results of this study (suitably anonymised and with ethical approval from the appropriate University of Leeds committee) to produce a range of academic publications and presentations.

The closing date for this call is **Friday 8 April**

**Applicants should submit a short CV plus a statement explaining why they would like to take up this opportunity, what experiences and skills make them suited to the position and what this work will contribute towards their research plans to Sophia Kennedy at s.kennedy@leeds.ac.uk.**

Applications will be considered by the panel and successful applicants will be notified within two weeks of the application closing date. **Written confirmation of support from the applicant’s supervisor will be required with the application.**

Any enquiries please contact Sophia Kennedy at S.Kennedy@Leeds.ac.uk

-OR-

For an informal discussion please contact Ratna between Monday to Thursday on 01274-542222