

EARTH WATCH

www.earthwatch.org.uk

Earthwatch Institute is an international environmental charity, with its UK office based in Oxford. Earthwatch inspires and empowers people to make meaningful environmental change, creating knowledge and encouraging action through hands-on projects. Project areas include citizen science, nature hood, plastic pollution, freshwater watch etc.

Placement opportunity:

It is anticipated that all of these placement projects would involve desk-based research, synthesising research literature to answer questions within areas of interest, allowing for the formation of recommendations for the improvement of our practice. Depending on the topic area, there may also be scope for placement students to support their secondary research with some elements of primary research e.g. interviews with stakeholders to test their findings. Potential research projects include:

- **Encouraging others to influence their social networks for pro-environmental change**

A key avenue for us achieving our mission is through engaging individuals and supporting them to adopt more pro-environmental behaviour. However, in order to maximise our impact it is important that positive changes are not limited to people we connect with directly. As such, we are keen to understand more about how we can effectively support participants to influence others in their social network (e.g. family, friend, colleagues, social media connections) to make positive behavioural changes as well.

Research undertaken by a placement student in this area would focus on questions such as:

What leads people to influence their family, friends or community to be more pro-environmental?

What features of (communications, engagement and/or learning) interventions support people to influence their social networks to be more pro-environmental?

What features of (communications, engagement and/or learning) interventions are barriers to people influencing their social networks to be more pro-environmental and how can barriers identified be overcome?

- **Supporting advocacy for pro-environmental change**

Broader structural changes are also necessary for a truly sustainable future. While we work directly with stakeholders to support these changes, Earthwatch also wants to engage effectively with individuals and empower them to advocate for pro-environmental change themselves, bringing this to the attention of, for instance, business and policy makers.

Research undertaken by a placement student in this area would focus on questions such as:

What leads people to advocate for pro-environmental change in society (e.g. through campaigning)?

What features of (communications, engagement and/or learning) interventions support people to advocate for pro-environmental societal change?

What features of (communications, engagement and/or learning) interventions dissuade people from advocating for pro-environmental change or act as blockers for this?

- **Translating research evidence to policy change**

The dissemination of research findings to influence policy and management practices is a further impact pathway for our organisation. To support our activities in this area, we are keen to understand the evidence around policy influencing, focusing particularly on strategies which have been evidenced as effective.

Research undertaken by a placement student in this area would focus on questions such as:

How is evidence used in the environmental policy making cycle at the local, national and international level? What are the barriers to the use of research evidence in policy?

What are the skills requirements (if any) for applied environmental researchers to effectively apply their research via policy to create impact? What are the barriers to the use of citizen science specifically in policy? How can barriers identified be overcome?