Improving Environmental Communication and Adaptation Decision-making in the Humanitarian Sector

submit your application to redcross@colorado.edu

Application Deadline: Thursday, December 15, 2016

CU-Boulder has partnered with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCRCCC) to place graduate students in locations in eastern and southern Africa each summer. This collaborative program targets improvements in environmental communication and adaptation decision-making as well as disaster prevention and preparedness in the humanitarian sector. It connects humanitarian practitioners from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre – an affiliate of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – with graduate student researchers at the University of Colorado who are interested in science-policy issues. Through this program we strive to accomplish three key objectives:

1. to improve the capacity of humanitarian practitioners within International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies network at the interface of science, policy and practice
2. to help meet needs and gaps as well as work as a research clearing house in environmental communication and adaptation decision-making in response to climate variability and change, as identified through Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre priorities and projects
3. to benefit graduate students by complementing the classes and research that they undertake in their graduate program with real-world experience in climate applications and development work

This internship program will place 1-2 PhD and/or Master’s degree students in an IFRC regional field office, a National Society branch office, or with a partner organization for a period of approximately 3 months.

The RCRCCC supervisors will liaise with specific IFRC field offices to identify potential projects and placements. Once projects are identified, RCRCCC supervisors will work with CU Boulder Director Max Boykoff, CU Boulder Graduate Coordinator Arielle Tozier de la Poterie and the student to design a scope of work. Projects can encompass, but are not limited to, topics such as the use of scientific information in decision making, communication of probability and uncertainty, perceptions of risk, and characterizing vulnerability and adaptive capacity. Placements in the field will address specific needs identified by IFRC field staff related to challenges of science communication and adaptation decision-making.

Participants will participate in a one-credit independent study/reading group ENVS 5909-902/CSTP 5909 designed to familiarize them with the Red Cross/Red Crescent organization and other topics of relevance to adequately prepare for field placements. The reading group will meet every other week at a time agreed to by the participants and the instructor in the CSTPR conference room during the Spring 2017 semester.
Participants will also be required to write six blog posts from the field during this placement, give some presentations (e.g. in ENVS, in the CSTPR brownbag series) upon return, and complete a report at the conclusion of their internship detailing their experience and research outcomes.

$5,000 funding in total will be provided to offset expenses (in-country housing, food, airfare and in-country transportation). Expenses can vary widely depending on the location and nature of the placement. Interns will work with CU-affiliated travel agents to arrange round-trip airfare to their field site. Due to this $5,000 limit, applicants are encouraged to seek additional funds from alternate sources, as expenses can exceed this budgeted amount.

This CU-Boulder program has now placed these six students in in locations of eastern and southern Africa:
- Sierra Gladfelter (Geography, MS) Lusaka, Zambia
- Drew Zackary (Anthropology PhD), Apac and Otuke, Uganda
- Leslie Dodson (ATLAS PhD), Lusaka, Zambia and Capetown, South Africa
- Amy Quandt (ENVS PhD), Isiolo, Kenya
- Arielle Tozier de la Poterie (ENVS PhD), Soroti, Uganda
- Kanmani Venkateswaran (ENVS, MS), Lusaka, Zambia

Past project topics have included analysis of uses of regional climate forecasts to trigger anticipatory humanitarian action and examinations of ways to improve the linking of science-based forecasts with humanitarian decisions. More information on the specifics of all these placements and activities can be found here:
http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/students/redcross/index.html

Application Details for summer 2017:

Criteria:
Successful candidates will have a demonstrated interest in the Southern and/or East African regions, as well as demonstrated interest in one or both topic areas (environmental communication and adaptation decision-making), as evidenced by any of these elements: courses completed/underway, past work, volunteer and/or research experience, MS/PhD thesis direction.

Successful candidates must be self-starters and capable of adapting to independent working conditions. Students must have the consent of their graduate advisor to participate. A detailed terms of reference tailored to each intern will be developed by the RCRCCC based upon their needs and the intern’s skills in the months leading up to placement in the field.

Application Requirements (all submitted as pdf files):

(1) Up to 1000-word statement about interest (geographic and/or topical) in the internship program, as well as a description of: a) how participation would fit into graduate study, b) previous experience and current skills would help to the RCRCCC to achieve its mission, c) preferred focus of work or topic of study, d) previous international experience and d) future career goals and objectives. Please be sure to specifically describe why and how the internship will be a mutually beneficial opportunity for both the CU student and the RCRCCC.
(2) **Statement of availability** between May and August 2017

(3) **Current C.V.**

(4) **One page letter/statement of graduate advisor support**

(5) Unofficial **transcript(s)** from graduate work at University of Colorado-Boulder

*Notification and Planning timeline:*

**December 15, 2016:** Applications due to redcross@colorado.edu

**week commencing January 9:** Interviews with finalist internship candidates

**week commencing January 17:** applicants informed of internship placement decisions

**week commencing January 23:** participants enroll in ENVS 5909-902/CSTP 5909; time to be determined by participants; meeting in the CSTPR conference room

**March 1:** Deadline for internship invitees to accept/decline offer (at this stage, offer is not a guarantee until final placement is confirmed by IFRC in Spring 2017)

**April 2017:** Final matching and placement decisions will be completed by IFRC

**Summer 2017:** students will be placed in Southern and/or East African regional field offices

These internships are made available through support by the Environmental Studies program (ENVS) and from the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) Center for Science and Technology Policy Research (CSTPR).

**Contacts**

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