

Job description and selection criteria

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Development Economics and Evidence-Based Practice
Division	Social Sciences
Department	The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE), Blavatnik School of Government
Location	Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Walton Street, Oxford, OX2 6GG Fieldwork with Young 1ove will be based in Gaborone, Botswana
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £32,817 - £38,017 per annum
Hours	Full-time
Contract type	Fixed-term for 3 years. There is the possibility to extend depending on external funding.
Reporting to	Stefan Dercon and Noam Angrist
Vacancy reference	143992
Closing date	12 noon GMT, Monday 16 December 2019

Job Description

Key aim: Conduct research with leading academics at Oxford and evidence-based practitioners at Young 1ove on the science and practice of translating evidence on proven adolescent health programmes into interventions at scale.

The Centre for the Study of African Economies at the Blavatnik School of Government and Department of Economics is a leading research centre in development economics. The Centre has recently joined a £20 million coalition launched by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) called Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents Hub.

By 2050 Africa will be home to half a billion teenagers. Despite the incredible opportunity that such a vibrant pool of young potential presents, many of these teens will be trapped in a cycle of poverty, violence, low education and poor health, by the time they reach adolescence. This new Hub aims to help them achieve their goals and aspirations. Researchers from Oxford's departments of Social Policy and Intervention, Tropical Medicine, the Blavatnik School of Government, English, Economics and Psychiatry will work alongside international partners including UNDP, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, governments across Africa, donors such

as the Global Fund and PEPFAR, NGOs and young people themselves, to identify and test a range of service combinations, from across health, education, social and economic sectors. In doing so, they will determine which combinations offer teenagers across Africa the best opportunities to lead better, safer lives.

The role of CSAE in the consortium is to examine the process of moving from promising evidence-based adolescent health and education pilots to national scale. In recent years, there has been exponential growth in development of careful trials and social experiments that provide rigorous evidence with high internal validity on potential life-enhancing interventions.

Moving to scale for some interventions – such as medicines – is unlikely to be a problem as they can be relatively easily scaled with high integrity: what is being offered in the trial and in the scaled-up version is nearly identical. More complicated interventions – such as labour market training, health education or pedagogy – are not easily delivered at scale in exactly the same way as in the controlled environments. Factors such as the nature of the organisation (e.g. government or very large NGO), small changes in implementation, as well as 'social' factors that come with moving across countries or regions may make the impact measured in a trial not necessarily identical once scaled. This is nevertheless the environment the policy maker finds herself in: delivery at scale, in a hard to monitor environment.

While the science of trials is extremely well developed, the systematic study of scaling and how to monitor progress is far less so. Counterfactuals are usually not defined, even though outcomes can be affected by a variety of factors not under control of those scaling. Outcomes may only materialize over time, but feedback should come well before to be able to fine tune delivery.

The proposed work programme will study how monitoring of scaling is done and how it could be done better, using a number of ongoing scaling up exercises based on rigorous initial evidence that focus on adolescents. The key area of work will be HIV information transmission among adolescent girls in Botswana, working with Young Love, one of the largest youth serving NGOs in Botswana with a strong commitment to evidence. In parallel, we will document experiences in monitoring of scaling in Harambee (South Africa) and Give Directly (Kenya), two settings in which CSAE is conducting trials as well. Young Love is interesting, as it is an example of what could go both right and wrong: they found that a change in the way information was delivered, keeping content identical, from youth (peer) facilitators to teachers totally changed the impact of the intervention. We will build on thinking they put in place to enable effective outcomes in other work they are involved in.

We offer a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for a candidate who has been awarded, or is near completion of, a doctoral degree. Your time will be split as a collaborator on new or ongoing work with CSAE researchers, your own independent research, and undertaking fieldwork in Botswana being embedded directly to Young Love in Botswana.

The fellowship will be structured such that for the first 3-6 months you will spend time in Oxford building skills, conducting literature reviews, and preparing for in-depth

fieldwork. For the next 12-18-months you will be in Gaborone, Botswana full-time conducting fieldwork with Young Love's research department. This will enable you to understand the ins-and-outs of how the organisation works, the data collected, the data cycles, research methods used, current best practices and challenges, analyse and use existing data to maximize day-to-day operations and impact, leverage data insights to tangibly improve the lives of tens of thousands of young people directly, and build strong relationships within the organisation. In the latter half of the fellowship, the post-doc will split their time between Botswana and Oxford depending on project needs, and will focus their attention on asking new research questions, collecting new data pending, and producing papers of academic quality and policy interest. The exact timing and location details are subject to negotiation.

The post-doc will be supervised by Co-PIs Stefan Dercon, Professor of Economic Policy at the University of Oxford and former Chief Economist of DFID, and Noam Angrist, the Executive Director of Young Love and an affiliate of CSAE at Oxford and the World Bank. The post-doc research, broadly defined, will focus on three areas:

1. A review of monitoring and outcome tracking by organisations that scale up 'proven' interventions, including how the scale was done and how we know the intervention still works. This should/could include a number of 'models', such as Young Love (Botswana), GiveDirectly (Kenya) and Harambee (South Africa), as well as other examples from West and Central Africa, such as in Cameroon. The framing will be around checking for external validity in practice. The examples picked will involve adolescents and young adults.
2. An in-depth research piece testing a number of monitoring/tracking methods used by Young Love involving adolescents. The focus here is on the quality of monitoring. Funding permitting, it could involve some RCTs embedded in monitoring and feedback systems, as well as machine learning for outcome prediction models (to be used during monitoring). We will be dependent on the nature of the interventions taking place, which will include bundled interventions as well if the opportunity arises.
3. A policy piece on lessons on doing monitoring better for persistent policy impact.

You will join a team at Oxford of Post-Doctoral Researchers, Research Assistants and a Research and Operations Manager. Projects have project management support from the Centre administrative team. You can apply for smaller pots of funding at the Centre and as part of Centre bids for travel and your own research. The managers of the team curate a supportive research environment, provide structures and mentorship to facilitate the long-term career development of staff, and structure work to maximise the potential for autonomy, creativity and personal growth. You will be encouraged to engage with the large community of development economists at the Centre of the Study of African Economies and in the broader Oxford community.

You will also be part of the team at Young Love of 100 staff, immersing in particular in a tight-knit 5-person research team driving data-driven impact every day. You are encouraged to immerse in Botswana and at Young Love and develop strong life-long links with a leading evidence-driven implementing organisation.

Responsibilities/duties

The main duties of the post are as follows:

- Engage in world-class research in an area relevant to the programme of research, both in collaboration with the principal investigators and independently, and present original research papers at international conferences and seminars.
- Maximizing evidence-based impact and data usage within Young Love.
- Contribute to and/or collaborate on other new and continuing research projects conducted by the two Principal Investigators, with scope for new single authored and jointly authored research. Activities could include but may not be limited to:
 - Design, development, budgeting and fundraising for research projects;
 - Conducting literature reviews and writing synthesis papers;
 - Development of questionnaires and interventions, including field travel;
 - Managing and supporting fieldwork firms or qualitative fieldworkers,
 - Budget management and administrative tasks to support fieldwork
 - Grant reporting;
 - Data management, analysis and writing of publications;
 - Supervision of field or other staff;
 - Promotion of research outputs and relevant findings to key stakeholders, including policy-makers, researchers, and implementors.

The post holder will report to Co-PIs Stefan Dercon and Noam Angrist.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged only against the criteria that are set out below.

- PhD or equivalent in economics, public policy, development studies with a focus on development economics with a quantitative focus. Candidates nearing completion of their doctoral dissertation may also be considered.
- Previous experience in designing and conducting lab and/or field experiments or research in developing countries or an alternative methodological expertise of relevance to the programme.
- Ability to carry out independent quantitative research, including strong writing skills and excellent skills in statistics/econometrics.
- Strong IT skills specific to the discipline, including use of Stata and LaTeX.
- Ability to innovate and work effectively with colleagues, including excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Proactive and reliable, with a flexible approach to work
- Evidence of management skills and strong organisational skills
- Experience co-ordinating teams and managing a variety of tasks
- A demonstrated interest in research in the area described in the introduction.
- Dedication to facilitating take up of research findings by policy-makers and programme implementers.

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE)

The Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) is a development economics research centre with researchers at the Department of Economics and the Department for International Development, University of Oxford, and the Blavatnik School of Government. The CSAE also has a long association with St Antony's College. Its mission is to apply modern research methods to improve economic and social conditions for the poorest societies in the world.

The Centre has a strong research reputation, which provides the basis for its increasing involvement in policy debates and other assistance to African governments and international organisations. The CSAE annual conference is an internationally renowned event for economists, attracting around 400 delegates. CSAE staff are not only involved in research, but also in teaching and supervising students. CSAE is home to the Journal of African Economies, which is widely circulated in Africa and which funds the annual JAE Fellowship programme. This programme enables African academics to spend a term at the CSAE each year.

CSAE research is supported by the World Bank; the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); the UK Department for International Development (DFID); the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR); the International Growth Centre (IGC); and the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) through the Growth and Labour Markets in Low Income Countries Programme.

The Centre publishes a Working Paper Series, operates a programme of lunch-time seminars on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during term, and runs several workshops and conferences each year. All CSAE work is available on the website at <http://www.csaе.ox.ac.uk/>

The Blavatnik School of Government

Over the years Oxford has sought to create a community of leaders around the world based on mutual trust and similar values, shared understandings of global challenges, and the determination to work towards common solutions. To realise this vision in a global context the University established in 2010 the Blavatnik School of Government within the Social Sciences division. The School's mission is to equip leaders with the skills and knowledge they need in order to address the world's most urgent public policy challenges and to help drive improvements in public governance throughout the world through education, training and research of the highest academic standards. The establishment of the School has been made possible thanks to a visionary gift of £75 million by Leonard Blavatnik, one of the largest ever received by the University of Oxford.

The Blavatnik School of Government is a global school of practice at which future leaders learn. The School offers an exciting, global education to the most able and brilliant women and men from all nations who share a commitment to academic excellence, public service and inspirational leadership. The School offers a one-year (12 month) taught Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree and a DPhil (Oxford PhD) in

Public Policy. The MPP is focused on public policy and the practice of government to prepare students for a career in public service, whether in government, in non-governmental organisations or in the private sector.

The Blavatnik School is committed to equality and valuing diversity within its workforce. We aim to ensure these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our colleagues, students and visitors. Our new building has been designed to the highest standards of accessibility, ensuring that we provide equal access to the School's facilities and learning environment for all members of our community.

The Blavatnik School of Government holds a bronze Athena Swan award to recognise advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

For more information please visit: www.bsg.ox.ac.uk.

Young 1ove

Young 1ove is one of the largest youth NGOs in Botswana with a mission of translating evidence in health and education into scalable programmes delivered by youth for youth. All interventions are school-based and conducted in partnership with government. The vision is to reach 1 million youth in East and Southern Africa by 2025.

Young 1ove has over 100 staff and has worked with over 65,000 youth to date in Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia. The organisation has strong relationships with government. This includes an MOU with the Ministry of Basic Education to scale nationally. The organisation also has long-term institutional partnerships with The Brookings Institute, UNICEF, J-PAL, and Pratham. Young 1ove is a trusted partner to government, has translated evidence into action, as well as conducted rigorous replication evaluations.

The organisation has two flagship programmes. The first programme reveals the risks of older 'sugar daddies' through a 90-minute school-based class. The inspiration for this programme comes from [a randomized trial](#) which showed a similar programme reduced teen pregnancy by 28% in Kenya. In 2014, the organisation adapted the programme to Botswana, and re-tested it in another randomized trial. The results showed the programme was promising with reductions in pregnancy. It also showed that contextual adaptation was needed prior to scale-up. For example, when youth delivered the programme it was highly effective, but when teachers delivered the programme there was a slight 'teenage rebellion' response. The organisation is now partnering with UNICEF and Grand Challenges Canada to incorporate a series of these lessons into a new and improved version of the programme, conduct A/B tests to iteratively improve the programme, and test the programme's impact on HIV/STIs as well as pregnancy before scaling-up in Botswana and the region.

The second programme, called [Teaching at the Right Level](#), is a cost-effective remedial education programme pioneered by Pratham in India, and has been tested in partnership with J-PAL in over six randomized trials and shown to dramatically improve basic numeracy and literacy skills. The programme groups students by ability level rather than teaching to a grade-level syllabus which is often

too advanced for most students, and has a menu of fun and level-appropriate activities that are custom-tailored to each group.

To date, Young Love has implemented the intervention in Botswana in 10% of primary schools. The results are striking: in the latest implementation rounds, the percentage of students who could not do any basic operations dropped from 26% to 2% in 30 days; those who could do division jumped from 8% to 66%. Following these strong results, Young Love has signed a 4-year MOU with the Ministry of Basic Education to scale up the programme nationally. Young Love also recently signed a Letter of Understanding with J-PAL and Pratham to build an *Innovation Hub* in Botswana that will be catalytic for a broader TaRL scale-up effort across Africa.

For more information please visit: www.younglove.org

Pre-employment screening

All offers of employment are made subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post.

If you are offered the post, you will be asked to provide proof of your right-to-work, your identity, and we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration (so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities so that we can discuss appropriate adjustments with you), and a declaration of any unspent criminal convictions.

We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at: www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/.

How to apply

If you consider that you meet the selection criteria, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a user. You will then be required to complete a number of screens with your application details, relating to your skills and experience. When prompted, please provide details of **three referees**. We will ask for references from shortlisted candidates.

You will also be asked to upload the following documents.

1. Cover letter. This should (a) explain why you are applying for the post and (b) provide evidence of how your qualifications, skills and experience meet the selection criteria outlined above. It should also (c) indicate the capacity in which your referees have gained knowledge of your work. Any personal relationships with, or potential conflicts of interest in relation to, the referees must be clearly acknowledged.
2. CV.
3. Paper. Please submit a complete paper to demonstrate your ability to succeed as a researcher/post-doc.

Informal enquiries about the post may be emailed to noam.angrist@bsg.ox.ac.uk or nangrist@younglove.org. All enquiries will be treated in strict confidence and will not form part of the selection decision.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that that you meet the selection criteria outlined above and we are happy to consider evidence of transferable skills or experience which you may have gained outside the context of paid employment or education.

Please save all uploaded documents to show your name and the document type.

All applications must be received by **midday** (UK time) on the closing date stated in the advert.

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk. Further help and support is available from [www.ox.ac.uk/about the university/jobs/support/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/the_university/jobs/support/). To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our e-recruitment system to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. The University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of Opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits.

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities.

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See www.welcome.ox.ac.uk.

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/.

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to My Family Care, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/.

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries. For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/.

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff.

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/.

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.