

SHORT-TERM PROJECT ASSOCIATE, AGRICULTURE

CROWDSOURCING RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Shawn Cole (Harvard Business School), Dr. Michael Kremer (University of Chicago and co-recipient of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics) and Peter Hickman (Harvard University) seek qualified applicants for the position of a short-term Project Associate. The Associate will be based in India and will work on designing a user-centred platform for an upcoming research project studying crowdsourcing in the context of agriculture. The position offers an opportunity to participate in cutting-edge research at the intersection of economics and product design. The Project Associate will gain first-hand experience in research management and UX design and will collaborate with diverse stakeholders including a large corporation and a global non-profit working in the agricultural space. *This opportunity is ideal for someone interested in pursuing postgraduate study in Computer Science, Operations, Economics, Statistics or an MBA/MPP/MPA.*

Project Motivation & Description

The Principal Investigators aim to explore how the process of crowdsourcing information from farmers can help facilitate farmers' learning best practices from their peers. Productivity among smallholder farmers in India is low and sub-optimal farming practices are often the cause of this. Different farmers adopt a variety of farming practices in their holdings and the possibility of transferring information from more productive to less productive farmers could help in improving outcomes.

We aim to design and deploy a WhatsApp-based platform to solicit information about farmers' cultivation practices, seed choices, etc. We will investigate what factors impede farmers' willingness to share such information and what might motivate them to act on information that they know has been collected from their peers.

The project will require working with the backend of APIs like the WhatsApp Business API to design the product. Additionally, it will require collecting primary data using the platform and assisting in preliminary analysis. The Project Associate will aid the research team in designing a WhatsApp-based UX suited for use by smallholder farmers, running the experimental interventions, and analysing data in collaboration with the research team.

Details of Role

- Location: India (remote). Being based out of Gujarat would be a plus but is optional.
- Language Requirements: Hindi, English, Gujarati (optional)
- Start Date: Immediate
- Duration: 2-3 months
- Compensation: INR 110,000-180,000 per month (~USD 1500-2500) based on experience

Responsibilities

- Designing the product to communicate with farmers and working on UX design
- Designing the content of messages to be sent to communicate with farmers for efficient data collection
- Liaising with research team and overseeing the rollout of the planned research design in Gujarat
- Assisting PIs in refining rollout strategy, identifying shortcomings in process, testing outreach methods and formulating final data collection protocol
- Managing backend of APIs like WhatsApp Business API and escalating issues with WhatsApp admin
- Manage day-to-day communication with farmers during the data collection phase
- Assisting with data cleaning, preliminary data analysis and preparation of requisite documentation and presentation

Desired Qualifications & Experience

- **Education & Experience:** Recent graduates or students in their pre-final/final year students having completed/pursuing BSc/BE/B.Tech/M.Tech in Computer Science, Electronics & Communication or other branches, B.Sc. IT, BCA, MCA and other software-focused fields, MBA/MSc with an undergraduate background in IT/coding. Relevant work experience/internships, some knowledge of agriculture and rural markets in India and basic knowledge of randomized evaluations would be a plus.
- **Technical Skills:** Proficiency in computer programming is an essential prerequisite. No particular language is required, but knowledge of Python, SQL and/or other data analysis tools like R and Stata is preferred. Familiarity/experience working with social media or communication channels like WhatsApp or Telegram based APIs would be a plus.
- **Communication & Management Skills:** Candidate should be highly motivated, attentive to detail, an independent worker, prompt in communicating progress and have a strong willingness to learn

Application Procedure

In order to be considered for this role, the following documents will need to be submitted:

- One-page CV
- One-page cover letter
- Coding sample and writeup. This could be the code that was used for any project or paper (term paper, class project, internship, etc.). Code could be in any language, but Python preferred if possible
- Contact details of 2-3 references (email IDs would suffice)

In order to apply, please complete the online application form [here](#) and submit the documents mentioned above. Feel free to email amaudar@hbs.edu in case of any questions pertaining to the role or the application process. Deadline to apply is Sunday, March 21st, 2021.