



**WORLD SOCIAL SCIENCE**  
fellows programme



**The International Social Science Council (ISSC)**  
calls for applications from outstanding early career social scientists around the world

to become  
**World Social Science Fellows**

by participating in a  
**World Social Science Seminar on**

**Big Data in an Urban Context**

**30 November to 4 December 2015**

**Xiamen, China.**

Recent decades have seen an unprecedented explosion in the human capacity to acquire, store and manipulate data and information and to communicate them instantaneously globally, irrespective of location. The ease of being able to capture, store, analyse, and manipulate not only large amounts of data, but specific data, means today the impetus is to use data in a smart and structured way. This offers major opportunities and profound challenges for doing research.

Sometimes erroneously considered a challenge first and foremost for computational sciences, Big Data developments have a far wider reaching impact. Much of the initial excitement relates to data about human interactions of various sorts. 'Big Data' gives us the power to gather and analyse data relating to the environment and to human interactions and offers the prospect of a far improved understanding of sustainable development, through the gathering of rich real time data on human interactions.

Exploring these data and applying the new techniques of 'data science' is essential if we are to address the major, fundamentally interdisciplinary, scientific and social grand challenges emerging from the changing planetary environment. Nevertheless, there are considerable cultural, methodological, ethical and technical challenges for the social sciences. This landscape and the issues which derive from it will be the focus of the World Social Science Fellows Seminar.

One of the exciting applications of Big Data is within an urban context, where the opportunities for gathering real time data about a wide spectrum of processes and interactions are immense. In complex

systems of interrelated components, it can be argued that resilience and sustainability will depend on ability to gather data from diverse sources, to identify appropriate indicators, to interpret them correctly and to design appropriate responses. In turn, this raises issues about the production of knowledge in the context of technological advances and the digital divide.

Big Data in an Urban Context, is a fertile interdisciplinary area of research and, in this seminar, a focal point of exploration of a range of methodological, ethical and technical issues relating to Big Data and the social sciences.

The seminar will be convened by leading social scientists of international renown. It is organised in partnership with CODATA, the Committee on Data for Science and Technology of the International Council of Science, and will be hosted by the International Council of Science International Programme Office on Urban Health and Wellbeing at the Institute of Urban Environment (IUE) in Xiamen, China.

To be part of this exploration and take forward the research agenda beyond the seminar, **we are looking for talented early career social scientists to become World Social Science Fellows.**

The Call is open to early career social scientists, natural scientists, and humanities scholars from all the world regions working on topics related to Big Data in an urban context. It is essential that candidates are interested in developing new, interdisciplinary perspectives.

We are offering the opportunity to interact with some of the leading thinkers in this area and a global group of other talented early career scientists.

We will cover travel costs for your journey to Xiamen, China, and local travel and subsistence costs.

Work as a World Social Science Fellow starts at the seminar, but it does not end there. We will ask all Fellows to work together during and after the seminar to develop at least one joint product presenting and discussing their main conclusions.

We hope that being a World Social Science Fellow will enable you to forge new and lasting networks that can stimulate and support transformative social science research, and that the experience will provide a basis for advancing your own career as a member – and future leader - of the international social science community.

## **LOGISTICS**

**Dates:** 30 November - 4 December 2015

**Place:** Xiamen, China

**Agenda:** The seminar will be a mix of traditional academic discussions on Big Data in an urban context, (based on work submitted by Fellows), together with focusing on interactive research visioning and action planning. At the end of the five days, Fellows will have a good overview of the current state-of-the-art of research as well as a vision for essential, compelling research priorities for the coming 5 to 10 years.

## **Selection process**

The ISSC will select a maximum of 20 early career social scientists to participate in the seminar and become World Social Science Fellows. We will seek to ensure representation from around the world and from different social science disciplines, as well as gender balance.

To be eligible to apply, you have to be:

- A post-doctoral researcher with a maximum of five years research experience following your PhD (candidates with more research experience can also be considered, if they explain why they should be eligible); or
- An early career researcher without a PhD but with an equivalent level of research experience and output;
- Under 40 years of age (candidates over the age of 40 can also be considered, if they explain why they should be eligible)

To apply for selection as a World Social Science Fellow, please submit the following, in English:

- A Curriculum Vitae of no more than 2 pages, including information about education, research projects and networks, awards and prizes and other pertinent experiences. In addition to the 2 page CV, add a list of your most important publications.

- An abstract (one page maximum) of the paper you would present at the seminar.
- A statement (one page maximum) outlining your perspective on the topic. Please highlight relevant experience you have in interdisciplinary research projects.
- Agreement from your home institution about your participation in the seminar, including a short outline of how you will share knowledge you have gained at the seminar with your colleagues/students after you return

The seminar will be held in English. Please indicate if this is a problem for you.

Applications can be submitted electronically and in one file to [Fellows@worldsocialscience.org](mailto:Fellows@worldsocialscience.org)

**Deadline for submission of applications: 24 August 2015, 00.00hrs GMT**

Successful applicants will be informed in late September 2015.

*The ISSC (<http://www.worldsocialscience.org/>) is an international organisation that aims to advance the practice and use of the social and behavioural sciences in all parts of the world, and to ensure their global representation. The World Social Science Fellows Programme (<http://www.worldsocialscience.org/activities/world-social-science-fellows-programme/>) is sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida, <http://www.sida.se>). This seminar is organised in partnership with CODATA (<http://www.codata.org/>), an interdisciplinary Scientific Committee of the International Council for Science (ICSU), which works to improve the quality, reliability, management and accessibility of data of importance to all fields of science and technology. The seminar is hosted by the International Council of Science International Programme Office on Urban Health and Wellbeing at the Institute of Urban Environment (IUE) in Xiamen, China.*