

Davis Expedition Fund

Example 1

Plants of the Redunculous Peninsula

BACKGROUND

The native people of Redunculous eat plants and use plants in their traditional medicine, such as to treat scabies. However, this peninsula, found on the southern coast of Bijunkajunk Land, is barely above sea level, and with the spectre of global warming and sea level rise looming, likely to be inundated. The Redunculun people themselves do not know the latin names of the plants they use and it seems there is no formal written record of which plants they use and in which ways (e.g. to cure scabies). Thus, it is imperative to determine what plants the Redunculun people eat and use in their traditional medicines before the peninsula disappears.

METHODOLOGY

I will travel to Bijunkajunk Land and from there to the Redunculous Peninsula to study the native plants. I will live with the Redunculan people, going out in the woods with them to collect plants. I will collect herbarium vouchers of all plants they utilize for food medicinally (e.g. to treat scabies). I will also make observations as to how effective these traditional medicines are in curing the ailments they are meant to cure, such as scabies. After spending a year with the Redunculans, I will return to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and use the extensive herbarium collections there to identify the plants I collected. I will then write a guide to the plants of the Redunculous Peninsula, highlighting their uses, both as culinary items and in traditional medicine (e.g. *Bothofagus itchyskinii*, which seems to be used to cure scabies).

TIMELINE

As soon as this grant is funded, I will travel direct to the field site, where I will live for one year. I will then return, submit my report, identify the plants, and work on the field guide.

BUDGET

£1000: Roundtrip flight to Jeridonkamutakalandinausiliatus, the capital of Bijunkajunk Land

£500: Roundtrip transport to Redunculous Peninsula

£2000: Annual rent for flat in village in Redunculous Peninsula

£500: Notebooks, pens, herbarium collection supplies

£1000: Digital SLR with fancy lens for close-up pictures.

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PROBLEMS WITH THIS PROPOSAL

- 1) Typos, misspellings, and poor punctuation. Also, latin names are not italicized.
- 2) No map of field location.
- 3) Insufficient background on previous research in the area or on similar topics (e.g. no references).
- 4) The proposal is poorly motivated scientifically. While we all know that global warming is an issue, if this peninsula is truly going to be completely inundated, then the Redunculan people will have to relocate away from their homeland (and its plants) anyhow. Perhaps a better justification would be to simply determine the flora of this location prior to it falling beneath the seas. It could also be motivated by exploring patterns in the use of native plants by local peoples.
- 5) No local collaborator or collaborating institution is identified.
- 6) Insufficient detail on the actual field plan. For example, how will the researcher travel to the Redunculous Peninsula? Beyond 'walking in the woods', there is no detail on field methodology. For example, if this is a forested environment, and the local people are using products from trees, how will the applicant obtain the necessary herbarium vouchers? If trees must be climbed for collection, how will this be accomplished? What training does the applicant have? What safety measures will be followed?
- 7) Timeline and costs seem unrealistic.
- 8) The main purpose of the Davis Fund is to allow applicants to conduct field work rather than to purchase equipment. If it is not possible to borrow the necessary field equipment from the University or a colleague, then plans should be evident for the equipment to be left with and used by local colleagues.