Appleseed Behavior Change Research Fellow

The Organization

Many of the best solutions to poverty and environmental issues, promoted by social impact organizations around the world, are not used as intended. In Malawi, mosquito nets are used for fishing. In Nigeria, exclusive breastfeeding is practiced by only 23% of young mothers. In Guatemala, nutrition-fortified maize seeds are available, but farmers rarely plant them. The list goes on. These organizations often struggle to reach outcomes that require behavior changes within the communities they serve.

Appleseed, founded in 2015, provides social impact organizations with consulting around behavioral research, strategy, and communications. We demystify “behavior change,” by offering a systematic and culturally-sensitive process for driving adoption of solutions that improve lives and the environment.

We only serve organizations with the highest potential for making an impact. Our nimble field team goes wherever our partners operate, and when we’re not joining them in the field, we are a fully remote organization.

Our current business model and partner engagements are only the initial steps, as we lay the groundwork for system change. We envision a day when all breakthrough solutions get the behavioral research and strategy expertise needed to truly make an impact.

To learn more, please visit www.appleseedimpact.org

An Example of Our Work

A health NGO in Kenya installed clean water tanks in 200 schools, but only 8% of children drank from them. Despite receiving training from community health workers, most kept
drinking untreated water from the river or from handwashing tanks. Health workers were very frustrated.

Appleseed first showed the health workers to ask the right questions. Research found that children disliked water made warm by the black tanks under the sun. Also, they had trouble telling drinking and handwashing tanks apart. Observation showed they avoided any tanks placed near teachers' offices. So we applied behavioral nudges, such as painting tanks white (to reflect heat) and putting soap inside hand washing tanks (to discourage drinking). We also moved tanks closer to where students played (and further from where teachers congregated).

These changes, paired with a communication campaign using better signage and positive reinforcement, made drinking clean water a social norm. Within a year, we achieved 60% uptake, which reduced chronic diarrhea for nearly 27,000 additional children.

Our real success was in getting the NGO's health workers to apply behavioral marketing throughout their programs: they now use it to successfully drive adoption of mosquito nets and nutrition supplements. By showing case studies like these to other social impact organizations, to funders, and to social impact accelerator programs, we foster more widespread use of behavioral marketing across the sector!

To see other case studies, please visit www.appleseedimpact.org/case-studies
Role description

Background:

In 2022, Appleseed will take on several new behavior change projects. For each of these projects, Appleseed will conduct formative research to understand how to get a target audience to adopt a target behavior and design behavior change interventions to be tested through an experimentation phase.

Fellow Goals:

(1) Learn and gain practical experience in the sector,

(2) Enable Appleseed researchers to make the most of data collected and

(3) Provide backup support to Appleseed team members on other miscellaneous projects or internal tasks.

Your primary role will be as a qualitative research assistant. You will facilitate smooth and accurate research by capturing, transcribing, and organizing the data that the research team is uncovering. You will help everyone stay on the same page, and keep track of new findings, hypotheses, and research questions as the research evolves. You may also play a role in the research itself as an observer in interviews and data analyst.

As the research workload varies, you will take on secondary responsibilities. These may be related to our behavior change projects (strategy design, experimentation of interventions) or to internal projects (communications, fundraising, business development, operations, HR, and more).

Compensation: We aim to create a meaningful experience for anyone who joins us on projects. Joining us as a fellow would provide you with:

1. Interesting work that makes a real difference
2. Insights and concepts, applicable to life and work
3. An expanded network
4. Financial compensation - stipend $500/month

Location: Fully remote

Start and end date: Rolling, usually spans 4 - 6 months

Expected hours: 20 hours per week

Supervisor: Baptiste Teyssier, Behavior Strategist / Project Coordinator
Responsibilities

Primary: Research Assistant
1. Interview support:
   a. During interviews: observation and note taking of what is said (and not said)
   b. After interviews: debrief, cleaning and formatting interview notes
2. Organization of data: keeping findings filled, up to date, and available to the team across the various tools used by the team (Slack, Miro, Drive)
3. Synthesis support: participation in activities to make sense of findings, interview design, keeping track of hypotheses, insights, and new research questions

Secondary: Team Support
1. Internal tasks: mid to low level internal tasks based on need
2. Strategy and Experimentation Design: participation and note-taking in all strategy and experimentation design meetings
3. Experimentation: supporting the project coordinator and lead researcher through multiple experiment cycles (“build-measure-learn”)

What we’re looking for

Threshold Criteria

- Willing and able to meet with people in multiple time zones. Our projects and project team members span the globe from SE Asia to E Africa to W Europe.

 Desired Competencies

- Positive attitude and curious
- Great listening/observation skills
- Very strong writing ability
- Highly organized: you produce order from chaos, make connections between themes, present complex information clearly/elegantly, and ensure nothing gets lost
- Qualitative data analysis and synthesis: you can make sense of large amounts of disparate content, and discern what is applicable; you have a theoretical foundation in scientific method, qualitative research, mitigation of bias; you have some experience with ethnographic/contextual inquiry and data analysis

Nice to Have

- Ability to fluently speak an additional language besides English
Some familiarity with the worlds of our target audience and client stakeholders (low-income setting in Asia, rural low-income setting in East Africa, U.S. based NGO's)

Personal experience with language learning as an adult

Personal experience with using mobile money in low-income countries

Background or deep interest in behavioral science / human-centered design / behavior change communications

How to apply

If you might be a fit and are interested, we'd love to hear from you! Please email team@appleseedimpact.org with the following:

- “Candidate for Appleseed Fellowship” in the subject line
- Describe why you would be a good fit for Appleseed, and vice versa
- Please answer the following questions:
  1. In the next year, when are you NOT available to serve as a research fellow at Appleseed? What is your ideal start date?
  2. What competing priorities do you have that may not allow you to work at least 20 hours per week for Appleseed?
  3. Do you foresee any reason you may not be able to fulfill the 6-month commitment that this fellowship requires?
  4. Are you willing to work across the time zones specified?
  5. What other languages, besides English, do you speak (if any), and what is your level of fluency?
- If you have had a role on a past research effort similar to the role you would serve on our research projects mentioned above, please describe that instance (the situation, your role, your contributions, and the results/learnings)
- Attach or link to 3 x other writing samples authored by you (please don't create anything new for us)