

Connecting U.S. and Bengali Cultural Heritage Issues: A Virtual Internship

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage with Contact Base in West Bengal, India – Smithsonian Online Education

About the Internship:

The Smithsonian “Connecting U.S. and Bengali Cultural Heritage Issues: A Virtual Internship” is designed to provide a meaningful, minds-on learning experience in understanding cultural sustainability work in West Bengal, India, and sharing one’s own work on sustaining culture. The internship offers the opportunity to connect with a diverse group of students, artists, and community scholars studying folklore, cultural anthropology, ethnomusicology, cultural sustainability, international relations, and other related subjects. Interns will exchange information across cultures, explore assumptions, break down stereotypes, and think critically about the culture of West Bengal and our own cultures here in the United States. Interns will have the opportunity to make deep connections to each other’s work and that of the staff of the [Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage](#) (CFCH). In addition, this internship will serve as a model for future virtual cultural exchanges, so participants will be involved in experimenting with and evaluating various platforms, means of communication, and how to make these exchanges meaningful.

About Smithsonian’s Virtual Internships and the Communities Connecting Culture Program:

This virtual internship is an integral part of the [Communities Connecting Heritage](#) (CCH) program, a new project from the U.S. State Department Education and Exchange Program, administered by the not-for-profit educational organization World Learning. CFCH is one of six U.S.-based cultural organizations chosen to participate, and we have been paired with Contact Base (part of a larger organization called [Banglatak](#)), a cultural sustainability NGO based in Calcutta (Kolkata), India. A portion of the exchange is in-person for a small number of staff and students, already chosen, with a wider circle of participants included through this Virtual Internship program.

Learning Objectives:

Participants will engage in an innovative exchange which 1) creates an opportunity to interact with the Smithsonian in meaningful ways that will increase skills, connect students to Smithsonian expertise, and allow them to contribute their own ideas and experience, and 2) places interns on the ground floor of a pioneering virtual program that introduces participants to each other’s cultures, explores methods of sustaining culture both in the United States and abroad, and creates meaningful dialogue.

Through the experience, the Smithsonian Intern will:

Answer and debate weekly questions and issues posted on select online platforms. As feasible, everyone will participate in a monthly real-time conversation with partners in West Bengal. The internship will culminate in participation in a robust interactive webcast (date TBA). Each intern will be asked to evaluate the experience through an exit survey and brief interview.

The candidate who would most benefit from this experience will be:

Interested in the fields of folklife, cultural sustainability, cultural anthropology, ethnomusicology, and international studies;

Passionate about finding ways to increase understanding and sustainability of culture to a wide audience via web-based technology and social media;

Interested in connecting with like-minded colleagues around the United States and in West Bengal, India.

Professional, mature, and an independent worker.

Terms:

Five-month internship, 8 - 10 hours per week, starting on March 1, 2018.

Check with your school's internship office to find out if this might qualify for course credit. If so, we will work within their guidelines to make this possible.

Location: Your house. It's a Virtual Internship! Interns will need to have access to their own computer with an internet connection, and will need to create accounts for several free web-based communication tools and social media platforms.

To Apply:

Please **submit your materials by January 17, 2018**. Applications received after this date will be considered on an as-needed basis.

Complete the online application through the [Smithsonian Online Academic Appointment System \(SOLAA\)](#).

Questions can be directed to CFCH Intern Coordinator Arlene Reiniger at reinigera@si.edu.