

FIREBIRD FOUNDATION FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Fellowships for the Documentation of Oral Literature and Traditional Ecological Knowledge

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1.0 Introduction

There are two types of Fellowships: The Firebird Fellowships and the L. W. R. Appell Fellowships. Both Fellowships are awarded only to individuals. They

cannot be processed through institutions. The individual awarded the Fellowship is alone responsible for how the funds are used.

2.0.0 Firebird Fellowships

While Firebird these Fellowship awards can be up to \$10,000, lesser funding requests are encouraged.

2.1.0 Firebird Fellowships are awarded for three purposes

2.1.1 The primary purpose of these Fellowships are to supplement other sources of funds so as to enable the researcher while in the field to make a collection of oral literature and traditional ecological knowledge. The Foundation encourages Fellows to live in a community for at least 9 months to a year to collect all the varieties of oral literature in the community, not just the obvious public ones.

These Fellowships are intended to cover the time for processing the collection of oral literature. The full transcriptions or even to begin translations of the material will have to be accomplished on the applicant's own time, or while supported by another institution, or through future grants.

The Firebird Foundation will, however, consider an additional Fellowship to allow the researcher to process the material.

2.1.2 To support the initiatives of indigenous groups to organize the collection of their oral literature and traditional ecological knowledge. We encourage indigenous societies to apply for Fellowships to begin the documentation of their cultures.

2.1.3 To support a return to the source community to collect specific material or to complete a collection. Fellowship applications to cover the costs of returning to a community where original work was done to continue documenting oral literature and traditional ecological knowledge are welcome.

2.2.0 Applications for Firebird Fellowships

2.2.1 The application should include

Description of the project with the following information:

- Ethnic group involved
- Types of oral literature expected to collect
- Methods used to collect the oral literature
- Urgency of the project
- Proposed timeline of the project
- Brief review of literature on the ethnic group if applicable
- If you are a graduate student, a letter from your academic advisor is required

A brief description of your background and interest in oral literature and a CV.

2.2.2 Budget

Include total costs, costs to be covered by Firebird Foundation, and costs to be covered by other funding sources. All amounts must be listed in USD. Fellowship funds are to be used to cover research expenses directly related and essential to the project such as:

Travel, essential living expenses during fieldwork, supplies and recording equipment, research assistance, gifts to respondents, and other relevant expenditures.

It is strongly encouraged that funds be used to develop locally run oral literature projects and local collection teams.

Funds are not to be used:

to cover salaries from other sources, and/or fringe benefits of applicant, tuition, non-project personnel, travel to meetings, purchase of books, internet costs, institutional overhead, institutional support, or preparation of books and videos for classroom use in the re-establishment of the language, etc.

Before completing a proposal carefully read the section below on “Aspects of Successful Applicants.”

2.2.3 Recording Equipment Recommended

In general documentation of oral literature should not be done in public, unless it is part of the culture, as this can skew the material to please the audience. We do

not approve of initially video recording of narratives and other texts. We have evidence that video recordings influences the structure and content of a document. Therefore, it is recommended that the recording of any narrative texts be by audio only, and video recording, should be used for public performances such as dances, performance of rituals, house building, community performances, etc.

- **Audio Recording:** Zoom H4n PRO Digital Recorder
- **Transcription:** Audacity Open Source software, <http://audacityteam.org/>
- **Photography:** An allowance of up to \$750 for camera equipment can be included in the budget. A Cannon SX50 or Cannon SX60 is recommended
- **Audiovisual:** Zoom Q8 Handy Video Recorder

It is preferred that recording equipment be left with the ethnic group so that they can continue recording.

2.2.4 Submission of Application

Submit applications by email in a legible font either as .doc or .pdf file or send printed applications via mail. The Fellowship is open to all nationalities but applications must be in English.

Applications are accepted for review quarterly: March 1, June 1, Sept. 1 and Dec. 1.

Firebird Foundation for Anthropological Research, P.O. Box A, Phillips, ME 04966, USA, or to the Foundation's email address: firebird@firebirdfoundation.org.

3.0 The Laura W. R. Appell Fellowships

3.1 Description

These Fellowships are given in recognition of Laura W. R. Appell's long term commitment to the Rungus Momogon community and in honor of her Rungus friends, especially Itulina and Minobidong, her primary source for Rungus religion. The recipients of this Fellowship are expected to develop a long term commitment to a community and to collaborate with the community's members to preserve and protect their oral literature and traditional ecological knowledge.

Each of these Fellowship can include up to \$40,000 to cover the expenses required to establish a long-term community-based project. The project must explicitly adhere to the values, ethics, and methodology established by the Sabah Oral Literature Project to collect and preserve the oral literature and the traditional ecological knowledge of that community.

3.2 Application Procedures

There are no formal guidelines. An applicant should work with the Foundation in preparing a research proposal. The Fellowship recipient will work with The Firebird Foundation to ensure the Sabah Oral Literature Project Guidelines are both adhered to and adapted appropriately to the individual community.

4.0 Successful Proposals for Fellowships include:

4.1 Applicants should indicate:

- Applicant plans to live in source community for 9 to 12 months; or
- The applicant is a member of the ethnic group and speaks the language
- The applicant intends to train local members of the source community so that the collection of oral literature can continue at the end of the Fellowship
- Linguistic skills: The applicant can speak the local language; or has the skills to prepare a phonemic orthography of the language if one is not available; or the applicant has contacted a linguist to help.
- An attempt should be made to collect several versions of all major texts. This is important for comparative purposes and will contribute to understanding the processes of learning and remembering, and provide a genealogy of sources for the texts.
- Collected texts are not to be corrected. There are no proper versions. To try and merge various versions of a particular text to present the “true” version only destroys the value of the original texts
- -The applicant shows sensitivity to the fact that not all oral literature collected should be made public. Please see section entitled: “Ethical Dilemmas of Public Access to Oral Literature Documents”
- Documentation of oral accounts should include life histories of significant people, the individual’s experience with major historical and life events, narratives of one’s life experiences, and so on.
- Budget must be synchronized with the action in the proposal
- Indication of how the collected documents will be transcribed and translated at some point in the future.

- Dedication to the collection of oral literature and traditional ecological knowledge
- Must indicate a knowledge of literature on the community
- Photographs of the actual research site and recording are required.

4.2 Field Methodology

An important aspect of the Foundation's field techniques is to involve native speakers in the data collection process. There are several additional advantages to having native speakers collect data, such as having access to data an outsider might not and having a native speaker's perspective about what data to collect. Having native speakers document their own language also generates local interest in the language preservation.

5.0 Responsibilities of Successful Applicant for a Fellowship

5.1 Permissions

The applicant is responsible for obtaining permission from the community to conduct the documenting of oral literature where it is required. This involves a full explanation of the purposes of the work, the uses of the material collected, compensation for respondents, and the negotiations of other agreements.

The applicant is similarly expected to make sure that those individuals being asked to record their oral literature are fully informed about the use of the material being documented, where it will be archived, etc. The applicant will inform respondents that they have the choice whether or not the material being documented is to be held privately and not shared publicly or whether it can be made public to a local audience or to a world audience.

5.2 Letter of Agreement

The successful applicant will receive a letter of agreement for the project which will be signed by the applicant and a Foundation officer. Please return the letter of agreement to the Foundation within one month of receipt. Funds will not be released without this letter. Please also let the Foundation know how you would like to receive your funds (wire transfer, check, etc.) and the date you need the funds.

5.3 An account of expenses must be submitted to the Foundation at the end of the Fellowship.

5.4 The Firebird Foundation is interested in periodic updates on your research from the field and as you process your data afterwards. We are also genuinely interested in hearing of any problems or unexpected experiences you had while collecting the material, as this will help us advise later applicants.

5.5 Reporting and Submission of Copies only of the recordings, transcriptions, and other documents are to be deposited and archived with the Firebird Foundation's Program for Oral Literature and Traditional Ecological Knowledge along with a final report including a list of expenses incurred. Ownership of the research materials will remain with the Fellowship recipient. We welcome periodic updates on the status of your work on the materials as well as reprints of any publications resulting from your work.

We would like to receive copies of your collected materials no later than one year after the completion of your fieldwork. We would prefer digital copies. We would also like copies of any transcriptions made of the recordings. Recordings should be legibly labeled and the transcriptions should indicate which recordings they are paired with. We also encourage you to archive with the Firebird Foundation copies of any resulting publications about your research or other materials that arise from the analysis of your recordings.

6.0 Ethical Dilemmas in Documenting Oral Literature and Providing Public Access to Collected Materials

The Foundation does not encourage providing open access of materials collected because of the possibility of engendering conflict over historical accounts, resource use, and so forth. See the section entitled: Ethical Dilemmas of Public Access. The Foundation, however, does encourage providing open access for carefully selected documents.

All collectors of oral literature should be fully aware that there has been an upsurge in violence and killings over access to resources. Therefore, blanket open access has the possibility of adding to this violence over tenure to land and other resources.

Finally, all those documenting oral literature should be aware of the impact they can have on a local community and their responsibilities to that community. The

experience of the San people of South Africa is well worth considering by any scholar or researcher wanting to document the oral literature of an indigenous people. From their experience the San have published a Code of Research Ethics for researchers wishing to work with the San (see the [San Code of Research Ethics](#) and [this article in Science](#)). The San Code has risen as a result of some researchers not treating the San people with proper respect, or who have published information that is viewed as insulting, or who have published their findings without prior consultation with the San community, and finally as a result of the failure of some researchers to give anything back to the San community in return for San cooperation while forwarding their own careers with their findings.