

Postdoctoral Researcher Prince Claus Chair *'Frugal Innovation for Development and Equity'*

The Prince Claus Chair (PPC) for Equity and Development seeks to fill a postdoctoral research position in the field of frugal innovation in informal settings. The position is connected to the Prince Claus Chair, which for the 2015-2017 period will be held by dr. Saradindu Bhaduri.

Description research domain

The objective of the Prince Claus Chair is to continue the work of Prince Claus (1926-2002) in development and equity. Utrecht University and the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam alternately appoint an outstanding young academic from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean or the Pacific to the Prince Claus Chair, established in early 2003, for the advancement of research and teaching in the field of development cooperation. For the 2015-2017 period the Prince Claus Chair research will be focused on 'Frugal innovation for Development and Equity'.

Frugal innovations are value-sensitive design and marketing strategies that bring products, services and systems within the reach of the billions of poorer and emerging new middle class consumers at the Middle and Bottom of the Pyramid. These innovations can be undertaken by established business units in the formal setting of the economy ("top-down frugality") or individual innovators at the grassroots level, largely in informal settings ("bottom-up frugality"). The challenge is to provide innovative solutions to problems of people in the bottom of the pyramid. Such innovations need to fit local circumstances and cultures. Examples of such innovations include water purifiers, washing machines or cooling systems that do not require electricity; several IT based (micro) financing applications like Mpesa and Zoono; and low-cost solar lighting systems for rural electrification. There are several instances where frugal innovations are increasingly co-produced in so-called polycentric networks of innovation, which link local innovators and entrepreneurs, with designers, financiers, formal research institutes, manufacturers and distributors from diverse regions, often located in different parts of the globe.

Many examples of, and studies around, such innovations in the informal settings are available in India, China and countries in Africa. These examples keep throwing up interesting research issues regarding values, cultural contexts, motivations and economic logic of these innovations. At a more conceptual level, these examples provide new scope to rethink the meaning of innovation and our understanding of frugality. An enriched understanding of these issues will help design effective policies, which would adopt a more sensitive, and inclusive, approach to knowledge generated in the informal settings of an economy.

Dr. Bhaduri and the postdoctoral researcher will be based at the ISS and will closely collaborate with the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Frugal Innovation in Africa. Valorisation and societal relevance will be leading principles behind the research activities. The work of dr. Bhaduri has a multidisciplinary focus and addresses the interface between development and (technological) innovation studies, with a focus on frugality in informal settings. The project is exploring the possibility of taking up frugal innovation in the "lock-and-key sector" by small firms (unregistered) and individuals in India and Africa for a comparative understanding of the process, scope and extent of frugality in these innovations.

Task description

The postdoctoral researcher will support the PCC in this research and is also expected to build her/his own creative engagement within this endeavour. Candidates with experiences in similar topics in other sectors are invited to apply. The successful candidate will be encouraged to use her/his past experience to contribute to the conceptual understanding of frugality in its various dimensions. The primary data collection will focus on a number of case-studies in India and Africa. The postdoc is expected to contribute to, and assist in coordinating these case studies, which will provide part of the empirical case material contributing to developing more clear understanding of frugal innovations in informal settings in India and Africa. The study may involve also quantitative analyses.

Requirements

- Awarded a PhD within the last 4 years.
- PhD or post-doctoral research experience in *innovation studies* or related fields of study, (preferably with a focus on developing/emerging economies).
- MSc. in any field of technology/social science/ innovation management.
- Awareness about technology and emerging market development;
- Familiarity with quantitative tools of social science research.
- (Preferably) experience with (field) research in Africa and/or India;
- Willingness to travel.

ISS is committed to building and sustaining a community based on inclusiveness, equity, and diversity and believe this will contribute to our mission and vision of being the best institute in our field. Applicants from the Global South (e.g. Africa, Asia and Latin America), are in particular encouraged to apply. We also encourage candidates with a demonstrated commitment to multicultural teaching, research, and service to apply. ISS is an equal opportunities employer and encourages applications from candidates of all genders, ethnicities, and nationalities. Interested candidates should submit a motivation letter, a recent CV and a statement of purpose, not exceeding 500 words, elaborating on how they intend to contribute to this project. Send your application to Tom Harmsen (harmsen@iss.nl).

Employment conditions

This is a full-time position with a fixed term for 1 year and 6 months, starting on January 1st 2016 or as soon thereafter as possible. Salary and secondary employment conditions will be in salary scale 10 or 11 (for details, see: [EUR salary](#)) in accordance with the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO) for Dutch universities. The successful candidate will be employed by Erasmus University Rotterdam, and based at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague and with a regular presence also at Delft University of Technology in Delft.

Last date of submission:

1 November 2015

For more information contact:

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