

## **What can I do if my students cannot complete their social and cultural anthropology fieldwork or limited fieldwork?**

### *SL IA*

If students have completed their initial observation but are unable to return to their fieldwork site, due to restrictions as a result of COVID-19, to undertake step 2 and 3 of the task, they can consider alternative ways to collect data remotely. For example:

- Cases where students undertook the initial observation in a fieldwork site where they knew the people they observed, for example within their school: in this instance students can contact people they observed using online tools, and use online surveys or interviews to collect additional data.
- Cases where students undertook the initial observation in a fieldwork site which it is not possible to return to, for example a shopping centre or coffee shop, or church: in this instance students can use online tools to survey or interview people they know who go to these places.

The IA task requires the application of non-participant observation and a second research method together with an evaluation of methods in relation to the conceptually framed and focused research question. Students are required to compare, discuss and evaluate the data collected using the two different research methods (i.e. non-participant observation and whatever second method the student has chosen).

The current situation may make it impossible for students to return to their fieldwork site but this is also a reality for many anthropologists who because of the current situation or for other reasons may not be able to return to a fieldwork site. In spite of this, many anthropologists follow up on research questions using alternative methods that can be applied using technology. Reflecting on the challenges presented when a fieldwork site or informants are no longer accessible, and what can be learnt from the process of using technology as an alternative means to collect data will be useful in the completion of Step 4 of the assessment: *critical reflection of fieldwork, methods and concepts* and in responding to the following prompts:

- a critical comparison and evaluation of the methods used in their two fieldwork experiences
- a discussion of the position of the researcher and how this may have affected the results
- an account of what has been learned through the process of gathering fieldwork data.

### *HL IA*

At HL, students can follow up any data collection using other methods and techniques that are possible to use online or over the telephone, such as interviews, questionnaires, surveys or life histories. Many anthropologists are doing fieldwork online and these experiences can be very rich in terms of evaluating ethical issues as well as their role in the data collection process.