Overview
The expedition funding enabled me to carry out research that contributed towards my Masters dissertation. The dissertation broadly explored representations and interactions with microbial life and critically addressed the implications of these representations and interactions for human and nonhuman relations. The areas of empirical research included cleaning and probiotic adverts, interviews with key figures at OpenBiome (a leading faecal bank in Boston), interviews with users of alternative medicating practices such as Faecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT), and a site visit and interviews at Micropia in Amsterdam (the only museum that is entirely focused on microbial life).

The Expeditions fund went towards a research visit to ‘Micropia’, as well as carrying out interviews with key figures within the museum. The site visit was essential for the research as Micropia acts as a key institution that both represents as well as translates microbial life to the public. The site visit aimed to unpick the discourses and genealogies of microbial life within the museum through both the materiality of the museum as well as through symbolic practices.

Visit to Micropia
The visit to Micropia started with a walk around the exhibitions at the museum, as it was a Friday morning the museum was empty, allowing me to see the museum while it wasn’t busy and to see each exhibit in detail. I then had an interview with a key figure of the museum, who explained the history of the museum and how
and who decided the make a museum focusing just on microbial life. They then talked me through some of the exhibitions, how the museum runs day to day and how a ‘family’ of investors that include biotech firms, research institutions and organisations funds it. This ‘family’ of investors use the museum to feedback their cutting edge research to the public.

I was also able to visit Micropia on the Saturday afternoon a much busier time for the museum. Visiting the museum when it was busy was important for the research, as I was able to see what exhibitions were popular, gauge the perceptions of visitors and see how the public engaged with the museum.

**Experience**

The trip enabled me to experience the museum first hand, this acted as not only invaluable in my dissertation analysis but also to my understanding of the institution as I was able to participate in some of the more interactive exhibitions one of which was called the ‘Body Scanner’.

The exhibition scans your body showing you an outline of your body and lets you pick which area of your body you would like to zoom into and see what kind of microbial ecologies contribute to that body parts functioning. Another interactive exhibition called the ‘Kiss’O Meter’ invited visitors to stand on a platform and kiss, while the kiss took place a camera would record the kiss to then record it back detailing what kind of microbial life is usually transferred and the evolutionary reasons why kissing became a usual practice in mammals. These interactive exhibitions were very popular with the public and good fun to participate in and observe.
Once I had completed my dissertation research I was able to explore the Amsterdam, a city I had never visited before. During my free time I visited the Anne Frank Museum and wondered around the city and beautiful canals.

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I am hugely grateful to the expeditions fund for their financial assistance, that without, the trip would not have been possible. My findings were invaluable to my dissertation and the people I met and relationship built with the museum will be beneficial for me to continue my research during my PhD.