

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY (2021)

EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN MIGRATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN MARGINAL MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

(QWAQWA, FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA)



Background

The Afromontane Research Unit (ARU) is the flagship research unit of the University of the Free State-Qwaqwa Campus (UFS-QQ), and seeks to become a continental leader in African mountain research.

The ARU has recently been awarded a Risk & Vulnerability Science Centre (RVSC) by the Department of Science & Innovation (DSI)/National Research Foundation (NRF). The RVSC: UFS-QQ seeks to contribute relevant research to the Global Grand Challenges from a South African perspective around the theme *The Sustainable Development of Phuthaditjhaba as an African Mountain City*. This theme has direct applications to other high elevation high-density conglomerations (“ruralopolis”) of planned and unplanned settlements in former homelands in South Africa, with relevance to unstructured urban-rural development in other developing countries.

Phuthaditjhaba, and the former homeland of Qwaqwa (now located in Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, eastern Free State, South Africa), has a population of 400,000 people that is currently characterised by high unemployment (>60%) and experiences significant hurdles to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this end, the ARU has established the project: “**Exploring intersections between migration, entrepreneurship and sustainable development in marginal mountain communities**” to understand economics and mobility from a Sustainability Science perspective. The study will feed into a wider collaborative research programme between the UFS-QQ and the University of Tokyo’s Graduate Programme in Sustainability Science – Global Leadership initiative (GPSS-GLI). The Programme links the rural mountainous communities of Qwaqwa and Gojome town, in Akita Prefecture, Japan, through a trans-local learning approach. Trans-disciplinary, trans-local approaches grounded in Sustainability Science have the potential to create nuanced knowledge about global sustainability challenges, such as migration. The project is also developing close links with the Global Mountain Safeguard Programme (GLOMOS); GLOMOS has a close relationship with the ARU, and emphasises the role of the United Nations instruments, including the SDGs, in such regional studies and interventions, including around migration. While the focus of this Fellowship is Phuthaditjhaba/Qwaqwa, it does feed into a broader interest regarding human migration patterns relating to the greater Maloti-Drakensberg (Lesotho/South Africa), and the social, economic, ecological and geo-political aspects of this.

Research focus

The RVSC: UFS-QQ seeks to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced Post-doctoral Research Fellow for 2021, with the option of renewal for 2022 based on performance. The successful Fellow will be registered in the Department of Geography, and affiliated to the RVSC: UFS-QQ. The Fellow will be an integral component of an interdisciplinary team that examines the links between migration, entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Phuthaditjhaba/Qwaqwa. The Fellow will be provided opportunity to travel, in order to represent the project and the RVSC-UFS, and career mentoring as part of the RVSC cohort at UFS-QQ.

This Call presents an excellent opportunity for high-achieving researchers to be part of an innovative, internationally collaborative Sustainability Science research project of high significance. The Fellowship is R190,000 per year (with the potential for a top-up based on performance and funds availability) with R30,000 for Fellowship running costs (the majority of costs for the project will be covered by the research consortium).

Duties:

1. Contribute to original research. This will include analyzing both qualitative interview/focus group data and quantitative survey data; help lead deliberative stakeholder workshops; conduct literature reviews; and employ sociological theories related to migration, entrepreneurship and sustainable development.
2. Willing to undertake fieldwork in Phuthaditjhaba and Qwaqwa, as well as elsewhere in the Maloti-Drakensberg.
3. Contribute to the publishing of relevant, high-quality research papers in relevant (preferably high impact factor) journals.
4. Contribute to presentations at professional meetings (including participation in the Global Leadership initiative).
5. Co-supervise post-graduate students.
6. Represent the project and RVSC-UFS at relevant conferences, including a DSI-NRF RVSC Conference.
7. The Fellow will be provided with undergraduate lecturing opportunities, and to participate in contributing to grant writing for experience.
8. For recently graduated Fellows, an arrangement can be made for them to include publishing their thesis chapters, provided it does not clash with the project commitments.

Eligibility:

1. A PhD degree in a relevant background discipline (e.g. Sustainability Science, Social Science, Human Geography, or motivated other).
2. Applicants should have obtained their Doctoral degree within five (5) years.
3. Applicants who are currently completing their Doctoral dissertation for submission may apply, provided they complete their Doctoral degree by 31st December 2020 (awards that are not taken up by 30th June 2021 will be cancelled by the NRF).
4. Full-time employees are only eligible to apply if they intend to take unpaid leave for the duration of the Fellowship.
5. Excellent people and organisational skills, including team work.
6. Be willing to undertake fieldwork among rural and remote, marginalised communities.
7. Self-driven and be able to set and meet own deadlines.
8. A proficiency in English, both verbal and written, is required; proficiency in Sesotho would be a major advantage.
9. A valid driver's license is preferable.

How to Apply:

Applications should be submitted to Dr Melissa Hansen (hansenmm@ufs.ac.za) by 30th June 2020, with the following:

1. A one-page Letter of Motivation (which includes why you are interested in this project, relevant experience, and any areas of particular interest).
2. Full CV.
3. Academic Transcripts.
4. Copy of ID or Passport (latter if a foreign applicant).

Short-listed candidates will be advised for an interview via a virtual platform; the successful candidate will be nominated to the NRF for appointment. The UFS reserves the right to re-advertise for this post if a suitable candidate is not found.

For further enquires please contact Dr Hansen at hansenmm@ufs.ac.za.