POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY (2022)

EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN ECONOMIC SYSTEMS, POVERTY 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), a continental leader in African mountain research.

The ARU hosts the UFS-QQ 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 (“ruralopoli”) 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 more than 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 economic systems, poverty and sustainable development in marginal mountain communities” to understand economics and mobility from an economics perspective. The study seeks to investigate economic systems and activities in the mountain city of Phuthaditjhaba. This includes the inflow and outflow of income within the society. It will explore resilience as survival mechanism in an environment characterised by harsh weather in form of low temperatures in winter, and alternate excessive rainfall and droughts which affect agricultural production and survival techniques. The study seeks examine the determinants and prevalence of poverty across socio-economic groups.

Research focus
The RVSC: UFS-QQ seeks to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced Post-doctoral Research Fellow for 2022, with the option of renewal for 2023 based on performance. The successful Fellow will be registered in the Department of Economics and Finance, and affiliated to the RVSC: UFS-QQ. The Fellow will be an integral component of an interdisciplinary team that examines the links between economics systems, poverty, and sustainable development in Phuthaditjhaba/Qwaqwa. The Fellow will be provided opportunity to travel and to represent the project and the RVSC-UFS.

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 R220,000 per year (with the potential for a top-up based on performance and funds availability) with R50,000 for Fellowship running costs.
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 economics theories related to economic development, poverty, and sustainable development.
2. Willing to undertake fieldwork in Phuthadijhaba and Qwaqwa.
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. Economics, or related field with strong analytic skills such as econometrics. Knowledge of development economics will be an added advantage).
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 30th June 2022 (awards that are not taken up by 30th December 2022 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 teamwork.
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 essential (please note that international candidates will need an international drivers licence to use a UFS vehicle or a car hired using UFS funds for research).

How to Apply:
Applications should be submitted to Dr Calvin Mudzingiri (mudzingiric@ufs.ac.za) by 15th February 2022, 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 Mudzingiri at mudzingiric@ufs.ac.za.