



Fellowship for full-time PhD study

University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

“Rural livelihoods, ecosystem services and human well-being”

SUCSES: Sustainability in Communal Socio-Ecological Systems

A fully-funded PhD fellowship opportunity is available to an outstanding individual interested in rural livelihoods, environment and human well-being. The successful candidate will work with collaborators from the School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences and MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt) of the University of the Witwatersrand, and the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The PhD fellowship is nested in a multi-disciplinary research project titled *SUCSES: Sustainability in communal socio-ecological systems*. The project aims to better understand the dynamic interactions between humans and the environment in rural South Africa, and the consequences of these for ecological sustainability and rural communities. *SUCSES* consists of two components, one focused on the ecological context and the other on the social setting. The latter component examines livelihood strategies and outcomes as they relate to household reliance on ecosystem services. The PhD fellowship is associated with this portion of the broader study. *SUCSES* is nested within the Agincourt health and socio-demographic surveillance system (AHDSS) in rural Mpumalanga Province, South Africa*.

Objectives of PhD project

To assist in:

- 1) establishing a longitudinal household livelihoods monitoring system for collecting, analysing and archiving household livelihoods data for a cohort of households in the AHDSS
- 2) analysing the drivers of household reliance on ecosystem services in the household cohort
- 3) assessing the links between household livelihood strategies and human well-being (e.g. food security), using a livelihood typology for the household cohort.

Competencies

The successful candidate will preferably have a social science background and these competencies:

- Experience using survey questionnaires, ideally in the context of livelihoods research
- Interest in human-environment interactions
- Skills in quantitative statistical analysis, especially multivariate modeling
- Be highly motivated and independent, but able to work well in a team
- An international driver’s license, and able to drive a stick shift
- Experience with GIS would be an added bonus, but not essential

* The AHDSS provides a platform for a wide portfolio of research comprising the MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt) of the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand

Responsibilities

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Collaboratively develop a livelihoods survey questionnaire which will be used for their study and for monitoring livelihoods in a cohort of households in the future
- Pilot and manage the implementation of the household livelihoods survey, including supervision of a small team of trained local fieldworkers
- Liaise with the project PIs and work closely with the staff of the Agincourt Unit
- Contribute to seminars at the Wits Rural Facility, Wits School of Public Health and Wits School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences

Fellowship conditions

The fellowship is for full-time study towards a PhD degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, and covers all fees and includes a monthly stipend for living costs. Project expenses will be funded separately. The successful applicant must be prepared to live in a rural African setting for extended periods of time during fieldwork.

Interested applicants should submit a CV (including names and contact details of 2 referees), academic transcripts, and a one-page letter of motivation to:

Dr Wayne Twine

e-mail: rcrd@global.co.za

Tel: +27-15-793 7500

AND

Dr Kathleen Kahn

email: Kathleen.Kahn@wits.ac.za

Tel: +27-11-717 2617

Deadline for applications: 15th June 2009 or until fellowship awarded to successful applicant.