



## **Bambara groundnut productivity from a historical perspective**

This is an interdisciplinary postdoctoral fellowship hosted within the Faculty of AgriSciences' Sustainable Agriculture programme and the Department of History.

### **Background**

Conventional agricultural practices have long posed a threat to crop diversity and indigenous knowledge systems. These practices, often driven by commercial interests and the pursuit of high yields, have led to the widespread adoption of monoculture farming and the displacement of traditional or indigenous crops and cultivation methods.

In this context, our research on the cultivation of the indigenous and underutilised Bambara groundnut in Southern Africa aims to shed light on the historical dimensions of agricultural practices in the region by examining its historical cultivation practices. We want to understand how indigenous communities have interacted with, and managed, this important crop over time. Through archival research, oral history collection, and the application of systems thinking frameworks, we aim to uncover the ways in which Bambara groundnut cultivation has evolved in response to changing environmental, social, and economic conditions. We hope to identify strategies for promoting sustainable agriculture and preserving indigenous knowledge systems by exploring the historical context of Bambara groundnut cultivation.

### **Objectives**

- Collate archival information and oral history data to map the history of Bambara groundnut diversity and management in Southern Africa.
- Investigate the socio-cultural significance of Bambara groundnut cultivation and its adaptation to changing environmental conditions.
- Examine the influence of historical institutions on Bambara groundnut farming practices and market access.
- Employ a case study approach to analyse Bambara groundnut production dynamics in South Africa and/or Zimbabwe.

### **Candidate attributes**

This is a two-year (NRF grant holder-linked), full-time position with opportunities for career development and impactful research. The ideal candidate will have strong analytical skills, interdisciplinary perspectives, and a dedication to preserving indigenous knowledge systems.

We encourage you to apply if you meet the requirements below, and have a passion for advancing agricultural sustainability through interdisciplinary research.

### ***Requirements***

- A PhD (obtained within the last four years) in History or related fields.
- Strong background in archival research, oral history, and qualitative research methods.
- Experience or special interest in economic phenomena and socio-cultural perspectives.
- Demonstrated ability to take a holistic approach to history and understand interconnected systems.
- Proficiency in critical evaluation of historical evidence and development of original interpretations.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a multidisciplinary team.
- Willingness to travel and conduct fieldwork in South Africa and/or Zimbabwe.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with a proven track record of publications or research outputs relevant to the project goals.
- The candidate will be **expected to produce two publications per year**

### **Application process**

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, CV, and contact information for two references by **30 April 2024**. Submissions should be sent via email to Dr E Phiri ([ephiri@sun.ac.za](mailto:ephiri@sun.ac.za)), CC Dr T Dube ([tdube01@sun.ac.za](mailto:tdube01@sun.ac.za)). **Only short-listed applicants will be contacted for an (online) interview.**

Postdoctoral fellows are not appointed as employees and, because their fellowships are awarded tax-free, they are not eligible for employee benefits.

Stellenbosch University reserves the right to NOT fill the post if a suitable candidate is not identified.