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SARChI
Chair
Transformative Social Learning
& Open-Ended Learning Pathways

Early Career Researcher Position: Doctoral/Post-doctoral Fellow/Research Assistant

Faculty / Division: Faculty of Education, SARChI Chair – Global Change and Social Learning Systems, Environmental Learning Research Centre, Rhodes University, South Africa

Address: Environmental Learning Research Centre, Lucas Avenue, Rhodes University, Makhanda

Position: Post-doctoral Fellow / Research Assistant

Hours of work: Full Time (1 April 2022 to Dec 31 2025)

Line manager: Distinguished Professor Lotz-Sisitka

Salary Range: R200 000 p.a. (doctoral/post-doc study), with R 200 000 for RA work (total R400 000)

Work Pattern and Place: Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC), Rhodes University Campus, 5 days per week, **on site at Rhodes University in Makhanda** (i.e. the scholar must be based in Makhanda, and be at work in the ELRC during working hours, except when travelling or on leave).

Visa / Work permit: The candidate must have a relevant research visa, work permit and/or permanent residency or be a South African citizen at the time of application.

Purpose of the Position

This is a full time contract doctoral/post-doctoral¹ and RA research position for an Early Career Researcher / Post-doctoral Scholar to work with the SARChI Chair on Global Change and Social Learning Systems on a prestigious, and exciting international research project focussing on 'Times of a Just Transition' funded by the British Academy in collaboration with the SARChI Chair.

The Times of a Just Transition programme brings together leading researchers from six continents and 14 disciplines to explore the role of time and temporality in structuring justice in sustainability transitions. The programme comprises 20 independent projects exploring this question from different perspectives – ranging from the times of bodily hunger to intergenerational narratives of time in Indigenous knowledge transitions to the study of apocalyptic narratives in anti-climate

¹ This is ideally for a post-doctoral scholar, but a scholar in the final year of their PhD (2023) will also be considered, with the understanding that the scholar will continue with Post-Doctoral scholarship in the programme in the following two years (2024/2025).

populist networks. The PDRA will work in one of these projects (based with the SARChI Chair at RU), but will be linked to the rest of the programmes through participation in the overall programme.

The 'Times of a Just Transition' programme is brought together around the following beliefs:

- First, that attending to time and temporality in sustainability transitions has the potential to radically deepen and transform our understanding of how justice is understood, contested, achieved or impeded; and
- Second, that this insight can be translated into new tools for political negotiation and public dialogue to articulate and agree routes towards justice in our collective responses to climate change.

The role of the post-doctoral and research assistant (PDRA) on this project is to work alongside the SARChI Chair of Global Change and Social Learning Systems, Distinguished Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka, to develop research-based insights into ***the educational and social learning dynamics of possibility knowledge(s) embedded in local languages and a diversity of just transitioning expansive learning processes.*** The PDRA should be willing to undertake expansive learning research with **Eastern Cape communities** involved in the Just Transition – inclusive of smallholder farmers involved in food, land and livelihoods transitioning, workers and employers in the Eastern Cape electric vehicle transition in Gqeberha and Buffalo City, and workers and employees working on biodiversity management, climate change adaptation and energy transition practices in the Eastern Cape. The SARChI Chair project 'Ixsha for Justice' meaning 'Time for Justice' is to explore **possibility knowledge(s) and temporality concepts in meaning making processes (i.e. cognitive, hermeneutic and regenerative justice principles), and the implications for expansive learning, education, training and skills development for Just Transitions.**

The researcher should have an interest, or background in research related to the above areas of Just Transitions to Sustainability in the Eastern Cape (food, energy, vehicle production etc.), local languages, education, transformative learning and/or meaning making. Ideally the researcher should have a good command of the isiXhosa language or other local South African languages, and have a social science, humanities or educational sciences background, and an affinity for working with people, as well as an interest in enabling and supporting transformative, expansive learning (i.e. learning what is 'not yet there').

The PDRA will need good communication and writing skills to support the development of a set of accessible tools and resources for policy makers, researchers, activists and educators working on sustainability challenges. Additionally the PDRA will be required to support the preparation, design and running of programme meetings, and preparation of materials for publication as part of the programme. Additionally, the PDRA will assist in organising the first TimeLab gathering for the international programme, which will be held in Makhanda in September 2024. The PDRA will also be required to contribute to the overall activities of the ELRC where relevant.

There will be opportunity for the PDRA to pursue their own interests in relation to questions of time, sustainability and justice and to develop professionally, including with support Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka. The PDRA will be required to produce two publications per annum, as per all PD contracts with Rhodes University. The PDRA will also be networked into an international group of PDRAs, and will have access to and support from the overall programme leadership team as well as research provided in the South African project.

This is an ideal opportunity for a postdoctoral researcher interested with interests in time, justice, sustainability, languages, meaning making, transformative, expansive learning and agency for change. The Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC), where the SARChI Chair is based,

hosts a number of research programmes and related research activities and is linked to a number of national and international networks, which is where the PDRA will be based. The ELRC offers a vibrant research context, and a welcoming, friendly and engaged community to work with.

Main Statement of Responsibilities

The PDRA will be expected to work closely with the SA Project Lead, Distinguished Professor Lotz-Sisitka to advance the South African 'Times of Just Transitioning' Project, and help to ensure connections and communications with the overall research programme through:

- Literature reviews and archival research where relevant
- Partnership formation on Temporality, Sustainability, and Just Transitioning in the Eastern Cape
- Fieldwork engagement and running expansive learning workshops with Just Transitioning Communities in the Eastern Cape
- Production of academic papers, as well as publicly accessible tools and facilitation resources on time, sustainability and justice.
- Attend and assist with organising, documentation the South African TimeLab event which will host the international partners in September 2023, and other programme meetings.
- Research, support and author the development of policy and academic papers on time, sustainability and justice relevant to own research focus and overall focus of the South African project.
- Contribute to synthesis publications including journal articles, special issues and edited books.
- Participate in bi-directional mentoring and ERC knowledge exchange networks with other PDRAs and members of the programme.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Relevant Experience, Skills and Knowledge

Essential

- Literature search and writing skills to develop and support academic publication and impact work in academic settings
- Experience in producing materials for non-academic audiences
- Fluent and excellent written and spoken language skills in at least two South African languages, and an interest in language and meaning making in sustainability education / social learning contexts
- Strong skills in developing and maintaining relationships, including online and through digital platforms
- Experience of either teaching or facilitation or public understanding/communication of science
- Interest in and academic knowledge relevant to the 'Times of a Just Transition' areas of work and creative ideas for taking these forward collaboratively in line with the programme's goals

Desirable

- Event organisation, planning and logistics skills, including for online and in-person academic, policy and arts-focused events
- Track record in education, public pedagogy, social or participatory arts or design
- Knowledge of academic and international policy debates related to sustainability and climate justice, and ways in which these relate to the Eastern Cape / South African context
- Experience developing collaborative academic and policy-oriented publications

Relevant Qualifications

Essential

- Post-graduate qualification (e.g. Masters) in a field of Education, Social Science, Humanities / Social-Ecological Science / Environmental Science / Public Understanding/communication of science that is relevant to the focus of the programme AND / OR
- PhD (or near completion of a PhD) in a discipline relevant to the programme area – e.g. time studies, sustainability, justice, education, change and transition theory. (i.e. the candidate can begin the RA work as PhD scholar and/or post-doc scholar, but in the case of a PhD scholar, the scholar **must** be in the final year of their PhD studies, and **very close to completion**). In the case of a PhD scholar completing their studies in 2023, it would be preferable if the PhD study can be submitted for examination by June 2023.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Essential

- Excellent organisational skills
- Ability to work independently and prioritise tasks when faced with competing deadlines
- Excellent team working skills
- Very good IT skills, including for writing and editing long documents, attractive presentation, using reference managing software, and tools for online communication (Zoom, WhatsApp etc)

Desirable

- Experience of presenting at academic conferences
- Experience building collaborative networks including both offline participatory, transformative expansive learning approaches / social networking, and online communications or use of digital tools

TO APPLY:

Please send 1) your CV with 2) a short letter of application, and 3) an 800 word motivation which indicates clearly your existing contribution to scholarly work, and how you see your scholarly work contributing to this research programme. You may also indicate how you might like to develop aspects of this scholarly programme through your work.

You can also familiarise yourself with some of the academic dimensions / debates on temporality studies in preparing your motivation, there is a large body of work growing around the theme of temporality/ies and education / social change research.

In the case of a doctoral scholar who is still finalising their research, please indicate how far you are with the study (i.e. **MUST** be in the final year, with submission **no later than** 15 December 2023, ideally 30 June 2023) to be considered for the second and third years of the programme offer.

Applications should be sent to Carlene Royle on c.royle@ru.ac.za

Closing date: 31 March 2023

Note: **Shortlisted applicants** will be invited for an interview with programme leads.