



Second call for applications

Postdoctoral research position at the African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand

July 2013 – July 2015

*****Closing date for applications: 31st May 2013*****

The African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand is looking for a postdoctoral researcher to join its 'Illness, Boundaries and Health Systems' team. The position will contribute to a project exploring the impact of migration legislation, trafficking discourses and transnational networks on the feelings of belonging of migrant sex workers (MSWs) in The Netherlands and South Africa. This position is financially supported by WOTRO and is a central component of a research collaboration between the VU University in The Netherlands and Wits University. The position will be based in Johannesburg and is for one year (starting July 2013), with the possibility to renew for a second year.

Using a transnational approach, this qualitative study investigates the double vulnerability of this group as (1) non-nationals and (2) sex workers. An analysis of multi-level policies and discourses surrounding migration, sex work, public health, and trafficking, will generate insight into how this group is moralised, criminalised and victimised. The research aims to explore the following questions:

1. In what ways do institutional, legislative and (inter)national directives and practices increase the vulnerability of MSWs, specifically in regard to violence and sexual health (risks)?
2. How do trafficking discourses, legal frameworks and law reform processes affect MSWs who are not trafficked?
3. How do the transnational networks of MSWs and their mobility contribute to their sense of belonging?
4. What measures are necessary to strengthen their rights as migrants and as sex workers in order to decrease their vulnerability and enhance their sense of belonging?

Key activities:

The successful candidate will be based at the ACMS and is expected to assist in developing the research process in South Africa, including undertaking fieldwork in Johannesburg. The postdoc will undertake a desk review of regional responses to migration, sex work, health and trafficking within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to facilitate understanding on how legislations, policies and discourses create conditions that increase vulnerability. Two methods are to be used to study the effect of trafficking discourses on MSWs: discourse analysis of documents collected during the desk review and interviews with governmental and non-governmental actors, including international organisations. A minimum of 20 interviews will be done with MSWs. The interviews will be designed to discuss their mobility and connectedness, and include topics such as their motivations to migrate, decision-making processes, networks at home and in the host country. They will also explore violence, vulnerability and health, as well as the relationship between their positions as MSWs and their feelings and experiences of vulnerability and belonging. Where possible, participatory methods will be used, building on our previous experience. Interviews with key stakeholders will be conducted to discuss the needs of MSWs. In addition, the postdoctoral researcher will be expected to contribute to publications, and to the MA programme at the ACMS through teaching and supervision of MA students.

Qualifications:*Required*

- A PhD in a relevant discipline (social sciences, public health, anthropology, development studies) awarded within the last 5 years, or about to be completed.
- Experience in qualitative research.
- Strong analytical and writing skills.
- Previous research experience in South Africa.
- Strong presentation skills, demonstrated through presentation of papers at international conferences.
- Ability to develop networks and to engage with a range of stakeholders.

Desired

- Publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- Knowledge of key regional languages, such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, Ndebele, Shona, Swahili, Portuguese and/or French.
- Previous experience in conducting research on the sex work industry.
- Experience in teaching graduate students at MA level.
- Experience in supervising graduate students at MA level.

Remuneration

A total package of up to ZAR 220,000 per annum will be available to the successful applicant. This includes a monthly stipend, relocation fees (including a return air fare) and medical insurance.

Application process:

Applicants should include:

- A substantive cover letter documenting relevant experience and reasons for interest in the position.
- A full CV.
- Two academic writing samples.
- The names of three professional references (with contact details).

Completed applications should be emailed to Dr. Jo Vearey at jo.vearey@wits.ac.za

Further information

For more information on the position, please contact Dr. Jo Vearey at jo.vearey@wits.ac.za

About the ACMS

The ACMS is an independent, interdisciplinary and internationally engaged Africa-based centre of excellence for research and teaching that shapes global discourse on human mobility, development and social transformation. The ACMS is one of the continent's leading institutions for research, teaching and outreach on migration.