

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP: LESIKA FAMILY FIELD LABORATORY

The Department of Economics at the University of Free State is collaborating with various national and international partners on a new research programme titled the "Lesika Family Field Laboratory". Some of the Economics experiments conducted as part of this programme comprise part of the "Family Observatory for Preventive and Developmental Social Work" project funded under a grant from the Presidency's EU-funded Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD).

At present, there are two open calls for full-time, residential Post-Doctoral scholarships available to researchers who want to join the above-mentioned research programme. The details are as follows:

Directorate Research Development, University of the Free State (UFS):

Amount: R220,000 / year (plus R30,000 / year research funding)
Duration: 2 years
Closing date: 07 November 2014

Centre of Excellence in Human Development, National Research Foundation (NRF):

Amount: R200,000 / year
Duration: 3 years
Closing date: 30 November 2014

Scholarships are tax-free.

Requirements:

PhD: graduated within the last five years (2010-2014)

Post-graduate course work in Experimental and/or Behavioural Economics

Experience in designing and implementing Economics experiments in the laboratory and the field

Experience in analysing data from Economics experiments

Post-Doctoral Fellows are required to publish a minimum of three scientific journal articles per year.

Submission:

Potential applicants should provide the following documentation together with an email confirming their interest in applying for a fellowship: letter of motivation (articulating their career ambitions and scholarly motivation as well as details of their major academic and scholarly accomplishments); Curriculum Vitae (CV); copies of 1-3 relevant research publication; full transcripts of under-graduate and post-graduate academic record; copy of Doctoral degree certificate; copy of ID document/passport.

Kindly submit your expression of interest, documentation and any related inquiries to Professor Frikkie Booysen at booysenf@ufs.ac.za and booysenfrikkie@gmail.com.

Deadline: 31 October 2014

The research team will work together with selected qualifying applicants to put together the 1-2 page research proposal to accompany their scholarship application.



Frederik Booysen

Professor, Department of Economics

Principal investigator: Family Observatory and Laboratory research programmes

LESIKA FAMILY FIELD LABORATORY

Background:

The family is a primary institution in society. Families on a daily basis make decisions regarding issues such as money, health, food, resources and social values, behavioural choices in which risk, time and social preferences play an important role. Such decisions moreover are of importance in achieving various development goals, including investment in family public goods, and the outcomes of such investment, including education, health, welfare and well-being. For this reason, the family is at the core of the larger developmental challenge, particularly in vulnerable communities.

Aim:

The Lesika Family Field Laboratory aims to investigate the dynamics of decision-making in the extended, multi-generational family, using a multi-, inter and intra-disciplinary approach grounded in Experimental and Behavioural Economics.

Objectives:

A first step in establishing a field laboratory of this nature is the development of a toolbox of experimental methodologies and complementary qualitative and quantitative methodologies for conducting applied research in this field. The second step is the application of these and other methodologies in a series of field experiments on intra-household decision-making in the extended family in a real-world context. The research in the third instance comprises an investigation of the manner in which preventive and developmental social welfare services impact and are impacted by risk, time and social preferences and associated behaviours of relevance to household welfare and family well-being, including cooperation in social dilemmas and investments in family public goods.

Methodology:

In terms of experimental design and data collection strategy, the field experiments conducted as part of this research are designed around the standard experimental procedures employed in field experiments on intra-household decision-making. Risk, time and social references are first elicited from individual family members, followed by joint elicitation of preferences from family groups representing different generations (children, adolescents, young adults, adults and the elderly) using a series of standard experimental games. There is a strong focus on social preferences in particular, including elicitation methods such as dictator, ultimatum and trust games, social discounting tasks, and public goods games. These experiments, first piloted in the laboratory with student subjects, are complemented by longitudinal research, at the pre- and post-experimental stage, including a quantitative community survey of family life and in-depth qualitative research with families interviewed in the community survey. In accordance with the principle of incentive compatibility in Economics experiments (Hertwig & Ortmann, 2001), experimental subjects receive real payoffs. Furthermore, in line with current best practice (Viceisza, 2012), the series of field experiments in turn are nested in an evaluation(s) of a particular preventive and developmental social work programme conducted in the Lesika Family Observatory. The Family Observatory aims to evaluate the implementation and impact of preventive and developmental Social Work programmes and other family-centred social services on household welfare and family well-being.

Partners:

Centre for Behavioural and Experimental Social Sciences (CBESS), University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK
Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (CELLO), University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium
Experimental Economics Centre (ExCEN), Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA
Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Tokyo, Japan
Research Unit for Behavioural and Neuro-Economics (RUBEN), University of Cape Town, South Africa

