



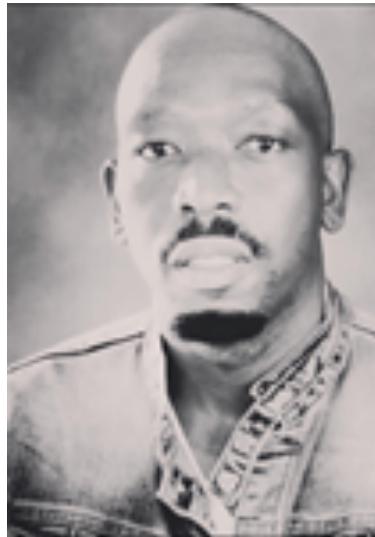
UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho



The Department of African Languages
Invites you to



Dr Nhlanhla Mnisi is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of African Languages, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. He is also a Senior Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity (hosted by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and Columbia University). Mnisi obtained his PhD in Aquatic Sciences (Freshwater Ecology) from the University of the Witwatersrand in 2018. His ethnobiological research explores the synergies between indigenous knowledge systems and modern scientific ecological monitoring tools. He strongly believes that collaborative studies between natural sciences and African languages are essential in preserving intergenerational knowledge that risks being lost unless it is preserved by the rightfully capacitated specialists.

TRANSLATING CITIZEN SCIENCE TOOLS: POTENTIAL, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

"Citizen science" is scientific research conducted, partly or wholly, by amateur or non-professional community volunteer scientists. Increasingly, citizen science projects are gaining attention – but the path forward is not even. One question challenging any citizen science tool is: Is it user-friendly and user-appropriate? Language itself forms an important barrier to effective participation in ecological citizen science initiatives. This study explores the opportunities and difficulties in translating the mini-South African Scoring System (miniSASS) biomonitoring citizen science tool. The miniSASS utilises the composition of sampled riverine macroinvertebrates in the determination of prevailing river health conditions. The miniSASS was simplified to enable execution by non-professionals but a signal gap remained. No attempt has thus far been made to translate the tool to the native languages of its intended users. Even though previous audits suggested that the miniSASS needs to be translated into other South African official languages, currently, the tool exists solely in English. Our investigation reveals that folk nomenclature and taxonomy for aquatic macroinvertebrates are mostly poorly documented – and, where documented, they are not standardized. This gives rise to an appreciable risk. Unless multidisciplinary initiatives are commissioned to preserve this knowledge, and to start utilising it along with modern scientific approaches in finding solutions to environmental degradation, we risk losing a wealth of knowledge that for centuries has served, educated and entertained indigenous southern African communities.

Date	27 May 2021
Time	14:00-15:00
Venue	Zoom link to be emailed
RSVP	By 20 May 2021 to https://forms.gle/tiaf7FpcFxiKroRA6
Enquiries	Penelope Mdluli at Penelope.mdluli@up.ac.za Tel: 012 420 3771