

BIJUMA—TEAM project—KYU—MMU—KU Leuven

## MSc. Scholarship Call

Project Title: Harnessing local traditional knowledge and experiences on the production and consumption of fruits and vegetables-based diets to optimize cardiometabolic health and undernutrition in the Rwenzori region

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### Project background

The Rwenzori region of Uganda is one of the country's food baskets, with a wide variety of Indigenous Fruits and Vegetables (IFV). Despite this richness, the consumption of these nutritious foods is low, and this is on the back of high rates (41%) of child stunting and micronutrient deficiencies. Additionally, the rising levels of urbanization have led to negative changes in the food environment—a threat to cardiometabolic health. To address this health dilemma, the Department of Food Innovation and Nutrition at Mountains of the Moon University (MMU), Uganda, along with the Department of Nutritional Science and Dietetics at Kyambogo University (KYU), Uganda, in collaboration with the Nutrition & Metabolism Associated Diseases at KU Leuven, Belgium, is implementing a project to harness local traditional knowledge and experience regarding the production and consumption of fruit and vegetable-based diets to optimize cardiometabolic health and combat undernutrition in the Rwenzori region. The project aims to enhance the community's culinary skills to boost the consumption of IFV. The project documents IFV with purported cardiometabolic benefits, aiming to validate these claims through clinical trials. In collaboration with Yonderlife, a community-based organization in Kabarole, this project involves local communities in co-creating delicious and novel food recipes that respect the traditional significance of Indigenous foods. Partnering with Rikolto—Good Food for Cities, we aim to establish food parliaments within the region to accelerate the conservation and consumption of IFV.

### The MSc. Applicant's profile

- 1) Must hold a BSc degree (**minimum upper class**) in Nutritional Sciences, Food Science, Public Health, Medicine, or any relevant allied health program.
- 2) Basic scientific writing and statistics skills.
- 3) Adequate command of both written and spoken English.
- 4) **Prior knowledge and experience of community engagement is an added advantage**
- 5) Must be highly motivated to undertake academic research in an international context.
- 6) Must demonstrate academic leadership and willingness to contribute to the supervision of BSc students
- 7) Must demonstrate good interpersonal skills to interact with other project partners and stakeholders.
- 8) Must be ready to complete his/her MSc training within two years.
- 9) Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

## Scholarship offer:

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The selected MSc candidate will receive full tuition to pursue the Master of Science in Human Nutrition at the Department of Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics, Kyambogo University. The candidate will also receive a modest monthly stipend for a maximum of 24 months. The full MSc funding is conditional on the successful defence of a research proposal and obtaining adequate credits within the first year of study. The candidate will have the opportunity for a short research stay in Belgium at the research unit Nutrition & Metabolism Associated Diseases, KU Leuven, with the supervision of Prof. Christophe Matthys. The research activities and fieldwork will be conducted in the Rwenzori region and funded by the above-mentioned TEAM project. The candidate will be supervised by Dr. Joweria Nambooze (KYU), Dr. Tonny Kiyimba, and Prof. Joshua Wesana (MMU) and defend his/her thesis at KYU.

## Application procedure

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The application dossier should include the following (**all in one PDF file**):

1. CV (**max 1 page**) and copies of your BSc. degree certificate and transcript of records.
  2. Statement of motivation (**max 1 page**) explaining why you believe you are the best candidate for the scholarship.
  3. Letter of recommendation from an academic referee supporting your application (**max 1 page**).
  4. Copy of your admission letter for the MSc in Human Nutrition program at KYU
  5. Digital copy of your BSc research report.
- Please address all applications to **Dr. Tonny Kiyimba** ([kiyimba.tonny@mmu.ac.ug](mailto:kiyimba.tonny@mmu.ac.ug)) and **Dr. Joweria Nambooze** ([jnambooze@kyu.ac.ug](mailto:jnambooze@kyu.ac.ug)).
  - All applications must be submitted by **15th July 2025, by 5:00 PM (EAT)**. Selected candidates will be contacted for interviews. The successful candidate should be prepared to begin their MSc studies in **August 2025. 2025**.