SADiLaR researcher selected for Open Seeds OLS-8 cohort

By Birgit Ottermann , issued by North-West University (NWU)   6 Oct 2023

A digital humanities researcher from the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR) has been selected for the next cohort of the Open Life Science (OLS) Open Seeds programme, an international mentoring and training programme for early stage researchers and young leaders interested in applying open principles in their work and becoming open science ambassadors in their communities.

Mmasibidi Setaka, a Sesotho language researcher at SADiLaR, has joined the eighth cohort (OLS-8) on a 16-week online programme of personal mentorship and cohort-based training, which started on 18 September 2023. The OLS-8 group comprises organisers, hosts, mentors and project leads/mentees from a broad range of research disciplines, who will share their expertise and gain knowledge essential to create, lead, and sustain an open science project. They will also get to connect with members across different projects, communities, backgrounds, and identities; and empower each other to become effective open science ambassadors in their communities.

Setaka is extremely pleased to have made the cut. "It is a wonderful opportunity of growth for me. The programme is going to give me a platform to learn and grow in my career, and to network with like-minded people. It is also going to challenge me as I will be learning and using programming language," she says. "I am really looking forward to gaining a greater understanding of the role and importance of open science and best practices for collaboration."

Mmasibidi Setaka

Investigating the stability of words in corpora

Participants can join this programme individually or in teams, with projects they either are already working on or want to start developing during the programme. Each project is matched to a suitable international mentor with whom members meet bi-weekly to discuss their projects and progress.

Setaka proposed a new project, titled 'Assessing word stability in corpora and its influence on learner dictionaries', through the assistance of her manager and SADiLaR's Professor in Digital Humanities, Menno van Zaanen. "It is a new idea that will challenge me to explore the use of digital technologies for lexicographic purposes within the field of humanities. The aim of the project is to investigate the stability of words in corpora when words are either removed or added. I want to see how these processes influence the compilation of general learner dictionaries," she explains.

In addition to the bi-weekly online mentoring and training, OLS-8 will also see the launch of a trial run in Kenya and South Africa, involving up to four in-person mentorship sessions for a maximum of three selected participant projects from each country. In South Africa, this additional support will be provided in partnership with ESCALATOR, a capacity and community development programme developed by SADiLaR.

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