



Thabile NKAMBULE

Home Country
Swaziland

Degree
PhD in Food Science

Expertise
Food Science

Research Focus
Antibacterial Activity of
Indigenous Vegetables

Host University
University of Nottingham,
United Kingdom

Fellowship Awarded
2012

Thabile P. Nkambule was born and grew up in Mbabane, the capital of Swaziland. She is one of five children and is currently the bread-winner of the family.

Upon completion of high school, Thabile enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Swaziland to study for a BSc in Home Economics, where on graduation she received a Dean's award for being a best student in the faculty. She then worked as a high school teacher for three years until deciding to further her own education. Thabile obtained a Fulbright exchange scholarship for an MSc in Food Science at the University of Florida, United States, which she completed in 2008. Since then she has worked as a lecturer of food science, nutrition and technology courses at the University of Swaziland under the department of Consumer sciences.

Thabile's PhD research seeks to evaluate antimicrobial properties of different plant parts of some indigenous vegetables from Swaziland against a panel of pathogenic bacteria. Today's major concern is the increasing resistance and allergic reactions to synthetic antibiotics. Focus is now shifting from using synthetic chemicals in preservatives and drugs to naturally occurring alternatives. Also in many developing countries including Swaziland, a large proportion of the population is mainly dependant on medicinal plants to meet primary health care needs. Currently there is heavy reliance on traditional use of this plant and has been the main focus of other researchers. There is a clear gap between traditional and scientific knowledge and this signifies the importance of this study. The results of this research could be potentially used for controlling some bacteria in human health and the food industry.

After completing her PhD studies, Thabile plans to return to teaching at the University of Swaziland and work on food science research focussing on antimicrobial activity of more unstudied indigenous vegetables as well as addressing food safety issues in the country. She also intends to be involved in work to help provide communities with knowledge that will sustain their health.