



VYAKULANI AFRICA

Citizen Scientist's Guide

This document explains all you need to know, to effectively participate as a citizen scientist in the Vyakulani Africa Project



ABOUT

The aim of the project is to document African diaspora foodways in Belgium. There is increasing interest in consuming nutritious plant-based diets in Europe. However, the consumption and trade of nutritious African foods, has not gained as much acceptance as it should in the public domain, in view of the historical link between both continents.

Among the African diasporas in Europe the desire to cook home foods with indigenous ingredients persists. Within families, food is one of the strong identity markers. Thus, the sustainability of home recipes and diets, including their transmission across generations and potential benefits for larger society (European citizens) need further exploration.



Calling all food enthusiasts:
To help highlight African cuisine in Belgium



WHAT IS CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen science is any activity that involves the public in scientific research and thus has the potential to bring together science, policy makers, and society as a whole in an impactful way. Through citizen science, people can participate in many stages of the scientific process, from the design of the research question, to data collection and volunteer mapping, data interpretation and analysis, and to publication and dissemination of results.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Your Research Questions

The objective of this project is (i) to highlight the importance and potential of African food systems to the larger public, (ii) to motivate Africans residing in Europe to reappropriate their foodways (iii) to facilitate the dissemination of healthy African foods to the wider public.

The main research questions are:

- What are the challenges of African food culture in Belgium?
- What aspects of the African food culture needs to be passed on to the next generation?
- What are the two questions you wish you had asked your grand parents about their food culture and tradition?
- Can you think of a cherished African food culture that has been lost due to the influence of western culture?
- Can you name three African superfoods from your food culture?



PROCEDURE

For this project , citizen scientists will interview people they think have something valuable or interesting to say about African food.

- We recommend that you speak to members of your own African community, people you are familiar with and know that they have interesting anecdotes and insights to share.
- You can limit yourself to asking the 5 suggested questions but you can also add questions if interesting elements come up in the conversation.
- If you have the impression that the interviewee did not understand a question or drifts off and talks about things that are less relevant, repeat the question, reformulate the question or dig deeper into certain aspects that have not been addressed.



THE INTERVIEWER'S COMPOSURE

Talking to people



- It is really important that the interviewee does not feel judged in any way.
- They should feel free to speak
- The information they are giving should be valuable and interesting .
- Listen closely to what you are being told during the interview and show the interviewee that you are listening.
- You should never correct the person you are interviewing on the course of events or the truth about the story. It is their opportunity to speak, even if you think they are wrong.
- Never show distaste or disapproval of what the person is saying, even if they mention foods or other things you personally dislike. Strong negative reactions may discourage the person from telling you about other uncommon procedures or foods.

RECORDING INTERVIEWS

- Record the interview, if the person gives consent as it makes the transcription of information easier and there are less misunderstandings or mis-interpretations.
- It also allows you to go back to the person if there are things you did not understand or if you realize you have further questions after listening to the recording.
- You can use your smartphone to record the audio during interviews and send to us after without editing anything.
- if possible for you, use also an online platform like zoom, TEAMS or Google meet etc

The rights of study participants

Every research participant has rights, according to European and international ethics guidelines.

- the right to be informed and understand what the research is about and what the objectives are; the right to understand the procedure of the research
- the right to know what the harms and benefits of the research are
- the right to know what will happen to the data and where it will go, who will get this data and where it will be stored.
- the right to remain anonymous and for the information not to be shared if they have not given consent.
- the right to withdraw from the study any time, which means to discontinue with the interview.



DATA STORAGE

Important Notice



In this project the information will be stored on a password protected database of the Africa Museum.

Some of the data may be shared online or in exhibitions if the person has given consent for the data to be used in this way.

None of the data will be shared with authorities, institutions or any government.

The persons responsible for the data is Sarah O'Neill Sarah.ONeill@ulb.be and Maureen Duru info@thefoodbridge.org

Managed by the Africa museum, the Food Bridge vzw and Diaspofood ULB

THANK YOU



Together we build the African Food legacy

