



2020 Gender Institute

Call for Director, Resource Persons and Laureates

Theme: Violence against Women and Girls in Africa's Civic Spaces.

Application Deadlines:

Director: 31st March 2020

Resource Persons: 31st March 2020

Laureates: 30th April 2020

Date for the Institute: June 15-26, 2020

Venue: Monrovia, Liberia

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, CODESRIA invites proposal submissions from African academics and researchers to participate in the 2020 Session of the Gender Institute that will take place in Monrovia, Liberia from June 15-26, 2020. *A limited number of non-African academics and researchers from within and outside the continent who will submit proposals and qualify will be selected to attend if they can fund the cost of their participation.*

The theme chosen for the 2020 session of the Gender Institute is “*Violence against Women and Girls in Africa's Civic Spaces*”. The theme for the Institute speaks to growing complexities of violence in general and violence against women and girls in particular as they struggle to overcome barriers to their empowerment. Throughout Africa, campaigns and struggles for women and girl's empowerment have borne some dividends. More girls attend and complete basic education today compared to the situation two to three decades ago. More women are engaging formal and informal civic spaces that were previously a preserve of male counterparts, including in the security sectors. Interventions from robust civil society have pushed governments to legislate in favour of better and inclusive gender policies to safeguard the rights of women and girls. But the gains so far achieved are being curtailed by persistence of older forms of violence and by new forms of violence against women and girls.

In the past, research, policy engagements and civil society advocacy have focused mainly on three forms of violence and developed tools to mitigate the effects of such forms of violence on women and girls. Most of these have focused on overt forms of violence with an emphasis on physical

abuse and attacks. These include domestic violence, sexual assault on girls and women especially in situations of distress and various forms of sexual abuse on the girl child. This focus leaves the unintended impression that violence affects mostly women and girls in “marginal” circumstances. While this is broadly true, the situation is a lot more complex. Women and girls experience violence not as a singular incident, but in multiple forms either occurring simultaneously or at different stages over their life. The consequences however cumulate and often result in longer term physical and psychological trauma.

The second complexity are the various forms of overt violence that women and girls are subjected to even within spaces that are thought to be safe. This includes the violence young girls face within schools either from their teachers in the form of sexual assault or body shaming due to their physiological development or the sex for grades harassment patterns in a variety of universities across the continent that make learning environments uncomfortable for young women. Evidence of sexual harassment that has emerged recently from reputable bodies such as UNAIDS, International Planned Parenthood Federation, the African Union Commission and even within civil society organizations add to this complexity. Even ICT, a tool relevant for the empowerment of women and girls has been turned into a platform to disseminate harmful, sexist, misogynistic and violent online content against women and girls in ways that undermine their dignity. Gender-based cyber violence is emerging as a prevalent form of violence affecting women across all spaces. While there has been some progress in signaling the dangers of gendered cyber violence, concerted efforts are needed to examine, understand and respond to the issue from a rights-based perspective. More studies on the issue are needed in ways that will holistically take stock of women's experiences of violence when navigating online spaces. Such studies will help design conceptual frames that would inform understanding of sexism, misogyny and gender-based violence online in order to mitigate its effects and establish knowledge gaps in the subject that need to be addressed. Violence against women and girls facilitated by or through communication technology remains elusive to detect and the regime of safeguards required to protect women and girls has hardly been developed across the continent. Matters are worsened if the various forms of overt and covert violence are mediated through religion, culture and tradition that combine with new forms of gender biases to engender more complex phenomenon.

In selecting this theme, the intention is to enrich existing data and evidence that speak to an increasingly complexity challenge of violence against women and girls in a context of civic engagement that claims to have achieved much in gender empowerment. The aim is facilitate the development of tools by different actors, including civil society organizations, that anticipate and respond in ways that protect the human dignity of women and girls in the different development spaces. Applicants are particularly encouraged to engage with emerging forms and increasing complexity of violence, including forms of epistemic violence that have become normalized in spaces that are thought safe for women and girls. Proposals that are theoretically grounded and seek to contribute to designing new tools to anticipate situations before violence occurs and/or seek to mitigate long-term effects of violence on women and girls are encouraged. Further, it is expected that proposal will show that women and girls might experience violence differently and that this is another level of complexity requiring nuanced tools to address the challenge.

Candidates submitting proposals for consideration as resource persons and laureates are thus encouraged to interrogate the various emerging trends and especially focus on deepening the level

of theoretical and empirical data available to gauge the magnitude and complexity involved in violence against women and girls.

Organization

The activities of all CODESRIA Institutes center on presentations by African researchers, Resource Persons, and participants whose applications for participation have been successful. The sessions are led by a Director who, with the support of Resource Persons, ensures that the Laureates are exposed to a wide range of research material and policy thinking. Each Laureate is required to prepare a research paper to be presented during the Institute. The revised version of such a paper will undergo a peer review for publication by CODESRIA. The CODESRIA Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) will provide participants with a comprehensive bibliography on the theme of the Institute. The Institute will be held in both English and French through simultaneous interpretation.

Eligibility and Selection

Director

The Director for the Institute should be a senior academic who is expected to provide intellectual leadership of the Institute. The Director should also have proven expertise and intellectual depth and originality of thinking on the theme of the Institute as evidenced from the record of research and publications. As part of the process, those wishing to be considered as Director should provide a 15-page proposal broadly reflecting on the theme of the institute and a course outline covering ten days and indicating the main topics to be covered with laureates during the institute.

Applicants for the position of Director should submit:

- an application letter;
- a proposal, not more than 15 pages in length, indicating the course outline and showing in what ways the course would be original and responsive to the needs of prospective laureates, specifically focusing on the issues to be covered from the point of view of concepts and methodology, a critical review of the literature, and the range of issues arising from the theme of the Institute;
- a detailed and up-to-date curriculum vitae; and
- three writing samples relevant to the theme.

The Director will (co) edit the revised versions of the papers presented by the Resource Persons and the Laureates with a view to submitting them to CODESRIA for publication.

Resource Persons

Lectures to be delivered at the Institute are intended to offer laureates an opportunity to advance their reflections on the theme of the institute and on their own research topics. Resource Persons are, therefore, senior scholars or scholars in their mid-career who have published extensively on the theme, and who have a significant contribution to make to the debates on it. They will be expected to produce lecture materials which serve as think pieces that stimulate laureates to engage

in discussion and debate around the lectures and the general body of literature available on the theme. They should also contribute to the comprehensive bibliography developed by CODICE.

Once selected, resource persons must:

- submit a copy of their lectures for reproduction and distribution to participants not later than one week before the date of the lecture;
- deliver their lectures, participate in debates and comment on the research proposals of the laureates;
- review and submit the revised version of their research papers for consideration for publication by CODESRIA not later than two months following their presentation.

Applications for the position of resource person should include:

- an application letter;
- two writing samples relevant to the theme of the session;
- a curriculum vitae; and
- a proposal, not more than five (5) pages in length, outlining the issues to be covered in their proposed lecture.

Laureates

Applicants should be African researchers who have completed their university and /or professional training, with a proven capacity to carry out research on the theme of the Institute. Intellectuals active in the policy process and/or in social movements/civic organizations are also encouraged to apply. The number of places offered by CODESRIA at each session of the institutes is limited to fifteen (15) fellowships. Non-African scholars who can raise funds for their participation may also apply for a limited number of places.

Applications for Laureates should include:

- an application letter;
- a letter indicating institutional or organizational affiliation;
- a curriculum vitae;
- a research proposal, including a descriptive analysis of the work the applicant intends to undertake, an outline of the theoretical interest of the topic chosen by the applicant, and the relationship of the topic to the problematic and concerns of the theme of the Institute; and
- two reference letters from scholars and/or researchers known for their competence and expertise in the candidate's research area (geographic and disciplinary), including their names, addresses and telephone, e-mail, fax numbers.

An independent committee composed of outstanding scholars of gender will select the candidates to be admitted to the institute.

All applications (for Director, Resource persons and laureates) should be submitted electronically via the link <https://codesria.org/submission/>