

## **2016 Child and Youth Institute**

Theme:

### **African Futures and the Futures of Childhood in Africa**

Date: 17 – 28 October, 2016

Venue: Dakar, Senegal

### **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

**Deadline : 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2016**

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is pleased to announce its 2016 Child and Youth Institute that will be held for two (2) weeks, from 17 to 28 October 2016. The institute is one of the components of the Child and Youth Studies Programme and is aimed at strengthening the analytic capacities of young African researchers on issues affecting children and youth in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The institute is designed as an annual interdisciplinary forum in which participants can reflect together on a specific aspect of the conditions of children and youth, especially in Africa.

### **Objectives**

The main objectives of the Child and Youth Institute are to:

1. encourage the sharing of experiences among researchers, civil society activists and policy makers from different disciplines, methodological and conceptual orientations and geographical/linguistic areas;
2. promote and enhance a culture of democratic values that allows to effectively identify issues facing children and youth on the African continent; and
3. foster the participation of scholars and researchers in discussions and debates on the processes of child and youth development in Africa.

### **Organization**

The activities of all CODESRIA Institutes centre on presentations made by African researchers, resource persons from the continent and the Diaspora and participants whose applications for admission as laureates have been successful. The sessions are led by a scientific director who, with the support of resource persons, ensures that the laureates are exposed to a wide range of research and policy issues. Each laureate is required to prepare a research paper to be presented during the session. The revised versions of such papers will undergo a peer review to ensure that they meet the required standard for publication by CODESRIA. The CODESRIA Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) will provide participants with a comprehensive bibliography on the theme of the institute. Access to a number of documentation centers in and around Dakar will also be also facilitated. The CODESRIA Child and Youth Institute will be held in French and English through simultaneous translation.

## **African Futures and the Futures of Childhood in Africa**

The theme of 2016 child and youth institute is “African futures and the futures of childhood in Africa”, and explores the interface between the future aspirations of children and versions of African futures in order to develop insights into how children are both living embodiments and prospective agents of social transformation in African societies. Its point of departure is the idea that children’s images of the future are important for the present understanding of childhood. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, the institute seeks to elucidate the generational implications of “development” to children’s lives, rights, opportunities, entitlements and transitions. It is envisioned that children’s individual aspirations not only intersect with collective expectations of families and communities but also inform and are informed by futurity and contingency of national development. The institute will attend to children’s every day lived experiences of learning, labouring, care and socialization while simultaneously locating these experiences in intersecting axes of history, power, spaces, politics and social structures beyond the “local” environment. In so doing, participants will not only excavate the archeology of childhood but also – through a dialectical understanding of futurity in child development and national development – push the boundary of childhood studies further.

Dominant perspectives on child development and economic development have a legacy of being both normative and western. Western constructions of childhood, especially childhood as a period of innocence and vulnerability where children must be protected from the adult world, have been exported to Africa through colonialism, mass media and development aid. Several programs for African children like schooling and welfare interventions are also rooted in ideas of globalized modernity in which the child was previously located. Yet, research shows how the global model of childhood has failed to describe African children’s lived experiences and realities. Economic development, too, is a “western invention”. Although development is seen as desired end point for all societies, in practice, the hegemonic narrative is that of modernization whereby Africa should emulate the trajectory of the western world: commit to neoliberal market economy, have democratically elected representatives, give education to the young, bring an end to the suffering of the poor, and promote gender equality and rights of minorities. The paradox is that the very things which African countries are unable to achieve because historical circumstances and global power structures prevent them from doing so are used as preconditions and signifiers of development.

A key dimension of child development is the care, socialization and education of children. Education and the “future generation” are inextricably tied. The Sustainable Development Goals have re-scripted the global development agenda, including governments and donors’ involvement in provision of social services, yet, are in many ways a continuation of the modernization paradigm. Investment in human capital formation – conceptualised only in the limited sense of schooling and acquisition of credentials – are widely advanced by international organizations as a panacea to poverty reduction and improvements in the rights of children. However, although the detachment of African children from informal ways of learning and knowing has long been recognised; the “scholarization” of knowledge and erosion of traditional socialisation continues to represent fundamental crisis in social reproduction. Indeed mass schooling shapes the way African children envision their life worlds and futures: fulfilling socioeconomic and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual and collective possibilities for present and anticipated life.

Child development has profound implications both for the future of childhood and for crafting alternative visions of the future by African societies. This is not the least because children

play important role as makers and breakers of complex systems of social reproduction. Although childhood is a temporal event – understood as a stage of life before one takes up full adult roles and responsibilities – African children fulfil adult-like roles and responsibilities in the here-and-now by choice, instigated choice or force, as well as through training, apprenticeships, and education. Millions of African children work, migrate and live independently, head households, impact and are impacted by violence as well as make significant decisions that not only shape their daily lives and future life chances but also of those around them. These children “mature” early because of poverty, epidemiological problems, limited schooling, and their responsibilities inside and outside their communities. In this sense, futurity for children is closely entwined with daily existence and intergenerational relationships embedded in care and nurturance within family collectives and wider society. Yet the challenges faced by children also reveal ideologies of national development, in particular the assumption on how, where and by whom the burden of social reproduction is to be borne out and under what circumstances. Furthermore, although many countries in Africa have had considerable success in economic development and relative social stability over the past decades, the ways in which childhood has evolved in these contexts and how children position themselves in the continent’s futures are not explored fully.

The 2016 child and youth institute focuses on how African children place themselves with respect to aspirations, rights, entitlements, and imaginations in Africa’s futures. The institute provides the spaces to evaluate current research and scholarships on the myriad of ways in which children’s understanding of the future might pinpoint social change as well as ideologies and practices of child development and national development. This presupposes revealing how daily social, cultural and economic lives of children not only reflect interdependent realities of socialization and skill acquisition but also how agents of development, for example, formal schooling represents a different, narrower, albeit globalized, model of education. Questions that participants can address include but are not limited to the following:

1. What is the significance of schooling for sustainable livelihoods and national development? How does informal learning shape the life chances and imagined futures of young people? How do young people navigate the gap between educational aspirations and uncertain realities shaping transitions into adulthood?
2. What are the roles of children in building peace and social stability in Africa? How does children’s current state of life explains and is explained by wider societal changes and trajectories?
3. What forms of local and community knowledge can be mobilised to cope with climate change and environmental degradation? How can development be made responsive to produce citizens that are locally sensitive and globally competent?

Participants in 2016 child and youth institute are encouraged to develop critical thinking on children’s contributions to daily and generational reproduction, the purpose of education, gendered perspectives and experiences as well as how formal schooling and informal education can be used to empower the future generation in Africa. From methodological points of view, examining children’s role in crafting the future not only calls for the need to explore their life worlds from their perspectives but also from the vantage point of “other generations”. Paper proposals need to provide fresh perspectives that weave together the themes of childhood, national development and the future, analyzing the unfolding historical geographies and contexts within which children’s lives are mutually constituted. Using

children's lives as a lens to understand social transformations, it is expected that participants will explore and discuss aspects of cultural, political, economic and emotional dynamics operating in Africa, and the ways these dynamics reflect, shape and enable us to re-imagine Africa's futures. Explaining social contexts are particularly pivotal in order to: a) demonstrate how opportunities, constraints, realities, and life chances of young people vary across space, and b) contribute to critical commentaries on the homogenizing, exoticizing, and particularizing tendencies of research on African childhoods. Participants are also challenged to tease apart the tension between global processes and the localized experiences of African children in order to theorise child development as an important but missing aspect of debates around sustainable development.

### **Coordination**

The 2016 Child and Youth Institute will be directed by Prof. Tatek Abebe of the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Norwegian University of Sciences and Technology. As Director of the Institute, Prof. Tatek Abebe will:

- Assist with the identification of resource persons who will lead discussions and debates during the institute;
- Participate in the selection of laureates;
- Design the course for the session, including specific sub-themes;
- Deliver a set of lectures and conduct a critical analysis of the papers presented by the resource persons and the laureates;
- Submit a written scientific report on the session.

In addition, Prof. Tatek Abebe will edit the revised versions of the papers presented by the resource persons and assess the papers presented by laureates during the Institute with a view to submitting them for publication by CODESRIA.

### **Resource Persons**

Lectures to be delivered during the session are intended to offer laureates an opportunity to advance their reflections on the theme of the Institute. Resource persons should therefore be senior scholars or researchers who have published extensively on the theme, and who have significant contributions to make to the debates on it. They will be expected to produce lecture materials which would stimulate laureates to engage in discussion and debate around their respective lectures and the general body of literature available on the theme.

Once selected, resource persons must:

- Interact with the Director of the Institute and the laureates to help the latter readjust their research questions and their methodological approaches;
- Submit a copy of their course materials for reproduction and distribution to participants no later than one week before they deliver their lectures;

- Deliver their lectures, participate in debates and comment on the research proposals and the papers of the laureates;
- Review and submit the revised version of their lecture notes or research papers for publication by CODESRIA not later than two months following their presentation at the Institute.

### **Laureates**

Applicants should be PhD candidates or scholars in their early career with a proven capacity to conduct research on the theme of the Institute. Intellectuals active in the policy process and/or social movements and civil society organizations are also encouraged to apply. The number of places offered by CODESRIA at each session is limited to ten (10). Non-African scholars who are able to raise funds for their participation may also apply for a limited number of places.

### **Application for resource persons**

Applications for the position of resource person should include:

1. An application letter;
2. A curriculum vitae;
3. Two (2) published papers;
4. A proposal of not more than five (5) pages in length, outlining the issues to be covered in their **three (3) proposed lectures**, including one on methodological issues;

### **Applications for laureates**

Applications for the position of laureate should include:

1. One duly completed application form in **word format**;
2. An application letter;
3. A letter indicating institutional or organizational affiliation;
4. A curriculum vitae;
5. A research proposal not more than ten (10) pages 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, the relationship of the topic to the problematic and concerns of the theme of the 2016 Child and Youth Institute ;
6. Two (2) reference letters from scholars or researchers known for their competence and expertise in the candidate's research area (geographic and disciplinary), including their names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses;

7. A copy of the passport.

### **Submission of Applications**

All applications should be sent electronically to: [child.institute@codesria.sn](mailto:child.institute@codesria.sn).

**For specific questions, please contact:**

**CODESRIA**

**CHILD AND YOUTH INSTITUTE**

Tel.: (221) 33 825 98 21/22/23

Email: [child.institute@codesria.sn](mailto:child.institute@codesria.sn)

Website: <http://www.codesria.org/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/CODESRIA/181817969495>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/codesria>