



CODESRIA

HEALTH, CHILD, AND YOUTH PROGRAMMES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

FACING PSYCHOSOCIAL DISORDERS: CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN AFRICA

DATE: 19-21 October, 2016

VENUE: Niamey, Niger

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)'s programmes on Health and on Child and Youth are major initiatives aimed at encouraging and developing research in the areas of health, child, and youth in Africa. For 2016, an international conference will be held on the theme: "**Children and Adolescents in Africa in the midst of Psychosocial Disorders.**"

Of all the crises on the African continent, the situation of children and adolescents is particularly worrying. Children and adolescents belong to very vulnerable social categories and are very exposed to risks. They are *"at the heart of poverty as well as routine and persistent insecurity. Despite the symbolic displays, children's exaltation as "common wealth" conceals their unfortunate fate in societies that violate their human dignity every day: ... forced migration, violence of all kinds, rape and sexual abuse, genital mutilation, enrolment in conflicts ..."* (J-D. Boukongou, 2006: 1998).

In this context marked by what should be described as *wars against children*, situations in countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali, Nigeria, and Cameroon are telling with their stories of children being raped, forcibly involved in armed conflicts, used as sex slaves, turned into human bombs for terrorist attacks, etc.

There is, therefore, an urgent and compelling need to raise the issue of psychosocial trauma affecting children and adolescents. This questioning should go beyond such wars which are exceptional situations that tend to normalize various forms of violent and lethal experiments in which children are involved. This year's conference will do so from a perspective which, goes beyond predictions of doom and gloom to undertake critical descriptive assessment of

the situation of children and adolescents suffering from psychosocial disorders. This exercise will be rooted in a forward-looking approach (a UNICEF report, published in 2014, reveals that 40% of children in 2050 will be living in Africa) anticipating future challenges which will arise with even more urgency. Such an assessment forces us to rethink the situation of children and adolescents in a broad perspective taking into account the intensification of 'new' forms of vulnerability arising from conflicts in Africa. It also requires to focus on common expression of the forms of violence that affect the life quality of children and their psycho-sociological development.

The following are some of the themes the conference will be addressing:

1. Trauma, armed conflicts and sexual violence against minors ;
2. Pathological careers of children who are exposed to drug issues ;
3. Dealing with children's and adolescents' psychosocial disorders by states and societies: public and private modes of enmity ;
4. Care and support for minors suffering from mental disorders ;
5. Cultural representations of psychosocial disorders among children and adolescents;
6. Mental health of children seeking refuge from war ;
7. Children and adolescents in the midst of school violence ;
8. Children and adolescents in the midst of family violence (incest, corporal punishment, etc.).

Works that adopt a multidisciplinary approach will be privileged. Researchers wishing to participate in the international conference are invited to submit a 300-word abstract and a CV containing full contact information, including email address and phone number to CODESRIA no later than **10th April 2016**. The authors of selected abstracts will be informed of the results no later than **30 April 2016**. They will be invited to submit full papers before **30 June 2016**. All documents should be sent in Word format by email to prs@codesria.sn. Please indicate "*Health Research Programme*" in the subject line when sending your email.

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