2020 Humanities Institute

Theme: New Frontiers in Teaching and Research in the Humanities in Africa's Universities

Call for Director, Resource Persons and Laureates

Application Deadlines:

Director: 15th February 2020

Resource Persons: 15th February 2020

Laureates: 1st March 2020

Date for the institute: 13th-24th April, 2020

Venue: Gaborone, Botswana,

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, CODESRIA invites proposal submissions from African academics and researchers in the humanities to participate in the 2020 Session of its Humanities Institute. The theme selected for the Institute *is "New Frontiers in Teaching and Research in the Humanities in Africa's Universities".* This institute will jointly be convened by CODESRIA and the *Academy for the Humanities in Africa*, in Gaborone, Botswana.

Over the last two decades, teaching and research in the humanities in African universities has been on the decline, occasioned partly by external and national level policies advocating for more investments in STEM subjects. STEM subjects are presented as offering better choices for Africa's development. While there seems to be emerging agreement across the world that the humanities are and should constitute an important component of a higher education sector in developing societies, universities in Africa continue to underfund the humanities. Consequently, the quality of teaching and research in the humanities has been undermined partly because the infrastructure for knowledge production in most institutions, including doctoral and post-doctoral programs, are near collapse. In addition, little has been done to revise content in the traditional humanities to accommodate emerging areas of study and/or disciplines. The overall impact has been the devaluation of the critical role of the humanities as an interrogative force for human values, principles, and history throughout most universities in the continent. There is therefore need for interventions to explore new theories and methods on which to ground relevant knowledge production in the humanities on the continent, and possibly suggest ways of broadening the scope of the humanities in the continent's universities, beyond the traditional academic disciplines.

Two narratives frame the status of the humanities in African universities. The first is that African universities over-enroll students in the humanities and social sciences, and this accounts for the increasing levels of graduate unemployment and skill mismatch. The second is that humanities and social sciences curricular in African universities could only be relevant to the extent that the intellectual perspectives from the humanities and social sciences enrich study and knowledge production in the STEM and other professional fields that are perceived as more relevant to Africa's development needs. Missing in these narratives are any attempts to explore how the humanities and social sciences would be enriched on their own. The emergence of new ways of studying and producing knowledge in the humanities, including new fields such as the digital humanities, environmental humanities, energy humanities, medical humanities and public humanities presents an opportunity for African academics to examine ways in which these new fields would be constituted to reinforce and enhance the relevance of the humanities as taught and researched in Africa.

The proposed Institute targets early career academics in the humanities from universities in the continent as an important intervention in this quest for renewal. Early Career Academics (ECA) are those academics teaching in African universities and who completed their PhD in the last five years. Ordinarily, applicants are individuals looking for possibilities of career and professional development as teachers, researchers and academics through support for research training and undertaking independent research and publication in quality journals. In conceptualizing proposals for consideration for the institute, candidates are encouraged to focus on exploring ways in which the new fields in would add new intellectual perspectives to the study of the humanities in African universities and the kind of institutional academic infrastructures required to support learning, teaching and research in the new fields. Through the humanities institute, CODESRIA seeks to induct the ECA to charting new research terrains and building a strong community of researchers in the humanities in Africa who are well-versed in addressing complex questions connected to that terrain. The CODESRIA institutes are a forum through which early and mid-career academics in African universities are convened to reflect on a common theme as a way of building the research

skills of the academics. The overall objective for this Institute will be to have the ECA work together alongside more experienced colleagues in the field to develop their ideas on new frontiers for teaching, researching and writing in the arts and humanities in Africa.

Candidates submitting proposals for consideration as resource persons and laureates are thus encouraged to interrogate the emerging trends in teaching and researching the humanities in the continent, new areas of study and the required theories and frameworks that would be deployed to better engage with work in the humanities in the context of the new trends in knowledge.

Organization

The activities of all CODESRIA Institutes center on presentations by African researchers, Resource Persons from the continent and the Diaspora, and participants whose applications for participation 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 conceptual, theoretical and research issues. Each Laureate is required to prepare a research paper to be presented during the Institute. The revised version of the 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.

One 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 academics in the Humanities who have attained their doctoral degrees within the last five years and, with a proven capacity to carry out research on the theme of the Institute. Intellectuals active in Arts and Humanities work outside universities are also encouraged to apply. The number of places offered by CODESRIA for this session of the institute is limited to fifteen (15) fellowships.

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 2020 Gender 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 in the thematic area 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/**