

Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa (GETSPA)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Ghana, with funding support from the Open Society Institutes of Africa, is calling for proposals for multi-country research that investigates the trajectories, processes and outcomes of social policy making in Africa since the colonial period. Social policies have over the years been often consigned to a residual category in policy making. However, the recent experience of COVID-19 illustrates that policy responses in periods of crisis usually rely on social policies for improvements in the human condition.

COVID-19 has shown that, while multi-level global crises affect all who live on the planet, both responses and impacts are highly differentiated and exacerbate gender, class and spatial inequalities. All over Africa, working people in rural and urban areas who are engaged in precarious work are facing existential challenges as a result of the contraction of economies and the limitations of state responses. These challenges are gendered. Measures such as lock-down and the closing of workplaces, educational institutions, and places of leisure and social engagements have underlined the importance of living spaces and reproductive activities.

The COVID situation has also brought into sharp relief the gender pay gap, the gender segmentation of paid work, and the burdens of reproductive and care work for women. There is also emerging evidence of a significant increase in gender-based violence. Furthermore, gender, class and spatial inequalities in access to education have come to the fore in several ways, including in the threat of increased attrition rates in education. With respect to health, there are risks that spending on reproductive health and other public health challenges will be sacrificed to COVID-19 expenditures. Such a change in focus could have negative impacts on maternal and under-5 mortality and morbidity, and result in a rise in women's paid and unpaid care burdens for the sick as frontline health workers and in their own households.

Responses to the socio-economic effects COVID-19 from state institutions--such as water and electricity subsidies for poor households, support for businesses and the augmentation of social protection programmes targeting the poor--have exposed the possibilities and limitations of social policy as currently constituted and created. Scholars of social development have over the years focused largely on social protection programmes or sectors such as education, health, water and sanitation, employment, and housing. Much of the discussion has been on questions of access and quality. Even fewer of such studies take on a gender equity perspective and almost none are interested in the economic policy dimensions of social development. These, coupled with a dearth of social policy expertise in Africa, create a compelling need for rethinking social policy and building constituencies that work for change in philosophies and approaches to social policy.

It is against this background that this call is interested in understanding the framing and value propositions underpinning social policy; the assumptions about the role of the state,

markets and society (the family and community); the interface between social and economic policies; and the socio-economic development outcomes of social policy, particularly in terms of gender, class and spatial inequalities. The project hopes to build on the outputs of this initial research a network and a programme of future research and constituency building activities toward the realization of an agenda for transformative and gender equitable social policy for Africa's development.

The project takes as its starting point Mkandawire's expansive definition of social policy as the

“collective interventions to directly affect social welfare, social institutions and social relations....concerned with the redistributive effects of economic policy, the protection of people from the vagaries of the market and the changing circumstances of age, the enhancement of the productive potential of members of society, and the reconciliation of the burden of reproduction with that to other social tasks. Successful societies have given social policies all these tasks, although the weighting of tasks has varied among countries and within each country, from period to period”.¹

Social policy is thus concerned with social welfare, social institutions, and social relations, and has both instrumental and intrinsic or normative value. This approach to social policy provides both a framing and a tool for assessing social policy in Africa.

The project locates its national studies in country socio-economic contexts, social welfare regimes and social policy priorities to ensure the widest applicability of the project's findings and recommendations. Notwithstanding the increasing homogenisation of social policy instruments, there are significant differences in socio-economic contexts and social welfare regimes in Africa that have influenced the processes and outcomes of social policy.

Furthermore, the project takes up gender equity and the transformation of gender hierarchies as an overarching concern. This is to address the lack of interest in the gendered nature of social policy regimes and the gender inequalities in social development across the spectrum of social policy regimes. Although there are increasingly social policy instruments that target women and from which they derive welfare benefits, these do not necessarily challenge gender hierarchies, and may actively reinforce them. The neglect of gender issues in social policy is manifested by unexamined assumptions about the family and household; and the lack of attention to the gender segmentation of employment and the problematic gender norms that underpin paid and unpaid care work and social reproduction. Addressing these gaps in policy making and the policy literature brings issues which are crucial to economic and social development into the conversation on social policy.

¹Mkandawire, Thandika. 2011. "Welfare Regimes and Economic Development: Bridging the Conceptual Gap." Pp. 149-171 in *Overcoming the Persistence of Poverty and Inequality*, edited by Valpy Fitzgerald, J. Heyer, and R. Thorp. Basingstoke: Palgrave; See also Adesina, Jimi O. (2011), *Beyond the social protection paradigm: social policy in Africa's development*. Canadian Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 454-470

Aims of the Project

The overarching goal of this project is the transformation of the discourses, approaches to and cultures of social policy making and implementation to establish Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy approaches in Africa.

The aims of the project are to:

- Map the current social policy landscape and its elements, opportunities, and challenges.
- Understand the interface between social and economic policies in African countries.
- Identify positive approaches to social policy in Africa and the global South, explaining why and how they work, and their potential for replicability.
- Design a framework for a reorientation of social policy.
- Grow a new generation of dedicated researchers of social policy.
- Capacitate constituencies to struggle for transformative social policy.
- Engage with policy makers and advocate for social change through transformative social policy.
- Build a repository of documentation on alternative approaches to social policy.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this call for proposals are as follows:

1. How has social policy been conceptualized and framed in different time periods since the colonial period? Specifically, what issues have been prioritized and how has this changed over time? Which social policies have been most pivotal in the trajectory of the countries of study, and why?
2. What explains the social policy choices that have been made in various countries and how these policy trajectories have evolved over time?
3. What is the current state of social policy and what are its dominant underpinnings, features and instruments? How do they address the key functions of social policy- i.e. production, social reproduction and reproduction of the care economy, redistribution, protection and social integration?
4. How do social policies currently conceive the role of state, market and societal institutions? How do social policies interact and interface with economic policies?
5. What are the implications of social policy for particular social groups and for inequalities of gender, class and space, and for economic and social development?
6. How has COVID-19 influenced the current state of social policy, and which of these influences is likely to be lasting, and promising for the transformation of social policy?
7. What recommendations for change arise from the current state of social policy and its implications?

Country Clusters of the Project

This is a multi-country study project designed to learn from the experiences of as many African countries as possible so as to allow for effective comparative analysis and creative lesson drawing. Therefore, the project is focused on ten country clusters based on contiguity and shared characteristics. The country clusters are:

- i. Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia
- ii. Senegal, Mali, Mauritania
- iii. Ghana and Nigeria
- iv. Cote D'Ivoire, Benin and Burkina Faso
- v. Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco
- vi. Ethiopia, Sudan and Djibouti
- vii. Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda
- viii. Congo DRC, Gabon and Cameroon
- ix. Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau
- x. South Africa, Mauritius and Zambia

Conditions of Application

Interested researchers should address their proposals to research any one of the country-clusters listed above.

Interested researchers are encouraged to build multi-disciplinary research teams composed of 2 or 3 researchers, ideally with representation from different countries in the cluster. The team should have a clearly identified lead with whom the project will contract for administrative purposes.

Proposals are accepted in English or French. GETSPA is unfortunately not able to work in more than two languages. However, it is envisaged that some project outputs will be in Portuguese.

Proposals must commit to analysing (i) the historical trajectories of social policy, (ii) use an expansive definition of social policy beyond the current focus on social protection, (iii) describe the implications of the structure of economies and dominant economic policy approaches on social policy, and (iii) analyse the gendered nature of social policies in the chosen country clusters.

Format of Proposals

The proposals should provide a sufficiently detailed summary with a preliminary outline of the proposed research. Proposal should be no more than 4,000 words in Times New Roman font size 12 and contain the following information:

- name, affiliation and contact details of Lead Researcher
- name and affiliation of other researchers
- an abstract (max 250 words)
- a short problem statement and refinement of research questions
- a short note on the proposed methodological approach, based on the research questions

- a list of specific social policy areas of interest to the researchers
- an overview of preliminary identified sources of information
- a list of potential stakeholders to engage under the project
- a short statement of constituency building and advocacy activities of the project
- project workplan (Gantt chart)
- tentative outline of research report
- short two-page CV and list of major publications of each researcher (does not count towards the proposal word count)
- budget and budget breakdown

Scope of Project Funding

The budget available per country cluster for this year is up to US\$ 39,000 (made up of up to US\$ 18,000 for honoraria; US\$ 9,000 for data collection and other research costs; and up to US \$12,000 for national dissemination including the costs of translating the final research report, constituency building and advocacy activities in the countries of study). Funding for future activities will be raised during this year and will depend on the successful delivery of year 1 activities.

Terms of Reference for Selected Country Research Teams

Research teams of successful proposals will be commissioned to:

- Undertake research and produce a research report on the basis of the research questions and the methodological approach outlined in their proposal.
- Work as a team to execute the project with scientific rigor and respect for the project time-table, and deliver high quality outputs.
- Produce a minimum of 3 blogs, 3 policy briefs and one journal article in English, French or Portuguese.
- Organize dissemination, constituency building and advocacy activities under the project.
- Undertake dialogue and build strong relationships with policy stakeholders.
- Provide written reports on the technical and financial aspects of the project half-yearly and as requested for accounting to project funders.
- Submit draft research reports in the language of the study, and the final report in both English and French. In the case of the Lusophone Africa cluster studies, the final report will be submitted in Portuguese in addition to English and French.²
- Participate in internal project meetings as needed to provide updates on the project of country research and related activities.
- Participate in inception, dissemination and other project wide meetings.
- Participate as needed in meetings to support the presentation and review of the progress of the broader project.
- Collaborate and network with other country groups on the project.
- Any other tasks needed for the successful execution of the project.

² Additional resources will be provided for the second language translation.

Submission, Selection Criteria and Dates

Proposals must be submitted in English or French via email to Project PIs Dzodzi Tsikata, Nana Akua Anyidoho and Michael Kpessa-Whyte at getsipa.ias@ug.edu.gh (and copied to pis.getspa.ias@ug.edu.gh and dzodzit@yahoo.co.uk) with a clear subject line “Proposal for IAS Social Policy Project”.

For specific questions or further clarification about this call, please contact Dzodzi Tsikata (dtsikata@ug.edu.gh; dzodzit@yahoo.co.uk or call or whatsapp +233 208200842.

Date issued: **12th January 2021**

Deadline for submission of proposals: **21st February 2021**. (*Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered*).

Submitted proposals will be reviewed by the project secretariat. Criteria for evaluation and selection of proposals include:

- Quality of problem statement, research methodology and statement of justification of social policy areas of interest to project.
- Scope of available sources for the study.
- Quality of proposed constituency building and advocacy activities.
- Qualifications and relevant experience of the authors
- Clarity of expression and quality of outline of research report.

Project Timeline

Date of Delivery	Event
12 January 2021	Launch the call for proposals
21 February 2021	Deadline for submission of proposals
7 March 2021	Inform selected country cluster teams
17 March 2021	Project inception workshop
30 April 2021	Finalisation of list of partners, targets and other stakeholders in country; submission of key social policy documents for uploading on project website.
mid-May 2021	Project progress webinars, & visits; approaches to stakeholders
15 June 2021	Submission of draft country cluster research report
15 July 2021	Production of timelines for significant moments in social policy making in each country; country communication and advocacy strategy.
30 July 2021	Feedback from project secretariat on draft country cluster research reports
31 August 2021	Submission of final country cluster research paper

1 September – 30 November 2021	Country cluster publications (3 blogs, 3 policy briefs, 1 draft journal article)
September – October 2021	National dissemination events
15 March – 15 December 2021 (on-going)	Collective project activities: reading group and webinars; progress meetings; capacity building workshops on communicating research and advocacy; project annual network meeting; networking visits between teams; project management team site visits, etc.
15 March - 15 December 2021 (on-going)	Networking and constituency-building