

CODESRIA Child and Youth Studies Institute

Theme: **The Place for work in African Childhoods**

Date: **6th September - 1st October, 2010**

Venue: **Dakar, Senegal**

Call for applications for the 2010 Session

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is pleased to announce its 2010 Child and Youth Studies Institute and invites interested scholars to send applications for consideration for selection as laureates and resource persons in the session scheduled for September 2010. The Institute is an offshoot of the Child and Youth Studies programme and is designed to strengthen analytic capacity on all questions affecting children and youth in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The impetus for the introduction of the Institute was strengthened by the critique emanating from African researchers of the content and context of the developmental crises facing the continent. In addition, the link between these problems and what is designed as an annual interdisciplinary forum where participants can reflect together on a specific aspect of the conditions of children and the youth in Africa provided further support for this kind of Institute. It is hoped that this Institute will contribute to the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge and policy.

Each session of the Institute is held over a period of four weeks under the leadership of a designated director.

Objectives

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

1. encourage the sharing of experiences among researchers, activists and policy makers from different disciplines, methodological and conceptual orientations and geographical/linguistic zones over an extended period of time;
2. promote and enhance a culture of democratic values that allows to effectively identify and tackle Children and Youth issues confronting the African continent; and
3. foster the participation of scholars in discussions and debates about the processes of child and youth development taking place in Africa.

Organisation

The activities of all CODESRIA Institutes centre on presentations made by resident researchers, visiting resource persons and the participants whose applications for admission as laureates are successful. The sessions are led by a scientific director. With the help of invited resource persons he/she will ensure that the laureates are exposed to a wide range of research and policy issues. Open discussions drawing on books and articles relevant to the theme of a particular institute or a specific topic within the theme are also encouraged. Each selected participant is required to prepare a research paper to be presented during the course. Laureates are expected to produce a revised version of their research papers for consideration for publication by CODESRIA. For each Institute, CODESRIA Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) prepares a comprehensive bibliography on the theme. Access to a number of documentation centres in and around Dakar is also facilitated. All CODESRIA Institutes are held in French and in English through simultaneous translation.

Topic for the 2010 Child and Youth Institute: A Place for work in African Childhoods

There is need to rethink the place of work in children's lives, taking into account African culture and the perspectives of children in Africa. While children in high-income families and societies

often enjoy a childhood of leisure, work is taken for granted as constitutive of growing up for the majority of the world's children. While many parents in Africa regard the international campaign against child labour as an ethnocentric imposition contrary to accepted child rearing practices, many children are concerned that the burdens imposed on them interfere with their learning and development. While work activities can contribute to growing up, child development also depends on constructive interaction with the people around them. We need to learn what work means for children in different situations.

Much discussion of children's work considers only the point of view of adults – what they expect or demand of children. In practice, the experience of work, and the benefits or harm that it brings to children's lives, is strongly affected by how children perceive their work. Children's perspectives are therefore essential to understanding the benefits and harm of work in their lives.

Most childhood work in Africa consists of unpaid work, whether domestic chores in the home or work on small farms or in other family enterprises, through which children learn their roles in society and acquire standing in their families through their contributions. Nevertheless, even domestic work can be extensive in poor households, especially when it includes collecting fuel and water or the care of sick in the family. While many children receive benefits from extended families, wealthy kin sometimes exploit the cheap labour of poorer kin under the guise of offering help. When work extends to helping on farms and tending livestock, it can incur hazards and may interfere with the child's schooling. How do we ensure that the work children rightly undertake as part of the educative process of growing up does not become so harsh or extensive as to hinder their development?

Paid work in Africa often begins at an early age. Earnings of children can help with family budgets in poor families. Contribution to family income gives to children status and respect in their families. Work can provide escape from restrictions at home, due to poverty or other constraints. Especially as children reach adolescence, work can help to extend relations beyond the home, meeting with peers, learning to deal with adults, and learning skills that are necessary for future life. When children are out of school for any reason, work provides constructive activity that is preferable to idleness. And yet work can also be psychologically and physically abusive, hazardous, and interfere with schooling. Apprenticeships can involve much work with little respect and little training in return. How do we allow children to benefit from the opportunities that work offers, while protecting them from exploitation?

There is a fear that children's work hinders their attendance or performance at school, and so restricts their future possibilities. And yet in many situations, it is the work that provides for school expenses, and work can create future opportunities particularly for children who are not very proficient at school. Are school and work essentially incompatible? What kinds of work are compatible with schooling and what kinds of schooling are compatible with work? When children work instead of attending school, is it the work that is keeping them from school or the failure of the school system that drives them to work?

The Child and Youth Institute, from the 6th September to 1st October, 2010, will focus on work in African childhoods. It aims to gather empirical information on the nature and extent of work in children's lives, and on the consequences of this work for their development and their future prospects, incorporating a variety of social science disciplines. All studies will be expected to consider both positive and negative aspects of work for the children: for this it is essential that they pay attention to children's perspectives and children's interests.

The 2010 Child and Youth Institute will be directed by **Professor Michael Bourdillon** from University of Zimbabwe. Professor Bourdillon has been working on African Childhood for more

than 20 years. He is the author of many books. He was the director of 2009 session of Child and Youth Institute.

As the director of the 2010 Child and Youth Institute, Professor Michael Bourdillon will:

- identify resource persons to help lead discussions and debates;
- participate in the selection of laureates;
- design the course for the session, including the specific sub-themes
- deliver a set of lectures and provide a critique of the papers presented by the resource persons or laureates;
- submit a written scientific report on the session.

Professor Michael Bourdillon is also expected to (co)-edit the revised versions of the papers presented by the resource persons with a view of submitting them for publication in one of CODESRIA's collections.

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 programme and on their research topics. Resource persons are therefore senior scholars in their mid careers who have published extensively on the topic, and who have a significant contribution to make to the debates on it. They will be expected to produce lecture materials which stimulate laureates to engage in discussion and debate around the lectures and the general body of literature available on the theme.

Once selected, resource person must:

- submit a copy of their lectures for reproduction and distribution to participants in the week that the lecture is presented;
- deliver their lectures, participate in debates and comment on the research proposals and draft papers of laureates;
- Review and submit the revised version of their lecture notes or research papers for consideration for publication by CODESRIA not later than two months following their presentations.

Laureates

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

Applications

Applications for the position of Resource Persons should include:

1. an application letter;
2. two writing samples;
3. a curriculum vitae;
4. a proposal of not more than five (5) pages in length, outlining the issues to be covered in their **three** proposed lecture.

Applications for Laureates should include;

1. an application letter;
2. a letter indicating institutions or organizational affiliation;
3. a curriculum vitae;
4. a research proposal (two copies and not more than 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 2010 Institute and
5. 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, email and fax numbers.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **31st March, 2010**. Acknowledgement of receipt of applications will be sent out before **the 3rd April**.

A selection committee of senior scholars will select the proposals **by April 15th, 2010**.

Selected applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection **by 1st May, 2010**.

All selected applicants are expected to use the period from May 2010 to end of July 2010 for data collection and writing draft papers for the Institute.

Draft papers should be submitted to CODESRIA by the **6th August, 2010**. All submitted papers must be accompanied by a 300 word abstract which will be translated for all laureates attending the Institute.

The Institute will be held in Dakar, Senegal from the **6th September to 1st October, 2010**.

All applications or requests for further information should be addressed to:

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