

Call for Proposals: Round two

Family Planning, Fertility and Urban Development

- **Date Issued:** 18 December 2018
- **Date website opens for electronic submission of proposals:** 15 March 2019
- **Deadline for submission of concept note:** 15 April 2019
- **Deadline for submission of full proposal:** 1 July 2019
- **Duration:** 1-2-year projects may be proposed. Most fellowships will last for two years.

1. Introduction

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) is pleased to announce a call for policy-relevant research proposals from early career researchers to increase the attention paid to family planning (FP), fertility and population growth in urban development at local, national and international levels. Eligibility will be limited to citizens of countries in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, who have received a Ph.D. within the past ten years, who are currently affiliated with established institutions in either region, and who have shown evidence of research skills, ideally through having authored or co-authored published papers.¹ (A medical doctor within ten years of completing residency, with some public health or social science training and evidence of research skills, may also apply.) Applications to study settings with high fertility, high unmet need for FP and high rates of urbanization are particularly encouraged.

The audience for the research includes urban planners and policy makers, and managers involved in urban health and family planning services. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the urban poor and other urban residents who, for diverse reasons, have limited or no access to quality family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH) services: e.g. adolescents and youth, recent migrants and residents of urban slums. In order to achieve its goal of increasing the attention paid to family planning, fertility or population growth in urban policy discussions and initiatives, researcher's projects should be policy relevant, addressing issues that contribute to inclusive and sustainable cities (SDG 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"). The researchers selected for this project thus have the opportunity to use their skills to improve human welfare in urban environments by studying matters that urban planners or programme managers need to address, setting their proposals within the policy contexts that exist both for family planning and for urban development. This is an exciting opportunity for young and mid-career researchers to gain new skills and advance their careers.

Where appropriate, researchers selected as "fellows" under this project will be paired with one or more mentors or partners to support their work; each fellow's needs will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The mentors/partners may be experts in research methodology, urban specialists, government officials in the city being studied, or some combination. The project will leverage international networks of researchers and policy makers in the areas of population/family planning and urban studies to build a cadre of early-career researchers committed to the topic, and to link them into policy communities in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Research fellows, mentors and top specialists in demography, public health, urban poverty and economics could also be involved in targeted events to inform policy makers at the local, regional and international levels about the research studies' objectives, process and results.

¹ A new Ph.D. awardee who has not yet established a relationship with an existing institution is not eligible to apply; thus this funding is not offered for immediate "post-doc" research if the candidate is not yet working in an institution in one of the two regions.

Ideally the project will help create a cadre of specialists devoted to studying the intersections between urban development and family planning, fertility or population growth. We welcome proposals from economists, geographers, urban specialists, policy analysts, and staff involved in programmes, in addition to demographers and family planning experts, provided that they meet the post-PhD (or post-MD) and institutional affiliation criteria.

Research supported through this programme will attempt to answer the following broad questions.

- What are the implications for urban development of demographic change, with particular attention to population growth and fertility? How does family planning and lower fertility help make cities and urban settlements more inclusive and sustainable (objectives of SDG-11)? How can family planning services be more effectively embedded in urban policies and health systems? What are the implications of family planning/family size for health, schooling, employment, poverty reduction and impact on the urban environment?
- How can family planning services in urban areas be most cost-effectively improved and reach those most in need? What would it take to ensure all urban residents have access to quality family planning services? How can urban inequities to services be reduced and what would be the benefits of doing so? Where is need the greatest (migrants; poor; youth; in particular communities or localities)?

2. Background and rationale

Between 2015 and 2050, the world's population is projected to rise by 2.4 billion, an increase of close to one-third. Three-fourths of this increase will occur in sub-Saharan Africa (1.2 billion) and South Asia (600 million) – the two regions that currently account for over 80% of the world population living in absolute poverty. Future population growth will occur almost entirely in urban areas and the world urban population is projected to increase by two-thirds by 2050. While many new arrivals in the outlying informal neighborhoods of cities are rural-urban migrants, a large part of this growth will be due to the larger number of births than deaths among urban residents. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia again stand out: these regions exhibit the highest rates of urban population growth, currently estimated at 3.8% per year for sub-Saharan Africa (doubling every 18 years), and 2.4% per year for South Asia (doubling every 29 years).

The definition of 'urban' differs between countries and there is no standard international definition of an 'urban' area or 'urban' population. The criteria that countries use to decide whether to define a place as 'urban' include population size, population density, type of economic activity, physical characteristics, level of infrastructure, or a combination of these. The OECD uses population-size cutoffs (50,000 or 100,000 people, depending on the country) but many countries use a smaller cutoff with a surprisingly small average threshold of around 5,000. Most urban research focuses on large cities and neglects smaller, intermediate-sized cities and large towns. Applications are welcome on all types of urban locality.

Cities are more unequal than rural areas, and most are struggling to keep pace with rapid population growth in terms of vital infrastructure. As a consequence, roughly one in three urban residents in Asia and Africa lives in slums with limited access to basic services, including health and family planning services, sanitation, clean water, and education. While urban fertility has fallen in recent years, urban unmet need for modern contraception and unwanted fertility are high, and the rapid growth in the number of young people and other disadvantaged subgroups living in cities translates into enormous needs for targeted sexual and reproductive health services. While urban areas generally offer a wider range of health care services and providers, including pharmacies and drug

shops, than rural areas, there are still important barriers to FP access in urban contexts. Research has identified provider bias in provision of FP to young people, to people without any children, to women who are unmarried, or to women without spousal consent.

Universal access to high quality family planning services should be an integral part of efforts aimed at building sustainable cities and economic prosperity for all, and more specifically has implications for gender equity, women's economic empowerment, and the so-called "demographic dividend." In addition, reducing unwanted fertility brings benefits in terms of maternal health and poverty alleviation, and will slow the pace of urban growth, thereby facilitating the achievement of other urban goals.

Policy discussions on urban development and health, as well as on "sustainable cities" (e.g., SDG 11), neglect these important roles of family planning. This is partly due to 'silo-ing' - a compartmentalization of research disciplines, of programme/service sectors and the inconsistent impact of research on policy which tends to marginalize the overall importance of family planning and fertility to urban development. Decades of research and programmes on urban health and 'healthy cities' in the global south have tended to focus on environmental health and when they have ventured into reproductive related health services tended to focus on HIV/AIDS. Meanwhile family planning research and programmes have largely ignored the specificities of vulnerable urban populations and the complexities of urban governance, with notable exceptions like the recently completed Urban Reproductive Health Initiative (URHI) and the new The Challenge Initiative (TCI) that enables cities to self-select into investing in significant additional family planning resources.

This project aims to address this neglect not only by producing the scientific evidence on the important role of population growth, fertility and family planning in urban development, but also by making sure that this evidence reaches the relevant policy makers at local, regional and international levels.

Applicants should consider the urban specificity of their research. Urban populations and their contexts have a variety of characteristics that differ from rural populations and that are likely to be associated with levels and patterns of FP and fertility--e.g. a greater range of services and providers; more anonymity; different modes and forms of social capital; exposure to a wider array and density of communications (tele- and verbal); differing patterns of temporary family separations (e.g. for migratory work); greater informal and formal employment opportunities; a denser governance structure which often includes both local (municipal) and central government influence, as well as civil society actors and other individuals or institutions that shape behaviors (communal, traditional and/or ethnically based governance); typically better education opportunities; dependence on a cash economy; a wider range of potential sex partners; and, for the urban poor, a 'double burden' of disease (communicable and non-communicable diseases). The heterogeneity of urban populations offers potential to focus on intra-urban differentials in FP and fertility and even intra-slum (informal settlements) differentials. Urban-specific contextual factors such as these need to be reflected in the conceptual framework, research questions and methods of any research on urban FP and fertility.

3. Objectives of this Call:

The IUSSP invites proposals from early-career researchers (PhDs awarded within the last 10 years, or MDs who finished residency within the last 10 years, in both cases with evidence of research ability) to conduct high-quality, policy-relevant research in a limited timeframe. Most fellowships will last for two years but a one-year timeframe is also acceptable.

Topics

We invite innovative proposals for projects that link aspects of population change, fertility and FP and related RH issues to urban development. Indicative examples of possible research topics include, but are not limited to:

- a. Consequences of urban population growth
 - Fiscal implications - How might reductions in unwanted and mistimed pregnancies reduce longer-term demands on governmental urban budgets?
 - Modelling the impact of urban population growth on poverty, employment, food security, education, infrastructure and other development sectors
- b. Consequences of fertility for urban household welfare
 - Links between numbers and timing of births and urban children's education, nutrition, etc.
 - Implications of urban childbearing for mother's employment, schooling, household savings, etc.
- c. Better understanding of intra-urban differences in fertility and FP
 - Where is the need for improved FP services greatest?
 - What are the individual, household, and contextual influences on fertility and FP behavior
 - What would it take to remove inequities and can innovative solutions be identified?
- d. Implementation and policy
 - How civil society can have an impact on urban FP programs and policies – e.g., combination of quantitative analysis of an NGO data set and qualitative interviews on policy influence
 - How government officials can make a difference to urban FP – e.g., a study of a city where FP initiatives are underway as part of The Challenge Initiative (TCI) project with specific questions (see list of TCI cities in annex)
 - Map the responsibility of urban local bodies across size class of cities and towns – e.g., *whether FP is listed as a priority item in policy documents and budgets for family planning*

Data

a. Secondary data analysis

It is envisaged that many proposals will use available data set(s) to address key issues of concern with secondary analyses. Possible data sources include Demographic & Health Surveys and Unicef's MICS, but we encourage fellows to go beyond those resources to consider [MLE surveys](#), censuses, labour force and economic surveys, other longitudinal datasets with urban coverage; urban demographic surveillance sites; repeated cross-sectional data, such as India's National Sample Survey (NSS); Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS) and similar economic datasets with urban coverage; PMA 2020 and/or PMA Agile data. Special attention should be paid to the problem of insufficient sample sizes when using secondary data analysis for studying the urban poor.

There is a special opportunity to collaborate with related projects and we strongly encourage this (though it is not required). A primary example is The Challenge Initiative (TCI), which is being carried out in selected cities in India, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Nigeria (see list of cities and links to materials in Annex to this call for proposals). Collaboration with other projects, for example on urban adolescents' access to services, is welcome, with evidence of agreement and support from the implementing agency.

b. Primary data collection

There is also provision for projects that include primary data collection, either in the form of small surveys or qualitative investigation. Examples include interviews with policy makers both in the reproductive health and urban development realms, other stakeholders at local, regional or national levels, assessment of service quality, attitudes and practices of providers, users and non-users of FP, and studies of women's perceptions of particular methods.

Emphasis on policy relevance

All projects must demonstrate a commitment to strengthen an enabling environment for urban policy discourse, development and implementation. *This is not research for research's sake alone, but rather an effort to generate evidence on specific topics within urban FP or fertility with the intention of informing not just academics but also government policy makers, "policy think tanks," and other actors involved in urban policy and welfare, with the ultimate goal of improving policy and programmes.* Early engagement of the intended target audience is crucial and special attention will be paid to whether and how the proposals demonstrate their understanding of the need to reach policy audiences. Applicants are encouraged to provide a description of planned steps to engage appropriate programme and policy stakeholders early in the study through to completion. The programme will designate additional resources for each fellowship that are specifically allocated for policy communications activities.

4. Unique features of the programme

The programme aims to build the policy-relevant evidence base on the implications of population growth, fertility and family planning for urban development in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, as well as provide capacity building opportunities to early-career researchers to work on issues of urban family planning.

- The programme will work closely with a select set of leading sub-Saharan African and South Asian institutions. Through annual fellow workshops, the programme will build the capacity of the early-career scholars (a) to conduct research on key areas of interest that demonstrates clearly the gaps in evidence and the ways in which these gaps may be filled, and (b) to communicate the results of that research to appropriate audiences for increased policy relevance.
- Where appropriate, early career fellows will be paired with a mentor to provide guidance on research and/or an urban partner to enhance policy engagement and relevance. This fellow-mentor-partner pairing arrangement will be formal. Selection of mentors/partners will be done in collaboration with the [IUSSP Scientific Panel on Family Planning, Fertility and Urban Development](#).
- A strong network-building component is anticipated. Annual fellow workshops will be held, (a) giving fellows exposure to a range of resource people who will serve as additional resources for their research, (b) enabling interaction between the cohorts of fellows, and (c) building skills in communication and policy engagement.
- Fellows will be strongly encouraged to present their research in important national and international conferences, and provision has been made in the budget to enable such attendance. They will be supported to link with broader research and urban development policy networks and programmes, both within and outside sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, making full use of established IUSSP networks and urban planning networks (e.g. UN.HABITAT, the International Society for Urban Health). They will also be encouraged to engage as early as possible at local and national levels with potential audiences who could use their research results, to ensure that the problem definition is tailored to specific gaps that need to be filled.

5. Funding scope and duration

The research project duration will be 12-24 months. All research activities and reporting must be completed before the agreed upon project completion date. A typical budget we expect to receive is US\$30,000 to \$40,000 for a two-year project though higher awards will be considered for proposals of exceptional quality.² This is for direct costs including computer hardware and software, primary

² Each budget will be reviewed in detail by a specialist research manager with knowledge of costs in the local context.

data collection, research assistants, and the fellow's time. The fellow's salary support will be provided when required to give her or him partial or total release from other duties for the project duration. (Costs for dissemination and communications, such as participation in conferences to present the work and workshops with policy makers of the city studied to present the results, will be provided from a separate fund.)

6. Eligibility criteria and submission process

The proposal must focus either on a single city, or represent comparative work on multiple urban areas, of any country of sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia. Eligibility will be limited to citizens of countries in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, currently working in established institutions in those countries (not necessarily a citizen of the country where proposing to do research). Contracts will ideally be made with individual fellows but can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis if their home institution has special requirements. Institutional overhead charges can be no more than 15% of the total budget.

Applicants should submit a 600-word concept note summarizing the research topic by 15 April using the [online application](#). Those with promising proposals will be invited to submit a full proposal by 1 July 2019. Annexed below are the content required for the concept note, and the list of main sections all applicants will be required to address in their full application (if invited to submit one).

Applications may be submitted in either English or French.

7. Selection process

Only proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will be considered for evaluation in accordance with the process and criteria outlined herein. Eligible proposals will be reviewed by technical experts identified by IUSSP.

Promising applicants will be given the opportunity to revise their proposals and will be required to participate in a proposal presentation and development workshop in Kampala, Uganda on 15-17 November 2019; this immediately precedes the African Population Conference of the Union of African Population Studies. A percentage of those finalist applicants will then be given a further opportunity to revise their applications once more, with a deadline of January 3, 2020. A final selection of fellows will be made in mid-January 2020.

Applications will be assessed on several criteria including quality of candidate, research quality, innovation, policy relevance, relevance of setting and subpopulation, and feasibility. Priority will be given to innovative research questions of direct policy or programmatic value in urban settings, and potential for influencing urban policy beyond the demographic and public health communities. The interdisciplinary IUSSP panel overseeing the project, comprised of demographers, experts on urban poverty and health, economists, and policy and programme specialists, will assess the relevance of the issue to be addressed and the evidence gap it will fill, as well as the significance of research for decision-making and for informing policy and programmes.

Proposals are expected to focus on research questions addressing priority agendas and development priorities defined by the city, country or region where the research will take place. Evidence that the proposed topic is indeed a priority – e.g., supporting statements from officials, links to or copies of press coverage of the problem – will be considered as part of the selection process. Alternatively, proposals may address important topics that are currently neglected in urban policies and programmes.

8. Enquiries

Any enquiries should be directed to UrbanFP@iussp.org by **15 June 2019**, in order to receive a response prior to the deadline date. (Questions about the concept note phase are due by March 15.)

9. Additional resources

A series of online webinars on topics related to this call for proposals will be posted in early 2019, to offer additional context on sustainable and “healthy cities,” policy engagement, and other topics. These resources are expected to help prospective applicants better understand the perspective of the project on these issues. Please check back periodically to website for the Call at <https://iussp.org/en/call-research-proposals>.

10. Time line

Call launched	18 December 2018
Application portal opens	15 March 2019
Last day to submit questions on concept note phase	15 March 2019
Deadline to submit concept note	15 April 2019
Last day to submit questions	15 June 2019
Deadline to submit full proposals	1 July 2019*
Announcement of shortlisted candidates	15 September 2019
Presentation of shortlisted proposals in Kampala	15-17 November (<i>followed by UAPS 18-22 November 2019 for those interested</i>)
Deadline to submit revised proposal	3 January 2020
Final selection announced	15 January 2020

***Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.**

11. Finalization of grant

Please note that the technical selection of a proposal does not guarantee that it will be funded by IUSSP.

The following procedure is anticipated:

Proposal finalization- Once a set of proposals has been selected for support in mid-January 2020, final adjustments will be made to the content.

Administrative Finalization-Administrative considerations must also be satisfactory for the fellowship to be awarded.

Country clearance requirements- In case national and/or institutional approvals are required to conduct research in a particular country, the applicant is required to obtain such approval prior to

receiving funding from IUSSP. This requirement applies only for selected applications. IUSSP reserves the right to not pursue the funding of a selected project if the country approval is not secured within six months after IUSSP officially announces approval of the project, as this would jeopardize the timely completion of the initiative.

12. Permission for use and disclosure of information

By way of submitting an application under this call for competitive grants, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers involved in the selection process, both within IUSSP and externally. The applicant further consents to the disclosure of his or her name and the name of the proposed project, in any announcement of selected proposals. Finally, all original data generated should be made publicly available.

ANNEXES

1. List of eligible countries

South Asia

Afghanistan
Bangladesh
India
Nepal
Pakistan
Sri Lanka

Congo, DR
Congo, R
Cote d'Ivoire
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
eSwatini
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia, The
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania

Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Sub Saharan Africa

Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cabo Verde
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros

2. List of cities prioritized by The Challenge Initiative (TCI) project and online resources

See:

- Video [What is TCI?](#)
- [Overview of TCI](#) (with list of cities with active projects).

3. List of main sections to be completed in the online application

1. Concept Note (15 April):

Personal information including education and work history

Surname, First name
DOB
Institution name and city
Nationality
Date of PhD and awarding university
Up to 5 best publications

Project description (up to 600 words)

Title of project
Research questions
Study population
Justification (added value, evidence gaps filled)
Data sources/methods
Policy relevance

2. Full Proposal (1 July)

Abstract (300 words)
5 Key words
Study population (100 words)
Research questions (300 words)
Justification for research (500 words)
Description of data sets and data collection/analysis methods and issues (850 words)
Target audience for the research (100 words)
Policy context and relevance (200 words)
Project workplan (150 words)
Training needs (150 words)
Budget
Additional information (500 words)
References