



Call for Proposals:

Family Planning, Fertility and Urban Development

- **Date Issued:** July 2, 2018
- **Date website opens for electronic submission of proposals:** August 1, 2018
- **Deadline for submission of proposals:** September 3, 2018 23:59 GMT
- **Duration:** 1-3 year projects may be proposed. Most fellowships will last for two years, with a minority lasting one or three 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 (a) contribute to the evidence base needed to better meet the family planning (FP) and related reproductive health (RH) needs of the most vulnerable in urban areas of countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and (b) increase the attention paid to FP, fertility and population growth in urban development policy initiatives 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 and who are currently affiliated with established institutions in either region.¹ Applications to study settings with high fertility, high unmet need for FP and high rates of urbanization are particularly encouraged.

Potential beneficiaries of the research include the urban poor and other urban residents who, for diverse reasons, have limited or no access to FP/RH services: adolescents and youth, recent migrants and residents of urban slums. In order to achieve its goal, the project will increase the attention paid to family planning in urban development policy discussions and initiatives, with a particular focus on 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 need to address.

Where appropriate, researchers selected as “fellows” under this project will be paired with one or more mentors to support their work; each fellow’s mentoring needs will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The mentors may be experts in the research methodology selected; urban specialists; elected or civil service 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 will also be involved in targeted events to inform policy makers at the local, regional and international levels.

Ideally the project will help create a cadre of FP specialists devoted to urban settings and issues, but we will be open to supporting not only demographers and family planning specialists, but also economists, geographers, urban specialists, policy analysts, NGO staff and others who meet the post-PhD and institutional affiliation criteria.

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.

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

- How does family planning help make cities and urban settlements more inclusive and sustainable (objectives of SDG-11)? Answering this question will require strong evidence on fertility change (in terms of completed family size, timing of births, age at marriage, population growth) and its implications for health, schooling, employment, poverty reduction and impact on the urban environment.
- What does it take to ensure all urban residents have access to quality family planning services and are empowered to have the number of children they want, and when they want them? How can urban inequities in access to family planning services be reduced and what are the benefits of doing so? Where is need the greatest (migrants; poor; adolescents; 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).

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 adolescents 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.

The problem is that policy discussions on urban development and health, as well as on "sustainable cities" (e.g., SDG 11), neglect the important role of family planning. This is partly due to a 'silo-ing' - a compartmentalization of research disciplines, of programme/service sectors and a limited impact of research on policy. 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 family planning in urban development, but also by making sure that this evidence reaches the relevant policy makers at local, regional and international levels.

3. Objectives of this Call:

The IUSSP invites proposals from early-career researchers (PhDs awarded within the last 10 years) to conduct high-quality, policy-relevant research in a limited timeframe. Most fellowships will last for two years, with a minority lasting one or three years.

Topics

We invite proposals for projects that focus on aspects of FP and related RH issues in urban areas. Indicative examples of possible research topics include, but are not limited to:

- a. Barriers to FP uptake in urban areas
 - Quality & characteristics of urban FP - *e.g. for adolescents, subdivided by rural-to-urban migrants vs. urban-born, girls versus boys, etc.; identification of weaknesses in provider competence; where unmet need is greatest.*
- b. Consequences of urban population growth
 - Fiscal implications - How might reductions in unwanted and mistimed pregnancies reduce longer-term demands on governmental budgets?
 - Modeling the impact of urban population growth on poverty, education, infrastructure and other development sectors
- c. Consequences of fertility for household welfare
 - Links between numbers and timing of births and children's education, nutrition, etc.
 - Implications of childbearing for mother's employment, schooling, household savings, etc.
- d. Measurement
 - Measurement of FP need in selected groups (e.g., adolescents in urban settings; new migrants; those displaced by natural disasters and conflict; those forcibly evicted)
 - Locating disadvantage - Distinguish between spatial concentrations of the urban poor in slum communities and the spatially dispersed poor who live in diverse neighborhoods – *e.g., what are the implications for program design? When is a slum focus warranted? How should the spatially dispersed poor be reached?*
 - Mining of existing data on cities – *e.g., cities' registration and survey data or data collected by an NGO*
- e. Implementation and policy
 - Comparisons/market segmentation – *e.g., FP in "urban"/"peri-urban"/"rural" areas; in public/for-profit/private non-profit services*
 - 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 technology can reduce urban FP barriers – *e.g., use of phone "apps"*
 - How government officials can make a difference on 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 most 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; 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.

There is a special opportunity to collaborate with related projects: [The Challenge Initiative \(TCI\)](#), being carried out in selected cities in India, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Nigeria (see list in Annex); [MOMENTUM - Kinshasa](#), [Adolescents 360 \(A360\)](#), and [Beyond Bias](#).

b. Primary data collection

There is also provision for projects that include primary data collection, for instance on provider attitudes, service quality, women's perceptions about contraceptive methods, interviews with policy makers.

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, "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. Ideally this might take the form of letters of support from urban officials offered at the time of proposal submission, but it could also be a description of planned steps to engage appropriate programme and policy stakeholders early in the study. The programme will designate 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 family planning in urban areas of 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 early career fellow-mentor pairing and annual fellow workshops, the programme will build the capacity of the early-career scholars (a) to conduct research on key areas of interest in urban family planning in countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia that demonstrates clearly the gap 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 working in the areas of family planning and/or urban studies. This fellow-mentor pairing arrangement will be formal. Selection of mentors will be done in collaboration with the [IUSSP Scientific Panel on Family Planning, Fertility and Urban Development](#). We anticipate that the involvement of a research mentor will further ensure research quality and skill enhancement.
- 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 cohort of fellows, and (c) building skills in communication and policy outreach.

- 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 (eg 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 project duration will be 12-24 months, with provision for a small number of fellowships to last 36 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\$40,000 for a two-year project.² Salary support will be available when required to give fellows partial or total release from other duties for the project duration.

It is expected that most fellows will continue to be based in their home institution. However, additional travel and subsistence funding will be available to allow some fellows to be based at a centre of excellence outside their own city or country of residence for up to 4 months per year.

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, and those currently working in established institutions. 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.

All applications must be submitted using the [online application](#) which will **open 1 August**. Annexed below is the list of main sections all applicants will be required to address in their application.

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 required to participate in a proposal presentation and development workshop in Kigali, Rwanda on November 9-12, 2018; additional input regarding recommended revisions in the proposals will be made to finalists during the next several days, which coincide with the International Conference on Family Planning (Kigali 12-15 November). Applicants will then be given the opportunity to revise their applications, with a deadline of January 3, 2019. A final selection of fellows will be made in mid-January 2019.

Successful fellows will also be expected to actively participate in a series of workshops at various stages of project implementation (for example, design, analysis, writing, communication to policy

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

makers) with the cohort of other selected fellows, to maximize opportunities for networking, capacity strengthening and knowledge transfer.

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 research questions of direct policy or programmatic value 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 should demonstrate that the activities respond to priorities identified by local, national and regional stakeholders. Proposals are expected to focus on research questions addressing priority agendas and development priorities defined by the city or country 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.

8. Enquiries

Any enquiries should be directed to UrbanFP@iussp.org by **15 August 2018**, in order to receive a response prior to the deadline date.

9. Time line

Call launched	2 July 2018
Application portal opens	1 August 2018
Last day to submit questions	15 August 2018
Deadline to submit proposals	3 September 2018*
Announcement of shortlisted candidates	1 October 2018
Presentation of shortlisted proposals in Kigali	9-12 November (<i>followed by ICFP 12-15 November 2018</i>)
Deadline to submit revised proposal	3 January 2019
Final selection announced	15 January 2019

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

10. 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 2019, 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.

11. 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

Sub Saharan Africa

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

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

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

Kenya

Kericho
Kilifi
Migori
Mombasa
Nairobi
Uasin Gishu
Uganda
Buikwe
Busia
Iganga
Mukono
Tanzania
Ilala
Kigamboni
Kinondoni
Temeke
Ubungo

Senegal

Kolda
Nioro

Cote d'Ivoire

Bouaké

Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou
Koudougou

Benin

UCOZ (Bohicon+ 8 autres communes), Projet PF

Nigeria

Plateau
Kano
Ogun
Bauchi
Delta
Niger
Anambra

India

Uttar Pradesh
Allahabad

Firozabad
Ghaziabad
Gorakhpur
Saharanpur
Varanasi
Shahjahanpur
Mathura
Noida
Kanpur
Lucknow
Faizabad
Odisha
Brahmapur
Puri
Raurkela
Madhya Pradesh
Dewas
Gwalior
Indore
Ujjain
Jabalpur

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

- Personal information including education and work history
- Title of research project
- Location (city, country that is focus of study)
- Institutional base
- 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 analysis methods and issues (850 words)
- Target audience for the research (100 words)
- Policy relevance (200 words)
- Project workplan (150 words)
- Training needs (150 words)
- Budget
- Additional information (500 words)
- References