

## Call for Applications

# Population, Ethics, and Human Rights Fellowship

**Deadline for applications: 31 August 2022**

### Fellowship Overview:

Duration:

- 12 months, February 2023 - January 2024

Locations:

- Johannesburg, South Africa (February - July 2023)
- Kampala, Uganda (August 2023 - January 2024)

Partner institutions:

- International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), Paris, France
- Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER), University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Institute on Inequalities in Global Health (USC IIGH), Los Angeles, University of Southern California, USA
- Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER), Kampala, Uganda

Support:

- The IUSSP and its partners are grateful for support from the International Development Research Centre, Canada that makes this fellowship and associated activities possible

### Overview

The IUSSP Scientific Panel, jointly with USC IIGH, WiSER and ISER, is issuing a global call for applications to host 3 early career research/practitioner professionals for a 12-month period. The official fellowship period will run from February 2023 - January, 2024.

The Fellowship requires a full-time commitment during a 12-month residence period -- Fellows will be hosted for 6-months at WiSER, Johannesburg and 6-months at ISER, Uganda (fellowship extension beyond 12-months is subject to available funding). The Fellowship Program will include support for individual and group research projects, interactive dialogues, seminars and research/practitioner workshops that seek to unpack interdisciplinary perspectives with a particular focus on emerging challenges in low- and middle-income countries. Fellows will be supported by the IUSSP Scientific Panel and the partner institutions WiSER (South Africa), ISER (Uganda), and IIGH (United States).

Applications will be accepted from low- and middle-income countries from different geographic regions and disciplinary expertise and supported to become a cohort of thought

leaders in this emerging field, including support for multidisciplinary collaboration. Fellows will be hosted at WiSER and ISER, so their residential fellowship will include direct study of and engagement with contemporary issues in South Africa and Uganda, as a complement to their own studies or areas of work (even if not specifically focused on South Africa or Uganda).

The fellowship program is designed to be immersive. Fellows will be in full-time residence at WiSER and ISER for 6-months, respectively, and will include three workshops with experts from the collaborating institutions and in the field more broadly. All sponsoring organizations will play key roles in supporting Fellows in their research. The residential component of the fellowship will immerse fellows in WiSER's weekly and monthly research seminars and colloquia and engage them with the [Bhalisa Network](#) and, while at ISER, will integrate them into ISER's policy advocacy work in Uganda around ethics, rights and legal identity. Fellows will be mentored by faculty and staff from the collaborating institutions and be connected to new areas of research and practice as well as supported in expanding their interdisciplinary professional network.

## Background

This initiative is designed to nurture a new generation of scholars and practitioners engaged with population register systems via direct mentoring and support, immersion into academic, policy and practitioner networks, debates, exposure and visibility through collaboration between fellows themselves, as well as meetings, publications, and communication channels.

Deeper interdisciplinary collaborations are required to address emerging ethics and human rights challenges that continue to evolve as population register systems are modernized and digitized. The overall purpose of this initiative is to strengthen interdisciplinary perspectives, drawing on perspectives from history, economics, law, public policy, demography, and public health, into efforts that are transforming population data systems. The fellowships will focus on approaches to improving governance and transparency in developing and addressing new ethical and rights considerations and scientific principles in digitisation projects. Particular attention will be given to the implications, hierarchies and exclusions produced or renewed by digital population registration. Selected fellows will be encouraged to explore the issues of ethics, rights and regulation through empirical, or concrete cases/examples of policy, statistical or administrative processes and procedures that either raise, address, or resolve these issues.

A key challenge for scholars and practitioners who work on and with population register systems is managing the promises of more inclusive societies via digitized population data against the potential risks of systemic exclusion and discrimination against vulnerable subpopulations, resulting in denial of basic rights and essential services.<sup>1</sup> Discussions are ongoing in many corners, yet, a major limitation of current efforts to explore and address these challenges is that such efforts are limited by disciplinary boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Discussions, and

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, S. (2020). *The Uncounted: Politics of Data in Global Health* (Cambridge Studies in Law and Society). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108649544

Amiya Bhatia & Jacqueline Bhabha (2017) India's Aadhaar scheme and the promise of inclusive social protection, *Oxford Development Studies*, 45:1, 64-79, DOI: [10.1080/13600818.2016.1263726](https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2016.1263726)

<sup>2</sup> Rao U. Response to 'The Aadhaar debate: Where are the sociologists?' *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. 2019;53(3):431-440. doi:10.1177/0069966719861759;

Khera R. The Aadhaar debate: Where are the sociologists? *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. 2018;52(3):336-342. doi:10.1177/0069966718787029

ultimately analyses, therefore lack the interdisciplinary approach needed to result in real change by simultaneously integrating perspectives from law, public policy, demography, and public health.

Despite strong interest and activity on the part of young scholars and activists in low- and middle-income countries, current well-resourced global efforts do not prioritize opportunities for them to contribute to shaping and scaling-up efforts in this area. This is a major weakness of current global debates, research and emerging practice. A new generation of researchers and practitioners, with an interdisciplinary perspective, appreciation of the role of institutions and a rights-based perspective, is desperately needed. Strengthening the inclusion of young researchers and practitioners from low-/middle-income countries is key to improving the quality, efficacy and sustainability of interdisciplinary efforts to address the challenges of digitized population data systems.

## General Information

*The program is designed for exceptional early career professionals, scholars, and others with an interest in population register systems who:*

- 1. possess the skills and commitment to use the fellowship experience to provide leadership in improving Emerging Ethics and Human Rights Issues in the Digitization of Population Register Systems at the global, national or local level;*
- 2. bring a depth of expertise and knowledge about the ethics and/or rights issues embedded in the digitization of population register systems*

- **Expected Outputs:** a series of scholarly/practitioner articles and general audience mini-essays over the course of the 12-month fellowship
- **Educational Requirements:** Either a completed PhD or at least 3-years professional experience in the field of legal identity, global health, human rights, population studies or related fields such as social sciences, law, and public policy.
- **Language Requirements:** professional competence in English
- **Fellowship Stipends and allowances:**
  - Stipend: US\$27,500 over 12 months to cover all living expenses
  - Travel Costs: Economy airfares from current residence to Johannesburg, between Johannesburg and Kampala, and between Kampala and Johannesburg, and home again
  - Administrative Costs: Health insurance and visa costs

**Enquiries:** Any enquiries should be directed to Paul Monet ([monet@iussp.org](mailto:monet@iussp.org))

**Application form: click [here](#) and sign in with a Google account**

In addition to the general information requested in the form, applicants need to provide the following:

*1) External references*

- Two references are required. Include names, email and phone numbers.

*2) A cover letter that briefly addresses the following:*

- Relevant professional achievements
- full course record and/or 2-paragraph description of related professional experience
- Two-page letter explaining why you want you this fellowship, and explaining:
  - what inspired you to apply for this Fellowship
  - Potential for leadership in addressing emerging ethics and rights issues relevant to population register systems (include attention to your lived experience, your career and accomplishments to date)
  - Potential for future growth and career advancement based on this fellowship opportunity
  - Potential for significant contributions to improving health equity more generally.
  - your Interpersonal and communication skills
  - Individual plans for incorporating the fellowship experience into specific career goals

*3) Up-to-date Curriculum Vitae*

*4) Description of proposed research*

Please describe the research project you wish to undertake, by including the following:

- Project Title
- Abstract
  - This is a brief, ~250-word paragraph to summarize what you hope to accomplish if awarded the fellowship and what you envision your project will entail.
- Background
  - This should be two paragraphs or more on the significance and innovation of your proposed project. Please include references if applicable.
- Objectives
  - State the short-term and long-term objectives of the proposed project.
- Methods
  - This section should detail the materials and methods to be used, as well as the intended approach to data collection and analysis.
- Funding
  - Do you have other funding for this project already? Please kindly provide information about any existing funding support.