

IUSSP Scientific Panel on Family Planning, Fertility and Urban Development (2018-2023)

The key aim of this five-year programme was to bridge the family planning-urban development policy divide by creating a cadre of young scholars who were funded to conduct research and who received specialist training in communication of findings to urban stakeholders and policy transfer. Thirteen research fellows, mainly demographers, from nine African countries were selected by competitive process and awarded grants that amounted, on average, to \$60,000 each. Specialist training on the research-policy interface was provided by the African Population and Health Research Center.

Many research projects involved secondary analysis of accessible data sets though most included original data collection in the form of surveys, key informant interviews, or group discussions. A common focus of study was marginalised and underserved urban populations, such as adolescents and those living in informal settlements. Fellows published a total of 20 peer reviewed journal papers, with an additional eight authored by members of the IUSSP scientific panel and a specially recruited post-doc.

In addition to local dissemination of results, panel sessions were organised at the International Conference on Family Planning (ICFP) in Rwanda 2018, the 2019 African Population Conference in Uganda, and the virtual International Population Conference in 2021. Seven fellows had submissions accepted for the 2022 ICFP in Thailand though visa problems restricted attendance. Six fellows attended the IUSSP conference in Madeira 2022 and held a poster session. For urban-focussed audiences, sessions were held at two conferences of the International Society for Urban Health, in China 2019 and Spain 2022. In addition, a panel session was organised in collaboration with The Challenge Initiative at the AfriCities Summit in Kenya 2022.

The final report: [Evaluation of a Research and Capacity-Building Project in Sub-Saharan Africa](#) provides an overview and evaluation of the programme, including views and experiences of the research fellows, a summary of project outputs including publications, lessons learned, and recommendations for carrying out capacity building through multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary fellowships with a focus on training early career scholars to carry out policy-relevant research and engage with policymakers.