

African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship Program

2018 ADDRf Fellowships for Doctoral Research on Abortion

Maternal deaths remain a significant health challenge in several Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Say et al., 2014). These deaths of women are as a result of pregnancy or childbirth and exert unquantifiable disruptions to livelihood of individuals and households, affecting the social and economic survival of individuals within communities (Storeng et al., 2010). Among the top causes of maternal deaths is unsafe abortion. While the incidence of unsafe abortion is already very high in Africa - these numbers are reported to be increasing and most often have devastating outcomes (Sedgh et al., 2016). There is need to generate high quality evidence to inform formulation of policies that deal with the wide social and economic vulnerabilities that predispose women to seek unsafe abortion. There is also insufficient evidence on the availability and quality of post abortion care in Africa. An in depth understanding of these issues and others would strengthen prevention efforts at national and regional stage.

[The African Population and Health Research Center](#) (APHRC) has partnered [Ipas](#), [Guttmacher Institute](#), [Gynuity Health Projects](#) and [Ibis Reproductive Health](#) to provide fellowships to support up-to four African doctoral candidates undertaking dissertation research on the topic of abortion. The abortion fellowships will be administered as part of the African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowships (ADDRf) program run by APHRC. ADDRf fellowships are awarded to advanced doctoral students who are within two years of completing their doctoral training at a sub-Saharan African university.

Goals of the fellowship

The dissertation grant is designed to bridge strategic gaps in research capacity and knowledge management to help researchers, health professionals and policy makers to increase their contribution in addressing issues related to abortion. The grant will provide research and training support to PhD candidates to:

- a) Conduct research addressing ways of improving data on abortion, prevention of unsafe abortion, and improving availability and quality of post abortion care.
- b) Address specific research capacity or knowledge management aspects that can advance the understanding, analysis and ways of finding solutions to unsafe abortion problems in Africa

Eligibility

The fellowship will primarily support research (including data collection, analysis and dissemination). Funds will not be used to support coursework.

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be citizens or permanent residents of an African country which has restrictive abortion laws and high rates of unsafe abortion, but also in countries that have liberalized their abortion laws
- Currently hold a relevant Master's degree
- Be currently registered in an African University
- Have completed all pre-dissertation requirements
- Be interested in working on abortion.
- Provide a detailed timeframe for completing their dissertation which must be endorsed by the head of department or the chair of the dissertation committee; and
- Must complete their research within 24 months of the start of the fellowship.

Female applicants are especially encouraged to apply.

Selection Criteria

The fellowship will be seeking to select candidates whose research can:-

- Expand the evidence base to inform better policies and programs, particularly in countries with restrictive abortion laws and high rates of unsafe abortion, but also in countries that have liberalized their abortion laws.
- Ensure wide dissemination of research and promote its utilization by policymakers, civil society organizations, health care providers and other stakeholders to facilitate policies that improve the quality and availability of safe abortion and treatment of unsafe abortion complications.
- Secure the resources and political commitment needed at the national level and within the regional and global community to build the evidence, share the findings and replicate programmatic and policy successes.

Evaluation criteria

The applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Candidate's scientific background, qualifications and demonstrated potential to develop a strong research career in the broad sexual and reproductive health rights area
- Scientific merit of the proposed research project including originality of research question(s); integration of social or technological innovations; clarity and adequacy of the study design; demonstrated knowledge of relevant/current literature; detailed analysis plan; ethical considerations, etc.
- Research environment including commitment of main supervisors and department to facilitate timely completion of the dissertation. Candidates are expected to have a supervisor or dissertation committee of persons who fully understand the depth and breadth of abortion
- Well-elaborated statement on the policy relevance and utility of the research, and
- Budget summary and justification, including clear plan to complete the dissertation within 24 months

Funding

Each Doctoral fellowship award will be up to a maximum of USD 10,000. This amount comprises a completion award of USD 1,000 that is only payable after successful thesis defense. Applicants can budget for a laptop computer and analytical software (e.g. STATA, SPSS, NVivo, Atlas/ti); research/data collection costs; and participation in one regional or international conference or workshop.

Successful candidates will attend **two** week-long training workshops on research methodology and scientific writing. Attending the workshops is mandatory. **The research methodology workshop is tentatively scheduled for mid-June, 2018 while the writing workshop will be held in 2019.** During the workshops, grantees will receive training and mentorship on various aspects of research (design and methods, ethics, data analyses, scientific writing, proposal development and communication of research results, etc.). The working language for these workshops is English. The cost of attending this workshop is directly covered by the program.

How to apply

All application materials must be received by **11:59pm (Nairobi time) on May 15, 2018** in order to be reviewed. Applications must include the following documents to be considered (Applications not meeting these requirements will not be reviewed):

1. Completed application forms (can be downloaded from (<http://aphrc.org/post/8976>). These forms must be submitted electronically either in MS Word format, MS Excel, where applicable.
2. Proof of citizenship or permanent residence in an African country. (e.g. copy of passport or other national identification);
3. Two letters of reference (at least one must come from a faculty member with extensive knowledge of applicant's academic history and performance and must document how the candidate's dissertation research fits into ongoing research programs in the department). Referees' contact information must be provided in the application form.
4. Evidence that the research protocol has undergone review and received approval from an approved ethical review board and the dissertation committee or is under review for the same.

The application form and supporting documents should be submitted in a single email to 2018addrf@aphrc.org

For questions, please contact:

The ADDRf Manager, E-mail: 2018addrf@aphrc.org

Telephone: 254 20 400 1000; Cell: +254 722 205-933 / 720 098-388 / 733 410-102; Fax: +254 20 400 1101



**African Population and
Health Research Center**