

GETSPA

Gender Equitable and Transformative
Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa



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An Africa-wide research project led by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, with the mission to transform the approaches to social policymaking and implementation in post COVID Africa.

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In brief

GETSPA is a multi-country research, policy advocacy, capacity building and network building project with a focus on social policy in Africa, hosted by the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Ghana. GETSPA has a mission to transform -- through research and constituency-building activities -- the cultures of social policy making and implementation in Africa.

The project, which began in January 2021 with funding support from the Open Society Initiatives of Africa, is focused on understanding the value propositions underpinning social policy: the assumptions about the role of the state, markets and society, the interface between social and economic policies, and the socio-economic development outcomes of social policy, particularly in terms of gender, class and spatial inequalities.

The project is designed to learn from the experiences of as many African countries as possible to allow for comparative analysis that will lead to both global and context-specific lessons and recommendations. The project is, therefore, focused on 10 country clusters spanning West Africa, East, Central, North, Southern and Lusophone Africa.

Goal

Our goal is to transform the discourses, approaches to and cultures of social policy making and implementation to establish Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy approaches in Africa.

Aims

- Map the current social policy landscape and its elements, opportunities, and challenges.
- Understand the interface between social and economic policies in African countries.
- Identify positive approaches to social policy in Africa and the global South, explaining why and how they work, and their potential for replicability.
- Design a framework for a reorientation of social policy.
- Grow a new generation of dedicated researchers of social policy.
- Capacitate constituencies to struggle for transformative social policy.
- Engage with policy makers and advocate for social change through transformative social policy.
- Build a repository of documentation on alternative approaches to social policy.



Motivation for GETSPA

Social policies have over the years been often consigned to a residual category in policymaking. However, the recent experience of COVID-19 illustrates the importance of social policies not only to respond to crisis but for the broader, long-term improvement in our human condition.

COVID-19 has shown that, while global crises affect all who live on the planet, both responses and impacts are highly differentiated and exacerbate gender, class and spatial inequalities. All over Africa, working people in rural and urban areas who are engaged in precarious work are facing existential challenges as a result of the contraction of economies and the limitations of state responses. These challenges are gendered. Measures such as lock-down and the closing of workplaces, educational institutions, and places of leisure and social engagements have underlined the importance of living spaces and reproductive activities.

The COVID situation has also brought into sharp relief the gender pay gap, gender segmentation of paid work, and the burdens of reproductive and care work for women. There is also emerging evidence of a significant increase in gender-based violence. Furthermore, gender, class and spatial inequalities in access to education have come to the fore in several ways, including in the threat of increased attrition rates in education. With respect to health, there are risks that spending on reproductive health and other public health challenges will be sacrificed to COVID-19 expenditures. Such a change in focus could have negative impacts on maternal and under-5 mortality and morbidity, and result in a rise in women's paid and unpaid care burdens for the sick as frontline health workers and in their own households.

Responses to the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 from state institutions--such as water and electricity subsidies for poor households, support for businesses and the augmentation of social protection programmes targeting the poor--have exposed the limitations of social policy as currently constituted and created. While scholars of social development have over the years focused largely on social protection programmes or sectors such as education, health, water and sanitation, employment, and housing, much of the discussion has been on questions of access and quality. Even fewer of such studies take on a gender equity perspective and almost none are interested in the economic policy dimensions of social development. These, coupled with a dearth of social policy expertise in Africa, create a compelling need for rethinking social policy and building constituencies that work for change in philosophies and approaches to social policy.

Who we are

GETSPA is implemented by social development scholars from over 30 countries, committed to work together towards gender equitable and transformative social policy for Africa's development. The research team also comprises two post-doctoral fellows who are currently engaged in independent research based on the key questions of the Project.

The day-to-day management of the project is carried out by the IAS-based GETSPA secretariat, with the strategic oversight support of the advisory committee, and the technical advice of the technical committee.

Researchers are grouped into country clusters based on geographical contiguity.

Country Clusters

WEST AFRICA

- Ghana. Nigeria
- Cote d'Ivoire. Benin. Burkina Faso
- Senegal. Mali. Mauritania
- Guinea. Sierra Leone. Liberia (Mano River)

EAST AFRICA

- Kenya. Rwanda. Tanzania. Uganda
- Ethiopia. Sudan. Djibouti (Horn of Africa)

CENTRAL AFRICA

- Congo DRC. Gabon. Cameroon

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- South Africa. Mauritius. Zambia

NORTH AFRICA

- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Egypt

LUSOPHONE AFRICA

- Angola. Mozambique. Cape Verde. Guinea Bissau

Contact us

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