



Child Poverty and Social Protection in Western and Central Africa

International workshop organised by UNICEF WCARO (Western and Central Africa Regional Office), the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty – CROP (ISSC/UiB), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Equity for Children

Abuja, Nigeria, 23-25 May 2016

CALL FOR PAPERS

According to a path-breaking study commissioned by UNICEF in 2003, child poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (in particular in Western and Central Africa) was extremely high. Fortunately, the situation has since improved in many countries. This is in part due to the expansion of social protection. However, given the rate of population growth, the decline is too low to make a dent in the total number of children living in poverty, contrary to the trend of adult poverty. It also seems that the reduction in child poverty has occurred in areas and among groups that are relatively close to those who are better off. Thus, inequalities, social exclusion, and the depth of poverty might have increased. Moreover, this takes place in a context where social protection is still limited and fragmented in most countries.

This workshop will seek to further understand the trends of child poverty, its distribution, and how social protection has contributed, or not, to its decline in Western and Central Africa during the last 10-15 years. It will also explore the types and limitations of social protection in the region, as well as its accomplishments. Other policies that can help reduce child poverty, improve well-being, and address inequities will be investigated.

The main objective of the workshop is to engender dialogue among academics, policy-makers, and civil society representatives about policies to expand social protection and eliminate child poverty in Western and Central Africa.

Papers are invited to answer the following questions for a given country or comparing across countries:

- What changes in the incidence, depth, and distribution (geographically or among socio-economic groups) of child poverty have been observed in recent years? Have inequalities and ethnic discrimination played a role in these trends? And what has been the impact of emergencies (e.g. the Ebola epidemic, floods/drought or armed conflicts) on the incidence and depth child poverty?
- Are trends similar across the different dimensions of child poverty? How sensitive are these trends to adjustments in the deprivation thresholds in these dimensions?
- Which policies have demonstrably contributed to (or hindered) these trends? What role has social protection played in reducing child poverty?
- What is the state of social protection in Western and Central African countries and how has it evolved?
- What is the political economy of social protection in Western and Central African countries?
- What lessons can be learned for successful regional integration? What should be key elements / instruments for a Regional Social Protection Policy?

Papers addressing other similar and pertinent questions about the trends, distribution, and depth of child poverty and social protection policies, including experiences from other regions, would also be welcome.

Selected participants will engage actively in presentations and discussions of all papers throughout the workshop. The presentations can be made in any of the ECOWAS official languages. After the workshop, participants should be willing to edit their paper with a view to publication. Participants are responsible for their own travel expenses and medical insurance. There will be support to cover room and board during the event. A limited number of travel subsidies are available. For co-authored papers, only one author may apply for grants.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS: 31 January 2016

The abstract must not exceed 500 words (one page) and must include: the title of the proposed paper, a presentation of the subject, the central argument, the main research questions and/or hypotheses, and key references. A CV no longer than one page must also be submitted, clearly indicating the applicant's name, title, nationality and contact information, as well as a list of recent publications. The **abstract** and **CV** must be sent by email to the following address: crop@uib.no. Submissions exceeding two pages will not be considered. The Academic Selection Committee will notify accepted participants of their selection in **February 2016** and provide guidelines for the format of the final paper to be submitted by **1 May 2016**.