



# CALL FOR PAPERS

## International Conference of the Conflict Research Network West Africa (CORN West Africa)

### Social Protection and Economic Uncertainties in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts



IPCR

Abuja, Nigeria 8-9 November 2023

CALL FOR PAPERS

The second decade of the 21st century has witnessed a rapid and remarkable proliferation of social protection measures across the world, particularly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic – when governments introduced and implemented 3,333 social protection measures between March 2020 to May 2021 across 222 countries or territories (International Labour Organisation, 2021). This proliferation has been attributed to the increased recognition that social protection contributes to achieving essential development goals (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2009; Hulme & Barrientos, 2008). Hence, social protection has become a popular response measure to the socio-economic outcomes of COVID-19 and the post-pandemic economic crisis that followed (Gerard, et al, 2020), as well as the rising impacts of climate change. In spite of this, social protection provision, coverage and expansion and systems development have lagged in fragile and conflict affected settings where the loss of lives, properties and livelihoods have created new forms of vulnerabilities, deprivation and social exclusion and social protection is particularly critically needed.

In Africa, social protection has emerged as a capstone instrument in the African developmental agenda since the development of the 2008 African Union’s Social Policy Framework, which aims to make social protection a central plank of development on the continent. Through this framework and others that have followed over the years, African governments have committed to providing and expanding social protection programmes as a response to reducing poverty, vulnerability and ensuring sustainable development. As such, a myriad of social protection programmes some of which include food subsidies, old age pensions, social cash transfers, and school feeding programmes have been designed, developed and implemented in various countries to protect the poor and vulnerable in difficult times.

In the last decade, Nigeria has made some significant progress in developing its social protection sector. Recent economic development policies introduced by government at the federal level have led to more socio-economic and political pressures in the country, thereby intensifying the demand for social protection measures by civil society organisations (CSOs). However, the demand for social protection is not new; neither is social protection a new concept in Nigeria’s policy arena. Social protection has long existed in the country in the formal sector as social insurance programmes (i.e. pension), however the other pillars of a social protection (i.e. social assistance and labour market interventions) received less attention. The aftermath of the financial crisis in the late 1970s prompted by the oil-glut, debits and structural adjustment programme (SAP) heralded the visibility of social protection in the country with the introduction of measures such as subsidy. This social protection measure was an attempt in the 1980s to mitigate the effects of SAP. In addition, the government introduced various social programmes at state and local levels to alleviate poverty. However, it was the return to civil rule in 1999 that sparked a new era for social protection programmes as part of the so-called “dividend of democracy”. More recently, the government has implemented an array of social assistance programmes such as cash transfers and school feeding.

Despite this trend in the development of social protection programmes across the country, the majority of citizens still live in extreme economic precarity. The existence of widespread high levels of economic precarity and the limited impacts of social protection responses in the country can be attributed to the prevalence of violent conflicts, climate change and economic uncertainties.



# CALL FOR PAPERS

While social protection was primarily able to counteract some of the effects, it seems not to be able to serve as a catalyst to reduce vulnerability or build resilience of individuals and communities in response to these covariate shocks. This is also the reality in other fragile and conflict contexts where social protection programmes are implemented. This reality calls for further empirical research and theoretical reflections on social protection programmes in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

The Conflict Research Network West Africa (CORN West Africa), in partnership with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), will host a conference themed, **Social Protection and Economic Uncertainties in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts**. The conference provides an opportunity for scholars, researchers, development practitioners and policy makers to critically reflect on social protection in fragile and conflict affected societies. Scholars, researchers and practitioners are invited to submit papers and posters that provide nuanced analysis of social protection as an effective response to violent conflicts, climate change, peacebuilding and economic uncertainties. In particular, the conference provides an opportunity for scholars and researchers to critically reflect on social protection policies and practice and unpack issues such as the framework of coordination among the different levels of governments, between government and non-governmental stakeholders, challenges of coordination among the different stakeholders, inclusivity and exclusivity in the selection of beneficiaries, politicisation of social protection packages, implementation of social protection programmes in hard to reach communities, unintended consequences of social protection in communities, the impact of social protection on power relations, and corruption in the implementation of social protection programmes. While the conference places emphasis on Nigeria, it welcomes submissions from other fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Paper proposals can address, but not limited to, the following questions:

- \* **What are the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of social protection? To what extent does social protection, as defined by neoliberal institutions, reflect the communal response to vulnerabilities in African contexts? How can we reimagine social protection in context of communal life in Africa?**
- \* **What is the political economy of social protection in fragile and conflict affected societies? How does social protection affect power relations? How does patronage politics shape social protection programmes in fragile and conflict-affected societies? How has neopatrimonialism and limited institutional capacity of the state impacted the rollout of social protection programmes? What are the impacts of social protection programmes on individuals, families and communities in Nigeria and global south?**
- \* **What are the outcomes of social protection programmes in conflict affected communities? How can social protection programmes support the reintegration of ex-combatants and internally displaced persons (IDPs)? To what extent has social protection programmes reinforced or reduced violent conflicts? Have social protection programmes contributed to peacebuilding in Nigeria and global south?**
- \* **Under what conditions can social protection programmes address the economic vulnerabilities caused by the removal of fuel subsidies and liberalization of the Nigerian currency? What are the coping mechanisms that exists outside state sponsored social protection programmes?**
- \* **Who are the main actors in Nigeria and global south's social protection landscape? What is the nature of interactions between the policy actors in Nigeria and global south's social protection landscape? What is the nature of coordination and coherence between different social protection actors and programmes in Nigeria and other fragile and conflict-affected societies?**
- \* **To what extent are social protection programmes in Nigeria and global south gender sensitive? How has social protection programmes improved the place of women in conflict affected communities? Does social protection programmes address gender-based violence in Nigeria and other fragile and conflict-affected societies?**

# CALL FOR PAPERS

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please submit an extended abstract of no more than 1000 words to the conference organizers at [conference@cornwestafrica.org](mailto:conference@cornwestafrica.org). The abstract should clearly state the research question(s), methodology, and main arguments of the proposed paper.

## VENUE

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja, Nigeria

## KEY DATES

**Deadline for Submission of Abstract:**

30th August, 2023

**Deadline for Submission of full papers:**

30th October, 2023

**Conference Date:**

8th and 9th November, 2023

## CONFERENCE FEE

**Participants from NGO and Development Sector:**

N50,000

**Nigerian Academia:**

N20,000

**Postgraduate Students:**

N10,000

**International Participants:**

\$100

## CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

Dr. Saheed Owonikoko, Moddibo Adama University, Yola – Co Chair

Dr. Nenpo Sarah Gowon Adelabu, University of Jos, Jos - Co Chair

## INQUIRIES

For more information, send an email to the organisers: [info@cornwestafrica.org](mailto:info@cornwestafrica.org)