



Call for Proposals

Youth and Democratic Governance in Africa

About the Africa Regional Office

The Africa Regional Office of Open Society Foundations (AfRO) works alongside OSF's four regional foundations and fourteen thematic programs. AfRO conducts programmatic work which complements other programs and takes the lead on advocacy and research at regional and continental level.

The Africa Regional Office works in three ways: responding to challenges impeding Africa's political and economic progress, for which a continental approach is relevant; complementing and maximizing the Open Society Foundations' work in Africa; and enabling the OSF regional foundations to respond to unanticipated developments and opportunities on the continent.

AfRO's youth programming

AfRO's 2017-2020 strategy seeks to support the building of regional and continental platforms which can assist youth activists to strategically organize and make their voices heard on issues of interest to the youth demographic. The intended ripple effect of this work is to have the increased participation and input of young people in the national, regional and continental discourse on employment and entrepreneurship, education and skills development, human rights and governance.

Progress and Challenges of Democracy in Africa

Democracy in Africa today faces several critical challenges:

- a. *Informal Power versus formal power:* Many elections in Africa are marred by unofficial groups, individuals, foreign interests and commercial companies which play a hidden role in election processes in order to gain undue influence in the governance of countries.
- b. *Violence:* Elections in many African countries are marred by violence. The zero-sum nature of elections and power makes political competition a desperate and deadly affair.
- c. *Intolerance and Exclusion:* In many African countries, constituencies are almost exclusively mobilized on the basis of ethnic prejudice, fear of exclusion and victimization. Voting has been reduced to tribal arithmetic. A casual audit of the ethnicities of senior civil service, directors of successful public contracting companies and awardees to lucrative licenses in historical governments indicates that the function of state is restricted to the ethnicity/ies that win an election.

Objective

This concept calls for proposals in furthering accountable, inclusive and responsive democracies in our respective countries and in Africa as a whole. We propose partnering in the following areas:

1. Regional and Sub-regional solidarity and action on specific matters: this may entail bringing regional and continental political pressure to bear on issues that national actions have not borne adequate progress. This may include issues such as violations of human rights including torture, repression, forced migration, dispossession and sexual violence;
2. Engaging with African political leaders and institutions with the aim of holding them to the commitments they have made to support youth through regional and continental instruments such as the African Youth Charter, Agenda 2063, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) et cetera.
3. Building and maintaining youth social movements: this may entail mobilisation of youth and communities on specific national or local issues of strategic impact. For example:
 - Action for economic policies that support incomes and livelihoods for the youth;
 - Action for accountability by security institutions for excesses against youth and their communities;
 - Action for inclusion in democratic processes such as development and economic planning, public contracting, public employment, public services delivery, elections, public contracting and public employment ;
 - Action that effectively challenges state capture by unofficial groups, individuals, foreign interests and commercial companies.
4. Protection and responses to the backlash faced by youth activists following their civic engagement;
5. Inclusive democracies: continental and sub-regional research in understanding the nature, manifestation and impact of exclusion at national level. The analysis of exclusion can be on the basis of identity/ethnicity, geographical, gender, age and economic status. It shall be useful to understand the policy, frameworks, policies, institutions and players that foment and benefit from exclusion.

Proposed Duration

- 4 Months for research
- 24 months of Action

Funding priority

This year, AfRO will award grants of between USD 30,000 and USD \$60,000 each, to selected organizations working at the intersection of youth and democratic governance. Selected organizations will demonstrate use of creative tools to enhance youth momentum and engagement on issues of interest to them. Priority will be given to projects whose planned activities are led by, and impact young people. The emphasis will

be placed on projects which transcend national, cultural, gender, economic, language barriers and provide the rural and urban young people from across different African countries with the opportunity to learn from each other and effect meaningful social change on the continent.

Eligibility criteria

This call is only open to civil society organizations whose mandate covers youth-related interventions. A past record of work with young people in Africa will be required.

Organizations are invited to submit a one page summary of their idea, a detailed proposal and budget.

Submission

All documents should be submitted to odieng@osiwa.org and fasuke@osiea.org by **July 5, 2019.**