

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR THE ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH SCIENTIFIC PANEL

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Union for African Population Studies (UAPS) is an African professional network for population scientists, practitioners, and policymakers dedicated to the advancement of population and development issues in Africa. In line with its mission to promote evidence-based population and development policies and programs, UAPS has established several thematic panels to facilitate knowledge generation, capacity strengthening, and policy engagement in key thematic areas.

The Adolescent and Youth Scientific Panel is one of these scientific panels, which will be established to catalyze research, policy dialogue, and advocacy focused on Africa's growing adolescent and youth population. With over 60% of the population under the age of 25, investing in adolescents and youth is critical for Africa's sustainable development and demographic dividend.

The Panel will serve as a knowledge and coordination hub ensuring that adolescent and youth perspectives are systematically embedded in broader population and development discourses, evidence generation, and policy recommendations. As such, this panel is positioned at the core of UAPS's scientific ecosystem. It will play a cross-cutting and integrative role, linking and amplifying the work of other UAPS panels by addressing adolescent and youth dimensions in each domain.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Adolescent and Youth Thematic Panel is to provide intellectual leadership, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and support the use of evidence to inform programs and policies that affect adolescents and youth in Africa.

- Promote research and knowledge generation on the health, education, employment, rights, climate change and wellbeing of adolescents and youth.
- Foster dialogue between researchers, youth-led organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders to influence youth-centered policies and programs.
- Support the development and dissemination of policy-relevant research on emerging adolescent and youth issues (e.g., SRHR, digital inclusion, mental health, climate change).
- Build the capacity of early-career researchers and youth scholars in adolescent and youth-focused research.
- Facilitate regional and continental collaboration on adolescent and youth issues.
- Organize knowledge-sharing events (e.g., webinars, panel discussions, conference sessions) on topics relevant to youth development and the demographic dividend.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Panel will focus on, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- a) **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**
 - Examine access to comprehensive SRHR services for adolescents and young people, including contraception, safe abortion (where legal), menstrual health, and prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
 - Explore sociocultural, gender, legal, and economic barriers to SRHR access and utilization.

- Investigate adolescent pregnancy, early marriage, and their impact on health, education, economic opportunity, and long-term wellbeing.
- Promote rights-based and gender-responsive SRHR interventions.

b) Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing

- Analyze the prevalence, risk factors, and protective factors for mental health conditions among adolescents and youth.
- Examine the effects of violence, conflict, social media, peer pressure, academic stress, and substance use on mental health.
- Assess the availability, accessibility, and quality of adolescent- and youth-friendly mental health and psychosocial support services.
- Explore stigma reduction, care-seeking behaviors, and integration of mental health into primary and school-based care.

c) Health Systems and Adolescent-Friendly Services

- Evaluate the capacity of health systems to deliver equitable, youth-friendly, and integrated services across health domains.
- Promote innovative models of service delivery (e.g., digital health, mobile outreach, school-based health services) that are tailored to adolescent needs.
- Strengthen multisectoral and community-based approaches to adolescent and youth health.
- Assess policy coherence and financing mechanisms that support adolescent health services.

d) Education, Skills, and School Health

- Investigate barriers to school attendance, retention, and completion among adolescents, particularly girls and vulnerable populations.
- Examine the integration of life skills in formal and informal education systems.
- Explore linkages between education, mental health, SRHR, and future employment outcomes.
- Assess the effectiveness of school-based health, nutrition, and wellbeing programs.

e) Employment, Livelihoods, and Economic Empowerment

- Explore the transitions from school to work, and the challenges faced by young people in accessing decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Assess the impact of vocational training, digital skills development, and financial inclusion on youth livelihoods.
- Investigate gender disparities in employment and the economic consequences of early marriage and childbearing.
- Promote social protection programs and labor market policies responsive to youth needs.

f) Climate Change, Environmental Health, and Resilience

- Analyze the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on adolescent health and livelihoods.
- Examine youth vulnerability to climate-related risks such as displacement, food insecurity, and waterborne diseases.
- Promote youth-led climate action, resilience building, and environmental justice initiatives.
- Explore the integration of climate adaptation in health, education, and employment policies affecting young people.

g) Health Equity, Inclusion, and Vulnerability

- Assess health and wellbeing disparities among adolescents based on gender, geography, disability, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation.
- Focus on marginalized groups including street youth, young people living with HIV, adolescent mothers, , and those in humanitarian settings.
- Support equity-focused policies and programs that leave no young person behind.

- Promote inclusive service delivery and intersectional analysis of youth vulnerabilities.

h) Youth Engagement, Leadership, and Governance

- Explore the role of adolescents and young people in shaping policies, programs, and research affecting their lives.
- Document models of youth-led advocacy, peer education, and social accountability initiatives.
- Strengthen mechanisms for meaningful youth participation in decision-making at local, national, and regional levels.
- Promote youth leadership in climate action, peacebuilding, and civic engagement.

i) Data, Research, and Evidence Translation

- Promote the generation and use of age- and sex-disaggregated data and youth-relevant indicators across sectors.
- Encourage interdisciplinary, participatory, and implementation research that informs responsive policies and programs.
- Support data-driven advocacy and effective knowledge translation to influence public discourse and decision-making.
- Build capacity for youth-centered monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems.

DURATION OF THE PANEL

- **Start and End Dates:** The panel's work will officially commence upon the appointment of its members and the first organizational meeting. The panel will be active for 4 years.
- **Extension/Review:** If the panel needs more time to complete its objectives, an extension can be requested with agreement from the panel members and relevant stakeholders. The request should include a clear rationale and updated deliverables. A formal review will occur after **12 months** to assess progress, gather stakeholder input, and potentially adjust the panel's mandate, extend its duration, or revise its objectives.

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY AND COMPOSITION

The Panel shall be composed of experts from diverse disciplines and regions of Africa with experience in adolescent and youth issues, including:

- Academics and researchers with a track record of work on adolescent and youth issues.
- Policy and program practitioners involved in the design or implementation of youth-related interventions.
- Representatives of youth-led and youth-serving organizations, ensuring meaningful youth participation.
- Development partners and donors supporting adolescent and youth programming in Africa.
- Other stakeholders, such as journalists, educators, and innovators, who contribute to youth development

Members should meet the following criteria:

- Experience and expertise in the above thematic areas.
- A **paid-up member of UAPS**
- Capacity to dedicate at **least eight (8) hours per week** to the panel.
- Demonstrated ability to **fundraise** for panel activities.
- Demonstrated ability to speak and write English. French will be an added advantage.

Members will be selected based on their expertise, experience, and contribution to the fields related to adolescent and youth health and will serve for a **two-year renewable term**.

Early career researchers and youth leaders are especially encouraged to apply.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PANEL MEMBERS

Panel members are expected to:

- **Contribute to the development of research papers** and policy briefs
- **Organize and attend panel meetings** and events to discussions on key findings on reports, and recommendations.
- **Collaborate with other experts** to produce interdisciplinary solutions
- **Participate in public outreach efforts**, including conferences, webinars, and consultations, to disseminate findings and promote awareness.
- **Review and provide feedback** on reports, policy recommendations, and strategic plans developed by the panel.

STRUCTURE AND MEETINGS

The panel will consist of five members in addition to the Chair and Vice-chair. The panel will meet **regularly**, either virtually or in-person, to discuss progress, review research outputs, and provide strategic direction. Ad-hoc meetings may be convened as needed for special tasks or consultations. A **Chair** and **Vice-Chair** will be elected from the panel members to oversee the activities of the group, with support from the **Secretariat** to oversee logistics and communication.

DELIVERABLES

The expected deliverables of the panel include:

- **Policy briefs** with actionable recommendations for governments, international organizations, and NGOs.
- **Publications** in peer-reviewed journals such as the Journal for African Population Studies ([JAPS](#)), conferences, and other forums to disseminate research outcomes.
- **Capacity-strengthening** activities targeting youth researchers
- **Support** the identification of youth-focused funding opportunities and collaborative projects.
- **Serve** as ambassadors of UAPS in their respective networks to promote the Panel's work.

BUDGET AND RESOURCES

The Panel is expected to fundraise and operate with funding provided by the **sponsoring organizations**, including government agencies, international institutions, and private sector partners. The Secretariat will provide seed money for some activities of the panel. A detailed budget for panel activities, including meetings, research, publications, and outreach efforts, will be developed, and approved annually.

REPORTING

The panel will provide regular progress reports to the Secretariat detailing activities, achievements, and impact.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Interested individuals who wish to join the **Adolescent and Youth Scientific Panel** must submit the following:

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):**
A two-page CV detailing educational background, relevant professional experience, and any key publications or projects in adolescent and youth health, public health, SRHR, mental health, or related areas.
- **Statement of Interest (1 page):**
A brief statement outlining your motivation for joining the panel, relevant experience in adolescent and youth health, and your preferred role (e.g., Chair, Vice-Chair, or Member).
- **Relevant Publications or Projects:**
Links or copies of selected publications, research outputs, or documented interventions demonstrating your expertise in adolescent and youth health, health systems, or health equity.
- **Letters of Recommendation (Optional):**
One or two letters from colleagues, mentors, or supervisors attesting to your qualifications and contributions to the field of adolescent and youth health, research, or policy.
- **Proposed Contribution (1 page):**
A short outline of how you plan to contribute to the panel's objectives. Please highlight any specific technical areas or skills you would bring (e.g., youth engagement, qualitative research, monitoring and evaluation, mental health, policy advocacy, etc.).
- **Availability and Commitment:**
A brief statement confirming your availability to participate in panel activities, including quarterly virtual meetings, collaborative research, webinars, and strategic outreach. Kindly indicate your willingness to serve a two-year renewable term.

Please submit the above documents in **one PDF file** to uaps@uaps-uepa.org

Deadline for applications: **midnight (GMT) 12/09/2025**

****Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.**

We look forward to receiving your application and working together to address adolescent and youth health issues on the African continent.

Contact the Secretariat via email at uaps@uaps-uepa.org if you have any questions.