



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Centre for Human Rights  
Faculty of Law

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### STUDY ON CHILDREN'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS IN AFRICA

19 April 2021

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#### Background

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter or Charter) was adopted 31 years ago. To date, 50 countries have ratified the African Children's Charter, which demonstrates a growing commitment to the respect, protection and promotion of the rights of children. There is no doubt that the Charter has contributed immensely to the development of standards and practice related to children in the region.

One of the areas in which the Charter has made this contribution is in relation to the socio-economic rights (SERs) of children. The Charter approaches this category of rights in a manner that is distinguishable from that of global treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN Children's Convention). Specifically, the Charter does not prescribe a different standard for the implementation of SERs on the basis of availability of resources. Instead, the Charter calls on states parties to take legislative and other measures to implement all its provisions. This approach of the Charter has been lauded as one of its strengths, noting in particular the common misconception that socio-economic rights are necessarily more expensive to implement than other categories of rights.

Given the passage of time since the adoption of the Charter, and the numerous jurisprudential and academic interpretations thereof that have emerged during the period, it is imperative to review the contribution of the Charter to the area of children's rights, while also reflecting on emerging issues on SERs to which the Charter may need to respond in the future.

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## **Rationale**

Following soon after the commemoration of 30 years since the adoption of the Charter, the Centre seeks to review the contribution of the Charter to the SERs discourse, and progress made by African countries towards the realisation of the SERs of children in Africa since its adoption. The study will also explore the sufficiency of the Charter to respond to emerging issues related to SERs in the near future.

## **Scope of submissions**

The Centre invites papers on the SERs of children in Africa, including on the following topics:

- Focus on traditional SERs such as health, education, adequate standard of living, water and sanitation, food and nutrition, housing, social protection, child labour and child work.
- The rights of children in relation to the environment, including a focus on the impact of climate change.
- Business and children's rights, including standard setting and enforcement of relevant norms in the African region.
- Budgeting for children's rights.
- Development frameworks and children's rights including the potential contribution of various frameworks to children's rights in the future.
- Litigation and enforcement of SERs, including a focus on strategies, opportunities and challenges relating to the use of the individual complaints mechanism under the Charter.
- Bridging perspectives on socio-economic issues of children from other disciplines including public health, psychology, social work, anthropology, amongst others, with children's rights.
- Technology and children's rights particularly on the interaction of children's rights with the fourth industrial evolution.
- SERs of specific groups of children, such as migrants, children with disabilities, girls, children in conflict situations etc.
- Comparative country studies, highlighting comparable approaches and standards in the selected countries

## **Methodology**

Submissions should ideally be based on a selected right or area listed in the scope above and should document the development of related standards from the Charter, interpretative instruments and literature, identify and analyse key issues that may have arisen in the implementation of that particular article/subject area, and identify any emerging concerns or opportunities for future consideration in relation to the right/subject area.

The preferred methodology for submissions is a human rights-based analysis, paying particular attention to the relevant authoritative standards at the regional and global levels. Cross-disciplinary and comparative methodology may also be applied. Abstracts should indicate that an analytical (rather than a descriptive) approach would be used.

A set of more specific guiding questions will be shared with researchers whose abstracts are selected.

The full papers should be between 8,000 – 10,000 words, presented in accordance with the Pretoria University Law Press referencing style, available [here](#) . Full papers will have to be in line with academic research and writing conventions.

### **Timelines**

- Abstracts should be submitted by 30 April 2021.
- Selected contributors will be notified by 4 May 2021.
- Full papers will be due on 1 June 2021.

### **Publication**

All full submissions will be subjected to a peer review process. Papers accepted after the review will be considered for publication in an edited volume of selected papers, intended for publication in 2021.

### **Payment**

Authors whose full drafts are selected for publication will be entitled to a modest compensation for their submission.

### **Submission of applications**

Abstracts of between 350 and 500 words may be submitted to Dr. Elvis Fokala at [elvis.fokala@up.ac.za](mailto:elvis.fokala@up.ac.za) copying Dr. Nkatha Murungi at [nkatha.murungi@up.ac.za](mailto:nkatha.murungi@up.ac.za), by 30 April 2021.

The abstract should indicate the proposed thematic focus and methodology to be used for the paper; and should highlight the contribution to scholarship that the proposed paper would make. Abstracts should contain the name and contact details, as well as a brief biographical sketch, of the author(s)

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For more information, please contact:

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