

## **Terms of Reference (ToR)**

### **Principal Investigators (PIs)**

#### **I. Introduction**

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan pan-African, not-for-profit organization established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently engaged in more than 26 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of women and men.

PASGR is implementing a multinational policy and practice-oriented research programme on African Youth pathways to Resilience and Systems change (AYPRoS) in ten (10) African countries namely; Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Benin, Togo and Cote d'Ivoire. This research will build up on a recently concluded the African Youth and Resilience (AYAR)<sup>1</sup> project, which was implemented across seven African countries. The main objective of the programme is to explore factors that drive youth resilience and how their lived experiences, voice and agency, and perceptions on sustainability and system change can be effectual in creating responsive programs, policies and practices, and unravelling credible insights to promote effective and sustainable youth access to dignified and fulfilling work.

Youth unemployment across Africa is a huge problem with far-reaching societal and global ramifications. Despite significant research on youth unemployment in Africa, few studies have explored the challenges of accessing dignified and fulfilling work. There is also limited research on systemic barriers, youth voices, agency, and resilience—particularly among young women and men from disadvantaged backgrounds, including refugees and displaced persons (RDPs), people with disabilities (PWDs), and youth in informality (both in the informal economy and informal settlements)—to address critical equity and social justice gaps and inspire hope for better youth employment opportunities in Africa.

To address the existing research gaps, PASGR is looking for country-based PIs in each of the programme's countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The African Youth and Resilience (AYAR) project, implemented across seven countries between 2021 and 2024, explored Africa's young women and men's aspirations, their perspectives on D&F work, and the journey towards success and achieving future lives including how they utilize resilience and adaptability. Findings are documented in publications accessible from <https://www.utafitisera.pasgr.org/publications/>

## II. Research Goal and Methodology

The programme will be anchored on the **Utafiti Sera approach**<sup>2</sup>– PASGRs' innovative research-to-policy framework that supports meaningful engagement of multiple stakeholders in the research process and provide safe spaces for stakeholder engagements and knowledge exchange on the national policy issue of interest. The Utafiti Sera framework provides platforms for networking among stakeholders thereby removing traditional barriers between researchers, policy makers, communities, and beneficiaries. Through establishment of Country Utafiti Sera Houses<sup>3</sup>, young people, particularly women, RDPs and PWDs will be accorded the opportunity to contribute to shaping the research direction and amplify their voices.

### a) Research objectives

The overall aim of this research is to contribute to improved macro-level employment and sustainable entrepreneurships, leading to accelerated growth and improved livelihoods for young women and men especially the marginalized groups comprising PWDs, RDPs and youth in informality, as a means of relieving poverty. The research programme will be guided by the following objectives;

- i. To understand how youth voice and agency can either impede or accelerate their journey to dignified and fulfilling work across sectors.
- ii. To analyze how perceptions of risk by individual and group (including RDPs and PWDs, youth in informality) across different age brackets (15-24, 25-35 years old) and contexts determine the level of preparedness to survive, cope and thrive against myriad socio-economic, religious, political and environmental threats.
- iii. To understand the obstacles faced by secondary youth in work (youth working in Mastercard Foundation-supported enterprises) and how they can be supported to thrive.
- iv. To explore young people's perception and other system stakeholders on what sustainability and systems change, and their vision of a system that has transformed, including the type of system changes needed to achieve dignified and fulfilling work.
- v. To foster a community of practice of young researchers on youth employment through tailored mentorship programs and advanced training to hone their research skills and technical capacities for sustained knowledge generation to tackle emerging policy and practice related challenges of youth employment in Africa.

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<sup>2</sup> Read more about Utafiti Sera and its achievements <https://www.utafitiserasera.pasgr.org/>

<sup>3</sup> The AYAR project supported the establishment of Utafiti Sera Houses at country levels with 7 vibrant and active platforms in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. These platforms will be utilised for convening stakeholders, including young women, RDPs and PWDs to deliberate on the proposed research process.

## b) Research methodology

The research study will employ an interdisciplinary, mixed-methods research strategy, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A key aspect of this strategy will be the **youth-led participatory approach** (that includes youth categories of interest i.e. RDPs, PWDs, youth in formalities and young women and men), which is centred on listening to the voices and narratives of different categories of youth. However, in recognising the importance of capturing subjective insights and elevating youth voices, as well as lived experiences of the youth, more qualitative data shall be used, focusing more on young women, whose unique experiences and insights will significantly contribute to the research. The qualitative methodology will utilize a **grounded theory**<sup>4</sup> and **phenomenological**<sup>5</sup> approach to study and unravel meanings of young people's perceptions, lived experiences, interactions and then interpret them to draw generalizable insights and patterns. Key informants' interviews (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) will be applied for generation of qualitative data while cross-sectional surveys will be employed in the quantitative data collection.

The Principal Investigator(s) in collaboration with Programme Implementation Team (PIT) will develop the research instruments (data collection tools and sampling techniques) that will be employed by the research study.

In collaboration with PIT, the country Principal Investigator(s) supported by the Research Associates (RAs) will adopt a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) lens in reviewing existing policies on youth employment in the target countries with a focus on identifying the gaps and proposing suggestions for improvement. It will also be instrumental in mapping of stakeholders with a specific focus on youth employment in Africa especially young women, PWDs, RDPs and youth in informality in the target countries. The PEA approach is much preferred for its utility in conducting an in-depth analysis of the social, political, economic, and cultural underpinnings and principles that govern youth employment in Africa, especially in the target countries.

This participatory approach is recognised because it enables the identification of opportunities and barriers, as well as strategies for overcoming those barriers. PEA provides knowledge that may be used to mobilise social groups, including active groups, to demand improved services from their government and how informal local institutions influence development. The PEA will allow the mapping of the key stakeholders that will be incorporated in the entire research process in line with the Utafiti Sera approach. The approach will allow PASGR to establish the Community of Practice (CoP) based on the identified key stakeholders as well as walk with them in the entire period of the research including the uptake phase.

Findings and recommendations from the PEA and synthesis of existing evidence from the review of policies will serve as a foundation to develop evidence-based strategies

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<sup>4</sup> Oktay, J. S. (2012). Grounded theory. Oxford University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Peggy M. Delmas, Rachel L. Giles (2023), *Qualitative, Multimethod, and Mixed Methods Research in International Encyclopedia of Education (Fourth Edition)*, 2023

aimed at enabling employment creation and sustainable entrepreneurships. This will lead to accelerated growth and improved livelihoods for young women and men especially the marginalized groups comprising PWDs, RDPs and youth in informality, as a means of relieving poverty. Additionally, the findings from these studies will be clearly documented, and their implications will be utilized to engage policymakers and practitioners in the youth ecosystem.

### **III. Scope of work**

The principal investigator will be responsible for;

1. Conducting a comprehensive review of the existing policies and regulations in on African youth employment in the target countries with a focus on identifying the gaps and proposing suggestions for improvement and prepare a comprehensive PEA report in each country.
2. Stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify key stakeholders and institutions involved in development and implementation of youth-related policies, programmes in the target countries.
3. Systems and Structure Analysis: Analyze the systems and structures in the country that impact youth employment (examine the interconnected policies, institutions, and socio-economic conditions that influence youth employment in a given country), with a focus on identifying factors that contribute to or hinder youth unemployment.
4. Conducting literature review to assess existing knowledge on youth employment, systems change, and resilience frameworks.
5. Collaborating with PIT to develop research design (both qualitative and quantitative research methodology).
6. Seeking ethical approvals from the relevant authorities in the country.
7. Training of the field research team on data collections tools.
8. Conducting in-depth qualitative research and quantitative data collection, data cleaning and analysis.
9. Drafting reports and all knowledge sharing products-policy briefs, blogs, journal articles and infographics in collaboration with RAs: Synthesizing findings into a final research report, including evidence-based recommendations to inform policy discussions and actions to addressing youth employ in Africa.
10. Capacity strengthening of research assistants (RAs).
11. Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy to actively involve key stakeholders in the process. Plan individual meetings with stakeholders and extend invitations to the 'Utafiti House' for informed discussions on policy gaps related to youth employment in the country.
12. Organizing all the project convenings in the county (inception, training research team, validation of research methodology, validation of findings and dissemination).

13. Disseminating the research findings through workshops, policy dialogues and conferences.

#### **IV. Timeline**

The PIs will work remotely from their home countries with periodic travel for stakeholder consultations and dissemination events. The PIs will be engaged throughout the program lifecycle i.e. April 2025 to December 2027. The detailed timeline for the various tasks will be mutually agreed upon between the selected country research team and the programme implementation team. Flexibility in setting the timeline will ensure that the assessment process is well-paced and efficient, accommodating any unforeseen challenges or adjustments required during the project implementation phase. Moreover, regular communication and progress update reports between the consultant and the project team will be essential to ensure smooth coordination and adherence to the agreed timeline.

#### **V. Qualifications and expertise for the Principal Investigator**

- 1) A PhD degree in social sciences, economics, development studies, or a related field.
- 2) At least 10 years of proven experience in conducting youth employment research and labour market analysis in Africa or any related thematic areas.
- 3) At least five years of proven experience in political economy analysis, policy analysis and high-level policy advice relating to youth employment in Africa.
- 4) Strong qualitative and quantitative research skills, including experience with participatory youth-led methods.
- 5) Demonstrated experience in working effectively with diverse stakeholders, including young women and men, government agencies, policy makers, CSOs, development partners and community organizations.
- 6) Excellent report writing and communication skills.
- 7) Fluent in English and/or French. For Senegal, Togo, Benin and Cote d'Ivoire, the candidate should be fluent in both English and French, written and oral.
- 8) Ability to deliver high-quality outputs within the specified timeframe will be crucial for the successful candidate.
- 9) Ability to propose evidence-based interventions and strategies that can contribute to improving employment among young women and men, especially RDPs, PWDs and youth in informality.
- 10) Familiarity with the African context and youth unemployment issues.
- 11) Experience in working with RDPs, PWDs and young women and men in informality will be added advantage.

## **Application process**

Interested candidates for the role of Principal Investigator (PI) are required to submit an application or expression of interest for this position. Applications should include:

- A CV/resume, including contact information.
- A cover letter explaining their interest in the position, and relevant experience.
- Include the financial proposal/budget.
- A description of any affiliated institution that can host the Utafiti Sera house.

Interested and eligible candidates are requested to submit their application with the subject clearly indicating "Principal Investigator" no later than **5.00pm EAT 21st March 2025** to [recruitment@pasgr.org](mailto:recruitment@pasgr.org) .

For any inquiries and questions related to the call, kindly write to [research@pasgr.org](mailto:research@pasgr.org) .

Note: Any form of canvassing will lead to automatic disqualification.