Fellowship Program to Produce New Generation of Peace, Security, Development Experts in Africa

$2.15 Million Carnegie Corporation-funded Program Awards 33 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships to Social Scientists

New York, New York, January 27, 2012—African scholars in the social sciences are benefitting from an innovative competition that offers routes to Ph.D completion around the themes of peace, security and development. Thirty-three scholars nominated today will become Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Fellows and will receive the institutional and intellectual support needed to develop, research or complete their doctoral dissertations. A complete list of Nominated Fellows is available at http://www.ssrc.org/pages/2011-next-generation-social-sciences-in-africa-program-fellows/.

By identifying and preparing promising early-career African social scientists, the program run by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and supported by a $2.15 grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York, aims to contribute to Africa’s long-term social, political and economic development by producing a new generation of scholars equipped with the know-how and research skills to address important policy issues on the continent at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The SSRC program is part of Carnegie Corporation’s efforts to accelerate the development and retention of the next generation of academics. Since 2007 the U.S. foundation has spent more than $90 million on initiatives to tackle Africa’s critical shortage of university researchers and teachers.

The inaugural cohort of Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Fellows includes scholars working on a range of issues from refugee camps in Ghana and conflicts over natural resources in the Niger Delta to homelessness and insecurity in South Africa, land use and conservation in Tanzania, and the reintegration of former child combatants in Uganda.

The president of the SSRC, Craig Calhoun, has noted that “nothing is more important to the future of Africa or the world than educated leaders who understand pressing social issues. The next generation of African social scientists will be key to peace, economic development, and a
just and prosperous future. We are honored to join with our colleagues in CODESRIA, the African Union, and other institutions to support African university teachers as they complete advanced research and acquire state-of-the-art skills.” This emphasis was reinforced by a recent World Bank publication that found that strong tertiary education in African universities is important for longer-term development goals and the vitality of societies in sub-Saharan Africa.

“The Fellowship program will cultivate social scientists with a uniquely African perspective on peace, security and development issues,” said Andrea Johnson, Program Officer, Higher Education and Libraries in Africa at Carnegie Corporation. “Young men and women selected for Ph.D completion address a critical need for a new generation of intellectual leaders capable of analyzing the complex dilemmas facing their countries and regions and developing responses that are workable in often difficult settings.”

Johnson said that developing the next generation of African academics will require continued investments in the career advancement of emerging scholars and support for the intellectual communities that nourish them.

Thomas Asher, director of the Next Generation Social Sciences program, observed that while universities in North America and Europe produce more individuals with doctoral degrees than the university systems can absorb, that is not the case in Africa, where fewer than half of all faculty members hold a PhD. And yet, he points out, this shortage of highly trained faculty does not indicate an absence of research capacity: “There are extraordinarily good researchers, working out of an array of institutions, but these individuals often are insufficiently aware of one another’s work. Our goal is to cultivate individual careers while developing a network linking the Fellows so that these researchers can efficiently share their findings with one another and collaborate. Ultimately, this network will be embedded within institutions in order to strengthen the research capacity of African universities across the continent.”

Asher added that by strengthening the research capacity of university-based scholars, the program provides a built-in ‘multiplier effect’ in that these scholars will be able to pass their knowledge and critical inquiry skills on to their students, who themselves will constitute subsequent generations of scholars and practitioners.
A distinguished selection committee representing leading social scientists in Africa and North America selected 33 nominees for the Fellowship: 7 faculty members were nominated for a dissertation proposal development award, 14 for a dissertation research award, and 12 for a dissertation completion award. These Nominees represent 19 disciplines and come from a wide array of universities, ranging from Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria to the University of Western Cape in South Africa.

**About the program**
The Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Fellowship Program consists of three fellowship competitions related to peace, security, and development: Support for the development of a doctoral dissertation proposal; dissertation research; and a one-year leave from teaching responsibilities to complete a dissertation.

Applicants for any of the three distinct competitive fellowship opportunities must be early-career social science faculty who hold positions in an accredited college or university in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania or Uganda.


**Contact:**
SSRC Press Office
Phone: 212-377-2700
E-mail: communications@ssrc.org