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Request for proposals for research papers

The dynamics of women's work: routes to economic and social empowerment

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) invites proposals for research papers on the dynamics of women's work, in order to improve our understanding of the linkages between women's work and their economic and social empowerment. The successful proposals will become part of the body of evidence within the UNU-WIDER project [Women's work – routes to economic and social empowerment](#).

Background

Recent progress in narrowing gender gaps in education, health, and political representation has not been matched by similar improvements in labour market outcomes for women, or more broadly, women's economic empowerment. Global data shows that there has been no increase in female labour force participation and no decrease in the gap between men and women. Women typically occupy the worst-paid jobs with the least protection, and attitudes toward gender often hinder access to better opportunities.

Women's work differs from men's as women are more likely to be unpaid for their work in family enterprises, and women are primarily responsible for household and caring tasks. Such combined responsibilities to contribute to their family enterprises, earn income in typically low-paid jobs, and care for the household can negatively affect women's physical and mental wellbeing.

For women to be economically and socially empowered, it is necessary to increase both the quantity and quality of jobs for women, and address gender barriers in accessing job opportunities and segregation in labour markets. Furthermore, the achievement of gender equality in labour market outcomes critically depends on the adoption of policies that address the 'double burden' that low-income women in particular face — earning income for the family as well as caring for other household members.

UNU-WIDER's project [Women's work](#) will cover three broad areas of research, including segregation, transitions, and measurement. This call is for proposals for papers on the key questions related to transitions.

Key questions

- What factors influence the transition from education to work and/or marriage? What do we know about effectiveness of policies promoting school-to-work transition?
- What factors account for a switch of trajectories for women (e.g., from paid work to care work, or from one job to another?)
- Women's aspirations: what are the qualitative aspects of work that women see as desirable? What features of work would increase their demand for paid work?
- What is the evidence on intergenerational mobility, and how does women's mobility differ from that of men? (mother-daughter mobility versus father-son mobility)
- What are the main data gaps that need to be filled to better understanding the dynamics of women's work and effectiveness of policies?

These questions are intended to provide direction for applications. Proposals for papers that focus on different but related questions are invited as well.

Types of data and methodologies

These questions can be addressed using a variety of data. We would encourage studies using the following types of data and empirical approaches:

- a Combining macro (national level) with micro data (specific case studies and/or RCTs).
- b Longitudinal survey data or retrospective survey data on, for example, work and fertility histories which would be especially important for examining work-life transition and intergenerational mobility issues. Examples of countries with panel data are Indonesia, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, China, India, Vietnam, and Thailand.
- c Causal inference: using exogenous variations in policy or natural experiments.
- d Qualitative evidence and/or a mixed-methods study.

While the emphasis is on empirical papers, theoretical work with insights into public policy will be considered as well.

Offer and expectations

UNU-WIDER invites proposals from qualified researchers for papers based on any of the questions/issues listed above, or different questions related to the dynamics of women's work. The aim is that these papers will culminate as articles in a special issue of a journal.

Proposals from individuals (or groups of individuals) as well as non-profit-organizations are welcome. Applications from suitably qualified women and developing country researchers are particularly encouraged. Applications from groups composed by at least 50% women will be given preference over groups with a smaller female quota. Proposals may address one or more of the research questions. Please read the [concept note](#) behind the project carefully before submitting a proposal.

Individual researchers will be issued UNU Consultant Contracts (CTC). A total research honorarium of US\$10,000 will be paid in two instalments; half after acceptance of the research proposal with methodology and data source, and the remaining upon delivery of a final draft of a working paper.¹ Both of these deliverables must be deemed acceptable by the editors before payment will be made. The honorarium is expected to cover all expenses associated with the conduct of the proposed research (including data collection, research assistance, etc.). It is not required to submit a budget.

The working paper will be considered for publication in the [WIDER Working Paper series](#). The working paper needs to be written in English and should be limited to 10,000 words or less, as [this is likely to be the maximum word count of a journal article should the paper be accepted](#)

¹ In cases where there is co-authorship of a paper the honorarium will be divided equally among the contributors.

for future publication in a collection. UNU-WIDER only commissions original research which has not been published elsewhere. To ensure the quality and originality of research, all submitted studies are analysed with the iThenticate software at the first deliverable stage and again prior to publication.

All successful applicants are expected to attend a 1-2-day workshop in 2020 (date and venue TBD) where work in progress will be presented to other contracted researchers. Costs of attending this workshop will be over and above the honorarium and will be borne by UNU-WIDER in accordance with United Nations University travel policy.

UNU-WIDER will formally pursue publication options after the selection of accepted proposals. The editorial team will draw from accepted proposals in order to develop a journal special issue to submit to a publishing house.

While payment of the second half of the honorarium will be made upon delivery of the working paper discussed above, the final version of the journal special issue will not be complete at that point. After payment has been made, researchers may be asked to respond to reasonable requests by the editors and publisher with respect to finalization of the journal special issue.

Dates

1 July 2019	announcement posted
30 July 2019	final opportunity for questions on the request for proposals for research papers
31 August 2019	proposals due
15 October 2019	target date for informing on final decisions
15 December 2019	target date for completion of necessary administrative procedures
1 May 2020	target date for submission of first draft of papers
June-July 2020	target window for work-in-progress workshop
30 September 2020	target date for submission of final papers
31 October 2020	target date for publication of working papers
30 November 2020	papers enter journal peer review process

Evaluation process and criteria

Proposals will be scored along the following criteria: technical merit (40 points), technical capabilities of the research team (30 points), and policy relevance (30 points). Based on this assessment, a pool of suitable proposals will be determined. From this pool, accepted proposals will be drawn by a decision panel. The decision panel will consider additional criteria such as overall coherence of the journal special issue, diversity of topics addressed, and geographic diversity. Only the final decision on whether the proposal was successful or not will be communicated to applying researchers.

Other considerations

For successful proposals:

- 1 Researchers or their institutions (non-profit) will sign a consultant contract or an institutional contractual agreement with UNU-WIDER that follows the UNU conditions of service for [Consultant Contracts \(CTC\)](#) or [Institutional Contractual Agreements \(ICA\)](#).
- 2 Researchers/institutions will transfer copyright of research produced under the contract to UNU-WIDER. The purpose of this copyright transfer is to allow UNU-WIDER to effectively negotiate with editors of journals and publishers in order to seek the most desirable possible publication outlet for a related set of papers. If

no (further) publication is to be expected by UNU-WIDER, the copyright can be transferred to the author(s).

Proposal submission details

- 1 The technical proposal should be no more than three pages of A4 paper in length, excluding cover page and references. Please use 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, and standard margins. The proposal should clearly state the research objectives, study design, data sources, and policy relevance. The cover page should contain the complete contact information of researcher(s) and a 200-word proposal abstract, which should summarize the research question, main method, data, and expected contribution to policy debate.
- 2 Submission of proposals is done electronically by using a form on the [RFRP announcement page](#). There are three forms to select from; one for individuals, another for groups of individuals, and a third one for non-profit organizations. Details (such as address, gender, nationality, date of birth) of all researchers involved will need to be entered to the form and the cover page, the proposal, and short CVs (five pages or less) of researcher(s) uploaded. Please familiarize yourself with the form in advance.
- 3 Submission of a budget is not required for the proposal.
- 4 Any questions on the proposal process should be sent to researchproposals@wider.unu.edu by 30 July 2019. All queries and responses will be published on the [RFRP announcement page](#). Selected answers will be updated on a rolling basis.