

Job Advertisement: Postdoctoral Fellow – Human Capital Development and Education Systems

Location	Nairobi, Kenya or Lilongwe, Malawi
Project	Africa Think Tanks Platform (ATTP) Project
Client	Africa Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)
Contract type	Fixed Term – 12 months
Start Date	October 2026
Application Deadline	25 September 2026

About AFIDEP

The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) is a regional non-profit research and policy institute established in 2010 to help bridge the gaps between research, policy, and practice in development efforts in Africa. Our primary purpose is to contribute to sustainable development through the use of evidence and advocacy to strengthen political commitment and resource allocation for development issues; inform the design and implementation of effective interventions; and strengthen governance and accountability structures for tracking development challenges in Africa. For further details, visit www.afidep.org.

Role Overview

AFIDEP is undertaking research and policy engagement on how African countries can accelerate socioeconomic transformation through strategic investments in people and improvements in education and skills systems. This work focuses on the relationship between demographic change, gender equality, human capital investment, education quality, and the preparation of young people for productive participation in society and the economy.

The Postdoctoral Fellow will support two distinct but complementary studies. The first is a multi-country study in two countries examining national policies, programmes, and sectoral investments toward harnessing the Demographic Dividend (DD) and Gender Dividend (GD), with particular attention to education and skills, health, and gender equality. The second study will examine curriculum reforms and pedagogical approaches that can improve the quality and practical relevance of Africa's education systems, including their contribution to skills development, employability, and innovation.

Scope of Services, Tasks and Expected Deliverables

1 Research design and study implementation

- Support the senior technical lead in refining research questions, conceptual and analytical frameworks, methodologies, sampling approaches, and study protocols for both studies.

- Develop or adapt quantitative and qualitative research tools, evidence-review frameworks, data-extraction templates, interview guides, and analytical matrices.
- Conduct literature reviews, evidence synthesis, policy mapping, and institutional analysis.
- Coordinate and support data collection in the selected countries, including engagement with country researchers and relevant institutions.
- Support data management, quality assurance, documentation, ethical compliance, and maintenance of clear research records.
- Track implementation against agreed work plans and flag emerging methodological, operational, or data-quality issues.

2 Analysis of investments toward the DD and GD

- Map and analyse national policies, strategies, programmes, budgets, and investments relevant to harnessing the DD and GD in the two selected countries.
- Assess the nature and adequacy of sectoral investments, particularly in education and skills development, health and wellbeing, gender equality, and related areas of human capital development.
- Examine policy coherence, implementation arrangements, coordination, financing, accountability, and the extent to which investments respond to the needs of women, girls, and young people.
- Identify investment and implementation gaps, promising approaches, missed opportunities, and policy-relevant lessons.
- Support comparative analysis across the two countries to determine what appears to work, for whom, under what conditions, and why.

3 Curriculum and pedagogy research

- Examine curriculum reforms and teaching and learning approaches intended to improve education quality and learning outcomes in African education systems.
- Analyse the extent to which curricula and pedagogical approaches respond to skills-development needs, employability, entrepreneurship, technological change, and innovation.
- Assess relevant features of curriculum design and implementation, teacher preparation and support, classroom practice, assessment, learning materials, and use of technology.
- Identify good practices, innovations, implementation challenges, and scalable solutions for strengthening the quality and practical relevance of education.
- Examine the contextual, institutional, capacity, and resource conditions required to adapt or scale promising approaches.

4 Data analysis and comparative insights

- Conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis using appropriate analytical methods and software.
- Triangulate findings across documentary, quantitative, and qualitative evidence.
- Support cross-country and cross-case comparison to identify common patterns, contextual differences, good practices, and transferable lessons.
- Prepare analytical summaries, tables, figures, and evidence matrices to support interpretation and reporting.
- Contribute to validation and interpretation of findings with policymakers, education practitioners, researchers, and other relevant stakeholders.

5 Knowledge products, reporting, and policy engagement

- Draft and revise research reports, policy briefs, presentations, dissemination materials, and other agreed knowledge products.
- Ensure that outputs are analytically rigorous, clear, concise, and responsive to policy audiences.
- Support the organisation and documentation of policy dialogues, technical consultations, validation meetings, and other stakeholder-engagement activities.
- Translate research findings into feasible and actionable recommendations for policy, investment, programme design, and implementation.
- Support dissemination and documentation of stakeholder feedback, research uptake, emerging influence, and lessons learned.

Qualifications and Experience

- A PhD completed within the past five years in Education, Economics, Development Studies, Public Policy, Demography, Population Studies, or a related field.
- Demonstrated expertise in human capital development, education systems, demographic analysis, gender analysis, or a closely related area.
- Strong understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, learning quality, and skills-development systems.
- Experience in policy-oriented and applied research, including qualitative and/or quantitative analysis.
- Experience designing research tools and methods and supporting data collection, analysis, and documentation.
- Demonstrated ability to undertake policy, programme, investment, institutional, or comparative analysis.
- Proven ability to produce high-quality analytical and policy-relevant outputs, including research reports, policy briefs, or peer-reviewed publications.
- Excellent written and spoken English. Proficiency in French or another language relevant to the study countries would be an advantage.

Skills and Competencies

- Strong analytical, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to integrate demographic, gender, education, economic, and institutional perspectives.
- Strong qualitative and/or quantitative data-analysis skills and proficiency in relevant analytical software.
- Ability to translate complex research findings into clear and actionable insights.
- Excellent writing, presentation, communication, and stakeholder-engagement skills.
- Ability to work effectively with a senior technical lead and within a multidisciplinary, multi-country team.
- Strong organisational skills, attention to detail, and ability to manage multiple tasks and deadlines.
- Commitment to research integrity, ethical practice, gender equality, inclusion, and high-quality evidence.

HOW TO APPLY

The application should include:

- A cover letter outlining suitability and motivation for the fellowship;
- A current curriculum vitae, including a list of publications and relevant research outputs;
- One or two writing samples demonstrating analytical and policy-relevant research;
- Copies of relevant academic certificates; and
- Contact details for at least three professional referees.

Please send your application, with the position title "Postdoctoral Fellow – "Human Capital Development and Education Systems" in the email subject, to Recruitment@afidep.org no later than **25 September 2026**. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

AFIDEP is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process.