

Rationale and Course Descriptions
for a
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
in
Social Work and Social Development
at the
Graduate School of Social Work
Addis Ababa University

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PhD Program in Social Work and Social Development
School of Social Work
Addis Ababa University

Rationale

Addis Ababa University, in collaboration with major United States research universities, proposes a three-year innovation project to build its capacity to educate a generation of PhD prepared engaged scholar-educators—action researchers. This program will develop the first-ever PhD in social work in Ethiopia. PhD graduates will possess the core competencies required to build a world class doctoral education program in social work. This innovative PhD program will prepare doctoral students in social work and social development, mentor these graduates in research, teaching, and scholarly dissemination, and build the infrastructure to continue the doctoral program. Initially the program will incorporate collaborative teaching with scholars from the United States. But the aim of the program is to lessen such arrangements over several years and empower the new faculty members to develop their own institutional identity and competencies to build social work as a profession within Ethiopia.

The College of Social work at Addis Ababa University has been established to create an academic program within Ethiopia that can address the development challenges the country faces. Another aim is to ensure that doctoral students who graduate from the program remain in the country, which will be achieved through three strategies: 1) positioning graduates to build scholarly careers within AAU and other universities within Ethiopia; 2) strengthening the international significance of the research projects doctoral students undertake within the program; and 3) creating career pathways for graduates within Ethiopian institutions, whether in major national institutions, universities, or community-based organizations.

The Ethiopian experience and the challenges and needs the country faces both nationally and at local levels call for scholars with expertise in generating action research that will address social problems with targeted programs and policies; this is the expertise to be developed in the proposed program as well as teaching competencies for future bachelors, masters and doctoral social work students. Doctoral students who study abroad too often remain in other countries as expatriates and the resultant “brain drain” stymies the opportunity for the country to build its own cadre of well prepared doctoral-trained social work faculty. By establishing the program within the context of the challenges and needs the country faces, the expertise of the doctoral students will incorporate knowledge, methods and practices relevant directly to Ethiopia. Thus, the proposed program shall integrate both action research and teaching competencies to incorporate a practical focus on the challenges and needs the country faces at multiple levels of society. Action research is a core aspect of the proposed doctoral program imbuing it with relevance, practicality, innovation, and a linkage between social theory, social practice and both undergraduate and graduate education.

Action learning is a form of research engagement in which doctoral students focus on the utilization of existing knowledge and best practices to design and implement research projects that achieve important development outcomes, and at the same time, contribute to scholarly knowledge. Action learning is a central idea of this program: 1) Ethiopia is addressing serious social issues that require effective and high impact action to ameliorate these issues; 2) the university is a major resource to the country and through its civic engagement can create long-term action projects sustainable across generations of doctoral students to achieve beneficial community outcomes while contributing to a global knowledge base; and 3) action projects will generate dissertation research that can potentially impact on the country’s national poverty

reduction, healthcare and development agendas. The action research focus also makes this doctoral program distinctive within the range of programs existing internationally. An AAU doctoral degree in social work will stand as one of a kind given this action research frame of reference and ethos of community/civic engagement.

Mission Statement

The mission of the AAU PhD Program in Social Work and Social Development is to prepare scholars who can undertake action research through community engagement that addresses the social development challenges Ethiopia faces, builds knowledge to strengthen community life, and stewards the education and profession of social work within the nation. The program will advance scholarship relevant to Ethiopia and expand the corps of Ethiopian scholars who are committed to the social development of the country. The kind of scholar the program identifies is contextually relevant to the Ethiopian experience and to the challenges and needs the country faces whether regionally or at local levels, in accordance with national and international standards.

Assumptions Underlying the PhD in Social Work and Social Development

Among the plethora of helping professions, the profession of social work stands out in its commitment to poverty reduction through social development. Social work uses an integrated approach that recognizes the importance of working simultaneously with individuals, groups and families, communities and localities, and national policy and resource systems. The profession's multi-level approach targets the amelioration of social issues by focusing on addressing both the causes and consequences of these issues. Social work is an action profession that bases much of its knowledge on what it discovers through the projects it undertakes within the complexity of the real world. Social work's history is one of civic engagement, building synergistic relationships among institutions, organizations, and even disciplines to address poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and homelessness. By linking research to action, the profession builds the knowledge bases necessary to achieve meaningful breakthroughs, particularly those related to the advancement of the quality of life.

Internationally, the profession serves as the backbone of social welfare as professionally educated and trained social workers at the BA and MA levels are active as core workers in numerous fields of practice, including mental health care, substance abuse treatment, child welfare, health care, management, human rights, and community development. Social workers within these settings blend knowledge bases at multiple system levels including policy, community, organizational, group and individual. In their work with people, organizations, and communities social workers are informed by theory, knowledge, and the determinants of human behavior as influenced by social structure, culture and diversity, and the dynamics of oppression, marginalization, and exclusion. At the level of the PhD, scholars educated in social work serve as faculty in schools of social work who combine their research agendas with the preparation of the next generation of social work professionals. Doctoral-trained social workers who possess a research degree but who understand practice are essential to the development of national infrastructure in social welfare and development. This includes building the capacity of Ethiopian faculty to expand social work education to the BA level at Addis Ababa University, as well as preparing faculty to develop BA and MSW programs at other universities throughout the country.

Graduate Profile

The primary mission of the PhD Program in Social Work and Social Development is to prepare graduates who are expected to:

- 1) Achieve international expectations of research faculty members who can produce and disseminate social work knowledge that is relevant to the pressing social development faced by Ethiopia.
- 2) Fulfill key faculty roles within Ethiopia's universities and leadership roles within its major institutions.
- 3) Educate social workers at the Ph.D. level who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies to advance innovation in social welfare and social development.
- 4) Contribute to the development of the social work profession within the country and the advancement of the innovation and effectiveness of social welfare programs and policies.
- 5) Create and test models of social work practice that are relevant to Ethiopia and to the education of Ethiopian social workers
- 6) Build a knowledge base supporting social work within Ethiopia that is relevant both nationally and internationally.
- 7) Strengthen the capacity of villages, cities, regional authorities, and national institutions to improve the quality of life of their citizens.
- 8) Produce knowledge relevant to social development through the integration of action research and civic engagement.
- 9) Take leadership for the advancement of social development projects that foster the movement of people out of poverty.
- 10) Improve community infrastructure through applied research and policy development in collaboration with citizens and local and national leaders.
- 11) Critically evaluate and advance services, supports, and capacities for the advancement of the collective health and well being of rural villages and cities.

PHD PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Admission Requirements

Admission into the PhD Program in Social Work and Social Development (PhD) requires the approval of the Council of Graduate Studies (CGS) of the University and is effected according to the rules and regulations set forth by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS).

Candidates will be eligible to apply for admission if they meet the following criteria:

- 1) Graduate GPA of at least 3.5
- 2) Graduate degree in social work (MSW) or MA degree in social work-related field
- 3) A cover letter and Personal Statement with a rationale for doctoral study, research, and teaching (5 pages maximum)
- 4) Presentation to the PhD Admissions Committee

At the end of the 3rd semester, students will complete their Qualifying Assessment for PhD candidacy. Each doctoral student will present his/her work before a committee of faculty of the School of Social Work. The Qualifying Assessment includes the following: 1) the Doctoral Portfolio, 2) a presentation, and 3) an oral examination by the faculty committee. Students who fail the Qualifying Assessment will receive a Certificate of Advanced Social Work and Social Development Studies.

The Doctoral Portfolio is a self assessment of their learning experience and an identification of their strengths and needs relative to the student's emergent substantive and methodological interests. The Doctoral Portfolio consists of four parts:

- 1) Teaching
- 2) Research
- 3) Service to the School, Community, and the Profession
- 4) Professional Use of Self

Each section of the portfolio contains a review of current work, plans for future work, and relevant information regarding the integration of teaching, research and service. Overall, the portfolio should show the student's progress over the first year of doctoral study, including the development of ideas, knowledge gained, abilities, and contributions. Students will identify their interests for their dissertation research projects. The Doctoral Portfolio should include grades, letters, new course syllabi, or other documents supporting the student's work for admission to doctoral candidacy. These items can be organized in Appendices as needed.

Planning and Research Teams with Core Faculty Leadership

AAU and international faculty will provide leadership for major research projects in several thematic areas relevant to social work and social development in Ethiopia. Through systematic procedures, students will undertake a comprehensive literature review; problem analysis and idea generation; proposal writing; the identification and formulation of relevant research questions; and the design and specification of methods and procedures for project implementation; the involvement of stakeholders in data collection, reduction, and analysis; and the formation of collaborative approaches to dissemination and utilization.

Thus, students will focus on their research, based on existing national priorities within Ethiopia. AAU faculty and its international team may design team-based research projects consisting of three to four students. These team-based projects will focus on substantive areas that possess significance for the country. Projects may be left in place from one doctoral student cohort to another. Thus, some projects may remain as standing foci within the PhD program amenable to further work by subsequent teams of students. Based on the growing competence of the doctoral program, the creation of engaged alumni who remain active in the program, and the emergence of strong faculty, these standing projects may include undergraduate and masters degree students who are participating directly in research. Based on existing national priorities within Ethiopia, as well as faculty expertise, four potential project areas are:

1. Capacity Building: Augmenting the capacity of local communities to reduce poverty through comprehensive community development through literacy, micro-enterprise, youth development, housing, rural development and soil and water conservation using best practices from social development and participatory approaches.

2. Child Welfare: Fostering improvements in child welfare, including orphan care, international and in-country adoption, non-formal education, gender equity, the reduction of harmful traditional practices, juvenile justice, divorce and child custody.
3. Health: Abating the transmission of HIV and other public health issues (e.g., malaria, TB, blindness, polio, birth defects, water-borne diarrhea diseases, malnourishment) using best practices in outreach, prevention, treatment, medication adherence, especially for anti-retroviral therapies, community collaboration, and awareness building.
4. Refugees and Migration: Improving humanitarian responses to displacement, migration, and refugee resettlement, conflict resolution, decreasing stigma and marginalization among vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, homeless persons, and so on.

Selection of Dissertation Advisor

Each doctoral student will submit a 3-5 page pre-proposal concept paper which describes the dissertation and the name of a proposed Dissertation Advisor to work with them on their proposal. This pre-proposal is submitted in writing to the School of Social Work. Once the Dissertation Advisor is approved, the doctoral student should work intensely with their Advisor to develop the complete dissertation proposal. This work should take place over a period of 3-6 months. When the proposal is ready for review, three additional faculty members will be selected by consensus of the doctoral student and their Dissertation Advisor. The doctoral student will present their dissertation proposal, consisting of an oral presentation and questions by the Committee. Upon passing the dissertation defense, students will proceed with their research. Depending on the nature of the research plan and process, pilot studies and research processes begin during and throughout the development of the final dissertation proposal based on consultation and agreement with the Dissertation Advisor.

The Doctoral Defense Committee for each student will consist of his/her Dissertation Advisor and 3 or more holders of doctorate degrees coming from the Graduate School of Social Work, departments and colleges at Addis Ababa University or other universities in Ethiopia, or doctorate degree holders from other countries. At least 1 member of the Doctoral Defense Committee must be from the Graduate School of Social Work; at least 2 members of the Doctoral Defense Committee must be “external reviewers” from outside the faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work.

Doctoral students have the option to pursue a dissertation monograph format for their work, or three articles as noted below. Each dissertation should include a comprehensive synthesis of previous research (literature review) covering the areas related to the dissertation research. For a monograph, the research synthesis (literature review) will be a separate section. For the dissertation model consisting of three publishable papers, the research synthesis may be integrated within various articles for publication or be included as a stand-alone publishable article, depending on the nature of the dissertation work and consultation with the Dissertation Advisor. Letters from editors of academic journals regarding their intent to publish the enclosed articles should be included as part of the dissertation manuscript. The length of the dissertation will be not less than 300 pages and not more than 450 pages, excluding references and appendices.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

- SWPH-701 Action Research and Models of Social Change (4 credits)**
SWPH-705 Quantitative Methods & Data Analysis (4 Credits)
SWPH-707 Qualitative Methods & Data Analysis (4 Credits)
SWPH-709 Knowledge Building for Social Work and Social Development (4 Credits)
SWPH-711 Program Evaluation & Policy Analysis (4 Credits)
SWPH-713 Writing for Publication (4 Credits)
SWPH-715 Teaching and Pedagogy in Social Work & Social Development (4 Credits)
SWPH-717 Dissertation (8 credits)

SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

(SWPH-831 Doctoral Pro-Seminar I), (SWPH-832 Doctoral Pro-Seminar II), (SWPH-833 Doctoral Pro-Seminar III), (SWPH-834 Doctoral Pro-Seminar IV), and SWPH-835 Doctoral Pro-Seminar V)

The Doctoral Pro-Seminar examines the critical issues in social work and social development faced by Ethiopia through multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary frameworks. The seminar consists of a 4 hour seminar every 3 weeks during the 15 week semester. Each session focuses on a substantive topic such as poverty, gender, community health, homelessness, migration, urban and rural development, child welfare, criminal justice, working with vulnerable populations such as people with disabilities, and so on. The seminars engage the faculty team and students in dialogue, debate, and a critical analysis of the topic of discussion. Participants will examine the theory and research base of the issue and identify best practice models and policies for addressing it at the community, regional, national, and international levels.

SWPH-883 Dissertation Design and Proposal Writing (No credit)

SWPH-891 Portfolio Preparation (No credit)

RESEARCH SUPERVISION

SWPH-941 Research Supervision I (No credit)

SWPH-942 Research Supervision II (No credit)

SWPH-943 Research Supervision III (No credit)

SWPH-944 Research Supervision III (No credit)

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Addis Ababa University – School of Social Work PhD Sequence¹

Year 1: Fall Semester	Year 1: Spring Semester	Year 2: Summer	Year 2: Fall Semester	Year 2: Spring Semester	Year 3: Summer	Year 3: Fall Semester
SWPH 831. Doctoral Pro-Seminar I (S)	SWPH 832. Doctoral Pro-Seminar II (S)	SWPH 711. Program Evaluation & Policy Analysis (C) 4 credits	SWPH 833. Doctoral Pro-Seminar III (S)	SWPH 834. Doctoral Pro-Seminar IV (S)	SWPH 835. Doctoral Pro-Seminar V (S)	SWPH 893. Transition to Professional Careers (S)
SWPH 701. Action Research & Models of Social Change (C) 4 credits.	SWPH 709. Knowledge Building for Social Work & Social Development (C) 4 credits	SSWP 713. Writing for Publication (C) 4 credits	SWPH 941. Research Supervision I (R)	SWPH 942. Research Supervision II (R)	SWPH 943. Research Supervision III (R)	SWPH 944. Research Supervision IV(R)
SWPH 707. Qualitative Methods & Data Analysis (C) 4 credits	SWPH 705. Quantitative Methods & Data Analysis (C) 4 credits	SWPH 715. Teaching & Pedagogy (C) 4 credits	SWPH 883. Dissertation Design and Proposal Writing (S)			
	SWPH 891. Portfolio Preparation (S)		SWPH 717. Dissertation (8 credits)			
8 Credits	8 Credits	12 Credits	8 Credits			

¹ The PhD in Social Work and Social Development at Addis Ababa University includes an innovative menu of Courses (C), Seminars (S), and Research (R). All courses (C) are completed in the first 3 semesters of study. A Qualifying Assessment is completed following the 3rd semester of doctoral study. Students who pass can move forward to Doctoral Candidacy. Since coursework will be completed, students will be able to teach in the 2nd year of PhD studies (Year 2). It is expected that students will complete their doctorate after 7 semesters of study. Since the PhD program is year-round study, students will complete their dissertations and graduate in 3 years.