UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion

Albion College

Call for Themed Volume of *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*

Urban Youth: Engaging young people and their futures in African cities

Estimated publication date: 15 December 2022

Guest editors:
Drs. Mercy Brown-Luthango, Rike Sitas and Laura Nkula-Wenz, *African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town*

Overview

According to the UN's *The Power of 18 billion* (UNFPA, 2014, p. i) '[n]ever before have there been so many young people. Never again is there likely to be such potential for economic and social progress. How we meet the needs and aspirations of young people will define our common future.' Nowhere is this argument more pertinent than in Africa, the world's youngest and fastest-urbanizing continent. It is estimated that the African population will reach 2 billion by 2050, with 50% of the population being under the age of 25.[1] The future of work, the future of our environment, the future of technologies and digitisation, the future of our global economy, the future of health, the future of cities is dependent on the role of youth in African cities. Yet, it is also young people – and especially young women and LGBTQ youth – that are excluded from decision-making and most vulnerable to structural unemployment, precaritization and systemic violence.

High-level policies like the African Union's Agenda 2063 place great emphasis on youth empowerment. However, this is a term that is hard to pin down and begs more concrete definitions rooted in engaged practice and scholarship. After all, who counts as 'youth' varies greatly, which is why this special issue centres and seeks to capture different experiences among this diverse group, e.g. those currently in school or not, unemployed graduates, young professionals etc.

We believe there remains a great need for grounded research that amplifies the voices of young people and those working closely with them to realize more just and equitable African cities.

1. El Quassif, A (2021) "The challenge of the youth bulge in Africa and the Middle-East – Migration and the brain drain", Policy Center for the New South.

The purpose of this themed issue of *Gateways* is therefore to showcase and interrogate different ways of engaging the lived realities, concerns and aspirations of Africa's urban youth. We invite articles that speak to one or more of the following questions:

- What stories are youth telling about the city? How are they engaging with, challenging and shaping local power structures?
- How can we strengthen the voice of young people - particularly women and LGBTQI – and articulate a focus on youth in local planning and decision-making?
- What alternative methodologies, innovative research strategies and collaborations are needed to effectively engage with and support Africa's youth?
- What role does the university and university-based research in partnership with communities play in all the above?

In line with *Gateways* mission of supporting different ways of knowing and being, submissions are explicitly encouraged to draw on different knowledge bases and tap into collaborations beyond the academy, i.e. community partnerships, activism, artistic practice etc. Co-productions and co-authorships are very welcome. Proposals for submissions in all three publication categories – i.e. research articles, practice-based articles, and snapshots – will be accepted. Particularly for snapshots and practice-based pieces, the approach can be more experimental and might include different forms of media (e.g. videos, sounds, mappings etc.). For more details on the different article categories and to familiarize yourself with the scope of the journal, please visit https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/ijcre/about/editorialPolicies#focusAndScope

Activity	Due Date
Call for papers	October 1, 2021
Paper proposals due, 500 words	November 22, 2021
Notification to authors	December 20, 2021
Writer's workshop (virtual)	Late March/Early April, 2021
Manuscript submission	May 30, 2022
Editorial Committee Feedback	July 4, 2022
Peer review	July through September, 2022
Revisions	September-October, 2022
Submission of revised drafts	October 15, 2022
Publication	December 15, 2022

Process and Timeline

The journal and its editors are committed to a supported publication process. This means that between the selection of abstracts and the final manuscript submission to the journal, we will hold at least one virtual writing workshop that will allow us to compare notes, provide feedback and invigorate each others' writing. While this seems particularly helpful to first-time academic authors, we believe that such a supported approach is beneficial for all career stages, as it opens up the often-lonely writing process to collective thought and support.

Authors interested in participating in this special issue are encouraged to submit a short proposal (up to 500 words by November 22, 2021; please indicate if your proposal is for a research article, a practice-based article, or a snapshot). Questions may be directed to the guest editors or the managing editor of *Gateways*:

- **Guest editors:** Rike Sitas (rike.sitas@uct.ac.za), Mercy Brown-Luthango (mercy.brown-luthango@uct.ac.za) and Laura Nkula-Wenz (laura.nkula@uct.ac.za)
- **Managing editor, *Gateways:*** Margaret Malone (Margaret.Malone@uts.edu.au), The Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, University of Technology Sydney (Australia)

About the journal

Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement is a refereed journal that responds to an emerging global movement of collaborative and change-oriented university-community research initiatives. It provides a forum for academics, practitioners and community representatives to explore issues and reflect on practices relating to the full range of engaged activity. Articles will not only bridge disciplinary boundaries but will seek to rigorously combine different knowledge bases that have traditionally been separated into academic and non-academic worlds. As such, cooperative, innovative and ethical community-based research approaches to conceptualising, designing, completing and communicating research are encouraged. As an open access journal, *Gateways'* mission is to increase the timely, accessible and inclusive sharing of critical insights and practice to scholars, community leaders and activists seeking to improve the quality of life in local communities around the world.