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Fourth AAPS Conference

Supported by Rockefeller Foundation and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

Theme: *African urban planning and the global South: pedagogy, research, practice*

17-19 November 2014

Lagoon Beach Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

Prepared by James Duminy

African Centre for Cities

Level 6 Menzies Building

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch

Republic of South Africa

7700

jwa.duminy@uct.ac.za

# Introduction

The Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS) is a peer-to-peer network of tertiary planning schools drawn from across the continent. AAPS has a membership of fifty-four institutions, from all regions of Africa. The secretariat of AAPS has been located at the African Centre for Cities (ACC, University of Cape Town) since 2008.

From Monday 17 to Wednesday 19 November AAPS hosted its fourth biennial conference in Cape Town (South Africa). Previous conferences have been held in Cape Town (2008), Dar es Salaam (2010) and Nairobi (2012).

The conference, which drew in representatives of 42 African planning schools and over 20 other institutions from around the world, was generously supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. This was the first time that an AAPS conference was open to wider attendance from both African and international institutions working on topics of planning in the global South.

Themed ‘African urban planning and the global South: pedagogy, research, practice’, the conference themes sought to explore the central themes and problems of African urbanization and how planning curricula can potentially respond to these. The emphasis was on Africa’s position in relation to the wider context of urbanization in the global South. The six conference subthemes were devised as follows:

* South-South engagements: new Southern perspectives on urban planning
* Political economies of African urban development
* Sustainable African urban transitions
* African urban governance and the post-2015 development agenda
* Co-production of urban services and knowledges
* Innovative pedagogies

The conference featured keynote presentations from a number of international experts on cities and urbanization in Africa and the global South, including Oren Yiftachel (Ben-Gurion University), Edgar Pieterse (African Centre for Cities) and Colin McFarlane (Durham University).

This short report document provides an overview of the proceedings and discussions at AAPS 2014. It highlights some of the key points and questions raised by participants. A list of participants and the conference programme are provided as appendices to the report.

# Proceedings and Discussions

*Day 1*

The first day of the conference was organized around the theme of ‘South-South engagements’. It began with a short welcome address from Vanessa Watson (University of Cape Town) and a recap of AAPS activity over the past two years by outgoing AAPS Steering Committee Chair Prof Babatunde Agbola (University of Ibadan).

Oren Yiftachel delivered the first keynote address, speaking about the need to theorise from the particular context and perspectives of urban areas in the ‘global South-East’. He argued that theorising from the South-East should be undertaken as a critique of how power how shapes planning knowledge, calling for more critical and engaged urban scholarship and ‘counter-planning’ efforts.

Other presentations on day one addressed the key opportunities for and challenges to developing ‘Southern theory’ in planning, and reflected on what African contexts could potentially learn from the experiences of other Southern regions including South Asia and Latin America (as well as how such a translocal learning process can be achieved in practice, in the particular context of planning education).

The day concluded with a plenary session dedicated to the topic of new African cities, represented by the recent proliferation of ‘urban fantasy’ plans across much of the continent. One of the key points emerging from this session was that such ‘fantasies’ are not necessarily new, but echo the master plans and new capital cities planned for newly independent African nations in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. We need to understand this history in order to understand why these new plans have been developed at such scale, and with such favourable reception amongst political elites. Another key issue is financing – we can understand a great deal more about the political economy of these ‘urban fantasy’ plans if we know how they are (intended to be) financed, and by whom.

*Day 2*

The second day addressed topics surrounding the political economy of land in African cities and peri-urban areas, how to promote sustainable African urban transitions, and how to apply co-production methodologies in urban service delivery and knowledge production.

The day began with a keynote presentation by Edgar Pieterse, which focused on the broad structural trends of urbanization in Africa in relation to the shifting global policy landscape, and emphasised the current opportunity to contribute to the urban SDG and Habitat III processes. He further reflected on the need for an alternative frame for understanding and responding to African urban development, and the implications of this frame for planning education.

The keynote presentation was followed by a short address by David Amborski, who outlined the history, agenda and work programmes of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and suggested some key opportunities for the Institute to engage with African scholars and institutions through networks such as AAPS.

Many of the papers presented on day two emphasised the importance of (formal and informal) land markets and governance in African urban planning. Promoting inclusive land access remains one of the key challenges for African cities, particularly in light of recent major increases in land values in many African cities, which tend to drive the exclusion of poor urban residents from well-located areas. This is having profound spatial effects, as many peri-urban areas grow and change rapidly in response to increased market demand. It is essential that African urban planners understand how land markets function and devise new means of governing urban land in ways that promote both economic development and socio-spatial inclusivity.

Presentations on the topic of co-production emphasised its importance as an approach to producing planning knowledge, upgrading settlements and delivering urban services. However, they also stressed that co-productive processes are highly demanding of educators and practitioners, with the potential to generate tensions and disagreements between partners.

*Day 3*

The third day of the conference centred on the themes of learning and innovative pedagogy. Colin McFarlane initiated proceedings with his keynote address on the politics of urban learning, particularly around sanitation practices in contemporary Mumbai, India. He highlighted how learning practices are at the heart of how people politicise sanitation practices across the domains of civil society, political society and subaltern struggle, and the implications for how we learn and can help others to learn in their everyday attempts to consolidate themselves in the city.

Other presenters reflected on their experiences with educating African planners, and the key contextual trends that necessitate developing new and innovative educational approaches. After all, educators face the challenge of not only training planners to adequately understand and respond to issues of rapid urbanization and informality, but also delivering this education in a way that engages with the new ways in which young people communicate and learn.

One of the most interesting sessions of the conference was a roundtable discussion (organised by Garth Klein and Sarah Charlton of the University of the Witwatersrand) on the topic, ‘planning pedagogy and uncomfortable practices’. The roundtable participants reflected on how planning education should attempt to respond to uncomfortable knowledge and practices such as anti-informality punitive measures and evictions (for example, Operation Clean Sweep in Johannesburg), or the passage of anti-homosexual legislation.

The conference closed with a final session dedicated to AAPS business. This session saw Peter Ngau (University of Nairobi) assume office as chair of the AAPS Steering Committee, taking over from Babatunde Agbola (University of Ibadan) who served AAPS admirably over the past two years.

# Conclusion

The AAPS 2014 conference, like the previous versions of the event, successfully drew together a diverse assortment of planning educators and researchers from many parts of the African continent, and elsewhere globally. The event once again demonstrated the value of organizing face-to-face meetings to enable networking and the sharing of knowledge to promote comparative and collaborative learning around planning education and practice.

The conference featured excellent keynote addresses, as well as presentations and papers on topics ranging from judicial governance and evictions in Delhi (by Gautam Bhan, Indian Institute for Human Settlements), to informal land markets in Latin America (by Edesio Fernandes, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy), to the challenges of establishing a new planning education programme in Zambia (by Gilbert Siame, University of Zambia). The diversity of issues addressed and topics discussed at the conference made it a rich learning experience with the potential to make a lasting impact on how planners are trained in Africa and elsewhere.

One of the key issues emerging from the conference was the notion of ‘universality’ and how we should think about it in relation to planning education and practice. Can we accept universal notions of how planners should be trained and how they should act in practice? Does universality as a principle blind us to the existence of difference between and within our cities? Are there universal ethical principles to guide planning practice and education, or do we have to think different about our values when working in Africa and the global South? These questions pose profound challenges to the status quo of planning education. While it may take many years before they can be adequately answered, it is hoped that the AAPS 2014 conference provided a suitable platform for them to be discussed and debated, as we enter a new era of global urbanization and development.

The central issue facing the future of AAPS is financial, as the last phase of funded AAPS projects has come to an end. However, there remain a number of opportunities for AAPS schools to raise funding for conducting further joint work and collaboration. In the meantime, AAPS members face the imperative of helping to refine the new African urban agenda to guide development efforts in the post-2015 era.

# Acknowledgements

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# Appendix 1: List and Contact Details of Participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution** | **Country** | **Title** | **First Name** | **Surname** | **Contact** |
| Omdurman Islamic University | Sudan | Dr | Safaa | Abubakr | sfabubakr@yahoo.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Mr | Furaha | Abwe | gfuraha@gmail.com |
| University of Ibadan | Nigeria | Prof | Babatunde | Agbola | babatundeagbola@yahoo.com |
| Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology | Ghana | Dr | Divine K. | Ahadzie | dkahadzie.cap@knust.edu.gh |
| Ahmadu Bello University | Nigeria | Dr | Adamu | Ahmed | drahmedadamu@yahoo.com |
| University of Lagos | Nigeria | Dr | Wale | Alade | walealade156@gmail.com |
| Ryerson University | Canada | Prof | David | Amborski | Amborski@ryerson.ca |
| University for Development Studies | Ghana | Prof | Francis | Bacho | franciszl@yahoo.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Prof | Stephen | Berrisford | stephen@berrisford.co.za |
| Indian Institute of Human Settlements | India | Dr | Gautam | Bhan | gbhan@iihs.co.in |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Ms | Brogan | Bradfield | broganbradfield@gmail.com |
| Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology | Ghana | Prof | Imoro | Braimah | ibraimah2002@gmail.com |
| Massachusetts Institute of Technology | Ghana | Ms | Devanne | Brookins | devanneb@mit.edu |
| University of KwaZulu-Natal | South Africa | Assoc Prof | Simon | Burton | Burton@ukzn.ac.za |
| Development Workshop | Angola | Mr | Allan | Cain | Allan.cain@gmail.com |
| Lincoln Institute of Land Policy | USA | Dr | Armando | Carbonell | acarbonell@lincolninst.edu |
| Massachusetts Institute of Technology | USA | Dr | Gabriella | Carolini | carolini@mit.edu |
| UN Global Compact Cities Programme | Canada | Dr | Corrine | Cash | corrinecash@gmail.com |
| University of Venda | South Africa | Mr | James | Chakwizira | Jameschakwizira@gmail.com |
| University of the Witwatersrand | South Africa | Dr | Sarah | Charlton | sarah.charlton@wits.ac.za |
| University of Zambia | Zambia | Dr | Douty | Chibamba | doutypaula@gmail.com |
| University of Malawi, The Polytechnic | Malawi | Dr | Edward | Chikwenda | echikhwenda@poly.ac.mw |
| University of California, Berkeley | USA | Prof | Jason | Corburn | jcorburn@berkeley.edu |
| North-West University | South Africa | Mrs | Selna | Cornelius | Selna.Cornelius@nwu.ac.za |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Mr | Guillermo | Delgado | guillermodelgado@me.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Mr | James | Duminy | jamesduminy@gmail.com |
| Omdurman Islamic University | Sudan | Dr | Muna | Eltahir | mmeltahir@yahoo.com |
| Durban University of Technology | South Africa | Dr | Kira | Erwin | kirae@dut.ac.za |
| Technical University of Kenya | Kenya | Dr | Lawrence | Esho | lawresho@yahoo.com |
| Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) | Ghana | Mrs | Faustina | Essandoh-Yeddu | fessandoh@gmail.com |
| Ethiopian Civil Service University | Ethiopia | Mr | Tilahun | Fekade | tilahunddg@yahoo.com |
| Durban University of Technology | South Africa | Mr | Tilmann | Feltes | till.feltes@web.de |
| Lincoln Institute of Land Policy | USA | Dr | Edesio | Fernandes | edesiofernandes@compuserve.com |
| Environnement et Développement Tiers Monde (ENDA-TM) | Senegal | Dr | Malick | Gaye | assmalickgaye@yahoo.fr |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Mr | Divesh | Guttee | diveshguttee@hotmail.com |
| Benue State University | Nigeria | Prof | Tim | Gyuse | tgyuse62@gmail.com |
| Durban University of Technology | South Africa | Ms | Robynne | Hansmann | robynne@dut.ac.za |
| Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology | Kenya | Dr | Patrick | Hayombe | rapospat@yahoo.com |
| Community Organisation Resource Centre | South Africa | Ms | Yolande | Hendler | documentation@courc.co.za |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Ms | Kate | Hogarth | kate.hogarth@gmail.com |
| Cities Alliance | South Africa | Ms | Adele | Hosken | adele.hosken@gmail.com |
| University of the Witwatersrand | South Africa | Prof | Marie | Huchzermeyer | marie.huchzermeyer@wits.ac.za |
| Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology | Ghana | Dr | Daniel K.B. | Inkoom | dinkoom@gmail.com |
| Ladoke Akintola University of Technology | Nigeria | Dr | Musibau | Jelili | jelmusi@yahoo.com |
| Kenyatta University | Kenya | Prof | Peter | Kamau | kamaupk@hotmail.com |
| University of Nairobi | Kenya | Dr | Paul | Kamau | pkamau@uonbi.ac.ke |
| Mzuzu University | Malawi | Mr | Dominic | Kamlomo | dkamlomo@yahoo.com |
| Ethiopian Civil Service University | Ethiopia | Dr | Samson | Kassahun | s\_kassahun@yahoo.com |
| University of the Witwatersrand | South Africa | Mr | Garth | Klein | Garth.Klein@wits.ac.za |
| Ardhi University | Tanzania | Prof | Wilbard | Kombe | kombewilbard@yahoo.com |
| Polytechnic of Namibia | Namibia | Mr | Jacques | Korrubel | jkorrubel@polytechnic.edu.na |
| The Polytechnic, Ibadan | Nigeria | Mr | Kolawole | Lawal | tplklaw@gmail.com |
| University of Lagos | Nigeria | Dr | Taibat | Lawanson | tolawanson@gmail.com |
| National University of Lesotho | Lesotho | Prof | Resetselemang | Leduka | rleduka@gmail.com |
| University College London | UK | Prof | Caren | Levy | c.levy@ucl.ac.uk |
| University College London | UK | Dr | Barbara | Lipietz | b.lipietz@ucl.ac.uk |
| University of Pretoria | South Africa | Prof | Alan | Mabin | alan.mabin@up.ac.za |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | South Africa | Dr | Cecil | Madell | MadellC@cput.ac.za |
| Mzuzu University | Malawi | Mr | Mtafu | Manda | mazmanda@yahoo.com |
| University of Leiden | The Netherlands | Dr | Laura | Mann | lauramann82@gmail.com |
| University College London | UK | Dr | Colin | Marx | c.marx@ucl.ac.uk |
| Eduardo Mondlane University | Mozambique | Mr | Filipe | Mate | matefilipesilvestre@gmail.com |
| University of Johannesburg | South Africa | Mr | Zenzile | Mbinza | zmbinza@uj.ac.za |
| Durham University | United Kingdom | Dr | Colin | McFarlane | colin.mcfarlane@durham.ac.uk |
| Durban University of Technology | South Africa | Dr | Dylan | McGarry | armadylan@gmail.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Mr | Martin | Mendelsohn | mf.mendelsohn@gmail.com |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | South Africa | Mr | Masilonyane | Mokhele | mokhelem@cput.ac.za |
| University of Botswana | Botswana | Dr | Chadzimula | Molebatsi | MOLEBACO@mopipi.ub.bw |
| University of the Free State | South Africa | Ms | Thulisile | Mphambukeli | mphambukelit@ufs.ac.za |
| Stellenbosch University | South Africa | Mrs | Anneke | Muller | Anneke.Muller@spl.sun.ac.za |
| University of Zimbabwe | Zimbabwe | Mr | Nyasha T. | Mutsindikwa | mutsindikwan@yahoo.com |
| Copperbelt University | Zambia | Mr | Francis | Muwowo | francismuwowo@yahoo.co.uk |
| University of Eldoret | Kenya | Dr | Benjamin | Mwasi | benmwasi@gmail.com |
| University of Nairobi | Kenya | Mr | Charles Baraka | Mwau | barakamwau@gmail.com |
| Ecole Africaine des Métiers de l’Architecture et de l'Urbanisme | Togo | Prof | Siméon | N'Dri Kouassi | ndrisimeon@hotmail.com |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | South Africa | Mr | Kenneth | Newman | newmank@cput.ac.za |
| University of Nairobi | Kenya | Prof | Peter | Ngau | peterngau@gmail.com |
| Catholic University of Mozambique | Mozambique | Mr | Sergio | Niquisse | sniquisse@ucm.ac.mz |
| Ardhi University | Tanzania | Assoc Prof | Tumsifu | Nnkya | nnkya6654@gmail.com |
| Bells University of Technology | Nigeria | Ms | Folasade | Odekunle | jokoshade@yahoo.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Dr | Nancy | Odendaal | nancy.odendaal@uct.ac.za |
| University of Lagos | Nigeria | Prof | Leke | Oduwaye | leodwa@yahoo.com |
| Lagos State University | Nigeria | Mr | Kunle | Ogundele | kunleoguns@yahoo.co.uk |
| Yaba College of Technology | Nigeria | Dr | Mobolaji | Olaseni | aolaseni@ymail.com |
| Yaba College of Technology | Nigeria | Mr | Abimbola | Omolabi | bimboomolabi@yahoo.com |
| Makerere University | Uganda | Dr | Fredrick | Omolo-Okalebo | omolofr@gmail.com |
| University of Johannesburg | South Africa | Dr | George | Onatu | gonatu@uj.ac.za |
| University of Nigeria | Nigeria | Dr | Victor | Onyebueke | victor.onyebueke@unn.edu.ng |
| University of Pretoria | South Africa | Prof | Mark | Oranje | mark.oranje@up.ac.za |
| Anambra State University | Nigeria | Mr | Pantaleon | Osunkwo | arcpoco2005@yahoo.com |
| Laboratoire d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Dynamiques Sociales et Développement Local (LASDEL) | Niger | Dr | Hamani | Oumarou | el\_hamani@yahoo.fr |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Prof | Ian | Palmer | ian.palmer@uct.ac.za |
| Politecnico di Milano | Italy | Dr | Maria Chiara | Pastore | mariachiara.pastore@polimi.it |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Mr | Brett | Petzer | brett.petzer@gmail.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Prof | Edgar | Pieterse | edgar.pieterse@uct.ac.za |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | South Africa | Mr | Nicholas | Pinfold | PinfoldN@cput.ac.za |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Ms | Azraa | Rawoot | rawoot.azraa@gmail.com |
| University of Ibadan | Nigeria | Dr | Lekan | Sanni | lekansanni@gmail.com |
| University of Zambia | Zambia | Mr | Gilbert | Siame | siamegilbert@yahoo.co.uk |
| University of the Witwatersrand | South Africa | Prof | Mfaniseni | Sihlongonyane | mfaniseni.sihlongonyane@wits.ac.za |
| Durham University | UK | Dr | Jonathan | Silver | j.d.silver@durham.ac.uk |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Ms | Caroline | Skinner | caroline.skinner@uct.ac.za |
| University of Nairobi | Kenya | Ms | Alice | Sverdlik | sverdlik@berkeley.edu |
| University of the Witwatersrand | South Africa | Prof | Alison | Todes | Alison.todes@wits.ac.za |
| Community Organisation Resource Centre | South Africa | Ms | Thandeka | Tshabalala | thandeka@courc.co.za |
| Human Sciences Research Council | South Africa | Prof | Ivan | Turok | iturok@hsrc.ac.za |
| University of Nigeria, Enugu | Nigeria | Prof | Smart U. | Uchegbu | suchegbu@yahoo.com |
| Georgia State University | USA | Dr | Kelechi | Uzochukwu | kuzochukwu@gsu.edu |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | South Africa | Mrs | Belinda | Verster | versterb@cput.ac.za |
| Eduardo Mondlane University | South Africa | Dr | Mauricio | Vieira | mmonteirovieira@uol.com.br |
| Laboratoire Citoyennetés | Burkina Faso | Dr | Jocelyne | Vokouma | lyne.vokouma@fasonet.bf |
| Maseno University | Kenya | Dr | George | Wagah | ggwagah@yahoo.com |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Prof | Vanessa | Watson | vanessa.watson@uct.ac.za |
| University of Cape Town | South Africa | Assoc Prof | Tanja | Winkler | tanja.winkler@uct.ac.za |
| Ben-Gurion University | Israel | Prof | Oren | Yiftachel | yiftach@bgu.ac.il |

# Appendix 2: Conference Programme

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Day 1 – Monday 17 November** | | **Day 2 – Tuesday 18 November** | | **Day 3 – Wednesday 19 November** | |
| 08:00 | Registration | |  | |  | |
| SESSION 1  08:30  08:45  09:00  09:30 | Chair: Dan Inkoom  Welcome and introduction: Vanessa Watson  Address by outgoing chair: Babatunde Agbola  Plenary address: Oren Yiftachel | | Chair: Nancy Odendaal  Plenary address: Edgar Pieterse  Address by Armando Carbonell (Lincoln Institute) | | Chair: Peter Ngau  Plenary address: Colin McFarlane | |
| TEA  10:00 |  | |  | |  | |
| SESSION 2  10:30 | Parallel Session: Southern theory   * Turok * Sihlongonyane * Molebatsi   Chair: Colin McFarlane | Parallel Session: Spatial transformations of the urban South   * Todes * Bhan * Mabin   Chair: Wilbard Kombe | Parallel Session: Land   * Omolo-Okalebo et al. * Marx * Bacho * Luhl & Delgado   Discussant: Tumsifu Nnkya  Chair: Mtafu Manda | Parallel Session: Land   * Chikwenda * Brookins * Uchegbu * Berrisford & Palmer   Discussant: Wilbard Kombe  Chair: Babatunde Agbola | Parallel Session: Innovative pedagogies (reflections)   * Chibamba & Nyanga * Pinfold * Inkoom * Onyebueke   Chair: Cecil Madell | Parallel Session: Innovative pedagogies (imperatives)   * Agbola * Muller * Lawanson & Oduwaye * Cilliers et al.   Chair: Tim Gyuse |
| LUNCH  12:30 |  | |  | |  | |
| SESSION 3  13:30 | Session: South-South learning   * Fernandes * Huchzermeyer * Allen & Levy   Chair: Alan Mabin | | Parallel Session: Sustainable urban transitions   * Turok * Lipietz & Johnson * Marvin & Silver   Chair: David Amborski | Parallel Session: Co-production of urban space and services   * Tshabalala & Hendler * Oduwaye & Dekolo * Uzochukwu * Oranje   Chair: Vanessa Watson | Roundtable Discussion: Planning pedagogy and ‘wicked problems’  Convenors: Sarah Charlton and Garth Klein | |
| TEA  15:00 |  | |  | |  | |
| SESSION 4  15:30 | Session: African urban fantasies   * Pastore * Odendaal * Watson   Discussant: Allan Cain  Chair: James Duminy | | Parallel Session: Sustainable urban transitions   * Cash * Feltes * Hansmann   Chair: Ian Palmer | Parallel Session: Co-production of knowledge in teaching   * Ngau * Marks et al. * Siame   Chair: Garth Klein | The way forward for AAPS: Vanessa Watson  Address by incoming chair Peter Ngau  Proceedings close at 16:30  Chair: Babatunde Agbola | |
| EVENING |  | | Conference Dinner at Moyo Restaurant, Blouberg | |  | |