

Migration, Displacement and Mobility in Africa: Complex Issues in Current Times

Recent years have seen global migration policy discussions being increasingly driven by moral panics – public anxiety about issues thought to threaten the moral standards of society. In 2018, two Global Compacts – agreed principles to guide an international response - for (1) 'Refugees' and (2) 'Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration' were implemented but the ways in which these Compacts will influence policy making and programming at the local level are unknown. In 2019, will these Global Compacts support or hinder the development and implementation of appropriate responses to migration in Africa? Key concerns include the continued side-lining of internal/domestic migration patterns, by far the largest form of movement on the continent, and the role of 'Europe in Africa' in relation to the ways in which the management of migration from Africa to Europe is increasingly being outsourced to African nations. What do these concerns mean for the social and economic development trajectories of the African continent, and for the protection of people on the move? The African Union has declared 2019 as the Year of Migration, Displacement and Mobility in Africa. To this end, this Annual Young Scientist Conference will focus on this theme with the aim of unpacking complex issues in current times in order to provide critical thought for improved ways forward to respond to diverse migration movements across the continent.

Suggested thematic areas

We invite submissions that consider the complex issues of migration, displacement and mobility in Africa. Below we outline suggested thematic areas but the conference themes will be finalised based on the submissions received.

The devil is in the detail: Responding to international migration

This sub-theme seeks to explore responses to diverse forms of international migration in Africa, including in the development and implementation of immigration legislation in light of two Global Compacts - for (1) 'Refugees' and (2) 'Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration'. Questions include: Whose responsibility is it to respond to international migration? What do current programmes look like? What is needed? What is the role of 'Europe in Africa' in restricting movement to Europe?

Reshaping humanitarian aid: The case for a shared responsibility

In 2019, the contemporary humanitarian landscape is associated with protracted crises that exist outside of typical conflict and environmental disaster situations. With increased and long-lasting civil, political and social unrest in many African countries, there is a need to understand this new humanitarian order, and re-think and re-shape appropriate humanitarian responses. This subtheme explores how humanitarian responses are a shared responsibility for everyone from the local to international level. It explores how humanitarian accountability should be built into all responses to migration, including thinking through urban refugee populations and the movements of domestic migrants into peripheral urban spaces, contributing to an increasing urban poor population. For example: Should humanitarian organisations respond to challenges in urban contexts and fulfil the responsibilities of the State? Can the Global Compact on Refugees support improved humanitarian responses or will the Compact further stigmatise forced migrant groups? What are the current legal frameworks governing global responses to humanitarian disasters? Are they still relevant in 2019? Whose responsibility is it to respond to the humanitarian needs of different migrant groups?

The New Urban Agenda: Migration, livelihoods, social welfare and the case for integrated development plans

This sub-theme seeks to explore challenges – and opportunities – of different forms of migration for Cities in Africa. This sub-theme will explore both domestic and international migration and is looking to explore such

linkages for a sustainable future in line with the SDGs and frameworks such as the New Urban Agenda, Agenda for Humanity as well as the Global Alliance on Urban Crisis. Key questions include: what are the challenges faced by local urban authorities in responding to the health and social welfare needs of diverse migrant groups? How can the contribution of migrant communities to local development be increased?

Re-imagining migration: Big data and opportunities for technological and scientific innovation

This subtheme explores the use of science, technology, and innovation in responding to complex migration and refugee-related issues across the continent and whether or not these have been successful. This includes thinking through the opportunities associated with 'big data'. A key concern surrounds the ethics associated with such innovation. For example: Who does this innovation serve? Do migrant groups benefit from such innovation? Can data that aims to improve our understanding of migration flows become a potentially dangerous form of surveillance for undocumented migrants?

Social capital, resilience and social networks among migrant groups

Migrant groups – including domestic migrants, jobseekers, asylum seekers, refugees, and undocumented migrants – may draw on social capital and social networks in order to navigate migration journeys and life in destination and transit contexts. This subtheme explores how State and societal responses are undermining or supporting the use of social networks and social capital as sites for resilience and growth, with particular interest in understanding similarities or difference between different migrant groups in different contexts including within urban and peri-urban spaces, refugee camps, and border areas. Key questions include: how can States maximise the opportunities of social capital and social networks afforded to migrants? Do current migration management approaches strengthen or weaken social networks for migrants?

Researching migration: Developing an African agenda for Africa

Recent years have seen a renewed conversation around the decolonisation and democratising of research in the African context. To contribute to this movement, it is crucial to map out the current concerns in migration research and provide considered alternatives. Some key questions include: What are our responsibilities as young scientists in supporting this agenda? What are the critical challenges inherent in approaching ways of re-imagining research on migration in Africa? How do we ensure that researchers – particularly early career scholars - on the continent can drive, shape and lead the agenda? What are the opportunities and challenges associated with international partnerships, including those with other low- and middle-income contexts such as India or Brazil, or with high-income contexts of Europe and North America?

Gender, Health and Migration

Migration is increasingly recognised as a determinant of health as it interacts with health outcomes and influences health inequities in multiple ways. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. The gendered nature of migration patterns highlights the fact that female migrants face unique and specific vulnerabilities including greater risk of exploitation, abuse and trafficking. There is however recognition that due to women's marginalization, migration to more economically and educationally open societies often can help improve their health, personal situations and employment opportunities lending an alternative narrative to factors can potentially increase the agency and capabilities.

Some key questions include: what are the multidimensional experiences and challenges that impact the health of women who migrate? What are the effects of migration on the availability of linguistically and culturally appropriate health care and the attendant costs in their absence?