

Indicator 3.2 The number of solution-orientated communities of practice created or supported with active involvement of HSRC researchers

A solution-orientated community of practice (COP) is a fit-for-purpose, short-term ‘think tank’, usually multi-disciplinary and problem-orientated in nature. It comprises at least five regular members/active participants, of whom at least one is from the HSRC, and its existence is evidenced by a dedicated web presence, and communication or activities during the period under review.

Provide the COP topic/purpose:

COP: Housing & Equitable Cities

This community of practice brings together a network of scholars, activists and practitioners interested in promoting access to adequate urban housing and more equitable cities. The COP is rooted in an understanding that cities around the world, especially in rapidly urbanising countries in the global South, face a systemic housing crisis that is interlinked with issues of poverty, urban inequalities, and socio-spatial segregation. An increasing number of urban residents are excluded from formal property markets and state provision, thus relying on informal practices to inhabit urban spaces and access opportunities. As such, practices of land and building occupations, informal rental housing, tented camps and urban commoning become integral features of urban landscapes, considerably shaping our neighbourhoods and cities. At the same time, housing and real estate function as important income-generating and wealth accumulation opportunities, albeit this is very unequally distributed across cities and the urban population. This COP centres the role of housing in urbanisation processes by pursuing three overarching goals:

1. **To research how housing policy and practice shape urban residents’ wellbeing, their access to the city, and larger processes of urbanization**
2. **To contribute to local, national and global policy debates on how housing can help to create more inclusive and equitable cities**
3. **To contribute to global theory from a Southern perspective on housing and urbanization**

This shall be achieved through the following:

1. A networking platform for scholars, practitioners, residents, activists and policy makers, predominantly from the global South, to examine the current role of housing in shaping urbanisation in different geographical contexts.
2. A space for deliberation, experimentation and learning among scholars, practitioners, activists, residents and policy makers to identify practical measures and progressive policy approaches to increase housing’s contribution towards more equitable cities.
3. A series of seminars or workshops to discuss different aspects of housing policy and practice, including issues of state provision of housing, public-private partnerships, inclusionary housing policies, informal housing, land and building occupations, homelessness, urban commoning, urban governance and solidarity economy.

4. A tangible opportunity for publication in reputable journals with high visibility that showcases latest research and practice on housing and equitable cities, with an opportunity to strengthen Southern theorising.

Provide details of the convener(s) of the COP:

Convenors:

Dr Andreas Scheba, Senior Research Specialist, Equitable Education and Economies, HSRC
 Ms Diana Sanchez-Betancourt, Senior Researcher, DCES, HSRC
 Dr Justin Visagie, Senior Research Specialist, Equitable Education and Economies, HSRC
 Dr Suraya Scheba, Lecturer, Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Cape Town

Provide details of the COP membership:

(Must have at least 5 regular members/active participants & at least 1 from the HSRC. Members can be drawn from academia, civil society and/or government, in any combination)

1. Dr Andreas Scheba, Senior Research Specialist, Equitable Education and Economies, HSRC and Centre for Development Support, University of the Free State (UFS)
2. Dr Justin Visagie, Senior Research Specialist, Equitable Education and Economies, HSRC and Department of Economics, University of the Free State
3. Ms Diana Sanchez-Betancourt, Senior Researcher, DCES, HSRC
4. Dr Suraya Scheba, Lecturer, Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Cape Town
5. Prof Ivan Turok, HSRC and UFS
6. Mr Bevil Lucas, Reclaim the City;
7. Ms Karen Hendricks, Reclaim the City;
8. Ms Robyn Park-Ross, Ndifuna Ukwazi
9. Mr Nick Budlender, Ndifuna Ukwazi
10. Ms Helen Rourke, Development Action Group
11. Ms Claudia Hitzeroth, Development Action Group
12. Mr Zama Mgwatyu, Development Action Group

Provide the hyperlink to the COP website/landing page accessible via the HSRC website:

TBC

Provide details of the activities of the COP during the year under review:

(Activities may include meetings to synthesise existing evidence, debate or discuss aspects of the topic within the group or in the form of seminars or webinars, monitor policy uptake, undertake literature reviews, study new methodological approaches to research or problem-solving to a social problem, designing demonstration studies, or producing a joint research proposal).

1. Regular team meetings

In addition to organising specific community engagement events, members of the COP engage regularly (at least once per month) with key stakeholders and collaborators either face-to-face or in person. Besides COP members, occupiers, activists, practitioners and policy makers participate in these meetings, where current challenges and opportunities of housing and city-making are discussed. These meetings provide a platform to discuss what concrete research interventions are needed (e.g. community indicators in Bogota; research on how the regularisation processes in Brazil can be applied in Cape Town; policy and institutional reforms required for the small-scale rental housing sector in South Africa) and to reflect on how to maximise the impact of engaged scholarship. The lessons and experiences are shared in meetings within the larger COP and other stakeholders to analyse housing and urbanisation comparatively across geographical contexts.

2. Documentary production and screenings

The COP in collaboration with occupiers, a filmmaker and research assistants produced a documentary called “City Occupied”. This documentary compares land and building occupations across Bogota (Colombia), Cape Town (South Africa) and Sao Paulo (Brazil). It is available in English and Portuguese on the project website. The documentary has been screened at occupations in Cape Town, Bogota and Sao Paulo. It will be screened again at the Cissie Gool House exhibition, which will take place from 7th to 21st June 2023 at the Cape Institute for Architecture in Cape Town. Besides COP members and residents, urban scholars and practitioners are invited to the viewing, which opens up collective discussions and reflections about the challenges and opportunities of occupations.

3. Development of joint research proposals

COP members develop and submit research proposals in response to open calls. Two proposals were successful and will provide financial means into 2023/24 to continue our engagement with occupations, support the development of practical and policy interventions, and produce academic outputs to further global theoretical debates.

- Occupations as practices of south design. Grant funding from the Governing through design research collective.
<https://www.koozarch.com/interviews/south-designs-for-planetary-futures>
- Urban vacancy, occupation and communing: Advancing a global comparative urbanism. Urban Studies Foundation Seminar Series Award.
www.urbanstudiesfoundation.org

Another proposal that is currently being discussed among members centres around developing a social housing web portal that builds on previous research and existing networks in the sector. Discussions are also underway about future research and practical interventions in the small-scale rental housing sector.

4. Conference panel

COP members will co-convene a panel session at the upcoming EADI conference in July 2023. The panel is entitled “Housing as commons: Sites of struggle and possibility”. In addition to facilitating the session, COP members will jointly present a paper “City occupied: comparative study of land/building occupations in Bogota, Cape Town and Sao Paulo”.

5. Development of knowledge products

COP members will submit journal articles, reports, HSRC review pieces and newspaper articles during the year of review.

6. Supervision and teaching of students

COP members supervise students working on urban housing and cities as part of their employment at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Free State. At the University of the Free State, Dr Visagie, Dr Scheba and Prof Turok run a course on ‘Spatial Economics’, which includes a module on Housing and the Economy. Dr Suraya Scheba teaches on housing and urban justice in her courses i) Society and Space, ii) Geographic Thought, and iii) Urban Political Ecology at the University of Cape Town.

*** Attach DCEO: Research approved COP report for upload on the RMS.**
(See attached template for the COP report to be compiled)

DCEO: Research approval of the Community of Practice report:

Signature: _____

Name of DCEO: R: _____

Date approved: _____

Community of Practice (COP) report (1 Page report for DCEO: R approval)

COP: Housing & Equitable Cities

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This COP aims to centre the role of housing in shaping urbanisation. It has three overarching goals:

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4. A tangible opportunity for publication in reputable journals with high visibility that showcases latest research and practice on housing and equitable cities, with an opportunity to strengthen Southern theorising.

Information on the COP is readily available at www.city-occupied.net and on the HSRC, EEE webpage at:

The convenors of the COP are:

Dr Andreas Scheba, Senior Research Specialist, Equitable Education and Economies, HSRC
Ms Diana Sanchez-Betancourt, Senior Researcher, DCES, HSRC

Dr Justin Visagie, Senior Research Specialist, Equitable Education and Economies, HSRC
Dr Suraya Scheba, Lecturer, Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Cape Town

The members of the COP are:

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During the period under review, the COP engaged in the following activities:

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