Urban Joburg

URBAN JOBURG Joburg is a complex city. On the one hand, its (too) high crime rates, its traffic problems, its smog, its secluded suburbs and the large gap between rich and poor reflect a harsh reality that makes Joburg not exactly the easiest city to live in.

But on the other hand, beneath this tough exterior is a city that is almost caring, and that grips you in its all encompassing embrace. Its vivacious vibe, its engaging range of entertainment, its spectacular sunsets and its cosmopolitan citizenry somehow keep you enchanted and alive to this city's magic.

It's a paradox, but we think that's really what defines Joburg. You cannot make sense of it. It doesn't want you to make sense of it, nor will it present itself on a silver platter to you. It will allow you though to engage with it, and to find out not only what makes Joburg, Joburg, but what makes YOU a Joburger.

Urban Joburg and its sister site, JoziGram, are our way of engaging with this mammoth city, and also of allowing you a space to engage with it, think about it, interogate it, and love it. Hope you enjoy them.

Our History:
Urban Joburg was founded by Thomas Coggin in September 2009, who edited the blog up until May 2015 with Marius Pieterse. Since then it has grown to include over 4000 followers on both its [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. The blog is edited at present by Julie-Ann Tyler. Julie-Ann is a Masters student in architecture, also at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Read more: http://www.urbanjoburg.com/

Jeffrey Paller ~ Rising Through

Cities? A Look At Ghana

A new report by the World Bank, "[Rising through Cities in Ghana](#)" analyses the rapid transformation of a country whose urban population has grown from 4 million in 1984 to more than 14 million today. 51% of Ghanaians now live in cities. Over the same period annual GDP growth has averaged 5.7%, the number of industrial and service jobs has increased by 21% and the capital city, Accra, has registered a 20% reduction in poverty.

However, in August 2014, a fiscal debt crisis forced the government to request financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund. And in May 2015, citizens of Accra peacefully protested the failure to resolve a three-year long electric power crisis that has sapped businesses and hindered economic growth.

The World Bank report, impressive for its presentation of unique data, comes at an important juncture for Ghana's urban development. Three points are particularly notable:

1. *Accra is not alone in driving Ghana's urbanisation.* While Accra gains a lot of attention for its role as a megacity on the continent, its primacy has actually declined. In 1984, Accra accounted for 24.4% of the population; by 2010, the figure was 16.6%. The report states that "the number of medium (20,000–50,000 people) and large medium (50,000–100,000) sized towns has quadrupled and tripled respectively." Big cities like Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi continue to grow, but an interesting and important area for future research will be the socio-political developments in regional urban centres like Tamale, Tema, Ashaiman, Cape Coast and Aflao.

Read more: http://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/ghana/
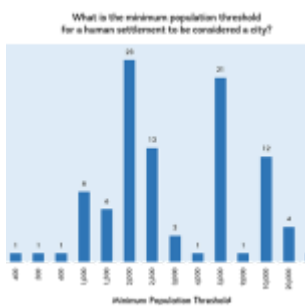
Glass negatives ~ Spain 1930s

From a collection of glass negatives: Spain 1930s.
We appreciate any information you may have about when and where exactly this photo was taken.

Chandan Deuskar ~ What Does "Urban" Mean?

Anyone reading this is likely to have heard the statistic that 'over half of the world's population now lives in urban areas'. This has been the standard opening line of reports and presentations about urbanization since this milestone was supposedly reached in 2008. But what does it really mean?

In everyday usage, terms related to human settlements have vague, shifting meanings. What one person might describe as a small 'city' might be a 'town' or 'village' for someone else; one person's 'megacity' might be a cluster of cities from a different perspective.

Similarly, we can usually identify areas that are clearly within a city and others that are outside it, but there is usually a peri-urban area of intermediate density that usually lies between the two, making it hard to define a clear city limit. Formal administrative boundaries may have historic or political meaning, but are rarely aligned with the physical or economic extents of the urban area.

Read more: http://blogs.worldbank.org/what-does-urban-mean

Josephine d'Allant ~ Muhammad Yunus: Redesign Economics To Redesign The World

Muhammad Yunus' keynote speech was one of the main highlights of the New Cities Summit. His speech was about the concept of a *social business*, which he defines as a non-dividend company working to solve a human problem. One of the reasons Professor Yunus finds this model compelling is that the money invested is returned and can then be reused, whereas with a charity, the money can only be used once. Social businesses are also an important answer to unemployment:

Professor Yunus counsels young people to become entrepreneurs instead of seeking jobs.

Read more: http://urb.im/live/blog/

Muhammad Yunus – Social business: http://www.muhammadyunus.org/social-business