

# The African Centre For Cities



The African Centre for Cities (ACC) is an interdisciplinary research and teaching programme focussed on quality scholarship regarding the dynamics of unsustainable urbanization processes in Africa, with an eye on identifying systemic responses.

## *Mission*

The ACC seeks to facilitate critical urban research and policy discourses for the promotion of vibrant, democratic and sustainable urban development in the global South from an African perspective.

## *Background*

In mid 2007, UCT Signature Theme funding was awarded to the Cities in Africa Project, which was a collaborative venture between the Faculties of Engineering and the Built Environment (EBE), Science and Humanities. The initiative is located within the EBE Faculty. The Signature Theme builds on an interdisciplinary network of academics across these three faculties, which emerged during 2005 and 2006, and which was supported in 2006 by EBE funding. This network in turn, had emerged as a result of an initiative by the Ove Arup Foundation, which had committed funds towards the establishment of an interdisciplinary masters programme in EBE (Urban Infrastructure Design and Management) in 2005, on the understanding that faculty staff would raise further funding for a related research initiative. In 2007, the proposed new director of the Theme was also granted an NRF Research Chair in Urban Policy, allowing the alignment of these two initiatives. Professor Edgar Pieterse was appointed to lead the Theme and take up the Chair, and he took up office in August 2007. Since then, there has been a process to rename the initiative as the African Centre for Cities to denote the focus on urban research in the global South but from an African perspective. The ACC is a response to the growing recognition world-wide of the importance of cities, and particularly cities in the developing world. In South Africa this is reflected in the increasingly urban emphasis in policy documents at both national and provincial level. The sense is one of impending crisis, with the realisation that rapid urbanisation also raises issues of adequate food supply, affordable shelter, employment opportunities, water and waste

management, public transportation, crime and disease, and environmental degradation and climate change.

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