AFRICAN CITIES RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Working Paper 17

Youth and capability development: Domain report

Olha Homonchuk, Elizabeth Dessie, Nicola Banks, Katja Starc Card, Susan Nicolai, Nansozi K Muwanga, Imrana Buba, Zainab M Hassan, Haja R Wurie and Eyob Balcha Gebremariam

July 2024

Olha Homonchuk
Research Fellow, Development and Public Finance, ODI, UK

Elizabeth Dessie
Research Associate, African Cities Research Consortium, The University of Manchester, UK

Nicola Banks
Professor, Global Development Institute, The University of Manchester, UK

Katja Starc Card
PhD researcher, The New School, US

Susan Nicolai
Senior Research Fellow, Equity and Social Policy, ODI, UK

Nansozi K Muwanga
Head of Department, Political Science and Public Administration, Makerere University, Uganda

Imrana Buba
PhD researcher, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, Norway

Zainab M Hassan
Executive Director, Somali Gender Equity Movement, US

Haja R Wurie
Senior Lecturer, College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, University of Sierra Leone

Eyob Balcha Gebremariam
Research Associate, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, UK

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Lorraine van Blerk (University of Dundee) and Paula Meth (University of Glasgow) for insightful peer reviews, which improved this paper. We are also grateful to the country research teams for in-country data collection, analysis and feedback on the research synthesis:

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Elizabeth Mengistu Tesemma, Ephrem Berhanu Debalke, Yonas Ashine Demise
Freetown, Sierra Leone: Haja Wurie, Muallem Kamara, Saidu Wurie-Jalloh, Andrew Dauda and Ahmid C Jalloh
Kampala, Uganda: Liola Patricia Kato and Solomon Winyi
Maiduguri, Nigeria: Abba Ali Yarima Mustapha, Samirah Usman Iliyas, Zainab Ali Hamidu
Mogadishu, Somalia: Zainab M Hassan

This paper was funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) as part of the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC) led by The University of Manchester. We would also like to thank Clare Degenhardt (ACRC) for copy-editing the paper, Hannah van Rooyen (ACRC) for typesetting and Elaine Antwi (ODI) for managing the project.

The findings and conclusions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of FCDO or The University of Manchester.

Abstract

Young people are indispensable in the pursuit of inclusive urban development in African cities. By 2050, over half of Africa's population will be under the age of 25. As such, young people will play a game-changing role in the development outcomes across Africa's cities and are often regarded as the "makers or breakers" of the future of the continent. The ACRC youth and capability development research uncovers prevalent systemic barriers hindering young people in African cities from fulfilling their potential, particularly within social welfare systems and politics.

Drawing on insights from five cities (Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Freetown in Sierra Leone, Kampala in Uganda, Maiduguri in Nigeria and Mogadishu in Somalia), our findings show that the key social systems provide limited support to young people transitioning into adulthood, yielding the need for reform. In particular, young people have emphasised the significance of quality education, vocational skills training programmes, financial services, health services and avenues for political participation. Overall, youth have high stakes but low power in the political sphere, undermining their ability to influence and improve the core social systems affecting their livelihoods. The paper outlines key policy recommendations that emerged from this research.

Keywords: Political economy, cities, youth, education, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Somalia

Cite this paper as:

Homonchuk, O, Dessie, E, Banks, N, Starc Card, K, Nicolai, S, Muwanga, NK, Buba, I, Hassan, ZM, Wurie, HR and Gebremariam, E (2024). "Youth and capability development: Domain report". ACRC Working Paper 2024-17. Manchester: African Cities Research Consortium, The University of Manchester. Available online: www.african-cities.org

ISBN: 978-1-915163-17-2

The African Cities Research Consortium is funded by UK International Development. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

UK International Development
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Acronyms

ACRC	African Cites Research Consortium
BOOG	Borno Office of the Governor
BSACSDHR	Borno State Agency for the Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response
EdTech	Education technology
FGD	Focus group discussion
FRN	Federal Republic of Nigeria
KII	Key informant interview
MoECHE	Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
WB	World Bank
YCD	Youth and capability development domain

Executive summary

Context

Young people are indispensable in the pursuit of inclusive urban development in African cities. By 2050, over half of Africa's population will be under the age of 25 (UNICEF and AUC, 2021). As such, young people will play a game-changing role in the development outcomes across Africa's cities and are often regarded as the "makers or breakers" of the future of the continent. The ACRC youth and capability development research uncovers prevalent systemic barriers hindering young people in African cities from fulfilling their potential, particularly within social welfare systems and politics.

Drawing on insights from five cities, our findings show that the key social systems provide limited support to young people transitioning into adulthood, yielding the need for reform. In particular, young people have emphasised the significance of quality education, vocational skills training programmes, financial services, health services and avenues for political participation. Overall, youth have high stakes, but low power in the political sphere, undermining their ability to influence and improve the core social systems affecting their livelihoods.

Methods

The study builds on evidence from five cities that are part of the youth and capability development domain, including Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Freetown in Sierra Leone, Kampala in Uganda, Maiduguri in Nigeria and Mogadishu in Somalia. These cities were chosen because they have youth-majority populations and have been directly or indirectly affected by conflict. The objective in selecting these cities was to investigate commonalities in youth capabilities, as well as the political and systemic influences shaping these capabilities, across diverse urban contexts.

City-level research teams drew on a combination of secondary and primary data collection. Primary data was collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions. In all cities, research teams were committed to distinguishing between the experiences of different vulnerable groups of young people, including young migrants and those living in refugee camps, as well as documenting how these challenges differ based on gender and socioeconomic status. Building on extensive debates on social versus biological definitions of youthhood, participants' ages ranged from 15 to 30 years of age. Children ages 0 to 15 were not included.

Figure 1: Youth and capability development domain cities

Key findings

Limited access to quality education, secure work, and mental and reproductive health services hinders the capabilities of youth

Political settlements in five research cities often exclude young people, as political elites engage with them primarily during the elections through patron–client campaigning strategies. These power dynamics restrict youth influence on policy agendas and hinder their ability to hold government agencies accountable. Additionally, conflicting interests among various government departments tend to undermine the effectiveness of youth programmes.

Navigating insecure labour markets is a central aspect of youth experiences, with challenges of un- and underemployment being similar across five cities. Youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds face hurdles in securing formal jobs and accessing microbusiness loans regardless of their education, due to issues like nepotism and corruption. When livelihood opportunities are scarce, some young men join militia groups or organised youth gangs to meet social and economic needs. Meanwhile,

young women are more likely to encounter financial exploitation and sexual discrimination during job searches.

Opportunities to acquire skills to better navigate the labour market are frequently limited, as both formal education and vocational skills programmes fall short in terms of quality and relevance to market demands. Gaps in government-funded education systems are often filled by private provision and vocational training programmes, perpetuating socioeconomic inequalities. Religious schools are another alternative that is more affordable but often of variable quality.

Research participants across various cities voiced concerns about the use of substances by peers as a coping mechanism for depressive symptoms arising from the stress of conflict and economic insecurity. Existing health systems generally provide limited mental health support, primarily due to persistent stigma among policymakers and young people. Moreover, mental health treatments alone often fail to address the core drivers of ill-being, such as unemployment, precarity and experiences of conflict-induced violence. Access to reproductive health services is severely restricted, often due to exorbitant costs at the time-of-service use.

Implications for urban policy reform

Integrated and multisectoral approaches to promoting youth capabilities

The number of cross-sectoral projects across African countries is on the rise; however, they predominantly concentrate on combining health interventions, such as HIV/AIDS (Kuruvilla et al., 2018) or malaria prevention (UN-Habitat/UNDP, 2022), with cash transfers (Austrian et al., 2021). Findings in this report suggest the need for broadening multisectoral youth programmes to incorporate youth skills training and mental health support. As the first step, it is crucial to support locally led initiatives of this nature that can be expanded or scaled up, as most evidence focuses on stand-alone, short-term skills training programmes.

Furthermore, lessons could be drawn from the Integrated Mental Health, Skills, and Work Policy strategies that have been rolled out across OECD countries since 2015, based on the evidence that mental ill-health weighs disproportionately on young people who are unemployed and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (OECD, 2021). One example of such type of support is the “I Can Work” programme in Wales, which offers integrated skills training and mental health support. The programme is accessible through the national network of health clinics and community-based support services and has resulted in improved interministerial coordination and integrated programming.

Protection and support for young people in informal labour markets

Many participants stressed the importance of regulating technical and vocational education and training (TVET) curricula, due to the considerable differences in the quality of skills training programmes. Of particular concern are informal apprenticeships, where young individuals are highly vulnerable to exploitation. At the

time of writing, there is a striking lack of research evidence on education and training and the informal economy (Alla-Mensah and McGrath, 2023) and how young people can be supported when navigating these informal arrangements. One option could be to learn from successful community-managed savings group models (for example, Ajo, Esusu, Saccos, Vicoba) and consult with the local communities when designing strategies to mitigate the risks faced by young people in the informal sector.

Meaningful inclusion of youth in decisionmaking

Research findings yet again emphasise the importance of participatory programme design – youth empowerment and capability development projects, whether funded by national or international actors, need to allocate time and resources to meaningfully collaborate with youth during research and programme design phases. Incorporating youth into decisionmaking processes enhances the likelihood that interventions will not only adhere to the cost-effective principles emphasised in the global North's policy discourse of “what works” and “smart buys” but will also be more sustainable and relevant to young people.

While numerous examples exist for shifting the power to local actors originating from the global South (Baguios et al., 2021), pathways to inclusion of young people in politics are less clear. In contexts where elections are either not held or dominated by money and violence, elevating youth voices and issues is challenging. This research illustrates that youth often find themselves forced to align with existing power networks to access any benefits at all. However, at the same time there is a growing awareness among political elites regarding youth's disruptive potential and the inadequacy of current clientelist approaches (for example, Muwanga et al, 2020). As such, there are increasing prospects for more meaningful inclusion of youth in the political settlements as the current powerbrokers will seek ways to ensure their political and economic survival.

1. Introduction

This study forms part of the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC), which seeks to identify systematic priority problems that prevent African cities from fulfilling their inclusive development potential and to understand how these problems are interlinked with the national and city-level political settlements. African cities today are among the fastest growing in the world (Thorpe, 2023), often facing the issues of growing inequality, weak social welfare systems, insecure incomes and crowded living conditions, all of which are inseparable from the questions of power and politics (Kelsall et al., 2021).

Young people are indispensable when pursuing inclusive urban development and studying African cities. They constitute large – often majority – segments of urban populations across the continent (Banks et al., 2022). As such, young people play a potentially game-changing role in development outcomes across Africa's cities in the coming decades: young people are "makers or breakers" and the future of African cities. Large youth populations hold a critical (often oppositional) role in urban politics, though are often co-opted into these processes, rather than represented or included (Oosterom, 2018; Bjarnesen, 2017). At the same time, young people have particular vulnerabilities associated with the transition stage in the life-course that are shaped and exacerbated strongly by the urban context. The social, economic and political dynamics within African cities often make the transition into traditional adult social roles exceptionally difficult. This limitation hampers the capabilities of young individuals in both their present lives and future prospects (Banks, 2021).

Yet African cities are difficult places to be young. Challenges related to work and employment are central to this story. Young people are overrepresented in under- and unemployment rates in cities experiencing fast-growing populations, shrinking formal economies and acute dependence on "making do" in informal and often precarious forms of work (Potts, 2013; Mastercard Foundation, 2020). The adverse implications of this stretch far beyond income, creating obstacles for young people in each and every one of the key transitions that young people undergo on the pathway to adulthood: education, work, health, family and citizenship (World Bank, 2007). Research underscores the non-linear nature of these transitions, emphasising the experiences of "stuckness" or '"waithood" of youth due to challenging or, at times, delayed transitions to adulthood (Gough, 2008; Banks et al., 2022; Rubin et al., 2022; Levy and Dubinsky, 2023). The stark reality for many urban youths is that they are unable to fulfil social roles associated with adulthood and unable to achieve or aspire to significant social or economic mobility. These challenges are deepened and aggravated in crisis- and conflict-affected settings, as well as during periods of rapid and prolonged change, such as the Covid-19 pandemic or climate change impacts. African cities and their populations are currently facing and will continue to experience the repercussions of these exacerbating factors.

If these complex challenges are to be addressed and young people's futures to be improved, then our attention must look beyond challenges and outcomes,

prioritising policy solutions. To achieve this, we must look deeper at the multifaceted and interlinked social, economic and political circumstances young people are facing, and the role that different city systems and urban stakeholders play in addressing these. This makes ACRC's two overarching frameworks of political settlements and city systems an effective entry point for identifying and addressing the critical challenges young urban populations are experiencing and generating insights and evidence to assist urban policymakers and stakeholders (including young people themselves) to improve young people's life chances and experiences of growing up in the city.

As one of the African Cities Research Consortium's eight different urban development domains, the youth and capability development domain is unique for its sole focus on the "social". Of course, all domains are deeply connected with social issues and city residents. Yet, with its primary focus on young people and their opportunities and challenges within and across African cities, this study is unique for this focus and is particularly crosscutting in this respect; young people have distinct experiences within and are affected by the issues faced in each and every domain that ACRC studies. As the work progressed, these linkages were particularly pronounced within the domains of informal settlements, safety and security, and neighbourhood and district economic development.

Our research was conducted across five cities that selected youth and capability development as a core priority within their city: Addis Ababa, Freetown, Kampala, Maiduguri and Mogadishu. While research was carried out within each city around a set of core research questions, research was designed locally around the core issues facing young people there. As Section 3 outlines in more detail, this was a process that provided autonomy to each local research team to tailor the specific fields of enquiry and research participants and to design the most appropriate research methods to explore the ways in which political settlements and city systems influence young people. While in the context of ACRC's focus on political settlements, interviews with key stakeholders were central to this, all research teams felt strongly that the voices of young people had to be centred equally, to hear their experiences of, perspectives on and priorities for urban development. To achieve this goal, city research teams convened several in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with young people.

Before moving onto our research findings, Section 2 first introduces our city studies and the research methods that guided them. Section 3 provides an overview of the conceptual framework that underpinned this comparative work, drawing on ACRC's overarching framework and the World Bank's transitions to adulthood framework. Section 4 dives into our comparative findings. This explores the ways in which the political economy at the city level is affecting young people and their inclusion in youth policy and programmes, before looking in more detail at the ways in which challenges within key city systems are constraining youth transitions. Education and skills training, work, physical and mental health and citizenship in contexts of insecurity are all central

to young people's experiences across our five cities. Section 5 reflects on implications of the findings and policy recommendations, and Section 6 concludes the report.

2. Research approach

This section outlines the key components and steps taken during the youth and capabilities domain journey of data collection and analysis. The conceptual framework underpinning this paper, and its relation to the ACRC overarching framework, is outlined in Section 4.

2.1. Research questions

The study was guided by the following overarching research questions derived from the ACRC conceptual framework:

1. What are the priority problems that prevent African cities fulfilling their inclusive development potential for young people?
2. How does the youth domain relate to a city's politics and/or with national political settlements?

These questions have been further articulated at the domain level by the domain leads, with the city-level research studies exploring the following areas:

3. What programmes exist for young people in the city and how do they conceptualise the "youth problem" and how to address it?

Of particular interest here was the spectrum between education and skills training programmes, on the one hand (that seek to deliver hard skills with tangible, measurable outputs), and those that focus on the softer outcomes, on the other (youth clubs and networks, sports for development).

4. What social support systems exist for young people in the city?

This question was intended to explore what forms of formal and informal institutions provide support to young people, and encourage (or discourage) youth participation, with a particular focus on the existence of support systems during the school-to-work transition.

5. Do young people feel in control of the direction of their social and economic lives?

An exploration of young people's priorities in their social and economic lives, their sense of control of decisionmaking and planning, and the support they receive from their communities.

6. What aspirations do young people have for their futures?

This aspect aimed at uncovering young people's hopes and dreams for themselves and their cities and understanding their vision of inclusive urban development, along with the role they and other actors play in achieving this role.

The above research questions were translated and adapted to the local contexts by city research teams.

2.2. Selection of case studies

Five cities with "youth majority" populations, directly or indirectly impacted by conflict, were chosen as case studies. The objective in selecting these cities was to investigate variations and commonalities in youth capabilities, as well as the political and systemic influences shaping these capabilities, across diverse urban contexts. The table below summarises the relevant key characteristics of each city, highlighting similarities[1] between them:

Table 1: Key characteristics of ACRC youth domain cities

Cities	Similarities in context
Freetown, Sierra Leone	In Western region, including Freetown, people aged 15 to 35 constitute 45.6% of total population (SSL, 2017). Around 20% of population live in multidimensional poverty (OPHI, 2022a). It is a post-civil war context, with legacies of conflict informing how issues around the youth questions are shaped and by whom.
Maiduguri, Nigeria	In 2021, 43% of population were under the age of 30 (WFP, 2021). Ongoing conflict between the insurgent groups and the national government led to large-scale internal displacement, violence and degradation of the systems, including education, healthcare, transport and the labour market.
Mogadishu, Somalia	78% of population under the age of 30 (SNBS, 2020); two out of three young people (aged 15 to 30) live in poverty and experience food insecurity (World Bank, 2018). The city is characterised by insecurity and weak institutions, due to 15-year long conflict between the Somali State and al-Shabaab[2] (meaning "the youth" in Arabic).
Kampala, Uganda	As of 2021, 77.2% of the population of Kampala was under the age of 30 and 27.6% were in multidimensional poverty (UBOS, 2022). Uganda has experienced intermittent violent conflicts since independence, with the government typically contested during and after the elections.
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Around 39% of urban population are in multidimensional poverty. 40% of Ethiopian population is under the age of 15 (OPHI, 2022b). The city is hosting refugees from other countries.

Source: Compiled by the authors of this report.

1 As a synthesis report, this paper primarily focuses on identifying common trends across African cities, which naturally results in a reduced emphasis on the distinct differences and complexities present in diverse urban contexts. Issues unique to only some of the cities will be explored in other types of ACRC outputs, including podcasts, blogs and short policy papers.
2 Al-Shabaab is an Islamist militant group operating in Somalia, known for its affiliation with al-Qaeda. The group aims to establish a strict form of Islamic law in Somalia and has been involved in various acts of violence, terrorism and insurgency in the region.

2.3. Data collection and limitations

City-level research teams drew on a combination of secondary and primary data collection. The literature reviews focused on available academic and grey literature, including legislative and policy documents, NGO and civil society reports, working papers, institutional websites and newspaper articles, and other relevant documents by international and multilateral organisations and development agencies. This was instrumental for mapping out and gathering important information about existing youth-focused policies, programmes and interventions developed and implemented by governmental and non-governmental actors in the selected cities.

Primary data was collected through a combination of individual and group interviews. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with relevant stakeholders, who were purposively sampled to generate diverse policy and experiential perspectives on the opportunities and barriers for young people to advance their livelihoods and aspirations, the role of actors and their inclusion of young people, and the success and failures of youth capability development programmes, as well as the preferred approaches to addressing the identified priority complex problems.

Key informants included leaders of youth-led community-based organisations (CBOs), representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), government officials from relevant government ministries and agencies, representatives of development partners, traditional and informal rulers, religious leaders, academics and thematic experts. The informants also included young people themselves, with a particular focus on young men and women residing in informal settlements, including conflict-affected and displaced young people, and economically disadvantaged youth, including those who were unemployed, underemployed or out of school, as well as youth activists and youth members of advocacy groups. Interviews and/or FGDs were also conducted with other community members to understand their perceptions of and attitudes toward youth. The number of respondents is summarised in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Number of respondents in each city

YCD domain cities	Key informant interviews	Focus group discussions (number of participants)	Total number of participants
Addis Ababa	69	5 (6-7 each)	100 (approx.)
Freetown	24	6 (8 each)	72
Kampala	10	8 (8 -15 each)	80 (approx.)
Maiduguri	40	21 (5-7 each)	161
Mogadishu	31	n/a (37)	68

In all cities, research teams were committed to differentiating between the experiences of young men and young women in each area and to distinguishing between the experiences of particularly vulnerable groups of young people (such as young migrants or those living in refugee camps) as well as documenting how these challenges differ for young people. Building on extensive debates on social versus biological definitions of youthhood (Hartinger-Saunders, 2008; Sawyer et al., 2018), participants' ages ranged from 15 to 30 years of age. Children (ages 0 to 15) were not included in the study.

Across all of these areas, the research focused particularly on what opportunities exist for young people across all these areas to advance their livelihoods and aspirations (individually and collectively at the city level), and what obstacles exist that prevent these from being realised. Preliminary findings were presented to the city's stakeholders at stakeholder engagement workshops organised by the city's research uptake leads and their feedback helped to strengthen the analysis.

The research teams noted three main limitations. In Kampala, obtaining accurate and up-to-date statistics about youth was a challenge. The last census in Uganda was carried out ten years ago and the most recent publicly available statistical abstract was produced in 2019, which does not account for Covid-related impacts. Researchers in Maiduguri and Mogadishu reported difficulties in mapping out youth-related programmes and/or all actors engaged in the sector, as well as receiving detailed information and documentation about available programmes and interventions. An additional challenge in Mogadishu was the security situation, which caused delays and trouble accessing participants living in IDP camps and informal settlements.

All city-level research went through an ethical approval process, including with The University of Manchester, UK; University of Ghana; Ardhi University, Tanzania; University of Lagos, Nigeria; Nigeria National Health Research Ethics Committee; and Strathmore University, Uganda. All data collectors received comprehensive training in research ethics, confidentiality and the facilitation of both focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

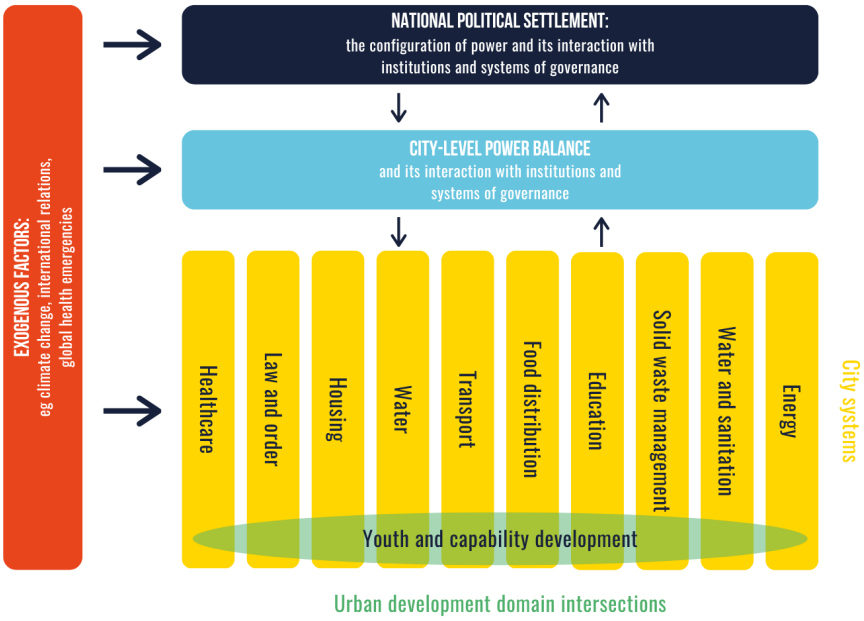
3. Prior knowledge

3.1. Conceptual frameworks

To date, most research on African cities is designed through a single-sector and technical lens, overlooking the importance of power and politics. To address this gap, the ACRC theoretical framework has been developed to take into account the complex interrelations and interactions between urban political processes and systems (Kelsall et al., 2021). **The ACRC conceptual framework identifies ten city systems** – education, healthcare, finance, water, sanitation, waste management, law and order, energy, transportation, and food distribution – **and eight socioeconomic and environmental domains**, those being: structural transformation, neighbourhood and district economic development, housing, informal settlements, land and connectivity,

safety and security, health, wellbeing and nutrition, and youth and capability development. All of the city systems are diverse in their nature and the scale at which they operate, the ways in which this operation is centralised or fragmented, and the closeness through which their failures are felt by urban dwellers. Domains are defined as “fields of power, policy and practice that are relevant to the solution of particular problems and/or to advancing specific opportunities in relation to cities” (ibid: 33). Within the ACRC framework, the urban development domains aim to transcend the siloed sector- or systems-based thinking. Building on this rationale, the youth and capability development domain, which is the focus of this paper, is interlinked with formal and informal education systems, financial and health services and a wide range of actors, including central, regional and local state officials, politicians, employers and policymakers.

Figure 2: ACRC’s conceptual framework



When applied to the YCD domain, the analytical dimensions specified in the framework are largely supported by the data, with the exception of the experiences related to work, which are central to the livelihoods of young people. According to the ACRC framework, labour markets and the experiences of work are not a city system per se. At the same time, the experiences of precarity and insecurity related to finding and maintaining work are central to the experience of youth across the five cities. As outlined in the ACRC domains of urban development, a majority of African urban residents reside in informal neighbourhoods, earning precarious incomes, primarily from micro- or household enterprises. Thus, fostering the development of “decent work opportunities” is crucial for improving the livelihoods and economies of African cities (Kelsall et al., 2021: 55). To reflect the importance of work,

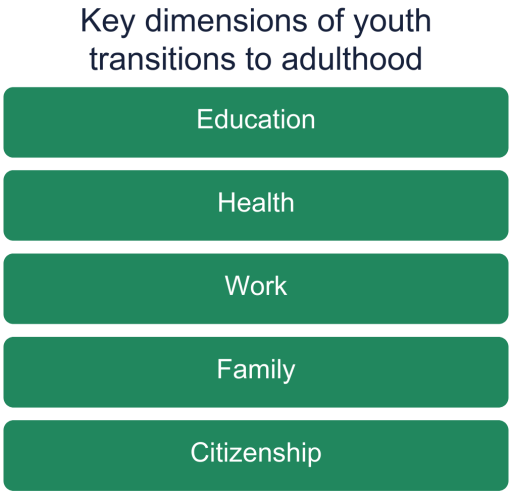
the framework for the cross-city YCD domain specifically is further building on the Youth Transitions to Adulthood framework introduced by the World Bank as part of the 2007 World Development report (World Bank, 2006).

The Youth Transitions to Adulthood framework consists of five stages through which young people transition in the life phase between youth and adulthood,[3] those being: learning; going to work; staying healthy; forming families; and exercising citizenship (World Bank, 2006: 39). The first stage concerns young people's experience of schooling in their areas of residence, the type of education they receive and the types of skills they are able to acquire as foundations for the future; the second transition concerns the contexts and conditions under which youth make school-to-work transitions, emphasising the relationship between human capital as a key asset, an accommodating labour market as the ideal setting and the ability to earn a living as an imperative; the third stage centres around health as another asset that needs nurturing, either by not engaging in substance abuse, or by ensuring information on sexual health is integrated into everyday life; the fourth shift concerns the objective that the previous stages often lead up to – starting their own families – depending on culture and social norms, and is crucial for both young women and men in different ways; and the fifth, final transition of the framework is concluding young people's transition into adulthood through their active participation in civil society and their ability to exercise the full range of citizenship rights and obligations afforded to them by the state.

With each of these stages consisting of a variety of challenges and opportunities, the framework offers a perspective through which to understand young people's lives as consisting of phases and stages that overlap. While existing literature and the findings presented in this report underscore the non-linear trajectories of African urban youth as they navigate the complexities of transitions from youth to adulthood, the World Bank framework accentuates the essential dimensions of youth livelihoods that shape young people's daily experiences in the cities. Rather than applying a normative understanding of youth transitions as a singular, universal experience, or a one-size-fits-all model, our operationalisation of the World Bank youth transitions framework, as outlined further below, allows for each transition to be explored through an emphasis on the systemic dimensions of the particular stage, as well as the political and power dynamic that configures the stage itself and transitions between them. Moreover, given the ACRC's focus on gender as a crosscutting theme, the World Bank's youth transitions stages allow for a gender-sensitive analysis of each stage and transition to emerge.

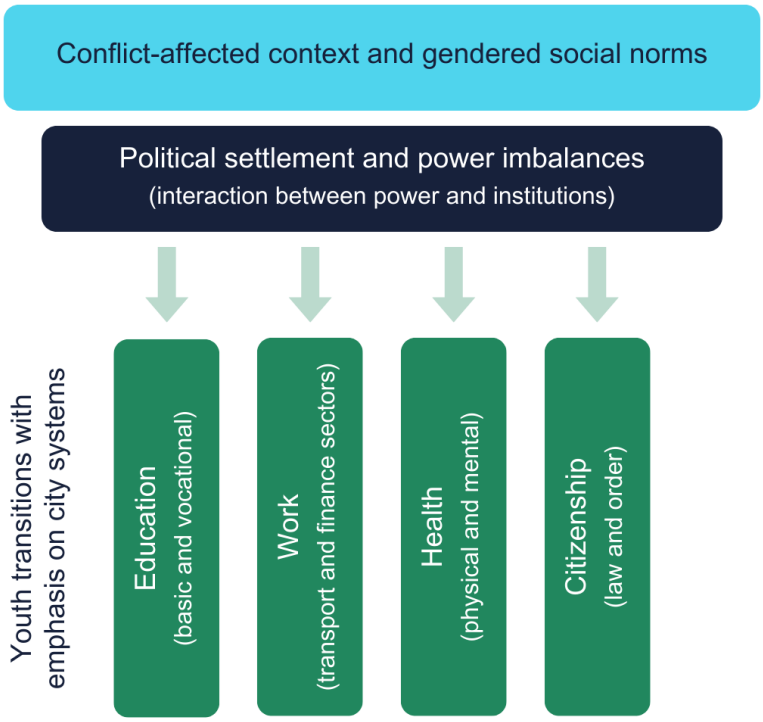
3 There has been a vibrant scholarly debate around the limitations of the World Bank youth transition stages. A key critique asserts that this framework imposes an unrealistic Western ideal of "adulthood", fostering unproductive comparisons of African young lives against an unrealistic standard (Camfield, 2011).

Figure 3: World Bank youth transitions framework



This paper takes the above frameworks and links elements of "political settlements" and "city systems" to that of "youth transitions" to clearly articulate not only experiences, but also causes and solutions to youth priority problems. Through the application of a political settlements and city-of-systems-focused perspective, our analysis draws out key characteristics of the power dynamics that underpin the national, municipal and local political arrangements through which elites manoeuvre youth and the youth question as an agenda for political gain in each of our five cities. Closely linked to the politics of youth, our city of systems perspective will allow our analysis to highlight the various systems that impact young people's lives the most, the ways in which these systemic failures are experienced differently by different groups of youth, and the manner in which young people try to confront these challenges through the resources available to them.

Figure 4: ACRC youth and capability development domain framework



As outlined in Figure 4, our conceptual framework leans on the World Bank's transitions framework, which we are using to understand the key systems identified in our domain's focus cities. ACRC priority city systems, such as transport, finance and legal system, are integrated into the core four dimensions of our framework, including education, work, health and citizenship. Our analysis will delve into each of these four building blocks of the World Bank's youth transitions framework. In so doing, it will spotlight how the breakdown of both formal and informal education systems adversely affects young people's access to quality education. Furthermore, it will explore how this disruption serves as a significant obstacle in the foundational development of human capital for youth, hindering their school-to-work transitions. The analysis will also examine the ways in which young people navigate challenges related to unemployment, underemployment and limited access to financial and borrowing systems. Additionally, it will explore how the absence of financial resources hampers their ability to access healthcare. Finally, the analysis will touch upon the fostering of citizenship in fragile and post-conflict urban contexts. In these environments, where law and order are either formally inadequate or informally secured, understanding the dynamics of citizenship becomes particularly crucial.

The concept of capabilities is central. Amartya Sen famously put forward the argument that understanding development requires a focus on impoverished lives, not just empty wallets, and that poverty should be reconceptualised in terms of capabilities deprivation, rather than resource or wellbeing deprivation (1999, 2000). The concept of capabilities, therefore, focuses on what a person can do or be, rather than on what they have or their wellbeing. In other words, the focus is on whether individuals are able to live a life that they find worth valuing (Homonchuk, 2020). An inability to pursue outcomes that an individual has reason to value, and the consequent inability to become the person one wants to be, is seen as the lack of substantive freedom accounting to the capability approach. A person's success in achieving desired outcomes is also at the core of agency, which can be defined as an individual's capacity to assert themselves and act in their own interest in terms of attaining a life they find worth valuing (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Alkire, 2005a; 2005b; Wolff, Lamb and Zur-Szpiro, 2015). Nevertheless, as literature on youth agency has highlighted, young people operating in constrained circumstances have drawn on resourcefulness, aspirations and the power of the collective to counteract some of the hardship their structural marginalisation produces (Jeffrey, 2012; Ansell, 2016; Mkwananzi and Melis Cin, 2020). The implication of this conception for our broader development work is that policy efforts should focus on the actual opportunities people have to engage in activities and actions they value, rather than on what they have, or their subjective assessment of life satisfaction (Alkire, 2005a; 2005b).

3.2. Literature review

3.2.1. Politics of youth and power imbalances in political settlements

The politics of youth in African cities is intertwined with the politics of urban growth throughout the continent. With high rates of unemployment disproportionately affecting young people in cities including Freetown, Maiduguri, Mogadishu, Addis Ababa and Kampala, young people's political participation has been identified as a precondition for more democratic, inclusive forms of governance, particularly in contexts where the "youth question" has been highly politicised.

Literature on the politics of urban youth has highlighted contextual differences in the extent to which social movements influence the political participation of young people in African cities (Sall 2004; Honwana 2014), including participation in elections (Resnick and Casale, 2014; Mac-Ikemenjima 2017; Musarurwa 2018; Chauke, 2020). While some studies point away from ethnic loyalty as the principal factor that shapes electoral choices (Resnick, 2012), others identify the mobilisation of youth as political agents through the politicisation of social difference as a marker in post-conflict African contexts (O'Laughlin, 2000; Morrell et al., 2012; Gobbers, 2016; Gukurume, 2022). Exploring the political participation of youth in Somalia, Bincof (2018) points to clan identity politics as a central determinant in informing young people's political engagement, as well as the extent of participation of young people throughout the Horn of Africa nation. Echoing notions of detachment from clan-based loyalties and pointing towards a focus on the provision of employment, a recent report published by the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2022) highlights this shift in the priorities of young Somalis, situating these changes within the nation's social, political and economic legacy of fragility. Specifically, the report identifies the Somali labour market as dysfunctional and ill-fitted for the needs of young people, men and women alike, emphasising the relationship between under-development and economic exclusion as one of the factors fuelling the integration of young people into violent insurgent efforts, namely through the workings of al-Shabaab.

Studies exploring factors that shape young people's political participation and their exclusion from formal decisionmaking processes highlight culturally rooted reasons for youth disengagement from politics. Civic identities and loyalty to communities play a central role in influencing young people's inclination towards or away from active political mobilisation (Arnot and Swartz 2012; Olaiya, 2014), including literature from West Africa. In Sierra Leone, Cubitt (2012) describes a political context in which elites of the post-war era have established coercive practices through which young people are integrated into politics. The decentralisation of governance mechanisms has allowed young people to stand for office in local districts and to claim quotas set up by the government as political party candidates at the national level. But Cubitt argues that much of these seemingly progressive forms of integrating young people into the formal political process have not resulted in actual inclusion. Instead, youth find themselves at the centre of a national scheme within which violence as a

youth problem is deeply politicised and they become victims of intimidation tactics by opponents before elections.

Previous research additionally underscores that young people's political mobilisation in the face of their exclusion showcases their political agency, particularly across urban areas. Discussing the contribution of youth to the democratisation of politics in Kenya through a focus on two youth movements, namely the Y2K'92 and the University Student Movement, Muhula (2007) finds young people's political mobilisation can be viewed as a response to their structural exclusion from mainstream policy and decisionmaking processes. Focusing on youth political mobilisation through institutional gateways, Oosterom (2018) relates the participation of youth in councils, forums and other formal governance mechanisms to the process of transition and democratisation, identifying one of the driving factors behind the informal political engagement of young people as the need to address community issues through local authorities, due to failures of governance in formal political structures. Literature on youth political participation has also highlighted distinctions in the formal and informal political practices of youth (Young, 2004; Piper, 2015). Bjarnesen's (2017) study shows how youth mobilisation takes place through informal social practice, a process that invokes the transformation of youth into a political force through the production of a collective identity. This framing of mobilisation, according to Bjarnesen (2017: 137), conceptualises "political involvement as a form of recruitment, rather than an expression of ideological affiliation or social critique".

Several African countries have introduced gender quotas to increase the representation of women in party politics (Barnes and Burchard, 2013); **however, female representation is often used for political purposes, rather than for addressing the underlying issues of gender inequality**. In Uganda, Muriaas and Wang (2012) highlight the value of quota policies in securing the representation of marginalised groups, nevertheless pinpointing the role of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), a party that had been in power for decades, in transforming the quota system into an instrument of control and navigating quota policies to maintain their hold on power. Despite much of the progress made in advancing women's activism, studies have also highlighted the continuing marginalisation of young women in the informal social mobilisation of youth. Examining the activism of Vanessa Nakate – a Ugandan activist and founder of the Youth for the Future movement, as well as the Rise Up movement, engaged in fighting racial injustice, gender-based violence and climate injustice through her activism – Barnes (2021) identifies three factors that constrain the activism of the young woman; namely, her location, youth and gender. Examining the intersections of Nakate's geography, gendered identity and age, Barnes highlights the ways in which Nakate negotiates the social constraints she faces as a product of her intersectional experience and the unique space she occupies on the international stage, due to her high profile. Through a focus on the scrutiny the young activist has faced, through her vocalised protests against various dimensions of injustice, Barnes (ibid: 3) underscores how "agency is not (only) a reflection of an

individual's apolitical motivation and skills to navigate interactions but is inherently linked to the political".

Building on the above, the politicisation of the "youth question" is central to programmatic interventions targeting young women and men in African cities (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2008; Amupanda, 2018), with some highlighting issues encountered in programming focused on young people utilised to secure political support from youth. In their study on biases in youth employment programmes, Flynn et al. (2016) call for a de-individualisation of youth programming through a range of adjustments designed to target failures in meeting programme objectives, namely the inability to consistently address the demand for labour. This, the authors argue, involves a reconceptualisation of youth employment policy to ensure that initiatives reflect "the situated, embedded nature of young people's agency as well as the structural constraints which individual agency and support alone cannot overcome" (ibid: 43).

Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Oosterom and Gukurume (2019) show how youth funds represented an important strategy rolled out by the ZANU-PF in an effort to neutralise the frustrations and discontent of growing numbers of young people due to high unemployment. This strategy was devised to gain political support and secure the loyalty of a seemingly disenchanted young and growing population, with youth fund schemes in the early 2000s being allocated along partisan lines. Similarly, discussing Urban Consumer's Cooperatives (UCCs) in Addis Ababa, Gebremariam (2020: 6) contextualises the establishment of the cooperatives in various city districts as both a means of capping the effects of rising food prices on the most disadvantaged while simultaneously mobilising political support from youth at the individual and household level. This initiative, Gebremariam argues, was a political strategy that meant the EPRDF "capitalised the phenomenon of increasing prices by organising the urban poor and using UCCs as additional channels to build its dominance".

3.2.2. Youth capabilities within cities of systems

A conceptualisation of cities as systems set out by the ACRC conceptual framework allows for a more integrated analysis of the challenges that sub-Saharan African cities face. While the unique systemic profiles of African cities may be deemed as diverse as the cities themselves, the material and social systems that constitute their urban fabric also share many of the complexities that characterise them. Five of the ACRC city systems[4] have been identified as key for the development of youth capabilities, based on the literature review and secondary data analyses across the cities within our domain. Those systems are education, healthcare, finance, law and order, and transportation. The section below provides a summary of the key characteristics of these systems identified in the literature.

4 For the full list of ACRC city systems see Kelsall et al. (2021: 30).

The provision of universal primary and secondary education has been at the forefront of African development policies, manifested through education-focus strategies and interventions across the rural–urban divide throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Riddell, 2003; Birdsall et al., 2005; Sifuna, 2020). Formal policy prioritisation of investment into education and the elimination of gender disparities in school enrolment rates has been reflected in the priorities of the African 2063 Agenda and the Continental Education Strategy (African Union, 2015; 2016). This focus is partially underpinned by the link between educational attainment and youth's ability to transition into productive and resilient adults (Awad, 2020). It is, however, essential to acknowledge that education alone does not ensure a smooth transition into secure and well-compensated employment, particularly in economies with limited opportunities in the labour market (see, for example, Honwana, 2014; Ansell et al., 2014; Punch, 2015; Homonchuk, 2020; Yassine and Bakass, 2022).

Despite the rhetoric of prioritising education, many African countries are experiencing a decline in education quality linked to inadequate funding and resource allocations from governments. Bennell's (2021) analysis of factors that shape universal education goals in sub-Saharan African countries highlights the political economy of class relations and growing competition for formal jobs in the education sector as the underlying contextual drivers unravelling the vested interest of political elites in achieving universal education. Inaccessibility and low quality of education are some of the key issues facing basic education systems in countries including Kenya (Chege and Sifuna, 2006; Sifuna, 2007; Nungu, 2010) and Uganda (Deininger, 2003; Stasavage, 2005). Across African urban contexts, high rates of out-of-school children and low quality of education have been linked to a rise in violence, as well as an increase in adolescent substance abuse (Mugisha et al., 2003; Flisher et al., 2010; Carney et al., 2020).

Given the challenges in the formal provision of education, **studies emphasise the role of technology in facilitating access to education for the most disadvantaged** (Asongu et al., 2019; Matli and Ngoepe, 2020), **as well as the importance of informal education and indigenous knowledge as integral parts of learning frameworks in African societies** (Matambo, 2018). The prospects of educational technology (EdTech) in potentially catalysing transformation in access to and the quality of formal education in sub-Saharan Africa has also been explored in recent literature (Asongu and Odhiambo, 2019; Ayega, 2020; Samarakoon et al., 2017), with various technical and vocational education and training (TVET) projects being piloted in countries including Kenya and Tanzania (Mastercard Foundation, 2020; World Bank, 2021). Focusing on addressing the challenges faced by girls in accessing education in post-pandemic contexts, Crompton et al. (2021) identify equity as a key ingredient in ensuring that EdTech interventions aimed at facilitating better access for marginalised children and youth produce desirable outcomes through enrolment and participation. However, adopting a post-pandemic lens and focusing on marginalised learners, Ochieng and Ngware (2022) find that, despite successes in the implementation of EdTech in Kenya, experiences during Covid-19-related lockdowns show that the

exclusion of vulnerable children and youth remains an issue, due to the inaccessibility of technology for low-income households.

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, **poor urban governance has resulted in the fragmentation of key institutions responsible for guaranteeing the rule of law**, resulting in layers of distrust among urban residents and communities. In cities in particular, studies show militarisation of urban pockets of insecurity as a product of government interventions aimed at policing certain neighbourhoods and reducing crime. This is the case in South African cities (Stuurman, 2020), as well as Bujumbura, Goma, Juba (Büscher, 2018), and Nairobi (Elfversson and Höglund, 2019). Formal institutions designed to consistently implement the law are a key function of the state and are crucial for ensuring popular trust and support in the state apparatus (Jackson et al., 2012; Méon and Sekkat, 2015). In this context, youth are central formative agents in self-establishing vigilante groups, militia units and criminal gangs (De Boeck, 2015; Alumona and Amusan, 2019; Divon and Owor, 2021). As part of security employment, youth provide protection services for urban business elites and politicians. It is also common for them to work as “area boys” to either protect or challenge rights to land (Momoh, 2000; Emordi, 2005). This points to vacuums in the provision of safety, as well as a lack of programmatic interventions and policy initiatives aimed at integrating youth into the labour market and assisting young people in making the school-to-work transition (Okojie, 2003; Sommers, 2007). Research has also highlighted the increased risk of violence (and even loss of life) for young men as a result of state institutions for law and order, being a category of the urban population who are at increased risk of policing (Van Stapele, 2020).

Furthermore, disadvantaged **young people face challenges in accessing formal finance systems, stunting the entrepreneurial ambitions of those eager to improve their circumstances** in African cities (Ahmed and Ahmed, 2021; Kebede, 2022; Rusu et al., 2022; Zhanda et al., 2022). Entrepreneurship is often praised for promoting youth entrepreneurship in labour markets in which job creation cannot keep pace with urban population growth. For example, Radebe (2019: 61) highlights that youth entrepreneurship represents one of the key determinants of “poverty reduction, economic development and job creation”. Yet, as noted above, the potential for young people to use entrepreneurship to support stable livelihoods is limited. Improved training and business skills development is one side of the equation, as we saw in the previous section. But so too is access to finance. Access to formal finance has also been shown to be driven largely by social indicators (namely, age and gender, which exclude young people and young women especially), education level and employment status (Soumaré et al., 2016). All of these have exclusionary influences when it comes to the ability of young people (and young women especially) to access formal finance. Trust in financial institutions has also been highlighted by existing literature as an important factor shaping the way that young people relate to formal financial institutions (Soumaré et al., 2016; Omondi and Jagongo, 2018; Berhanu and Azadi, 2020).

The health of African youth is shaped by several city systems, including water, sanitation and food systems (Angoua et al., 2018; Battersby and Watson, 2018; Lindley et al., 2018), **urban waste management systems** (Makarichi et al., 2019; Rasmeni and Madyira, 2019), **and healthcare systems** (Satterthwaite et al., 2019; Alaazi and Aganah, 2020)**.** There is extensive literature that maps the paths, obstacles and strategies that shape young people's access to basic health services and amenities in cities and the ways in which young people utilise that access (Evans 2018; Shoniwa & Thebe 2020; Moussié 2021). Gender and age are prominent factors in shaping young people's access to basic amenities in cities (Evans, 2018; Shoniwa and Thebe, 2020; Moussié, 2021). Limited or unimproved sanitation facilities are repeatedly highlighted as particularly damaging for women, young women and girls. This is not just a matter of safety and hygiene, but also a matter of safety and exposure to violence, depending on community dynamics and distance to sanitation facilities. This has been shown in cases such as Nairobi, Kenya (Winter et al., 2018); Maputo, Mozambique (Shiras et al., 2018), Kampala, Uganda and Lilongwe, Malawi (Adams et al., 2018).

Strategies emerging informally to tackle deficiencies in state-provided basic services present avenues for income generation among adolescents and young individuals. This is particularly observable in activities related to waste management (Grant and Oteng-Ababio, 2012; Adama, 2014), a substantial portion of which operates within the informal economy. This illustrates the intricate interplay between the ACRC's youth and capability development domain and the informal settlements domain, where young individuals are disproportionately represented as both inhabitants of informal settlements and participants in informal work.

However, these forms of employment come with significant health risks. As illustrated by these case studies (Owusu, 2010; Amugsi et al., 2016; Ssemugabo et al., 2020), informal employment is often a short-term survival strategy rather than a sustainable, long-term livelihood approach. Although each city faces unique challenges, according to its own demographic, geographic and topographic nature, recent studies from across the continent all echo parallels and similarities in the nature of the issues confronted and the manner in which these issues impact the lives of young people. Many of these have been aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Kihato and Landau, 2020).

As cities and their populations grow and expand outwards, so too does the need for transport infrastructure. The mobility and transportation needs of young people in African cities differ in relation to gender, age, disability and socioeconomic status, as well as in relation to other social and economic indicators that shape access and use (Porter, 2010). Yet it is widely recognised that existing transport infrastructure in African cities is largely inadequate in meeting the needs of growing, and increasingly mobile, urban populations (Wood et al., 2020). Limited connectivity, endemic congestion and traffic jams, and problems accessing urban transport characterise the experiences of transport across African cities. These experiences are closely linked to income (or lack of it), often making transportation – whether formal or informal – an exclusive space

inaccessible to a significant portion of economically disadvantaged urban residents, especially youth and women with extended commutes, including adolescents, young individuals, and women (Salon and Gulyani, 2019; Tembe et al., 2019; Falchetta et al., 2021; Møller-Jensen, 2021). There has been limited attention from urban transport planners on the specific mobility needs of young people and women in particular, from an income and a safety perspective (Esson et al., 2016; Poku-Boansi et al., 2019; Porter et al., 2021; Kacharo et al., 2022). Kett et al. (2020) argue that the discussion needs to shift from "access" towards a more explicit focus on "inclusion". This, they argue, offers one way of reframing how disability is conceptualised within urban transport planning plans, and the ways in which disability may intersect with other social indicators in low-income countries. They highlight the need to integrate the voices of children, young people and adults in understanding their transport needs.

4. Cross-city findings

This section offers an overview of the prevailing themes and dynamics within the political settlements and city systems that influence the capabilities of young people across five African cities. By doing so, it sheds light on the shared challenges encountered by urban youth as they navigate critical transitions into adulthood.

4.1. The political economy of youth inclusion and programmes

Political settlement power dynamics in many African cities tend to exclude young people from decisionmaking, owing to persistent colonial legacies of bureaucratic authoritarianism, patron–client relationships, and complex ethnic political competition and fragmentation (Berman, 1998). Consequently, formal national youth strategies and inclusion mechanisms often fail to grant youth authentic influence over policy agendas or the power to hold government agencies accountable for policy shortcomings. These power dynamics are further complicated by the interplay of local, national and international actors' agendas, with youth organisations within the YCD domain exerting minor influence over national-level decisionmaking processes.

Across cities, youth-focused organisations typically include national youth councils, youth leagues, youth wings of political parties, youth trade-based associations and religious youth groups. In addition, there are standard youth-focused government agencies, including the Ministries of Youth and Sports, Ministries of Education, and Ministries of Youth or Women's Empowerment. Youth-focused ministries are typically guided by the national human capital development strategies, where youth are portrayed as an untapped opportunity for national development and, in some cases, a force for peacebuilding (for example, Somalia 2020 Human Capital Development Strategy (Barise and Hashi, 2020)).

Despite the growing presence of formal national-level inclusion and focus on youth, day-to-day narratives of young people tend to portray them as a homogeneous group that is a victim to problems of their own making. As one government official in Uganda

put it: “The youth, actually, their first problem is themselves”.[5] Such remarks typically imply that youth are irresponsible in managing their finances and using government programmes for purposes contrary to their intended purposes. In cities with recent experiences of conflict, there is another layer of narrative bias, whereby youth, especially young men, are framed as a risk group capable of violent extremism (see Citizenship section below).

Such sweeping generalisations gloss over non-static, diverse sets of youth needs, based on socioeconomic and migration status, age, ethnocultural and linguistic identity and political affiliation, and lead to “one-size-fits-all” policy solutions. Young people are further silenced through intergenerational, class and gender power imbalances within government bureaucratic structures. High political positions continue to be occupied by elders, who represent a minority of the population and are not willing to include young people unless they conform to the existing political agenda.

Some informants argued that the youth organisations are intentionally underfunded because youth are seen as a threat by older generations in power. In Freetown, mandates for youth wings of political parties are limited to supporting overarching campaigns or recruiting new party members. Such findings echo youth voices in other research studies:

> “We have a problem whereby most of these old guys, [they] see us as threats whenever we become active. They normally think that we are fighting them. That is the challenge we are going through. (...) whenever we come up with an opinion, they think that we are underestimating them” (Kagambirwe and Muriaas, 2023: 10).

Young women in particular are often not trusted to have the capacity to fill and manage positions in politics. In Freetown, only 10% of the seats in the legislature are occupied by women, with chieftaincy authorities and tribal head positions reserved for men only. In Maiduguri, women in politics are often at a disadvantage, due to access to resources to garner support and influence during the elections. Sociocultural and religious factors further downplay the relevance of women among the powerful groups. Despite 30% of seats being allotted for women, few women have emerged as winners at general elections at national and state levels in the last two decades. In Maiduguri, there are no women representing the city at the National Assembly. As respondents in Maiduguri noted:

> “There are few women in political positions such as […] commissioner, but they hardly have strong say on governance and even business. The men seem to have a stronghold and control nearly everything”.[6]

> “Women are generally less powerful because of low level of literacy, early marriage, cultural belief putting women at disadvantaged position in communities.”[7]

5 Key informant interview, Kampala government official.
6 Civil servant.
7 Borno State House of Assembly contestant.

> "I would not want to classify them as powerful, because of the peculiarity of the city in terms of the cultural role of women as housewives engaged most times in petty trading and depend largely on the husbands."[8]

The coordination and continuity of youth programmes are often undermined by complex government structures, divergent interests of government agencies, and competition between political parties. Without coordination and oversight, different government and donor agencies duplicate efforts by rolling out very similar programmes. In cases where the programmes are jointly funded, the responsibilities get diffused, leading to confusion. As one KII in Kampala stated: "There is an over fusion of mandates, roles and responsibilities […] This is further aggravated by the vertical (non-integrated) approach to the delivery of the different mandates".

Many youth-led organisations have shared that it is difficult to partner with the government, due to its complex bureaucracy and officials' perceptions of youth organisations as incompetent. In Maiduguri, state government programmes are also largely uncoordinated, with other actors – including the federal government, INGOs and civil society organisations – often initiating similar programmes. As one youth organisation leader noted:

> "Different government agencies are replicating many programmes, and the same beneficiaries are being recycled because there is no coordination or database of people who have previously benefited from similar programmes. For example, in some interventions, you will see beneficiaries who have benefited three or four times using the same business plan."[9]

Several youth programmes have been abandoned when the Borno State governor that initiated them left office.

The discontinuation of youth programmes for political reasons perpetuates resentment towards the government among young people, making the intergenerational distrust mutual. In Freetown, the lack of coordination and involvement of municipal authorities in the planning and implementation similarly affects the longevity of youth projects.

In countries with direct voting systems,[10] **political elites are most likely to engage with youth during elections through patron–client campaigning strategies which take advantage of the difficult financial situations faced by many young people.** Due to sheer numbers, youth often have the power to decide the outcome of elections. For example, youth were the biggest support base for Kyagulanyi, who won the 2021 general elections in Kampala as the highest polling candidate. Taking this into account,

8 All Progressives Congress (APC) party member.
9 Maiduguri, Nigeria, male youth leader.
10 Indirect elections involve a two-step process, where voters elect representatives who then make the final selection of leaders or representatives. Somalia has been using indirect elections since 2012, in which traditional clan leaders nominate the members of parliament's lower house. Consequently, in Mogadishu, political leaders have no incentive to sway youth votes.

politicians commonly offer participation in youth programmes to entice or reward their supporters.

This is allegedly why in regions such as Borno, Nigeria, the majority of youth programme participants come from areas where the ruling party has a political advantage or connections, while only a few come from regions where they have little influence. As one interviewee stated, youth programme admissions boards exclude candidates perceived to be of a different political affiliation: “it is difficult to benefit from the state government initiative if you do not have a government contact”.[11]

However, relying solely on in-kind patronage is becoming insufficient to influence the youth vote, as young people are increasingly aware of politicians' attempts to manipulate them during elections and are sceptical regarding the fulfilment of politicians’ promises. In Kampala, youth living in informal settlements reported staying true to their votes despite accepting campaign handouts. Quiet resistance by youth is the partial driver of Museveni’s loss during the last presidential election in Kampala to Robert Kyagulyani (Bobi Wine). Interviewees in Freetown have also expressed a sentiment of highly one-sided relationships between the political elites and youth, in which politicians wrongly perceive youth as easily manipulated pawns to be exploited against their opponents: “Some of the politicians engaged communities and target the youths. In my opinion, politicians perceive the youths as idlers who can easily be gullible and influenced”.[12]

4.2. City systems’ constraints on key youth transitions

4.2.1. Education and skills training

Opportunities to obtain skills relevant to the labour market are of particular concern to young people. Across ACRC cities, young people report that the **government-funded education systems provide low-quality education that does not enhance youth capabilities to facilitate transition into secure employment.**

The low quality of government-funded education across African cities is underpinned by several common interrelated factors. In Kampala, quality of education in government-funded schools is undermined by overcrowding of classrooms (Datzberger, 2019), teacher absenteeism (Mukhaye, 2023), and lack of accountability or incentive structures for teachers to improve the quality of education (Musika et al., 2019). Furthermore, the content of the curricula is often not suitable for the realities of the local labour markets, with several participants expressing concerns that the education system emphasises theoretical training over practical training, which does not meet the needs of employers: “Young people cannot read Roman and Greek history and use that in the job market. You should refine the curriculum to match the current time”.[13]

11 Maiduguri, educated male youth.
12 Freetown, key informant interview.
13 Freetown, key informant interview.

Lastly, the government-funded free universal basic education is often out of reach for the most disadvantaged, due to hidden costs, such as informal school-related fees, uniforms, textbooks and transportation. Failure to meet these costs is one of the main reasons for school dropouts in cities such as Kampala (Mpyangu et al., 2014).

> "Theoretically, education is free but practically, it is not. When pupils transition from junior to senior secondary, parents are often required to pay millions for admissions. For instance, a relative of mine paid over SLL 2,000,000 (~$100) for admission for his daughter. This is a serious challenge for the poor."[14]

> "My biggest challenge was figuring out how to pay the tuition fees. My father was able to borrow money to cover my first year's tuition. I used my weekends to do menial work to take care of myself and buy books."[15]

The shared narrative of education system shortcomings is supported by statistics showing low learning outcomes compared to years of school attended (see Table 3). In Sierra Leone, as of 2018 only 66.6% of young people were classed as literate, with girls achieving lower levels of literacy compared to boys. Due to intersection of material deprivation and cultural norms, investment into girls' education is often seen as unnecessary, because of early marriage and pregnancy. In 2017, an estimated 45% of girls in Somalia were already married before their 18th birthday, mostly forced marriages by al-Shabaab or parents (Hassan, 2017). In Freetown, 68% of girls have their first pregnancy between the ages of 12 and 20. As of 2016, 13% of teenage mothers in Sierra Leone had never been to school and 55% had dropped out of school and not returned since becoming pregnant (Street Child, 2016). The combination of above-mentioned factors has often led to a shared perception that the education systems in African cities are failing young people:

> "Overcrowded classrooms, low morale among the teachers, puny salaries for teaching and non-teaching staff, infrastructural deficiencies, and a collapse of governance at the school, district, and national level have all become part of this systemic failure."[16]

Table 2 2022 learning outcomes based on harmonised learning assessment scores[17]

	Expected years of school			Learning-adjusted years of school		
City	Boys	Girls	Overall	Boys	Girls	Overall
Nigeria	10.3	10.1	10.2	5.1	5.0	5.0

14 Freetown, youth in formal setting.
15 Maidugiri, educated male youth.
16 Uganda, key informant interview.
17 The harmonisation uses a conversion factor to compare international and regional standardised achievement tests on reading and maths. These tests include PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, SACMEQ, LLECE and PASEC. For the harmonisation methodology see Patrinos and Angrist (2018). For country-specific reports, see Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Uganda. Comparable data for Ethiopia was not available at the time of writing.

Sierra Leone	9.5	9.7	9.6	4.8	4.9	4.9
Ethiopia	8.1	7.5	7.8	4.6	4.1	4.3
Uganda	-	-	6.8	-	-	4.3
Somalia	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Data retrieved from the World Bank's Human Capital Project.[18]

In conflict and post-conflict cities, education systems are particularly strained because education is not seen as a priority, which leads to long-term underinvestment in conflict-affected education systems. During the period of civil war in Sierra Leone, competing priorities and a lack of national ownership and leadership in the education sector have led to underinvestment and labour force capacity gaps. In Maiduguri, the education sector has been severely disrupted by the ongoing insurgency, which has resulted in massive infrastructure damage, loss of human resources, displacement of thousands of students and intermittent occupation of schools by military and IDPs (BOOG and BSACSDHR, 2020). In Mogadishu, education is one of the public sector services that completely collapsed after the civil war. The implementation of the most recent National Youth Development and Job Creation Initiatives, which were launched by the President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, have been deprioritised on the government agenda because the Somali government has been very involved in the offensive against al-Shabaab.

Gaps in the government-funded education systems are often filled by private provision of education and vocational training programmes,[19] **perpetuating class inequalities and disadvantaging low-income youth**. In Somalia, the private sector assumes a pivotal role in delivering education, with 58% of primary schools being privately operated, contrasting sharply with the mere 3% that are fully public. Approximately 39% of primary schools are managed by non-profit organisations and receive partial support from the public funds (UNESCO, 2022: 60). This pattern extends to secondary education, where 73% of schools operate under private ownership (ibid). The dominance of the private sector is most pronounced in higher education, with only 2% of students enrolled in a public university (UNESCO, 2022: 159). Unfortunately, the cost of private education often remains prohibitive for the majority of Somali youth.

In Kampala, to obtain a vocational skills certificate from the Department of Industrial Training, which can then be used to enter tertiary-level education, out-of-school

18 See www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital.

19 Examples of vocational skills programmes in Maiduguri: Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria Programme (YouWIN), the Youth Employment and Social Support Operation (YESSO), the Youth Entrepreneur Support Programme (YES-P), and the N-Power Empowerment Programme. In Freetown: Skills Development Fund by the World Bank, implemented by the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education. In Kampala: Business Vocational Education and Training (BVET) programme and skilling up centres set up by KCCA, such as the Kabalagala One Stop Youth Centre; Presidential "Skilling the Girl/Boy Child" Initiative, which resulted in the creation of the Luzira Skilling Centre in Kampala.

children need to pay 100,000 Uganda Shillings (approximately 26 USD). For youth from low-income backgrounds, who are most likely to be out of school, the fee is too costly, making the certification scheme unhelpful. As a key informant living in Katwe, Uganda noted: “Someone can barely afford what to eat and you are asking them for 100,000 shillings”.[20] Similar views have been expressed by participants in Freetown:

> “TVET education is expensive, and this is a major challenge for young people who may have dropped out from formal schooling. TVET education should always be a ready option, but some of these courses are costly and that discourage many young people to enrol”.[21]

Religious schools are another alternative that is more affordable but often of variable quality. In cities like Mogadishu and Maiduguri, a significant number of children attend Quranic schools. In Maiduguri, religious schools can be categorised into two types: formal and regulated by the Ministry of Education, such as the Islamiyya schools, which blend the national curriculum with Islamic teaching; and informal ones like the Tsangaya schools, which solely follow a Quranic curriculum and lack government regulations or quality standards. In Nigeria, regions with high levels of Quranic education have lower learning outcomes compared to the rest of the country, reflecting long-term underinvestment into non-government system of education (Sarwar et al., 2024).

Gendered design and short duration are key limitations to the effectiveness of youth formal and informal vocational skills programmes. In Maiduguri, common informal trade apprenticeships are often limited to tailoring, welding and mechanics shops. In Mogadishu, vocational training programmes are dominated by plumbing, carpentry, mechanics and electrician skills for young men and hair and beauty salon training, such as henna painting, for young women. Regrettably, jobs in the beauty services sector are frequently neither lucrative nor sustainable, mainly because there is low demand for such services during economic downturns. As one interviewee in Freetown said: “One of the challenges we face with salon work is a lack of customers, due to hardship in the country”. Therefore, the gendered design of vocational programmes constrains women, compelling them to participate in low-profit microbusinesses from their homes.

Furthermore, the widely available government-funded apprenticeships are often too short to genuinely teach youth marketable skills, while longer-term small-scale programmes, often funded by international donors, are too small in scale and duration to make a society-wide shift in youth capabilities. In Mogadishu, young people and employers have expressed discontent about training programmes being typically six months long. Given that part of the training has to be spent on basic numeracy and literacy, there is not enough time to equip trainees with adequate vocational skills for employment. This means that in many cases vocational training is just giving exposure

20 Kampala, key informant interview.
21 Sierra Leone National Council for Technical and Academic Awards (NCTVA) key informant interview.

or a taster of a profession, requiring young people to self-teach skills through YouTube and other online platforms.[22] This finding ties back to earlier literature that underscores the potential of technology in enhancing access to education for the most disadvantaged (Asongu et al., 2019; Matli and Ngoepe 2020). Concerning internationally funded vocational trainings, key informant interviews (KIIs) in Mogadishu have highlighted that the trainings are difficult to scale up, due to the cost of international staff and consultant salaries. Such programmes help selected young people, but the difference is not felt and seen across the whole community. Hiring local staff could enable these programmes to have a wider reach and impact more people.

Given the variability in skills training programmes' quality, many participants highlighted the need for regulation of TVET curriculums. Without shared quality standards, many TVET programmes lack assessment of whether the programme reflects the needs of the labour market and whether youth have gained new skills through the programme. Furthermore, the programmes do not take into account the preparedness of young people to enrol in the programme:

> "The biggest challenge is that every organisation or project comes with its own curriculum, and this causes it to take away the learning ... There is an impediment to bringing a curriculum that is not compatible with the education standard of Somali youth and culture. Students who graduated from high school in Somalia need at least six months of preparation courses like English, physics and so on before the skills training."[23]

The need for regulation and protection is especially pronounced in informal apprenticeships, where young people are at a high risk of experiencing exploitation. In Mogadishu, youth interviewees expressed strong concerns regarding informal apprenticeships, perceiving them as exploitative. A few young people reported instances of mistreatment, including physical assault during their apprenticeships and a lack of support following occupational injuries. Adding to the challenges, the duration of informal apprenticeships is often unspecified, with many young people working unpaid indefinitely without knowing when they will graduate. The quality of apprenticeships also varies significantly, as some local artisans deliberately limit the scope of knowledge shared with their students to avoid potential competition from young individuals.

22 In 2022, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education registered nine TVET Centres in Mogadishu. Those centres provide technical and entrepreneurship skills training. There are additional centres registered under the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which are vocational skills training centres that are less than a year old. Most NGO TVET run short-term training programmes that run for around six months and are initiated by international non-governmental organisations or donors.
23 Somalia, a male young person in TVET education.

Box 1: Story of Zuri, an 18-year-old female migrant in Addis Ababa

Zuri moved from to Addis from Hawassa, the capital of the Southern region, about a year ago in search of better paid work. During the discussion, Zuri shared that employers sometimes cause physical harm and beat their workers. She also mentioned that she has a broker who finds her a job in exchange for 20% of her salary as a commission for as long as she is working in the city. Having a broker helps avoid harsh work conditions. However, they do not let Zuri switch jobs in the city. Prior to moving to Addis, Zuri finished eight years of school and worked in a hotel and a juice shop. Zuri has left behind six siblings whom she now supports by sending money.

Those who do manage to secure employment after training are often continuing to experience exploitation. For example, in Ethiopia there are no labour laws guaranteeing minimum wage, statutory annual leave, weekends, or absences to attend family emergencies such as bereavement. The efforts to legalise minimum wage and other worker rights perused through the tripartite negotiations between the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions, the government and the employers' federation have not been successful.

Lastly, taking up blue-collar jobs following vocational training is not seen as a full transition to adulthood. In Freetown, only white-collar jobs are seen as meaningful employment, with young people in informal jobs often considering themselves unemployed. The low status of manual jobs inevitably affects young people's interest and uptake of the skills training programmes: "People always frown at TVET courses, some say, the courses are for dropouts".[24] In Nigeria, young people recruited to clean the streets declined because they viewed the work beneath them. One solution suggested by young people was for interventions targeted at youth to not lump people into one category of "uneducated youth" and differentiate between different levels of needs based on age, skills and capacities. Moreover, as research conducted in urban centres in Ethiopia has highlighted (Mains, 2007; di Nunzio, 2022), such interventions would also require a consideration of the implications attached to the types of work that youth engage in, particularly young men, given the social expectations attached to work and successful youth transitions. These findings speak to the broader literature reflecting the complexities of school-to-formal work transitions, especially for young men (see, for example, di Nunzio, 2017; Dawson, 2022).

4.2.2. Work

In most of our case study cities, **the majority of young people are unemployed, underemployed or are in insecure employment, making issues of labour market insecurity central to the challenges in transitioning to adulthood.** For instance, in Mogadishu, the overall national unemployment rate for individuals aged 14 to 29 stands at 67%. Among young women, who predominantly engage in the informal small business sector, the official unemployment rate is even higher, at 74%. As briefly

24 Freetown, NCTVA representative.

discussed in the education section, having formal education qualifications does not guarantee employment. In fact, individuals with school and university degrees often report higher unemployment rates compared to their uneducated peers (Gelle et al., 2021). In YCD domain focus cities with relatively high levels of youth employment, like Kampala, the jobs available are typically of low quality (UBOS, 2017, 2020; Merotto, 2020). In Addis, for instance, the average monthly starting salary for garment factory workers is approximately 1,275 ETB (roughly $23 USD or £18). This situation leads to underemployment, where young people struggle to secure a livelihood, including independent living, rent, transport and re-skilling themselves, due to inconsistent incomes and low pay. Participants across all five cities emphasised the pivotal role of work in shaping youth capabilities:

> "Young men and women are in a desperate situation because [of] the widespread unemployment rate."[25]

> "Getting a job is the greatest challenge for an educated person."[26]

> "The educated youth roam the streets of the city looking for mainly 'white-collar' jobs. With time, the youth get disillusioned."[27]

> "We are not even paid the cost of a single jacket we produce. I struggle a lot to cover my expense. One day I had nothing to put in the lunch box for my son."[28]

Persistent un(der)employment was often cited as the key reason trapping people in "youthhood", as individuals cannot fulfil their social and gender roles around supporting family members and starting their own family:

> "Young people are unemployed, which explains why so many young people who should be married are unmarried. No woman desires to marry an unemployed man."[29]

> "Being a male youth in Maiduguri is extremely difficult. To demonstrate your value, you must take care of your needs and assist your siblings. Society will view you as a nuisance if you cannot do this due to unemployment."[30]

The drivers of youth un(der)employment are largely similar across city contexts, including the mismatch in skills and labour market opportunities, a rapid rise in youth population, lack of legal labour market protection frameworks and, in some cities, the limited availability of formal wage employment (YCED, 2020). In Maiduguri, education is seen as not relevant to preparing young people for readily available productive sector jobs, such as agriculture, fishery, energy and livestock (Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, 2022). Jobs requiring formal education accreditation, such as in government agencies and the private sector, are limited.

25 Mogadishu, FGDs, employee.
26 Freetown, FGDs, youths in a formal setting.
27 Kampala, KCCA, 2022.
28 Addis, factory employee.
29 Maiduguri, educated female youth.
30 Maiduguri, educated male youth.

Furthermore, **youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds struggle to secure formal jobs due to nepotism and corruption**. In Kampala, youth in Owino Market report that without well-placed networks it is extremely difficult to find formal employment and access to government programmes that are supposed to assist them in obtaining jobs. In Mogadishu, the 4.5 system[31] means that government jobs are allocated by clan affiliation, rather than merit or experience. Starting from a disadvantaged position was seen as limiting their life chances, leading to a sense of hopelessness:

> "In the government or NGOs, the positions of jobs are pre-selected. They make recruitment even before they advertise the vacancy post. Except when the post is a senior position, they officially proceed with the normal recruitment process."[32]

In Maiduguri, the recruitment processes are similarly not transparent. They are primarily aimed at specific individuals close to politicians, rather than at deserving youth. Many of the young people interviewed claimed that only those who are "close to godfathers"[33] are selected. Young people with disabilities have particular difficulties navigating the recruitment process. Many of the youth interventions now use online applications, excluding youth with disabilities, low levels of digital and reading literacy, and those who cannot afford broadband or mobile data.

Taking the above factors into account, for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds the school-to-work transition is often achieved through the informal sector, such as through security work, while youth from more secure backgrounds pursue formal salaried jobs. Unfortunately, informal work opportunities are often sporadic and only profitable enough to ensure subsistence, perpetuating the intergenerational cycle of poverty: "Children from wealthy families have no trouble finding work because they have the money and connections, but poor people like us do not have this opportunity."[34]

City transport systems are significant employment opportunities for young men. In Mogadishu, 95% of Bajaj[35] drivers are below the age of 35 years and are mostly males. The cost of purchasing a Bajaj is between $2,500 to $4,000. Consequently, young men tend to rent Bajajs for about $10 per day. In Maiduguri, Nigeria, it is common to see four to five young people co-renting a single Keke tricycle, which limits their working hours to only a few hours or days. This makes them under-employed, with little income security and no opportunities for upward mobility. In Maiduguri, the

31 A 4.5 system is a quota mechanism for sharing political power. By this formula, the population is divided into five groups, based on clan affiliations. Four of these groups are considered to be "major clans", while the fifth group encompasses all other minorities not affiliated with the primary four. The fifth coalition holds half the political representation value compared to the four dominant groups.
32 Mogadishu, young male employee.
33 The godfathers are influential politicians and party financiers, including successive governors, senior government officials, retired military officers, oil industry bosses and others who have sway over who occupies political positions at the city and state levels (Haruna et al., 2022).
34 Maiduguri, unemployed male youth.
35 Bajajas are privately owned three-wheeled motor vehicles similar to rickshaws or Tuk Tuks.

Boko Haram insurgency has further limited transport work opportunities. Due to security concerns and state regulations, to get on a motorway one needs an escort. There are also frequent curfews, bans on motorcycles and Keke tricycles, and intimidation by security guards. Reflecting the general sentiment around blue-collar work, transport sector jobs are not regarded positively: "In my community, we don't have anything to empower young people. They end up becoming bike riders."[36]

In conflict-affected cities, **young men sometimes join militia groups and organised youth gangs as a means of meeting social and economic needs.** This in turn perpetuates negative stereotypes about the youth, especially those living in informal settlements among political and community leaders. In Mogadishu, high rates of out-of-school youth and unemployment have contributed to the formation of gangs known as *Ciyaal Weero* ("youth that attack"). These groups tend to have clear organisational structures and hierarchies, allowing youth to feel social belonging, recognition and progression, which is lacking in the current political and economic structure. The most notorious gang members, the ones that kill, tend to be promoted and become leaders. Gangs are not confined to their districts and go to other districts to rob people. As a result, the youth who live in the attacked districts organise themselves to protect their residents and go after the gangs who attacked them for revenge. Most gang members are male; however, there are reports of young women playing a supportive role in the attacks, such as luring victims by asking for help.

Young women are more likely to experience sexual discrimination and financial exploitation when looking for work, adding another layer of complexity to their experiences of transitioning to adulthood. In Mogadishu, participants highlighted that the private sector discriminates against young women, as they might take sick or maternity leave if they get pregnant. Young women also face sexual harassment when seeking employment, as they are asked to have sex in exchange for employment. The vast majority of formal female employees in Mogadishu are only given office cleaning or cooking and serving tea. In Freetown, female sex workers in the city do not have legal protection and are at high risk of being trafficked.

> "The opportunities for girls and boys are not the same when it comes to job opportunities. There are many jobs in the private sector for young people, but they are given to young men and not to young ladies. In the government, there are opportunities for young women, but when you look at it as a whole, it is not the same."[37]

Small business financing opportunities[38] are similarly highly gendered and exclusionary of young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, regardless of their educational attainments. Small business loans and grants typically target entrepreneurs to help them develop their businesses and improve the

36 Freetown, youth in formal setting.
37 Mogadishu, CSO leader.
38 Financing programmes that youth within Kampala can apply for include: The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), Emyooga, Community Driven Development Fund, Kampala City Sente Loan, OWC/NAADS.

sustainability of their incomes and living conditions. An example of such an initiative is the *Munafa* Fund (meaning "prosper"), in Sierra Leone. *Munafa* is a social microfinance institution offering individual loans, a savings account and tailored skills training. Unfortunately, the financial sectors tend to be male-dominated and discriminatory against women who are trying to gain access to financial services, including loans, as young women often lack collateral:

> "If a young woman went to the bank the bank officials would not give her a loan. If she looks for a guarantor, she will not find a man willing to do that for her. But if the young man tries, it will be easier for him to first get the guarantor, and thus the loan."[39]

In Nigeria and Sierra Leone, in addition to collateral, many financing programmes require online applications, university certificates, business plans and insider connections – criteria that youth in need often cannot meet: "It is difficult to get loans from micro-credit as one needs collateral. Even if you have it, one still needs 'sababu' (connections) or must bribe to get the loan."[40]

Interviewees in Kampala similarly reported that government financing is available but with many instances of mismanagement. For example, the information about the Youth Livelihood Programme was difficult to access and many participants did not realise that the funding was a loan rather than a grant. Repayment of small businesses is often described as excessive and somewhat exploitative. Furthermore, repeated shocks from pandemics, such as Covid-19 and Ebola, unfortunately, resulted in disruptions and discontinuation of small business funding opportunities.

4.2.3. Physical and mental health

Research participants across cities expressed worries about a rise in substance abuse, especially alcohol, as peers resort to substances as a coping mechanism for chronic stress and depressive symptoms caused by economic insecurity and conflict.[41] Interviewees in Maiduguri and Mogadishu suggest that the use of hard drugs is highly prevalent among young people. The inability to meet familial obligations and expectations while living in a conflict-affected environment is associated with feelings of rage, frustration and anxiety, particularly among IDP and refugee youth (see also Logie et al., 2020). The lack of resolve for psychosocial needs leads some young people to engage in substance abuse to self-soothe (World Bank and Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2015), as is well captured by the following quote from a young man in Maiduguri:

39 Mogadishu, male FGS employee.
40 Freetown, youth, Kroo Bay.
41 Please note that, globally, the highest levels of alcohol consumption are found mainly in high-income countries. The world's population with the lowest per capita consumption live in Eastern Mediterranean region and Muslim-majority countries. Looking at school-aged alcohol consumption data across 45 counties in Europe and Canada, youth from higher economic class and boys are more likely to consume alcohol.

> "the drugs keep me calm most of the time, but they have also taken everything I have. I spent all my money on Tramadol […] I began using it after Boko Haram assassinated my two brothers in my presence. When I take drugs, nothing matters any more."[42]

Other common drivers for drug abuse include long working hours in the informal labour market and a higher prevalence of injuries in manual occupations that lead to the use of prescription and illicit opioids. In Mogadishu, drug abuse amongst Bajaj drivers is rampant, as young men use drugs to be able to work double shifts:

> "The driver must pay $10 for the daily rent [of Bajaj]. Yet he has […] to pay the bills and provide for his family. If you put in effort during the day and work hard, you can get $25/day. But this is not enough […] So, the driver thinks the solution is to use drugs to not get tired and work double shifts until 3:00 am."[43]

Interviewees further suggested that (I)NGOs and community services providing psychosocial support and promoting mental health awareness are in short supply. Consequently, the few services available are often too overburdened to properly assist those with addiction. **Furthermore, the treatment of psychological outcomes typically does not address the core drivers, such as unemployment, precarity and conflict-induced violence.** Cross-sectoral or joint interventions providing both skills training and mental health support are rare, despite growing evidence of their effectiveness (Wahlbeck, et al., 2017). The need for such integrated intervention was indicated by participants, who shared stories of meaningful employment opportunities protecting young people's mental health:

> "This young man lost his mother, who used to sell Akara [bean cake] to pay for his degree at Ramat Polytechnic. A few months after her passing, he began using drugs. I hired him as a facilitator in a non-formal learning centre so he could support himself. Now, he has changed."[44]

An additional desk review also shows that there is a lack of nationally driven policy strategies to prevent harmful alcohol and drug consumption among young people and adolescents (see Table 4). Youth across cities reported that young people in difficult circumstances use alcohol for psychological relief. Global-level evidence and WHO recommendations suggest that, when implemented effectively, alcohol control and harm reduction policies can result in reduction of alcohol-related harms (Ghandour et al., 2016). In African cities, policies and programmes mitigating harmful use of alcohol by youth are needed to reflect youth needs and risks going forward.

42 Maiduguri, out-of-school IDP.
43 Mogadishu, young male Bajaj driver.
44 Maiduguri, male INGO staff.

Table 3 National policies to prevent harmful use of alcohol

Policies/country	Nigeria	Uganda	Sierra Leone	Ethiopia	Somalia
National monitoring system on consumption	No	No	No	Yes	No
Written national policy/prevention strategy	No	No	No	No	Officially banned [45]
National legal minimum age for on-premises sales of alcoholic beverages	No	No	18	18	Officially banned
National legal minimum age for off-premises sales of alcoholic beverages	No	No	18	18	Officially banned
Legally binding regulations on alcohol advertising	No	No	No	Yes	Officially banned
Alcohol per capita (15yrs+) consumption (in litres of pure alcohol) as of 2016	13.4	9.5	5.7	2.8	0.0

Source: WHO (2018).

Health systems typically have very limited mental health support, due to persistent stigma about mental health difficulties across age groups, including among policymakers and young people. In Maiduguri, youth have reported instances of unprofessional conduct among healthcare providers, who stigmatise all mental health difficulties as signs of "madness". Similarly, in Kampala, concerns have been expressed by young people regarding the lack of differentiation between the need for minor mental health support or coping skills and severe mental health conditions requiring institutionalisation in psychiatric hospitals. The social rejection of people with mental illness is interwoven with cultural beliefs surrounding witchcraft, spirit possession and rejection of Western psychiatric practices (Kitafuna, 2022). The prevalence of stereotypes in mental health discourse leads to stigmatisation, even for minor expressions of mental distress, resulting in young people hesitating to seek help. Findings from Addis research suggest that providing appropriate training and supervision for healthcare professionals is an essential first step to reducing stigma and effectively delivering mental health support.

Access to reproductive health services is severely restricted, often due to exorbitant costs. Young people across all five cities reported that high incidence of teenage pregnancy stems from a lack of comprehensive state education on the subject and the absence of free access to contraception. In Northern Nigeria, certain communities still promote abstention among young people (Abdullahi and Umar, 2013). In Freetown, condoms can cost up to 15,000 leones (approx. $1, while the average salary is estimated to be between $40 and $75), while long-term contraception is only

45 Alcohol consumption is prohibited in some Muslim-majority countries, including Somalia (Ghandour et al., 2016).

accessible for those who can pay high consultation fees. The Covid-19 lockdown presented additional challenges for youth in obtaining contraceptives (Mambo et al., 2022). In Freetown, sex workers are particularly vulnerable to maternal mortality rates and other pregnancy-related problems, due to limited access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. Given the common difficulties in accessing even basic contraceptives, young people suggest that NGOs should realign their priorities away from a heavy focus on HIV/AIDS education to reproductive health.

4.2.4. Citizenship

Social institutions embodying city systems play an important role in framing how youth experience citizenship and understand their relationship with the state. The day-to-day lived experience of citizenship is largely reflective of the balance between individuals' social rights, in their procedural and substantive forms, versus their contributions to the community and the country. Procedural rights refer to how individuals are treated by official government offices and departments (for example, processes of state university admissions), while substantive rights refers to what those rights actually deliver (that is, the quality of education youth receive) (Dean, 2015; Homonchuk, 2020).

Procedural fairness in social city systems such as education and healthcare is important, not only because it contributes to fair outcomes, but also because perceptions of procedural justice share social perceptions on country-wide levels of inequality and social inclusion. Successful youth transition to full citizenship entails feeling "at home" in their society and knowing that they will be fairly recognised over the life course. Social invisibility, mistreatment by powerful institutions and stark inequality in opportunities, in contrast, undermine a young person's sense of belonging and agency associated with citizenship (Erikson, 1994).

Youth across all five YCD cities shared discontent about the experiences of procedural and substantive injustice in the spheres of education, work, healthcare and law enforcement. Instances of injustice often take the form of low- and high-level nepotism and corruption, which undermine access and quality of social institutions. These practices have significant implications for young people's ability to enhance their livelihoods and their overall experience of citizenship. Young people often perceive the failures of social institutions as deliberate and systematic neglect by the political and economic elite, leading to feelings of being undervalued and frustrated: "We are tired of being neglected. […] We know Kampala and all the groups that work within the city. Why do you rely on State House officials who do not even know anything about the people of Kampala […]?"[46]

Experiences within educational institutions, including schools, vocational training programmes and universities, hold paramount significance in this regard. Using the lens of transitions to adulthood, education can be a critical stepping stone, enabling

46 Kampala, key informant interview.

youth to access full-time, secure employment, while also empowering them to exercise their civil and political rights. However, as highlighted earlier, youth experience a neglectful approach from governments regarding the provision and regulations within the education and skills training sectors.

In contexts with limited social rights and civic participation, young people sometimes resort to joining militia groups and gangs to meet their social and economic needs, which in turn further deepens their exclusion from country-level political settlements. As can be seen, for example, in Mogadishu with Ciyall Weero gangs, young people sometimes resort to engaging in terrorist attacks, suicide bombings and community defence against other violent factions. In areas with high prevalence of gang groups, customary law (Xeer) and religious law (Shari'a) start to carry more weight than the formal legal frameworks set out by the national government. Youth gangs are typically well organised and have organisational structures and hierarchies, including leaders, speakers, committees and enforcement mechanisms. Membership provides prestige status among peers, opportunities to experience social inclusion and recognition, source of income, and a strong sense of collective identity.

Overall, current youth generation frequently encounter a self-perpetuating cycle while navigating transitions into adult citizenship roles. On the one hand, the lack of meaningful procedural and substantive social rights hampers their ability to have a voice and exert power within the political settlement. On the other hand, youth face significant barriers in influencing the quality of education, healthcare and other city systems, exacerbating their exclusion from the political process.

5. Implications

This research carries several implications. In this section, we delve into the contributions this paper makes to the existing theories in the field of youth and capability development, drawing on insights derived from synthesising findings across our five focus cities. We further reflect on the merits of domain-level analysis within the broader ACRC conceptual framework, assessing how focusing on youth and capability development contributes to overarching concepts like political settlements and city systems. Additionally, we explore the strategic and policy implications of this research, providing insights to inform future reform efforts and the design of interventions aimed at empowering young individuals and fostering more inclusive and equitable urban environments.

5.1. Contributions to theory

This paper makes several notable contributions to theory in the field of youth and capability development and political settlements. By integrating insights from the World Bank youth transitions framework (World Bank, 2006; Banks, 2021), capabilities theory (Sen, 1999), and the concepts of political settlements and city systems (Kelsall et al., 2021), it offers valuable insights on the complex interplay between these factors and their impact on young individuals' transition into adulthood.

As a synthesis of findings from five diverse African urban settings, this paper contributes to the existing literature by providing an overview of common challenges faced by young people. In doing so, the paper recognises the contextual nature of capability development, while emphasising the common barriers to enhancing youth capabilities development across contexts. For example, issues surrounding gendered skills programming and exclusionary borrowing systems emerged as common challenges across contexts. The exploration of such crosscutting themes provides valuable insights into the interconnectedness of multiple factors in capability development and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges young people face. This approach also allows us to question certain strategies employed by international development and national government actors in the realm of youth capability development.

The research further sheds light on the intricacies of youth inclusion and exclusion from city systems and political settlements. It explores how power imbalances related to generation, class and gender influence young people's access to job opportunities and essential services such as health clinics, transportation and vocational skills training. It also highlights that the most disadvantaged youth possess the least influence over the dynamics of the political settlement, with disadvantages essentially exacerbating their exclusion from decisions that will shape their futures in the long run. Unfortunately, youth in all five cities included in this study reported exclusionary dynamics in the political settlement – even where youth-specific institutions (such as youth councils) exist – hindering our ability to make a judgment as to which types of political settlements are more conducive to improvements in youth outcomes. Further research in this sphere is crucial for advancing conversations about democratisation, governance and the social contract. There is a pressing need to tackle existing power imbalances and cultivate political settlements that are more inclusive and participatory.

Furthermore, the paper's expansion of the ACRC theoretical framework to include work and employment, particularly in the informal sector, contributes to the literature on the urban labour markets (Thieme, 2013; Fox et al., 2016; Sassen et al., 2018; van Blerk et al., 2020; Dawson, 2021). In particular, findings reiterate the growing importance of informal labour in many urban settings and their capacity to shape youth transitions. With much urban youth relying on social capital for their entry into urban labour markets, the gendered and classist hierarchies of work tend to shape the long-term prospects of economically disadvantaged youth, especially young women, who lack the necessary connections and financial resources to secure work in higher-paid occupations and the formal sector. By incorporating relevant dimensions from ACRC and World Bank youth transitions frameworks, the paper enhances the theoretical tools available to analyse and design policies that encompass the diverse realities young people encounter in their pursuit of economic empowerment.

5.2. Reflections on merits of domain-level analysis

By conducting analysis at the domain level, the ACRC more effectively captures the intricacies and nuances of specific sectors and issues as they relate to broader urban

development. Through examining each domain separately, as researchers we have been able to better identify specific barriers and opportunities for youth capability development. This granular approach allows policymakers and practitioners to target interventions more precisely, tailoring strategies to address the specific needs of young individuals in each sector.

Domain-level analysis allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the crosscutting themes that influence youth capability development. For instance, by exploring gender, public finance and climate issues across various domains, the ACRC can reveal how these themes interact with and impact young people's experiences. Understanding these interconnections is crucial for developing holistic and integrated policies that consider the multidimensional aspects of youth transitions.

Moreover, the domain-level analysis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the role of political settlements in shaping youth capabilities within specific sectors. By examining how power imbalances and political dynamics manifest in each domain, researchers can identify the systemic factors perpetuating youth exclusion or inclusion. This knowledge can inform targeted policy interventions to promote more inclusive political settlements that facilitate youth empowerment across different sectors.

5.3. Strategic and policy implications

The strategic and policy implications of this research hold the potential for shaping future reform efforts and interventions in the field of youth capability development and political settlements in urban African cities.

In particular, the findings suggest a need for integrated and multisectoral approaches to promoting youth capabilities. Since 2015, OECD countries have moved to an Integrated Mental Health, Skills, and Work Policy strategy, based on the evidence that mental ill-health weighs disproportionately on people who are unemployed, with lower socioeconomic status, and are young (OECD, 2021). This strategy has led to an increase in interministerial coordination and integrated programming, such as the I Can Work programme[47] in Wales, which provides skills training and mental health support and is accessible through the national network of health clinics and community-based support services. In Africa, the number of multisectoral action projects is increasing, often focusing on malaria prevention (UN-Habitat/UNDP, 2022), HIV/AIDS services (Kuruvilla et al., 2018), and girl-focused cash transfer programmes, such as the Adolescent Girls Initiative in Kenya (AGI-K). Findings in this report suggest the need for broadening multisectoral action projects to incorporate skills training and mental health. To achieve this, it is essential to establish guidelines for fostering buy-in across sectors and ministries. Additionally, determining the most effective financing mechanisms is crucial for enabling multisectoral approaches that can effectively enhance youth capabilities (Efevbra et al., 2020).

47 See: rcs-wales.co.uk/en/supporting-you-into-work (accessed 16 January 2024).

Key messages also emerge on the meaningful inclusion of young people in the design of development and humanitarian-funded youth empowerment projects. Engaging youth in participatory programme design ensures that their voices and expertise are heard, enabling the creation of interventions that genuinely reflect their needs and aspirations. This inclusive approach enhances the relevance and sustainability of youth empowerment initiatives.

Lastly, policymakers should prioritise the protection and support of young people in informal labour markets. Establishing frameworks that safeguard young workers from abuse and exploitation can contribute to their wellbeing and economic empowerment. Addressing the harmful use of alcohol and other substances among young people requires targeted policies that focus on prevention and support. Such measures are essential to positively impact the health and prospects of African cities' youth population.

6. Conclusion

By 2050, one in two Africans will be under the age of 25. The experiences of young people in cities like Addis Ababa, Freetown, Kampala, Maiduguri and Mogadishu reveal similarities in challenges faced by urban youth that will shape the future of the African continent and the global labour market. At the same time, their stories underscore some of the unique distinctions in the subjective marginalisation, political exclusion, and disadvantage that young women and men are confronted with in their daily lives. As this paper has shown, these challenges, largely driven by systemic failures and weak governance in the focus cities, shape young people's transitions into adulthood.

Youth transitions tend to extend beyond a well-defined age bracket, stretching well into adulthood, reinforcing the idea that adulthood transitions are a social, and typically non-linear, process. The observation that youth capabilities to transition into adult social roles are often restricted by exclusionary political settlements and city-level systems failures underscores the significance of understanding these dynamics to inform effective policy design and interventions. This has further implications, whereby youth policies and interventions should not only address youth's immediate needs but also empower young individuals to become active agents of positive change in their communities.

Throughout the analysis, it became evident that young people face exclusion from economic, social and political participation, even in contexts where formal processes and institutions for youth inclusion exist. This exclusion is rooted in generational, class and gender power imbalances, particularly affecting young women. The synthesis also highlighted the crosscutting themes of gender, public finance and climate, with gender issues consistently prevalent across the cities, though public finance and climate change aspects were less emphasised.

Vocational skills training and small business financing programmes were found to lack elements that challenge gender norms, resulting in unequal opportunities for young

women. Furthermore, the health systems exhibited significant deficiencies in supporting reproductive and mental health, due to stigma, financial constraints and limited youth involvement in decisionmaking processes concerning these matters.

The experiences of injustice encountered by young people in education, employment, healthcare, and law enforcement systems hinder their full transition into adulthood. In African cities, these injustices too often drive some individuals towards alternative pathways, such as joining illicit social hierarchies like gangs and insurgency groups, perpetuating negative stereotypes about youth living in informal settlements and excluding them from political inclusion structures. Moreover, the study expands on the ACRC theoretical framework, highlighting the importance of informal sector employment, which is not sufficiently covered in the existing “systems” identified.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to promote youth capabilities in African cities and address the challenges identified:

1. **Integrated and multisectoral approaches:** Policymakers should adopt integrated and multisectoral approaches to promote youth capabilities. Learning from the OECD's Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work Policy strategy and other successful initiatives, countries should enhance interministerial coordination and integrated programming. Developing guidelines on achieving buy-in across sectors and ministries and identifying appropriate financing mechanisms will facilitate effective multisectoral action.
2. **Meaningful political participation for urban youth:** Notable across our five cities is that while institutions and processes exist to foster youth participation in urban (and national) politics, these do not provide space for most young people to meaningfully engage in and with processes and policies that influence them and their transition to adulthood. Young people recognise they are used as political pawns and that politicians try to purchase, rather than earn their votes. Yet in the same ways as they must rely upon their own agency in fostering livelihoods in tough city contexts, young people are vocal about pushing back against these political tactics. In the youth gangs and groups that are emerging from this political vacuum for young people, there are clear organisational structures and hierarchies that provide young people with the social belonging and recognition they desire.
3. **Meaningful youth inclusion in project design:** Development and humanitarian-funded youth empowerment projects must prioritise meaningful inclusion of young people in the design process. Recognising the value of participatory programme design, involving youth in decisionmaking will result in more effective and relevant interventions.
4. **Protection and support for young people in informal labour markets:** Policymakers should develop frameworks to protect and support young people in informal labour markets. Learning from successful community financial support models, strategies should be implemented to mitigate the risks faced by young entrepreneurs in the informal sector.
5. **Preventing harmful substance use:** Policymakers must prioritise policies aimed at preventing harmful substance use among young people. Implementing evidence-based strategies and providing access to support services will aid in reducing substance abuse among the youth population.

In conclusion, this paper's synthesis of findings has shed light on the interplay between political settlements, city systems and youth capability development in our five African cities, building on the World Bank youth transitions framework (World Bank, 2006 Banks, 2021), the concept of capabilities (Sen, 1999), and the ACRC conceptual framework (Kelsall et al., 2021). By delving into specific sectors and crosscutting themes, the paper provides valuable insights for designing contextually relevant and effective policies and interventions. The exploration of crosscutting ACRC themes and the inclusion of the informal labour market dimension only deepened our exploration of the complex challenges young people face.

Through the recommendations outlined above, policymakers and practitioners can take concrete steps towards promoting inclusive and supportive environments for young people, supporting them to transition successfully into adulthood and contribute meaningfully to society. Understanding and addressing the challenges faced by young people is crucial for building sustainable and resilient African cities for the future.

References

Abdulai, AG (2023). *The politics of development in Accra: a political settlement analysis*. Unpublished ACRC report. Manchester: African Cities Research Consortium, The University of Manchester.

Abdullahi, M and Umar, A (2013). "Factors associated with engaging in pre-marital sex among the students of University of Maiduguri". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention* 2(10): 40-49.

Alla-Mensah, J and McGrath, S (2023). "A capability approach to understanding the role of informal apprenticeship in the human development of informal apprentices". *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 75(4): 677-696.

Adama, O (2014). "Marginalisation and integration within the informal urban economy: The case of child waste pickers in Kaduna, Nigeria". *International Development Planning Review* 36(2): 155.

Adams, EA, Juran, L and Ajibade, I (2018). "'Spaces of exclusion' in community water governance: A feminist political ecology of gender and participation in Malawi's Urban Water User Associations". *Geoforum* 95: 133-142.

African Union (2015). *Agenda 2063. The Africa We Want.* African Union Commission. Available online [pdf]: (accessed 16 January 2024).

African Union (2016). *Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025.* African Union Commission. Available online [pdf] (accessed 16 January 2024).

Ahmed, H and Ahmed, YA (2021). "Constraints of youth entrepreneurs in Ethiopia". *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research* 1-10.

Alaazi, DA and Aganah, GA (2020). "Understanding the slum–health conundrum in sub-Saharan Africa: A proposal for a rights-based approach to health promotion in slums". *Global Health Promotion* 27(3): 65-72.

Alkire, S (2005a). *Valuing Freedoms: Sen's Capability Approach and Poverty Reduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alkire, S (2005b). "Why the capability approach?" *Journal of Human Development* 6(1): 115-135.

Alumona, IM and Amusan, L (2019). "Youth cultism, crime and lethal violence in Nigerian cities". *African Renaissance* 16(2): 11-29.

Amugsi, DA, Mwangi, JN, Haregu, TN, Aboderin, I, Muindi, K and Mberu, BU (2016). "Solid waste management policies in urban Africa: Gender and lifecourse considerations in Nairobi and Mombasa". Urban ARK Working Paper 14.

Amupanda, JS (2018). "Who is in the 'We'? Interrogating the African Union's Agenda 2063 and youth political participation". *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies-Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 13(1): 56-76.

Angoua, ELE, Dongo, K, Templeton, MR, Zinsstag, J and Bonfoh, B (2018). "Barriers to access improved water and sanitation in poor peri-urban settlements of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire". *PloS ONE* 13(8): e0202928.

Ansell, N (2016). "From objects to subjects? Children and youth in development". In J Grugel and D Hammett (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of International Development*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pages 487-511.

Ansell, N, Hajdu, F, van Blerk, L and Robson, E (2014). "Reconceptualising temporality in young lives: Exploring young people's current and future livelihoods in AIDS-affected southern Africa". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 39(3): 387-401.

Arnot, M and Swartz, S (2012). "Youth citizenship and the politics of belonging: Introducing contexts, voices, imaginaries". *Comparative Education* 48(1): 1-10.

Asongu, SA and Odhiambo, NM (2019). "Enhancing ICT for quality education in sub-Saharan Africa". *Education and Information Technologies* 24(5): 2823-2839.

Austrian, K, Soler-Hampejsek, E, Kangwana, B, Debaba Wado, Y, Abuya, B and Maluccio, JA (2021). "Impacts of two-year multisectoral cash plus programs on young adolescent girls' education, health and economic outcomes: Adolescent Girls Initiative-Kenya (AGI-K) randomized trial". *BMC Public Health* 21: 2159. Available online (accessed 23 January 2024).

Awad, A (2020). "From school to employment: The dilemma of youth in sub–Saharan Africa". *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25(1): 945-964.

Ayega, D (2020). "Pandemics and education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Invest in education technology". *American Journal of Educational Research* 8(8): 581-586.

Baguios, A, King, M, Martins, A and Pinnington, R (2021). "Are we there yet? Localisation as the journey towards locally led practice: Models, approaches and challenges". ODI Policy Brief. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available online [pdf] (accessed 23 January 2024).

Banks, N (2021). “Developmental spaces? Developmental psychology and urban geographies of youth in sub-Saharan Africa”. *Children's Geographies* 19(2): 210-224.

Banks, N, Starc Card, K, Dessie, E, Marcus, R and Nicolai, S (2022). “Youth empowerment and development in African cities”. ACRC blog series. Available online (accessed 16 January 2024).

Barise, A and Hashi, A (2020). *Human Capital Development Strategy for Somalia*. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies and City University of Mogadishu. Available online [pdf] (accessed 16 January 2024).

Barnes, BR (2021). “Reimagining African women youth climate activism: The case of Vanessa Nakate”. *Sustainability* 13(23): 13214.

Barnes, TD and Burchard, SM (2013). “‘Engendering’ politics: The impact of descriptive representation on women’s political engagement in sub-Saharan Africa”. *Comparative Political Studies* 46(7): 767-790.

Battersby, J and Watson, V (2018). “Addressing food security in African cities”. *Nature Sustainability* 1(4): 153-155.

Bennell, P (2021). “The political economy of attaining Universal Primary Education in sub-Saharan Africa: The politics of UPE implementation”. *International Journal of Educational Development* 80: 102317.

Berhanu Lakew, T and Azadi, H (2020). “Financial inclusion in Ethiopia: Is it on the right track?” *International Journal of Financial Studies* 8(2): 28.

Berman, B J (1998). “Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: The politics of uncivil nationalism”. *African Affairs* 97(388): 305-341.

Bincof, MO (2018). “The role of youth in political participation in Somalia”. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 23(10): 64-74.

Birdsall, N, Levine, R and Ibrahim, A (2005). “Towards universal primary education: Investments, incentives, and institutions”. *European Journal of Education* 40(3): 337-349.

Bjarnesen, J (2017). “The politics of inclusion and exclusion in urban Burkina Faso”. In E Oinas, H Onodera and L Suurpää (eds.), *What Politics? Youth and Political Engagement in Africa*. Brill, pages 123-140.

BOOG and BSACSDHR (2020). *Overview of Borno State’s 25 Year Development Framework and 10 Years Strategic Transformation Plan*. Maiduguri: Borno

Office of the Governor and Borno State Agency for the Coordination of Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response.

Büscher, K (2018). "African cities and violent conflict: The urban dimension of conflict and post conflict dynamics in Central and Eastern Africa". *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12(2): 193-210.

Camfield, L (2011). "Young lives in transition: From school to adulthood?" *The European Journal of Development Research* 23: 669-678.

Carney, A, Kaaya, S, Kajula, L, Ibitoye, M, Marwerwe, G and Sommer, M (2020). "'Most of the youth are drinking because they have nothing to do': How idle time facilitates adolescent alcohol use in urban Tanzania". *Journal of Child and Adolescent Substance Abuse* 29(2): 129-142.

Chauke, TA (2020). "Youth apathy in an electoral democracy: A critical discourse on civil participation in South Africa". *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development* 9(3): 35.

Chege, F and Sifuna, DN (2006). "Girls' and women's education in Kenya". *Gender Perspectives and Trends* 91: 86-90.

Crompton, H, Chigona, A, Jordan, K and Myers, C (2021). "Inequalities in girls' learning opportunities via EdTech: Addressing the challenge of Covid-19". Working Paper 31 EdTech Hub. Available online (accessed 16 January 2024).

Cubitt, C (2012). "Political youth: Finding alternatives to violence in Sierra Leone". *Africa Dialogue* 15.

Datzberger S (2019). "Why education is not helping the poor. Findings from Uganda". Conference presentation Available online [pdf] (accessed 7 July 2023).

Dawson, HJ (2021). "'Making plans through people': The social embeddedness of informal entrepreneurship in urban South Africa". *Social Dynamics* 47(3): 389-402.

Dawson, HJ (2022). "Living, not just surviving: The politics of refusing low-wage jobs in urban South Africa". *Economy and Society* 51(3): 375-397.

De Boeck, F (2015). "'Poverty' and the politics of syncopation: Urban examples from Kinshasa (DR Congo)". *Current Anthropology* 56(S11): S146-S158.

Dean, H (2015). *Social Rights and Human Welfare*. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Deininger, K (2003). "Does cost of schooling affect enrollment by the poor? Universal primary education in Uganda". *Economics of Education Review* 22(3): 291-305.

Di Nunzio, M (2017). “Marginality as a politics of limited entitlements: Street life and the dilemma of inclusion in urban Ethiopia”. *American Ethnologist* 44(1): 91-103.

Di Nunzio, M (2022). “Work, development, and refusal in urban Ethiopia”. *American Ethnologist* 49(3): 401-412.

Divon, SA and Owor, A (2021). “Aguu: From Acholi post war street youth and children to ‘criminal gangs’ in modern day Gulu City, Uganda”. *Journal of Human Security* 16(2): 82-96.

Efevbera, Y et al. (2020). “Multisectoral programming for adolescent health and well-being in sub-Saharan Africa – Insights from a symposium hosted by UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation”. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 67(1): 24–25.

Elfversson, E and Höglund, K (2019). “Violence in the city that belongs to no one: Urban distinctiveness and interconnected insecurities in Nairobi (Kenya)”. *Conflict, Security and Development* 19(4): 347-370.

Emordi, EC (2005). “Emergence of the ‘area boys’ phenomenon in Lagos, Nigeria”. *The Constitution* 5(1): 61-88

Erikson, EH (1994). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York, NY: WW Norton.

Esson, J, Gough, KV, Simon, D, Amankwaa, EF, Ninot, O and Yankson, PW (2016). “Livelihoods in motion: Linking transport, mobility and income-generating activities”. *Journal of Transport Geography* 55: 182-188.

Evans, A (2018). “Cities as catalysts of gendered social change? Reflections from Zambia”. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108(4): 1096-1114.

Falchetta, G, Noussan, M and Hammad, AT (2021). “Comparing paratransit in seven major African cities: An accessibility and network analysis”. *Journal of Transport Geography* 94:103131.

Flisher, AJ, Townsend, L, Chikobvu, P, Lombard, CF and King, G (2010). “Substance use and psychosocial predictors of high school dropout in Cape Town, South Africa”. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 20(1): 237-255.

Flynn, J, Mader, P, Oosterom, M and Ripoll, S (2016). *Failing Young People? Addressing the Supply-side Bias and Individualisation in Youth Employment Programming.* IDS Evidence Report216. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

Fox, L, Senbet, LW and Simbanegavi, W (2016). “Youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, constraints and opportunities”. *Journal of African Economies*, 25(suppl_1): i3-i15.

Gebremariam, EB (2020). “The politics of dominating Addis Ababa (2005–2018)”. ESID Working Paper 148. Manchester: Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre, The University of Manchester. Available online [pdf] (accessed 16 January 2024).

Gelle, LY, Abshir, A and Ali-Salad, MA (2021). “Graduate unemployment in Somalia: Causes, socio-economic consequences and possible solutions”. *Journal of Economics* 9(3): 14-21.

Ghandour, L, Chalak, A, El-Aily, A, Yassin, N, Nakkash, R, Tauk, M, El Salibi, N, Heffron, M and Afifi, R. (2016). “Alcohol consumption in the Arab region: What do we know, why does it matter, and what are the policy implications for youth harm reduction?” *International Journal of Drug Policy* 28: 10-33.

Gobbers, E (2016). “Ethnic associations in Katanga province, the Democratic Republic of Congo: Multi-tier system, shifting identities and the relativity of autochthony”. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 54(2): 211-236.

Gough, KV (2008). “‘Moving around’: The social and spatial mobility of youth in Lusaka”. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90(3): 243-255.

Grant, R and Oteng-Ababio, M (2012). “Mapping the invisible and real ‘African’ economy: Urban e-waste circuitry”. *Urban Geography* 33(1): 1-21.

Gukurume, S (2022). 11 “Navigating Precarious Spaces: Youth, social movements and political activism in Zimbabwe”. In I Bangura (ed.), *Youth-led Social Movements and Peacebuilding in Africa*. London: Routledge, pages 162-180.

Hartinger-Saunders, R (2008). “The history of defining youth: Current implications for identifying and treating delinquent youth”. *The New York Sociologist* 3.

Haruna, A, Joseph, W and Abubakar, AA (2022). “Political settlement – Maiduguri City”. ACRC unpublished draft report. Manchester: African Cities Research Consortium, The University of Manchester.

Hassan, Z (2017). “Somalia’s education system: Towards accessibility, inclusiveness and quality education*”. The 2016 Annual HESPI Conferences on IGAD Economies: Proceedings of Conference on Imperatives for Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals in the IGAD Region*. Addis Ababa.

Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2022). *Youth Unemployment and Security in Somalia. Prioritising Jobs for Achieving Stability.* Mogadishu: Heritage Institute for Policy Studies. Available online (accessed 16 January 2024).

Homonchuk, O (2020). *Ukraine's Poor Majority: Exploring the Driving Factors of Subjective Poverty*. DPhil thesis. University of Oxford. Available online (accessed 16 January 2024).

Honwana, A (2014). "Youth, waithood, and protest movements in Africa". In *African Dynamics in a Multipolar World: 5th European Conference on African Studies – Conference Proceedings*. Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Internacionais do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), pages 2428-2447.

Jackson, J, Bradford, B, Hough, M, Myhill, A, Quinton, P and Tyler, TR (2012). "Why do people comply with the law? Legitimacy and the influence of legal institutions". *British Journal of Criminology* 52(6): 1051-1071.

Jeffrey, C (2012). "Geographies of children and youth II: Global youth agency". *Progress in Human Geography 36*(2): 245-253.

Kacharo, DK, Teshome, E and Woltamo, T (2022). "Safety and security of women and girls in public transport". *Urban, Planning and Transport Research* 10(1): 1-19.

Kagambirwe, G and Muriaas, R (2023). "Avenues for youth representation in Uganda". CMI Working Paper 01. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute. Available online (accessed 16 January 2024).

Kebede, GF (2022). "Entrepreneurship and the promises of inclusive urban development in Ethiopia". *Urban Forum* 34: 1-30.

Kelsall, T, Mitlin, D, Schindler, S and Hickey, S (2021). "Politics, systems and domains: A conceptual framework for the African Cities Research Consortium". ACRC Working Paper 2021-01. Manchester: African Cities Research Consortium, The University of Manchester. Available online [pdf] accessed 22 January 2024).

Kett, M, Cole, E and Turner, J (2020). "Disability, mobility and transport in low-and middle-income countries: A thematic review". *Sustainability* 12(2): 589.

Kihato, CW and Landau, LB (2020). "Coercion or the social contract? Covid -9 and spatial (in)justice in African cities". *City and Society* 32(1): 1-11.

Kitafuna, KB (2022). "A critical overview of mental health-related beliefs, services and systems in Uganda and recent activist and legal challenges". *Community Mental Health Journal* 58(5): 829-834.

Kuruvilla, S et al. (2018). “Business not as usual: How multisectoral collaboration can promote transformative change for health and sustainable development”. *BMJ* 363: k4771.

Levy, N and Dubinsky, I (2023). “Forever young: Institution-based waithood among youth in Ghana and South Africa”. *Time and Society* 3 August.

Lindley, S, Pauleit, S, Yeshitela, K, Cilliers, S and Shackleton, C (2018). “Rethinking urban green infrastructure and ecosystem services from the perspective of sub-Saharan African cities”. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 180: 328-338.

Logie, CH, Okumu, M, Mwima, S, Hakiza, R, Chemutai, D and Kyambadde, P (2020). “Contextual factors associated with depression among urban refugee and displaced youth in Kampala, Uganda: Findings from a cross-sectional study”. *Conflict and Health* 14: 1-13.

Mac-Ikemenjima, D (2017). “Violence and youth voter turnout in sub-Saharan Africa”. *Contemporary Social Science* 12(3-4): 215-226.

Mains, D (2007). “Neoliberal times: Progress, boredom, and shame among young men in urban Ethiopia”. *American Ethnologist* 34(4): 659-673.

Mambo, SB, Sikakulya, FK, Ssebuufu, R, Mulumba, Y, Wasswa, H, Mbina, SA, ... and Kyamanywa, P (2022). “Challenges in access and utilization of sexual and reproductive health services among youth during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in Uganda: An online cross-sectional survey”. *Frontiers in Reproductive Health* 3: 705609.

Mastercard Foundation (2020). *Secondary Education in Africa: Preparing Youth for the Future of Work.* Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

Matambo, E (2018). “Formal against indigenous and informal Education in sub-Saharan Africa: The battle without winners”. *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 17(1): 1-13.

Matli, W and Ngoepe, M (2020). “Capitalizing on digital literacy skills for capacity development of people who are not in education, employment or training in South Africa”. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development* 12(2): 129-139.

Méon, PG and Sekkat, K (2015). “The formal and informal institutional framework of capital accumulation”. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 43(3): 754-771.

Merotto, D (2020*). Uganda: Job Strategy for Inclusive Growth*. World Bank Group Job Series, 19. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

Mkwananzi, F and Melis Cin, F (2020). “From streets to developing aspirations: How does collective agency for education change marginalised migrant youths’ lives?” *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 21(4): 320-338.

Møller-Jensen, M (2021). “Frictions of everyday mobility: Traffic, transport and gendered confrontations on the roads of Accra”. *Mobilities* 16(4): 461-475.

Momoh, A (2000). “Youth culture and area boys in Lagos”. In A Jega (ed.), *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*. Uppsala and Kano: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, in collaboration with The Centre for Research and Documentation, pages 181-203.

Morrell, R, Jewkes, R and Lindegger, G (2012). “Hegemonic masculinity/masculinities in South Africa: Culture, power, and gender politics”. *Men and Masculinities* 15(1): 11-30.

Moussié, R (2021). “Childcare services in cities: challenges and emerging solutions for women informal workers and their children”. *Environment and Urbanization* 33(1): 117-130.

Mpyangu, CM, Ochen, EA, Onyango, EO and Lubaale, YAM (2014). *Out of School Children Study in Uganda*. Kampala: United Nations Children’s Fund, Uganda Country Office.

Mugisha, F, Arinaitwe-Mugisha, J and Hagembe, BO (2003). “Alcohol, substance and drug use among urban slum adolescents in Nairobi, Kenya”. *Cities* 20(4): 231-240.

Muhula, R (2007). “Youth and politics in Kenya: Promise or peril? Democracy, governance and civic participation”. *Africa Insight* 37(3): 362-375.

Mukhaye, D (2023). “Teachers vow to lay down tools as schools reopen”. *Monitor News*, 18 January.

Muriaas, RL and Wang, V (2012). “Executive dominance and the politics of quota representation in Uganda”. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50(2): 309-338.

Musarurwa, HJ (2018). “Closed spaces or (in) competent citizens? A study of youth preparedness for participation in elections in Zimbabwe”. *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 56(2): 177-194.

Musika, A, Poungsuk, P, Siriwan, N and Introrrathed, S (2019). “Relationship between curriculum and instructional materials of non-formal agricultural higher education”. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists* 7(3): 515-529.

Muwanga, NK, Mukwaya, PI and Goodfellow, T (2020). “Carrot, stick and statute: Elite strategies and contested dominance in Kampala”. ESID Working Paper 146. Manchester: Effective States and Inclusive Development, The University of Manchester. Available online [pdf] (accessed 10 June 2024).

Nungu, M (2010). “Universalizing access to primary education in Kenya: Myths and realities”. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education/Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheures et chercheurs en éducation* 3(2).

Nussbaum, MC (2000). *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochieng, VO and Waithanji Ngware, M (2022). “Adoption of education technologies for learning during Covid-19 pandemic: The experiences of marginalized and vulnerable learner populations in Kenya”. *International Journal of Educational Reform* 10567879221076081.

OECD (2021). *A New Benchmark for Mental Health Systems: Tackling the Social and Economic Costs of Mental Ill-Health*. Paris: OECD Health Policy Studies.

Okojie, CE (2003). “Employment creation for youth in Africa: The gender dimension”. *Jobs for Youth: National Strategies for Employment Promotion*, 15-16.

Olaiya, TA (2014). “Youth and ethnic movements and their impacts on party politics in ECOWAS member states”. *Sage Open* 4(1): 1-12.

O'Laughlin, B (2000). “Class and the customary: The ambiguous legacy of the indigenato in Mozambique”. *African Affairs* 99(394): 5-42.

Omondi, RI and Jagongo, A (2018). “Microfinance services and financial performance of small and medium enterprises of youth SMEs in Kisumu County, Kenya”. *International Academic Journal of Economics and Finance* 3(1): 24-43.

Oosterom, M (2018). “Youth engagement in the realm of local governance: Opportunities for peace?” IDS Working Paper 508. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

Oosterom, M and Gukurume, S (2019). “Managing the born-free generation: Zimbabwe’s strategies for dealing with the youth”. CMI Working Paper 2019:02. Bergen: Chr Michelsen Institute.

OPHI (2022a). “Sierra Leone: Subnational poverty trends”. Humanitarian Data Exchange Database. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. Oxford: University of Oxford. Available online (accessed 22 January 2024).

OPHI (2022b). “Global MPI country briefing 2022: Ethiopia (sub-Saharan Africa)”. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative Country Briefing. Oxford: University of Oxford. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

Owusu, G (2010). “Social effects of poor sanitation and waste management on poor urban communities: A neighborhood-specific study of Sabon Zongo, Accra”. *Journal of Urbanism* 3(2): 145-160.

Patrinos, HA and Angrist, N (2018). “Global Dataset on Education Quality: A review and update (2000-2017)”. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 8592). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Piper, L (2015). “From party-state to party-society in South Africa: SANCO and the informal politics of community representation in Imizamo Yethu, Cape Town”. In C Bénit-Gbaffou (ed.), *Popular Politics in South African Cities: Unpacking Community Participation.* Pretoria: HSRC Press, pages 21-41.

Poku-Boansi, M, Amoako, C and Atuah, DO (2019). “Urban travel patterns and safety among school children around Accra, Ghana”. *Journal of Transport and Health* 15: 100660.

Porter, G (2010). “Transport planning in sub-Saharan Africa III: The challenges of meeting children and young people’s mobility and transport needs”. *Progress in Development Studies* 10(2): 169-180.

Porter, G, Murphy, E, Adamu, F, Dayil, PB, De Lannoy, A, Han, S and Van der Weidje, K (2021). “Women’s mobility and transport in the peripheries of three African cities: Reflecting on early impacts of Covid-19”. *Transport Policy* 110: 181-190.

Potts, D (2013). “Rural–urban and urban–rural migration flows as indicators of economic opportunity in sub-Saharan Africa: What do the data tell us”. Migrating Out of Poverty Research Programme Working Paper. London: Kings College.

Punch, S (2015). “Possibilities for learning between childhoods and youth in the minority and majority worlds: Youth transitions as an example of cross-world dialogue”. In J Wyn and H Cahill (eds.), *Handbook of Children and Youth Studies*. Springer, page 689.

Radebe, TN (2019). “The challenges/barriers preventing the South African youth in becoming entrepreneurs: South African overview”. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies* 11(4 (J)): 61-70.

Rasmeni, ZZ and Madyira, DM (2019). “A review of the current municipal solid waste management practices in Johannesburg City townships”. *Procedia Manufacturing* 35: 1025-1031.

Resnick, D (2012). “Opposition parties and the urban poor in African democracies”. *Comparative Political Studies* 45(11): 1351-1378.

Resnick, D and Casale, D (2014). “Young populations in young democracies: Generational voting behaviour in sub-Saharan Africa”. *Democratization* 21(6): 1172-1194.

Riddell, A (2003). “The introduction of free primary education in sub-Saharan Africa”. Paper commissioned for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, *The Leap to Equality*. Paris: UNESCO.

Rubin, M, Meth, P, Tshuwa, L, Charlton, S and Kinfu, E (2022). “Eternal urban youth? Waithood and agency in Ethiopian and south African settlements”. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement* 15(2): 1-18. Available online (accessed 22 January 2024).

Rusu, VD, Roman, A and Tudose, MB (2022). “Determinants of entrepreneurial intentions of youth: The role of access to finance”. *Engineering Economics* 33(1): 86-102.

Sall, E (2004). “Social movements in the renegotiation of the bases for citizenship in West Africa”. *Current Sociology* 52(4): 595-614.

Salon, D and Gulyani, S (2019). “Commuting in urban Kenya: Unpacking travel demand in large and small Kenyan cities”. *Sustainability* 11(14): 3823.

Samarakoon, S, Christiansen, A and Munro, PG (2017). “Equitable and quality education for all of Africa? The challenges of using ICT in education”. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 16(6): 645-665.

Sarwar, M, Homonchuk, O and Nicolai, N (2024). “Education system (in)coherence in Northeast Nigeria”. ERICC Working Paper. Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) Research Programme Consortium.

Sassen, S, Galvaan, R and Duncan, M (2018). “Women's experiences of informal street trading and well-being in Cape Town, South Africa”. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy* 48(1): 28-33.

Satterthwaite, D, Sverdlik, A and Brown, D (2019). “Revealing and responding to multiple health risks in informal settlements in sub-Saharan African cities”. *Journal of Urban Health* 96(1): 112-122.

Sawyer, SM, Azzopardi, PS, Wickremarathne, D and Patton, GC (2018). “The age of adolescence”. *The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health* 2(3): 223-228.

Sen, A (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sen, A (2000). “A decade of human development”. *Journal of Human Development* 1(1): 17-23.

Shiras, T, Cumming, O, Brown, J, Muneme, B, Nala, R and Dreibelbis, R (2018). “Shared sanitation management and the role of social capital: Findings from an urban sanitation intervention in Maputo, Mozambique”. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15(10): 2222.

Shiras, T, Cumming, O, Brown, J, Muneme, B, Nala, R and Dreibelbis, R (2018). “Shared sanitation management and the role of social capital: Findings from an urban sanitation intervention in Maputo, Mozambique”. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15(10): 2222.

Shoniwa, TT and Thebe, V (2020). “Informal and unserviceable: The state, informal settlement residents, and sanitation management in Western Tshwane city, South Africa”. *Urban Forum* 31(4): 533-547.

Sifuna, DN (2007). “The challenge of increasing access and improving quality: An analysis of universal primary education interventions in Kenya and Tanzania since the 1970s”. *International Review of Education* 53(5): 687-699.

Sifuna, DN (2020). “Universal primary education concept and preliminary interventions in Africa”. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa* 4(11): 36-51.

SNBS (2020). *Benadir Regional Report 2020, Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS)*. Mogadishu: Somalia National Bureau of Statistics (formerly Directorate of National Statistics, Federal Government of Somalia). Available online [pdf] (accessed 13 June 2024).

Sommers, M (2007). “Creating programs for Africa’s urban youth: The challenge of marginalization”. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* 10(1): 19-31.

Soumaré, I, Tchana Tchana, F and Kengne, TM (2016). “Analysis of the determinants of financial inclusion in Central and West Africa”. *Transnational Corporations Review* 8(4): 231-249.

Ssemugabo, C, Nalinya, S, Lubega, GB, Ndejjo, R and Musoke, D (2020). “Health risks in our environment: Urban slum youth’ perspectives using photovoice in Kampala, Uganda”. *Sustainability* 13(1), 248.

SSL (2017). *Sierra Leone 2015 Population and Housing Census: Thematic Report on Population Structure and Population Distribution*. Freetown: Statistics Sierra Leone. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

Stasavage, D (2005). “The role of democracy in Uganda's move to universal primary education”. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43(1): 53-73.

Street Child (2016). “Written evidence submitted to the UK Department for International Development by Street Child: Girls’ education in Sierra Leone and Liberia”. London: Street Child. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

Stuurman, Z (2020). “Policing inequality and the inequality of policing: A look at the militarisation of policing around the world, focusing on Brazil and South Africa”. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 27(1): 43-66.

Sukarieh, M and Tannock, S (2008). “In the best interests of youth or neoliberalism? The World Bank and the New Global Youth Empowerment Project”. *Journal of Youth Studies* 11(3): 301-312.

Tembe, A, Nakamura, F, Tanaka, S, Ariyoshi, R and Miura, S (2019). “The demand for public buses in sub-Saharan African cities: Case studies from Maputo and Nairobi”. *IATSS Research* 43(2): 122-130.

Thieme, TA (2013). “The ‘hustle’ amongst youth entrepreneurs in Mathare's informal waste economy”. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7(3): 389-412.

Thorpe, D (2023). “African cities – the fastest growing in the world”. SmartCitiesDive. Available online (accessed 4 December 2023)

UBOS (2017). *The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Area Specific Profile Series: Kampala Capital City Authority.* Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

UBOS (2020). “Leveraging Uganda’s population dynamics for a resilient future amidst Covid-19”. World Population Day brochure. Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

UBOS (2022). *Multidimensional Poverty Index Report 2022*. Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

UNESCO (2022). *Education Sector Analysis: Assessing Opportunities for Rebuilding the Country through Education*. Dakar: IIEP-UNESCO. Available online [pdf] (accessed 4 April 2024).

UN-Habitat/UNDP (2022). *The Comprehensive Multisectoral Action Framework: Malaria and Sustainable Development*. New York: UNDP.

UNICEF and AUC (2021). *Transforming Education in Africa: An Evidence-based Overview and Recommendations for Long-term Improvements*. UNICEF and the African Union Commission. Available online [pdf] (accessed 22 January 2024).

van Blerk, L, Shand, W and Hunter, J (2020). "'Street citizenship': Informal processes of engaging youth as citizens through research and knowledge exchange in three African cities". *Space and Polity* 24(3): 330-345.

Van Stapele, N (2020). "Police killings and the vicissitudes of borders and bounding orders in Mathare, Nairobi". *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38(3): 417-435.

Wahlbeck, K, Cresswell-Smith, J, Haaramo, P and Parkkonen, J (2017). "Interventions to mitigate the effects of poverty and inequality on mental health". *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 52: 505-514.

WFP (2021). *Evaluation of Nigeria WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2022: Terms of Reference*. Policy Report. Rome: World Food Programme. Available online (accessed 24 January 2024).

WHO (2018). *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization. Available online (accessed 22 January 2024).

Winter, S, Barchi, F and Dzombo, MN (2018). "Drivers of women's sanitation practices in informal settlements in sub-Saharan Africa: A qualitative study in Mathare Valley, Kenya". *International Journal of Environmental Health Research* 28(6): 609-625.

Wolff, J, Lamb, E and Zur-Szpiro, E (2015). *A Philosophical Review of Poverty: A Review of How Poverty Has Been Understood and Analysed in Contemporary Political Philosophy*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Wood, A, Kębłowski, W and Tuvikene, T (2020). "Decolonial approaches to urban transport geographies: Introduction to the special issue". *Journal of Transport Geography* 88.

World Bank (2006). *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation.* Washington, DC: The World Bank Group.

World Bank (2018). "Somali poverty and vulnerability assessment: Findings for wave 2 of the Somali High Frequency Survey". Washington, DC: World Bank. Available online [pdf] (accessed 24 January 2024).

World Bank (2021). *Unleashing the Power of Educational Technology in TVET Systems.* Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. Available online (accessed 24 January 2024).

World Bank and Federal Republic of Nigeria (2015). *Northeast Nigeria Recovery and Peace Building Assessment: Volume I Synthesis Report*. Washington, DC:

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Available online (accessed 24 January 2024).

Yassine, A and Bakass, F (2022). “Do education and employment play a role in youth’s poverty alleviation? Evidence from Morocco”. *Sustainability* 14(18): 11750.

YCED (2020). “The 2016-2021 National Youth Manifesto: A healthy and productive youth population contributing to a peaceful and prosperous Uganda”. Available online (accessed 24 January 2024).

Young, C (2004). “The end of the post-colonial state in Africa? Reflections on changing African political dynamics”. *African Affairs* 103(410): 23-49.

Zhanda, K, Garutsa, N, Dzvimbo, MA and Mawonde, A (2022). “Women in the informal sector amid Covid-19: Implications for household peace and economic stability in urban Zimbabwe”. *Cities and Health* 1-14.

AFRICAN CITIES RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO TACKLING COMPLEX CHALLENGES IN AFRICA'S RAPIDLY CHANGING CITIES.

Where we're working

ACRC is working in 12 cities within sub-Saharan Africa with the potential and need for urban reform.

- Accra, Ghana
- Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Harare, Zimbabwe
- Kampala, Uganda
- Lagos, Nigeria
- Lilongwe, Malawi
- Maiduguri, Nigeria
- Mogadishu, Somalia
- Nairobi, Kenya

Find out more

- www.African-Cities.org
- @AfricanCities_
- bit.ly/ACRCnews
- AfricanCities@manchester.ac.uk

The African Cities Research Consortium is funded by UK International Development. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

UK International Development
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity