



Call for applications for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the African Centre for Cities (Re-advertisement)

DEADLINE: 29 JULY 2024

The African Centre for Cities (ACC) is based in the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics at the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment. The ACC was established in 2007 at the University of Cape Town as an urban research institute. ACC is interdisciplinary in its scope, drawing expertise on urban issues from across the university. The mission of the ACC is to “facilitate critical urban research and policy discourses for the promotion of vibrant, democratic and sustainable urban development in the global South”.

The ACC invites applications from suitably qualified applicants to apply for this three-year Postdoctoral Research Fellowship as part of a project led by the Indian Institute of Human Settlements, called “**If Cities Could Speak: Vulnerability, Climate and Health in the City.**”¹

The project is funded by the Wellcome Trust (WT) and will run from April 2024 to April 2027. **The project falls under the WT’s focus area of climate and health.** The project includes partners in South Africa (led by ACC), Kenya (led by KDI), Sierra Leone (led by SLURC), and India (led by IIHS, also the overall project lead), all of whom bring extensive experience in the fields of informal settlement upgrading and climate responses.

The overall project focusses on:

- How climate related hazards impact on people’s health in vulnerable areas of African and Asian cities (taking into account the challenge of attribution and complexity of the lived experience of health and climate risks)
- How mixed methodologies, including GIS mapping and health ethnography can jointly contribute to advancing work on the climate/health interface in global south cities (we plan to speak into debates in public health and urban studies)
- Knowledge translation through visual material, popular media, and other modes (e.g. the production of non-academic outputs that are useful for diverse audiences)

The successful candidate will be part of an **interdisciplinary team, based at ACC**, working to understand the climate risks faced in vulnerable communities, how these impact on health, and how

¹ The project proposal was called ““Spatialising Climate Impacts on Health: A Focus on Vulnerable Settlements in Megacities of the Global South”. However, the project was renamed at the kickoff meeting in Bangalore in May, 2024.



people in communities experience these relationships. While some of this work will be undertaken at the city-scale, it will be important to focus the research on specific settlements.

The ideal post-doc candidate will have a strong social science background with a willingness to work closely with the GIS and public health researchers who form part of the wider project. **We do not necessarily expect candidates to have extensive experience in both health and climate-related research**, we will consider candidates with experience in one or the other and who are willing to learn more about the linkages between the two fields. Most importantly, there must be a **willingness to utilize the methodologies collectively developed by the team** (led by IIHS). There must be interest in translating and communicating research findings for diverse audiences including communities and decision-makers.

Core to the overall project is focussed work on vulnerable settlements in the various cities. **In Cape Town, the selection of the specific vulnerable settlements will be driven by the post-doc**; based on their existing experience and networks. It is expected that the post doc will select at minimum one and at maximum three areas to undertake this more detailed work. The post-doc will be expected to broker the relationships and undertake the research at the settlement level.

The work will include:

- As part of the wider project, IIHS will undertake city-wide risk mapping for all of the partner cities. The post-doc is expected to assist in this process by providing qualitative inputs into these mapping processes and ground-truthing these maps in the selected vulnerable settlements where we focus the work.
- In the selected settlements, the post-doc is expected to conduct at least 15 health history interviews (this methodology is being jointly developed by requires strong ethical and ethnographic skills)
- Participant observation in selected settlement (and other methods that would assist in contextualizing the health experienced identified in the interviews)
- Using this material to identify suitable academic and non-academic outputs, including supporting the development of visual material for a short film (led by IIHS with inputs from the various cities).

Timelines

We would like the post-doc to begin as soon as possible. The first six months will be used for methodology development. We have allocated one year of field work, provisionally starting early 2025 (subject to ethical approval and other factors). The last 1.5 years of the project will be used for translation of work into popular, scholarly, and policy material.

Travel

It is expected that the post-doc travels for project related meetings. The first meeting will be in mid-2025 in Nairobi. In 2026, the meeting will be in Bangalore. Additional travel for conferences may be needed.



Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must have:

- Completed a doctoral degree in an area of study that is relevant to urban studies and southern urban debates within the past five years (e.g. Geography, Political Studies, Anthropology, Urban Studies, Planning and related fields) and/or public health debates related to the impacts of climate hazards on health and wellbeing. We will consider candidates where the PhD has been submitted and is still under view.
- Demonstrated experience conducting research in informal settlements or vulnerable areas. The scholar must have an existing relationship with the communities/settlements they are proposing that the research takes place in. If scholar does not have this, they must explain how they plan to undertake settlement selection and broker access, keeping in mind the project timeframes and ethical implications.
- Demonstrated ability to translate work for diverse audiences. Experience using mixed methods, including comfort with working with basic quantitative information (it is not expected that the scholar has used GIS, but that they are comfortable and interested in engaging with scholars who do).

Applicants must not have held any previous full-time professional or academic posts.

Conditions of Award

The successful candidate will be required to:

- Register as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in ACC.
- Comply with the University's approved policies, procedures, and practices for the postdoctoral sector.
- Participate in selected teaching and supervision that form part of the ACC work in the Masters of Southern Urbanism and Masters of Sustainable Urban Practice.

Value and Tenure

The fellowship is valued at **R 420,000 per 12-month period** and includes no fringe benefits. The fellowship is tenable for one year, and is **renewable for a total of up to three years contingent on satisfactory academic progress and the availability of funds**. The fellowship complies with the SARS policies/rules and is therefore exempt from taxation. Relocation expenses are not covered by the fellowship. Non-South African citizens may be required to apply for a study visa.

Application requirements

Applicants are required to submit the following documents in a single pdf, via email, to: faranaaz.bennett@uct.ac.za by no later than midnight, on July 29th, 2024.

1. A proposal (max two pages) which includes:
 - A short bio of the applicant, in narrative form.
 - Motivation for joining the project and your specific skill set.
 - An overview of the proposed site/sites including its location, an overview of the climate risks and hazards on the site, and any relevant information on the material condition or demographic profiles. Explain your current relationship with this site and why you think it is suitable for this project.
 - Evidence of interest in translating research for diverse audiences



2. A CV including a list of publications/scholarly and creative outputs (max two pages)
3. Copies of academic transcripts;
4. Names and contact details of at least two academics who have taught, supervised or worked alongside you.

Please clearly state that this is an application for the 'If Cities Could Speak' and label all your files with your last name.

NB: The position is full time and cannot be undertaken remotely.

Selection process

A panel comprised of ACC staff, and selected member of the wider project, will form part of the shortlisting process. Candidates will be scored based on criteria relevant to the project and the top three candidates will be shortlisted. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Interviews will be held with shortlisted candidates in the first week of August.

Enquiries

For more information on this position, please contact Dr Liza Cirolia at liza.ciorlia@uct.ac.za.

NB: This is a re-advertisement and candidates who applied previously need not apply again.

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications, to change the conditions of the award, and/or make no awards at all.

