

Workshop Program Point Sud 2021

Reframing Youth Politics and Citizenship in the COVID-19 Era in Africa

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University Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, Mozambique

Convenors

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Abstract

“Reframing Youth Politics and Citizenship in the COVID-19 Era in Africa” is an interdisciplinary intersectional conversation that brings together senior and junior scholars, activists and practitioners to examine how within structural constraints and the COVID-19 pandemic, young people, as scholars, artists, social actors and change makers, are shaping the social, political, economic and cultural life of their societies. Africa has the most youthful population in the world, with more than 70 percent of its population below the age of 30, and an average age of 20. African youth constitute a disenfranchised majority dealing with socio-economic and political challenges that stem from inadequate education, high unemployment, and political marginalization. Despite the challenges they face, many young Africans are savvy entrepreneurs surviving and thriving in both the formal and informal economies. They dominate the internet and digital spaces, and many are creative innovators and steadfast community organisers. Not surprisingly, young people are already playing an active role in combating the spread and impact of COVID-19 on their societies.

The proposed workshop will be held at a time when the world will be coming to terms with the full impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted economic activity leaving millions without jobs and livelihoods, and unsettled existing patterns of sociability. In the face of fewer and weaker safety nets, the social and economic impacts of the pandemic on African populations is already severe. Thus, the importance of understanding this pandemic beyond its health and epidemiological features, as a profound and multifaceted societal crisis, cannot be overstated. The impacts of COVID-19 will certainly exacerbate the difficult conditions of youth.