



Human Development &
Capability Association

Call for Proposals
for a hybrid on-campus & online conference
HDCA Conference 2023

*'Vulnerability, human development and
cooperative re-building in turbulent times'*

September 11th - 13th 2023, Sofia, Bulgaria



SOFIA UNIVERSITY
ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI



TRUST
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ACHIEVEMENT



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Conference theme ‘Vulnerability, human development and cooperative re-building in turbulent times’

We are living in turbulent times, times characterized by dynamic, deepening inequalities both between and within societies, as well as increased levels of insecurity and vulnerability. The Covid 19 pandemic, climate change, ecological disasters, famine, war in Ukraine and many other conflicts around the world, have deepened these trends. The consequences are evident in human and non-human life posing multilayered obstacles to human development. Between 2020 and 2021, the human development index contracted for all countries.

Vulnerability is a feature of humanity. Martha Nussbaum notes the need for societies to acknowledge their citizens are needy and vulnerable. If vulnerability is an enduring aspect of the human condition, it needs to be addressed by individuals, collectives and institutions. The recent Covid-19 crisis demonstrated that human vulnerability is universal. But it is also shaped and experienced differently depending on economic, political and social environments.

There are no ready, easily applied and transferable answers about how individuals and societies can cope with vulnerability amidst many emerging challenges across the world. However, there are some lessons to be learned. All crises remind us how much human lives are interrelated. In order to flourish, our societies need more cooperation at all levels – local, national and global. We need a balance between striving for individual goods and the promotion of public goods. Innovations can help, but an inclusive usage of digital technologies is necessary.

Recent manifestations of human vulnerability raise questions about how the capability approach and the human development paradigm can help, in the contemporary context, in thinking through some of the questions of changing capability sets across social divisions of race, class, gender, age, disability and nationality. Applying the capability approach can encourage studying who benefits and who loses from recent societal developments. How is development as freedom as outlined by Amartya Sen possible under these circumstances? Are there capabilities that can promote prosperity, hope and re-imagined futures in our contemporary world?

While the conference call is open to all types of contributions that engage with the broader theme of human development and capabilities, the 2023 HDCA conference brings these questions to the fore. We invite papers which inform and discuss the search for answers looking at human agency, the capacity of people to overcome emerging crises, changes in well-being and moving towards flourishing societies, and sustainable development. Accounts are welcome looking at the ways in which people co-create, collaborate and thus re-build lives in a range of settings aiming to create better futures for the human and non-human worlds. Studies of cooperation among individuals, an enlargement of people’s capabilities as an essential feature of any resilient and hopeful society will provide an understanding of how to address important societal challenges. We also invite work which considers what makes cooperation sustainable, that is, stable and valuable so can contribute to our understanding of how to deal with the challenges that we face. Since cooperation is not confined to a particular social domain, its understanding requires a strong interdisciplinary perspective in which emphasis on capabilities is indispensable.

We would especially like to welcome papers that engage in research in the following four broad areas:

- how to conceptualize and measure vulnerability and human development at micro, macro level – country, regional and global - in turbulent times;
- how new challenges facing contemporary societies may enhance or restrict human development and social inequalities;
- how to encourage cooperation among differently located actors, institutions, and organizations with the aim to enrich development outcomes for all social groups, localities, nations and sub-regions;
- how to develop capabilities associated with well-being and equity that respond to the changes of work, family, knowledge production, political and social relations, the environment and non-humans.

The conference theme provides a space to examine these issues across disciplines, in research, teaching, and professional practice, and to explore policy dialogues across sectors such as the labour market, education, and health. Papers are invited which explore vulnerability, human development and cooperation through different approaches - quantitative, qualitative, participatory, and mixed-method methodologies. The conference theme is intended to give space for discussion of topical areas in research on the capability approach and human development concerned also with collective capabilities, intersectionality, empowerment, and sustainability.

We invite scholars, activists, policymakers, practitioners, and students working in the area of human development and capabilities from all parts of the world to Sofia, Bulgaria. We look forward to hosting participants from a wide range of research fields, topics, methods, professions, and regions to engage in fruitful conversations with each other, and to provide space for co-creation of new theoretical and methodological advances on the capability approach and the human development paradigm which may also have political and practical implications for reducing human vulnerability and improving individual, societal and ecological well-being.

This Year's Hosts

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPS-BAS, <https://ips-bas.org/institute/>) is the main national research centre in the sphere of social sciences in Bulgaria. IPS-BAS has rich experience in implementing projects assigned by various contracting authorities: national and international. The IPS-BAS carries out fundamental and applied research, consulting and expert activities, training of highly-qualified specialists. IPS-BAS is also partner in two of the three most important European research infrastructures in the field of social sciences: Consortium SHARE: Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe and Consortium ESS ERIC: European Social Survey.

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (<https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/eng>) is the first Bulgarian high academic school established in 1888. Today it is the biggest and most prestigious educational and scientific hub in the country according to international and Bulgarian university ratings. The University has three centres of excellence: the Center of Excellence UNITe (Universities for Science, Informatics and Technologies in e Society), the Center of Competence "Clean Technologies for Sustainable Environment - Water, Waste, Energy for the Circular Economy", the Center of Excellence "Heritage BG".

Foundation Open Society Institute – Sofia (OSIS.BG | [Open Society Institute – Sofia](#)) is a non-governmental, non-for-profit organization founded in 1990 in Bulgaria. Over the years, OSIS has established itself as hub of supporting civic activism and at the same time an independent policy-oriented think tank in Bulgaria, Central and Eastern Europe and internationally. OSIS has a track record in high quality policy research with a focus on social justice, development, human rights with acknowledged contributions in the fields of education, healthcare and living conditions, among others with a focus on vulnerable communities. The research has been commissioned by the World Bank, the Ministry of Education of Bulgaria, the European Commission and other institutions.

The Trust for Social Achievement Foundation (Trust :: [Homepage \(socialachievement.org\)](#)) is a non-profit, grant-making organization based in Bulgaria. Human development, cooperation and social justice are deeply engrained in the fabric of TSA and coincide with its mission to reduce poverty and decrease achievement gaps in early childhood development, education, employment, and housing with a focus on Bulgaria's Roma community. Since its founding in 2012, TSA has been a pioneer and an incubator for new approaches and ideas, testing how best to tackle deeply rooted social and economic issues and proposing sustainable evidence-based solutions that impact policy and legislation.

Sustainable Cooperation (SCOOP | [Sustainable Cooperation \(scoop-program.org\)](#)) is a research and training programme dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of sustainable cooperation as a key feature of resilient societies. The idea therewith is that cooperation within and between families, organizations, and communities – the “meso-level” of societies - is key to all resilience. But cooperation is difficult to sustain over time. Changing circumstances can affect individual concerns and decisions and render existing arrangements to sustain cooperation less effective. Uniting expertise from social and economic history, sociology, psychology, and philosophy, the interdisciplinary SCOOP research and training programme not only unravels the conditions for sustainable cooperation in the policy domains of care, inclusion, and work, but also assesses the effectiveness of current and new arrangements in safeguarding resilience.

The conference venue (Sofia University) is located at city center of [Sofia](#) (near a metrostation), next to the Bulgarian Parliament, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, and surrounded by many hotels and touristic attractions.

Programme Committee

Melanie Walker, Higher Education & Human Development, University of the Free State, South Africa
Elaine Unterhalter, Centre for Education & International Development, UCL, United Kingdom
Martin van Hees, VU Amsterdam/Amsterdam University College, the Netherlands
Shailaja Fennell, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
Pepka Boyadjieva, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS, Bulgaria
Petia Kabakchieva, Sofia University, Bulgaria
Vassil Kirov, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS, Bulgaria
Melis Cin, Lancaster University, United Kingdom
Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS, Bulgaria (Conference Chair)

Organising Committee

Emilia Chengelova, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS, Bulgaria
Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS, Bulgaria
Sonya Karabelyova, Sofia University, Bulgaria
Boyan Znepolsky, Sofia University, Bulgaria
Petia Kabakchieva, Sofia University, Bulgaria
Georgi Stoytchev, Open Society Institute Sofia, Bulgaria
Marin Lessenski, Open Society Institute Sofia, Bulgaria
Dessislava Velkova, Open Society Institute Sofia, Bulgaria
Bagryan Malamin, Open Society Institute Sofia, Bulgaria
Doriana Basamakova, Trust for Social Achievement, Bulgaria
Martin van Hees, VU Amsterdam/Amsterdam University College, the Netherlands
Pepka Boyadjieva, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS, Bulgaria (Chair)

Confirmed Keynote Speakers



Martha Nussbaum,
University of Chicago,
United States



Melanie Walker,
Higher Education & Human Development,
University of the Free State,
South Africa



Branko Milanović,
City University of New York,
United States



Subbu Subramanian,
Independent Scholar;
formerly, Professor: Madras Institute
of Development Studies, Chennai,
India



Vassil Kirov,
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology,
BAS, Bulgaria



Gustaf Arrhenius,
Institute for Futures Studies,
Sweden



Ursula Holtgrewe,
Centre for Social Innovation,
Austria

Types of Proposals for Parallel Sessions

In addition to keynote lectures and other plenaries, the conference will accommodate seven types of sessions. Except for the poster sessions, all of them can take place *either* in-person (during the 3 conference days) in Sofia, *or* online (at the end of day 2 or early day 3 of the conference):

1. **Academic paper sessions**, for which single papers can be submitted. Each paper will be presented in a session with 2 or 3 other submissions (25 minutes per paper including Q&A). Please send an abstract of 500-1,000 words, with a list of 3-5 keywords.

2. **Thematic panel sessions**, for which a set of presentations on a single theme related to this year's conference theme or to the subject of one or more of the HDCA's thematic groups is submitted. Panel proposals are welcome from the thematic group coordinators as well as from people unaffiliated with them. We particularly welcome interdisciplinary panels and panels that combine academic perspectives with those of practitioners. Each thematic panel should have a maximum of three presentations. It is also possible to propose two panels on the same theme. Each theme must have a coordinator who submits a panel abstract of up to 1,000 words, plus 3-5 keywords. In addition, an abstract of 500-1,000 words, with a list of 3-5 keywords, should accompany each presentation. The coordinator will act as the contact person for the thematic session(s) and the other panel presenters. (NB: If not all of the papers in the proposed panel session are evaluated favorably, the approved papers will be regarded as individual submissions and may be allocated to the sessions listed in point 1.)

3. **Author-meets-critics sessions**, in which an author presents a summary of a recent book or larger piece of research. Each author should send a 500-word synopsis of the relevant book or research project, along with 3-5 keywords. The submission should also include the names of one or two confirmed discussants. Discussants can be researchers, but we particularly encourage including at least one practitioner (or organization) as proposed discussants.

4. **Roundtables**, which are intended to engage policymakers or (non-)governmental stakeholders, or to organize discussions with practitioners about practical approaches to dealing with the problems that are the focus of the conference. Please send a 500 - 1,000 word abstract, plus 3-5 keywords. Also include information on the roundtable participants, affiliations, and whether the participation of each of them has been confirmed. Submissions can be academic-led or practitioner-led.

5. **Young-scholar-meets-senior-scholar sessions**, intended for graduate students to present their research plan or work in progress (proposals should be 500-1,000 words, with 3-5 keywords). Senior scholars, including HDCA Fellows, will provide feedback and chair the discussion.

6. **Documentaries**. If you would like to present and discuss your film or documentary during this conference, please send in a proposal with background and motivation (500-1000 words).

7. (not available online:) **Poster exhibition**, for which dedicated time slots will be available in the program so that authors can communicate their ideas to the circulating audience. Posters could present a research project, some completed fieldwork, a case study, or an early-stage research proposal. Please send an abstract of 300-600 words, with a list of 3-5 keywords.

Please note:

- You will be required to identify the broad theme for your proposal to enable us to allocate it to reviewers (for example, education or health).
- Since we expect a large number of submissions, each person is allowed to be involved in a maximum of two proposals and these must be for different types of sessions (e.g. full paper and thematic panel)
- The same proposal may not be submitted more than once to different kinds of sessions, for example, full paper, poster, and young scholar.
- For panel proposals, the panel organizers may not substitute a non-reviewed paper if a presenter withdraws.

The main criteria for evaluating the various kinds of submissions are:

- Novelty/originality
- Clarity and structure
- Significance/impact/relevance to/engagement with the capability approach and/or human development
- Methodology/methods or practical application
- Fit with the conference theme

While the proposals may come from any discipline and may be theoretical, applied, or policy-based, every submission must engage with, apply, extend, criticize, or offer insights specifically relevant to the capability approach and/or the human development paradigm.

Kuklys Conference Prize

At the conference, the HDCA will award the annual Wiebke Kuklys Prize for the best paper presented by a graduate student. All graduate students who have not been awarded their degree before 30 June 2023 and are presenting a paper at the 2023 HDCA conference under their sole authorship are eligible to be considered for this prize. If you wish for your paper to be considered, indicate so on the online submission form.

To compete for this prize, the full paper must be submitted by 07 July 2023. The winner of the 2023 Wiebke Kuklys Prize will be awarded a cash amount (the purpose of which is to contribute to the student's graduate work, for example, in the form of equipment or book purchases or conference attendance). The name of the winner will be announced at the closing plenary session of the conference, which the author must attend either online or on-campus. *The Kuklys prize is annually awarded at the HDCA conference for the best conference paper written by a graduate student. It is aimed at promoting the work of graduate students in the field of human development and the capability approach. It is named in memory of Wiebke Kuklys, who, as an Economics PhD student at Cambridge University, advanced the capability approach by exploring the application of new statistical techniques. Wiebke studied in Germany, Chile, and England, and combined an open mind for new ideas with a concern for the most vulnerable people and she believed that high-quality research could contribute to making the world a better place to live in. Wiebke died in June 2005, at the age of 33, only a few months after receiving her PhD degree. Her dissertation was published posthumously by Springer under the title "Amartya Sen's Capability Approach: Theoretical Insights and Empirical Applications."*

Previous Winners

- 2019 - Matthias Kramm, "When a River Becomes a Person"
- 2018 - Juan Fernando Bucheli, "Marginal Youth: Quality of Life and Spatial Exclusion in Bogota"
- 2017 - Julio Alejandro Cáceda Adrianzen, "Moral Obligations as the Third Aspect of the Notion of Capabilities"
- 2016 - Morten Fibieger Byskov, "Are capabilities content-independently valuable? A reply to Carter"
- 2015 - Raj Patel, "The Natural and the Social in the Metrics of Justice"
- 2014 - Annie Austin, "Practical reason in hard times: the effects of economic crisis on the kinds of lives people in the UK have reason to value"
- 2013 - Oscar Garza Vazquez, "From the Idea of Justice to the Idea of Injustice: Mixing the Ideal, Non-ideal and Dynamic Conceptions of Injustice"
- 2012 - Agnese Peruzzi, "Understanding social exclusion in a longitudinal perspective; A capability based approach"
- 2011 - Nicolai Suppa, "Does capability deprivation hurt?"
- 2010 - Donna Vaughan, "Development, Rights, and Indigenous Australians – A Critique Of Australian Government Policy Using The Capability Approach"
- 2009 - Stacy Kosko, "Parental Consent and Children's Rights in Europe: A Balancing Act"
- 2008 - Suman Seth, "A class of Association Sensitive Multidimensional Well-being Indices"
- 2007 - Jose Manuel Roche, "Monitoring Inequality among Social Groups: A Methodology Combining Fuzzy Set Theory and Principal Component Analysis"
- 2006 - Constanze Binder, "Context Dependency of Valuable Functionings: How Culture Affects the Capability Framework"

Conference Format and Timeline

We plan the conference in a hybrid format. We invite people to come to Sofia and participate in person in the Conference but will also provide for HDCA members who are unable to attend with panels for online presentations.

All keynote events will be livestreamed. One will be open for the public (Martha Nussbaum). A variety of in-person parallel sessions will be organized during days 1, 2 and 3, in-between the different plenary sessions; parallel sessions of day 2 late afternoon and day 3 early morning will be completely in online modus.

	Open Access	Participation through online platform	On-campus participation
Public event (Martha Nussbaum keynote)	1	1	1
Public event (TSA, OSIS & World Bank)	1		1
Public event (book launch of the Martha Nussbaum's new book)			1
Plenary sessions		6	6
Parallel sessions		12 Sept pm 13 Sept am	11-13 Sept
Poster exhibition			Yes
Documentaries			Yes
Meeting facilities		12 Sept pm 13 Sept am	11-13 Sept
Conference dinner			Yes
HDCA Membership and Journal Subscription		Yes	Yes

HDCA Summer School

The HDCA will be holding a two-day summer school (Friday 8 September – Saturday 9 September 2023) for graduate students working with the capability approach. Senior HDCA academics will present the basics of the capability approach and discuss cutting edge topics and developments. There will also be opportunities to get group feedback on research projects. Further details will be communicated closer to the event on the conference website.

Pre-Conference Events Day

Information about the pre-conference events day (Sunday 10 September 2023) will be provided additionally on the HDCA website in due time before the start of the conference.

Conference Sustainability

In keeping with the theme of the conference, we will make special efforts to run the conference as sustainably as possible:

- The Conference program will not be supplied on paper format but through Whova, an electronic conference app available on smart phone, tablet or laptop, just as in previous years;
- Meals will be plant-based and as much as possible made from locally sourced ingredients;
- We strongly encourage all participants to bring their own reusable drinking cups or bottles;
- The catering services will be provided by a local social enterprise of Maria's World Foundation, which offers training and work for young people with intellectual disabilities.
- We very much encourage participants to consider offsetting their GHG emissions (as the HDCA is committed to doing);
- We suggest that guests combine their conference visit with an extended stay in Europe, thereby preventing further flight emissions for additional holiday or business trips.

Conference Accessibility and Inclusiveness

We aim to make our conference as inclusive and accessible as possible, not only in terms of physical space and materials provided (e.g. program, presentations, and nametags) but also with regard to presentation pedagogy and session design (e.g. we encourage presenters to think about how they plan to interact with the audience and to think about what audiences at this particular conference may be able to contribute to conference sessions).

For further suggestions about how we can make the 2023 gathering more accessible and inclusive, please contact us by email (hdca2023@osi.bg). Conference attendees with special requirements are especially encouraged to get in touch.

HDCA Journal

We encourage papers presented at the conference to be submitted for publication in the *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*. This HDCA-owned journal is a peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary journal for people-centred development. For more information on the journal and on how to submit your paper, please see the Journal webpage: [Journal of Human Development and Capabilities | Human Development and Capability Association \(hd-ca.org\)](https://www.hd-ca.org/journal).

Conference Registration, Fees, and Scholarships

Online conference and summer school registration will open around 1 May 2023. For the conference, separate fees are foreseen for those wishing to attend in-person and for those wishing to attend online only (please note that in-person attendees will of course have full access to all livestreams as well). Applicants from low and middle-income countries are eligible for reduced registration fees, as per this schedule:

	In-person	Online
Resident in High Income Country		
Early bird	\$360	\$170
Standard	\$400	\$230
Concessions [°] + students early bird	\$180	\$80
Concessions [°] + students standard	\$230	\$110
Resident in Low- or Middle-Income Country		
Early bird	\$130	\$80
Standard	\$180	\$110
Concessions [°] + students early bird	\$80	\$50
Concessions [°] + students standard	\$150	\$80

°NGO worker or similar or unwaged

The conference registration fee includes a one-year HDCA membership, including a year's subscription to the *Journal of Human Development & Capabilities*.

Summer School

Information about the fee for participation in the Summer School will be announced on the HDCA website additionally in due time before the start of the conference.

Scholarships

The HDCA has a limited number of scholarships to attend the conference in person or online. They will be awarded based on merit and need to either:

- a) early career scholars presenting single-authored papers at the 2023 HDCA Conference or
- b) scholars residing in low- and mid-income countries presenting papers at the 2023 HDCA Conference (for jointly authored papers to qualify for scholarship funds, both authors must reside in a low- or middle-income country).

Applications for scholarships, should be downloaded and completed after applicants have received the referees' review of your abstract **by 15 April 2023** and submitted by **30 April 2023**.

How to Submit Your Proposal

Please submit your proposed poster, paper, or panel online from **12 December 2022** (<https://www.conftool.org/hdca2023>)

If you encounter any problems, please contact the conference organizers by email (hdca2023@osi.bg).

To ensure academic quality, all submissions will be assessed by two reviewers, at least one of whom is an HDCA Fellow or a senior researcher in the field.

Important Deadlines

15 February 2023 – Closing date for submission of proposals

15 April 2023 – Announcement of acceptance/rejection

30 April 2023 – Deadline for scholarship applications

1 May 2023 – Opening of conference registration

9 June 2023 – Deadline for conference registration at early-bird rates

07 July 2023 – Deadline for paper submission for Kuklys prize

04 August 2023 – Final deadline for conference registration at standard rates

04 August 2023 – Submission of full papers/posters/presentations