

**Call for Proposals
for a hybrid on-campus & online conference**

**2021 HDCA Conference
*“Capabilities and Transformative
Institutions”***

**Antwerp, Belgium
13-15 September 2021**

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Conference Theme: Capabilities and Transformative Institutions

How can we organize for the world of tomorrow? Covid-19 has taught us that we are not ready. We have re-discovered our common vulnerability – not only to a virus, but also to policy mismatch, institutional hiccups and authoritarian backlash. Divided we stood, unable to act in concert, lacking real opportunities for deliberation. How can we improve the structures of living together and face the challenges ahead to build a more just and sustainable world? The HDCA Conference 2021 puts this question center stage.

Institutions, social arrangements, or the structures which emerge from our social living, have been considered in different ways in the variety of disciplines that engage with the capability approach. The conference will provide an opportunity to let these various understandings speak to and learn from each other.

More specifically, we would like to invite work on capabilities and institutions related to three particular issues:

First of all, we invite contributions that explore the interrelation between institutions (economic, political, social, cultural) and people’s opportunities to be and do what they value, with a special emphasis on how institutions may have an unequal impact on different social groups. Sen’s early work on the role of democracy in preventing famines and, more generally, on the way in which economic and political incentives may exacerbate or **overcome social divisiveness**, both within and across national borders, points to the importance of this issue.

Secondly, diverse disciplines and strands of the literature provide different angles from which to discuss individual agency in relation to social structure and our **ability to act in concert**. It is not only that human sociability is *intrinsically* rewarding (regardless of the material benefits provided by different social structures), but also—as authors like Paul Ricoeur, drawing on Hannah Arendt, argue—that the “structures of living together” play a *constitutive* role in situating both ourselves and others as distinct yet equivalent beings and in **shaping structures of solidarity**. Further contributions to this debate can inspire us to find new ways to transform unjust structures and unsustainable ways of living.

Thirdly, institutions organize collective decision-making. In the work of both Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen, considerable room is made for “**government by discussion**” as a crucial link between individual ideas about the good life and reasoned social choice. The reflection on ways to deepen democracy and to promote participation at multiple levels of decision-making has been part and parcel of the development debate in the Global South. In the Global North, this reflection has recently taken another turn, with the emergence of what has been called “polaritics”, the related debates on the potential of the New Media to contribute to or challenge democratic decision-making, and on the impact of economic inequality on democracy.

While the conference call is open to all types of contributions that engage with the broader theme of human development and capabilities, we would especially like to invite papers that engage with one of the above three broad areas.

We invite scholars, activists, policymakers, practitioners, and students working in the area of human development and capabilities to Antwerp, Belgium. We look forward to hosting participants from a wide range of research themes, topics, methods, professions, and regions to engage in innovative conversations with each other, and to find new synergies in advancing the core aims of the Human Development Paradigm. We especially welcome those who are new to the field, introducing us to fresh ideas and perspectives. We would also like to expressly invite participants from the Global South, from ethnic minorities and from Indigenous peoples.

In addition to contributions on the conference theme, the conference will also be a meeting place for the HDCA's thematic groups and regional networks. Currently, 15 thematic groups are active:

- [Children and Youth](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Empowerment and Collective Capabilities](#)
- [Ethics and Development](#)
- [Foundational Issues in the Capability Approach](#)
- [Health and Disability](#)
- [Horizontal Inequality](#)
- [Human Rights](#)
- [Human Security](#)
- [Indigenous People](#)
- [Participatory Methods](#)
- [Quantitative Research Methods](#)
- [Sustainable Human Development](#)
- [Technology, Innovation and Design](#)
- [Work and employment](#)

There currently exist also seven regional networks that maintain informal ties to the HDCA:

- [Francophone West Africa & Madagascar Network](#)
- [Latin American Network](#)
- [Asia-Pacific Region Network](#)
- [South-Asia Network](#)
- [Southern Africa Network](#)
- [North American Network](#)
- [European Regional Network](#)

Further, proposals on all core HDCA topics are welcome, including, but not limited to:

- Capability measurement and empirical analysis
- Capabilities and epidemics
- Capabilities and the role of emotions
- Capabilities and the virtues
- Capabilities, migration, urbanization and human capital
- Creating social and economic impact in development and public policy using the capability approach
- Democracy, participation and deliberation
- Education: rights, equalities, and capabilities
- Epistemic (in)justice and institutions
- Equalities and inequalities for children and youth
- Global South and Global north collaborations: opportunities, challenges and sustainability
- Health inequalities, disability, and aging
- Higher Education: opportunities, inequalities and agency.
- Human and non-human capabilities
- Human capabilities and psychology
- Human rights and development
- Human security against economic, health, and environmental risks
- Methodological issues in operationalizing the Capability Approach
- Past and future generations
- Philosophical and ethical foundations and implications of the Capability Approach
- Policy analysis and evaluation related to capabilities and agency
- Refugees' capability to integrate
- Restorative justice and capabilities
- Sustainability, sustainable development, and SDGs
- The capability approach and arts policy and practice
- The environment and sustainable development
- Transparency, accountability, global governance and public policy
- Transgenerational capabilities and human development
- Transitional justice and reconciliation
- Urban and rural capabilities

‘This Year’s Hosts: Welcome to University of Antwerp!

The [UAntwerp](#) has an important research and teaching tradition in social justice and active pluralism in the social and human sciences. The Conference has been set up in such a way that all social and human science faculties participate in it. We can also count on the [The University Centre Saint-Ignatius Antwerp \(UCSIA\)](#), well versed in building bridges between academia and wider society in the area of social justice.

This Conference will also be the culmination of the 20th anniversary year of [the Institute of Development Policy \(IOB\)](#). The Human Development & Capabilities Association stands for a multi-dimensional vision of development, as it gives central attention to human agency as both the end and the means of development and as it assigns a constitutive role to public debate and deliberation in the development process. In this, it provides for the core ingredients of the work the IOB has been cultivating over the last two decades.

The conference venue is located at a mere 10 minute walk from the old city center of [Antwerp](#), with many opportunities to relax, have dinner or simply stroll around. Throughout history, and today, Antwerp connects to the world through its inland port, with direct yet sheltered access to the North Sea. During the pre-conference you will have the opportunity to explore one or more traces of the traditions that have been shaping the city.

Program Committee

Alejandra Boni, Ingenio, CSIC Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain

Bea Cantillon, Faculty of Social Sciences UAntwerp, Belgium

Koen De Feyter, Faculty of Law, UAntwerp, Belgium

Jay Drydyk, Philosophy Department, Carlton University, Canada

Guido Erreygers, Faculty of Business and Economics, UAntwerp, Belgium

Faith Mkwanzzi, University of the Free State, South Africa

Elaine Unterhalter, Centre for Education and International Development (CEID), UCL, United Kingdom

Tom De Herdt, Institute of Development Policy, UAntwerp, Belgium (Conference Chair)

Organizational Committee

Tom De Herdt, Institute of Development Policy, UAntwerp

Michael Domen, Institute of Development Policy, UAntwerp

Vicky Verlinden, Institute of Development Policy, UAntwerp

Barbara Segart, University Centre Saint-Ignatius, Antwerp (chair)

Confirmed Keynote Speakers



[Martha Nussbaum](#)

University of Chicago



[Achille Mbembe](#)

Wits Institute for Social and Economic
Research, University of the Witwatersrand



[Lucas Chancel](#)

Sciences Po & World inequality Lab



[Bonny Ibhawoh](#)

Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University



[Sunita Narain](#)

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE),
University of Delhi



[Marc Fleurbaey](#)

Paris School of Economics

Parallel Sessions and type of proposals

In addition to keynote lectures and other plenaries, the conference will accommodate **nine** types of sessions:

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. **Research and Action sessions**, for which a set of presentations can be submitted, describing and analysing a particular field of action and the way it links with the human development paradigm and/or capability approach. Each session will include 3 or 4 other presentations (20 minutes per presentation including Q&A). Please send an abstract of 500-1,000 words, with a list of 3-5 keywords for the whole set of presentations. In addition, an abstract of 500-1,000 words, with a list of 3-5 keywords, should accompany each single presentation. A coordinator will act as the contact person for all presenters.

3. **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.)

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **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.

7. **PechaKucha presentations** with an online presentation of your work in the standard [PechaKucha format](#). These presentations can cover 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.

8. **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.

9. **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).

Please note:

- 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.
- 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).
- 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.**

In the hybrid conference format, all plenary sessions, roundtables and thematic panel sessions will be livestreamed.

Other paper presentations will be livestreamed to the extent possible for presenters wishing to be livestreamed.

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 2021 and are presenting a paper at the 2021 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 15 July 2021**. The winner of the 2021 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

The main conference will start with an Inaugural Lecture on 12 September, 5.30pm and take place from 13 to 15 September 2021 (Monday to Wednesday). It will be preceded by a Summer school for doctoral students (Friday-Saturday 10-11 September) and a day of pre-conference events (Sunday 12 September).

A hybrid conference Format

We currently plan the conference in a hybrid format, combining on-campus activities with online features, as we think this format combines the advantages of live social interaction with increased access for those unable to attend.

In practice, this means we try to make sure that all plenary sessions, roundtables and thematic panel sessions will be livestreamed. Other paper presentations will be livestreamed to the extent possible for presenters wishing to be livestreamed.

We do take into account however that the current situation does not allow us to accurately predict whether or not an international campus event will be feasible or allowed in September 2021. In case this is not yet feasible, we will switch to an online conference mode. A final decision about the conference format will be taken before 1 May 2021.

	Open access	Participation through online platform	On-campus participation
Pre-Conference events			✓
Plenary sessions	✓	✓	✓
Roundtables		✓	✓
Thematic Sessions (including Research&Action)		✓	✓
Other Parallel Sessions*			✓
Poster exhibition			✓
PechaKucha presentations		✓	✓
Meeting facilities		✓	✓
Conference Dinner			✓

* also online to the extent possible and desired.

HDCA Summer School

During **the days preceding the conference (10 and 11 September 2021)**, the HDCA will be holding a two-day summer school 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 (please check online at www.hdca2021.org).

Pre-Conference Events Day

Immediately before the conference (Sunday 12 September 2021), we offer a hands-on program to discover the historical legacy and contemporary urban social life of the city of Antwerp through the lens of the conference theme. Participants can opt for a series of seminars around one of the formative intellectual currents, socio-economic communities or cultural groups that currently make up the fabric of the city. Each seminar is also the starting point for a city walk that traces past and future traditions in Antwerp.

Conference Sustainability

In keeping with the theme of the conference, we will make special efforts to run the 2021 events as sustainably as possible:

- The Conference program will not be supplied on paper format but through an electronic conference app available on smart phone, tablet or laptop, just as last year;
- We plan to organize a hybrid conference, combining “live” and “online” contributions for all plenary sessions, roundtable discussions and thematic panel sessions as well as for a number of other sessions, to the extent possible.
- 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 UAntwerp Catering Services has its own sustainability policy concerning leftover foods.
- We very much encourage participants to consider offsetting their CHG 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).

The online feature of plenary sessions will also allow to add subtitles in Spanish and French.

We will make every effort to make the conference accessible to (young) parents and families, from facilitating child care (which through liability and insurance issues we are not able to provide in-house), to providing a separate lactation/breastfeeding area for those who prefer breastfeeding in a more private environment, and extra storage facilities for parents (e.g. for food, etc.). Young parents are of course more than welcome to wear their baby at all times in the conference facilities. If you have childcare needs, please indicate so on the proposal submission form and we will be in touch directly once your proposal has been approved.

For further suggestions how we can make the 2020 gathering more accessible and inclusive, please contact us by email (hdca2021@uantwerp.be). Conference goers 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](#).

Conference Registration, Fees, and Scholarships

Online conference and summer school registration will open around 1 March 2021. 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 lower middle-income countries](#) are eligible for reduced registration fees, as per this schedule:

	<i>Live</i>	<i>Online</i>
<i>Resident in Upper Middle Income or High Income Country</i>		
<i>Early bird</i>	\$375	\$150
<i>Standard</i>	\$425	\$200
<i>Concessions[°] + students early bird</i>	\$150	\$80
<i>Concessions[°] + students standard</i>	\$200	\$120
<i>Resident in Low or Lower Middle Income Country</i>		
<i>Early bird</i>	\$95	\$45
<i>Standard</i>	\$125	\$75
<i>Concessions[°] + students early bird</i>	\$45	\$25
<i>Concessions[°] + students standard</i>	\$65	\$40

[°] NGO worker or similar or unwaged

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

Summer School:

Graduate Students: US\$80

Scholarships:

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

- a) early career scholars presenting single-authored papers at the 2021 HDCA Conference or
- b) scholars residing in low- and mid-income countries presenting papers at the 2021 HDCA Conference (for jointly authored papers to qualify for scholarship funds both authors must reside in a low- or middle-income country)

The amount of each scholarship will be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, final amounts have tended to be capped at US\$1,000, and the average amount awarded has been US\$500.

To apply for one of these scholarships, please download and complete the scholarship application form after you have received the referees' review of your abstract **by 15 April 2021**. All scholarship applications must be received by the Chair of the Scholarships Committee **by 30 April 2021**.

How to Submit Your Proposal

Please submit your proposed poster, paper, or panel online from 1 December 2020 (<https://www.conftool.org/hdca2021/>) using the appropriate form.

If you encounter any problems, please contact the conference organizers by email (hdca2021@uantwerp.be).

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 2021 – Closing date for submission of proposals

15 April 2021 – Announcement of acceptance/rejection

30 April 2021 – Deadline for scholarship applications

1 May 2021 – Opening of conference registration and final decision on conference format

15 June 2021 – Deadline for conference registration at early-bird rates

15 July 2021 – Deadline for paper submission for Kuklys prize

15 August 2021 – Final deadline for conference registration at standard rates

15 August 2021 – Submission of full papers/posters/presentations