



CONFERENCE THEME

Rural and Urban Histories of Southern Africa in microspatial and trans local contexts

Cities and towns in Southern Africa are living archives of, amongst others, migration, development, hardships, innovation, indigenous knowledge, memory and identity. From pre-conquest trading settlements and missionary stations to spatial and economic rivalries among cultures. The late 19th and 20th century witnessed the establishment of colonially established towns and cities, followed by post-independence urban expansions. The region's rural and urban spaces reflect deep historical processes that continue to shape 21st century's everyday life. Micro spaces and local histories in rural and urban contexts, usually reveal the footprint of power, race, class, gender, labour, environmental use and abuse. These histories are inscribed onto the landscape: its streets, towns, central business districts, informal settlements, transport routes, public spaces, entrepreneurship, cultural expression, political activism, and social networks.

The Regional History Society for Southern Africa (RHSSA) invites historians, scholars, practitioners, archivists and urban planners to explore the multiple pasts of Southern Africa's rural and urban histories in microspatial and translocal contexts. As the past informs the present, an understanding how rural and urban communities evolved, contributes to a better understanding of its current status and dynamics.

SUB-THEMES

We welcome submissions across a broad spectrum of topics related to the above conference theme. Topics of interest include, but not limited to:

- Assessing the historiography of rural and urban histories in southern Africa
- Pre-Conquest time communities and early settlement formations
- Colonial systems and their 20th century impact on community settlement
- Post independence time rural and urban trends
- Experiencing formality or/and informality in everyday rural or/and urban life
- Homeliness and labour memories of/in industry and company towns
- Community life; urban cultures and identities
- Rural or/and urban heritage as the past, present and future of rural or/and urban communities
- Education and training's impact in micro communities
- Environmental impacts to rural or/and urban communities
- Comparative or/and translocal perspectives on any rural or urban history in southern Africa



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Professor Munyaradzi Manyanga (BA, BA Hons, Fil Lic, PhD)

Munyaradzi Manyanga is Full Professor of Archaeology and Heritage Management and the Executive Dean of the School of Heritage and Education at Great Zimbabwe University. He holds a PhD from Uppsala University, Sweden. He has taught at several universities in southern Africa including the University of Zimbabwe, University of Botswana, University of Pretoria, University of Witwatersrand and the Midlands State University. He has spent the last three decades researching on precolonial urbanism, state formation, ancient technologies and livelihoods in southern Africa. Of interest to him has been the precolonial urban - rural configurations that shaped settlement forms and patterning. His works have questioned received wisdom on interpreting the African past and advocates for the application of African philosophies in understanding African past.



Professor Innocent Chirisa

Innocent Chirisa, the Vice Chancellor of the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) is a Full Professor in Urban and Regional Planning. Has a keen interest in systems thinking and analysis, social theory, and urban and peri-urban dynamics. Currently focusing on environmental systems dynamics with respect to land-use, ecology, water and energy. Holds a DPhil in Social Sciences from the University of Zimbabwe and a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of the Free State, South Africa. Prof Chirisa is also currently a Visiting Professor with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Johannesburg South Africa; was, for nine years in the served as a Research Fellow with the University of the Free State, South Africa. He has also served as a Visiting Professor at the Chinhoyi University of Technology (Zimbabwe).



ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

Please submit your abstract (300 words max), inclusive of the abstract title and a short bio note.

Follow the link to [submit abstracts](#).

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission Deadline: 31 August 2026
- Notification of Acceptance: 16 September 2026
- Conference Dates: 25, 26 and (27 Excursion) November 2026

SUBMIT ABSTRACT

For further information or assistance, please visit the [RHSSA website](#) or contact the organizing committee at admin@rhssa.co.za.

We look forward to your contributions!



CONFERENCE REGISTRATION & PAYMENTS

Please follow the link to [register and make payments](#).

- Conference registration fee (Southern Africa Residents): **R2800**
- International Conference registration fee: **R3200**
- Postgraduate registration fee (Southern Africa Residents): **R2500**
- International Postgraduate registration fee: **R2900**

Payment deadline: 5 October 2026

To confirm your registration, kindly send the order confirmation or proof of payment to: admin@rhssa.co.za

*PLEASE NOTE:

- We are aware that there are issues with some international VISA debit card payments, the preferred and best way to pay is with a **credit card**.
- Conference registration fees are **non-refundable**. Once payment has been received and confirmed, no refunds will be issued under any circumstances, including cancellation of attendance. Delegates are therefore advised to ensure their availability and travel arrangements prior to completing registration.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation should be arranged by conference attendees themselves. Booking at the [Amazing Travel](#) (+263 718790596, By GZU Law School Entrance), [Amazing Village](#) (+263 772634639, 500m), [Urban Lifestyles Hotel](#) (+263 789418320/+263 773507551, 5km), [Chevron Hotel](#) (+254 733 280000, 500m), [Flamboyant Hotel](#) (+263 78 600 1581, 1.5km), is suggested. However, should you be interested to lodge elsewhere one of the following places can be considered (In a range of 0-1km from the conference venue):

- [Palm View Lodge](#) (+263 779556956, 4km)
- [Dreamwoods Lodge](#) (+263 786755525, 4km)
- [Uncle Bee Lodge](#) (4km)
- [Lee's Inn](#) +263 779348443 (5km)
- [Great Zimbabwe Hotel](#) (+263 787122005, 25km)
- [Clevers Lakeview Resort](#) (+263 8688003933, 30km)



For more information or any other enquiries contact:

- Mrs. Yolandi Strydom (admin@rhssa.co.za)

or the Conference Hosts:

- Prof Vongai Z Nyawo (vznyawo@gmail.com) | Dr James Hlongwana (jameshlongwana@gmail.com) | Prof Marlino Mubai (mmubai1975@hotmail.com)

RHSSA Steering Committee

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