YOUNG & RESILIENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Y&R 2026 SEMINAR SERIES

10 June: Dr Clara Siagian

Belonging as affect and practices: Young people's acts of participation in urban Indonesia and Lebanon



Dr Clara Siagian

Despite consensus on its value, the promotion of youth participation in urban governance often results in tokenistic and exclusionary institutionalisation, overlooking how young people themselves define and practice participation.

In this presentation, we offer insights from the YUP project — a multiyear participatory action research on youth participation in urban governance in four cities across Indonesia and Lebanon. Drawing on a survey and focus group discussions with young people, we examine their practices, drivers, and constraints of participation. We argue that 'belonging' operates both as an affect motivating engagement and as a set of practices enacted as participation itself.

Belonging and participation are thus co-constitutive: young people participate because they belong, and belonging is produced through participation. Our analysis reframes youth fluid engagement and material struggles not as detachment but as efforts to belong shaped by urban infrastructures, social norms, and precarity that unevenly enable or foreclose participation.

Biography

Clara Siagian studies the intersection of people, place, and politics with special interests on young people living in Global South cities. With a PhD from the Australian National University, Clara currently serves as a postdoctoral researcher at University College London working on youth participation in urban governance. She is also a research affiliate with the Center on Child Protection and Wellbeing (PUSKAPA), Universitas Indonesia where she leads research projects that investigates issues around housing, child marriage, climate change, and violence from the perspective of young people. Her scholarships have been published in high-impact journals such as Cities, Children's Geographies, and International Journal of Urban and Regional Research.

10 June, 12:00 to 1:00 PM

Parramatta South EZ.1.57 & online

Lunch will be provided