

The Bartlett Development Planning Unit

Planning for socially just and
sustainable development
in the Global South



What we do

Environmental justice, urbanisation & resilience

How can planning support transformative synergies between urban resilience and environmental justice?

Diversity, social complexity & planned intervention

How do issues of social diversity and citizenship play out in the urban setting, where issues of space and rapid change create heightened possibilities for social fragmentation and conflict, but also for transformation?

Urban transformations

What can design and planning contribute to collective initiatives that seek to bring about social and spatial justice in cities of the Global South?

State and market

How can planning promote progressive interactions between state, society and market actors and institutions?

Where we are



Who we are

The Bartlett Development Planning Unit conducts world leading research and postgraduate teaching that helps to build the capacity of national governments, local authorities, NGOs, aid agencies and businesses working towards socially just and sustainable development in the Global South. We are part of The Bartlett: University College London's global faculty of the built environment. The DPU has over 65 years of experience in academic teaching, research, policy advice and capacity building in the field of international development.

As part of our mission to build the capacity of professionals and institutions, the DPU undertakes a range of action-oriented work with partners in different parts of the world. Regular contact with policy and planning practice through capacity building and advisory work is viewed as an important part of challenging and developing the theoretical and methodological debates pursued in our teaching and research.

A central focus of the DPU's work, since it was established in 1954 under the leadership of Prof Otto Koernigsberger, has been on innovative and socially just approaches to planning in dynamic urban contexts. The DPU has been at the forefront of the development of models of planning, including Action Planning and Urban Development Planning, which contest the static and time-bound city master plans, and instead seek to enable collective initiatives to bring about social and spatial justice in cities of the Global South.

How we work

Embedded



Knowledge situated by concerns, experience and struggles.

Collective



Knowledge production as a common endeavour pursued through networks.

Reflexive



Questioning theoretical and methodological frameworks, producing new possibilities of thinking and action.

Relational



Questioning the unequal relations of power of the political economy of knowledge production.

Active



Cultivating collective action and imaginations sensitive to the potential of transformative change.

Trans-disciplinary



Complexity is celebrated, revealing multiple perspectives through diverse voices.

MPhil/PhD Research Programme

The MPhil/PhD research programme constitutes a course of self-selected academic study focusing on the urban, political, economic, environmental, social, and institutional dimensions of development. It encourages and supports research that is value-driven and which generates original knowledge addressing the enduring challenges posed by multiple forms of inequalities, injustices, inequities and impoverishment.



MSc Environment and Sustainable Development

This programme interrogates the relations between development planning and socio-environmental challenges and aims to advance a progressive environmental and sustainable development agenda in a rapidly urbanising Global South. It provides an understanding of the processes generating environmental degradation and inequality and identifies strategic pathways to address socioenvironmental injustices.



MSc Urban Economic Development

This programme equips students with research and analytical skills and practical experience to engage critically with key issues in urban economic development. We prepare a new generation of influential thinkers and actors in public, private and civic spheres to creatively and effectively deal with the challenges of urbanisation and sustainable urban development.



MSc Urban Development Planning

This programme explores the room for manoeuvre for socially and spatially just urban development planning, building on a critical understanding of the structural processes, institutional frameworks and collective action that generate change in diverse urban contexts.

MSc Development Administration and Planning

This programme is committed to the critical study of the theories and practices of development administration and planning. It seeks to provide participants with an understanding of the processes generating social change, and the skills to reflect upon and engage with such processes.



MSc Health in Urban Development

This programme aims to produce theoretical and practical knowledge on the interrelationships between formal and informal urban contexts, health disparities, social justice and development planning in the Global South. Participants will develop skills to promote urban health equity in urban development planning.



MSc Building and Urban Design in Development

This programme reconceives urban design as a transformative practice that transcends physical form and function. It emphasises research on a multiplicity of urban conditions through the principles of social justice. Students will learn to critically reflect on design research practices to encourage holistic, strategic and just spatial outcomes.



MSc Social Development Practice

This programme explores 'people-centred' approaches to international development, in which citizens are active agents in shaping development agendas. Students engage with the implications of promoting well-being and citizenship in the context of social diversity, exploring the traditional realm of the social sector as an entry point to influence wider contestations of rights and citizenship.