



UCIL



Issue 54 March 2012

dpu news

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Building on local cultural and political institutions in Somaliland and Somalia

By Michael Walls



Over the past eight years, DPU's **Michael Walls** has worked closely with a number of partners both inside Somaliland and out. Central to this is an on-going effort to both understand the indigenous institutions that guide decision-making, and to support the processes taking place. Michael's work links with that of the State and Market research cluster at DPU (see section 3 of this dpunews for more details), focusing on the nature and role of the State, here in a post-conflict situation. Somaliland's situation has attracted attention as a stable portion of what was the Republic of Somalia, with much discussion over the differences in aid delivery there in contrast to experiences further south. Somaliland's lack of recognition as a sovereign state has meant that they have developed a relationship with the international development community that is quite distinct from the other Somali areas.

No nation encapsulates state failure in the public consciousness more than Somalia. This perception has underpinned initiatives

such as the major London conference on Somalia held on 23rd February 2012, with its preoccupation with security. However the Somali areas in the Horn of Africa do, in fact, boast a number of promising attempts to build on local institutions to support evolving governance systems. The most enduring of these laid the foundation for the, as-yet unrecognised, Republic of Somaliland.

These processes have not been without their problems though: political consolidation tends to rely on a call to unity that is based either in Islam or on kinship through the segmentary Somali clan structure. While religiously-based identities provide a powerful foundation in Somali tradition of calls for people to set aside inter-clan rivalries and work together, they lack the conflict-resolution mechanisms provided by customary law within the clan system. Clans, on the other hand, provide strong structure for day-to-day social organisation, but are inherently divisive, cultivating a sense of lineage-based

'separateness' to promote internal cohesion. That 'otherness' has been heavily politicised through generations of colonialism and post-colonial division and conflict, generating an ossified sense of antagonism that many Somalis describe as 'clannism'.

It is precisely the resilience of this paradox that makes the multi-clan democracy which has gradually been consolidating itself in Somaliland such a promising example. While frequently accused by its critics of domination by the Isaaq clan-family, the reality is that, based as it is on colonial borders that paid only passing attention to clan areas, Somaliland actually embraces a notable diversity of kinship groups. Even the dominant Isaaq

Below: Electoral campaigning in Hargeisa (Claudia Simoes: www.photofact.co.uk)

Opposite top left: Electoral campaigners at the national monument in Hargeisa (Claudia Simoes)

Opposite bottom left: Polling station (Claudia Simoes)



grouping is not one clan but a number of different clans, who have clashed a number of times over the years, so undermining any suggestion that they act as a coherent and hegemonic power.

While this is fascinating from an anthropological perspective, the discussion also carries great developmental significance. Indeed, the contrast between Somalia and the internationally unrecognised Republic of Somaliland has even become something of a focal point for debate in the UK media on the effectiveness of aid. The Daily Mail, The Economist and, more surprisingly, The Guardian, all carried stories that claimed Somaliland's success in gradually building a viable representative democracy as proof the lack of effectiveness of aid. The reasoning is that Somaliland's lack of international recognition has meant "ineligibility for foreign assistance" (Eubank, 2011), yet the unrecognised state has been more successful than its recognised and lavishly funded transitional counterpart in Mogadishu (Birrell, 2011, Baobab blog, 2011). Even the satirical magazine, Private Eye, employed a flagrantly inaccurate representation of the facts to flagellate "clumsy" and misinformed donors in Somaliland (Private Eye, 2009). It is a superficially compelling argument, and



one that has been picked up eagerly by some Somaliland commentators, keen to promote their impressive achievements. In fact there can be little doubt that foreign governments and aid agencies have made a great many serious missteps in Somalia over the years. But, as is so often the case, this reasoning

hides a much more complex situation. In spite of a lack of international recognition, Somaliland has been the recipient of an increasing flow of aid, and while the political situation has long been impressively stable, infrastructure, education, health and most other sectors remain about as poorly developed there as elsewhere in what was the Republic of Somalia.

The remarkableness of Somaliland, though hardly by design, is the way in which local and external interests have balanced each other. By and large, donors have not been able to 'set the agenda' in as dominant a fashion as elsewhere. They have nevertheless been essential partners in many significant developments in the past decade. This has most clearly been the case in the political arena, where technical and practical support has worked alongside deep involvement by outsiders who have nevertheless often maintained a long-term involvement. Rather than external agents wielding such financial heft as to permit them to dictate terms on a 'take-it-or-leave-it' basis, donors have often been encouraged to act as full participants, subject to the same disputes, debates and agreements that are experienced by local actors. That model has underpinned an engagement which has had its problems, but which has nevertheless contributed to the political stability and democratic evolution that is rightly beginning to attract accolades.

For many Somalis, a long period from the mid-1980s, when the dictatorial regime of Siad Barre was gradually collapsing through civil war in the north which then spread to the south in 1991, the last two and a half decades have been enormously destructive. At different times, large proportions of the populations of whole areas have been forced to flee, with a generation of Somalis born and raised as refugees or migrants. Some have been successful in their adopted nations, and many have gained a foreign education and a perspective shaped by years living outside the Horn. This has meant the growth of a proportionately huge Somali diaspora, carrying a plethora of divergent experiences, aspirations, and levels of wealth and education.

Both the start and end of the period of widespread conflict came early for Somaliland. Prominent in the early insurgency during the 1980s, Somaliland's two largest cities were bombed flat by Siad Barre's air force in 1988, and when they reclaimed their independence in 1991, they had to start the process of rebuilding with a

Below: Monument to Independence in Hargeisa (Claudia Simoes)



population that had barely known a Somali government that was both developmentally oriented and responsive to their needs. Over a period of six years, they held a lengthy series of clan-based conferences; some were small meetings, others involved representatives from all the major clans living within the borders of the old British protectorate. By 1997, that process had generated a constitution and a system of broad government support from the most powerful clans.

By and large, that momentum has been maintained. A constitutional referendum was held in 2001 which overwhelmingly approved the document; elections were held for local Mayors in 2002 and for the President in 2003. The Lower Chamber of Parliament then faced election in 2005, before disputes over the process for registering voters caused a series of political crises that delayed further elections until 2010.

Three years ago, Michael Walls was working as one of the coordinators of the then forthcoming Presidential elections. At that stage, they were scheduled to take place in September 2009. In fact, by the specified date, Somaliland was far from ready to hold such an important vote. The political parties were engaged in a bitter dispute amongst themselves and with donors over a deeply flawed voter registration process, and it was hard to imagine an election at any stage in the near future.

It was largely due to a timely, persistent and committed intervention by a number of outsiders (indeed, donors and foreign states)

that tabled a resolution to the crisis that ultimately proved successful. An agreement was signed on 30 September 2009, a new Electoral Commission was put in place, and suddenly an apparently critical crisis was transformed into a remarkably efficient process of preparation for a successful election in June 2010.

The international observer team with whom DPU was involved was able to declare the election a free and fair 'expression of the will of the Somaliland people' (Walls and Kibble, 2011). Remarkably for such a young and resource-poor parliamentary democracy, the opposition candidate had secured a clear victory, and was installed in power within the constitutionally mandated period. The symbolism of the swearing-in ceremony in which the outgoing presidential team stood beside the incoming team and welcomed the new government was lost on no-one.

participation in Somaliland¹.

Historically, women have exercised considerable power through control of household resources, including trading in animal products, household maintenance, child rearing and other reproductive roles. However, they have always been excluded from formal political deliberation. With many elements of the customary pastoral society breaking down as a result of the interconnected effects of conflict, environmental degradation and sedentarisation, women's role in Somali society has changed significantly. With men often absent fighting, or else killed or disabled in the various Somali wars, then frequently despatched overseas to earn money in the Gulf states, US or Europe, women were required to find new ways of providing for the day-to-day needs of households without direct support from men. As pastoral livelihoods have become

Somaliland government activities as well as those of NGOs. However, donor sensitivities over being seen to provide de facto recognition for the government has resulted in a greater proportion of assistance being channelled through civil society than would normally be the case. This has resulted in a relatively well-resourced NGO sector, and women's organisations have established themselves as some of the most articulate, focused and organised members of that burgeoning civil society.

In spite of these changes and the campaigning power of well-resourced advocacy organisations, women have remained largely excluded from political institutions. The reasons can be traced to concerns rooted in a residual sense of custom. Both male and female voters complain that they cannot vote for female parliamentary candidates because they do not know if the woman involved will work on behalf of the clan of her father or that of her husband. In a society in which clan has consistently provided the only reliable social safety net through periods of conflict and weak government, that is a powerful call to tradition. However, it is an adaptation of tradition that does not accommodate the huge social changes that have occurred. Many women feel that they are held back from capitalising on new opportunities in business and society by a social and political adherence to a kinship system that excludes them from collective decision-making.

There has been considerable discussion on how this roadblock might be removed and there are signs of progress. While the 2005 election of the House of Representatives delivered only two female MPs in a chamber of 82 members, it seems almost certain that a quota will be introduced ensuring the election of minimum numbers of women and members of minority social groups in local and parliamentary elections. However, the recommendation on the level at which the quota will be set has been delayed, and there has been much argument about whether a token level of, perhaps, 5% or a higher threshold - maybe 15% - is more appropriate. Many Somalilanders expect the eventual introduction of a quota of between 10 and 15 per cent, though this is not yet confirmed. The problem is not confined to Somaliland, though the situation is worse there: the Transitional Federal Parliament in the south has an official quota for women of 12 per cent which has never been met. The figure achieved currently stands at 7 per cent.

Michael Walls' involvement with Somali issues also sees him providing support for



Above: View of Hargeisa (Claudia Simoes)

Michael Walls is once again hoping to help coordinate an international observer effort for local body elections scheduled for April 2012. However, the precise date remains uncertain, with likelihood that that vote too will need to be delayed.

As notable as Somaliland's uneven but sustained consolidation of parliamentary democracy has been, it is also striking for its perpetuation of gender inequality in politics. Towards the end of 2011 the DPU undertook research for the Swedish organisation International IDEA which focused on women's political

increasingly marginal, women's livelihood activities have expanded in areas such as trade – for example, assuming responsibility for hiring trucks for transport of goods from southern Somali areas, or in the qaad (the mild stimulant leaf chewed widely by Somalis and Yemenis) business.

Women have also assumed responsibilities in civil society. For many years, donor funds have directly supported

the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group for Somaliland and Somalia, formed to promote greater awareness amongst British politicians of the complexities and successes of Somalis both in the UK and in the Horn. As a founder and past Chair of Somaliland Focus (UK), and as Chair of the 50-year old Anglo-Somali Society, Michael also seeks to help foster constructive on-going dialogue between diaspora Somalis, those living in the Horn and non-Somalis. The Kayd Somali Arts and Culture Ltd, a UK-based charity that Michael acts as a chair for, organises literary and arts festivals in London and Hargeisa, and works to help maintain a positive view of Somali culture and its interactions with other cultures.

The people of the Somali Horn of Africa still face enormous challenges as they negotiate a constructive political and social settlement that allows them to escape the destructive cycles of division and conflict that have marked the five decades since independence. Somalia has never known a sustained and successful political union, yet many amongst both the Transitional Federal Government and the militants of al-Shabaab insist on the inviolability of a never-established political unity. That question is one that must ultimately be decided by Somalis themselves, but Somaliland's progress to date surely maps

more positive options for political stability than are offered by either the conflictive processes of the Transitional Government in the south, or the defiantly un-Somali calls to fundamentalist Salafism that are the mark of al-Shabaab. And just as pragmatism and tolerance are important in finding a political accommodation, pride in the culture and common heritage of Somalis must surely play a role in offering a satisfactory basis for Somali social unity that is more inclusive and positive than the antagonisms of a politicised 'clannism' or the imported and violently repressive asceticism of the Salafist Shabaab.



Above: Hargeisa (Claudia Simoes)

1 Research led by **Michael Walls** with the help of **Rozina Kanchwala**, a graduate of DPU's MSc in Environment and Sustainable Development

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DPU's New Website

In November 2011, the DPU launched its new website as part of a Faculty-level initiative to offer a better user experience and establish more effective communication within the extended DPU and wider international development community. When you visit the homepage you will now be able to subscribe to the DPU news and events feeds, mailing list, twitter page, Facebook group and also keep tuned with



weekly posts to our dpublog. Continuing deeper into the site, you will have access to information on current research projects being carried out by the DPU staff, as well as information about opportunities for partnership with the DPU.

In our 'Latest' section you will have direct access to all our media production outputs such as the publications repository, dpunews in PDF format, and video productions by students and staff. The new website also highlights the department's vision and mission, academic staff profiles, the different academic programmes, and admission processes, job opportunities, special facilities and so forth.

This project was a massive undertaking that involved a large number of people across the DPU and the Faculty. We hope that when you visit the site you find the information you seek, find out interesting things about our 'community of practice', and that this new site enables you to stay better connected and up-to-date with our activities. www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu

ESD 15th Anniversary Workshop

10 to 12 September 2012

Sustainable Urban Futures: Learning collectively from theory and practice

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of the MSc in Environment and Sustainable Development at the DPU, the ESD team is planning a three-day Workshop to take place in London from 10 to 12 September 2012 (just after the World Urban Forum in Naples). This initiative will focus on producing a collective publication examining what can be learnt in theory and practice from the experience of the 350 alumni that have been part of the course since its inception in 1997. If you are interested in joining this initiative, please contact **Étienne von Bertrab** (e.bertrab@ucl.ac.uk).



Learning about the Governance of Poverty in the Context of Informality DPU's Collaboration with Mekele University

In May 2011, 54 students of the Urban Economic Development (UED) and Development Administration Planning (DAP) courses undertook research on issues related to the governance of poverty reduction and growth strategies in and around Mekele, Ethiopia, with the facilitation of Mekele University. The 2012 UED/DAP fieldtrip will return to Mekele for a second time to engage with development issues in the area. Ethiopia offers fascinating insights into poverty reduction processes. Despite having a relatively low per capita income, Ethiopia is one of the fastest growing, non-oil producing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with economic growth at an average of over 10% since 2004. With a relatively competent civil service, a government committed to social and economic reform, and stable currency, evidence is emerging of substantial progress in poverty reduction and levels of inequality.

How economic growth translates into improvements in living conditions of poor women and men is a complex matter and there are challenges to sustaining these

improvements. For example, agricultural development is highly dependent on weather patterns and, while fundamental to the rural economy, represents a declining share of GDP growth. Urbanisation rates are increasing and present enormous challenges in terms of the provision of infrastructure and housing. Furthermore, economic growth appears not to be generating structural transformations in the economy because of slow rates of industrialisation, import dependency on basic goods and poor technological advancement.

In this context, the students adopted the perspective of development consultants to gain an improved understanding of the factors behind Ethiopia's success in poverty reduction, researching the links between poverty reduction and community tourism, decentralisation of health and education processes, and local government approaches to informal economic activity, as well as initiatives to reduce poverty through improvements to manufacturing, infrastructure and rural-urban linkages.

The fieldtrip led to the DPU signing a Memorandum of Co-operation with Mekele University to support the development of research links in the future. As part of this process, and in collaboration with the Centre for African Studies at the University of London, three Mekele University staff

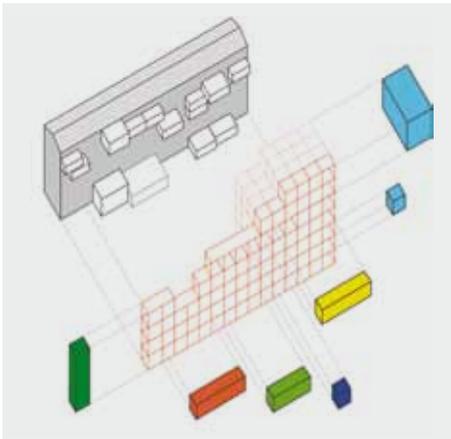
*Above: Factory in Mekele
(Le-Yin Zhang)*

will participate in a workshop in March 2012 to formulate a common research agenda.

A research proposal has already been submitted to the European Research Council by DPU's **Colin Marx** to build on this relationship. It addresses a key question at the core of understanding urban informal economies: are poor women and men merely a passive majority or do they possess some autonomous generative capacity? Noting that the extensive literature on informal economies does not provide the means to address this question critically, this research proposes to shift the basis on which urban economies, and the contributions of poor women and men, are conceived.

Critical Urbanism Studio Modules at the DPU

In September 2011, Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD) launched its new BU8 module Critical Urbanism Studio I led by **William Hunter**, **Dr. Camillo Boano** and **Giorgio Talocci** (DPU PhD candidate). Aiming to (re)introduce design pedagogy and critical analysis to a new audience, the module is striving to bridge the gap between the DPU, Bartlett Architecture and Urban Design, and Geography (MSc Urban Studies).



Above: Exploded Diagram of Incremental Adaptive Structure for Kim Lien Housing, Hanoi (BU8 students)

Through case-based seminars, roundtable discussions, and short design charrettes, the students were exposed and guided through diverse projects representing different global contexts, building typologies, and scale, culminating in an expanded investigation of the KTT Housing programmes in Kim Lien, Hanoi which has undergone dynamic self-generated physical transformation since its inception in the 1980s. Students were challenged to understand the value of case study research while questioning the impact of design rhetoric and strategies for the upgrading of communities struggling against access to resources, livelihoods, and equal provision of spatial assets. Moving forward on these foundations in 2012, the pilot BU9 module Critical Urbanism Studio II seeks to expand on critical investigative design strategies, hinging on innovative methodologies for design meaning and action in contested development.

DPU summerLab Launches in Rome

The DPU recently activated its inaugural summerLab from 5-10 September 2011, structured as an immersion into contested sites in Rome. The primary case study, grounded in the Metropoliz occupation, dealt with two adjacent sites, each containing derelict factory buildings. In the past two years both sites have been occupied by squatters, immigrants and a Roma population attempting to secure a home within the peripheral urban limits and actively resist market and political pressures.

The two sites are divided by a masonry wall, pierced in one location by a gated opening. Within these sites, the occupation has self-organized over time, using the hollow shells of the former factory buildings to enclose self-built residential units. A natural segregation has occurred between the Roma community and immigrant communities from Peru and Morocco. Without the external catalyst of impending site redevelopment or building demolition, the conflict between the occupants and State authorities continues to simmer just below the surface, with the 'grey' legality of occupations held in check by the 'grey' legality of evictions and

alternative site selection.

In the context of a wider housing market, a visit to Corviale demonstrated the extremes of a Modernist solution to social housing. Built in the 1970s, this kilometer-long structure on the very edge of Rome has one length of the building facing the city and the other facing farmland. A bus route runs along the front of the site, stopping at each of the five main vertical circulation cores before reaching the far end. With no clear system of management and maintenance, the building appears illegally occupied and in perpetual decline, even though this is not the case. Other centrally located buildings, despite being illegally occupied, appear highly organised, well maintained and adapted to current uses.

Future destinations for politically-engaged critical design workshops in the DPU summerLab series include Zurich, Bucharest, Amsterdam, and Brcko (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/summerlab>

Below: The Metropoliz occupation in Rome (Andrew Wade)





Left: Infrastructure is a critical issue for the urban poor in Dhaka, Bangladesh (Cassidy Johnson)

New ESD Modules on Infrastructure and Services, and Water and Sanitation

With the aim of opening another specialisation for Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) students, the programme has introduced two new modules: Sustainable Infrastructure and Services in Development, and Urban Water and Sanitation, Planning and Politics. The modules are taught by **Étienne von Bertrab** in collaboration with other DPU lecturers, and draws on the DPU's extensive research and experience with respect to the governance of service provision particularly in the Peri-Urban Interface (PUI).

While the first module deals with infrastructure and services more broadly, including those related to water, sanitation, transport and energy, the second module explores the underlying causes of water poverty and critically examines innovative and transformative approaches to sustainable water provision and sanitation services.

Dialogues in Development

The DPU has continued its discussion series on cutting edge development issues, with inputs from leading figures from the world of urban development. In June 2011, Professor Zilton Macedo from the Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brazil, gave a talk entitled "Dilemmas in Maintaining Growth" on the Metropolitan São Paulo water supply and sustainability. On 3rd October, to celebrate World Habitat Day, the DPU hosted a discussion panel on "Cities and climate change: Climate compatible development and the challenges of urban informal settlements". Discussants included DPU's **Cassidy Johnson** and **Vanesa Castán-Broto**, DPU's Visiting **Professor David Satterthwaite** and Alfredo Stein Heinemann of the University of Manchester. On 18th October 2011 Jockin Arputham, Founder of the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India and President of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), gave a talk on "How can you reduce urban poverty without working with the urban poor? Without using their knowledge

and their capacities?". A November 2011 event saw Sheela Patel (Founder of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in conversation with David Satterthwaite. In a session chaired by **Caren Levy** December 2011 Arif Hasan (Chairman of the Orangi Pilot Programme Research and Training Institute) was in conversation with **Ruth McLeod** (Urban development specialist and DPU Senior Teaching Fellow) discussing "How poor people house themselves in cities today". In January/February, Professor Susan Parnell (visiting Leverhulme Professor at UCL, and Professor of Geography at the University of Cape Town) led a 3-session series on "African Perspective on Urban Development Planning". The first session on "Theories and Ethics in Urban Development", was followed by a session on "Current urban challenges, future directions: the next 50 years of urban planning in Africa". This trio of presentations was concluded with a panel discussion on "Urban planning futures in dialogue".

Research Clusters at the DPU

In 2011, the DPU created four research clusters, to co-ordinate and catalyse synergies in our research interests. These clusters will be used as a basis to theme future editions of the DPU News.

The **Urban Transformations** cluster focuses on what design and planning can contribute to collective initiatives seeking to bring about social and spatial justice. Rapid urbanization is placing cities of the global South at the core of the developmental agenda for the twenty first century, presenting both challenges and opportunities for thinking and acting out city futures. An extraordinary diversity has led to a resurgence of identity politics and mobilization of potentially new constituencies for development planning, matched by diversified spatial forms of organization at the city level, resulting from the splintering of urban space and the creation of “islands of wealth in oceans of poverty” (The State of African Cities 2010, UN-Habitat). The objective is to tease out multiple urban transformation processes and explicitly increase the room for manoeuvre of actors to harness key levers of change.

The **Environmental Justice, Urbanisation and Resilience (EJUR)** cluster aims to unearth emerging relationships and contradictions between resilience and environmental justice in the contemporary geographies of capitalist urbanisation and accumulation. In recent years, the role of cities in sustainable development has been acknowledged to a higher degree within both academic and development communities. There are however significant blind spots in the understanding of how urbanisation operates in metabolising nature and in the creation and distribution of risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities among urban dwellers.

The **Diversity, Social Complexity and Planning Interventions** cluster examines how issues of social diversity play out in relation to the urban setting, where issues of space, fluidity, and rapid change, create heightened possibilities for social fragmentation, inequality, and conflict, but also possibilities for transformation. It builds on the DPU’s established work on gender policy and planning, cosmopolitan development, social development, governance, and post conflict reconstruction. And also focuses on relationships between social diversity, development processes, and planned interventions, exploring the ways in which multiple social identities have (or have not) been addressed through the policies, plans and practices of development institutions, and the associated social and

development consequences.

The **State and Market: Governance and Policy for Development** cluster focuses on long-term approaches to the governance of development transitions. Its aim is to analyse the ethical implications of the competing frameworks that underpin these approaches, and promote progressive interactions between state, society and market actors and institutions.

In 2011, the State and Market cluster convened a workshop on ‘Cooperatives and urban livelihoods’ with participants from the Economics Department of the University of Roma Tre and Florence, the Cooperative College in Manchester, London School of Economics, and the International NGO Practical Action. The workshop generated interesting discussions on the topic, facilitating exchange of information from a variety of disciplines and fields. Furthermore, the participants identified key questions to understand the role and potential of cooperatives in expanding human development in an urban context.

Continuing with an interest in the governance of livelihoods, two research proposals have been prepared over the past year. The first examines the role of informal knowledge in African urban economies in promoting economic growth. The second examines the potential to create community-led approaches to developing African informal economies as an alternative platform for urban economic growth. The Cluster is also involved in convening two conference panels for the forthcoming African Studies Association UK Biannual Conference in Leeds in September 2012. The panels are entitled: ‘Understanding informal urban livelihoods’ and ‘National and municipal responses to informal urban economies’.

Urban Knowledge Network Asia

The DPU is one of the main partners of the new Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) project, awarded a grant of Euro 1.25 million under the Marie Curie Actions “*International Research Staff Exchange Scheme*” (part of European Union’s Research Executive Agency’s Seventh Framework Program). Due to start in April 2012, it will run for four years, entailing a network of 102 researchers from 13 partner institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, coordinated by The International Institute for Asian Studies, University of Leiden.

UKNA addresses critical urban development issues in Asia, taking into account the challenges of the diversity in heterogeneous urban societies. Its aim is

to study how Asian cities, taken as organic socio-spatial entities, manage their space and improve human liveability. A meeting and launching workshop should take place in Napoli, Italy, during the World Social Forum in September 2012. DPU’s involvement is led by Yves Cabannes as principal investigator.

Public Sector Mediation in Land Access in the Middle East and North Africa

Prof Yves Cabannes has been a research partner of the MERSI program, exploring how public sector mediation in Maghrebi and Middle Eastern metropolises is addressing competing interests for land and access to housing. Coordinated by the French Institute of the Middle East, research teams investigated how the so-called “Arab spring” might modify the governance links between the State, market forces, and civil society in relation to decent housing conditions, culminating with a seminar in Paris and planned book in 2013.

Local Governance, Urban Mobility and Poverty Reduction: Lessons from Medellín

Julio D Dávila continued coordinating this 19-month research project, with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for International Development (DFID). As part of the dissemination of research findings, he lectured at the University of Cambridge, The Architectural Association London, and Alan Baxter Gallery (with **Diana Daste**), and gave seminars at the NAERUS conference in Madrid (also with Diana) and the University of London’s Institute for Historical Research. He co-authored a paper with Peter Brand from Universidad Nacional de Colombia, who presented it at the World Planning Schools Conference in Perth (Australia) in July 2011.



Above: The research team with DPU alumni at the Medellín workshop. From left: Diana Salazar, Ernesto Betancourt, Daniel Oviedo, Julio Davila, Jose Echeverry, Caren Levy, Diana Daste, Paola Jiron and Natalia Villamizar.

Two important workshops were held in Colombia in May and December 2011, giving an opportunity to disseminate results and provide a stimulating platform for discussion involving national and local academics, policy-makers, leaders of local communities, civil servants and students. The December 2011 workshop held in Medellín attracted 180 participants, including the full DPU team of **Julio Davila**, **Caren Levy** and **Diana Daste**. The workshop was complemented with visits to the cable-cars and surrounding low-income communities, helping validate and disseminate the research results among a diverse set of local and national actors.

Disease, Environment and Development in Nairobi

An international consortium of research institutions in Kenya and the UK, including the DPU, has been awarded a five-year research grant to develop the research project “Epidemiology, Ecology and Socio-Economics of Disease Emergence in Nairobi”. **Julio Dávila** and **Adriana Allen** represent the DPU as part of The University of Edinburgh team. The project is funded by a number of prestigious UK institutions, including the Medical Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

Low Carbon Initiatives in Social Housing in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Vanesa Castán Broto visited Ljubljana in February 2011 to conduct a short research project on social justice and low carbon initiatives in the city. The objective of the research was to investigate the benefits and implications of integrating low carbon initiatives into municipally-led social housing policies. It focused on the work of the Public Housing Fund of the Municipality of Ljubljana which provides rental social housing for disadvantaged groups. During the last decade the Fund has implemented several social housing projects which incorporate energy efficiency and low carbon innovations, in order to both demonstrate commitment to sustainable development, and reduce energy bills for economically disadvantaged social groups. The research showed that these initiatives have set a low carbon standard for housing in Ljubljana, but they are limited in their ability to address energy-related vulnerabilities resulting from the de-population of the urban centre and the predominance of sub-urban family house models in planning and development discourses.

The research was funded by the Interdisciplinary Cluster on Energy Systems, Equity and Vulnerability (InCluESEV), an interdisciplinary research cluster led by King's College London, the Universities of

Lancaster and Durham (<http://incluseev.kcl.ac.uk/>). The research also benefited from the institutional support of the Building and Social Housing Foundation (<http://www.bshf.org/>) and the University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. The results were presented at an InCluESEV workshop on “Designing and living with energy efficiency” held in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, 10th of March 2011.

Film and Activism: Tuzla Urban Energy Landscapes

What is the role of film for academic-activists? In the context of development planning, research has the implicit ethical goal of promoting transformations towards more socially just societies. One of the difficulties is that activism requires forms of public engagement which have not been traditionally associated with academia. Documentary film offers opportunities to explore alternative forms of communication and the DPU is developing several initiatives to understand and explain the relevance of film in research and education for planning and development.

Recently **Vanesa Castán Broto** and **Gynna Millán Franco**, following Vanesa's long engagement with energy, post-industrialisation and urban development in the city of Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina), approached film as a tool to document both the peri-urban landscape transformations associated with energy production and the different explanations shaped by heterogeneous concerns of national identity, economic priorities and place attachment of these transformations. Following a visit to Tuzla in October 2011 backed by the InCluESEV Research Development Fund, the research was presented at a workshop on Energy justice in a changing climate: defining an agenda, at Kings College, London, on the 11th November 2011. A film is currently in development.



Above: The coal-fired power plant dominates the landscape around the city of Tuzla (Vanesa Castán Broto)

Shock (not) Horror: Mediating Radical Transformations in Infrastructure Provision

This new EPSRC two-year research project, launched in October 2011, brings together academics in civil engineering (Newcastle University), sustainable design (Open University) and development and planning (UCL) in a bid to imagine the infrastructure of the next century. The thesis is that ‘shocks’ (economic crisis, floods, terrorist attacks) open up learning opportunities to rethink the operation of infrastructure and devise more resilient and adaptable infrastructure systems. Methodology will build on an on-going dialogue between academic and industry partners, including Arup, Network Rail, National Grid and IBM, among others, through a series of interviews, workshops and experiments. For more information contact **Vanesa Castán Broto** (v.castanbroto@ucl.ac.uk) or visit the project website (<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/shock/>).

Urban Metabolism at UCL

Debates and urban sustainability interventions have been heavily influenced by concepts in ecology and biological sciences. One such concept is that of “*urban metabolism*”, which refers to the metabolic processes by which cities transform raw materials, energy and water into the built environment, human biomass and waste. The adoption of this concept has fostered new imaginations of what the city is and how material and immaterial flows – through infrastructure, through different economies – mediate the production and reproduction of the city, both as a biophysical and socio-economic entity. Urban metabolism has also inspired new ways of thinking about how cities can be made sustainable and raised criticism about the specific social and economic arrangements in which some forms of flow, or being in flow, are prioritized within the city.

The concept has been influential across a range of disciplines linking urban studies with fields as diverse as engineering, human geography, economics and development studies, and associated research is now starting to make an impact. For example, the Urban Unit at the World Bank released in 2009 a high profile report called *Eco2Cities*, which advocated urban metabolism understandings of the city in sustainable urban development. Yet, it could be argued that urban metabolism-inspired prescriptions have remained within single disciplines and they have not yet made a difference in terms of creating radically new ways of thinking about the city and its development.

Engaging with these questions, **Adriana**

Allen and Vanesa Castán Broto have been coordinating the Urban Metabolism at UCL project. Funded by the UCL Environment Institute (EI), the project was launched in June 2011 to foster interdisciplinary dialogue around urban metabolism. Rather than creating a shared understanding of urban metabolism, the project focuses on exploring the potential for interdisciplinary studies of the sustainable city by revealing the diversity of approaches and perspectives around this key concept within UCL and establishing links with the wider debate.

This initiative contributes to UCL's work on sustainable cities, within the wider initiatives promoted by UCL Grand Challenges. In 2012, the project will be followed up with the development of a film output from the interviews and an event to bring interdisciplinary researchers together. For more information, or to participate, contact Vanesa Castán Broto (v.castanbroto@ucl.ac.uk) or Adriana Allen (a.allen@ucl.ac.uk).

The Social Production of Urban Risk

In autumn 2011, **Camillo Boano** and **Alexandre Apsan Frediani** coordinated a workshop in Mexico City with Oxfam-Latin America and Caribe (LAC) which aimed at consolidating research on urban risk, mitigation, prevention

Right: In this picture from left to right: Luis Alberto Salamanca Mazuelo (Research consultant, Bolivia) Alex Frediani (DPU), Camillo Boano (DPU), Miguel Chacon (Research consultant, Guatemala)



and relocation, specifically looking at the context of La Paz (Bolivia) and Guatemala City (Guatemala). The workshop brought together government officials, representatives from civil society organisations, consultants in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as Oxfam officers from La Paz, Guatemala and the regional office in Mexico City. The participants explored the relationship between urban development and disaster risk reduction strategies and agreed on a series of crucial research questions that should be addressed to contribute to

on-going action towards causes of risk production in urban contexts and defining subsequent urban strategies.

Following the workshop, local consultants collected data in La Paz and Guatemala, developing site-based narratives in four selected settlements aiming to offer an in-depth examination on how risk is perceived and constructed (at community and at city level) and how that influences policy and planning on disaster and risk reduction, especially within discourses dealing with relocation. Research concludes in February 2012.

PHD Programme

The Role of the State in Developing International Financial Centres

The PhD highlighted in this section is an example of postgraduate research connected to the DPU's State and Market research cluster. PhD candidate **Da Feng Xu's** research seeks to explore the role of the state in developing international financial centres (IFCs) in large, fast-growing developing countries. The rapid pace of economic globalization and financial liberalization, coupled with tremendous advancement in telecommunication and electric network, has greatly altered the landscape of global economy. In this context, IFCs have become the nodes or hubs of capital flows in the global network. Developing countries have been trying to upgrade their premium cities (i.e. Mumbai, Dubai, Moscow, Sao Paulo) into IFCs so as to integrate into the world economy. Therefore, a new question has been raised: How could these late-developing countries overcome institutional deficiency and

weakness and sharpen their competitive advantage on IFCs development in relatively short period? A case study of China will shed some lights on this issue.

As the largest developing country in the world, China started to map out a strategic plan to develop Shanghai into an IFC in early 1990s. In 2011, Shanghai ranks 5th in the Global Financial Centre Index (GFCI) just after London, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore. It is generally arguable that the significant progress of Shanghai in finance is attributed to the rapid growth of Chinese economy and the intervention of the state. Another noticeable feature of the financial system in China is the State ownership. The State has dominant ownership in the banking industry; most of the listed companies in the security market are state-owned; insurance, investment and other financial firms are also state-owned or state-controlled, which I labeled as "financial statism". The state-controlled financial sector implies

that financial resources are tended to be allocated according to the intention of the state.

Using Shanghai as a case, the study will examine the IFCs development from a new perspective of institutional political economy, focusing ownership structure in particular, on the IFCs development in transitional countries. The main themes include: why did the Chinese state maintain dominant ownership in the financial sector after undertaking market reform and opening-up policies? Has the state ownership promoted or hindered the growth of IFCs during past decades? The study also intends to conduct a quantitative analysis on the causal relationship between ownership structure and IFCs development. The on-going study suggests that although IFCs development could be accelerated by state intervention through dominant state ownership, we should be wary of its side effects on sustainable and healthy growth in the long run.

News from former DPU students and friends

Dr Sunil Kumar (PhD 1996) has been appointed Dean of Students at the London School of Economics, where he lectures in the Department of Social Policy. The Dean's role is to help maximise students' learning potential and enhance the student experience. Sunil was also a guest at 'The Forum', a BBC World Service radio programme, on the topic "What does home mean to us?"

After living and working in Mexico since completion of their masters (ESD 2002-03), **Anna Kydd** and **Étienne von Bertrab** decided to embark on a new adventure and move to London. Anna is now directing the SHM Foundation, while Étienne joined the DPU as a lecturer. They also got married on August 6th, 2011, in the magical town of Tepoztlán, Mexico.

While attending the 'Global Shanghai' workshop in Shanghai in March 2011, **Le-Yin Zhang** held an informal seminar with a group of urban administrators, researchers and practitioners. Several are alumni of the DPU and the Bartlett including Lin Chu Zhu (UDP 1991-92), chairman of Shanghai Economy Almanac Press, Ming Lu (UED 2000-01), Deputy Director for the Science & Technology Commission of Shanghai Pudong New Area, while Wang Qiang, Huang Jia-Wei, and Wang Yun all hold important government or corporate positions.

Omar Saracho, (ESD 2007-08) is now based in Jakarta, working at Mercy Corps as an Urban Development and Climate Change Adaptation Advisor. While in Indonesia, Yves Cabannes had the opportunity to visit an amazing breadth of projects under his coordination in Duri Kosambi and Pluit, Jakarta including slum improvement programs, water supply and waste collection. Audrey Lovering (DAP 2004-05) is currently the Rockland Community Development Director in a small seaside town in Maine where she is working with an engaged citizenry, to create economic opportunities, improve housing conditions and enhance amenities for the city's residents.

Ding Liu (DAP 2009-10) is now working in the Development Department of a county level government in the city of Chongqing, South West China. In 2011 he was responsible for the local household registration reform led by Chongqing Municipal Government. He says "Chongqing's reform is likely to make a breakthrough in the development of rural areas in China. The government intends to remove the discrimination between the urban people with a non-agricultural hukou and the rural people who has an agricultural one, in terms of social security, medical care, education and a series of barriers that stand in the way of the development of average agricultural people."

Siri Mittet (ESD 2002-03) moved back to Norway at the end of 2006 after working as the Recycling Liaison Officer at the London Borough of Redbridge for a few years. Since August 2007 Siri has been the project coordinator for a large social science research project at the University of Oslo looking at climate change adaptation in Norway. This project is coming to an end soon (April) and she is looking out for new work opportunities. Siri is actively engaged in a Norwegian Transition Town initiative in her community, she runs Green Drinks Oslo and this fall she got elected into local politics for the Green Party.

Katja Starc (BUDD 2010-11) is working on a long-term, Australian-funded project (The Liaison Office) in Uruzgan province, Southern Afghanistan. The project explores changes in local governance, justice and rule of law, security and development, which includes the sectors of health, education, infrastructure, private sector, agriculture and gender issues.

Marisol García & Krista Canellakis (BUDD 2009-10) received seed capital from a Chilean government program called Start-Up Chile inspired by their professional backgrounds and experience in BUDD at the DPU. 'Crowdplaces' seeks to improve under-utilized urban spaces through a user-friendly crowd-funding platform for individuals and communities to initiate ideas leading to physical neighbourhood improvements.

www.crowdplaces.org

Igor Malgrati (BUDD 2009-10) is working for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Afghanistan, and is currently managing the construction of the new orthopaedic centre in Faizabad.

Benjamin Leclair Paquet (BUDD 2008-09) is now a Researcher at the Future Cities Lab, ETH-Zürich based in Singapore. His interest lies at the nexus of innovative means of participation through design and heterotopian architecture in violent spaces.

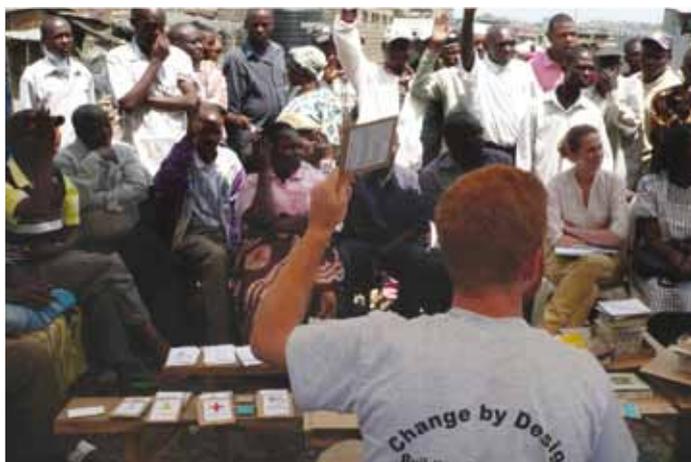
Chris Alford (DAP 2010-11) is now managing the Capacity Building programme at EntreMundos, EntreMundos, an organisational development NGO working in the Western Highlands of Guatemala that has links with over 150 NGOs, community groups and cooperatives in the region. They also publish a bilingual magazine every two months which contains news, information and articles on human rights and development issues in Guatemala.

Paola Palestini (DAP 2009-10) left a fruitful year with UNICEF in Togo to start an internship at Food and Water Watch in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

George Azariah-Moreno (UDP 2002-04) has been working in Venezuela since 2009, first as a community planning officer in Caracas' new Economic Development branch, with a focus on local capacity building in the city's most vulnerable areas; and more recently with APPUI (Apoyo a la Planificación Urbana Participativa, or "Support for Participatory Urban Planning"), a multidisciplinary cooperative made up of architects, anthropologists and musicians who creatively support participatory urban processes, in a context where national legislation aims to strengthen grassroots initiatives.

Please get in touch and let us know what you are up to – send your news to w.hunter@ucl.ac.uk

Training and Advisory Services



Left: Alex Frediani at field discussions in Mashimoni

Change by Design: ASF-UK Action Learning Workshop

In June and July 2011, **Alexandre Apsan Frediani** coordinated a workshop on participatory design in Nairobi together with **Isis Paola Nunez** (BUDD 2007-08), **Matthew French** (UN-Habitat) and **Naomi Shinkins** (ASF-UK Associate). The workshop was developed under the banner of Architecture Sans Frontieres - United Kingdom (ASF-UK), in partnership with the Pamoja Trust, a Kenyan NGO, and the Housing Policy Section of UN-HABITAT with support from the Development Planning Unit of UCL, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the Scarcity and Creativity in the Built Environment Research Project.

The principal focus was an exploration of the opportunities and limitations of integrated community-led participatory design for responsive slum upgrading in Kenya, and the degree to which this community-led approach could not only build an improved physical environment but also recognise the social production of space; empower slum dwellers to be active agents of change; and build socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable communities.

Through investigations in Mashimoni, one village in the Mathare Valley, the workshop findings demonstrate the immense complexity of slum upgrading in Kenya, in particular the tension between individual priorities and needs, and those of the collective. Through analysis at the macro institutional scale, the meso neighbourhood scale, and the micro dwelling scale, the workshop highlighted the benefits of undertaking participatory design at these three scales, concurrently, and linking them

together for residents to make trade-offs. Furthermore, this synchronised analysis facilitated negotiations using the spatial dimensions as a medium to facilitate dialogue, which was successfully done in the final 'portfolio of options' exercise undertaken at the end of the workshop. In total over 65 participants were involved on a daily basis for the duration of the workshop, which included international ASF participants, local participants and residents of Mashimoni.

The methodology and findings of the workshop can be accessed in the report uploaded in the following website: http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/news/change_design

Mainstreaming Gender Equality into Swiss Development Cooperation in the South Caucasus

Since 2011 **Julian Walker** and DPU Associate **Nadia Taher** have been building on the DPU's longstanding collaboration with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC-DEZA) to support gender mainstreaming in the SDC South Caucasus Programme (which covers the SDC country programmes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). This has involved working with the SDC's Gender and Governance Advisor to strengthen the promotion of gender equality in the domains in which the SDC is working in the South Caucasus. A major component of the work has been to bring a clearer gender perspective to the eight Economic Development and Employment (EDE) projects which comprise the bulk of SDC's regional technical cooperation. These projects have been structured using the 'Making Markets Work for the Poor' ('M4P') approach, a livelihoods framework

which is gaining currency with many donors. To date we have found that, while the M4P framework, with its focus on pro-poor transformation of market structures, provides the theoretical space for addressing gender equality issues, its application in practice often treats gender issues, and equality issues more generally, as secondary to economic growth. One of the challenges of this work therefore has been to work with SDC staff and partners to understand how gender relations structure differential access to markets in the region, and to think creatively about how to address gendered market institutions in ways that promote equality.

Protecting Tenure Security through Land Trusts

Prof **Yves Cabannes** has been involved in a Feasibility of Community Land Trusts for Brussels Region that was financed by the Belgian State Secretary for Housing. As a result of the study, the first CLT in mainland Europe should be implemented in the near future, to increase the accessibility of affordable land and housing for those families below the median income level. The scenarios proposed involve different combinations of the market through investors, the Governments and organized users.

Improving Access to Water in Eastern Sudan

In 2010 **Zeremariam Fre** led a team of four Sudanese experts and six enumerators to conduct a survey of 600 poor households in and around Kassala city in Eastern Sudan for the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Government of the Sudan. The preparatory irrigation water and socio-economic survey in Eastern Sudan had two dimensions- namely, improving the water situation for safe drinking water and irrigated agriculture for food security. In both cases the survey focused on improving the water supply situation for poor households. The irrigation water survey involved 300 small farmers (wadi irrigationsystem). An important aspect of this survey was to assess the importance of traditional irrigation systems and their role in enhancing household food security for thousands of small farmers who depend on riverside (wadi) irrigation systems. Two reports were produced and accepted by JICA who are going to fund a multi-million project in the next five years.

Networks and Meetings

DPU Networking on Climate Change

Several DPU staff members are engaged in research activities on climate change and the transition towards low-carbon economies. **Vanesa Castán Broto** has presented a number of papers on the topic including one on “urban infrastructure, low carbon interventions and the political ecology of everyday life” at the Workshop on Low carbon cities, resilience and social justice (University of Birmingham, 17th October 2011); another, with Harriet Bulkeley on “*Living Low Carbon through Housing Experiments*” at a special session on Learning to be low carbon: leveraging change at home and at work at the Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, in September and another, also with Harriet Bulkeley on “*Maintaining Climate Change Experiments: Engaging the Everyday Reconfiguration of Urban Infrastructure*” at a workshop on Everyday Infrastructure and the City, at Durham University, 5th May 2011.

Le-Yin Zhang has been conducting research and consultancy (for several national and international bodies) on climate change and sustainable development since 2003. She participated in the 5th Urban Research Symposium (“*Cities and Climate Change: Responding to an urgent agenda*”), organised by the World Bank, in Marseille, France, in June 2009. As a member of the Policy Instruments study group of the UCL Carbon Governance Project, she investigated how policy regimes affecting wind power and innovation system activities co-evolved in China, Europe and the US. She has recently been invited by ICLEI to contribute to the publication “*The Economy of Green Cities: World Compendium on the Green Urban Economy*”. She also presented a paper in the workshop on “*Global Shanghai*” in Shanghai (March 2011), organised and sponsored by the British Academy and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. The workshop brought together researchers from UK and China to explore the challenges and potential of Shanghai as a global city in the context of China’s rise as an economic powerhouse.

The Role of the State in the Formation of Global/World Cities

Barbara Lipietz, who studied world-city formation in Johannesburg for her PhD, gave a talk at the Centre for Africa, School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London, on “*Participatory governance in African cities*” on 1st March 2012.

Le-Yin Zhang presented a paper (see below in Networks and Meetings) in the workshop on “*Global Shanghai*” in Shanghai (March 2011), organised and sponsored by the British Academy and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. The workshop brought together researchers from UK and China to explore the challenges and potential of Shanghai as a global city in the context of China’s rise as an economic powerhouse.

The City in Urban Poverty

On 10-11 November 2011, policy makers, theorists, and practitioners deliberated on the theme of “*The city in urban poverty*” at the DPU at a workshop funded by UCL Grand Challenges. The workshop sought to unsettle an easy consensus in relation to the spatialities of urban poverty, with contributions revealing the diversity of spatialities, and the need to attend to the spatial politics of urban poverty in formulating progressive policies and practices. Various aspects of the governance of urban poverty were discussed, through mapping, poor people’s tenure status, and gender relations; and how community-led and participatory enumerations are creating alternative urban spatialities for addressing poverty. A key insight was that urban poverty is both multi-dimensional and multi-sited. This has important implications for the moral and ethical undertones that characterise the governance of poverty and serve to separate the ‘deserving’ from the ‘non-deserving’ poor. A multi-dimensional and multi-sited approach disrupts the possibility of identifying a specific point/individual that can be characterised as either ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’ because the causes of poverty can no longer be singular and confined to that point. Instead, a multi-sited view highlights the many different places in cities that people are impoverished often in complex and compounding ways and the different forms of connectivity between these places. The proceedings of the workshop are being worked up into a book.

DPU Staff Networking and Appointments

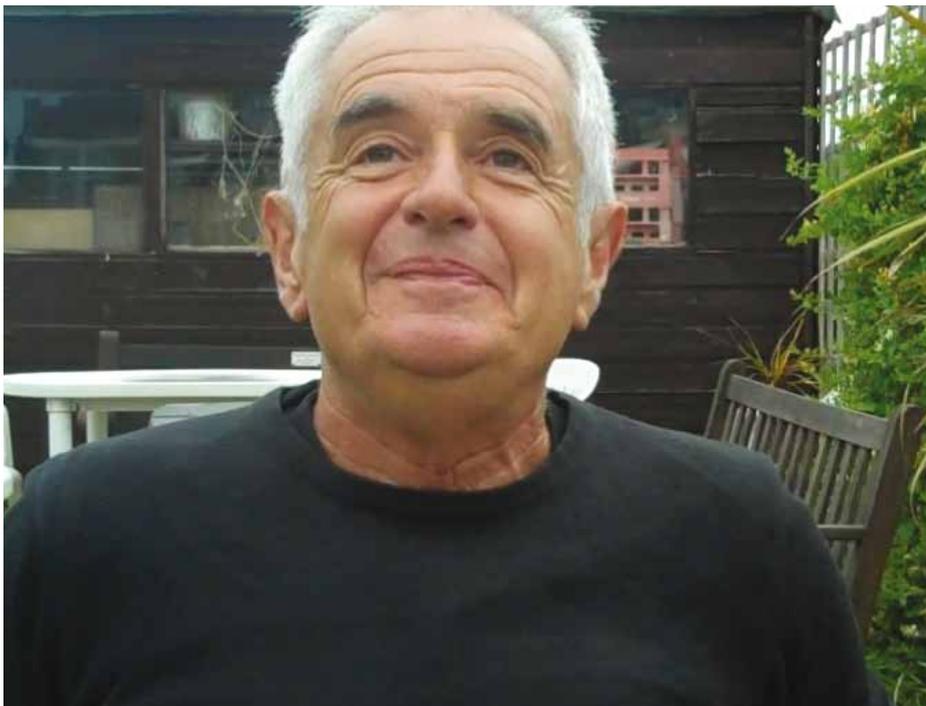
In September 2011, **Julio D. Dávila** gave a keynote speech on ‘*Urban Institutions and Informality: The Context of Architectural Education*’ at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London, a contribution to the RIBA Melvin Debates on Architectural Education. Julio has also been appointed member of the Advisory Board of a three-year MSc “*Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design*” jointly run by Stuttgart University (Germany) and Ain Shams University, Cairo (Egypt). The programme is funded by the German Government and the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education.

Prof Yves Cabannes has received various appointments over the last year including as an Honorary Board Member of the FMDV World Fund for City Development (<http://www.fmdv.net/en/>), a member of the Board of Directors for the Participatory Budgeting Project (USA and Canada) Rockefeller Foundation. He has also received the Bellagio Centre Residency Award.

Yves participated in The Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development (PRCUD) Roundtable Forum in Palembang, South Sumatra, July 24th – 27th on how cities can best implement strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change. One of the key issues discussed was the central role of Governance within the decentralization process taking place in Indonesia.

The international seminar on urban indicators for municipal planning that took place in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, on November 7th and 8th, 2011 not only highlighted the progress made in Brazil in that field, but also explored mechanisms by which civil society is producing its own indicators to monitor the implementation of public policies and make the results available to the citizens. Prof Cabannes introduced a method that has been largely used as multi-actors tools to assess the quality and impact of Participatory Budgeting.

The Argentinean Network on Participatory Budgeting (RAPP) is probably one of the most active in the world, largely supported by the central government and gathering around 50 cities that implement participatory budgeting. Prof Cabannes gave the keynote speech on the expansion of participatory budgeting world wide, primarily in China and Africa at the RAPP meeting from 10-12 November 2011.



Robert Biel's Retirement

By Julio Dávila

Robert Biel retired in September 2011.

Robert has made considerable contribution to DPU's teaching and to the wider theoretical debates on international political economy, systems theory, sustainable development and urban agriculture.

His seminal book *The New Imperialism: Crisis and Contradictions in North/South Relations* originally published in 2000, with a 2007 edition translated into Spanish and Arabic, examined the development of the international political economy through the notion of 'long cycles', arguing that the roots of poverty and resource depletion largely lie in the international economy, and advocating for a serious reconsideration of grass-roots and indigenous practices as a way of averting major ecological disaster. In 2011 he published *The Entropy of Capitalism* which set out to create a novel synthesis between systems theory and political economy. The theme of low-input agriculture was further developed in Robert's teaching and writing, and was embodied in a module which he and Yves Cabannes set up on urban agriculture, perhaps the first of its kind internationally.

Robert was at the DPU for 15 years, having previously taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and Birkbeck College. Robert and I were co-directors of the MSc Development Administration and Planning for many years, and upon his retirement I took over from him as Director of DPU's MPhil/PhD programme. Luckily for us and for

our students, he has continued to provide much valued teaching inputs into the MSc Environment and Sustainable Development.

New Appointments

The DPU are happy to announce the appointment of **David Satterthwaite** as our new Visiting Professor, in recognition of his longstanding work with the DPU and his enormous contribution to the understanding of urban environmental issues. He is also a Senior Fellow with the Human Settlements Group at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and has been a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) since 1998.

Welcome to **Étienne von Bertrab** who has joined the DPU as Lecturer in ESD, leading two new modules on Sustainable Infrastructure and Services, and Urban Water and Sanitation. An engineer and development planner by training, Étienne was a Lecturer in Political Ecology at ITESO University, in Mexico, where he played an active role in several civil society organisations and environmental justice networks. Étienne's research interests relate to notions of risk transfer and development-induced displacement, devoting particular attention to social responses to environmental injustice, the role of solidarity networks and the notion and implications of a 'global civil society'. He now carries out hydric justice research on innovative forms of co-production of water services that can contribute to transformative change for the urban and peri-urban poor.

Congratulations to DPU's **Nkenji Okpara** and **Sharon Cooney** who recently had babies. Welcome to Joseph Okpara-Thomson and Joseph James Urtone. We also welcome **Hema Tank** and **Shabana Ashraf** who are the maternity cover for Nkenji and Sharon respectively. There have been a number of changes in our team of post graduate teaching assistants. Rosa Babourkova has left her post as PGTA for Urban Economic Development to concentrate on her PhD research and has been replaced by recent DAP graduate **Henry Mathes**. Virginia Stephens has left her PGTA post for Development Administration and Planning, also to focus on her PhD and we are currently in the process of recruiting a new PGTA for the programme. In the meantime **Alicia Yon** has been covering the PGTA role for both DAP and SDP. Andrew Wade has left his post as PGTA for the BUDD course and has been replaced by **Anna Schulenburg** (BUDD 2010-11). Matthew Brown has left his administrative post and joined the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) as Secondment.



Top left: Robert Biel
Above right: David Satterthwaite
Below right: Étienne von Bertrab

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DPUNews is published by the Development Planning Unit, UCL.

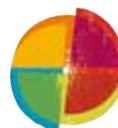
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Editor: Julian Walker
Design: www.wpb.co.uk

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