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**Minding the gaps: transport
equity, accessibility, and wellbeing in
contexts of transition**

By Daniel Oviedo and Julio D. Dávila



Focus On

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The lack of clear separation with motorised vehicles creates hazards for pedestrians in Accra Newtown District, Ghana. Photo credit: Stephen Leonard Mensah.

Curbing private motorisation and reducing transport-related inequalities, while keeping car dependency low, is an urgent challenge faced by cities across the world. International evidence has shown that, as per capita income rises and urban population grows, so does private car use in cities (Teoh et al., 2020). Recent research involving DPU scholars finds that, despite unequal and exclusionary spatial development patterns and transport practices, most cities in sub-Saharan Africa are potentially able to redefine their urban trajectories so they become more inclusive and accessible (Cavoli, 2021; Oviedo et al., 2022). In contexts of increasing economic growth and the localised risks associated with climate change, concerns about rising levels of motorization, growing social and spatial inequalities, and high levels of air and noise pollution ought to be powerful incentives to drive forward an urgent transition to a more sustainable and equitable mobility.

Walking offers an appropriate lens to grasp the contradictions arising from the juncture in which many cities in middle and low-income countries find themselves. It is also at once both an opportunity and a challenge. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the opportunity arises from the fact that cities are, in practice, 'walking cities', as over 50% of all trips are completed on foot. The prevalence of walking has less to do with the urban 'flâneur' aimlessly wandering around the urban fabric, and more to do with the 'captive walker' who has no choice

but to walk to reach their destination. Walking is also a challenge, as poorly lit streets, uneven or non-existent pavements, careless driving and crime pose additional risks. And yet, perhaps because it is mainly the poor who walk, the predominance of walking as a mode of transport has rarely been a priority for politicians.

Earlier urban and transport plans, often dating back to colonial times, locked-in an automobility, technological primacy that today is politically and financially costly to shift. This is compounded by recent rapid processes of unplanned urbanisation marked by rising socioeconomic disparities and the dispersal of informal settlements lacking access to basic infrastructure and reliable transport, where most of the urban poor live (Oviedo and Nieto Combariza, 2021; Dávila, 2023). Conventional criteria for planning transport infrastructure and services underpinned by principles of utility maximisation, combined with the spatial concentration of wealth and power in a few privileged city districts, have contributed to self-reinforcing cycles of hyperconnectivity in city centres and business districts, while bypassing the more peripheral locations of low-income and informal neighbourhoods (Oviedo and Dávila, 2017).

Against a backdrop of secular imbalances in urban transport planning and practices, serious institutional and multi-disciplinary efforts are needed in the search for greater social justice and long-term urban sustainability. The realities and daily experiences of the 'informal majority' and those who are likely to be disadvantaged by virtue of their location in the city, their income, skills, gender, ethnicity or age should be incorporated into long-term plans and daily operations of public transport systems, traffic management schemes and urban design guidelines. A key principle underpinning a renewed approach to transport planning would be to strive for 'equality of opportunity', allowing each actor to decide what is more valuable for them in specific circumstances. This is distinct from the conventional 'equality of outcomes' approach, which assumes that certain activities (e.g. a salaried job, shopping) are intrinsically more valuable than others (e.g. visiting a sick relative, community work), an approach normally used to justify large transport infrastructure investments benefitting some sectors of the population, such as private car drivers or male salaried workers over, for example, pedestrians or women who predominantly work from home (Schwanen, 2022; Dávila & Amoako-Sakyi, 2022).

From mobility to accessibility: a shift in focus

The transition to new paradigms of urban mobility requires a more subtle and profound understanding of current behaviours, expectations, and the socially imposed limitations of a diverse population. Without leaving aside local and regional nuances, such behaviours can be framed in terms of accessibility in its four core, interrelated components: land-use structure; individual and collective characteristics; time; and transport and communications infrastructure and services (Oviedo et al., 2022). Accessibility can be defined as “the ease of reaching desired destinations given a number of available opportunities and intrinsic impedance to the resources used to travel from the origin to the destination” (Bocarejo and Oviedo, 2012, p. 143). However, it is important to differentiate accessibility from access. The latter refers to realising a potential through diverse means such as travel, home deliveries, or via digital means such as the Internet. Accessibility is considered ‘sustainable’ when it takes place within the ecological carrying capacity of supporting urban systems.

Despite unequal and exclusionary spatial development patterns and transport practices, most cities in sub-Saharan Africa are potentially able to redefine their urban trajectories so they become more inclusive and accessible.

Unlike formal public transport, workers can carry large parcels on ‘bicitaxis’, an informal mode of transport in Soledad, Colombia. Photo credit: Julio D. Dávila.



Innovations from the top and the bottom

Local authorities can help mitigate some of the more deleterious outcomes of rapid unplanned urbanisation through local policies guided by equity principles. One important step is to recognise the benefits of ‘multi-modality’, the diversity of means by which people travel in the city, from walking to high-speed trains. Instead of one-size-fits all solutions, diverse transport modes can suit a wide range of urban features, socio-economic realities, population densities, locations and topography. To be effective in helping reduce inequalities, transport systems must be adapted to local conditions, as the case of Medellín’s Metrocables has amply shown (Dávila, 2021). Medellín (Colombia’s second largest city) boasts five aerial cable-car lines in peripheral neighbourhoods that started life as informal settlements. All are integrated with the mass transit system through various public transport modes such as the overground, the bus rapid transit system (BRT) and its feeder routes, and a tramway. In densely and haphazardly built areas, the small footprint of aerial cable-cars avoids the large land expropriations and demolitions that would be needed to make space for a road or railway line. This not only saves time and money, but also leads to smaller carbon footprints. Preserving the existing urban form and avoiding evictions or relocations is key to helping safeguard the social fabric of the community.

Despite the visibility and prestige of metro systems, BRTs and aerial cable-cars, the state typically supplies a small share of public transport, especially in low-income countries. Much less glamorous, low-tech, ‘informal’ transport can account for up to about 90 per cent of transport supply in Sub-Saharan African cities and represents an important source of jobs. For example, an estimated 15,000-20,000 people run Nairobi’s matatu (minibus) system, while Mumbai is served by 150,000 rickshaws. These services are essential for low- and middle-income users, as in the case of Dhaka where they offer close to eight million trips per day and are extensively used by women (Hasan & Dávila, 2018). And yet such services are often ignored, discouraged and even banned by local authorities, who often see them as a nuisance. Although they can be polluting and occasionally unsafe, they offer greater accessibility, flexibility and adaptability for the diverse needs and financial realities of their users than most formal transport systems. Outright bans might be popular with some middle-class voters but can be very harmful not only to their users but to the thousands of families for whom this is a main source of income.

Our research in the UCL-Osaka University Walking Cities Lab (WCL, 2022) points at the ingenuity and adaptability of communities across informal neighbourhoods in Sub-Saharan African cities in adapting to unwalkable environments. The community of Moyiba in Freetown, Sierra Leone, have created facilities

for accessibility such as bridges, pathways and staircases that can be three or four times the length of officially recorded formal infrastructure. Similarly, the communities address issues of security and safety through interventions that reduce the risks associated with drainages, blockages and other hazards linked with the walkable environments, and also those linked with fear of crime and insecurity, through co-produced infrastructure and self-organisation.

Accessibility and digital connectivity

In many parts of the world the restrictions arising from the Covid-19 pandemic drastically reduced our ability to interact face-to-face with others. It showed that regular contact with others is central to human wellbeing, as well as to the welfare and prosperity of cities and urban regions. It also suggested that connectivity should not be understood merely as a physical process involving the movement of people over space. It can also involve interactions mediated by a telephone or an electronic device such as a smartphone or personal computer. Today, digital interactions are good substitutes for physical ones and indeed can often be rewarding, saving energy, time, money, and carbon emissions. Apart from enabling direct person-to-person or business-to-business communication, they can significantly contribute to making information, education and health services, political representation, and commercial

transactions faster and more targeted for a much larger proportion of the population than older technologies. By making these available to individuals, businesses and organisations that would otherwise find physical travel inconvenient, expensive or time consuming, digital connectivity can significantly contribute to reduce inequalities.

The concept of accessibility mentioned earlier can help measure the extent to which people are able to access a range of opportunities. As discussed in recent DPU work (Dávila and Amoako-Sakyi, 2022), the success of a digital technology can be gauged in terms of how effective it is in securing such opportunities. However, as with transport, insofar as there are differences in the way people gain access to, and effectively make use of, digital technologies, not all policy decisions are likely to benefit everyone equally. During the government-imposed pandemic lockdowns, digital technology made it possible for only a relatively small proportion of the labour force to continue working almost uninterrupted, while a vast number of manual workers and children of families with no access to the internet were completely cut off from income-earning and education opportunities. Despite their rapidly increasing availability and undoubted attractiveness for most people, however, digital technologies have the potential to exclude some members of society by virtue of their lack of skills, financial resources or inadequate basic underlying infrastructure.

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On the way to school: New challenges, priorities, and methods

The DPU was recently awarded funding (administered by the UK's Medical Research Council) for a three-year implementation research project examining active mobility among secondary-school adolescents, aged 11 to 16 years. This seeks to measure the extent to which young people find walking and cycling to school acceptable, while measuring their effect on promoting healthier lifestyles and improving mental wellbeing. Led by Daniel Oviedo as principal investigator, with Julio D. Dávila as one of the co-investigators, the project will adopt a life course approach to implementation research underpinned by principles of diversity, inclusive stakeholder participation, and health equity.

The project involves researchers based in four countries and focuses on two contrasting case studies, Maputo in Mozambique and Bogotá in Colombia, to shed light on the complexities and opportunities of the implementation, adaptation, and scalability of active mobility interventions, and the applicability of such interventions in different social, cultural, economic, and governance contexts. It will, firstly, evaluate two recent novel interventions



'Bicicarros' are an important mode of transport for low-income residents in the municipality of Soledad, Colombia. Photo credit: Julio D. Dávila.

designed and run by Bogotá's city authority in low-income areas: Al Colegio en Bici (promoting cycling to school) and Ciempiés Caminos Seguros (promoting walking to school). Secondly, drawing on innovative citizen science methods, the team will assess the impact of cycling and walking interventions on physical activity and mental wellbeing outcomes.

Thirdly, we will implement a similar active mobility intervention among adolescents in low-income communities in Maputo where, although a large share of children and adolescents walk to school, there are no explicit policies or programmes to support such practices. Fourthly, building on a range of research and implementation partnerships, the project will seek to establish equitable collaborations across sectors for capacity building and facilitating an international dialogue and knowledge exchange around implementation research, policy adaptation and effectiveness, and the reduction of non-communicable disease risks through the promotion of physical activity and mental wellbeing through active mobility interventions.

Why focus on secondary-school adolescents?

Research shows that adolescence is a critical period of psychological, biological, and social development marked by adjustment and skill acquisition; a period when young people develop independent relationships, adopt habits, and assume responsibilities (Christie and Viner, 2005; Erikson, 1968; Patel et al., 2007). A sense of identity and autonomy are key mental health aspects that flourish during this life period (Erikson, 1968). Adolescence is also a critical point for the diagnosis and mitigation of non-communicable disease risk factors such as cardiovascular risk, as well as mental health difficulties and disorders (Burns, Durkin and Nicholas, 2009).

Evidence shows that adolescents who are physically active have higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and depression. Various bio-psychosocial influences contribute to this relationship, including changes to brain function, opportunities for social interaction, and development of competence and self-efficacy. Similarly, active mobility among adolescents contributes to higher levels of physical activity and better cardiovascular fitness. Although less substantial, some studies shed light on the way this influences adolescents' cognitive development and psychological health through playing a role in increased emotional self-confidence, and the development of independence and emotional bonds with their environment.

Evidence also shows that physical activity rates decline through adolescence. As such, interventions that promote healthy lifestyle practices and mental wellbeing at this important life stage can be critical for public health. This has become especially acute in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the effects on health and mental wellbeing are only beginning to be understood (Loades et al., 2020; Rider et al., 2021).

Why a transdisciplinary and intersectional approach to health equity?

Physical activity and mental wellbeing are at the centre of global development agendas, embodied in, for example, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a core developmental aim and a global public health concern, reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases requires approaches from disciplines beyond the medical sciences. We believe that, within the right multi-disciplinary framework, social science and built environment professionals like us can make a substantial contribution to public health aims.

In contemporary cities, the type of structural factors highlighted above, such as income disparities, inadequate infrastructure provision, and diverse social identities, influence health impacts across the life course (Bödeker, 2018; Lucumí et al., 2015). These factors also influence rates of active mobility among adolescents.

While lower-income children and adolescents tend to have higher rates of active mobility than their richer counterparts, they also face higher risks due to the absence of pedestrian access routes, smooth pavements, street crossings, and traffic control devices. Advancing a transdisciplinary understanding of health impacts and equity with a focus on critical life stages can help refine targets and improve delivery mechanisms for interventions.

This proposal builds on ample experience and a variety of insights that we have gained as DPU scholars over the past decade or so, from engaging with our students, involvement in research and consultancy, and from learning from our colleagues both in academia and outside of it. It draws on the strengths of a highly multi-disciplinary university like UCL, with a world-class track record of scholarship and collaboration in key subjects such as cities, medical sciences and public health. It also builds on the significant vantage point offered by our location in London, a highly cosmopolitan city which offers an unrivalled overview of all continents. And finally, it builds on DPU's long-standing commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability, not only in the research we do, but also in our post-graduate teaching programmes and our engagement with professionals, activists, scholars, and government officials on the ground.

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Ronaldo Ramirez

1934-2022

By Patrick Wakely,
Professor Emeritus of
Urban Development
(Former DPU Director).

Ronaldo Ramirez, Senior Lecturer at the DPU for 32 years (1974-2006), passed away peacefully in Sheffield (UK) on 17 December 2022 at the age of 88.

He was born and raised in Chile, where he studied architecture and urban planning. As a student he was an active member of the Chilean Communist Party (CP). In the late 1950s he led a Chilean delegation to a CP International Youth conference in the People's Republic of China, and visited North Korea, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union. After graduating from the University of Chile he established an architectural practice in Santiago that worked mainly on the design of social housing, within the framework of a progressive national housing policy.



Members of DPU staff in 1976 with (left to right): Babar Mumtaz, Nigel Harris, Colin Rosser (DPU Director at the time), Michael Safier, Ronaldo Ramirez, Jaya Appalaraju, John Lloyd and Otto Koenigsberger (DPU's founder and first Director). Photo credit: unknown.

In the early 1970s he enrolled in the Centre for Urban Studies at UCL, directed by the eminent urban sociologist Professor Ruth Glass, from which he qualified with a post-graduate diploma in Development Studies. On his return to Chile, he was appointed Professor at the University of Chile.

Following the military coup d'état in 1973 that established the Military Junta dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, there was no way in which Ronaldo, as a CP member, could remain in Chile safely. So, with help from close friends in London, he and his family left Chile and came to the UK.

In 1974 he was appointed a Lecturer at the DPU to teach, and then later direct, the post-graduate diploma course in Urban Development Planning (then the only nine-month course offered by the DPU). In the late 1970s, he and Louis Wassenhoven – another lecturer in the Unit – designed a curriculum and teaching and examination schedule for an MSc programme in 'Urban Development Planning' (UDP), embracing a series of specialist options (e.g. 'Housing', 'Urban Economic Development', etc.); the approval of which Ronaldo negotiated with the Academic Board of the University of London (UCL did not have postgraduate degree-awarding powers then). In 1992, he re-designed

the 'Housing' option of the UDP course as a separate MSc programme in 'International Housing Studies', secured its academic approval, and then directed this until his retirement.

Ronaldo was not only a creative researcher, an engaging teacher, and a popular research degree supervisor; he was also a significant political thinker.



DPU staff members Ronaldo Ramirez (with a pipe) and Michael Mattingly (standing), running a training workshop for the Amman Urban Regional Planning group in Amman, Jordan, in 1978. Photo credit: unknown.

In collaboration with Jorge Fiori and Liz Riley, amongst others, Ronaldo also secured grant funding for major research projects, notably 'Self-help housing provision in Latin America: The case of Venezuela' (1983-89); 'Urban poverty alleviation through environmental upgrading in Rio de Janeiro's Favela Bairro Programme'; and 'Factors for successful community initiatives at the barrio level: The case of Cuba' (2002-04). He was also commissioned to undertake studies for the United Nations' UN-HABITAT and other international aid agencies in Africa and Asia.

Ronaldo was not only a creative researcher, an engaging teacher, and a popular research degree supervisor; he was also a significant political thinker. He introduced the important work of the 1970s Latin American left to the DPU, highlighting its relevance to urban development planning and housing, beyond the dominant African and Asian influences at the time. In the early 1980s, Ronaldo ran an evening reading group on Marx's 'Capital' as an extra-curricular activity.

Ronaldo was welcomed as DPU staff thanks to the enlightened policies of

the UK Labour Government of the early 1970s; notably Judith Hart, Minister of Overseas Development, who gave the green light for Chilean exiles to enter the UK after the 1973 military coup. Ronaldo's intellect and personality were a powerful attraction for many Chileans and other Latin Americans who chose to study at the DPU thereafter.

Ronaldo devoted his professional life in the UK to the DPU, with strong support from his wife, Ruth Weil, their daughter, Paulina, and son, Matías; both economists with flourishing academic careers in British universities, of which Ronaldo was very proud.



DPU seminar on housing in Latin America sponsored by a British Council Link Award in 1991, including (from left to right) Ronaldo Ramirez, Fernando Negret (Universidad Nacional de Colombia), Jorge Fiori (chairing), María Bertrand (Universidad de Chile) and Alan Gilbert (UCL Geography). Photo credit: Julio D Dávila



Top image: Ronaldo was a charming, witty, and very supportive teacher and colleague. Photo credit: unknown.

Right image: From left to right: Julio D Dávila, Caren Levy and Ronaldo Ramirez in a relaxed mood in the mid-1990s. Photo credit: unknown.



His charm, wit and good humour will be badly missed by his many friends, colleagues and former students.

Head On

Alexandra Panman has been awarded an **Insight Development Grant** from the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to work with Liam Kelly (Assistant Professor in Economics, UNBC) on a two-year project called “Understanding the Role of Collective Property in Sustainable Urban Economic Development: Evidence from First Nations Reserves in Canada.”

Alexandra Panman and Colin Marx have been awarded **Global Engagement Funds** from UCL to work with Robynne Hansmann (Durban University of Technology) on a project called “Customary tenure and sustainable urban development: insight from Igonyama Trust Board lands in Durban, South Africa”.

Haim Yacobi and Azadeh Mashayekhi received funding from UCL’s **Global Engagement Cities Partnership Programme** in collaboration with Eric Verdeil and Helene Thiollet from SciencesPo Paris. Their research project and seminar series will offer critical and interdisciplinary debate on how religious actors and institutions are shaping the urban and spatial politics of cities in the Middle East.

Catalina Ortiz and Supitcha Tovivich (DPU alumna and Assistant Professor at Silpakorn University) won a grant on Connections Through Culture offered by the **British Council in Thailand**. Their project is entitled “A Tale of Two Flower Markets: Bangkok-London” and was part of the Bangkok Design Week exhibitions.

Liza Griffin and Gemma Moore received an award from UCL’S **Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund** to develop a network called “Partnerships for Healthy Parks”. Their project will bring together green space infrastructure organisations, health and social care institutions, and academic researchers to explore opportunities for cross-sector working and learning on health inequalities linked to green spaces.

Julio D Davila’s two-year term as a member of the **Advisory Committee of BiodiverCities to 2030**, sponsored by Colombia’s Environment Ministry and run by the highly respected Humboldt Institute came to an end in 2022. This comprised a multi-disciplinary group of researchers exploring pathways to ecological diversity in Colombian cities.

Liza Griffin co-authored **Supporting People with Dementia: A Guide for Community Gardens** with Jack Ashton, Moise Roche, Sebastian Crutch, Claire Waddington, Claudia Cooper, and Kay Pallaris. The guide, funded by UCL’s Grand Challenges and the DPU, provides community gardens with the information and sources of support they need to make their spaces and facilities more welcoming for people living with dementia. It is intended to help people enjoy and access community gardens with confidence, agency and dignity. The guide has been used to inform the design of a garden being exhibited at this year’s Royal Horticultural Society’s Chelsea Flower Show in July. Their Rare Space Garden designed by Charlie Hawkes and funded by the National Brain Appeal, is intended to provide respite for people living with rare forms of dementia.

The DPU SummerLab programme has recently launched a Special Research Fellowship series, providing opportunities for a series of researchers to work in the field for extended periods.

The **DPU SummerLab** programme has recently launched a Special Research Fellowship series, providing opportunities for a series of researchers to work in the field for extended periods, with the support of local partners to whom DPU is profoundly grateful. **Colombia:** In Cali, Naiara Yumiko (MSc BUDD alumna) supported the activities of the Gridding Equitable Urban Futures in Areas of Transition (GREAT) research project, with the supervision of staff from Universidad del Valle and Catalina Ortiz. Naiara has contributed to an interactive mapping of intersectional identities, producing highly visual maps and graphic elaborations. She has also supported the production of policy briefs within the overall framework of GREAT PublicLabs’ activities. **Brazil:** In São Paulo and in Campinas, Lourenço Queiroz Capriglione (MSc ESD alumna) worked with the research group on Sanitation of the Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo (FESPSP). Lourenço, supervised by FESPSP’s staff and Pascale Hofmann, has contributed to mapping linkages between sanitation and the sustainable development goals, raising the importance of sanitation and promoting integrated approaches and benefits through fieldwork and dialogue with local stakeholders. **Somaliland:** In Zeila the DPU is partnering with the Redsea Cultural Foundation (RCF) and is supporting two local researchers (Abdalgani Aid Almi and Abdifatah Mohamed Abdi) to map physical artefacts of relevance to the socio-cultural and spatial development of the coastal town, along with producing some oral histories. In Berbera, RCF will support Laia Garcia Fernandez, who will research a series of construction techniques in Berbera’s historical districts and wider surroundings, supporting their conservation and dissemination. The fellowships in Somaliland are supervised by RCF staff, Amina-Bahja Ekman and Giorgio Talocci.



OVERDUE Team hand in hand with TNUSSP in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Photo credit: unknown.

Between 9 and 18 February **OVERDUE**, a research-action network tackling the sanitation taboo across urban Africa, embarked on a knowledge exchange in the Tamil Nadu State of India. Hosted by the Tamil Nadu Urban Sanitation Support Programme (TNUSSP) led by Kavita Wankhade at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), OVERDUE partners from seven African cities explored gender inclusive social mechanisms and technological options along the full sanitation chain, supporting livelihoods and occupational health for sanitation workers.

Led by Adriana Allen, OVERDUE brings together research institutions, NGOs and consultants focusing on and working with the cities of Beira (Mozambique), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Mwanza (Tanzania), Antananarivo (Madagascar), Saint Louis (Senegal), Abidjan (Ivory Coast), and Bukavu (DRC). Since its inception seven years ago, this programme has made significant progress not only in bringing the voices, experiences and aspirations of sanitation workers to the fore, but also in instituting tangible changes in the sanitation technologies and infrastructures that are now fully absorbed as part of the regional government's toolkit. Thus, the knowledge exchange was rich both in field visits to Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs), community toilets, and in interactions with Self Help Groups (SHGs) on the ground; and also in cross-city and cross-continent discussions between OVERDUE partners and the TNUSSP team. Tamil Nadu offered OVERDUE a chance to study the complete chain of sanitation as shared by the Hindu Newspaper on 10 February. After seven days in the field, the knowledge exchange culminated in a panel discussion titled "Just Sanitation for all: Insights from Indian and African Cities" held in Chennai on 16 February (catch up with the recording here). The panel

spoke to two questions at the core of our work and experience in India. First "What does it take to make technology work for the urban poor across the sanitation chain?" and second "How could community action and government action converge towards inclusive sanitation?" The event drew a local crowd that engaged with five OVERDUE panellists. The discussion is reflected in articles published by DT Next and the Chennai Express. The journey across Tamil Nadu was rich and diverse, and a series of reflections are being gathered across the cities that will be shared in the form of four short blogs to be published on our website in the coming weeks. Armed with these insights and experiences, we are now entering into the final year of OVERDUE and our aim is to advance just sanitation by counter-acting the multiple blind spots identified so far through our research. We will focus on regional capacity building and regional advocacy, culminating in September 2023 with a Charter on African Cities for Just Sanitation, seeking to reframe the sanitation talks across UN High Level Political Forum and SDG Summit (September 2023). To learn more about OVERDUE please visit their website and subscribe to get in the loop!

Research

DPU colleagues Barbara Lipietz, Alesio Kolioulis and Tim Wickson have been awarded a **Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Actions fund** worth €3 million as part of an international consortium led by Agnès Deboulet from Université Paris 8/ CNRS. The project “FairVille” (Facing Inequalities and Democratic Challenges through Co-production in Cities) aims to address embedded urban inequalities and the challenge they pose to democracy in large cities and urban regions. [More information is available here.](#)

Daniel Oviedo received a £1.2 million grant from the **Global Alliance of Non-Communicable Diseases** for a three-year implementation research project called “On the way to and from school (OWS): active mobility interventions for the promotion of physical activity and mental wellbeing in adolescents in Bogotá, Colombia and Maputo, Mozambique”. The project will focus on the acceptability and impact of active mobility to and from school interventions (AMTS) intended to promote healthy lifestyle practices and mental wellbeing among secondary-school adolescents, aged 11 to 16 years. The project is set up as a partnership between the DPU, the Anna Freud Centre for children’s mental health, Newcastle University, Oxford University, Universidad de los Andes in Bogota, The Observatorio de Movilidad Urbana in Maputo, Universidad Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique Architects Without Borders, Stanford University, and the Transport authorities of Bogota and Metropolitan Maputo. It will be centred around healthy lifestyle practices such as regular cycling and walking to and from school as a means of reducing the risks of non-communicable diseases (NCD) among children. The research focuses on the analysis of contrasting case studies in different global regions (in Latin America and Africa) to shed light on opportunities and challenges of the implementation, adaptation, and scalability of active mobility interven-

tions. This research aims to elaborate the ways in which those different interventions can be implemented in diverse social, cultural, economic, and governance contexts worldwide. The project focuses on two contrasting case studies in different regions (Maputo, Mozambique and Bogotá, Colombia), to shed light on the complexities and opportunities of the implementation, adaptation, and scalability of AMTS, and the applicability of such interventions in different social, cultural, economic, and governance contexts. Professor Julio D Davila will be a co-investigator on this project.

The Walking Cities Lab (WCL) is an international platform for innovative approaches to studying walking cities that are not walkable. It was established through the DPU – Osaka University partnership in 2019. Thanks to continued funding from the Osaka University Global Knowledge Partnership Grant (GKP), UCL-Osaka University strategic partners fund, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, the WCL has developed research in Freetown, Accra and Maputo. In collaboration with local partners – Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre and Architects Without Frontiers in Mozambique – the lab has been consolidating a methodology for understanding street-based neighbourhood improvements from the intersectional perspective of pedestrians. The group’s research is focused on how low-in-

Motorised Three Wheelers in Puerto Limon Costa Rica. Photo credit: San Gil, 2023.



come urban inhabitants experience, build and give meaning to their walking environment; transforming existing routes, opening new ones, modifying roads and creating public spaces. This year, the WCL was awarded a 500,000 SEK (£45,000) grant from the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations new Walking Program. The project titled “Transforming the Unwalkable City” will advance existing knowledge and methods about non-state interventions in the walking environment and the everyday experience of pedestrians. This will build on previous research developed by the WCL and will reinforce collaboration amongst academics, practitioners and advocates across three sub-Saharan African cities, as well as a wider community of practice and research. Three new institutions will join the WCL as it welcomes Jim Walker (founder and director of Walk21), while Louis Kusi Frimpong (University of Environment and Sustainable Development) and Regina Obilie Amoako-Sakyi (University of Cape Coast) take over a shared lead of the research in Ghana.

“Crafting Knowledge of Sustainable Urban Economic Development” aims to shed new light on alternative pathways for sustainable urban economic development through arts-based engagement.

In partnership with the Global Alliance for Informal Transport in Costa Rica and Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, Colombia, Daniel Oviedo is leading a project on “Data for Sustainable Mobility” to evaluate the potential of motorised three-wheelers (commonly known as auto-rickshaws or tuk-tuks) as a socially and environmentally just public transport option in Soledad, Colombia and Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica. The project is funded by **CAF** (the Development Bank of Latin America). It applies low-cost methodologies in its two case studies to ensure replicability in other Latin American and Caribbean cities. Through low-cost sensors, CO2 emissions models, mobility surveys, Google maps and social media, the research identifies the configuration and function of motorised three-wheelers. Initial findings show that this mode of transport has become the third main mode of travel in Puerto Viejo and Soledad, with women being the majority users in both cases. Against this backdrop, it is possible to infer that motorised three-wheelers are addressing mobility needs previously unmet by the existing mobility options in both contexts. With the average PM2.5 measures below the maximum established by the WHO, in Puerto Viejo these transport services have the potential to become a mobility option with a low environmental impact. In terms of livelihoods, the research shows that motorised three-wheelers have become an important job alternative for locals, and also for migrant populations who might not have access to many other work opportunities in both cases. Mariajosé Nieto is a co-investigator in the project, leading the research on Soledad.

Paroj Banerjee is leading a project in collaboration with partners from India and the University of Sydney called “The Impact of Smart City Visions on the Most Vulnerable in Mumbai”. The project aims to generate new knowledge on the ways in which the adoption of technology has impacted some of the most vulnerable urban communities, such as the houseless. It responds to the call of urban governments that has reinforced smart city development with a focus on COVtech following the pandemic. The project focuses on Mumbai and adopts mixed qualitative methods involving ethnographic observations, interviews with stakeholders such as government officials, members of NGOs, activists, academics, planners and civil society. In examining the impact of technology, the project unravels equity concerns for vulnerable groups. The project also critically examines the meanings of technology and the broader social infrastructure that enables its use. The project is funded by the International **SDG Collaboration Programme** at the University of Sydney where Associate Professor Tooran Alizadeh is the principal investigator.

Alexandra Panman has been awarded a **Bartlett Research Grant** for work with Leah Lovett (CASA) titled “Crafting Knowledge of Sustainable Urban Economic Development”. The project aims to shed new light on alternative pathways for sustainable urban economic development through arts-based engagement with evolving land use decisions in collective property regimes under pressure of urbanisation. The methodology will centre on collaboration and knowledge exchanges with indigenous artists in Canada to develop markers for spatial stories. It will combine web-based augmented reality and time-based media with traditional techniques such as weaving.

Connections

Updates from Alumni

In January 2023, Antoine Kallab (● **MSc UED** 2019) returned to the American University of Beirut as the Associate Director of the university's Nature Conservation Center and as Instructor of Practice. His main responsibilities are to oversee investments and fundraising efforts, while also contributing to strategies to promote the Center's vision. He is also in charge of educational outreach, partnerships, and internal capacity building.

Francesco Mellino (● **MSc UED** 2014) became Senior Ecological and Wellbeing Economist at C40 Cities, a climate leadership organisation. His work focuses on the transformational change needed to limit global heating to 1.5°C, and create resilient, equitable cities. He is the Guest Editor for the forthcoming Special Issue on Ecological Economics for the Journal of City Climate Policy and Economy.

Connor Muesen (● **MSc ESD** 2019) recently joined C40 Cities as an Inclusive Climate Action (ICA) Project Officer. In this position, Connor supports a European-wide programme that is addressing energy poverty through various policies. Connor's role involves undertaking desk-based research, working alongside city officials to implement policy, organising peer-to-peer knowledge sharing forums between cities, as well as developing outcome reports to highlight key impacts. He also works with colleagues based in Bengaluru, India, on a project that is facilitating dialogue and collaboration between informal waste workers and the city government.

Adlah Alkurdi (● **MSc DAP** 2012) joined the UK's FCDO office in Qatar in January 2023 as Project Coordinator for the Gulf Strategy Fund.

Aji Fatou Gaye (● **MSc DAP** 2019) has taken on the role of Education Specialist Communicating for Meaning at UN Women, where she had previously worked as HQ Security Specialist. Aji was the founder and remains chair of the organisation Forward for You, an NGO fostering sustainable human development in The Gambia.

Starting September 2022, Mario Flores Ruiz (● **MSc DAP** 2019) is serving as Deputy Director for Business Development in LATAM and Asia, at Food for the Hungry, Inc.

Adriana Salazar Ruiz (● **MSc DAP** 2018) is on the Steering Committee of the UNEP-led Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction. Together with her team at GIZ she is supporting the Powering Climate Protection programme at The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) to create and maintain multistakeholder platforms that bring the global energy transition forward.

Claudia Wong (● **MSc DAP** 2022) has joined the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as a Country Programme Officer for Colombia and Paraguay. In that role, she manages both countries' project portfolios and works on rural development strategies from a bottom-up perspective.

As part of the KNOW-team in Lima, Luciana Gallardo Jara and Belén Marie Desmaison (● **MSc BUDD** 2015) were selected to showcase their project "Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality" at the XVI Spanish Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism (BIAU). Recently, they also won a prize at the Vida Urbana Competition for their project 'Corredor económico Cultural Jirón Ancash'.

Melissa García Lamarca (● **MSc BUDD** 2010) was recently awarded the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellowship, affiliated with the Beyond Inhabitation Lab at the Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST), Polytechnic of Turin, and is working on the CLIMATEJUSTHOME project.

Salma Nassar (● **MSc BUDD** 2018) and Nada Elfeituri (2019) have participated in the Urban Design Otherwise Conversations hosted by Camillo Boano. Salma is currently working as the Urban Development Programme Associate at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat) in Egypt. Nada is a Senior Design Researcher at All in Agency.

Shoko Sakuma (● **MSc BUDD** 2018), Natalie Cho (2022) and Dina Mneimneh (2021) were selected to be part of the Public Practice cohort working across Local Governments in London under the Public Practice Placement Scheme.

Ritwika Deb (● **MSc SDP** 2021) relocated to UN City, Copenhagen after working in the UNDP Regional Service Centre, Istanbul. As a Knowledge Management Specialist with UNDP's Bureau of Policy and Programme Support, she aids the HIV and Health Group's Global Fund Partnership team to strengthen country preparedness and technical capacity to respond to HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

María Clara Arrubla Palacio (● **MSc UDP** 2022) joined the internationalisation team of the Government of Antioquia, Colombia. There, she is contributing towards the region's development and the strengthening of its international connections. In a separate role, Maria Clara is also part of the team leading the sixth case study of the "Inclusive Infrastructure" research project of UCL's Global Disability Innovation Hub, taking part in Medellín, her home city.

César Barrientos (● **MSc UDP** 2022) recently became a director for the southern regions of Chile at the NGO Huella Local. Through the articulation of the public and private sectors, he is supporting local governments in developing infrastructure projects that seek to improve the quality of life of the communities that inhabit the most isolated territories of Chile.

Fajri Mahmuda (● **MSc UDP** 2022) joined the ASEAN Secretariat as a Transport Officer in Jakarta, Indonesia. Fajri is responsible for facilitating and coordinating collaboration between the 10 ASEAN Member States as well as the Dialogue Partners, in order to enable the implementation of land transport (including railways and highways) and cross-border facilitation initiatives, projects, and studies across the ASEAN Region.

PhD News

In September 2022, **Blanca Larrain** successfully defended her thesis on how the political practices of contemporary feminist movements in Chile are re-configuring citizenship.

In November 2022, **Vanessa Galeano - Duque** successfully defended her doctoral thesis, "Delivering the 'miracle': levelling-up low-income neighbourhoods through local infrastructure and jobs activation. Medellin, Colombia, 2000-2018".

In January 2023, **Hannah Sender** successfully defended her thesis "Extending displacement: Young residents' experiences of living in expectation of ongoing place-based rupture in Central Beqaa, Lebanon".

Hands on

Haim Yacobi together with workshop participants from the High Atlas Foundation, Marrakech. Photo credit: unknown.



The DPU has expressed its condolences and solidarity with the people of Kurdistan, Syria and Turkey. It has called on its networks to donate and organise events to assist recovery from this tragic event. [Access the full Statement of Solidarity here.](#)

In November 2022, Haim Yacobi conducted a one-day workshop on “how urban health should be integrated in development projects”. The workshop participants from the **High Atlas Foundation**, a Marrakech based NGO, shared their current work experience as a platform for developing an urban health intervention strategy.

In November 2022, Daniel Oviedo and his team organised the **second workshop on transport-related social exclusion and the future of micromobility**. Bringing together private and public stakeholders, the discussion brought up the necessity of micromobility improvements in terms of safety, legislation, and urban infrastructure. The project is rapidly gaining popularity with key urban actors interested in primary data gathered by the IME team.

In October 2022, Rita Lambert attended workshops in Lima, Peru, to better understand community energy practices and resilience, and draw lessons for better policy and planning, as part of the project **Grounded Energy Modelling for Equitable Urban Development in the Global South** (GEMDev). The workshops included visits to various settlements where the research team appreciated the community strategies adopted to reduce energy poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic, in the face of disruptions to energy supply chains, energy price volatility, increased household energy demand due to country-wide lockdowns, and lower disposable incomes. The workshops explored the feasibility of community energy hubs in various settlements that will be implemented by local NGOs, **CENCA** and **CIDAP**.

The IME team organised the second workshop on transport-related social exclusion and the future of micromobility.



Visit to one of the oldest auto-constructed settlements in Lima, El Agustino, to discuss energy and housing challenges as part of GEMDev project. Photo credit: Rita Lambert.



As part of the GEMDev project, Rita Lambert featured in an [interview on dignified housing and energy in Lima](#), Peru, first published by the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru in October 2022.

Later in November 2022, Rita Lambert, together with researchers from UCL, PUCP, CEPT and Foro Ciudades para La Vida, met for a workshop and site visits in Ahmedabad, facilitated by CEPT University and Mahila Housing Trust, also as part of the GEMDev project. Focusing on the nexus of energy and housing, the purpose was to better understand the **housing trajectories of poor urban dwellers** and the challenges related to energy access, thermal comfort and wellbeing. In a city of 5.6 million inhabitants, which experiences extreme temperatures of up to 45°C, acute health concerns for those living in poor-quality accommodation and thermal comfort are key priorities for residents. The shift in morphology from sprawling low-rise settlements to purpose-built apartment blocks in Ahmedabad, have meant changes in the use of space and energy practices.

In partnership with [CatalyticAction](#), Andrea Rigon is conducting a participatory analysis of **co-designed public spaces in Beirut post-blast reconstruction**. The project funded by MENASP, UKRI is building a database of all public space projects. It will conclude with a one-week art installation and participatory workshop discussing the reconstruction of public spaces after disasters, including their impact and importance, the challenges of involving local communities, as well as coordination and accountability issues.

In partnership with the Black & White Association and CatalyticAction, Andrea Rigon began working in the neighbourhood of Castel Volturno, Italy (one of the most marginalised places in Europe) to **co-design a community space with children**. Over half of the local children are of African descent and the neighbourhood presents a rich cultural diversity. It does not have any public infrastructure and has been further isolated by a broken bridge. The project started with a range of activities involving 70 children aged six to

Housing trajectories of the urban poor in Ahmedabad, from low-rise informal occupation of land to high-rise slum rehabilitation projects. Photo credit: all by Rita Lambert.



15. They discussed their memories of play, places in which they feel safe and happy, as well as imagining their dream play and the spaces where this could take place. Older children acted as architects by putting their shared visions on a 3D representation of the neighbourhood. Their ideas were showcased and discussed with parents, teachers, and other adults in the community the following day. The aim of this first intervention is to bring residents together and to transform social relations. The approach builds on CatalyticAction's DECID handbook published by UN-Habitat and UNICEF.



Members of the Black & White Association co-designing community spaces with children in Castel Volturno, Italy. Photo credit: CatalyticAction.

In October 2022, Said Mahathir was invited to exhibit his artwork **Coffee and Male Gaze** at "The Lost and The Remained" exhibition hosted by The Koppel Project Hive and curated by An.Other Asian. Through his painting, he criticised Acehnese's socioreligious politics that transformed local coffee shops into male-exclusive spaces.

Over half of the local children are of African descent and the neighbourhood presents a rich cultural diversity.

In February, Liza Griffin and Gemma Moore presented their work on the **Healthy Parks Framework** to the Cambridgeshire County Council Parks Partnership and later to the Bradford-based research partnership JU:MP, funded by Sport England, which aims to help children and families get more active.

In October 2022, OVERDUE partners in seven African cities launched **Flexifund Projects**. Drawing from insights gained throughout their research, the focus of these projects is on implementing strategic interventions to advance just sanitation in the cities of Abidjan, Antananarivo, Beira, Bukavu, Freetown, Mwanza and St Louis. The documentation and dissemination of all projects will enable them to play a key demonstration and advocacy role in improving the status quo of sanitation in the cities in which they are being implemented.



Left: Between Secular and Spiritual Life: Negotiating Spaces and Temporalities. Photo credit: Said Mahathir.

Below: A viewer admires the 'Coffee and Male Gaze' artwork. Photo credit: Said Mahathir.





During a recent trip to Mwanza, OVERDUE principal investigator Adriana Allen and Co-investigator Pascale Hofmann joined their local partners Wilbard Kombe from Ardhi University and Tim Ndezi from the Centre for Community Initiatives to launch the **Mwanza City Sanitation Forum** (MCSF). This is a key component of the Flexifund activities supported by the OVERDUE project in Mwanza and the first of its kind in the whole of Tanzania. Its main purpose is to advance the provision of safe sanitation in the city in an inclusive and sustainable way. Composed of representatives from the water and sanitation utility, municipality, ward government, the Tanzanian Federation of the urban poor, sanitation workers collectives as well as the OVERDUE project team in Mwanza, the MCSF serves as a multi-stakeholder platform to advance just sanitation by enabling further access to sanitation, particularly in the city's 45 informal settlements, recognising the role of female and male sanitation workers in providing a public good, and supporting incremental sanitation improvements along the service chain. The next few months will see the establishment of a revolving fund that caters for different needs and the affordability capacities of beneficiaries through a portfolio of finance models. Furthermore, the MCSF will lead the participatory development of guidelines to create an enabling environment for sanitation users and workers across the service chain to address existing challenges and shift, incrementally, towards safely-managed and just sanitation.

In Mwanza, Tanzania the Flexifund project is supporting community partners to fund and construct their own sanitation infrastructure. Advancing just sanitation through two interlinked projects: (1) finance mechanisms for sanitation facilities improvement; (2) co-production of enabling guidelines to tackle sanitation taboos. Photo credit: unknown.

The **Housing and Popular Habitat Latin American Secretariat** (SELVIHP in Spanish) is an articulation space for socio-territorial and political movements in the region founded in 1990 to support the social production of habitat. In November 2022, Adriana Allen joined SELVIHP's Escuela Latinoamericana de Autogestión del Hábitat (ELAH) held in Valparaiso and Santiago (Chile). The school brought together representatives of social movements and grassroots organisations from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Mexico, and Dominican Republic, working together to consolidate normative frameworks and progressive policies in support of social production of habitat processes across the region.

Adriana's trip included a stop in Buenos Aires (Argentina), where she had the opportunity to interact with the **Movement of Occupants and Tenants** (Movimiento de Ocupantes e Inquilinos – MOI) and its Federation of Housing Cooperatives, as well as other housing cooperatives and movements working under the umbrella of Habitat International Coalition (HIC) – currently presided by Adriana – towards the protection and realisation of the social function of housing and land.



Top: Fieldvisit to Villa Retiro in Buenos Aires with grassroots leaders. Photo credit: unknown.



Left: Members of SELVIHP's Escuela Latinoamericana de Autogestión del Hábitat (ELAH) held in Valparaiso. Photo credit: Adriana Allen.

Staff news

DPU is hosting **Qianxi Zhang** from NingboTech University and University of Nottingham. She will work at the DPU for one year with Andrea Rigon and CatalyticAction on designing child-friendly cities, with a particular focus on play spaces outside playgrounds, using the concept of playability. A first event comparing interventions in Ningbo, Beirut and Milan took place in February and more will follow.

In November 2022, **Nadine Coetzee** joined OVERDUE as a research fellow. Nadine is an architect and urban practitioner who has worked in South Africa and Uganda delivering informal settlement upgrading projects that alleviate poverty, build resilience, and promote spatially just cities. She has significant experience in water and sanitation projects ranging from monitoring service delivery and supporting community teams to advocate for change, to implementing public realm upgrades to improve safety. Welcome Nadine!

For the last eighteen months, **Ilundi Polonia Cabral** (Austral Consulting) has worked with the OVERDUE team in Beira (Mozambique). Ilundi returned to Austral in 2023 and **Ana Leao**, an anthropologist with vast experience in advancing gender equality in Mozambique, took over her role within the OVERDUE project. OVERDUE would like to thank Ilundi for all her support and insightful contributions and welcome Ana to the team!

Networks and meetings

Hanadi Samhan was invited to speak at the conference **Imagining Futures Gathering II: Strategic use of Archives in contexts of Displacement and Post-Conflict** hosted by the British Institute at Ankara in February last year.

Last June, Catalina Pollak Williamson participated in a workshop on **Keywords for Radical Organising: Infrastructure** organised by the Centre and School of English and Drama, Queen Mary University of London. This was the second of three ‘in-conversation’ workshops which brought academics from the humanities and social sciences into conversation with organisers and artists to unpack the challenges and opportunities afforded by different ways of thinking, talking, and theorizing about radical organising.

The workshop on Keywords for Radical Organising: Infrastructure brought academics from the humanities and social sciences into conversation with organisers and artists to unpack the challenges and opportunities afforded by different ways of thinking, talking, and theorizing about radical organising.



Launch of the GOLD VI Report at UCLG Congress in Daejeon. Photo credit: UCLG.

In July 2022, Catalina Pollak Williamson gave a public talk entitled **Railing Against Railings** on the contested histories of railings in relation to garden squares. The talk was part of the Bedford Square Walking Tours run by the Paul Mellon Centre, Yale University.

In August 2022, Alexandra Panman convened a workshop on **Collective Property Under Pressure of Urbanisation**, which brought participants from around the world to UCL, with support from UCL's Global Engagement Funds and the Bartlett Development Planning Unit's State and Market research cluster. The day was divided into four interrelated panels: (1) implications for the efficiency and equity of land resource generation and distribution; (2) the relationship between collective property rights, land value, and values; (3) the interaction between legal frameworks and community-level approaches to managing lands; and (4) the role of leadership within communities and local governments in shaping changing property relations.

Catalina Ortiz led a panel at the **RC21** conference held in Athens 24-26 August 2022. The panel was titled “On decolonising urban knowledge Decolonising urban knowledge(s): an ordinary imperative in extraordinary times”.

Catalina Ortiz was invited to be the inaugural keynote speaker of the **Latin American and Caribbean Cities Collective** at the University of Illinois Urban Champaign on 15 September 2022. Her talk was entitled “Disobedient Urban Research: Provocations for Setting a Decolonial Agenda”.

Catalina Ortiz was invited to be the respondent in the **launch of Abdou-Maliq Simone's new book** “The surrounds: Urban Life Within and Beyond Capture” held at the Urban Institute at the University of Sheffield on 26 September 2022.

In October 2022, OVERDUE together with the TNUSSP, held a special session at the **UNC Water and Health Conference** to bring to the fore the invisibilised and undervalued role of women across the sanitation service chain. The full recording from the session is available at The invisible workforce: how to value women's role in sanitation?

In October 2022, Adriana Allen was invited to join the **7th World Congress and Summit of Local and Regional Leaders** organised by United Cities and Local Governments (UCG) held in Daejeon (Korea), where the municipal movement gathered under the motto “Local and Regional Governments Breaking Through as One”. During the Congress, together with Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Camila Cocina (now at IIED), she was a keynote speaker at the launch of the UCLG GOLD VI Report: Pathways towards Urban and Territorial Equality, produced by the DPU KNOW team led by Caren Levy in collaboration with municipal authorities and civil society networks, including Habitat International Coalition (HIC), Slum/Shack Dwellers International, the Global Platform for the Right to the City, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and Co-Habitat Network, among others. GOLD VI focuses on how local and regional governments can address the local manifestations of growing inequalities and contribute to creating pathways to urban and territorial equality, discussing six distinctive pathways: Commoning, Caring, Connecting, Renaturing, Prospering and Democratizing.

Catalina Ortiz was invited to speak at the event “Coproducing Urban Knowledge From Below” organised by **UCL Urban Lab** on 14 October 2022.

On 28 October 2022, Said Mahathir and Hanadi Samhan hosted an event on “Religious Infrastructure in the City”, as part of the seminar series **Inclusive Spaces** hosted by Bartlett’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group. They explored how Muslim and non-Muslim communities experience the creation of Muslim spaces, and how these communities connect – or face barriers – with city planners and planning authorities.

In November 2022, Adriana Allen delivered a keynote speech at the **PLEA Conference** held in Santiago (Chile) under the theme: “Will cities survive? The future of sustainable buildings and urbanism in the age of emergency.” Drawing on the key findings and messages from the Renaturing Chapter of GOLD VI Report co-cu-

rated with Mark Swilling and Isabelle Anguelovski, she explored what renaturing urbanization entails and why this pathway is key for a socially and environmentally just transition.

Vanessa Galeano presented a paper entitled “What is Medellín’s ‘miracle’ about? Territorial justice of the world renown ‘social urbanism’ project” at **XII Encuentro Anual de la Sociedad Chilena de Estudios Regionales SOCHER** in Antofagasta, Chile in November 2022.

In November 2022, Kristine (Tin) Alvarez was selected as a participant in **The Sociological Review Foundation’s Early Career Researcher Writing Retreat** in Wales, and also served as discussant in the book forum, “Urban Ecologies on the Edge: Making Manila’s Resource Frontier”, at the **International Conference on Geographical Studies**.

Julio D Dávila participated in the **Annual Conference of the Colombian Society for Urban and Regional Researchers (ACIUR)** in Bogotá, Colombia, November 2022, where he presented two co-authored papers: “Mass transport, green spaces and urban liveability: Evidence from Cali, Colombia” by Daniel Oviedo, Orlando Sabogal, Natalia Villamizar and Julio D Dávila; and “Urban parks in Bogotá and London: Reflections on their contribution to urban equity and sustainability” by Camilo Santamaría and Julio D Dávila.

Also in November, Julio D. Dávila presented a paper entitled “UK-Cuba case study in international collaboration on sustainable cities” at the **XX Scientific Engineering and Architecture Congress in Havana, Cuba**. This was co-authored with Emily Morris (UCL), Jorge Peña (CUJAE, Cuba), and James Warren (Open University, UK).

On 8 November 2022, Orlando Sabogal presented the paper entitled “Arguments for cycling as a mechanism for sustainable modal shifts in Bogotá” (co-authored with Daniel Oviedo) at the **World Bicycle Forum** in Manizales, Colombia.

Catalina Ortiz was also invited to the launch of the Laboratory of Barrios Populares – Populab in Cali, Colombia on 15 November 2022. This initiative is part of the research project Gridding Equitable Urban Futures in Areas in Transition, funded by the UK-GCRF where she is a co-investigator. Her talk was entitled “The city and the transition to urban territorial peace”.

On 16 November 2022, Catalina Ortiz presented the Decalogue of neighbourhood upgrading in pandemic times at the **Costa Rica National Urban Forum 2022** in the session on “Informal Settlements: Comprehensive Habitat Management and the Right to the City”.

UCLG GOLD VI Report focuses on how local and regional governments can address the local manifestations of growing inequalities and contribute to creating pathways to urban and territorial equality.



Mina Rakotoarindrata (SiMiralenta), Angèle Koue (GEPALEF) and Festo Dominic Makoba (CCI Tanzania) at 21st AfWA Congress and Exhibition and the 7th International Faecal Sludge Management Conference, Abidjan. Photo credit: unknown.

Catalina Ortiz was invited as guest speaker to the **Colombian Association of Urban and Regional Researchers** [ACIUR] conference held in Bogota on 18 November 2022. Her talk was entitled “Co-producing knowledge about care in self-built neighbourhoods in pandemic times”.

On 28 November 2022, Daniel Oviedo participated in the International Transport Forum’s (ITF) Roundtable on **Increasing the Share of Cycling and Walking in Urban Mobility** at the OECD in Paris. Daniel Oviedo engaged with a network of academics, practitioners and high-level policymakers across the global north and south to help define principles and agendas for the inclusive promotion of walking and cycling across social groups. The roundtable will inform policy outputs from the OECD to be published in the first half of 2023.

In December 2022, Hanadi Samhan gave a talk to the **Socially Just Planning Doctoral Network**, entitled “The voluminous camp: The geopolitics of sacred ontologies – The case of Lebanon”.

In January 2023, Daniel Oviedo was invited by Buro Happold to hold a talk on **e-scooters and their role in transport-related social exclusion**.

In January 2023, Catalina Pollak Williamson was invited to teach at the **International Seminar, Urban Mention**, School of Architecture,

University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain. Her intervention, “Melodías de Balcón: Cuidándonos unos a otros” (Balcony tunes: Looking after each other) was structured as a participatory live-project where students engaged with the local community and a resident-association of the city’s old town. The aim was to investigate existing infrastructures of care that organically developed during the pandemic but became dormant once the time of crisis was over. Building on her PhD research, she also gave a public lecture at the University of Navarra in that same month, where she discussed the use of play as a tool for social and urban transformation (more here: ‘Critical Play’: el juego como herramienta de transformación urbana).

Catalina Ortiz was invited to speak at the **Transformative Climate Media for Urban Futures: Imagination, Interaction, Impact** held in Potsdam on 24 January 2023. Her paper was entitled “Cultivating urban storytellers and the potentials of Transmedia”.

Catalina Ortiz was asked to speak at the **Imagining Futures through Un/Archived Pasts** (IF) Network event: “Roles of Institutions in Egalitarian Archival Practice and Methods of Creating Digital Repositories” held in Ghana on 25 January 2023. Her presentation centred on the project Living Archives: gendered (hi)stories of urban reclamation in Moravia, Medellín.

In February, Liza Griffin participated in a workshop hosted by **Natural England** on resilient fishing communities. Natural England are currently examining how fishing fleets and their associated communities can better embody resilience and how this relates to securing ecological outcomes. Along with other participants, Liza examined criteria driving decision-making processes, the barriers preventing more constructive arrangements, and what government bodies might do to help foster resilient communities.

In February, OVERDUE partners from Mwanza (Tanzania) and Antananarivo (Madagascar) were hosted by Angèle Koue (GEPALEF) in her hometown and OVERDUE partner city of Abidjan. This year for the first time, the Faecal Sludge Management Alliance (FSMA) partnered with the African Water Association to co-host the **21st AfWA Congress and Exhibition and the 7th International Faecal Sludge Management Conference**. On 21 February, Festo Dominic Makoba (CCI Tanzania) presented a paper on Gendering Faecal Sludge Management to support just sanitation, and shortly afterwards Mina Rakotoarindrata (SiMiralenta) presented on Gender mainstreaming in open and circular sanitation systems. Both presentations formed part of a session titled “Empowering the marginalised”.

Adriana Allen participated in **UCLG Feminist Caucus** which propels a global feminist movement, and took part in UCLG Research Forum, which aimed at shaping the UCLG' strategy to continue to co-produce impactful research to support the municipalism movement. With the aim of consolidating the housing justice community of practice at UCLG, she also chaired a special session entitled "Cities for Adequate Housing: from present emergencies to a future of housing justice". As the emergency housing policies adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic come to an end, this session explored how these experiences can be revisited, reinforced, and sustained over time as a basis for a joint, local-level strategy to face a global, yet localized, housing emergency.

Camillo Boano chaired two sessions of the **Urban Design Otherwise 2023 series** at DPU, a series born in 2021 reflecting on 'otherwise' ways and forms of transgressions of spatial design practices with guests and alumni from the BUDD programme. The series embraces multiple knowledges, addresses asymmetries of power and colonial legacies, and seeks to find alternative ways of revealing the voices of unrecognised groups in city making processes. This year the first session was titled "Towards Anticolonial Design: urgency, methodologies and diffractions"; the second was "Crisis, Design and Criticality: thinking frictions and ecologies of climate emergency".

Julio D Dávila gave a keynote speech on "Urban sprawl and equity: Challenges for sustainable planning" at the **Building Sustainable Regions Forum** hosted by the Colombian Sustainable Construction Council, which brought together heads and staff of construction firms, construction material suppliers, architects and urban planners.

As part of the **1st Symposium on Data Science** at the UTP (Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira), Orlando Sabogal gave a presentation on "Geographic Data Science" where he highlighted some of the research on app-based mobility at the IME platform led by DPU.

Alessio Kolioulis was invited to take part in the podcast **Reasons to be Cheerful** with Ed Miliband and Geoff Lloyd, on the topic of night-time economy.

The London Project, part of MSc UED, provides recommendations on current issues facing the UK's capital city. This year, partners from Department for Transport, Enfield Council, and Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities asked questions about the fairness of road user charging, how to maximise the delivery of social value in regeneration schemes, how hybrid working may impact on London's productivity and economic geography, and how tourism in London could be more sustainable. UED students did a fantastic job presenting their findings at the showcase event and their final reports will be shared with partners. For further information, or if you'd like to become a London Project Partner, please contact Margarethe Theseira (m.theseira@ucl.ac.uk).

The London Project provides recommendations on current issues facing the UK's capital city.



Gathering of the UCLG Feminism Caucus. Photo credit: UCLG.

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Cover Photo: Lack of adequate drainage infrastructure is a feature of the early stages of an informal settlement like Ashaiman (Greater Accra, Ghana). Photo credit: Julio D. Dávila.

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