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**Why C.R.A.V.E.  
Just Sanitation for African Cities?**

**By Adriana Allen, Nadine Coetzee,  
Pascale Hofmann and Claudy Vouhé**



# Focus On

## Why C.R.A.V.E. Just Sanitation for African Cities?

By Adriana Allen, Nadine Coetzee, Pascale Hofmann and Claudy Vouhé<sup>1</sup>

How do cities deal with the faeces and urine produced by their inhabitants? Across the Global North, we mostly flush them away without wondering what happens next in terms of impact on nature and other humans. We distance ourselves from human waste and trust that sanitation infrastructure will mix it with water and transport it far away: from the toilet to the sewers, to a treatment plant.

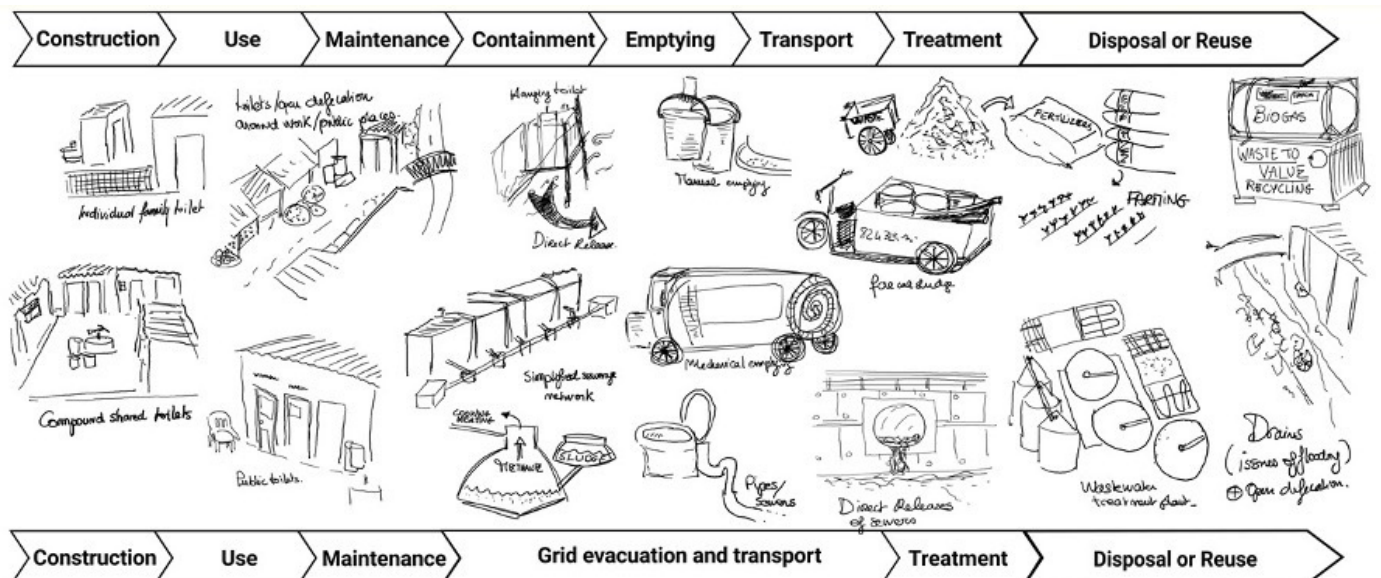
For most women and men living in African cities, dealing with urine and faeces is not a matter of flushing a toilet. Safely containing and disposing of human waste to protect people from diseases, and to avoid contamination of ground and surface water sources, is a daily concern and duty. For many who lack sanitation facilities, even finding where to wee and poo is a time-consuming task and a mental load. This raises questions about the affordability and practicality of daily use pay-as-you-go public or

communal toilets; and also on the stigma and safety involved when the only option is to defecate in the open.

It has long been assumed that a “sanitation revolution” based on building gridded infrastructural systems, like those developed in the urban Global North, is the key to reaching universal access to adequate and sustainable sanitation and hygiene services, and to eliminate open defecation across African cities. However, the sanitation “crisis” is far from vanishing in African cities, particularly prejudicing women and girls as users, care givers and sanitation providers. This reality led to the conception of the action-research project **OVERDUE – Tackling Sanitation Taboo Across Urban Africa**<sup>2</sup>, led by The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London, and funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

In their rich historical interrogation of the global sanitation crisis, Black and Fawcett (2010) frame this crisis as a “taboo”, an unspoken subject across almost every culture. We talk, plan, and manage cities and urban life as if faeces and urine are not part of them. Building upon this framing, we argue that, rather than approaching the sanitation crisis as being a lack of facilities, infrastructure, technologies, and investments, the real problem lies in understanding why urban sanitation has been historically relegated to a taboo. Sanitation is an unpleasant topic rarely tackled in its own right, and a complexity pushed aside in favour of discussions around clean water, water-based sewage systems, and water-intensive hygiene practices. Our perspective reads the sanitary metabolism of a city as a highly complex system made up of pipes, energy, matter, nature, and social and environmental relations. These can produce illness or health, poverty or

The grid / off-grid sanitation service chain. Credit: OVERDUE Team.



prosperity, suffering or wellbeing, and stigma or respect for the different groups of women, men, girls and boys engaged in the management of sanitation (Allen et al., 2021).

Adopting a feminist political ecology (FPE) perspective, over the last three years we have worked with seven fast-growing cities with distinctive sanitation historical trajectories and contemporary challenges: Beira (Mozambique), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Mwanza (Tanzania), Antananarivo (Madagascar), Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Bukavu (DRC) and Saint Louis (Senegal). The project's main purpose has been threefold:

- To reframe sanitation across urban Africa by unpacking the historical and colonial narratives that underpin the “sanitation taboo”. Thus, enabling a 360 degrees perspective on what “equitable urban sanitation” means from an FPE perspective (what matters, to whom, why), and on what sanitation infrastructures promise and actually deliver across different colonial legacies and postcolonial conditions.
- To produce actionable knowledge based on a re-evaluation of sanitation experiences, practices, and investments across the continuum of large-scale infrastructural investments.
- To take stock of ongoing experimentation towards equitable sanitation and to foster regional dialogue and exchange. Engaging with the women and men who invest in, use, maintain, and fix sanitation infrastructure, OVERDUE has generated both insights and change, bridging experiences across scales, institutions, and infrastructure.

We used the sanitation service chain as a key hermeneutic device to navigate grid and off-grid trajectories, engaging with people, things, places, and practices. We unveil the taboos and social and ecological relations that weave them together to reveal where and why ambitions for just sanitation have become truncated, or have the potential to flourish.

Amongst the grid narratives, and aspirations of reproducing the 19th century sanitary revolution of the urban Global North, are the incremental and informal coping mechanisms adopted by the urban poor. Most African cities just get by, skirting around the sanitation taboo. This calls for a decolonising of the ways in which the “urban sanitation crisis” continues to be framed and tackled. It involves unpacking the historical and colonial narratives that underpin the sanitation taboo, and developing a critical interrogation of urban sanitation trajectories. We have done this by examining the investments, practices and experiences across the continuum from large-scale infrastructural investments made by the public and private sectors to build and expand grid systems, to the incremental practices and investments made by the urban poor collectively and individually to produce off-grid coping mechanisms.

Through our collective co-production of knowledge, experimentation with and learning from different strategic interventions to advance just sanitation from an explicit FPE perspective, we distilled five key actions to translate knowledge into transformative change: to **Commit**, to **Recognise**, to **Act**, to **Valorise** and to **Engender** – to **C.R.A.V.E. Just Sanitation for African Cities**. We take each of these actions in turn to share some of the insights and advocacy messages crafted throughout the OVERDUE journey.

**The sanitation “crisis” is far from vanishing in African cities, particularly prejudicing women and girls as users, care givers and sanitation providers. This reality led to the conception of the action-research project OVERDUE – Tackling Sanitation Taboo Across Urban Africa.**

## Commit

Despite longstanding recognition of the beneficial role played by adequate sanitation on people's daily lives, it was not until 2010 that sanitation, together with water supply, was recognised as a human right. It took a further five years for sanitation to become recognised as a distinct right, separate from water, and to accept that sanitation systems do not necessarily have to be water-borne or water intensive. While the right to adequate services is intrinsically linked to the right to adequate housing, both domains are still treated and pursued as if they are separate from each other. Injustices in the ways in which sanitation is provided, accessed, and improved prevail. As we witness a persistent, everyday violation of rights endured by 60% of the urban population in Africa and 2.4 billion people worldwide, it is time to really commit to challenging historical and contemporary narratives that stop international commitments short of advancing just sanitation.

Urban Africa's sanitation crisis is often narrated as a story of truncated aspirations, differences, deficits and exceptionality across grid and off-grid systems. On the one hand, city-wide infrastructural aspirations and promises are conceived by governments, corporations and the international community as means to support job creation, market access, capital accumulation and public health provision. On the other



COMMIT: Realising the right to sanitation requires recognition of the makers of sanitation. Here a manual pit emptier services a household in Freetown. Photo Credit: OVERDUE 2021.

hand, urban dwellers frequently experience differential access to such infrastructures, and face a plethora of challenges that come with limited and dysfunctional systems, while making and contesting political claims about what sanitation infrastructures do, don't do and should do. Working across city-wide aspirations and lived sanitation experiences, an array of practices to run sanitation systems is deployed by engineers, vacuum truck operators and latrine emptiers, who straddle the formal and informal sanitation value chain – building, repairing, operating and improvising – bringing to life the real sanitation systems that support everyday life.

Tracing sanitation investments and interventions over time reveals clear biases in spatial, social, and technological terms, and a persistent neglect of those most in need of sanitation improvements. In many places across urban Africa, underground sewerage networks serve a minority of usually better-off inhabitants. For instance, in Freetown, Beira and Mwanza, the underground sewerage network only reaches 0.3%, 10% and 23% of the populations respectively. Yet, most donor funds are allocated to capital investments for repairing and extending the grid. Off-grid sanitation rarely attracts significant funding which extends at best to education and awareness-raising campaigns. Moreover, the case of

Beira shows that the benefits of these large-scale investments are often short-lived, as little attention is given to the operation and maintenance of these systems, reproducing a build-and-neglect pattern. In addition, evidence from Senegal shows that not only are centralised sewerage systems more expensive, but the costs are mainly borne by subsidised utilities. In contrast, the costs of installing, operating and maintaining sanitation facilities in off-grid areas are expected to be covered by individual households (Schaub-Jones, 2022).

Realising the right to sanitation requires that governments, utilities, and donors commit to including off-grid systems in their policies, plans and budgets. This means working with the everyday makers of sanitation, the women and men, girls and boys who build, use, maintain, repair and manage the systems that keep African cities afloat.

**Tracing sanitation investments and interventions over time reveals clear biases in spatial, social, and technological terms, and a persistent neglect of those most in need of sanitation improvements.**

## Recognise

According to a World Bank desk-study conducted in 2012 across 18 African countries, poor sanitation results in annual economic losses equivalent to 1 to 2.5% of these countries GDP. The majority of costs come from annual premature (and avoidable) deaths due to diarrheal disease directly attributable to poor water, sanitation, and hygiene; with other significant costs associated to productivity losses coming from poor sanitation, and time lost to meet basic sanitation needs (World Bank, 2012). While similar reports are highly aggregated and therefore account for a fraction of the actual economic impacts of inadequate sanitation, a more recent study found that preventable deaths, high medical costs, productivity loss and lost school days equated to 3.2% of Tanzania's GDP in 2022 (Belete, 2023). There is ample evidence that the benefits of safely managed sanitation services go far beyond the sanitation sector itself (Parikh et al., 2021). Yet, when it comes to sanitation investments, particularly in off-grid areas, their potential value in terms of human, public and ecosystem health, livelihoods and productivity is often disregarded. Governments tend to refrain from funding off-grid sanitation solutions if they cannot operate on a cost-recovery basis, while downplaying the fact that sewerage networks are highly subsidised.

Understanding that sanitation relies on far more than pipes, pits, and toilets calls for recognising that the experiences of everyday sanitation makers and users across urban Africa are deeply gendered and marked by intersectional asymmetries. For instance, access to public and communal toilets is shaped by needs, capacities and aspirations that differ across gender, class, age, and ability. However, these differences and inequalities are often rendered invisible, forcing sanitation users to cope and adapt to facilities conceived as universally adequate, rather than the other way around.



**RECOGNISE:** The sanitation burden carried by the urban poor. Dealing with challenging geographies, Kambarage settlement in Mwanza. Photo Credit: Pascale Hofmann 2023.

SDG6 draws attention to the sanitation service chain in its entirety and the importance of safely managing faecal sludge and wastewater. Yet, the emphasis of most sanitation improvements continues to be on enhancing access to toilet facilities, which, while important, it simply not enough. Those fortunate enough to benefit from sewerage connections usually do not have to worry about containment, transport, treatment, and disposal of faecal waste. However, in off-grid areas, such responsibility predominantly lies with households and must be considered at the construction stage. In so-called “informal settlements” which make up the bulk of African cities, households rely on the self-provision and management of onsite sanitation. For instance, in Mwanza, informal settlements tend to be located on steep rocky hills where digging deep enough pits is difficult and expensive. Their development and densification further render many dwellings inaccessible for emptying trucks. Residents are thus forced to resort to informal, and often unsafe, emptying practices that pose a threat to public and environmental health. In Freetown, hanging toilets that directly discharge into streams, canals and the sea are not uncommon. Bukavu and Antananarivo know similar conditions.

As a result, access to improved services relies on the efforts of paid and unpaid sanitation workers to meet basic needs and health protection standards. However, the diverse range of people who deliver crucial sanitation services along the service chain remains overlooked and unrecognised. Our findings across the cities of Beira, Mwanza and Freetown substantiate repeatedly that the stigmas attached to off-grid sanitation practices have vast consequences on health, wellbeing, livelihoods and the environments. They also suggest that informal sanitation workers, like manual pit-emptiers, put their health and safety on the line to manage and dispose of the waste as safely as possible given their means and available infrastructures. Yet, workers often lack formal support to operate in a safer way, while widely adopted off-grid sludge management practices are often criminalised and sanctioned. Manual pit-emptiers are frequently fined or even risk incarceration, and many are forced to work at night to avoid getting caught by the authorities. In Saint Louis like in other cities, we heard that women too, as unpaid workers in their “care” role, try to conceal how they manage their sludge in often dangerous and health threatening ways, to avoid social stigma and sanctions.

It is high time for policy makers and funders to recognise the sanitation stigmas and taboos that burden the urban poor across Africa. There is also the need to meet required standards for the protection of informal sanitation workers (i.e. occupational health and safety systems) and for the management of faecal sludge (vacuum pumps and vehicles, faecal sludge treatment plants).

**The partnering cities implemented critical strategic interventions at different levels and along the sanitation service chain to translate research into action, responding in each case to key contextual sanitation challenges.**

## Act

Acting towards just sanitation involves interventions across the whole sanitation service chain and its governance, with dedicated efforts to tackle the massive gender inequalities that are produced and reproduced throughout. As part of the OVERDUE project, the seven partnering cities implemented critical strategic interventions at different levels and along the sanitation service chain to translate research into action, responding in each case to key contextual sanitation challenges.

In Mwanza, the OVERDUE team supported household and compound improvements by facilitating their connection to a Simplified Sewerage System (SSS). Working with local communities, the Federation of the Urban Poor, CCI and Ardhi University have managed to expand the reach of the SSS into a previously impossible terrain. A gender-aware, revolving sanitation fund has been established to support households and collectives with affordable loans to finance sanitation improvements. Not only does this help households to upgrade their access to sanitation services, it also creates a forum for different stakeholders to come together to

contribute to co-financed, well-coordinated sanitation solutions. A key challenge ahead is to ensure that the fund revolves, while also creating opportunities to support those who require full subsidies to benefit from sustainable sanitation improvements.

Partners in Bukavu (CFCEM.GA), Freetown (SLURC, CODOHSAPA & FEDURP) and Beira (Associação FACE) took a gender-responsive approach to public toilet rehabilitation and management. In all three cities, strategic interventions were initiated to tackle a persistent lack of public facilities that respond to women’s needs in terms of safety (separate and lockable doors), hygiene (disposal of pads and cleanliness), affordability (user fees), and space (to accommodate not only the user, but those that she cares for). In Beira, FACE held extensive participatory design processes, carefully constructed to enable women and men (including those with disabilities) to share freely in both gender segregated meetings and collectively. Critical decisions concerning the public toilets’ rehabilitation included their participatory design, placement (where



**ACT: Effective action toward achieving just sanitation requires responding to an inclusive range of users, workers and systems. A group of female vegetable sellers are consulted on the proposed public toilet rehabilitation at Mercado Banana, Beira. Photo Credit: OVERDUE 2023.**

more women/girls work and live), as well as management and financial sustainability (fees, opening hours, conflict management). The team in Beira soon also acknowledged that this process had to extend not only to those using the public toilets, but also to those cleaning and managing them. As part of their rehabilitation of the toilets at Mercado Banana, clearer contracts between local government and sanitation workers cleaning the facilities were championed to improve job security and overall support: factors that directly impact the standards of cleanliness in the toilets.

Interventions carried out across the seven OVERDUE cities confirmed that actions focused on infrastructure upgrades alone have limited impact. Acting towards just sanitation requires an intersectional perspective responding to an inclusive range of users, the creation of operational linkages between users and workers, as well as the systems of governance and financial mechanisms required for transformative change across different scales.

**VALORISE:**  
Embracing practices in which sanitation waste used as a resource can add value across the scales. Primary school students tend to their vegetable patch fed using co-composted organic waste and faecal sludge. Photo Credit: Claudy Vouhé, OVERDUE 2023.



## Valorise

There is an urgent need to shift from a narrow focus on infrastructure costs to a wider notion of value creation that recognises benefits to the public, ecosystem health and rehabilitation, as well as livelihoods. Thinking beyond sectoral boundaries can help to explore ways in which sanitation waste can become a resource for energy generation and food growing practices, while also addressing gender inequality. Strategic interventions in Antananarivo, Abidjan and Saint Louis have focused specifically on closing the sanitation loop at household and neighbourhood levels to recognise and lighten women's invisible sanitation work and foster their economic empowerment. In Saint Louis, OGDS is piloting a series of biogas digesters, retrofitted at household level to existing septic tanks, to siphon off what would have been waste gases as fuel for cooking. In Abidjan, GEPALEF worked with

women living in an off-grid community to initiate a co-composting livelihood strategy, including the construction of a pilot Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant, and training for processing and selling the compost. OVERDUE partners SiMIRALENTA in Antananarivo have set up a gendered demonstration project at a local primary school in partnership with the municipality and the utility. They rehabilitated a small faecal sludge treatment plant close to a primary school to raise awareness of the possibilities for reusing faecal sludge. There, students are now growing vegetables in the school garden with co-composted organic matters, and powering their school kitchen with biogas. Despite technological advancement and innovative small-scale initiatives like the ones mentioned above, the re-use or valorisation of human waste remains a taboo subject, stigmatised and uncomfortable, especially in

proximity to food and cooking. This is despite various accreditations for the safety of co-composting and fertilisers produced in this way.

To valorise human waste, we need to acknowledge that obstacles to many practices are distinctly social, rather than technical. Restricting and hiding the management of faecal sludge poses a much higher risk to the environmental and public health of off-grid communities, particularly women, than embracing practices in which sanitation waste is used as a resource that can add value across the scales – from the daily lived experience of those living off-grid and to the national fiscus of the country.

**ENGENDERing sanitation is a critical field for advancing gender equality. OVERDUE partner organisation OGDs uses theatre to perform a “révolte des femmes” in Saint Louis, Senegal. Photo Credit: OVERDUE 2022.**



## Engender

Across all seven cities, OVERDUE has actively sought to frame the nexus between gender and sanitation. A feminist perspective first brought to the fore the overlap between socially constructed gender roles and physiological differences. For instance, women and girls need to urinate more often than men, and this need increases with pregnancy. Menstruating people also require more frequent use of toilets. Women and girls risk infections when they do not empty their bladder and when their reproductive and urinary systems are exposed to unhygienic conditions. During our research, we heard that open air urination was frequent for male students from Antananarivo University, but a riskier practice for female students. In Bukavu markets, women vendors talked of abdominal pains when not able to urinate all day, because public toilets are non-existent, too dirty or unsafe (sexual harassment). Menstrual hygiene is a key issue. In Saint-Louis or Abidjan, the lack of toilets contributes to girls dropping out of education when unable to manage their menstrual hygiene. Containers are rarely available in public toilets. Male toilet carers often object to dealing with used menstrual pads, and many women are ashamed of, or uncomfortable with, disposing of their pads in public toilets.

Our research further confirmed that women and girls' inferior social status creates different forms of discrimination in sanitation. For instance, the division of labour within paid and unpaid sanitation work is highly gendered, with many roles and responsibilities allocated to women taken for granted as “care” and naturalised as “feminine” at household level. This work is largely invisible, unappreciated and undervalued. Yet, work and mental load build up as public infrastructures and services fail households, and women cover up for these failures.

Across many sanitation experiences and practices, women and girls' autonomy, dignity and safety are compromised and threatened. In Abidjan, women are the primary carers of sanitation at home, yet men are priority users. Besides, women must ensure that their bodily functions go socially unnoticed (no noise, no smell, or visible frequent use of toilets). In Beira, women put their autonomy, dignity and safety on the line when hiding under their kapulanas (wrap-around cloth) and seeking a familiar male to accompany them, in order to avoid sexual harassment when going out at night to the “designated” open air defecation zone.

**A feminist perspective first brought to the fore the overlap between socially constructed gender roles and physiological differences.**



**This gathering will bring together a gender-balanced group of sanitation leaders from across the continent, including sanitation workers and users, as well as local governments, civil society organisations and other international networks committed to changing the future of sanitation across urban Africa; because just sanitation is long OVERDUE.**

Gender inequality in sanitation also has an economic dimension. Because fewer women own their homes, their rights to sanitation are disproportionately denied as tenants. In Antananarivo, more men seem to use fee-paying public toilets because they are more able than women to afford them. This is one of the reasons why OVERDUE partners CFCEM/GA in Bukavu market conducted negotiations to define non-discriminatory user-fees for the rehabilitated toilets. The absence of toilets in their home, compound or neighbourhood, disproportionately affects women because their mobility is restricted by gender roles and norms. While men work outside, women are often confined to their immediate surroundings to deal with their reproductive and productive responsibilities. Women are also under-represented in paid sanitation work along the service chain. The Federation of the Urban Poor in Mwanza has been training female sanitation technicians, but they have to work hard to convince others that they can do the job as well as men.

Blatant discriminatory practices confirm the need to Engender sanitation as a critical field to advance gender equality and just sanitation as a human right for all.

## Legacy building

Change does not happen overnight, particularly when defined in terms of advancing justice. Achieving just sanitation clearly involves far more than building more toilets, sewers and treatment plants. We face deep-seated taboos that are culturally reproduced and reinforce different faces of colonialism and patriarchal attitudes through the erasing of the sanitation needs, experiences, practices and aspirations of many – women and girls in particular.

As we near the close of the OVERDUE project, we have set in motion several ways to continue this conversation across the region. Throughout July 2023, we assembled a well-positioned and passionate group of nearly 70 sanitation practitioners from across urban Africa in a co-learning space devoted to advancing just sanitation. Due to its vibrancy and relevance, this has morphed into a community of practice ready to embrace the challenge of building equitable sanitation in African cities. Along with this community and many others, in early September we launched our campaign “We C.R.A.V.E #JustSanitation4AfricanCities”. This will deliver a collective call for action to be developed during a two-day regional meeting in Nairobi 11-12 September 2023. This gathering will bring together a gender-balanced group of sanitation leaders from across the continent, including sanitation workers and users, as well as local governments, civil society organisations and other international networks committed to changing the future of sanitation across urban Africa; because just sanitation is long OVERDUE.

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## Footnotes

### 01

This piece is based on the primary research conducted by all OVERDUE project team members. The authors acknowledge their insightful contributions. More details [here](#).

### 02

The project is led by Adriana Allen and funded by the UKRI Grand Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). For more information visit the project website at: [www.overdue-justsanitation.net](http://www.overdue-justsanitation.net)  
Or get in touch with Adrianna Allen at: [a.allen@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:a.allen@ucl.ac.uk).

# Head On

## The GOLD VII Report Towards the localization of the SDGs advances progressive municipalism through policies and practices in five key areas.

The **GOLD VII Report Towards the localization of the SDGs** was released at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPL) in July 2023. It was produced by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) and facilitated by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The DPU's Caren Levy, Adriana Allen, and Daniel Oviedo contributed to this report with several papers, together with Camila Cociña, Alexandre Apsan Frediani (IIED) and Julia Wesely. The report advances progressive municipalism through policies and practices in five key areas:

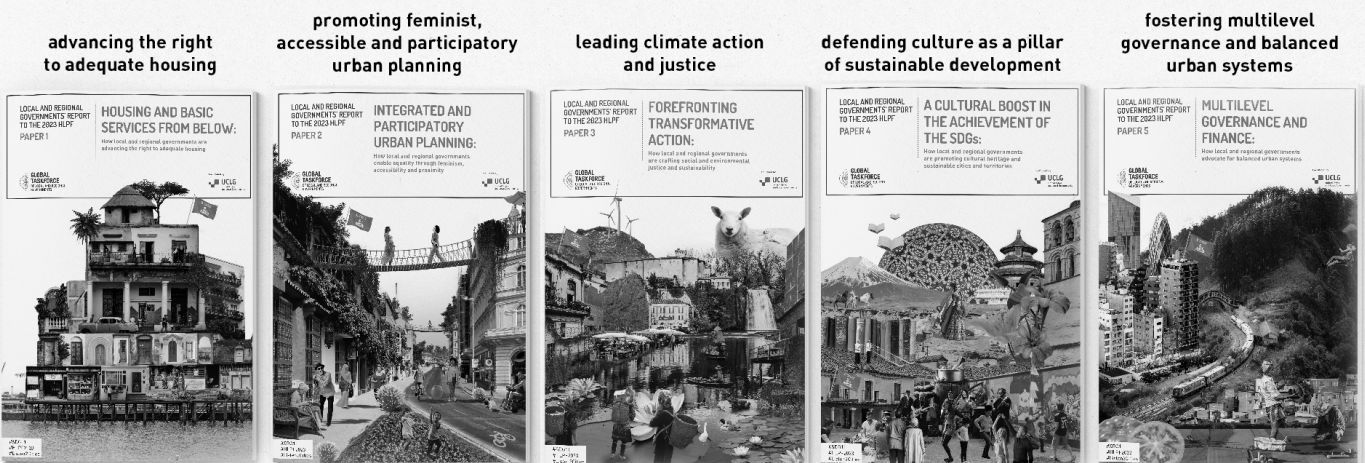
- Recognising, protecting and fulfilling the right to housing and basic services. Paper 1: Housing and basic services from below by Camila Cociña and Alexandre Apsan Frediani.
- Fostering urban planning to reduce fragmentation and segregation. Paper 2: Integrated and participatory urban planning by Daniel Oviedo.
- Crafting environmental justice through commoning and decoupling approaches. Paper 3: Forefronting transformative action by Adriana Allen and Julia Wesely.

- Acting on cultural dimensions to accelerate SDG implementation. Paper 4: A cultural boost in the achievement of the SDGs by the UCLG Committee on Culture.
- Advancing effective multilevel governance. Paper 5: Multilevel governance and finance by Caren Levy.

The **DPU SummerLab Special Research Fellowship** in São Paulo, Brazil has led to the production of a policy brief titled “Sanitation in informal settlements: integrated local action towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Campinas”. This was officially launched in São Paulo in August and is available in [English](#) and [Portuguese](#). The research was carried out by Lourenço Capriglione (MSc ESD alumnus) under the leadership of Pascale Hofmann (DPU), in collaboration with Tathiana Chicarino and Elcires Pimenta from Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo (FESPSP), one of DPU's partner organisations. The research focused on a context-specific examination of synergies and risks between sanitation and the SDGs in the municipality of Campinas in the state of São

GOLD VII Report Towards the localisation of the SDGs. Credit: UCLG.

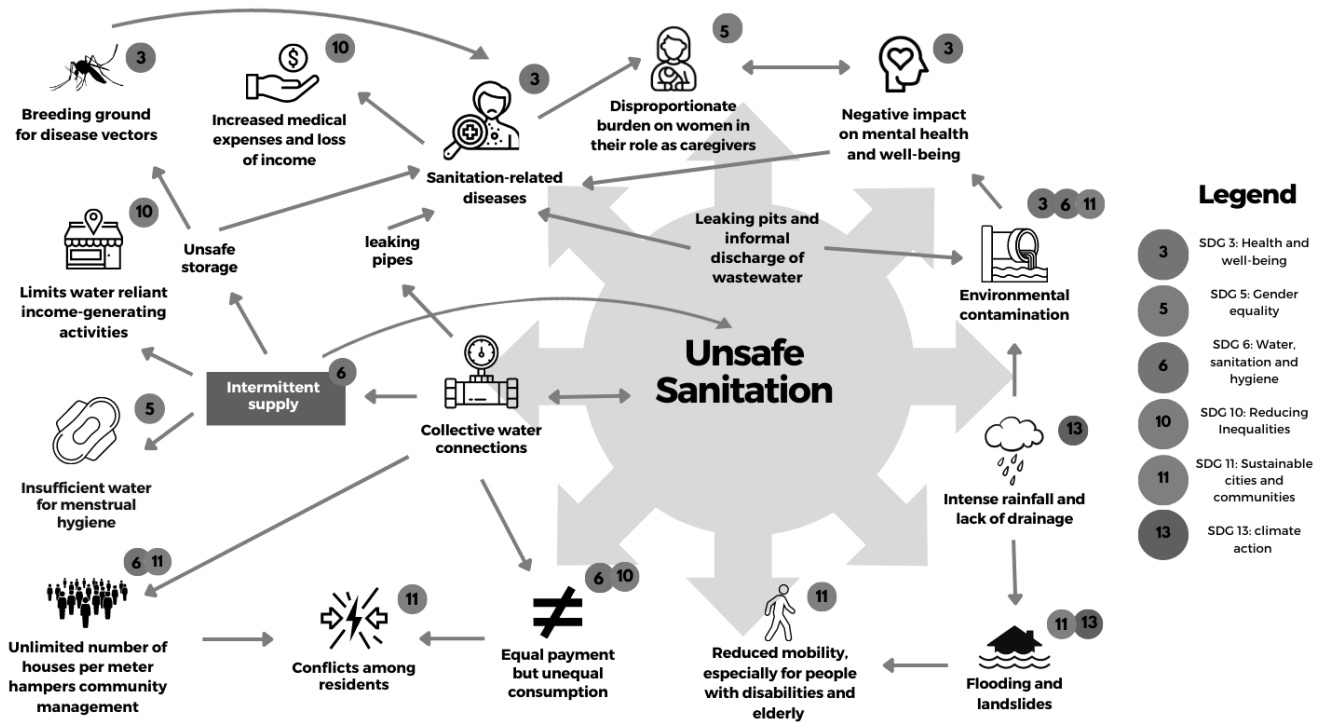
Local and regional governments are leading transformation towards more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities by...



JOIN US FOR THE LAUNCH OF OUR ANNUAL REPORT AND 5 PAPERS ON #SDG11 DURING THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS DAY AT THE #HLPF2023

Map of interconnected risks in Campinas' informal settlements between sanitation and a number of SDGs prioritised in the research. Credit: Lourenco Capriglione.

## Risk Map



Paulo, with particular emphasis on informal settlements, given their disproportionate vulnerability to sanitation inadequacies. It builds on an important series of work by a multidisciplinary UCL team that Pascale has been involved in, which examines links between sanitation and the SDGs at global, national and local level.

As part of the project **Transforming the unwalkable city: knowledge, practices, and interventions** - led by Daniel Oviedo and funded by the Volvo Research and Education Foundation (VREF) - three stakeholder workshops were developed by local partners in Freetown, Maputo, and Accra to engage policymakers, communities and practitioners. In Maputo, Architects Without Borders presented findings about walking experiences in a low-income neighbourhood during Maputo's Sustainable Mobility Week. They engaged policymakers through roundtable discussions and a Jane Jacobs walk. In Freetown, DPU and SLURC researchers discussed walking as a mode of transport with the Vice

Minister of Transport, the Ministry's team delivering Freetown's World Bank-funded public transport corridor, the Freetown City Council, and the GIZ-funded consulting team advising on the city's cable-car project. In Accra, researchers from the University of Environment and Sustainable Development and the University of Cape Coast invited community members, local council representatives and national authorities to reflect on the unsafe and challenging conditions for walking in Accra, and the potential for planning for walking. All local engagement workshops focused on the opportunities and challenges to transform precarious and unsafe walking conditions into walking as an

active, enjoyable mode of transport that improves accessibility for all.

Azadeh Mashayekhi received an **Urban Studies Foundation Seminar Series Award** to conduct a research project on the role of religious actors in shaping urban planning. The award was received in collaboration with Noura Wahby (American University in Cairo) and Camila Saraiva (Universidade Federal do ABC, Brazil), as well as team members Thaisa Comelli (UCL, Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction) and Vafa Dianati (UCL, DPU).

Jane's walk during Maputo Sustainable Mobility Week, with policymakers and Architects Without Borders. Photo Credit: Joaquin Romero de Tejada.



# Research

Daniel Oviedo and DPU60 PhD Scholar Mariajosé Nieto concluded a research project for the **TUMI Data HUB for Sustainable Mobility**, in collaboration with CAF – Development Bank of Latin America. The project piloted low-cost methodologies for data collection in Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica and Soledad, Colombia, with the Global Alliance for Popular Transport and Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla as local partners. The research highlighted the potential of motorised three-wheelers as a socially and environmentally just public transport option. The project interrogated the contribution of these forms of public transport to disrupting the cycle of fragmented infrastructure (in)accessibility and social exclusion. Using data from low-cost sensors, it also developed a model to predict vehicle emissions, including CO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and noise. Findings will be published in a special issue of *Data & Policy* at Cambridge University Press.

As part of the **UCL-Osaka Walking Cities Lab**'s ongoing research on walking environments, experiences and practices, Daniel Oviedo led fieldwork in Freetown with SLURC partners. The research team piloted an innovative research methodology using 360-degree recordings of the conditions faced by the inhabitants of a low-income hill settlement, and the infrastructure interventions developed by the community to adapt to the walking environment. The team delivered training to SLURC researchers for the use of remote sensing equipment, captured drone and 360-degree footage, organised a focus group with the community, and collected semi-structured interviews with high-level practitioners at the Sierra Leone Road Safety Agency, Sierra Leone Roads Agency, the Ministry of Transport, the Federation of the Urban Poor, and the local council unit in charge of settlement upgrading, among other key stakeholders.

Daniel Oviedo and PhD researcher Orlando Sabogal are collaborating with colleagues from the Inter-American Development Bank and Universidad del Norte in their research on **app-based collective transport** in Mexico City (Mexico) and Barranquilla (Colombia). This project explores the feasibility of microtransit considering travel times, fares, comfort, and other operative characteristics. Moreover, the project is analysing how structural problems in mass transit systems, negative perceptions of quality, and fear of crime can mediate the uptake of microtransit. Over 2000 surveys were collected, and the team is now working on data analysis and producing the final outputs. Microtransit pilots in Europe and the United States have failed due to economic constraints and the need to subsidise the service. Nevertheless, recent experiences in Latin-America suggest that microtransit can flourish, reduce car dependency, and fill gaps in conventional public transport.

On 1 July 2023, the ground-breaking three-year research project **On the Way to School** was launched. It focuses on urban development through active mobility interventions to improve the wellbeing of secondary-school adolescents aged 11 to 16. Thereby, the project aims to promote healthy lifestyles and mental wellbeing in diverse urban contexts. Already in May 2023, the first episode of a new webinar series titled “On the Way to School: Active Travel Interventions and Physical and Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in the Global South” was released to share presentations on methodologies, partnerships, and the historical context of active travel policies in Bogotá. Associate Researcher, Floriana Mutambe, presented the project design and contributed to discussions about adolescence in the VI Sustainable Mobility Week of Maputo's Metropolitan Area 2023. In June 2023, three co-Investigators of the project attended The Global Network meeting of Ourvoice in Stockholm, Sweden, where they engaged in fruitful discussions with international partners, sharing experiences and ideas about the use of Citizen Science methods in adolescent mobility and health research in the Global South. In

August 2023, Daniel Oviedo presented the project as part of his reflection on the priorities for active travel research at the IDB Workshop on “Future Priorities for Transport Research in LAC” held during the XXII Pan American Congress on Transport and Logistics in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The research involves a broad partnership between the DPU and partners in Colombia, Mozambique, as well as collaborators from academia, local governments, and practitioners in the Global North. Daniel Oviedo leads the project. Julio Dávila is currently leading Work Package 1 (WP1), which involves implementing and assessing three Active Mobility to and from school (AMTS) interventions in Bogotá, Colombia. WP1 employs a logic model to assess the effects of active mobility on students' mental health and wellbeing in selected schools. The goal is to provide comprehensive intervention descriptions and insights for effective AMTS policies in Bogotá. Valuable data from WP1 will inform a later pilot in Maputo, Mozambique.

**The research highlighted the potential of motorised three-wheelers as a socially and environmentally just public transport option.**

# Connections

Nancy Arbogast ( ● **MSc BUDD** 2021-22) joined Ardhi University in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, as an Assistant Lecturer in the Architecture Department. She is involved in its design studio and 1st to 4th year theoretical courses. She also participates in the university's research and consultancy work.

Filipe Camaño Garcia ( ● **MSc ESD** 2020-21), recently joined the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) leading the efforts on a highly ambitious project to create the Global Circularity Protocol. With UNEP as a strategic partner, this project aims to address policy and corporate accountability gaps currently preventing circularity to scale as a new business modus operandi. While it is a business-led initiative, the project involves a diverse group of stakeholders from academia, NGOs, and policymakers both from the Global North and Global South. The circular economy is not a panacea but an accelerator and paradigm shift towards sustainable development, provided it is a green and just transition.

Debayan Chatterjee ( ● **MSc UDP** 2019-20), a Commonwealth Scholar from India, finished his MSc in Urban Development Planning at UCL with a distinction in 2020. Since then, his constant engagement with well-known multi-national design firms like Albert Speer and Partners (AS+P), AE7, and Jacobs offered him immense opportunities to work on various scales of planning, design and research projects for both private builders and public agencies in four different countries (Germany, Saudi, UAE, and the UK). Currently, he is working as a Senior Planner in Frankfurt. He is also co-founder of an online institute called the AUDAcademy that helps students across the globe to inspect and rethink the paradigms of urban design and its intersection with the city's social, cultural, economic, and environmental fabric, at multiple scales and scopes. More on Debayan's work [here](#).



Staff celebrating the graduation of the DPU cohort from 2021-22. Photo Credit: unknown.

Aram Cho ( ● **MSc DAP** 2016-17) returned to South Korea and joined a PhD programme in the Science Studies Department (Science Policy major) at Seoul National University. Her research focuses on Science and Technology Policy for Development. While joining the programme, she participated in multiple projects regarding science policy from institutes such as the National Research Foundation, Ministry of Science and ICT of South Korea, Hyundai Motor Company, etc. Since 2021, she has been awarded the Fellowship for Fundamental Academic Fields three years in a row.

In August 2021, Leandro Gorgal ( ● **MSc DAP** 2019-20) was appointed Under-Secretary for International Financial Relations for the Development of Argentina's Federal Government, where he is in charge of managing all multilateral and bilateral development finance, including funds from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and CAF (Latin America's development bank). Akemi Higa ( ● **MSc BUDD** 2021-22) started working at the London Borough of Croydon as the South Norwood High Street Heritage Action Zone Officer after she graduated from the DPU. Akemi is currently working alongside community groups in South Norwood to deliver meaningful change in the area through community engagement, capital works, placemaking and capacity building.

Jamie Pett ( ● **MSc DAP** 2011-12) is a freelance facilitator, coach and consultant. He is hosting a six-month learning journey for white men who want to explore and embody what it looks like to contribute to change and create a world beyond patriarchy and white supremacy. If you are in or around London, find out more and apply [here](#) before 5 September 2023.

Lyza Rossi ( ● **MSc UDP** 2019-20) has been working at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) since 2022. Her work is extremely variegated, ranging from the technical assessment of municipal infrastructure projects, to the development of urban action plans with local governments. Her work also covers a wide geographical focus, from the Western Balkans, to South and Eastern Europe, the MENA region, and Central Asia.

Naiara Yumiko ( ● **MSc BUDD** 2019-20) was selected for an internship at the UN-Habitat's flagship programme for Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities in Kenya. She will be working on community-led initiatives for spatial inclusion and sustainable urban regeneration projects.

# PhD News

In March 2023, **Isabel Brain** successfully defended her thesis in which she identifies a concept of “kaleidoscopic densification” to explain the repopulation of inner-city Santiago. More information [here](#).

In March 2023, **Vicki Austin** successfully defended her thesis, which suggests that Assistive Technology should be viewed as a transitional demand of Disability Justice. More information [here](#).

## The interactive map launched in July at UCL presents over 450 Israeli court cases in which civilians sought compensation under tort law for damages inflicted during armed activities.

A project conceptualised and co-led by DPU PhD student **Venugopal Agrawal** from January 2021 to June 2022 at Saath Charitable Trust, Ahmedabad, India won the ESRI India GIS Achievement Award in the Non-Profit Organizations category. The initiative implemented a GIS-Based Management Information System across multiple projects at Saath, allowing progress on infrastructure development, health-care outcomes, livelihood development, skills training and education to be tracked and managed effectively across individual settlements and multiple city wards in Ahmedabad. The award was accepted in January 2023 by Venugopal's co-lead, Abid Hira, at the Annual ESRI User Conference in New Delhi.

**Khristine (Tin) Alvarez** was awarded an IJURR (International Journal of Urban and Regional Research) Foundation Writing-up Grant in April 2023. In May 2023, she presented a paper titled “Paradoxes of resilient city making” at the Flow/Overflow/Shortage Symposium. She co-authored the debates paper “COVID-19 and urban informality: Exploring the implications of the pandemic for the politics of planning and inequality” published in Urban Studies earlier this year, and this was also included in the journal's July special Issue on “Urban Public Health Emergencies and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Infrastructures, Urban Governance and Civil Society”.

In April 2023, **Carmen Abouamra** was awarded the IJURR Foundation Studentship for her research on LGBTQ migration. This research examines the spaces, encounters, borders, and infrastructure that shape this migratory experience.

The [Navigating the System](#) exhibition welcomed 1200 visitors to the Urban Room at UCL East from mid-March to mid-April 2023, and showcased the results of a research project on boat dwellers' access to healthcare services across London. This project was designed to investigate the entanglements of transient water lifestyles and health. It was led by PhD students **Nura Ali** (DPU) and Joseph Cook (Anthropology), and funded by a UCL Grand Challenges award. They worked with photographer Caitlin Vinicombe to illustrate their statistical and qualitative findings. The team engaged the boater and health communities, as well as policymakers, in a successful dialogue event on 13 April 2023.

PhD student **Orlando Sabogal** was invited by GIMS (Grupo de Investigación en Movilidad Sostenible) at Universidad Nacional de Colombia to lead a Summer Course on [Spatial Analysis](#). The course covered geocomputing operation, spatial autocorrelation, and other key spatial analysis techniques.

On 19 July 2023, an [interactive database](#) titled “Mapping civilian harm claims against Israel and the Palestinian Authority before Israeli courts” was launched at UCL. The project was led by Haim Abraham (UCL Faculty of Laws), Gilat Bachar (Temple University Beasley School of Law) and the Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights, with the assistance of DPU PhD student **Matan Flum**. This interactive map presents over 450 Israeli court cases in which civilians sought compensation under tort law for damages inflicted during armed activities. Databases that document the losses suffered by civilians in armed conflict are highly important to the facilitation of reparations and reconciliation. Having a clear record of the wrongs committed during conflict is key to holding those responsible to account.

# Hands on

The action-research project **OVERDUE: Tackling the sanitation taboo** continued to foster productive knowledge exchanges across African cities via three stops between May and June 2023. Each stop contributed to the OVERDUE Charter “We C.R.A.V.E (Commit Recognise Act Valorise Engender) Just Sanitation for African cities”.

## Stop-1 Mwanza Knowledge Exchange

From 26 April to 5 May 2023, OVERDUE project partners from Bukavu, Beira and Freetown joined the MSc ESD Learning Alliance in Mwanza (more details below). Hosted by the Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) and Ardhi University, the OVERDUE delegation was exposed to innovative interventions supported by the Federation for the Urban Poor Tanzania aimed at improving sanitation. These included further connections of off-grid facilities to the simplified sewerage systems, the construction of individual toilet structures financed through the innovative Mwanza Sanitation Forum and Fund (a strategic sanitation intervention supported by OVERDUE), and the promotion of hygiene education via the Community Health Workers.

## Stop-2 Antananarivo Knowledge Exchange

From 19 to 23 June 2023, OVERDUE partners from Mwanza, Saint Louis and Abidjan went to Antananarivo for a knowledge exchange hosted by SiMIRALENTA and Genre en Action. The team met with the Commune Urbaine d’Antananarivo and undertook several visits, meetings, and workshops to discuss gender, just sanitation, and experiences across the cities taking part in the exchange. The visit also marked the opening of the strategic intervention implemented by SiMIRALENTA and Genre en Action with their partner the Société Municipale d’Assainissement. The OVERDUE team and their

partners rehabilitated a small faecal sludge management plant close to a primary school. Two objectives of the project are to reduce open air defecation and mismanaged disposal of sludge in the neighbourhood; and to reduce the work and economic load of women dealing with sanitation at a domestic level.

## Stop-3 Maputo Knowledge Exchange

On 27 June 2023, members of Austral Consultoria, Associação FACE de Água e Saneamento and l’Etre Egale from the OVERDUE Beira team organised a seminar in Maputo on **Inclusive and Gender Sensitive Urban Sanitation in Mozambique**. Forty prominent water and sanitation practitioners from Beira and Maputo discussed the promises, deficits, injustices, disregard for the needs of women, and the bias for on-grid sanitation in African cities. Hélder Domingos from FACE and Catarina Mavila from Austral Ltd (OVERDUE’s partners in Mozambique) extracted key learnings from the three-year long action project carried out in Beira, with support from the Serviço Autónomo de Saneamento (SASB) Director, Moíse Chenene. The conversation focused on how to plan, build and sustain public toilets (PT) in a context where the shortage of land and the scarcity of autonomous individual sanitation systems give PT a public service/commons status. The day after the seminar, Maputo municipality organised on-site meetings with people using, building and managing public toilets. In off-grid peripheral settlements, maintaining and sharing community toilets remains a complicated and potentially conflictual topic; a balancing act between rights and duties, as much as a social construction impregnated with gender stereotypes and power relations.

In July 2023, the OVERDUE project hosted 70 engaged and well-positioned sanitation practitioners from across 15 cities in Africa for an online co-learning space. They approached a series of key stops along the sanitation service chain (watch the call for participants here) by exploring everything from pipes to people as infrastructure; from

investments and policies to collective action; from sanitation facilities to health and environmental outcomes; from bylaws to social norms. In a nutshell, everything that matters to make urban sanitation a means to build more caring and gender equitable cities. As a developing community of practice, ready to embrace the challenge of building equitable sanitation for women and men, they have collectively authored a glossary “**Talking Just Sanitation into Practice**” which represents the practices, people, places, feelings and things that make up sanitation in French, English, Portuguese and Swahili speaking Africa. The month of collaboration culminated in the drafting of a charter setting out the key values of #JustSanitation4AfricanCities by setting out what each represented urban area CRAVEs (Commits Recognises Acts Valorises Engenders) to reach our common goal of sanitation justice. This draft will be taken forward in each city as the team builds towards a final OVERDUE meeting in Nairobi, and eventually reframes sanitation talks at the UN High Level Political Forum and SDGs Summit in September 2023.

**The OVERDUE project hosted 70 engaged sanitation practitioners from across 15 cities in Africa. They approached a series of key stops along the sanitation service chain by exploring everything that matters to make urban sanitation a means to build more caring and gender equitable cities.**





OVERDUE partners from Freetown and Bukavu explore the simplified sewerage network of Mabatini, Mwanza (top); OVERDUE partners support the launch of the school garden and kitchen alongside the newly rehabilitated faecal sludge treatment plant (middle); Sanitation practitioners from Maputo and Beira join OVERDUE for a seminar and tour of Maputo public toilets (bottom). Photo Credit (all images): OVERDUE, May-June 2023.



The 2022-23 **MSc Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD)** cohort has also been part of a **Learning Alliance** with the **OVERDUE** project. As part of this Alliance led by Adriana Allen and Rita Lambert, ESD students worked with OVERDUE partners at Ardhi University (Wilbard Kombe) and the Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) (Timothy Ndezi), producing actionable knowledge to advance just sanitation in the city of Mwanza, Tanzania and beyond. During April-May 2023, the ESD students embarked on a ten-day research trip to Mwanza, Tanzania to offer a 360 perspective on what just sanitation means. In addition to Rita and Adriana, DPU staff supported their work in the field, including Pascale Hofmann, Nadine Coetzee, and Aishath Green, together with Festo Makoba and Mussa Raido at CCI, Tatu Mtwangi Limbumba, Sheila Salum and Richard Prosper at ARDHI University, as well as Flower Innocent Gelard and Godlisten Ulomi, who completed the interns team. The group was joined by OVERDUE partners from Bukavu (DRC), Beira (Mozambique) and Freetown (Sierra Leone). Their work culminated in a full day devoted to sharing and debating the students' findings and recommendations with a wide range of local stakeholders, and the production of the following policy briefs:

- Closing the Loop: Capturing the Value of Sustainable Sanitation to Benefit Urban Agriculture.
- Keeping the Pot Cooking: Community-led Revolving funds and the Key Ingredients for Just Sanitation.
- Strategies for equitable access to urban sanitation: Bridging-grid and off-grid technologies.
- Caring for the Carers: Gender Responsive Sanitation Policy and Action.



ESD students and partners at the end of their presentations in Mwanza. Photo Credit: Adriana Allen.

The **Fairville project (Facing Inequalities and democratic challenges through Co-production in Cities)** was launched in February

2023 at a successful inaugural event hosted by the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) based at the Laboratoire Architecture, Ville, Urbanisme, Environnement (LAVUE) in the University of Paris Nanterre. The initial consortium meeting set the theoretical groundwork for the project. During their visit to Montreuil's La Noue estate, the Fairville team – formed by Barbara Lipietz, Alessio Kolioulis and Tim Wickson – engaged with locals and activists to understand their perspectives on urban regeneration and living conditions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This work was underpinned by the launch of Fairville Labs, which kicked off in Berlin in late May 2023. A workshop formalised the launch of all project labs, with discussions on operational plans. Fairville members also visited the Rathausblock, a significant site in Berlin's Fairville Lab, where local activists, artists, and the city's largest social landlord are collaborating to create affordable housing. This effort is critical given Berlin's housing crisis and aims to

**The Fairville team engaged with locals and activists to understand their perspectives on urban regeneration and living conditions, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



Fairville team - Fairville kick off Meeting, February 2023. Photo Credit: Audrey Debargue.

preserve social spaces via shared land agreements, co-managed by the various stakeholders. Looking ahead, the Fairville consortium's next major event is the Open Citizen Meeting, scheduled for Brussels in November 2023. All project stakeholders will gather for the first time, including academics, non-academics, local authorities, and most notably, the Fairville Lab Citizens. To date, all eight Fairville Labs have been featured in the project's blog. Detailed presentations on these labs can be found on [the project website](#).

In March 2023, Daniel Oviedo and DPU60 PhD scholar Mariajosé Nieto met with the **Transitions to Sustainable Urban Mobility (T-SUM)** team based at the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC). They shared project outputs with Freetown's public and private sector stakeholders. The Sierra Leone Ministry of Transport has assigned a technical expert to liaise with the research team and explore how T-SUM and the UCL Walking Cities Lab's outputs may be incorporated into the World Bank-funded Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project to regenerate Moyiba, a hillside informal settlement and one of T-SUM's case study sites. T-SUM outputs have previously been shared with the team working on World Bank-funded Integrated Resilience Urban Mobility Project (IRUMP).

In March 2023, Clemence Cavoli, from UCL's Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering (CEGE), together with the T-SUM team based at the Observatory of Mobility and Transport (OMT), presented project findings to Amilton Florêncio Alissone, Mozambique's Vice-Minister for Transport and Communications. Evidence collected by the T-SUM team on everyday mobility and accessibility in Maputo was incorporated into the **Maputo Metropolitan Area's (MMA) inaugural Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)**, supported by the MobiliseYourCity Partnership.

**The Sierra Leone Ministry of Transport has assigned a technical expert to liaise with the research team and explore how T-SUM and the UCL Walking Cities Lab's outputs may be incorporated into the World Bank-funded Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project.**

T-SUM/WCL's team with representatives from the Ministry of Transport during a strategic meeting in Freetown, March 2023. Photo Credit: Daniel Oviedo.



In May 2023, DPU's Liza Griffin and George Revill, Open University, received **Bartlett Policy Support Funding** for their arts-based policy engagement work designed to help foster better working relationships between policymakers at the local, regional, and national levels in UK fisheries. The project focuses on social sustainability and resilience in a notoriously divided sector. Social sustainability and resilience are fundamental not only for UK fisheries and struggling fishing communities, but they are also a strategic policy area for current national policymaking. Their arts-based policy engagement involved reflection and directed discussion between stakeholders around a creative artefact called a 'sonic postcard'. The sonic postcard called Fishing for Life is a 14-minute sound-work co-created with stakeholders, fishers, researchers (including Griffin and Revill) and a sound artist for a UKRI research art-engagement project called "Sounding Coastal Change". Workshops involved the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, the Marine Management Organisation, the Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science and Fishing into the Future.

**Social sustainability and resilience are fundamental not only for UK fisheries and struggling fishing communities, but they are also a strategic policy area for current national policymaking.**

In May 2023, the MSc Urban Economic Development (UED) cohort studied the **Tren Maya project in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula** through its Overseas Practice Engagement. Alessio Koliulis, Carmen Abouamra and Étienne von Bertrab, with the support of PhD student Juliano Cavalli, strengthened UED's relationship with Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY) and with local research partners Co'ox Mayab, Niños y Crías, as well as the Secretariat of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU). The primary aim of their research was to understand the effects of infrastructure development on the Yucatán Peninsula, specifically in Mérida and its surrounding region. The study placed particular emphasis on the implications of infrastructure development for ecological integrity and the circular economy, community-led tourism and the transformation of the state vis-à-vis regional planning.

After three years, Kamna Patel has stepped down as a founding advisory panel member of **Accelerate, the outreach programme of the built environment charity the Open City Foundation**. Accelerate aims to diversify the built environment and provides 16-18-year-olds with a series of skills workshops on architecture, planning and construction across London; one-to-one mentoring; and in-depth guidance on university applications. It targets groups underrepresented in built environment education. During Kamna's tenure, Accelerate has grown from one cohort of 30 students partnered with UCL, to three cohorts of 90 students partnered with UCL, Central St. Martins, Kingston University and the AA. The programme is expanding to Birmingham in 2024. On average, 70% of Accelerate participants secure conditional offers to study architecture and related subjects at university, marking real progress in diversifying built environment education.

**Accelerate aims to diversify the built environment and provides 16-18-year-olds with a series of skills workshops on architecture, planning and construction across London**

Kamna Patel has joined the inaugural cohort of **Culture, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (CEDI) Associates at the Wellcome Trust**, following a competitive process. Kamna will work alongside the CEDI team at Wellcome and five other expert Associates to support Wellcome's ambition to be an inclusive funder.

DPU's Liza Griffin and Bartlett's Gemma Moore, along with consultant Catherine Max and Mark Walton at Shared Assets, have been awarded **knowledge exchange funding** for a project entitled "Co-producing an Online Platform for the Healthy Parks Framework". The Healthy Parks Framework (HPF) is an engagement and planning tool that enables park managers and community groups to plan and appraise greenspaces to improve the health of park users, engage residents, and address health inequalities. Their online interactive platform will elevate and embed their work within wider policy and practice ecosystems. This platform will offer guidance for local authorities and community groups on how to use HPF and will host usable case studies on what can be done to make greenspaces more inclusive and promote health. London's **Central**



St John's Gardens,  
Clerkenwell. Photo  
Credit: Gordon  
Brockie, Central  
District Alliance.

**District Alliance** has used the Healthy Parks Framework to co-design a green space in Clerkenwell called St John's Garden. The Framework was used by stakeholders to consider the garden's landscape, its biodiversity, activities on offer and its spatial features. The different characteristics of the Framework provided a means to identify key elements of a healthy garden space.

On Friday 8 September, a 6.8-magnitude earthquake shook **Morocco** below a remote cluster of mountainous villages 45 miles south of Marrakech. The earthquake caused the death of over 2000 people and injured over 2000 more according to Morocco's Ministry of Interior. The impact of the earthquake was felt all over the country, but the epicentre was recorded in the High Atlas Mountains close to Marrakech. This shocking event is particularly personal to the DPU as Marrakech was the destination for MSc Health in Urban Development's (HUD) Overseas Practice Engagement in 2023. Our students and staff visited and worked in Marrakech's Medina, where several houses have collapsed, as well as in the village of Aghbalou which was also severely impacted. Our partner organisation, The High Atlas Foundation (HAF) works extensively in Marrakech and the surrounding villages affected and has established a support system for the communities there. Our thoughts are with the people of Morocco.

# Staff news

On 22 May 2023, **Jacqueline Hartley** joined the DPU as the new Programme Administrator working alongside Roisin Breen. Jackie is returning to DPU after initially joining temporarily in the Unit Secretary role some years ago. She has been working for both the Institute for Global Health and Global Business School at UCL in the intervening years.

**Kamna Patel** has returned to the DPU following a two-year secondment with INGO Christian Aid as their Principal Advisor on Race and Diversity. She is looking to bring her new and challenging ideas on racial equity and decolonisation in the development and humanitarian sector into her teaching and research.

**Natalia Gavazzo** joined the DPU as a visiting scholar between April and August 2023. She is a Researcher of the Technological and Scientific Research National Council (CONICET) and Professor in Anthropology, Action Research Methods, and Migrations at the Universidad de San Martín (UNSAM), Buenos Aires. Since 1999, she has been studying regional migrations to Argentina, particularly focusing on Bolivians and Paraguayans in Buenos Aires, their identification with migratory origins, and the impact of those identifications on their social participation in communitarian organisations. She worked with Adriana Allen on the intersection of migration, gender, and climate change and, with support from the DPU EJUR research cluster, Natalia produced a comprehensive literature review on this question, while also drawing on her own action-research conducted with migrant women in the Reconquista River basin in Buenos Aires. She will share key insights from this desk-study at a public seminar in Autumn 2023. We are grateful to Natalia for her contributions and look forward to continuing to work with her in the future!

In July 2023, the OVERDUE team said “au revoir, à la prochaine” to its treasured research fellow and colleague **Nelly LeBlond**. Her valuable inputs, support and insights, intellectual contributions to the project, her care for each member of the team, and organisational support, will be missed thoroughly. She is an exceptional individual and professional with massive qualities on all fronts. The team wishes her all the best in her personal and professional life, and she has earned the appreciation of everyone across the OVERDUE network.

# Networks and meetings

In January 2023, Kamna Patel spoke on a keynote panel at a conference on **The Politics of Development Studies**, hosted at the University of Manchester by Tom Goodfellow and Prithvi Behuria, and funded by the Journal of Development Studies and the Development Studies Association (DSA). The panel closed the conference with provocations to the question “What’s wrong with Development Studies and how can we change it?”. Kamna spoke alongside Ingrid Kvangraven (Kings College London), Sara Stevano (SOAS) and Indrajit Roy (University of York). Their talks were turned to blogs and can be accessed via the [DSA website](#).

**Étienne von Bertrab was invited to give a talk at the Tourism, Globalisation and Local Societies permanent seminar at Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). His talk focused on the role of academia in a highly polarised political environment in the context of the Tren Maya project.**

**DPU alumni and Camillo reuniting in Santiago de Chile. Photo credit: unknown.**



In March 2023, Daniel Oviedo participated as keynote speaker on public transport affordability at a session on “Transport for Inclusive Development: The Role of Inclusive Mobility as a Catalyst for a Sustainable Future” during the **World Bank’s Transforming Transportation conference** in Washington D.C.

In March 2023, Daniel Oviedo was invited to speak at the Volvo Research and Education Foundation (VREF)’s **Future of Urban Transport research workshop** in Paris, France. In his role as the lead of the research project “Transforming the Unwalkable City: knowledge, practices, and interventions for a more inclusive future of walking in Africa” he reflected on the need for transforming unwalkable cities through empathy. At the same workshop, DPU60 PhD Scholar Mariajosé Nieto was selected as one of the **Next generation scholars**. She presented her PhD research on “the value of two and three-wheeled mobilities: mobile livelihoods and non-commuter mobilities in a Caribbean urban mobility configuration”. She also presented at a thematic session about data collection in transport, where she shared her mixed-method methodology for understanding the functionalities of popular transport, including mobile interviews, GPS tracking and Google Street View.

On 12 March 2023, Catalina Ortiz spoke at the **People Compare: Cross Disciplinary Discussions** event hosted by the LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre.

In April 2023, Camillo Boano participated in a week-long workshop entitled “**Experiment on uncertain terrain: extensions as re-compositions, Urban Life at the extensions**”. This was curated by Abdoumalig Simone and supported by the British Institute in Paris as well as the Sheffield Urban Institute.

In April 2023, Camillo Boano was invited to give a keynote speech at the **AHRA PhD Symposium** at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Cardiff, themed “researching in crisis”. He also took the opportunity to present a paper titled “Lifelines and the possibility of destituent design: opaque notes on incompleteness and failure as methods in urban crisis research”.

On 9 May 2023, Étienne von Bertrab was invited to give a talk at the **Tourism, Globalisation and Local Societies** permanent seminar at Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). His talk focused on the role of academia in a highly polarised political environment in the context of the Tren Maya project. This led to a fruitful dialogue involving numerous academics and local stakeholders.

On 22 May 2023, Catalina Ortiz was invited to speak at the [Digitising the Periphery](#) symposium where she discussed “[digitising self-built neighbourhoods otherwise](#)”. The event was held at The Building Centre in London.

On 24 May 2023, Catalina Ortiz was invited to present at the [Slum upgrading and popular participation symposium](#) hosted by the Queen Mary Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean at Queen Mary, University of London.

In May 2023, Camillo Boano visited UDLA (Universidad de Las Americas) in Santiago de Chile to engage in a series of conversations around the pedagogy of architecture and urban design, specifically working with the [Nucleo Estudio Urbano](#) led by DPU alumni Francisco Vergara Perucich and other colleagues. During his trip, Camillo was interviewed at a speaker series entitled “Cielo Falso”, and he was also able to meet some DPU alumni for an informal dinner.

As the President of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), Adriana Allen participated in the [UN-Habitat Second Assembly \(UNHA2\)](#) in June 2023. She advocated for the acceleration and full realisation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and its commitments, in particular the respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights under the umbrella of the Right to the City. This includes women’s full and effective participation and equal rights; combating and preventing speculation, displacement, homelessness and forced evictions; ensuring the social and ecological functions of housing, land and the city; the need to further decentralise decision-making and resource-allocation processes; the recognition of cities as common goods; and the democratic management of cities and territories through more participatory and inclusive approaches, such as the social production of habitat. As 2023 sees the mid-term review of the 2030 Agenda at the SDG Summit and the development of UN-Habitat’s next strategic plan, it is more critical than ever to renew a decisive commitment to implementing the NUA principles and commitments, and identify concrete steps to localise its implementation. UNHA2 was also a great opportunity to strengthen DPU and HIC collaboration with long term partners, including UCLG, Huairou Commission, and Slum Dwellers International, among many others.

In June 2023, Azadeh Mashayekhi and Haim Yacobi organised two workshops at the DPU and SciencesPo Paris, in collaboration with H el ene Thiollet, on “[The Role of Religious Actors in Urban Politics of Middle Eastern Cities](#)”. The workshops brought together participants from the UK, France and the Middle East with support from UCL’s Global Engagement Fund Cities Partnerships. The workshop participants provided a detailed account of various cases in which religious organisations shaped the politics of urban development in different parts of the region. A working group of DPU and Sciences Po academics and early career researchers will pursue further research on urban politics, religious actors and the entanglement of state, market, religion and urbanism.

In June 2023, Camillo Boano delivered a keynote at the University of Reading, UK, for the launch of the [Critical Geographies of Disasters workshop and network](#). He presented a paper entitled “From spaces, figures and territories to the minor, the ambivalence and the destituent gesture of critique”.

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On 26 June 2023, Cassidy Johnson and UCL EPICentre's Felipe Rivera convened and chaired a workshop as part of phase 2 of a **British Council's Going Global Partnerships grant**. The activity was jointly co-organised by the Indian Institution for Human Settlements (IHS), EPICentre, and DPU, in consultation with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). In the workshop, a baseline curriculum about disaster resilient infrastructure, previously developed by an Indian consortium of universities lead by IHS, was revised by a cross-faculty group from UCL. The curriculum will be taught across a range of higher educational institutions in India, the UK, and eventually in other countries. The workshop included academics from various departments, as well as DPU's Caren Levy, Julio Davila and Emmanuel Ostueye.

Catalina Ortiz and Natalia Villamizar Duarte presented their project **Living Archive: weaving gendered (hi) stories of urban regeneration in Moravia, Medellin** at the Weaving worlds: Speculations between affect & evidence conference, which was held at TU Delft, 28-30 June 2023. Catalina also presented her work at the event WARP – Werkstatt für kulturelle Ausdrucksweisen und Recherche in der Praxis, hosted by the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage at Humboldt-University of Berlin on 5 July 2023.

In July 2023, Daniel Oviedo participated in the **World Conference of Transport Research (WCTR)** with two papers: "Lifting urban mobility for the poor: decoding the links between mobility, neighbourhood perceptions, and life satisfaction" and "How much is accessibility worth? Utility-based accessibility to evaluate transport policies in Latin America." The first paper was awarded the best WCTR paper on transport in developing countries.

In July 2023, Daniel Oviedo also participated as a panellist in the sixth session of the 2023 **INTALINC (International Network for Transport and Accessibility in Low-Income Communities)** webinar "n "emerging priorities for future research".

In July 2023, Camillo Boano participated in the **28<sup>th</sup> UIA (International Union of Architects) World Congress** in Copenhagen. Along with Francisco Diaz he presented a paper entitled "Refusing Land's Capture: A New Status for a Finite Resource" at a panel session on "Design for Partnership for Change: Re-thinking Land", which was led and facilitated by Sandi Hilal (DAAR and 2023 Golden Lyon at the Venice Biennale) and Merve Bedir.

Catalina Ortiz was invited to contribute to the episode on "Medellin: Social Urbanism" in **The City Show podcast**, hosted by the African Centre for Cities and the Cityscapes Magazine.

On 12 July 2023, Azadeh Mashayekhi was invited to the **5<sup>th</sup> Congress on Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies** in Lyon. She presented her paper as part of a panel on "Political Production of Space in Capital Cities in the Middle East and Muslim World". The panel was organised as part of an ongoing research project SPACEPOL (Space and Politics in the Capital Cities) – a comparative study of six capital cities, Ankara, Astana, Tehran, Cairo and Abu Dhabi, funded by ANR France.

On 19 July 2023, Catalina Ortiz co-hosted the "**Southern Urbanist Practice Reflection Seminar**" along with UCL Urban Lab's Postgraduate Urbanists. This was a hybrid event with contributions from Gautam Bhan (Indian Institute for Human Settlement), Gabriella Carolini (MIT), Beatrice De Carli (London Metropolitan University), Suraya Scheba (African Centre for Cities), Tanzil Shafique (University of Sheffield) and Ola Uduku (University of Liverpool). The seminar aimed to inspire and equip participants to incorporate Southern Urbanist Practice into their respective urban contexts through thought-provoking conversations, idea exchange and actionable insights.

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In July 2023, Adriana Allen participated in the annual meeting of **Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Sustentable** (CEDEUS) at the Catholic University of Chile. As a member of CEDEUS International Advisory Committee, Adriana has been supporting CEDEUS from its inception. The 2023 annual meeting took place in Concepcion and provided a great opportunity to engage with the whole team to discuss how to continue driving its research along key lines of public policy, shaping Chilean cities present and future. During the meeting, she also participated in a public panel discussion on what building a feminist perspective into research, advocacy and organisation change looks like.

The trip also provided an opportunity to connect with Chilean members of the **Habitat International Coalition** (HIC), which Adriana has presided over since 2020, and also with DPU alumni. On her way back to London, she had a brief stop in Buenos Aires, where she participated in a seminar discussion on rental housing trends as an emerging form of urban extractivism, and on the gendered impacts of housing financiarisation upon tenants. The seminar was co-organised by CEAPI, ACIJ, CELS and the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation and attended by social movements, grassroots organisations, legislators and journalists who together built a 360-degree perspective on this critical and yet overlooked challenge. Adriana's intervention framed the wider context in which the post-Fordist housing regime emerging over the last two decades is increasingly undermining the use value of housing, and precarising tenants' access to housing, with disproportional impacts on women.

In August 2023, Liza Griffin presented a paper at the **Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference** on "Mediating Wellbeing in Greenspaces" at a panel asking "Why do urban green and blue spaces matter for health and wellbeing?".

**Adriana's intervention framed the wider context in which the post-Fordist housing regime emerging over the last two decades is increasingly undermining the use value of housing, and precarising tenants' access to housing, with disproportional impacts on women.**

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