



# UCL

**MSc** Social  
Development Practice



A critical approach to 'people-centred' development, addressing the challenges for promoting well-being and equitable citizenship in the context of social diversity and globalisation

### Programme Co-Directors

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### Core and Optional Modules

Social Policy and Citizenship  
Social Diversity, Inequality and Poverty  
Social Development in Practice  
NGOs and Social Transformation  
Communication, Technologies and Social Power

# MSc Social Development Practice

**Overview** The central focus of the programme is the relationship between active citizenship and development, with the recognition that diverse identities and aspirations are critical components of social change. This programme responds to the increasing focus on well-being and 'people-centred' approaches, evidenced both by the revised policy priorities of many development agencies, and the discourses of grass-roots organizations, which question market led processes of development. At the same time, there is a need to problematize such approaches, given the power



relations operating at various scales, from the global to the local, and the social dynamics of rapidly urbanizing societies. These concerns highlight the challenge of recognising and valuing difference in a way that strengthens, rather than fragments, collective action, and ensures universal principles of equity. This programme offers the opportunity to engage with the theoretical and practical implications of promoting well-being and citizenship in the context of social diversity, exploring the traditional realm of the social sector as entry point to influence wider contestations of rights and citizenship as manifested in development initiatives.

**Structure** The programme consists of lectures, seminars, workshops, case study analysis, and field work in the UK and abroad. Students are expected to take an active part in their own learning through reading, essay writing and individual and group project work. Student performance is assessed through programme work, examinations, and a dissertation report.

The programme consists of the three core modules that are compulsory for all SDP students (90credits); an optional module (30 credits); and a dissertation report (60 credits).



The core programme modules provide the theoretical and methodological components of the programme. Participants are required to study a core group of subjects which focus on planning and practice and on the theoretical debates which underpin social development policy and practice generally, and poverty reduction in particular. Programme sessions comprise lectures, seminars, group work, debates and practical exercises. An overseas field work assignment is undertaken in term three.

The optional module allows students to select a programme from another MSc programme in accordance with their own particular interests.

**Careers** The programme attracts participants from a wide variety of disciplines including sociology, anthropology, international studies, history, communication studies, geography and psychology. The programme focuses on linking an analysis of social development theory with the application of practical development methodologies. The emphasis on UK based and international field work gives students a level of practical experience which is not offered by comparable social development Master's courses. This puts participants in a good position to pursue careers in international development, by applying



acquired skills on the ground to support relationships between community groups and development actors. Graduates of the programme have moved into a range of professions, including work in: international NGOs, in both specialised social NGOs (for example NGOs concerned with gender equality, youth, or disability) and social roles in mainstream development NGOs; bilateral development agencies as social development specialists; national government in positions related to social policy, and; private sector companies engaged in social appraisal, social research and consultancy. The programme has also provided many graduates with the basis to continue into PhD research.