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Parallel session A2

**Knowledge and global urban studies**

Monday 11 November, 16.00 – 17.30

IAS Common Ground

Chair: **Prof Julio D Davila**, Professor of Urban Policy and International Development, UCL

Discussant: **Prof. Susan Parnell**, Chair in Human Geography, University of Bristol

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**Reinventing planning education through networked pedagogies**

Prof. Adriana Allen, Professor of Development Planning and Urban Sustainability, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL

Julia Wesely, Research Fellow, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL

This presentation reflects on ongoing research within the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) programme, which brings together 13 partners across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the UK to address growing inequalities in the global South. Planning Education is one central lever for developing pathways to urban equality, as its aspiration is to equip urban practitioners with the necessary skills, competencies and capabilities to strategically address current and future development challenges.

Despite its central role for achieving more just and equal cities – manifested in global agendas such as the SDGs 4 and 11 – current planning education rather seems to be compounded in double inequalities. There are inequalities in accessing, experiencing and providing education itself, as well as inequalities produced as an outcome of inadequate education. Previous research has identified severe quantitative deficits, outdated pedagogies, and qualitative shortfalls in the education of urban practitioners. Moreover, the political economy and pedagogic practices adopted in (higher) education programmes often reproduce Western-centric political imaginations of planning, which in turn reproduce urban inequality.

Against this backdrop, the presentation contributes to consolidating and making visible innovative and critical pedagogies for reinventing education at scale. Specifically, it explores the roles of regional grassroots networks and higher education networks for facilitating translocal learning – by which we mean the situated traveling of ideas, knowledges and practices – for urban practitioners. Taking the pedagogical work of the Habitat International Coalition in Latin America (HIC-AL) and the African Association of Planning Schools (AAPS) as case studies, the presentation critically examines their distinct de-colonial, pluriversal, justice- and inclusion-oriented agendas to reflect on their potential to transform increasingly unequal cities in the global South.

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## **The challenge of conflicting rationalities about urban development: Experiences from Mistra Urban Futures' transdisciplinary urban research**

Prof. David Simon, Professor of Development Geography, Royal Holloway University of London

Dr Warren Smit, Research Manager, African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town

This paper reflects on ten years of transdisciplinary urban research by Mistra Urban Futures, a global centre focusing on the co-production of knowledge for more just and sustainable cities across the global South and global North. The paper focuses on one of the key challenges that Mistra Urban Futures has faced in its work: in addition to the competing interests and agendas of participants in co-production processes, there are also often deeper underlying conflicting rationalities about many of the key concepts and substantive issues relating to making cities more just and sustainable,, driven by ideological, educational, contextual and personal factors. These differences can be even more polarised between different cities and countries, including deep divisions about the fundamental nature of the problem, the ultimate goals and objectives of urban development interventions, and key underlying concepts.

This paper explores these challenges and reflects on the various approaches adopted by Mistra Urban Futures to facilitate the understanding of these differences and identify commonalities and overlaps of interest. For example, most of the Mistra Urban Futures projects had initial phases to identify and understand the different views of participants in order to be able to identify common ground for collaboration. In some cases, the different terminologies and concepts used by people from different sectors or disciplines required developing a common conceptual vocabulary during this initial phase. In one particular project in Cape Town, the research method included the mapping of the different rationalities of key stakeholders as a basis for identifying opportunities for further collaboration. Ultimately, understanding and engaging with the different rationalities of participants in co-production processes is essential for different actors to work together to co-produce and operationalize knowledge for more just and sustainable cities.