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# dpu news

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# Partnering with higher education institutions for social and environmental justice in the global South: lessons from the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre

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In the context of the £1.5 billion aid money that the UK government is now channelling through UK research institutions, this article explores the importance of building local institutions and capacity in order to establish equitable research partnerships that respond to local concerns. It will also explore the role of these institutions in brokering local partnerships for urban justice.

### GCRF debate

As far back as 1970, UN member nations classified as ‘economically advanced’ committed themselves to increasing “... official development assistance to the developing countries ... to reach a minimum net amount of 0.7 percent of its gross national product at market prices”. The UK is one of only six countries that uphold this commitment today, having made it central to its foreign policy. UK ODA has resisted government cuts but, in the context of austerity, it has been difficult to maintain the legitimacy of this conspicuous investment, with increasing pressure to use ODA to the benefit of the UK economy. The government has therefore now taken the opportunity to support an underfunded higher education sector, at risk of losing their EU funding. As a result, UK universities and research institutions are now receiving £1.5 billion of ODA.

David Hulme, head of the Development Studies Association, the most important professional organisation of academics working on international development, argued that the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) risks ‘ripping off’ the poorest people in the world because it moves resources away from the poorest and puts them into sectors where investments have the highest returns for UK society. On the other hand, current UK aid policies allocate large amounts of money to multi-national companies and private sector consultancies for programmes that many consider problematic.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, universities may do a better job of spending these funds. For instance, the practice-oriented work of the DPU has always been supported by ODA.

Nonetheless, these funds pose ethical challenges to universities. It is important

that researchers do not see GCRF as just more research money to continue ‘research as usual’, taking for granted that their research will benefit a developing country. A fundamental question for researchers is how best can we use these funds, given that they should lead to improved well-being for some of the poorest women and men. We share our reflections to support researchers’ thinking about how to create and engage in the partnerships needed for ODA research.

### The need for strategic research partnerships in the

What we often witness ourselves and hear from colleagues in the global South is that foreign researchers hire local academics as individual consultants to do data collection and other research tasks. Local academics targeted by international researchers are often among the best academics in the country and are usually happy to join such projects if paid international rates. This directs their time and energy away from local universities and organisations, including the government, which desperately need their input. Local academics thus have more incentive to conduct work which responds to external research agendas in projects that may hold little immediate benefit for local universities.

The responsibility lies with UK-based researchers, although their practices are understandable. It takes a couple of emails to agree a daily fee with a local researcher, but it takes months or years to develop a strategic partnership with a local university in which the terms of engagement in research projects for staff are openly discussed and arrangements identified that benefit all parties. But if Northern researchers do not want to take resources away from global South higher education and government institutions by offering a parallel salary and diverting people from their critical work, then a long-term partnership approach is the only viable option. Having equitable partnerships with local research institutions, however, is not enough. To improve well-being for women and men living in poverty, the global South partner institution also needs to have strong relationships with communities and their

organisations. Through the discussion of the DPU experience with Njala University in setting up the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre, we will highlight some of the challenges and potential of building these complex partnerships.

### The Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC)

Between 1991 and 2002, the Sierra Leone civil war displaced about one third of the population and left the country with fragile institutions, poor infrastructure, and a weak economy. In 2014, post-war recovery was undermined by the Ebola epidemic, which killed approximately 4,000 people in Sierra Leone (and many more in neighbouring countries) and had a major impact on the country’s economy. Sierra Leone remains at the bottom of the Human Development Index, ranking 179th out of 188. 78% of the population is in multidimensional poverty<sup>2</sup> and a further 15% is at risk of falling into multidimensional poverty, while maternal mortality is the highest in the world.

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*Below:* Workshopping urban settlements, Freetown.  
Photo by SLURC.



Recognising the scarcity of reliable data and other information about Freetown, and the limitations of local research capacity, the UK NGO Comic Relief, which had a portfolio of funded projects in informal settlements in the city, asked the DPU to conduct scoping research on the knowledge available with a local lecturer. When they approached the DPU again to commission research into some of the important knowledge



*Above:* Cockle Bay settlement. Photo by SLURC

gaps identified, we asked ourselves what the legacy of such a project would be. This prompted discussions with Njala University, the leading academic institution in Sierra Leone, after which a case was made to Comic Relief about the need for a larger investment. The project proposed to establish a research institution to build research capacity of urban professionals and communities in Sierra Leone, to set a locally-relevant research agenda, to deliver high quality research in partnership with others, to disseminate research outputs, and to work in partnership with urban actors to advocate for urban justice.

The Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) was officially launched in early 2016, aided by sustained support from the Njala University management, whose Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Environmental Science Faculty have remained directly involved throughout. SLURC is based at the Institute of Geography and Development Studies at Njala University. Therefore, a financially autonomous legal structure – controlled by a board composed of Njala University, the DPU and a local civil society representative – was set up to ensure the operational flexibility needed to implement complex practice-oriented research projects. Njala University also seconded, on a part-time basis, two of its lecturers to direct SLURC: **Joseph Macarthy** and **Braima Koroma**. The DPU hired a project manager who is full-time seconded to SLURC for an initial period of three years. Currently the centre is co-managed by a committee of two SLURC

directors and two DPU lecturers: **Alexandre Apsan Frediani** and **Andrea Rigon**, with the aim of getting DPU lecturers to progressively withdraw from management. The centre then hired researchers and administrative staff.

This was not an easy arrangement to set up. Firstly, both UCL and Njala bureaucracies had to negotiate an acceptable agreement. Secondly, that agreement had to be implemented.

### Partnerships for justice

To achieve its goals, SLURC needed to establish important relationships, most crucially with communities living in informal settlements. The centre was part of a larger programme funded by Comic Relief involving international and local NGOs implementing development projects in Freetown's slum communities. This network allowed SLURC to build relationships with communities and set up a research and training agenda relevant to the needs of these communities and their organisations. In particular, SLURC was able to build on the legitimacy that these NGOs had established over many years, and to communicate the role of a research organisation. SLURC was accepted by local governance actors, including local chiefs, community disaster management committees as well as by members of the urban poor federation. Moreover, this network was able to participate in a 4 cities initiative, also involving Cape Town, Kampala, and Lusaka, aimed at improving the lives of slum dwellers. This created

opportunities for learning between cities.

Another element that illustrates the importance of this partnership between research institutions is the complementarity of the networks provided by the DPU and Njala University. The DPU's international network facilitated access to key stakeholders such as DFID, IIED, Cities Alliance, foreign governments and donors, as well as recruiting expertise for the international advisory committee. The network also helped SLURC to learn from the experiences of DPU's friends, such as the lessons from **Arif Hasan** in setting up the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi, which Arif shared during a visit to London by the SLURC team, and also from the struggles for tenure regularisation of the Los Pinos community in Quito which the team visited with the Mayor of Freetown during the Habitat III conference.

However, the strong network in Sierra Leone cultivated by Njala University lecturers was equally vital to the project. As a research institution highly involved in practice work and training, SLURC has positioned itself as an institution trusted by communities, NGOs, government and international organisations and is therefore capable of brokering partnerships that can transform urban development paths in Sierra Leone. For example, SLURC served as a mediating platform between city authorities and NGO representatives who have not always trusted each other.

SLURC trainings are opportunities for community members, academics, NGO staff and government officials to work together, get to know each other and to build relationships. The centre has already fostered conversation between international and local actors to explore the possibility of a city-wide slum-upgrading programme in Freetown. And, in October 2016, SLURC organised a delegation to Habitat III including the Mayor of Freetown, who met with the UN Secretary-General and key donors, bringing Freetown needs to international attention.

As a result of these synergies, SLURC and the DPU have initiated key research projects drawing on the agenda of local groups and SLURC partners. For example, research on urban livelihoods in informal settlements conducted by Braima Koroma and Sudie Sellu of SLURC, with Andrea Rigon and **Julian Walker** of the DPU, worked with the Federation of the Urban Poor and the Pul Slum Pan People (PSP) network of NGOs working in Freetown's informal settlements. The findings were launched at a high-level workshop in Freetown in August 2017. The research revealed the importance of labour-intensive livelihood systems for the employment and wellbeing of women and men in informal settlements, as well as for the wider city level economy and social cohesion. It also highlighted the extent to which these livelihoods are threatened by current approaches to urban governance. Another project, led by Joseph Macarthy and Suleiman Kamara of SLURC with Alexandre Apsan Frediani of the DPU, has focused on the role that urban humanitarian responses have played in the empowerment of informal settlement communities in Freetown. This generated important

evidence about the capacities of local communities in responding to disasters, as well as the institutional barriers to involve communities in wider policy and planning processes. Our next piece of research will focus on the role of action area plans in bringing about more inclusive and just city-making.

### Partnership challenges

SLURC initially faced a number of organisational challenges. To begin with, because it was difficult to clearly anticipate the workload that was expected from co-directors, only a few working days were arranged for their involvement with the centre. Once the centre became fully operational, with more new research funding opportunities emerging, it became clear that more was needed of their time than was originally thought. Coupled with their existing teaching and other academic workloads at the university, it has been difficult for them to easily take on the added work. Moreover, because running a research centre was a relatively new experience for the local university, it was difficult to find candidates with the relevant training for the different positions created at the centre. SLURC therefore prioritises skill- and knowledge-building of its staff. However, it has also been a challenge to retain some of the centre's highly-skilled and performing staff in view of the strong competition from other organisations. To address this, efforts have been put in place to recognise and motivate staff, and to ensure staff expectations are in line with the organisational vision.

Another challenge is the management of relationships with other stakeholders. SLURC activities generally require the active involvement of different stakeholder

organisations, including NGOs, the government as well as communities and their groups. As this usually involves making collective decisions across institutional boundaries, it has sometimes been difficult to ensure the active participation of some stakeholders and/or their commitment to the issues. Moreover, while in the case of the Comic Relief-funded partners, it was occasionally possible to make decisions based on consensus, the implementation of actions was often challenging due to varying capacities among organisations as well as the differing strategies they pursue.

Regarding the sustainability of the centre, a key challenge lies in searching for additional funding opportunities, especially in the face of on-going changes in donor financing mechanisms following the global financial crisis. Partnering with the DPU and other organisations to prepare funding applications has required not only reshaping SLURC's organisational structure but also adapting activities and strategies to the fluctuating funding environment. This has required staff to be proactive and to make decisions in a timely manner, as well as cultivating new skills and knowledge to effectively mobilise resources.

### The importance of building local institutions and capacity

A key focus of the partnership is on building capacity of a wide number of stakeholders. Therefore, the first condition of SLURC to any potential research partner is that their work must also involve a major capacity building component. For example, research projects start with training in which SLURC brings together residents of informal settlements, NGO staff, academics, civil servants and other urban professionals.

Unlike a single research project, such a strategic partnership needs institutional commitment and the involvement of many people. This is truly a DPU-wide project, with almost 20 DPU staff already collaborating with SLURC. Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Andrea Rigon direct the project on the DPU side, while **Giovanna Astolfo** ensures smooth implementation and coordinates activities. **Nkenji Okpara** and **Elsa Taddesse** support the complex management and relationship with UCL central finance and contribute to the training of SLURC staff. **Michael Walls** sits on the SLURC International Advisory Committee representing UCL and delivered the keynote lecture at the SLURC high-level conference on the Freetown economy. **Caren Levy** provided key input in the



Left: Livelihoods research on fisheries at Portee Rokupa, Freetown. Photo by SLURC

development of the proposal and now sits with **Julio Davila, Julian Walker, Adriana Allen** and Michael Walls as senior advisors on the project. Julio Davila has also played a key role in negotiating the contradictions between UCL's structures and procedures and the Sierra Leonean institutional context.

DPU investment and commitment has been substantial but benefits are also significant. SLURC has become a platform that has enabled UCL researchers to conduct ethical and meaningful research in Freetown. For example, **Adriana Allen, Cassidy Johnson, Emmanuel Osuteye** and **Rita Lambert** conducted research and training in Freetown as part of the Urban ARK project, and are now preparing to take MSc Environment and Sustainable Development students to Freetown for their fieldtrip in 2018. **Daniel Oviedo** recently submitted a research proposal on transport with SLURC directors.

SLURC is also a key partner in the GCRF ESRC project Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality led by Caren Levy (see also the announcement under Research in this edition of DPU News). This £7 million project, involving a range of research partnerships sharing similar principles with SLURC, is a demonstration of how GCRF can be used to build research capacity through partnerships for social justice.

Other activities involving DPU staff include Walker and Rigon's training and research on gender and livelihoods. Frediani and colleagues from Architecture Sans Frontières-UK delivered a training on participatory planning and design. **Magdalena Gatica** and **Milimer Morgado** conducted fieldwork for their MSc dissertations in Freetown and Morgado also contributed to an IIED-funded research project with Frediani. More DPU students will be working on SLURC-related dissertations this year. ESD alumnus **Alexander Stone** is now spending 9 months at SLURC as the Information and Data Management Officer. Many more DPU staff will be progressively involved; for instance, SLURC has already discussed working together on urban health with **Haim Yacobi**. This list does not include other researchers at UCL and in other institutions who have interacted with SLURC so far.

When setting up such an institution, fundamental capacities do not only relate to academics – the skills of professional services staff are just as important. During a capacity building trip to London, SLURC staff were able to learn and exchange

experiences with UCL research, library, and finance staff. Discussions with the UCL Vice-Provost International contemplated the creation of a secondment scheme for UCL staff to SLURC and also discussed other initiatives.

### Final reflections

Setting up such a partnership and building a sustainable institution requires an enormous amount of very labour-intensive work.

Are academics willing and able to spend significant time dealing with financial management, contracts, legal registration, consultants, recruitment processes, internal policy development, management meetings, staff mentoring, and networking and advocacy meetings rather than working on research and publications? Does the

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*Below: Participants of the Gender and Urban Livelihoods Training Programme. Photo by SLURC.*



current university structure acknowledge the importance of these efforts, given that academic promotion is strongly based on peer reviewed publications? We were lucky to receive internal support from colleagues at the DPU and UCL, which allowed us to commit to SLURC, but this may not be the case for others.

While SLURC received praise and support directly from the top management of UCL, the increasing centralisation of many university bureaucracies, with processes and systems designed to work in the UK or the EU or North American contexts, poses further obstacles for academic staff trying to set up such partnerships and arrangements. These are institutional barriers that we should work to challenge. Moreover, traditional research funding may not always be suitable to set up an institution; a creative funding strategy, exploring a broader range of funders, including NGOs, may be necessary.

Such a partnership also implies unlearning and relearning how to work together, across institutions, from small

tasks like booking flights with routes that minimise visa requirements, to identifying common priorities and languages. Today, SLURC management meetings are very efficient, we have identified a common vision and language, and we understand each other's ways of working. Such a relationship is a long-term project: it has taken three years to get to this point.

Despite the challenges, we are convinced of the fundamental importance of this approach. The spirit of the SLURC project builds on a long history of DPU strategic partnerships to build the capacity of research institutions in the global South: from the Institute of Technology Bandung school of planning in the 1980s to the more recent support for curriculum development at the Indian Institute of Human Settlements, and now including SLURC. It is also part of the same ethos of the new GCRF project **Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality**, whose award demonstrates how funding bodies are recognising the importance of partnership. Finally, we feel that SLURC embodies the core principles behind UCL's Global Engagement Strategy, which aims to build partnerships to support the capacity of local institutions rather than building UCL campuses across the world.

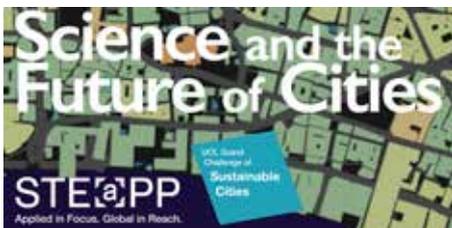
UCL's Global Engagement Strategy was on our side, as was our shared departmental vision of creating partnerships of equivalence aimed at strengthening local higher education institutions in the global South. Therefore, this experience demonstrates that for meaningful partnerships to come about, the process cannot rely solely on the motivations of individual academics. It requires institutional support that values long-term collaborations, committed to tackle the power asymmetries between higher education institutions, backed by the commitment of tangible resources to permit those partnerships to develop.

1 Witness, for example, the scandal surrounding the consultancy Adam Smith International or ASI – <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/02/uk-aid-company-bosses-quit-crackdown-profiteering-adam-smith-international> (accessed 5/9/17)

2 For a definition of multidimensional poverty, see the Oxford University OPHI website <http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/multidimensional-poverty/> (accessed 5/9/17)

## UCL-Nature expert panel on urban science-policy interface

Urban policy and urban science are at a critical juncture. Many policymakers and scientists gathered for a once-in-twenty-years opportunity at the Habitat III summit that launched the UN's New Urban Agenda in Quito in October 2016, and both reiterated how this momentous occasion was flawed by poor science-policy interfaces. Science, as argued in *Nature*, is 'disparate, marginalized and ill-prepared to interact effectively with global policy', while others argued evidence-based policymaking is 'dysfunctional in many parts of the world.'



To redress these limits and advance the development of more integrated, cross-disciplinary, and policy-engaged research on cities, *Nature Sustainability*, the new interdisciplinary journal of Nature Research, and the City Leadership Lab at University College London have established a ground-breaking Expert Panel on the urban science-policy interface for global sustainability. The Panel brings together 25 internationally-recognised urban experts from a variety of disciplines, geographies and research backgrounds to build an interdisciplinary assessment of the urban science-policy interface.

The core conveners of the Panel are the UCL City Leadership Laboratory, based in UCL's Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy (STeAPP) and *Nature Sustainability*. The Panel benefits from the support of the UCL Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) and the UCL Grand Challenge of Sustainable Cities, as well as the International Council for Science (ICSU), the DPU, and the Prince of Wales's International Sustainability Unit.

Adriana Allen has been supporting this initiative as Co-Director of the UCL Grand Challenge for Sustainable Cities and as a member of the panel that met in London on 3rd - 4th July 2017. She was also one of the contributors to a public event on Science and the Future of Cities held on 5th July at the headquarters of Springer Nature.

## Global Citizenship Summer School 2017: Rise Up! The simulation that nearly went off the rails

During the first two weeks of June, the DPU led, for the fourth time, the UCL Global Citizenship Summer School under the Grand Challenges Sustainable Cities strand. Based on the case of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, this two-week programme draws from the MSc level Windsor Workshop, which was developed in collaboration with our Tanzanian partner, the Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI). The Windsor programme was designed by Ruth McLeod, and adapted for the Global Citizenship Summer School by Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Stephanie Butcher, with a wealth of material produced by Gynna Brightside and Matthew Wood-Hill. This year, the programme was coordinated by Nikhilesh Sinha and Ricardo Marten-Caceres, with Pascale Hofmann leading the programme thematically, drawing from her long experience of working and researching in Dar es Salaam.

The Global Citizenship programme is designed to introduce undergraduate and graduate participants to international development issues and theories of urban sustainability, while helping them develop critical thinking, negotiating skills and the ability to work collaboratively in groups. Additionally, the programme offers opportunities to develop language skills through Swahili lessons, as well as video-making and editing techniques. It promotes an immersive role-play approach to learning, wherein participants are invited to take on the identities of various actors involved. Participants are assigned to different actor

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Below: 'Residents of Chamazi' protest injustice.

Photo by Nerea Amoros Elorduy

groups, including government authorities, development agencies, financial institutions, commercial developers, the media, and two resident groups. The resident groups represent people living in two distinct areas of Dar es Salaam: Kurasini, which lies close to the centre of Dar es Salaam, by the port, and Chamazi, a relatively new and rapidly growing settlement in the periphery. The simulation asks participants to immerse themselves in negotiations between these different actor-groups in order to determine a collective vision for Dar es Salaam. The actor groups themselves are quite diverse, with a number of sub-groups who may have differing interests. For instance, the development agencies include international groups like UN-Habitat and WaterAid, as well as local NGOs like CCI and researchers from Ardhi University. Financial institutions include large corporate institutions like Barclays Bank together with microfinance entities that work closely with resident initiatives. Even within the resident groups, participants are encouraged to take on differing roles ranging from poor fisherfolk to wealthy landlords.

The idea behind the simulation is to structure the diversity at play, pushing participants to seek common interests with others while learning to navigate diversity of opinions within their groups. Role play provides a flexible structure and 'safe-space' for participants to explore ideas, while inculcating a sense of fun in the research process. However, it is also fraught with ethical issues, especially when participants take on the roles of real personalities, but also in terms of being sensitive to how they represent the residents of informal settlements. This is where the facilitators, a number of PhD students from the DPU, play an invaluable role in guiding the





Above: 'Tanzanian Government' announces plans at a contentious press conference. Photo by Nerea Amoros Elorduy

simulation to keep the participants grounded but also to ensure that portrayals are realistic and respectful of their real-life counterparts.

Over the two weeks, participants had the opportunity to develop their characters, drawing on multiple resources available to them. Morning lectures delivered by external partners and DPU staff introduced participants to international development and the kind of socio-environmental challenges facing Dar es Salaam and cities across the global South. Urban sustainable development formed the overarching framework for the entire simulation, and this year, participants utilised the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a tool to explore possibilities for collaboration, while also acknowledging its limitations.

The programme is punctuated by four major events that help catalyse the action. The first is a social event where actors get to introduce themselves to each other in character and exchange business cards, which are useful as a networking tool later on in the simulation. The second event is a televised chat-show, where group videos are shown and discussed by a panel of experts, and where each group is allowed to clarify their position and ask questions to others. In the second week, the government authorities call a press conference to announce their plans, and this session often gets contentious! The final event is a second television show where videos of newly formed alliances are screened and discussed. The best video is later shared with the other strands of the Global Citizenship Summer School.

This year the press conference was particularly fractious - several groups expressed deep suspicions regarding government plans - and led to an impromptu election. The current administration was re-elected, largely due to an alliance formed with citizen groups to bolster their reputation and legitimacy. The experience

highlighted the strength of the simulation, and the investment of the participants in continuing to stay in character and to reach a solution that allowed all to move forward. For the DPU, the programme offers an opportunity to introduce its concern for socially just and sustainable development to participants and explore the complexity of actors, processes and claims that characterise negotiations to address existing challenges.

### DPU leads International Election Observation Mission in Somaliland

The DPU's **Michael Walls** has been contracted by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to lead an election observation mission to observe a Presidential Election scheduled in Somaliland for 13th November 2017. The mission is being run through by UCL's consulting arm, UCL Consultants, and will involve a six-person Coordination Team, supported by project management out of UCL's London office, who will draw together a total of about 60 international observers. Michael has been one of two coordinators for election observation missions in 2010 and 2012, in association with the international NGO Progressio, and he was also a member of the organising team in 2005, for parliamentary elections. However, this will be the first time the mission will be organised solely by UCL, with Michael playing the role of Chief Observer.

The Coordination Team will need to spend just over a month in the region, organising deployment plans for observers, accreditation with the National Electoral Commission, and a schedule of briefings covering everything from the principles of election observation through the practicalities of this particular mission, arrangements for security, transport and so on.

Somaliland is building a strong record of successful elections, with the November poll being the third presidential vote since their unilateral declaration of independence in 1991. As well as the 2005 election of MPs in the lower house of Parliament, local elections were held in 2002 and 2012, and presidential ballots were cast in 2003 and 2010. The initial years in Somaliland's reinstated independence did see the recurrence of conflict, but a series of conferences resolved issues and established a system of representative democracy, with the result that there has been no recurrence of widespread violence since 1997. This places Somaliland in direct contrast to its troubled neighbours. Djibouti and Ethiopia are yet to find a formula for electoral democracy,

while Somalia to the south has been riven by years of clan-based division and to date has been unable to organise elections on a one-person-one-vote basis.

### DPU and SLURC organise first high-level conference on Freetown economy

**Julian Walker** and **Andrea Rigon** with the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) organised the First High-Level Conference on the Freetown Economy: formal and informal synergies towards a prosperous city on 23rd August 2017. The conference brought together academics, central government, local authorities, communities, politicians and NGOs to discuss what the livelihoods of informal sector residents contribute to the city. The keynote lecture was given by **Michael Walls** who presented new insights into thinking about the informal economy. The session on synergies between informal and formal sectors in Freetown brought contributions from economists and planners from the two main universities in Sierra Leone. The conference was an opportunity to present findings from a DPU-SLURC research project which documented the real-life livelihood strategies of women and men living in informal settlements. A final session discussed wider urban strategies for livelihood sustainability and a prosperous city economy with the participation of NGOs and communities.

Top left to right: Braima Koroma and Michael Walls  
Below: Conference participants.  
All photo by Alexander Stone



## Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality: Challenging structural causes of inequality in cities of the global South

*Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality* (henceforth KNOW) is one of 37 interdisciplinary projects recently granted funding by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Research Councils UK Collective Fund. **Caren Levy** will lead a global partnership to deliver transformative research and capacity for innovation in policy and planning that will promote urban equality. Involving a consortium of researchers based at UCL, the University of Durham, IIHS (Indian Institute of Human Settlements, India), Ardhi University (Tanzania) and FLACSO (Latin-American Social Sciences Institute, Costa Rica), KNOW will work with local academic and community-based partners in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Tanzania, Cuba, Peru, Costa Rica and Colombia, India and Sri Lanka. With a budget of over £7 million, KNOW will run to the end of 2021, creating a network of Urban Learning Hubs that will continue the work beyond the end of the project.

The GCRF is a £1.5 billion research programme and forms part of the UK Government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment to contributing 0.7% of GDP to international aid (see also the lead article in this edition of DPU News). The fund aims to ensure that UK research plays a leading role in addressing the global issues faced by developing countries. For more information, visit: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/>.

## Tsunami risk for the Western Indian Ocean: steps toward the integration of science into policy and practice

The 10-month project *Tsunami risk for the Western Indian Ocean: steps toward the integration of science into policy and practice* is funded by the UK's Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) through a Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Resilience Foundation Award. It brings together a multidisciplinary team of statisticians, earth scientists, civil engineers, archaeologists, philosophers and urban planners from India and the UK. On the India side, that includes the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) and Indian Institute of Science, while in the UK, partners include the DPU (**Cassidy Johnson** and PhD candidate Julia

Wesely), the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction and Statistical Sciences (Serge Guillas), the London School of Economics and Brunel University. The aim of the project is to analyse tsunami risks and model coastal inundations to elaborate how urbanisation processes contribute to potential impacts of tsunamis on communities, and to assess corresponding modelling and policy uncertainties. The project thereby draws attention to tsunami risks in coastal cities along the West Coast of India, which have so far been neglected, and it aims to produce relevant information for decision-makers, such as state disaster risk management authorities and urban planners, to reduce those risks. A workshop with policymakers and academics was conducted at the IIHS in Bangalore in early May 2017 to discuss existing information needs and preliminary project findings. Cassidy Johnson contributed by presenting an urban planning perspective on tsunami risk management and highlighted the importance of considering informality for disaster risk management in India's coastal areas.

## Sustainable Cities of the Amazon

The two-year research project *Ciudades Auto-Sostenibles Amazónicas* ('Self-sustaining cities of the Amazon' or CASA), coordinated by BUDD alumna Belén Desmaison at the Pontificia

Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), with the involvement of DPU's **Camillo Boano** and **Giovanna Astolfo**, is developing a participatory process with local communities, local authorities and the national government to co-produce sustainable spatialities and promote alternative livelihood systems in the Amazon, starting from local technologies and knowledges. The project aims to create evidence-based methodology for a more participatory implementation process of preventive relocations. The project looks at the city of Iquitos, in the Peruvian Amazon, where a massive relocation process of around 16,000 people living in the low-lying and flood-prone district of Belén has long experienced considerable difficulties posed by flooding and consequent community dissatisfaction. A particular problem is that relocation threatens the traditional spatial organisation of Amazon communities, negatively impacting livelihood systems. In July, as part of the project, Giovanna Astolfo took part in a participatory workshop (*Taller Participativo*) in Nuevo Belén with the CASA team and students from PUCP. The work focused on alternative design proposals for the creation of self-sufficient systems to ensure the economic sustainability of resettlement, and to

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*Above:* New housing, Iquitos by CASA.



create new livelihood options. Proposals, developed by an interdisciplinary team of PUCP students and validated by the community, investigate which technologies and construction techniques are better adapted to the context in social, spatial and climatic terms. For more information, visit: <https://casapucp.com/>.

### Linking transport and urban health in Cali, Colombia

The DPU has been awarded funding by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to conduct an 18-month research project exploring the links between transport and health in Cali, Colombia, starting in October 2017. The lead Investigator will be **Daniel Oviedo Hernandez**, who will be working with **Julio Davila** and **Haim Yacobi** from the DPU and Nick Tyler from UCL Civil, Environmental and Geomatic



Above: Participants of the Action Planning Workshop, Dar es Salaam. Photo by Emmanuel Osuteye.

evidence gathered for this research, analysis of the *corredor verde*, and workshops and debates with local practitioners from a range of disciplines and stakeholders in Cali. The research will draw on qualitative and quantitative data, with case studies in both high and low-income areas adjacent

for example, every-day and small-scale disasters, such as water-borne illnesses.

Data was collected from two informal settlements in the city of Dar es Salaam: Bonde La Mpunga (in the Msasani ward) and Mtambani (in the Vingunguti ward). The research team worked closely with community residents, the leadership at the sub-ward (*mtaa*) level and the Federation of the Urban Poor who are active in both areas.

At the end of June 2017, a three-day Action Planning workshop was organised, bringing together the researchers from CCI and Ardhi University, community leaders and residents, as well as external stakeholders from the Department of Disaster Management, the World Bank Tanzania Office, municipal officials and other technical experts.

The workshop helped to disseminate and discuss findings from the data collection which was undertaken using the 'Action at the Frontline' methodology, developed by the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR). This confirmed the range of threats that community residents were exposed to, highlighted coping mechanisms and steps already taken by both the community and external support agencies, and ranked community priorities for future action.

In all, the workshop stimulated a healthy discussion, including a list of short- and long-term priority action points about what measurements should be used to show the realities of risks low-income people face in a way that is practical and straightforward, so that policy-makers can take action. Participants also discussed communication channels that could be leveraged in order to ensure that community voices feed into policy formulation.



Above: Artist's impression of the Corredor Verde. Photo by CALI

Engineering (CEGE). The project is a collaborative undertaking between UCL, the Inter-American Development Bank, the University of Lancaster and Universidad del Valle in Cali.

The aim of the research is twofold. First, it seeks to examine and provide evidence on concepts of urban liveability and health equity in the context of land use and infrastructure policies in Cali, Colombia's third largest city. In particular, the research will analyse the *corredor verde* ('green corridor'), an ongoing large-scale urban regeneration initiative in the city. Second, the project aims to spark a dialogue regarding practices and challenges for planning and assessing healthy urban environments that resonate with growing debates about urban health in Latin America. Such a dialogue will build on local

to the *corredor verde* with different characteristics in relation to the social determinants of health.

### Action at the Frontline: Risk in Informal Settlements – Community Knowledge and Policy Action

The DPU, led by **Cassidy Johnson** and **Emmanuel Osuteye**, has partnered with the Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) and Ardhi University, both in Tanzania, to investigate the impacts of environmental risks on people living in informal settlements and to seek ways to influence policy and community action in order to better address these risks.

The research recognises that to promote risk reduction along with inclusive and accountable planning, local institutions need to have a better understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities to which the populations in their jurisdictions are exposed; including,

This project is solely funded by the AXA Research Fund. For further information, see: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/development/research/risk-informal-settlements>.

### Urban Africa: Risk Knowledge (Urban ARK) updates

The DPU's research on the ESRC/DFID funded Urban Africa: Risk Knowledge (Urban ARK) programme, led by **Cassidy Johnson** and **Adriana Allen**, examines the governance and planning practices in urbanised African towns and cities and the ways in which they promote or reduce urban risk. Working in Karonga (Malawi), Freetown (Sierra Leone), and Niamey (Niger), the project investigates contemporary interactions between the structures of urban planning, including organisational forms and bureaucratic mandates, dominant development practices, plan-making procedures and individual stakeholder agency in shaping the (re)production of cycles of risk accumulation and reduction.

The research findings so far suggest that the failings of the formal planning system and slow, retrospective, and poorly resourced approaches to Disaster Risk Management (DRM) exacerbate risk in small urbanising towns such as Karonga, and the same findings also highlight the added complexity of customary land practices and their relationship to the planning and governance of risks.

There have been DPU-facilitated workshops in both Karonga and Freetown (in July and August 2017), designed to assist residents and the devolved local government officials to develop more effective DRM measures in cities, and to create strategic action plans that break cycles of risk accumulation. The work in Freetown is being done in partnership with the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC). In Malawi, it is supported through a partnership with the Mzuzu University.

There has also been significant progress with the development of the virtual analytical tool *ReMapRisk* for both cities. This process has seen a large amount of georeferenced data collected on hazards, vulnerabilities, and capacities to act, within the settlements of interest, which is being analysed and will be visualised with the *ReMapRisk* tool.

Additionally, in July 2017, the DPU team hosted Hamadou Issaka from the Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey,

Niger, as part of the Urban ARK Fellowship scheme, to conduct research on the range and impacts of urban risks in Niamey. The specific focus of the research was on the implications of new land reforms and related issues of affordability and access for the urban poor. The three-week residency ended with a two-day workshop on urbanisation and risks in Niger, featuring presentations from Urban ARK consortium members and Catherine Baron (University of Toulouse, France).

The rest of the DPU team includes Caren Levy, Emmanuel Osuteye, Barbara Lipietz, Rita Lambert and PhD Candidate Donald Brown. For more information, see: [www.urbanark.org](http://www.urbanark.org).

### Spatial inequality in times of urban transition: Complex land markets in Uganda and Somaliland

A DPU team led by **Colin Marx**, **Michael Walls**, **Cassidy Johnson** and **Vanesa Castán Broto** has been awarded £186,000 of a £998,000 total budget to undertake a two-year DFID-funded research project entitled 'Spatial inequality in times of urban transition: Complex land markets in Uganda and Somaliland'.

Within the context of complex social and economic transitions (formal and informal), population growth and migration, the project focuses on urban socio-spatial development and how economic, institutional and socio-cultural

aspects are interrelated in African cities. The project proposes to develop a sound framework with which to analyse and explain urbanisation processes based on key spatial features of the city as a system, namely: access to urban land, distribution of spatial assets, and the urban morphology resulting from formal and informal land transactions. It will assess the factors and actors that influence these processes, in order to explain 'how' urban transitions are managed, steered and/or self-organized.

The project focuses on Complex Land Markets – as interdependent aspects of the political and economic system of any city – to support the design of integrated interventions and promote inclusive growth, poverty reduction and access to livelihoods in East African cities.

The DPU team will be working with project partners, the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) of Erasmus University (Rotterdam), who lead the consortium, alongside IPE Tripleline (London). The team will also be working with local partners in Uganda (Urban ActionLab, Makerere University) and Somaliland (Institute of Research, Heritage Preservation and Development of the Redsea Cultural Foundation).

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*Below: Kisenyi informal settlement, Kampala. Photo by Colin Marx.*



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# Connections

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Three DPU alumni are currently working in different roles for CARE International UK. **Amelia Rule** (UDP 2013-14) is the Emergency Shelter Advisor for CARE's Humanitarian and Emergencies Team. She deploys specifically in emergencies to support shelter programmes, providing assistance to people who have lost their homes in a natural disaster, conflict or crisis. She has supported shelter projects in various countries including Lebanon, Nepal, Madagascar and Haiti. She has also developed good practice guidance for Gender and Shelter programming, as well as a toolkit which aims to address gender-based violence mitigation in shelter programming. These tools will be adopted by other shelter advisors and supported by the Global Shelter Cluster.

**Mark Malhotra** (UED 2013-14) is Innovation Advisor at CARE, working on the Women's Economic Empowerment team. Mark supports social businesses operated by CARE, helping them with strategy, finance, marketing and sales. One such business in Zambia is building a supply chain to get health products (diarrhoea medication, fortified porridge, pain relief, sexual health products and clean energy) to underserved and marginalised communities. The business employs women and some men to sell the products door to door, which means the salespeople earn additional income and communities get access to health products they would otherwise have to travel to purchase. Mark will soon be spending time in Tanzania to help launch a new business which will support savings groups with a smartphone app that digitises their records, allowing them to connect with formal finance in a secure way.

**Luisa Miranda** (BUDD 2013-14) is working as a Shelter Research Assistant for the Promoting Safer Building Programme partnered by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), CARE International UK, British Geological Survey and EPICentre. The research focuses on understanding (self-)recovery processes after disasters. Luisa's key areas of interest are social justice, public space, community engagement, humanitarian shelter and host communities, infrastructure, gender, protection and inclusion.

**Yara Nafe** (DAP 2015-16) was working as a Senior Programme Officer at Jordan's National Democratic Institute, but in December 2016, she shifted to the German development agency, GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), where she advises on capacity-building for civil society organisations and on gender sensitisation.

Since August 2017, **Jingmei Huang** (DAP 2015-16) has been working as a Fundraising Officer at VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) with responsibility for new products and digital fundraising, and is based in Kingston upon Thames in the UK.

After graduating from DPU, **Priya Bhullar** (ESD 2015-16) worked on post-earthquake recovery with UN-Habitat & Architecture Sans Frontières UK in Nepal. She then worked at a charity in London exploring youth development and education before being offered a position on Save the Children's Sierra Leone Programme Team, where she will be focusing on gender equality.

**Alexander Stone** (ESD 2015-16) worked as a consultant for a children's charity in London, and also took part in a project with UN Habitat and Architecture Sans Frontières in Nepal. Since April 2017 he has been working in Freetown, Sierra Leone, for the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre. There he helps to carry out research in informal areas of the city, working with residents' groups and community organisations, assisting with their advocacy efforts, and attempting to influence government policy in their favour.

**Shona Curvers** (SDP 2014-15) is working as a consultant at New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) in London, a charity consultancy and think tank that aims to make the charity sector work more effectively. Shona aids in all areas of the research and consulting team, supporting charities to measure their impact and develop theories of change. She also works on projects that combine NPC's organisational knowledge with ongoing conversations in the sector in order to drive their think tank work.

**Alex Milano** (SDP 2014-15) is the Project Manager at Project Gaia, an NGO that works to increase access to clean cookstoves and fuels. She manages operations in East Africa, specifically Ethiopia and Madagascar. Current projects include the establishment of a women-owned social enterprise in Kebribeyah refugee camp in Ethiopia to deliver ethanol cookstoves and fuel to households in the camp and in the host community, as well as managing a World Bank funded contract to scale up local ethanol supply for cooking in Madagascar. She also works as an analyst at E Co. Ltd, a low carbon development consultancy where she assists in bid development.

**Caitlin Nisos** (SDP 2014-15) works for Friends of the Earth as a Facilitator & Coach on the Bee Cause campaign, which aims to help reverse the decline of UK bee populations by 2020 by getting the UK government to commit to comprehensive and permanent ban on all neonicotinoid pesticides post-Brexit. In this role, Caitlin supports the team in developing and delivering a campaign strategy and action plan, demonstrating that an alternative is possible, that there is pressure for change, and that the status quo has become untenable. In addition, she works as a volunteer associate with Architecture sans Frontières and serves on the board of Castlehaven Community Association in Camden, London.



## Co-Learning for Action: From risk-mitigation to transformative action to disrupt urban risk traps in metropolitan Lima

Building on previous years' research, the fifth and final year of collaborative work in Lima by the MSc Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) led by **Adriana Allen** and **Rita Lambert**, focused on initiatives that directly or indirectly tackle the risk traps that affect the most vulnerable social groups in the city. The objective was to contribute in three primary ways:

1. To develop an analytical framework for assessing what transformative action to disrupt urban risk traps means in practice;
2. To assess the transformative capacity of a variety of focused and strategic initiatives aimed at disrupting cyclical risk accumulation traps;
3. To expand the network of allies for transformative change and to contribute to the strengthening of synergies and relationships.

The fieldwork culminated in a presentation of key messages to the Congress of the Republic of Peru on the 8th May 2017.

*Left:* View from one of the first 'invasions' – El Agustino, taken during a transect walk.

Photo by Rita Lambert

*Right:* In-depth interview during fieldwork to construct a timeline of one of the case study settlements.

Photo by Caroline Gladman

*Bottom:* Final Presentation at the Congress of Peru.

Photo by DPU

## MSc BUDD contribution to Dalieh Watch Day and Festival in Beirut

The Civil Campaign to Protect the Dalieh of Raouche in Beirut invited the MSc BUDD urban intervention studio team to contribute to the Dalieh Watch Day and Festival, held in Beirut from 18th to 21st May 2017. The Dalieh of Raouche is a public part of the Beirut seafront, in danger of being privatised. In view of the recent listing of the Dalieh of Raouche and the Heneine Palace by the World Monuments Fund, the Watch Day aimed to raise awareness of the significance of natural and built sites under threat. In this context and through numerous activities, interventions and events, the Dalieh Campaign hopes to gain wider visibility and develop a more targeted lobbying strategy with political interlocutors.

Since 2015-16, students and tutors (**Catalina Ortiz**, **Camillo Boano**, **Giorgio Talocci**, **Giovanna Astolfo**, **Camilla Cociña**, **Ricardo Marten** and **Fani Kostourou**) of the BUDD Urban Intervention Studio, part of BUDD's practice module, have explored



Dalieh's past and current reality in relation to the wider challenges of the city of Beirut and a continued engagement with its urbanisms in both pedagogy and research. With the use of a series of pedagogical approaches pertaining to the fields of comparative urban design and design research, the studio has investigated the complexity of borders and border-making practices in contested cities. The focus has been on the topological and topographical nature of borders as well as their agency and potential, essentially reflecting on the changing role of architecture and contemporary urban design practices. Part of the studio's final outcomes were exhibited at the Dalieh Watch Day, arguing that urban design in Beirut has served as a tool for maximising private profit in a star-architecture-led reconstruction of a post-conflict city and that a re-calibration is needed starting from its edges and, specifically, from the contested territory of Dalieh.

The Watch Day took place during the Heritage Week celebrated by the Ministry of Culture. Information about the Dalieh Campaign can be found on the website: [www.dalieh.org](http://www.dalieh.org).

## Building collective capacity to disrupt urban risk traps: Action planning workshops in Karonga, Malawi and Freetown Sierra Leone

The DPU's **Adriana Allen** and **Emmanuel Osuteye**, as part of the wider Urban ARK



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*Top:* A workshop participant presenting a group strategic action plan.  
 Photo by Adriana Allen.

*Bottom:* Action planning workshop at SLURC, Freetown.  
 Photo by Alexander Stone

programme, conducted a series of a two-day Action Planning workshops, firstly in Karonga, Malawi in July 2017, followed by another in Freetown, Sierra Leone in August 2017. The workshops were a follow-up to the process of understanding risk accumulation over time in the two cities and to apply the practices and resources (as part of the ReMapRisk process) that had been mobilised to monitor and study the risk profile. They also examined existing

initiatives for disaster risk reduction and the capacities of community residents and other stakeholders to act effectively in that regard.

Preliminary findings from the *ReMapRisk* data collection were shared and refined to support the creation of several strategic action plans, with each action plan drafted at the lowest identified level in the devolved DRR structure. In Karonga, four strategic action plans were prepared by the four Neighbourhood Disaster Risk Management

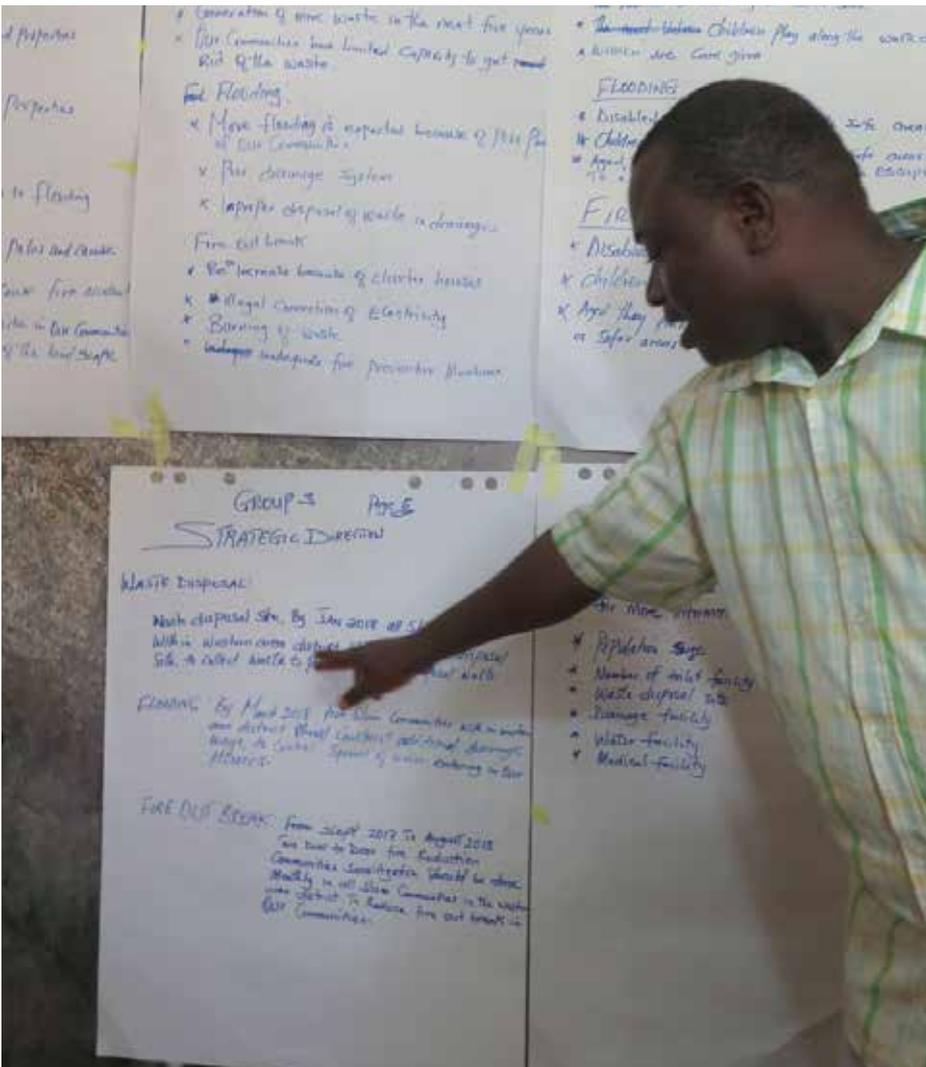
Committees (NRMCs), whereas in Freetown, a total of 15 strategic action plans are being prepared by the five Community-Based Disaster Risk Management Committees (CBDRMCs) found in each of the three districts of the city (Western, Central and Eastern).

By March 2018, it is expected that each of the action plans created will have been refined and prioritised, with some small seed funding provided by the project for practical interventions that will serve as a hands-on learning opportunity on community-based DRR.

Recent mudslides in Freetown and, in particular, that in the suburb of Regent which resulted in the loss of over 500 lives, and the displacement of more than 3,000 people, have highlighted the urgency of risk reduction in that city<sup>3</sup>.

### BUDDcamp 2017

This year's BUDDcamp explored the work of the SPRAR (*Sistema di Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati* – ‘protection system for asylum seekers and refugees’) programme, led by the Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Zavidovici in Brescia, Italy. The programme works with refugees, assisting them to achieve progressive autonomy, as they integrate and adapt to a new city. In the BUDDcamp Brescia 2017 design workshop, students looked at dwelling practices in the city of Brescia, where the presence of refugees and migrants at different stages of their migration experience has triggered a complex system of reception, assistance and hospitality. The outcome of the workshop was published to present student's findings, as well as their personal journeys towards understanding their roles as urban practitioners, designing for socio-spatial justice.



3 More information can be found in one of the outputs arising from the research: Osuteye, E., and Leck, H. (2017) "Freetown's mudslides and the slippery slope of urban risks in Africa", Opinion Piece: IRIN News, 23rd August, 2017 [https://www.irinnews.org/opinion/2017/08/23/freetown-s-mudslides-and-slippery-slope-urban-risk-africa] (accessed 5/9/17)

# Networks and Meetings

## Confronting violence and impunity in water struggles in Latin America

The theme of the eighth international meeting of WATERLAT-GOBACIT (an inter- and transdisciplinary network for teaching, research and practical action on the politics and management of water) was 'Water, power and impunity: social resistances and emerging alternatives

the annual short video competition and the winners of WATERLAT's prizes to the best doctoral and master thesis; a very successful initiative of the network. As has become a tradition, the meeting closed with a public conversation, which in its plenary session approved a general declaration and four specific declarations for Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, and the host country. The



Above left: Local activists denouncing expansion of monocultures (particularly pineapple for exports) in Costa Rica. Photo by Étienne von Bertrab

in the construction of egalitarian and inclusionary water politics'. That reflects the seriousness of and increasing concern at heightened levels of state violence and impunity in Latin America when it comes to people defending human rights and the environment. But it also reflects the ethos of the network, which aims to contribute to the construction of social forms whereby water politics and management are grounded in principles of equality, solidarity, and social inclusion. As such, delegates from 13 countries shared and discussed relevant research and experiences aimed at reversing these worrying trends. As a member of the thematic area 'Art, Communication, Culture and Education', DPU's Étienne von Bertrab shared reflections on his ongoing research on media and the construction of empathy with regard to water conflicts in Mexico.

The meeting, which took place in San José de Costa Rica in early April, served as an opportunity to present the winner of

ninth meeting will take place in João Pessoa, Brazil, in September 2018 and the call for proposals of activities is now open. More information is available at [www.waterlat.org](http://www.waterlat.org)

## LSE Cities report launch on Urban Uncertainty

On 8 June 2017, Adriana Allen presented a commentary at the public launch of the *Urban Uncertainty* report, which was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Ricky Burdett, Director of LSE Cities. Based on a research project led by Austin Zeiderman from 2012 to 2015, the report conceptualises uncertainty and how uncertainty interacts with and shapes urban life across Latin America, Africa and Asia. Empirically focused, this interdisciplinary engagement with uncertainty around climate change, infrastructural disruption, insecurity, speculation, pandemics and land politics highlights the many ways it manifests across local and global scales. The study also reveals the varied strategies and tactics that individuals and groups – within and beyond official domains of urban governance – use to govern and find stability in uncertain times.

## Social Protection for Inclusive Development in the Afar Region of Ethiopia (SPIDA)

The consultative workshop of the SPIDA Research consortium, led by DPU's Zeremariam Fre, and regional stakeholders on the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in the Afar Regional State took place at Samara University in Samara, the capital of Afar Regional State, Ethiopia on 3rd May 2017. The workshop was co-organised by the SPIDA research consortium (consisting of Adigrat University, UCL and PENHA), Samara University and the Disaster Prevention and Food Security Programme (DPFSP) of Afar Regional State.

The primary aim of the workshop was to engage with policymakers, academics and NGOs through knowledge exchange and mutual learning, thus increasing the participation of relevant stakeholders and enhancing the validity of the SPIDA study outcomes. The second objective was to prepare for the forthcoming national conference in November 2017 by directly engaging with policymakers, academics and other actors at the Afar State level as well as nationally within Ethiopia. The third objective was for the SPIDA researchers to collect



Top: Afar pastoralists. Photo by Jeff Slazer.

Above: Afar camel market. Photo by PENHA.

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## Staff News

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additional information on the PSNP from the various stakeholders in order to fill any knowledge gaps in the present SPIDA study.

The workshop was attended by the SPIDA research team members, government authorities from different sectors of Afar region, Samara University staff and NGO staff. The SPIDA team shared the preliminary findings of the SPIDA study from the first year. The representative of the DPFSP of Afar Regional State presented his reflections on the experiences of the PSNP program implementing agencies on the gaps identified in the implementation of the program and actions taken so far to address such gaps.

Speakers underlined the need to critically evaluate the implementation and impact of the PSNP programme to ensure benefit for sectors of the wider community in the Afar region, including agro-pastoralists, pastoralists, nomads, women and youth. Speakers highlighted the importance of such seminars in bringing researchers, policymakers and implementers together, and in promoting informed dialogue with relevant experts, thus enriching the ongoing policy dialogue.

The DPU welcomes **Haim Yacobi** as Professor of Development Planning. Yacobi's academic work focuses on (post)colonial architecture, planning and development in Israel/Palestine, the Middle East and Africa. Spatial justice and urban health, contested urbanism, transnational migration and informality lie at the core of his research and consultancy work, teaching and activism. He will lead the DPU's efforts around urban health.

**Daniel Oviedo Hernandez** joins the DPU as a Research Associate focusing on Transport and Urban Development Planning. Daniel will work alongside Julio Davila and Caren Levy in further developing the DPU's transport research agenda through targeted publications, funding applications and research projects.

Congratulations to **Vanesa Castán Broto**, who has been offered a Professorial Fellowship at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Sheffield, and will sadly leave DPU over the summer.

We say goodbye to Graduate Teaching Assistants **Di Jiang** (UED), **Milimer Morgado** (SDP) and **Nina Neubauer** (ESD), who will be leaving DPU this month. The interim maternity cover for ESD is **Dominique Chatfield**, a former ESD student, and **Diana Salazar** will return from maternity leave at the beginning of November.

**Alexandre Apsan Frediani** welcomed baby Dalia, **Cassidy Johnson** had baby Elisabeth, and **Kamna Patel** will soon go on maternity leave. **Sharon Cooney** has returned from maternity leave to resume her post as Programme Administrator. Congratulations to all the new arrivals, and we look forward to extending best wishes to those to come!

**Yukiko Fujimoto** is on secondment to the Bartlett's Construction & Project Management, and is due back at DPU in December 2017.

We also bid farewell to **Antonio Estache**, who will hand over teaching on the module 'UE6: An Introduction to Public Economics' to **Marco Giani**.

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## PhD Programme

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At the end of April Tatiana Ome Baron successfully completed her doctoral thesis entitled 'An ethnography of Bogotá's Ecobarrios: The construction of place-based eco-political subjects, subjectivities and identities', under the supervision of Adriana Allen and Julio Davila.

As an anthropologist interested in cities, her thesis offers an ethnographic account of how the notion of Ecobarrios has opened different paths in the construction of eco-political subjects in Bogotá. Ecobarrios emerged as an institutional programme, implemented by the Mayor's Office between 2001 and 2003. In 2009 it was adopted as a local initiative by the dwellers of the eastern hills of the city as a 'resistance strategy' to avoid eviction and as a means to improve living conditions.

Following the different trajectories of these two attempts to articulate the notion of Ecobarrios as processes shaping urban life and territories in Bogotá, Tatiana's thesis examines the ways in which the emergence of eco-political subjects either re-produces or challenges micro-political dynamics of and from place and how it has given rise to transformations in urban planning. Conceptually and methodologically, the analysis fosters a debate about the scope, capacity and limitations of anthropology and ethnography in advancing our understanding of how different environmentalisms are pursued through urban planning processes and grassroots initiatives.

# Publications

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Allen, A., Belkow, T., Escalante Estrada, C., de los Ríos, S., Kamiya, M., Lambert, R., Miranda, L., Wesely, J. & Zilbert Soto, L. (2017). **“De la mitigación de desastres a la interrupción de trampas de riesgo: La experiencia de aprendizaje-acción de CLIMA sin Riesgo”**. Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos sobre Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres (REDER) Vol. 1(1): 6-28.

Allen, A., Zilbert Soto, L., & Wesely, J. in collaboration with Belkow, T., Ferro, V., Lambert, R., Langdown, I. & Samanamu, A. (2017).

**“From state agencies to ordinary citizens: reframing risk-mitigation investments and their impact to disrupt urban risk traps in Lima, Peru”**. Environment and Urbanization.

Braier, M. & Yacobi, H. (2017). **“The Planned, the Unplanned and the Hyper-planned: dwelling in contemporary Jerusalem”**. Planning Theory and Practice.

Milner, E.L. & Yacobi, H. (2017). **“Spaces of sovereignty: A tale of an unrecognized Palestinian village in Israel”**. Planning Theory.

Doucet, I. & Boano, C. (2016). **“Disruptive Design: on design gestures, breathing, and not-doing. Interview with Camillo Boano”**. Candide Journal for Architectural Knowledge (10): 113-139.

Sinha, N. (2017). **“Rental Practices in two informal settlements in Hyderabad, India”**, in Sengupta, U. & Shaw, A. (Eds), *Coming of an Age: Trends and Issues in Housing in Asia*, London: Routledge: 250-277.

Talocci, G. & Boano, C. (2017). **“The de-politicization of housing policies: the case of Borei Keila land sharing in Phnom Penh, Cambodia”**. International Journal of Housing Policy, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2017.1298365>.

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Yacobi, H. (2016). **“From ‘ethnocracy’ to urban apartheid: the changing urban geopolitics of Jerusalem\al-Quds”**. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* Vol. 8(3).

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*Cover photo:* SLURC team conducting research on urban risk in informal settlements in Freetown. Photo by SLURC.

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Planning for socially just and sustainable development in the global South