Two new programmes at CENDEP

From the next academic year CENDEP will offer two new Postgraduate Certificates (PG Certs), which carry an academic value of one third of a Masters degree. **The PG Cert in Shelter after disaster** is aimed at those working or interested in post disaster shelter. The programme will run in semester two each year, ie between end of January and early May. The PG Cert will comprise a core module, ‘Shelter after disaster’, and optional modules including: ‘Learning practice’; ‘Working with conflict’; and ‘Disasters, risk, vulnerability and climate change’. As with all CENDEP programmes, the new PG Cert will mix practical skills and approaches with learning based on past experience.

The **PG Cert in Humanitarian action and conflict** will combine the theory and practice of working in conflict. Aimed primarily at practitioners, the course will draw on knowledge and experience representative of the English and the French traditions in humanitarian theory and practice. As such, it offers a unique opportunity for dialogue between the two dominant approaches, the Anglo-Saxon (often based on service provision and co-operation with government organisations) and the French (the 'sans-frontierist' approach of radical independence). The course is being offered as distance learning, and is a jointly-offered award between Oxford Brookes University and Université Paris-Est Créteil, France.

CENDEP’s award-winning **Masters degree in Development and Emergency Practice (DEP)** focuses on understandings, practical tools and approaches for working in chronic poverty and acute emergencies, ie natural disasters and/or conflict. Optional and core modules cover a wide range of issues including partnerships, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods, governance, human rights, gender, logframe analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

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Improving learning and practice in the humanitarian shelter sector

**Two day conference hosted by CENDEP and CARE International UK**
16-17 September 2010, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

Funded by ELRHA (Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance)

**Conference announcement**

This conference aims to learn and share lessons from practical experience of enacting shelter after disaster. It will comprise invited speakers, plenary and smaller seminar optional sessions. Presentations (case studies, papers, reflective pieces) from participants will be organised under one or more of the following three themes: (1) co ordination, collaboration and partnerships: risks and benefits of working with other NGOs, UN bodies, private sector and governmental authorities; (2) community engagement: working with affected communities in community ownership, donor and owner driven approaches; and (3) innovation in shelter approaches: developing and using transitional shelter, working with shelter providers, new approaches to shelter.

For further information, registration and submission of outlines contact Jeni Burnell, conference organiser at jburnell@brookes.ac.uk or visit the CENDEP website
In the development field, this seemed an excellent basis. This diversity of students influences the style of the course. There is a very broad range of subject areas included, with a focus on core principles and encouragement and support to delve into greater depth through individual and group study and discussion. This allows great opportunities to learn from the experiences of others, and also avoids the risk of ‘tying everything up neatly’ – which would not represent the untidy complexity of the development field!

From a personal point of view, my interest was caught by a number of unexpected areas – including human rights and working with conflict – just two examples of a number of modules and sessions taught by excellent visiting lecturers.

Nine months after starting the MA, I started working for The Brooke - an international NGO that focuses on working horses and donkeys and the communities that own them. Did the course help in this career change? Undoubtedly yes: every day learning from the MA course helps in balancing the challenges of working for an organisation that works with a foot in development and a foot in the world of animal welfare; the cohort of students provides ongoing friendship, support and contacts.

This year’s cohort comprises 51 full and part time students from 20 countries – Uganda, Ethiopia, South Africa, North and South Sudan, the USA, Canada, Spain, Norway, Slovakia, Germany, Portugal, England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and St Lucia.

As with each intake, the cohort mixes those with experience in humanitarian aid with those new to the sector. Mammeet Kaur joined the programme from India having worked with an NGO, while Manuel Pereira joined after working for four years with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in East Timor.

David Bainbridge, Tear Fund’s Director of Disaster Management is taking the programme part time, as is Ann Foley who also works at Tear Fund as Director of Regions. Marina Muenchenbach joined the programme after working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and most recently undertaking work in Northern Uganda.

Those new to humanitarian work include Alex Pike who joined the programme after taking a business degree and Phil Wright who has a background in film and music editing. Ali Smith is taking the course while also working as a nanny. Sally Pike came to DEP after a career in the BBC from where she retired in 2009 from the post of Africa Bureau Chief.

David Woodward is a Major in the British Army and is attending DEP full time before returning to active duty. Zeya Schindler from California returned to full time education after under taking field work in Burma, as did Victoria Bateman after working in Vietnam.
In September CENDEP and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) co-hosted a one day conference focusing on the role of built environments. Over 50 participants attended, from NGOs, universities, intergovernmental agencies and specialist think-tanks. Keynote speakers included expert consultants and senior staff from the IFRC, the Shelter Centre, CARE International UK, University College London and the University of Westminster.

The conference reviewed the state of the art in post disaster shelter and discussed the roles of shelter practitioners currently working in the sector. It debated and questioned the role of architects. The conference agreed that, while architects do have a role, they need to radically rethink their conventional approaches if they are to be relevant in the reconstruction of effective post-disaster shelter. For many architects, this may mean ‘relearning’ the skills they have developed to engage better with people affected by disaster in a process, rather than just focusing on an end result – the shelter – as a product. The conference report, as well as presentations from speakers, can be found on CENDEP’s website.

Building relevance research report
by Caroline Cage, Dipti Hingorani, Sophie Jopping and Elizabeth Parker

In preparation for last September’s conference four CENDEP students interviewed 12 shelter experts who shared their concerns, hopes, ideas and priorities about the current ‘state of the art’ of shelter after disaster and how shelter professionals can improve their work. A particular focus was on the identification of the technical and personal skills required for shelter professionals and current opportunities for improvement. The 14 page report looks in detail into the roles of the shelter practitioner, co-working relationships and working in multi-disciplinary teams. The report identifies key issues which include the need to understand better the complexity of shelter; the role of ‘the missing beneficiary’; the need for knowledge management; professionalisation; and the overall lack of learning within the aid sector on this subject. The report can be found on the CENDEP website.

A Changing tourism: tourism vulnerable coastal communities and climate change research project

This one year research project aims to explore the changes to the tourism industry and vulnerable communities in small islands brought about by climate change, and develop initiatives aiming at the adaptation of these communities to their changing environment. The project is a collaboration between CENDEP, Oxford Brookes’ Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management and the London School of Economics (LSE) Complexity Research Group, and is being funded by Brookes’ Central Research Fund (CRF). Complexity thinking is being used as a framework for exploration. Phase one of the project comprises a literature review, the formation of a multi-disciplinary network, and a workshop for key actors from tourism, academia and the aid sector. Phase Two will comprise field work, implementation and research, for which funding is being sought from elsewhere.

As a first step a half day workshop was held at the LSE in March 2010. The workshop was facilitated by Professor Eve Milleton-Kelly. The aim of the workshop was to bring together senior practitioners in the humanitarian aid and tourism industries to exchange ideas and to identify steps for including the vulnerability of low income coastal communities to the impacts of climate change. To these ends 17 participants attended from both sectors, including from the humanitarian sector practitioners and academics from ALNAP, University College, London and CARE International.

Conference report on Building relevance: post-disaster shelter and the role of the building professional

In September 2009 he was selected by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to be one of the lead authors of a special report, ‘Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation’.

Simon Fisher has been based in Zimbabwe since early 2009 working with American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). In addition to being responsible for humanitarian and livelihood programmes he is working with a team to train security sector personnel, especially in the police and prison services, in practical conflict transformation skills. He also continues to teach part-time on the Masters course in the Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance at Africa University.

Nabeel Hamdi led training for Habitat for Humanity’s ‘Housing and human settlements course’ in Budapest, attended a UN-HABITAT East Africa inter-university Workshop on the African city and the implications on educating architects and planners, and attended a conference in Nepal in collaboration with the National university of Science and Technology Norway, Lhasa University and the University of Kathmandu exploring new trends in urban development.

Mohamed Hamza provided consultancy services to the UNDP’s Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) on disaster risk reduction (DRR) in SEE States, designed and delivered DRR and Training of trainers courses, and provided expert consultant inputs to a three year Red Cross programme concerning Disaster Management Capacity Building in West Africa.

Brigitte Piquard has been following her initiatives on space and violence mostly in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (POT) through field trips and conferences, and has started new initiatives on capacities enhancement in Universities of crisis areas mostly in the Middle East (Iraq and the POT).

David Sandersen evaluated a Church World Service (CWS) post-earthquake recovery programme in Pakistan for Action by Churches Together (ACT) and reviewed governance and disaster preparedness programmes in Bangladesh for CARE funded by USAID. In 2009 David gained his PhD by published works bringing together research and publications between 1995-2008 concerning livelihoods and urban risk. In March 2010 David was conferred as Professor.

Leda Stott has continued to work with the International Business Leaders Forum and the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) in East Africa, conducting workshops and providing support on corporate social responsibility for a selection of companies in the AKFED network. She has also been working with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to examine the achievements and challenges of a regional health partnership across the Americas. The work from this study is intended to assist the development of PAHO’s recently launched Partners Forum.

David Carver was one of the lead authors of a special report, ‘Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation’.

Recent activities

Richard Carver advised the Open Society Justice Initiative on strategic litigation to defend human rights in the context of counter-terrorist and national security measures, visiting several countries in South-East Asia and the Middle East to coordinate with local lawyers and human rights activists. He worked with the National Human Rights Commission of the Maldives and with the Ombudsman institutions in Croatia and Uzbekistan to help improve their legal frameworks. He gave a paper on Ombudsman institutions in Central and Eastern Europe to a conference at Harvard University.

Ian Davis, who edited the first UN guidelines on Shelter after Disaster in 1981, has been a member of the team developing its revision for publication in 2010. He has also been one of the authors of a World Bank publication, ‘Guidelines on Housing Re-construction following Disasters’ (publication March 2010).

Core staff and module leaders
Dr Rod Burgess, Senior Lecturer, School of the Built Environment; Richard Carver, Human rights specialist; Simon Fisher, Conflict specialist; Emeritus Professor Nabeel Hamdi, architectural specialist; Professor Mohamed Hamza, specialist in disasters and vulnerability; Dr Brigitte Piquard, Senior Lecturer in International Humanitarianism; Professor David Sandersen, CENDEP’s Director and DEP Programme Leader; Leda Stott, expert in cross-sector partnerships and editor of the journal ‘Partnership Matters’; Caroline Tindale, Programme Administrator

Regular contributors and visitors
Kate Angus, consultant; Peter Apps, journalist with Reuters; Philip Buckle, disasters specialist; Charles Clayton, Oxford Leaders; Visiting Professor Ian Davis, disaster management and shelter expert; Professor Tom Downing, climate change expert; Dr Alex Frediani, University College London; Rachel Goldwin, CARE UK; Tutu Foundation UK; Matthew Knops, psychologist, advisor for Oxfam; Sean Lowrie, King’s College London; Megan Price, REDR; Catherine Russ, REDR; Colonel Marty Slade, Regional Clinical Director, British Army; Dr Hugo Slim, conflict specialist; Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Nestle; Dr Caroline Sweetman, gender specialist, Oxfam; Dr John Twigg, Research Fellow, University College London

Global tutors
Belinda Cowden, Director of Institutional Housing, Polokwane Municipality, South Africa; Giuseppe Damiano, Director, Rapid-Latinoamerica, Peru; Patama Roonrakwit, founder, Community Architects for Shelter and Environment (CASE), Thailand; Dr Anshu Sharma, Programme Director, SEEDS, India

Staff and visitors

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CREATING EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENTS: HOW ACTION ON THE URBAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT CAN ENHANCE BASIC CAPABILITIES AND FREEDOMS

This work studies the impacts of built environment projects on basic capabilities—health, safety, association, livelihood, senses, imagination, thought and control over one’s environment. It makes the case for practitioners to incorporate training, participation, and leadership to be sustainable.

A COMMUNITY FOCUSED EXPLORATION OF PARTICIPATION AND POWER IN DECISION MAKING IN LARGE-SCALE URBAN REGENERATION

Community can play in making decisions about the regeneration of their area. The primary focus is on how the needs of those living on or adjacent to the site being developed are addressed and factored into the new development.

New CENDEP associates

CENDEP is pleased to welcome two new Associates. Charles Clayton has worked in top NGO leadership for over two decades. From 1989-2003 Charles was Chief Executive of the NGO World Vision UK. He was Group Chief Executive of Shaftesbury Housing Group, UK before returning to World Vision in 2004 as National Director for Jerusalem – West Bank – Gaza, a post which he held until 2009. Charles has now returned to Oxford and is Director of the organisation Oxford Leaders. In semester two Charles led a series of six 90 minute seminars on NGO leadership for DEP students.

Philip Buckle has worked in disaster management for over thirty years. From 1991-2002 he was Manager of the Department Of Human Services’ State Emergency Recovery Unit in Victoria, Australia. He has held academic posts at RMIT University in Melbourne Australia, Swinburne University, Australia and Coventry University. Recently Philip has been undertaking research and consultancy for UNDP, UNISDR and the World Bank.

Cities and crises

The new book ‘Cities and crises’ from HumanitarianNet, co edited by Brigitte Piquard with Dennis Day, Annette Grindsted and David Zammit, focuses on urban crises caused by conflict or natural disaster.

The 209 page book contains papers on vulnerable cities and explores themes of the city as a target, the city as a refuge, and recovering cities. Brigitte’s paper, ‘Gated populations, walled territories’ explores the impacts on the notion of space and coping mechanisms concerning the West Bank Wall.

Other papers include ‘War, cities and planning: making a case for urban planning in conflict-affected cities, written by York University’s Sultan Barakat and Shpira Narang, ‘Social trust in urban crises’ by Annette Grindsted and Astrid Jensen from the University of Southern Denmark, and ‘Invisible vulnerabilities. The case of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and San Salvador (El Salvador)’ by Tatioana Moura and Silvia Roque from the University of Coimbra.

New book from Nabeel Hamdi

The new book by CENDEP’s Emeritus professor Nabeel Hamdi is published by Earthscan, who state that the book ‘offers a variety of methods and tools for analyzing the issues, engaging with communities and other stakeholders for design and settlement planning and for improving the skills of all involved in placemaking. Applicability covers design as a process of enablement, participation and community / stakeholder engagement, site planning and site analysis, making practical interventions strategic, monitoring and evaluation, presentation, facilitation and negotiation and for teaching and learning.’

‘The book also critiques the single vision top down approach to design and planning. It demonstrates through examples and profiles of successful professional practice drawn from across Europe, the US, Africa, Latin America and post-tsunami Asia, how good policy can derive from good practices when reasoned backwards, as well as how plans can emerge in practice without a preponderance of planning. Reasoning backwards is shown to be a more effective and inclusive way of planning forwards with significant improvements to the quality of process and place.’

Dissertations

19 DEP Masters degree dissertations were submitted in 2009. These include:

OF PROFIT AND PEACE

by Rhiannon Price

This dissertation discusses the potential of the generic ‘peace-through-commerce’ project through cases of Afghanistan, Sudan and Darfur, and Rwanda and their relation with neighbouring states. It tackles the key issue of the place of profit-making businesses in peace-building. It gives an insight into the many ways through which commerce can variously bolster or undermine the pursuit of peace.

It argues that greater understanding is required about the workings and behaviour of small and medium enterprises and multinational companies before they can be relied upon as a wider panacea for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

THE POWER TO MOVE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE FRAMING OF THE 2004 INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI BY THE BBC

by Caroline Holden

This dissertation looks at the media response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in the first two months after the disaster and the impact of the media on the way governments, NGOs and the public understand and responded to it. Through the use of qualitative frame analysis, this study explores how the framing of the Tsunami by the media and the donations given by public and private bodies varied over the two months.

It examines how the British public interpreted the frames used by the BBC and what impact they felt it had on donors’ response. It highlights the critical role that communication has in the current not-for-profit sector and the importance of the media.

HOW CAN VULNERABILITY AND RISK BE REDUCED IN LARGE-SCALE GATHERINGS?

by Hani Hashim Al Nabulsi

Hani Al Nabulsi’s work analyses crowd dynamics and its relationship to hazards, risk and vulnerability. It investigates the relationship between (a) design and engineering issues related to human behaviour and movement, (b) information, and (c) crowd management that is intended to cope with ever more intense and complex flows of people.

It argues that safe event operation of densely large-scale gatherings is only effective when an in-depth vulnerability and risk assessment integrates information, management and engineering frames of reference.

CREATING EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENTS: HOW ACTION ON THE URBAN BUILT ENVIRONMENT CAN ENHANCE BASIC CAPABILITIES AND FREEDOMS

by Mona Luxton

This work studies the impacts of built environment projects on basic capabilities—health, safety, association, livelihood, senses, imagination, thought and control over one’s environment. It makes the case for practitioners to incorporate actions on the built environment as a tool to promote human development. It examines the role of citizen participation in empowering environments, finding that successful projects need a balance of training, participation, and leadership to be sustainable.

A COMMUNITY FOCUSED EXPLORATION OF PARTICIPATION AND POWER IN DECISION MAKING IN LARGE-SCALE URBAN REGENERATION: LEARNING FROM STRATFORD CITY

by Elizabeth Parker

Elizabeth Parker’s study asks what role a community can play in making decisions about the regeneration of their area. The focus is on how the needs of those living on or adjacent to the site being developed are addressed and factored into the new development.

It presents the stages of the project (initiation, planning, design, construction and management), identifying opportunities for community involvement and how the quality of community participation can impact on the success of projects of this scale.

TIME FOR A CHANGE?: THE TRADITIONAL HUMAN RIGHT NGO FACT FINDING AND INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTIONS OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHT VIOLATIONS

by Eric Meldrum

This study concerns the investigative methods used by human rights NGOs and asks whether these are still appropriate given the emergence of both national and international justice mechanisms to prosecute those suspected of gross human right abuses.

The work looks at the effect the NGO methodology has had upon subsequent criminal investigations and prosecutions.
Bethanie Cunnick writes, the 2010 festival was our most successful yet with a record turnout and a really positive response from audience members, directors and speakers. The festival began with a fascinating pre-launch performance from 'The Burma Play: a Comedy of Terror's which told the story of Burma’s history with flair, biting humour, virtuoso performances and original live music at the impressive North Wall Arts Centre.

Continuing the theme, Burmese Activist Ko Aung joined us for the official opening of the festival, now in its 8th year, to offer his personal reflections and experiences after the screening of the documentary montage film ‘Burmaj’. The Oxford bar Baby Simple hosted a fantastic launch night party, following the film, with music from hip hop and spoken word acts Dizzee Rascal, soul band Sarah Williams White and swing-folk singers Toyface and the Crash! Bang! Boom!

Saturday’s screening of Israeli/Palestinian based film ‘To Shoot an Elephant’ held at the Quaker Meeting House in Oxford was hosted by Former Head of World Vision Jerusalem Charles Clayton and his wife Anne Clayton who is UK coordinator for Palestinian Christian Human Rights Organisation Sabeel, who were joined by Gaza refugee Ghada Ageel.

A representative from LGBT charity Stonewall joined us and the maximum capacity audience, at the Phoenix Picture House Cinema for the screening of Oscar nominated film ‘Milk’.

Two evenings at the Vaults and Gardens café followed, with screenings of short films from ‘Ctrl+Alt+Shft’, Brazilian documentary film ‘MST: the biggest march in Brazilian History’ plus African based films ‘Burden of Peace’ and ‘Saharawi’ presented by some of the writers, directors and producers.

Hugo Slim led the discussion following the well attended film ‘Shake Hands with the Devil’, a fascinating documentary about Romeo Dallaire at the Oxford Synagogue in Jericho, Oxford.

Gemima Wolfes came to talk about the work of her organisation Anti-Slavery International in relation to the feature film ‘Trade’.

The closing night was led by the directors of documentary ‘Outside the Law: Stories from Guantanamo prison Omar Deghayes

The Human Rights Film and Music festival is an annual event, showing feature films, documentaries, shorts and animations in venues throughout Oxford, presented by directors, activists, representatives from NGO’s, scholars and authors. The event is run each year as an initiative of CENDEP students who organise the event and secure the films. The festival is free of charge and open to all.

From DEP to Save the Children
Josie Calvert writes, I joined the Masters course in Development and Emergency Practice in September 2008. CENDEP has fostered strong links with some of the well-known NGOs which not only keeps the course content relevant to the day to day realities of working in the humanitarian sector, but also really helps when it comes to looking for work experience and jobs.

During the Masters I was able to gain valuable work experience firstly by going on a field trip to Peru to work with the NGO RAPID LatinoAmerica, and then to Bangladesh to work as a research assistant for three weeks with CARE.

I am now on a year long training scheme with Save the Children. The work I am doing is to respond the chronic food crisis in East Africa. The combination of my previous experiences meant that this was the Children’s busiest time since the 2004 Tsunami and so my first few weeks in the emergencies team were a real baptism of fire — but, I was able to draw on the knowledge and skills that I learnt on the course and apply them to my work.

The work they do is amazing and makes a huge difference to millions of children around the world. Since starting the Masters at Brookes, I haven’t looked back and my feet have hardly touched the ground as I have been so busy, not least with recently becoming a grandmother.

I am really proud to be working at Save. The emergencies team are an extremely hardworking, dedicated and lively bunch.

DEP updates
Ian and Monica Verhaeghe are in Haiti working with the NGO Samaritan’s Purse. Dipti Hingorani won a Vodafone World of Difference award to work with both CENDEP and the NGO ASF-UK on post-disaster shelter reconstruction. Natalie Daniels won a scholarship to study in the USA. Eric Meldrum is working with a child rights NGO in Delhi. Sari Kaijala continues to work in Afghanistan. Hannah Sanderson is currently working with the NGO Merlin. Hilly Grumbard is working with the organisation CoforC (formerly known as Corporates for Crisis). Caroline Cage is undertaking a PhD at London South Bank University, working closely with the NGO Practical Action and undertaking field research in Kenya. Beth Parker is working along with Victoria Batchelor at Arup’s international aid department.
New initiatives in shelter after disaster

Immediately after a natural disaster a vital need is for safe shelter. In the first days and weeks in the relief phase shelter is often in the form of tents and makeshift shacks built from whatever materials are available.

As relief shifts to recovery critical decisions are made that set the nature and scope of longer term shelter: location, quality, cost, role of government authorities and aid agencies, and of people themselves. While ‘shelter after disaster’ has been a recognised field of work for at least thirty years, the systems and approaches for successful shelter delivery are far from clear.

With a bewildering range of actors and contested debate over the best approaches, achieving equitable, sustainable and effective shelter after disaster is complex and all too often goes wrong. To these ends CENDEP’s approach to shelter after disaster is to learn from practice about what works best.

Improving learning and planning in the NGO shelter sector; ELRHA funded research project with CARE UK

The project, a one year research initiative with CARE International UK, funded by ELRHA (Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance), seeks to improve the post-disaster shelter capacity of NGOs, which will be achieved through facilitating learning and improving practice.

The programme aims specifically to encourage new personnel into the shelter sector, thereby widening the pool of experienced and professional humanitarian staff. Activities include the documentation of shelter case studies in Peru, Bangladesh and India, student internships and the development of academic courses.

Rapid Shelter training for Haiti

In March, in collaboration with ELRHA and Save the Children UK, CENDEP organised a week-long training to prepare potential shelter practitioners for deployment to Haiti. The first three days were held at Oxford Brookes and concentrated on good shelter practice.

The 19 participants had the benefit of the experience of four shelter experts all recently back from Haiti, as well learning from Visiting Professor Ian Davis, author of ‘Shelter after Disaster’ and Laurence Whitehead, an authority from Oxford University on Latin American political science. Other activities included case studies and discussing theoretical approaches. After their time in Oxford the group was bussed to Northampton for three further days in security and first aid training that included wading waist-deep through a stream, sleeping in a tent at minus four degrees and encountering a mock kidnap.

Bill Flinn writes, we have been advising an aid agency on the design of a ‘transitional shelter’, a family home that will serve as a provisional house until there are resources for a more permanent dwelling. These houses are expected to be in use for three to five years, but that could stretch to ten years or more. So they have to be strong and well-built to survive hurricane seasons, floods and earth tremors.

Once we had re-designed the shelter, the next logical step was to build it as a prototype that would demonstrate sound engineering and good, storm-resistant carpentry techniques. With a handful of architecture students, it was built in a couple of days from a pile of timbers, a bucket of nails and some rolls of metal strapping. Aside from learning about shelter after disaster, the students were able to practice their carpentry skills.

The following week the shelter was used as a didactic tool in our rapid shelter training for Haiti. The participants were able to see how good engineering and construction techniques can make a simple, de-mountable, safe, temporary home.

What works well in shelter after disaster?

In October CENDEP hired Research Associate Jeni Burnell to undertake a literature review of ‘what works well in shelter after disaster’. The review is considering key themes of durability, adaptability, appropriateness, likeability, usability and process. The outputs of the research include a database of information organised under respective themes as well as research papers. Information will be drawn from peer reviewed journals such as ‘Disasters’ and ‘Environment and Urbanization’ and previous research undertaken for example by Cambridge Architectural Research (CAR) and London South Bank University.
Patrick Shepherd (photo bottom left) writes, one of the attractions of the DEP Masters is the two week optional field trip that takes place during the winter break. This year the options were India, Palestine and Peru. Like many others, I decided to use the winter break as an opportunity to do a bit of travelling before hooking up with one of the fieldtrips. During the first semester I had been studying aspects of conflict in Colombia. The more I learned, the more I wanted to go. It therefore seemed to make sense to fly to Colombia and travel down by land to Peru and join that field trip.

I followed up on contacts in Bogota that I’d made whilst doing research for the conflict module. It turned out to be incredibly worthwhile and a lot of fun. It brought more life and energy to what had previously been coursework shrouded in theory and speculation. I’d encourage anybody thinking of going on one of the field trips to take an extra week or two to follow up on any research that particularly interested them from the first term.

For me that meant meeting people living and working in the downtown homeless communities and in the informal settlements on the peripheries of Bogota. These streets are alive and truly diverse. Colombia's rich and volatile past has left a bubbling cauldron of different cultures and ideologies. Some merge harmoniously, others explode in scenes of desperate and grotesque violence. Urban migration is the trend and now the cities fringes are swelling up with displaced peasants caught between the paramilitaries, the guerrillas and the government.

The field trip, led by Rod Burgess, kicked off in Lima so I flew into the jungle and travelled up the Amazon and into Peru. From the second the plane doors opened to the day I left the jungle I was drenched in sweat. I continued along the housing theme and arranged to meet some local partners of the NGO Engineers Without Borders who were working on a clinic in the floating town of Belen. From there I flew to Lima to join the fieldtrip which was hosted by Rapid LatinoAmerica – a team of emergency preparedness specialists.

The guys at Rapid had arranged for us to visit several informal settlements around Lima, a huge copper and zinc mine and the port facility where the minerals are piped to and exported from, a tsunami preparedness project, and some post-earthquake reconstruction projects around Pisco.

We were in Peru as the chaos of the Haiti earthquake unravelled and some of Rapid’s crew were dispatched to help remove people from the rubble. As we looked at some of the transitional shelters and ghost towns around Pisco there was a strong sense of reflection about the reconstruction process.

Corruption, lost momentum and bureaucracy had failed these towns and you had to wonder if Haiti would succumb to a similar fate. This adds a human element to lectures and case studies that helps to keep me grounded and focused. On reflection, the trip was great. I learnt a lot. Can’t wait to get to work!
Kevin Dunbar (bottom photo, far left) writes, In January of 2010, nine DEP students were joined by two colleagues from Brookes’ Planning Department in the hustle and bustle of Orissa State in eastern India on the 2010 CENDEP field trip. Orissa is one of the poorest states in India.

Leading the team were David Sanderson, the Director of CENDEP, and Anshu Sharma, from the well established NGO Seeds India and international tutor for Oxford Brookes. We were also joined by the Urban and Development Resource centre (UDRC) and spent time working from the offices of the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF).

We were also hosted for an afternoon by KIIT University who organised a joint lessons sharing workshop with Masters students from their agriculture department.

The trip began with a workshop on participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) led by David and Anshu, introducing the core principals of this research and assessment technique. After pushing a van through deep sand, changing a flat tire, and dodging rickshaws that seemed determined to run them over, the team charged off to use their newfound PRA skills in communities in Orissa.

As a group we decided to spend the last week in a coastal fishing village called Pentha Kota in the town of Puri working on a PRA based assessment of three highlighted issues – use of physical environment, governance and livelihoods. In Puri the team interacted with community members, NSDF and UDRC, and used a rooftop ‘office’ above the community toilet block with an amazing view of the community and the ocean. It was from this vantage point that interviews were held, reports written, stories shared and relationships cemented.

At the end of the week, in a small area of the village, we marked off an area of sand, and reported the findings back to the community. While this sounds like a formal affair, great relationships had been formed during the week in Puri, so it seemed more like a gathering of friends than a presentation.

Fishermen, political and community leaders, women, children and representatives from local NGOs all took part, passionately giving their feedback on our work.

Jeni Burnell, also on the trip, summed up the trip well - ‘Perhaps the most valuable and rewarding experience of the Orissa field trip was the knowledge that through our learning experience we had the opportunity to contribute to reducing others’ vulnerabilities and, hopefully, improving their lives in the long term.’

The ‘Pentha Kota fishing community participatory assessment report’, produced as an output of the workshop by SEEDS, UDRC and CENDEP, explored key issues that included fishing and associated activities, adaptation to climate change, fairer access to key services, land tenure and use of space.

Findings and recommendations were organised into three interrelated themes: building strong governance, in particular relating to the need to negotiate for land tenure through equitable relocation; strengthened livelihoods, mostly through diversification of income earning opportunities; and improved physical environment, in particular concerning the lack of adequate sanitation.

The final report can be found on CENDEP’s website.