This year’s cohort of 53 full and part time students are from Europe, North America, Africa and Asia. As with each intake, the cohort is a mix of experienced aid workers, those new to development and others with careers in other sectors looking to apply their skills within the humanitarian aid sector.

Caoilinn Briggs from California came to Oxford after working in Haiti and before that west Africa. Camilla Higgins from Northern Ireland worked for an NGO in Peru just before joining the programme, Zainab Koroma from the British Red Cross, Amy Moran from Christian Aid, Clement Kalonga from Oxfam GB and Tamsin Morrison from Opportunity International are taking the programme part time while continuing to work, while Pam Silko is attending full time after spending several years working with World Vision in South East Asia, including the Asian tsunami and Burma’s Cyclone Nargis.

Martina Tomaselli, a translator with the UN in New York joined the programme after becoming interested in the content of the talks she was translating. David Cuttle spent ten years in Australia developing emergency management capacity for the Australian Government. Before joining DEP Michelle Young and Michael Richards worked for many years in architecture, while Victoria Bodart and Caroline Parks both worked for large law firms. For Caroline, ‘the programme marks a significant shift in career towards my long term goal of working in the humanitarian sector’.

Ghanalain Wisdom Blessie-Dent joined the British army before retraining as a social worker, while Walter Mwaka came from Uganda after working with World Vision. Phiona Namupungu from Uganda took an undergraduate degree in social work and social administration and took on volunteering roles with The AIDS Support Organization, Action Aid Uganda and Voluntary Action for Development. She joined the course after winning a scholarship from The Martin Wilkinson Fund for International Scholarships, choosing DEP “because it focuses on community capacity to transform lives.” Phiona’s goal on leaving the programme is ‘to help people in the same or worse situation as me, to be able to educate people on how they can enjoy better livelihoods.’

Lisa Zocher from the USA joined the programme after living and working in Colombia, which she says ‘allowed me to experience firsthand the poverty and difficult living situations so many people endure. These experiences have changed my life and lead me to pursue the MA. ’

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DEP 2010-11 cohort

Rabecia Muoku writes, My experience from living in a refugee camp for 16 of my 26 years in Northern Uganda is my biggest driver and motivation for pursuing this Masters Degree in Development and Emergency Practice. I was born a year after the start of the civil war in Sudan, and therefore never had an idea of how living in your own peaceful and stable country feels like. All I remember was living in a congested refugee camp in Northern Uganda and waiting for relief aid each new month from the Humanitarian aid Agencies.

My admiration for humanitarian work grew stronger each passing day while in the refugee camp. I loved the aid workers and kept hoping that one day, if an opportunity presents itself, I would study to become an international humanitarian aid worker assisting many people around the world who would be in a similar situation like me, living in refugee camps, as a result of either violent conflict and/or displacement due to natural disaster. For me, this course is a dream come true. Secondly, things have changed in my then country of Sudan. The cessation of South Sudan (where I come from), from the North presents many post conflict reconstruction and development challenges for the South.

I listen to use my skills impacted by this course to actively take part in the reconstruction and development process of South Sudan. Though my biggest dream is to work with vulnerable communities nationally and internationally, because I feel I can have a bigger impact on more than most other people based on my experience.

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DEP 2010-11 cohort

Damaris Frick writes. I am doing the CENDEP course part-time. I have worked as an emergency relief worker for The Salvation Army Emergency Services for the last five years. This has taken me to disaster and conflict zones around the world. The course challenges me to improve not only my own work but to influence my organisation as well.

The CENDEP course has been doing that and more. It gives me new impulses and inspiration for thought. I enjoy the fact that the lecturers have broad experience in the field themselves and relate their teaching to that. It is also great that the course attracts people from various backgrounds, ethnically and regarding experience. The practical course challenges me to improve not only my own work but to influence my organisation as well.

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Urban disasters – lessons from Haiti

Haiti’s earthquake of 12th January 2010 killed over 220,000 people, injured 300,000, left over one million homeless, and destroyed infrastructure, services and homes. Urban areas were particularly badly hit, with extensive damage and large numbers of people killed.

In response the UK Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) raised over £100 million from the British public towards relief and recovery, which was used by its 13 member agencies. In December the DEC commissioned a review to ask, ‘what can be learnt from international NGOs for the next urban disaster?’ The question results from the recognition that NGOs are largely unprepared for urban disasters - events which are set to increase in number and severity, and which the World Bank calls a ‘game-changer’ in terms of the need for agencies to gear up for better response.

The 30 page review, led by David Sanderson with a team from India and Haiti, provided 10 recommendations, including the need to work closely with local government, to use cash based approaches where possible, to reconsider the use of temporary shelter (and focus on long term housing instead), to work with the private sector and local markets, and to use more orientated tools. The final, main recommendation was to prepare for the next 3-5 large urban disasters that will almost definitely occur over the next 10 years. The report, which was launched by the DEC in March, is available on the DEC and CENDEP websites. A two minute movie summarising the findings can also be seen on YouTube.

Architecture and Conflict


After an investigation of the role of architecture and space in conflict as well as the potential of architecture for peace and conflict transformation, this special issue combines a range of theoretical perspectives - including national and international law, political economy and cultural studies - with cases studies of key cities and regions, which include Belfast, Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Recent publications


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Kevin Dunbar

To explore the role of local emergency services in disaster preparedness and response and determine how these can be supported to do a better job, this study began by taking a look at the operations of the Haifa Firefighter Department. The study used this question as an entry-point and went beyond the general context to focus on specific issues, considering the importance of linking community disaster risk reduction (DRR) and humanitarian assistance (HA). This led to increased yields in wheat and rice. Punjab has experienced a significant increase in the cotton area, and was used to set precedents. This study challenges this notion by unearthing the unsustainable aspects that have resulted in the present agrarian crisis, such as water shortage and pollution, soil degradation, health problems and financial pressure. This study presents an alternative model and other recommendations towards a more sustainable and resilient food system.

Manmeet Kaur

This research investigates to what extent humanitarian assistance programmes support local economies during and after a disaster. The study concluded that humanitarians should consider how best this support can be strengthened by forming partnerships with Local Markets and in coordination with Local Governments. The study addresses the context of conflict affected environments, in this case Kilometers from the city. The study found that 20 years of violent internal conflict is in transition to development. The context builds on the concept of co- generating knowledge between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ on specific areas of interest, where insiders may want to find solutions for practical problems, whereas outsiders may want to generate conclusions reached.

CAPACITY TO THRIVE, AS SEEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PAUL STOCKLEY

This study seeks to question the underlying premise of humanitarian agencies and providers, namely, that they know what the child needs and theoretical basis for it, and then offering a narrative of a participatory video workshop conducted with members of a community breastfeeding advocacy group in Mandaluyong City, Manila. PV is totally unique to captures people’s true visions and to bring their ideas to other communities. It offers marginalised, impoverished, and even illiterate people a method of expressing themselves in their own unfettered.

CONFLICTS IN CONSERVATION, TERRITORIAL AND VALUE BASED IMPLICATIONS FOR CAT Tien National Park, Vietnam

Victoria Bateman

This dissertation seeks to uncover the conflicts occurring in the context of biodiversity conservation at Cat Tien National Park in Vietnam to better understand the implications of this notion. A series of structured and semi-structured interviews of experts in the region, and the results analysed through the ideas of community engagement. The results of this study put ideas and strategies for conservation in Cat Tien into a framework for prioritising goals and understand the impacts of activities.

USING VIDEO IN COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVOCACY: CRITICAL REVIEW OF A PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP IN MANDALUYONG CITY, MANILA

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This study presents an alternative model and other recommendations towards a more sustainable and resilient food system.
Shelter after disaster
New course takes shape

Bill Flinn writes, Shelter after Disaster is a new CENDEP 20 credit optional module. Over 35 students attended the course - an indicator of the interest that this emerging subject is generating. The module sought to set a balance between a reflective, discursive methodology through group work and case studies and a more rigorous approach to building principles, shelter theory and disaster risk reduction.

Guest speakers, mainly from practice and all experts in their field, used examples from, among other countries, Haiti, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cuba, Bangladesh and India to illustrate the scale, breadth and the complexity of shelter programmes. The course emphasises that there are no easy answers to shelter after a disaster and every set of circumstances is unique. There is one common factor however: that the people affected by a disaster are not victims but the first responders and the most important partners in any response.

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The reasons for this failure are several. They include: the lack of secure funding for the refugee agencies and its consequent dependence on government donations; the sheer scale of the refugee crisis in the post colonial world; and the narrow scopes of the protection, accommodation and resettlement regime, which is still largely unchanged, excludes the refugee as an individual fleeing the threat of persecution, usually on grounds of belief or political affiliation. It takes little account of the actual causes of most contemporary forced migration, such as conflict, disaster and ethnic cleansing.

Some small but important steps forward have been taken. For example, there have been serious efforts to address the singular protection needs of people displaced by disasters or conflict who do not cross borders – a term that refers to the heavy-handed and indiscriminate effort to protect national security. Xenophobia, often officially encouraged, has clouded public understanding of the obligation to offer protection to those fleeing violence and persecution.

In Europe and North America, the response to refugee influxes has become bound up with the ‘war on terror’. The victims of violence have often suffered the most. The response by humanitarians, backed by heavy-handed and indiscriminate effort to protect national security, has been to reinsure and consolidated ethnic cleansing.

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Kate Angus writes, CENDEP and Brookes’ Business School recently conducted a needs assessment of 10 senior leaders (CEOs and Presidents) from leading humanitarian aid agencies to find out what they perceived as issues and opportunities concerning effective leadership. The research was developed and overseen with support of the UK Government, Oxford Leaders and Oxford Change Management.

The research identified several key areas for learning, many of which relate to the challenges faced by international organisations working in a complex and politicised environment. These include: determining and managing risks; measuring values; making rapid decisions on the basis of incomplete information; designing organisations which are decentralised and able to being constantly adapt; and creating workable partnerships.

They were also asked what kind of academic offering Brookes might develop to address learning needs. Many responded that short courses (particularly where supported by distance and flexible learning), coaching, mentoring and action learning were the preferred options. While identifying the usual leadership functions in NGOs (such as setting direction, articulating vision and values, and staff management), the research also revealed a range of unique leadership concerns in NGOs, for example, the need for ‘rights-based approaches’, the trend in monitoring and evaluation and NGOs’ productivity metrics, value for money and staff motivation.

In addition some new elements are being drawn from the business sector, such as the latest business management courses in leadership which cover areas such as leadership, power, change and development. Significantly, the respondents expressed a preference for learning that was needs based. The most favoured methods were coaching, peer support, action learning and shadowing.

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Nabeel Hamdi (Programme founder and Emeritus professor) writes. Arriving from the USA via the buzz and openness of the MIT and Harvard campus, where I had spent some ten years, to the sedate and largely gated academic community of CENDEP, it took some getting used to. My mandate was to help professionalise the programme, give it status and content, no small task when, to begin with, to invent a new Masters degree in International Development – something unique, fun, practical and relevant to some of the big issues emerging globally – a Masters in Development Practice as it first became known. I spent my first academic year organizing the programme, with the help of friends and colleagues and going through the validation process. The validation event was difficult at times. I recall someone saying that it would be difficult to start this course until I had ironed out the details. To which my response was – I can’t iron out the details until we start. Our first year 1992/93 included some twenty students, mostly studying architecture taking the course as a special route, unsure what it was all about but attracted by its international focus on places such as India, Thailand, Laos, Ecuador and Jamaica.

In time the mix of those with experience and those new to development - a worry at first - became as sources of mutual respect and creatively. Ignorance after all is often liberating! And while the non-architects would talk, brainstorm and write, so the architects would sketch, visualise and challenge, ensuring mutual respect and pushing boundaries. As the discipline evolved students discovered that inter-disciplinary work entailed learning to work with others and not trying to be those others. As and the course grew and became more diverse, so we took on new agendas and made progressive adjustments in content and leadership – complex emergencies, humanitarianism, post disaster reconstruction – until today the programme is the envy of many an academic institution.

Since 2010 the world has witnessed overwhelming urban disasters in Japan, Haiti, Chile, Christchurch and Brisbane. Japan, often considered the most prepared, still suffered losses and catastrophic damage. It is however a testament to this preparedness that the news was not of a collapsed Tokyo. Other countries have a lot to learn from this – stable societies that take disaster risk seriously increase safety and preparedness. The tragic impact of Haiti’s earthquake underlines this. Unless better action is taken, rapid urban growth with large concentrations of people, too often living dangerous places, will lead to more stories like that of Haiti. In this respect the humanitarian aid community is looking at development and is increasingly aware of the need to prepare. More importantly it also needs to proactively think in this area – it needs to be a witness to the concept of unfailing good building codes, building a resilient city and the need for government and other communities in managing their own risk, especially amongst those who are the most vulnerable – but is also to look at Flora and Fiona and to withstand hurricane disarray.

I will always remain grateful to the many colleagues and students who contributed so enthusiastically and generously to this chapter in the Centre’s evolution – whether through the testing and refinement of new curriculum or other CENDEP initiatives such as the now-annual Oxford Brooks Human Rights Film Festival, currently in its ninteenth year and going from strength to strength.}

CENDEP's Masters of Science degree in Development Practice (DP) was first offered in 1991 and had an intake of 15. Since then it has evolved into a multidisciplinary degree offering modules concerning conflict, disasters, chronic poverty, refugees and human rights. The programme has had four programme leaders, who here reflect on the past 20 years and speculate on the next 20.

Hugo Slim (CENDEP Director, 1994-2004) writes. I joined CENDEP a month before the Rwandan genocide and the terrible violence that ensued in 1994. This terrible event joined civil wars in Somalia, Bosnia, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Liberia and Sierra Leone to make armed conflict a central theme of the 1990s. In response to these wars, humanitarian action, human rights and peace-building became urgent themes in global activism. At CENDEP, we embraced these areas of practice and development with the deeper values of development practice. Today’s upsurges across North Africa and the Gulf embody popular conflict of a more progressive kind. This is encouraging - although Libya’s uprising may, like Cote d’Ivoire, become sadly entrenched in a more conventional civil war.

Social change born of responsible popular uprising is something to be celebrated. It stands in stark contrast to the atrocities and societal trauma of development by civil war and disaster. Social change should be fertile ground for the kind of emergent people-led development championed by CENDEP. If conflict is more progressive than disasters, then disaster is still a priority. Business emerged from the ap-palling role extractive industries could play in 1990s war economies around diamonds, timber and oil. Improved business ethics may be a silver lining from these terrible wars.

CENDEP is wise to use partnerships and alumni to build networks across these rich-poor regions.

Brian Phillips (Programme leader, 2002-2006) writes, it was especially exciting to be invited to become part of CENDEP in 2002 – as vital conversations about the need for ‘rights-based approaches’ in both the humanitarian and development sectors became urgent the world over. Having spent the previous eleven years working for Amnesty International, I was delighted to develop a human rights based approach to development practice and to develop the human rights practice strand for the Centre’s renowned Master’s course.

It was an immense privilege to help forge imaginative links between previously separate disciplines as the boundaries between humanitarianism, development and human rights work were increasingly disappearing within inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations alike. The growing emphasis on human rights in development was a testament to the creative process of integration inside CENDEP even more compelling.

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DEP
9th Human rights arts and film festival

Daniela Mota writes. In January 2011, as part of the annual DEP field trip, 14 students undertook a 12 day community assessment in Morjim, a village in India’s Goa State. The work was undertaken with the Indian NGO SEEDS India and the International Centre in Goa (ICG). The assessment focused on the threats of climate change along the coastal northern edge of Goa and the potential threat to vulnerable communities. Activities included discussions with local stakeholders and the use of participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) tools, including mapping and transect walks.

At the end of the assessment student made two presentations. The first was to local residents in the fish market, wherein attendees were invited to provide feedback and comments on draft findings, including voting on which recommendations residents thought were most important. A second session was held later in the same day at the ICG offices and was attended by academics, experts and journalists. At that event the final report ‘Morjim at risk? Vulnerable communities field trip’ was launched and discussed. The report received widespread interest in the media and was reported on the front pages of the Times of India and The Goa Herald, as well as appearing in several websites and other newspapers. As a result of this study an electronic platform ‘Goa Action Search’ was created to share information on current issues in Goa.

■ To download the final report and to find the link to the platform, visit the CENDEP website.

9th Human rights arts and film festival

Daniela Mota writes. The line-up for the 2011 Human Rights Film Festival included mainstream feature films such as Aamir, Persepolis, Maria Full of Grace and this in addition to documentaries such as Forgiven Birds of Paradise. El Problema and Gender Against Men as well as a sneak preview of 2012 film The Runner.

A host of engaging speakers joined us from a variety of organisations such as Oxfam, Sandhurst Arts, Community Albums, Peace Brigades International, Free West Papua Campaign, Christian Aid, Forward UK, Saluev and Tourist with a TypeWriter to name a few.

Once again the films were screened all over the city in venues such as the Arts Centre, the Jam Factory, Magdalen College Auditorium, the East Oxford Community Centre, the ever supportive Oxford Synagogue and the Old Bookbinders in East Oxford.

The 9th annual festival focussed largely on the role of the arts in shaping our understanding about global issues and for the first time we made links with our neighbours, Cheney school, by organising a workshop, in conjunction with local art organisation Artisjustaword where the students produced some amazing artwork for each of the films screened at the festival. The pieces were framed and displayed at the opening event, became a key part of the promotional materials and are now being exhibited at a venue in East Oxford.

Another exciting event involved a local graffiti artist, Kaiinder Shamas, who created a marvellous banner, so huge it was impossible to miss, which was used to promote the festival.

Other exciting events included a theatre piece, Change, which highlighted the humanitarian issues of climate change that is so often/overlooked – the real people who are suffering right now. This was followed by an evening of guest speakers, who discussed the role of women in the arts and development, accompanied by a visual feast of shorts, snippets of films and documentaries.

The children’s rights night, in conjunction with local organisation Community Albums who seek to give children a voice, began with an uplifting welcome message from a group children in Uganda.

The festival closed with a comedy sketch show, ‘Worlds C Offs’ from comedian duo Robin and Patricia.

The Human Rights Film festival is an annual event showing feature films, documentaries, shorts and animations in venues throughout Oxford, presented by directors, activists, representatives from NGOs, 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.

To download the final report and to find the link to the platform, visit the CENDEP website.

Moriim at risk? Vulnerable communities field trip

To download the final report and to find the link to the platform, visit the CENDEP website.
Kevin Dunbar, (DEP 2009-10) writes, I was lucky enough to move straight from handing in my dissertation to a traineeship in the Save the Children’s Emergency Department called the Humanitarian Skills Development Program (HSDP). I travelled to southwest Haiti and supported the on-going responses to the 2010 Haiti earthquake and Pakistani floods along with numerous other smaller disasters. As part of the training we went through an intense six month Emergency Operations Programme which included distance learning sessions on topics such as health, child protection and project management.

I'm now off to put all of this training into practice and spend the next six months implementing Save programmes as a roving field officer in southern Sudan. It’s going to be an exciting time to be as Save South Sudan becomes an independent country. The last year and a half has changed my life, from a banker and salesman in international business in Canada to an emergency worker in Sudan. It's a privilege to have found my place in this humanitarian community.

Matt Banks (NQP 2005-06) writes, Graduating with my Masters has been a passport to many interesting adventures and experiences I have lived in 2006. Immediately after graduat-ing I got a job in Sri Lanka as director for a small Emergency Response team supporting the on-going responses to the 2010 Haiti earthquake and Pakistani floods along with numerous other smaller disasters. As part of the training we went through an intense six month Emergency Operations Programme which includes distance learning sessions on topics such as health, child protection and project management.

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Beth Parker (DEP 2008-09) writes, A highlight has been using ASPIRE - our in-house poverty reduction and sustainability tool - that can be used for monitoring and evaluation as well as programme design and management. We undertook an assessment in Haiti which was able to inform future project development. The work is extremely rewarding and I look forward to the year ahead.

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From Haiti to the DRC

Ian and Monica Verhaaghe (DEP 2008-09) write, While writing our CENDEP dissertations, we felt it was important to focus on topics that would not only tick all the academics boxes, but would also serve to open doors for future employment opportunities.

A short period interning with Tearfund, the end of our respective contracts coincided with the January 2010 earthquake that rocked Haiti and left more than 200 000 dead. Three weeks afterwards we began a 13-month contract as WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Co ordinators with a US-based NGO. Under various USAID grants and privately funded programmes, Monica was responsible for capacity building of household WASH kits and hiring national staff to create hygiene education and health promotion interventions in several camps. Ian was responsible for providing clear vision and access to emergency latrines in over 100 camps, to try to mitigate the outbreak of diarrhoea.

In October of 2010 just as Haiti began to stabilise and experience positive change, Hurricane Thomas ripped through southwest Haiti, followed by an outbreak of Cholera in the north. As a result the country stumbled back into emergency mode surrounding Part du Plateau and southwest Haiti while Ian became responsible for coordination of systems for three cholera treatment centres.

We have finished our contracts in Haiti and are preparing for year-long contracts in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tearfund in the DRC will fill the role of Public Health Promotion Advisor. Our work will be community-led sanitation (CLTS) programmes while training and managing local partners in these programmes.

The BIF also carries out advocacy work and we have led and been involved in a number of initiatives including delegations to Bolivia by British MPs and trade unionists and visits to the UK by Bolivian politicians and social movement leaders. As part of the training we took part in a speaking tour in November last year.

I have maintained involvement with CENDEP and the Oxford Brookes Human Rights Film Festival. At the festival, the BIF presented a short documentary called ‘Abya Yala: This Land is Ours’ which took part in a question and answer session after the film.
Early on I took on production of the newsletter, and decided to get articles from some of our guest speakers, as they came and share their concerns and ideas which, as it turned out, became part of the development of the course.

My role has changed over the years and I no longer have direct contact with CENDEP’s students. However, I have been fortunate enough to retain my links with this world through the typing of Nabs Hamdi’s books. This has allowed me to see how things have changed – and yet in some ways not changed. There is always real work to be done and I know that CENDEP graduates are some of the finest and most talented in the world, fulfilling roles in the aid and development sectors.

I really valued the opportunity to reflect on the conundrums that I had witnessed in my work and to share my ideas with others. The stimulating subjects combined with the fascinating mix of students inspired rich and thought-provoking debates which fuelled my dream of deepening my understanding of development in Africa.

Since completing the course I have put my learning into practice as Director of SOS Sahel International UK for five years, and more recently working with IIED and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, a regional training and resource center on disaster risk management, where she served as the Director of Training and Education for four years. She designed and developed various training modules on disaster management and risk reduction intended for various audiences from government to NGOs and UN agencies, and directed national, regional and international courses.

Since January 2005, she has been with the United Nations Development Programme as Disaster Risk Reduction Advisor of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. She was actively involved in facilitating South-South Co-operation among developing countries in disaster risk reduction.

When she was studying at Oxford Brookes University, she was one of those 10,000 human rights victims who filed a pioneering action suit against President Ferdinand Marcos, under whose term Zenaida had been imprisoned for two and a half years for political activism. The Court of Hawaii had found for the Marcoses to compensate the victims. However, justice was denied for too long. Only on 7th March this year, she was one of those 7,500 human rights victims who were compensated.

As most of them said, it was not the amount - what matters most is that their cause was vindicated. She is proud to be part of the group who are pioneers in establishing principles of civil responsibility for massive violations of the laws of humanity.

Prior to studying at CENDEP in 1996-1997, Zenaida Delica-Willison (bottom photo, far right) was the Executive Director of the Creipes Disaster Response Center, a national civil society organisation in the Philippines with 18 regional affiliates. She served at the same Center for one more year after her Masters course ended. That year she got an opportunity to frame her years of practical experience into development theories. In 1999, she joined the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), a regional training and resource center on disaster risk management, where she served as the Director of Training and Education for four years. She designed and developed various training modules on disaster management and risk reduction intended for various audiences from government to NGOs and UN agencies, and directed national, regional and international courses.

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