Ian Davis’ library comes to Brookes

Ian Davis is donating his disaster management library of over 700 books, research reports and journals to Oxford Brookes. The collection, spanning over 35 years, includes extensive works on hazards, vulnerability and all aspects of risk reduction. Once catalogued, the ‘Ian Davis Disaster Management Collection’ will be made available to students and visiting researchers.

‘I see this as the foundation of a major collection on disaster management’, said Professor Davis.

Ian Davis is a leading figure in disaster management. In 1996 Ian became the first UK citizen to be awarded the United Nations Sasakawa Award ‘for an outstanding contribution to International Disaster Prevention’. He has been a senior adviser to the United Nations, governments and NGOs.

Ian has written or edited over 100 publications on disaster related themes, including the co-authored At Risk, Natural Hazards, People’s Vulnerability and Disasters and the influential Shelter After Disaster, published by Oxford Polytechnic Press in 1978.

Ian began his work in disasters at Oxford Brookes, then known as Oxford Polytechnic, where he worked from 1971-89.

In 2007 Ian Davis became a Visiting Professor to CENDEP. He is also Visiting Professor to several other universities in the UK and Japan.

Learning from the tsunami; Oxfam workshop announced

This November Oxfam International will hold a one day workshop at Brookes to share lessons learnt from a US$2 million three year research project, ‘The Oxfam International Tsunami Disaster Risk Reduction and Participatory Action Research (PAR) Program.’ The objectives are to bring practitioners together to discuss the value of PAR and to encourage its adoption within humanitarian response.

Up to 50 participants are expected, including practitioners from NGOs and intergovernmental agencies, academics, specialists and the media. The event, being held in collaboration with CENDEP, is the UK stage of a series of dissemination workshops taking place between October and December in Switzerland, India, Sri Lanka and the USA.

New Africa scholarships fund launched

The Brookes Africa Scholarship Scheme (BASS) was set up in 2007 to support students from sub-Saharan Africa. The fund provides scholarships of up to £10,000 to contribute towards the full tuition and living costs for studying the MA degree in Development and Emergency Practice (DEP).

This year five students were awarded full or part scholarships. DEP students are eligible to apply for the Martin Wilkinson Fund for International Scholarships, originated last year by University Governor Martin Wilkinson for DEP students, as well as other scholarships offered by the university. DEP also receives students each year funded by the Oxford-based Windle Trust.

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Marie Curie PhD Fellowship

PhD student Chumatal Eitam has been awarded a Marie Curie Fellowship, one of the EU’s most prestigious Doctoral level fellowships, for her research as part of the Network of Humanitarian Action Programme (NOHA). Chum’s research concentrates on the accountability of humanitarian systems at field level and the purpose of evaluations within the humanitarian aid sphere. Before joining CENDEP Chum worked in Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Indonesia with a variety of aid organisations.

Marie Curie Fellowships provide European placements for pre and post-doctoral researchers, usually up to the age of 35. NOHA is a European network that aims to analyse the underlying causes of humanitarian crises and to formulate strategies for rehabilitation and development through educational programmes. See www.nohanet.org

Alessandra Borges writes. After finishing the course in 2006 I took a temporary post at Save the Children UK in London as a Regional Communications Coordinator covering a group of countries that included South America, the Middle East and South East Europe. It was a challenging job and provided immense opportunities for learning.

Then I headed for South Africa, where I am now the Communications Director at a new Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) office in Johannesburg. My job here is to set up a communications unit, which will work on raising awareness in South Africa on humanitarian crises and supporting advocacy work.

In addition to providing medical assistance to populations in need, MSF’s mission also entails ‘speaking out’ about the plight of vulnerable people. At the moment I am implementing several communications activities, such as producing a website and a newsletter and building a network of journalists in the country.

Stefano Archidiacono writes. I am currently working with CeVI, an Italian NGO in the city of Cochabamba in the heart of Bolivia.

After a year spent in Oxford studying the Masters degree I had the opportunity to use the skills I gained and commit myself to a sensitive issue in Cochabamba, namely the lack of fresh water.

I am coordinating a project that strengthens the capacities of community based organisations. We are providing training schemes and legal support to local organisations. We believe that community based management of water is a real alternative. Moreover, we advocate for the right to fresh water, a right that belongs to everyone regardless of socio-economic conditions, place of living, race or gender.

DEP 2007-08

A key strength of the programme lies in each year’s cohort. This year’s group comprises 32 students from 20 countries - Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Australia, Japan, Denmark, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Spain, Ireland, UK, Holland, Portugal, Germany, France, Belgium, USA and the Lebanon.

They range from experienced aid workers to those new to development. John Okumu from Uganda joined DEP after working in child welfare. Ayaz Ayaz from Pakistan joined the programme after getting caught up in the 2006 earthquake in his home city of Muzaffarabad. Robert Snell from the UK is planning a career in development after working for four years in China as a teacher.

Mafalda Picarra currently works with Oxfam and is taking the programme part time. Patrick Bell from the UK worked in Mexico City for 11 years, both for the urban NGO Armonia and latterly as a teacher before returning to the UK. Sridevi Madala, an architect from India, joined the programme following her experiences working in fishing villages affected by the tsunami in Tamil Nadu. Rona Inniss, who is taking DEP as an option in her architecture studies, is focusing on asylum seekers in the UK.

Solla Asea from Southern Sudan became a refugee at the age of 16. After gaining a degree in law from Uganda’s Makerere University she went on to work for an NGO, followed by the UN working with Eritrean refugees in Eastern Sudan. This was yet to be one of my very challenging experiences of working with refugees who have been staying in Sudan ranging from two years to three decades.'

Between 2005-07 Solla worked as a human rights officer in Darfur. The work exposed me to tasks of coming face to face with people who suffer violence, human rights violations by both state and non state actors and general sufferings.' On completing the programme Solla plans to ‘make a positive contribution to the reconstruction and gradual development of Southern Sudan.’

Coree Alvarez from the Philippines joined the programme after 14 years working with NGOs in the Philippines, and since 2004 with Oxfam where she worked in Darfur for one year, followed by the tsunami response in Aceh, Indonesia, and latterly managing public health projects in the DRC. Coree was not sure about returning to study, until some colleagues and friends mentioned the course. On inspection she found that the DEP course’s emphasis on practice convinced me that this is the course that will be most useful and relevant to me.

Chris Sidell worked for 10 years in the IT sector, with the last five as part of a team building a startup software company which became a market leader. Chris had been interested in a shift of career and settled on development or humanitarian work, a field that combined many of my interests with the opportunity to use my skills and experience.’

He chose DEP after searching for a course that offered a blend of the development and humanitarian disciplines but with a strong practice-oriented focus. ‘The course at Brookes was unique in offering this, and was recommended by senior people working in the sector.’

LAST YEAR’S COHORT

Many of 2006-07’s cohort have gone on to take up development and emergency posts around the world.

Simon Wright joined MSF in the Democratic Republic of Congo; Paul Critchley also took up a post with MSF managing emergency surgical activities in Kismayo General Hospital, Somalia. Lucy Strickland worked with CARE in Afghanistan for three months undertaking research for her dissertation; Isabel Fernandez moved to Peru to work with the NGO Rapid-Latinoamerica; Stefano Archidiacono works for the Italian NGO CeVI in Bolivia.

Gemma Tracey Apiku, Heidi Ottosen and Katie Hartless went on to intern for Oxfam GB based in Oxford. Ric Tighe went on Oxfam working in logistics. Spencer Lawley has joined the Commandoes. Paul Kenya moved to Canada. Sari Kaipainen worked for eight months with NGOs in India before returning to the UK to work with the Oxford-based NGO Fahanu; Lizzie Thompson spent five months in Australia researching for her dissertation. Yasu Yoshimura spent several months in Cambodia undertaking research into child trafficking. And, after a year running David Copperfield’s exclusive island resort in The Bahamas, Rhi Price is taking up a senior post at the US Army base Camp Freedom in Baghdad.

...
New journal of HUMAN RIGHTS

Brian Phillips, human rights tutor

The new Journal of Human Rights Practice will be published by Oxford University Press from March 2009. It will aim to capture learning and communicating the lessons of practice across professional and geographical boundaries, and to provide a vehicle for innovative national and local practitioners worldwide who currently lack a platform for sharing their expertise internationally.

Academic interest in human rights practice has grown exponentially over the last decade. CENDEP’s inclusion of a human rights stream in its MA course since 2002 reflects very precisely this greater attention to practice-oriented education in recent years. Activism – its ethical imperatives, its particular constituencies, its social and political impact, and even its organisational structure – has become the subject of scrutiny.

The human rights mainstream is faced with a number of challenges and opportunities. Security concerns and the war on terror have meant that human rights groups worldwide must find ways to contest the rolling back of hard won civil liberties. International agencies such an Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have extended their remit to consider economic and social rights.

The movement as a whole is exploring ways of holding non-state actors accountable using human rights mechanisms. Beyond the NGO sector, governments have been influential in securing international treaties protecting post-conflict prisons and the International Criminal Court. Innovations in practice abound, but are often not well disseminated.

Relevant debates now extend across the many issues where the human rights paradigm has moved centre-stage: in the fight against HIV/AIDS; humanitarian initiatives such as improved protection programmes; and corporate social responsibility, to name a few examples.

In this context, the Journal of Human Rights Practice will seek to provide a forum for discussion and exchange for a host of actors, old and new, concerned with human rights practice.

In short, the conversation around what constitutes good, transferable human rights practice now extends much more widely than before, creating a community of learning and debate that includes a host of actors whose perspectives have not always been present in more traditional human rights forums.

The journal will be edited by Brian Phillips and Professor Paul Gready, DEP’s External Examiner.

UPDATES

Nabeel Hamdi chaired a workshop in Sri Lanka, The Improved Practices of Post-Tsunami Settlement Re-construction: How and Why Principle Actors Change their Ways. The meeting was attended by several NGOs and was organised in collaboration with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Mohamed Hamza continued the ongoing design of three training disaster management courses for UNDP, due to end in 2008. He was also appointed a senior advisor to the Swedish Rescue Service Agency (SRSA) which is part of the Swedish government, and finished a scoping study for the World Bank on Climate Change and Vulnerability which included case studies from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

Brigitte Piquard visited Bethlehem where she has been lecturing for the last three years. She also continued her research into non-violent modes of resistance to the Separation Wall. Brigitte began as Head of the Masters degree programme in Humanitarian Affairs at Paris 12 University Val de Marne, France.

David Sanderson led an impact assessment of Christian Aid’s response to the 2006 Kashmir earthquake, involving field work in India and Pakistan and the facilitation of a lessons learnt workshop in Sri Lanka. He is currently working with Practical Action in the formation of a UK Governance in Practice network.

Global tutors

Patama Roonakwitt, based in Bangkok, is completing an alternative housing scheme, TEN House in Bangkok (tenbangkok.blogspot.com). She is also working with a community housewife group developing chili paste products which will hopefully lead to an environmental improvement project. In March Patama will lead a workshop in Osaka, Japan with the NGO Architecture Sans Frontieres-UK (ASF-UK).

Anshu Sharma, based in Delhi, chaired the Unified Response Strategy Committee of SPHERE-India which involves all major humanitarian agencies working in India to agree to use a common assessment format to be used in the aftermath of any disaster. He also reviewed ActionAid’s post-tsunami work in six countries, and was part of SEEDS’ post-flood shelter response and school restoration programme in Rajasthan which constructed 300 shelters.

Undergraduate studio takes shape

The two semester long International Development and Emergency Practice (IDEP) studio explores issues of physical design within low income urban settlements. The studio focuses on the social, economic and political aspects of a settlement in order to better inform the responses designers make.

The studio takes place each year as an optional route for second and third year students taking Brookes’ BA (Hons) degree in Architecture. The studio was piloted last year when students focused on low income settlements in Bangkok, Thailand. This year’s programme centred on Alexandra township, a large low income settlement located within Johannesburg, South Africa.

In order to gain a better understanding of the brief, students engaged in a variety of activities including researching and role playing residents of ‘Alex’, invading a nearby site, becoming architectural design teams, and subsequently developing design schemes which included HIV and AIDS clinics, waste recycling centres, performance space and housing.

Photos from top: student built ‘illegal’ shack at Brookes; shelter expert Bill Flinn with students.

CENDEP’s one year Masters degree in Development and Emergency Practice

CENDEP’s award-winning Masters degree in Development and Emergency Practice (DEP) provides an academic setting for the study of poverty, vulnerability, conflict, development and disaster management.

With its emphasis on practice, the programme offers students the opportunity to both develop and challenge knowledge, skills and attitudes in the fast changing fields of development and emergency practice.

The programme is targeted both at those having or seeking careers within NGOs, bilateral or multilateral humanitarian, development and human rights agencies or governmental and commercial organisations working in international development.

The programme attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines. Since its inception in 1991 over 500 students from around the world have taken the programme, with many going on to pursue careers in development and humanitarian response.

The programme offers a range of modules covering key aspects of development and emergency practice including: partnerships; human rights, law & activism; globalisation; conflict & humanitarianism; natural disasters, vulnerability & climate change; refugees; and global institutions.

In 2001 the programme was awarded the Queen’s Award for its contribution to humanitarian work. In 2006 the singer Annie Lennox became the programme’s Patron, reflecting the programme’s commitment to human rights.

This year sees the introduction of a new module, Learning development masterclass. The module will be led by CENDEP’s Emeritus Professor, Nabeel Hamdi, and will focus on the practical tools practitioners require to work in developmental settings.
**Staff and visitors**

**Core staff and module leaders**
- **Dr Rod Burgess**, Senior Lecturer, School of the Built Environment
- **Bethanie Cunnick**, Programme Administrator
- **Emeritus Professor Nabeel Hamdi**, urban shelter and action planning expert
- **Dr Mohamed Hamza**, specialist in natural disasters and vulnerability
- **Dr Brian Phillips**, working with Amnesty International and editor of the Journal of Human Rights Practice
- **Dr Brigitte Piquard**, Senior Lecturer in International Humanitarianism

**Visitors**
- **Kitty Arie**, Emergency Officer, Save the Children UK
- **Sue Cavanna**, Executive Director, SOS Sahel
- **Leonard van Duijn**, conflict adviser
- **Prof Tom Downing**, climate change expert, Oxford University
- **Dr Alex Frediano-Apsani**, urban specialist
- **Greta Jensen**, psychosocial consultant
- **Peter Greste**, BBC Africa Correspondent
- **Usa Kar**, Executive Director, Africa Now
- **Martin Knops**, psychologist, advisor for Oxfam
- **Richard Luff**, Strategic Project Manager, Oxfam
- **Peter Penfold**, former High Commis’s of Sierra Leone
- **Lt Col Ken Roberts**, Staff Officer, British Army
- **Col Betty Slade**, Regional Clinical Director, British Army
- **Hugo Slim**, conflict specialist, Corporates for Crisis
- **Dr John Twigg**, Research Fellow, Benfield Hazard Research Centre at UCL

**Regular contributors**
- **Peter Apps**, journalist with Reuters
- **Margie Buchanan-Smith**, Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute, London
- **Visiting Professor Ian Davis**, disaster management and shelter expert
- **Dr Caroline Sweetman**, gender specialist, Oxfam

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

**Visiting Senior Practitioner Programme (VSPP)**

VSPP is a new initiative for which the University is currently raising funds. The VSPP is intended to strengthen the practice-oriented nature of DEP by allowing senior humanitarian practitioners to be seconded to CENDEP full time for one semester or part time for two semesters. The VSPP is aimed at experienced humanitarian practitioners from NGOs, government or UN bodies who want to make sense of their experience and who are willing to communicate it to others. While at CENDEP practitioners will be expected to lead student seminar groups, give lectures and to write papers. For further information contact the Programme Administrator.

**Humanitarian Net conference, Denmark**

Cities and crises: a new humanitarian space

**Brigitte Piquard** writes, Sudden crises in urban spaces – caused by conflict, natural disasters, economic downturn or acts of terror - are a major global concern. With rapid urbanisation, where over half the world now lives in towns and cities, new kinds of vulnerability have appeared. In this context the international aid community needs to understand better the urban contexts which break with the humanitarian and development traditions that are geared towards rural environments. Responses and coping mechanisms of the population differ from other settings and new paradigms for action are needed.

To these ends staff from CENDEP attended the three day event held at The University of Southern Denmark in Odense in February 2008 to discuss issues and to plan new lines of research related to urban spaces and crises. More than 40 universities, members of the Humanitarian Net thematic network from all around Europe, were present. New initiatives under Brookes leadership have been planned, including joint publications, participation at international congresses and research workshops.

**Dissertations**

18 DEP Masters degree dissertations were submitted in 2007. These include:

**The threat posed by availability and inadequate control of small arms and light weapons to post-conflict reconstruction: the case of southern Sudan** by Betty Araba

Using Southern Sudan as a case study, this dissertation examines the threat posed by Small Arms and Light weapons (SALWs) to post conflict communities and the existing initiatives, at the global, regional and national levels, to control their availability and reduce their potential risk. It also explores the reasons why Sudanese civilians still demand SALWs as well as problems associated with such demand and how effective measures that are people centred could be designed to address the problems.

**What are the most appropriate strategic planning and governance models/processes in establishing a new non-governmental organisation? Strategic planning for Indian ocean disaster relief, Sri Lanka** by Matthew Banks

This dissertation examines the principles of strategic planning and governance in NGOs. Increasing levels of professionalism, growing competition for funds and the additional demands for transparency from donors are forcing NGOs to think more strategically. Strategic planning and governance procedures can offer organisations a methodology for meeting these increasing demands. This dissertation investigates current best practice in strategic planning and governance with a view to establishing guidelines for organisations to take into account when embarking on a strategic planning process.

**Men, masculinities and gender: an examination of role play in contributing to gender equality** by Val Encomio

Integrating a male perspective as a critical strategy in promoting gender equality between women and men has been gradually gaining recognition among development policy planners, practitioners, and researchers during the past decade. This dissertation examines the arguments along with the growing body of research on masculinities which in turn strengthens the justification for integrating men in a gendered approach. The study also explores key areas of interventions where men are positioned to contribute to the well-being of women and address the problems associated with gender inequality.

**Freedom and housing rights for low-income groups: a case study of Peru** by Alex Tilley

This dissertation examines housing policy in the context of the current debate around development models and paradigms. Beginning with a discussion of this debate, the author carries out a critical analysis of neoliberalism and neoliberal shelter policy. Two new approaches which have recently entered development discourse are then considered – the Human Development Approach and the Rights Based Approach to development. Questions are raised concerning the degree to which these represent a break with the neoliberal model and also to what extent the models can be differentiated from each other.

**What kind of freedom? Challenges facing women ex-fighters from the Eritrean liberation war** by Cathryn Upshon

Using interviews and literature review this study considers the current situation of women ex-fighters in Eritrea and how the international community might support them in overcoming challenges to their own reintegration. In doing so, it reflects on the nature of the freedom women enjoyed during the fight for national liberation and the extent to which the experience of soldiering liberated them. The study concludes that the lines between national, political and gender freedom may have been blurred for some women and their emancipation may well have been a little more than the effective mobilisation of women for political and military ends.

**Adherence or non-adherence? Good practice in administering antiretrovirals to children with HIV and AIDS in rural resource-poor settings: the case of Kiwoko Hospital** by Kate Wooding

This research explores what makes an ART (Antiretroviral therapy) programme successful for children who have HIV and AIDS in a rural resource-poor setting in regard to adherence. It confirms that in order for there to be good adherence effective counselling needs to be given to the caregiver prior to receiving ARVs and good relationships between the caregiver, patient and staff should be established. In addition, follow up through regular clinic appointments and home visits are vital. The concerns for the future of ART programmes are whether they can receive a constant supply of ARVs and substantial funding.
with the dancer handily clutching the programme), while sampling the Brazilian food which was provided by students from the Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management.

The theme for this year was Hope, leading to the selection of movies that, while reflecting the harshness of life for many, also included elements of positivity.

The 2007 film *Caramel* (Nadine Labaki) was one of the festival’s highlights. Not yet on DVD release, it was a sneak preview of the Lebanese feature film focusing on the dilemmas five women face in a society caught between oppressive patriarchy and ‘Western chic’.

Director Khadija Al-Salami joined us from Yemen, along with the Yemeni film festival coordinator Leila Ingrams to present her film *A Stranger in Her Own City*, a documentary which follows a 13 year old girl who challenges centuries of tradition by not wearing her veil.

Other movies shown included *Blood Diamond*, *Shooting Dogs* and *Rabbit Proof Fence*.

The festival was held in a number of locations: as well as at Brookes films were shown at in central Oxford at The Jam Factory, the Jericho Tavern and the newly re-opened Regal (formerly the Old Bingo Hall) on Cowley Road.

On the final afternoon at the Regal former CENDEP student Alex Tilley, who now works for the Bolivian Information Forum presented the Bolivian film *Abya Yala: This Land is Ours*, a documentary that explores the history of the struggle against poverty and oppression in Bolivia. The film charts the emergence of a new kind of politics and leadership, showing how these forces have won power at the national level.

The movie was followed by a discussion with Bolivia’s former Health Minister Dr Nila Heredia who attended the event. The festival closed with a performance from Malawian singer Ron Nkomba.

Although the festival is an annual event it is run each year as an initiative of CENDEP’s students who organise the event and secure the films. The festival is free of charge and open to all.

Films are usually donated by directors and film makers who support the event’s aims.

Bethanie Cunnick writes, The festival, now in its 6th year, began with a Brazilian themed evening of food, film, drinks and music. Vice Chancellor Professor Janet Beer opened the event and introduced the screening of *Favela Rising* (Jeff Zimbalist and Matt Mochary), which tells the story of a former drug-trafficker who rallies his community in Rio de Janeiro to counteract violence through hip-hop and Afro-Brazilian dance.

After the film, attendees were invited to the Brookes Restaurant for a performance by five-piece band Brazilian band Illustrious Sambistas who encouraged everyone to dance (as witnessed in the photo, left).
WELCOME TO KABUL

Lucy Strickland

For her MA dissertation Lucy Strickland spent three months in Afghanistan conducting research into an NGO cross-sector partnership in girls’ education. She was hosted by the International NGO CARE Afghanistan. Here she writes about her first day in Kabul.

In September 2007, my comfort zone was stretched to elastic new lengths as I left Oxford for the brown, sun-baked bowl of Kabul. Twenty-four hours into my first day in Afghanistan, I already had a whiff of what life might feel like for a country still caught at the crossroads of ongoing conflict and an unstable peace. The landscape is heavily stained with memories of the past and noises of now; decaying mounds of Soviet tanks and weaponry intermingle with fruit sellers and second-hand TVs lining the roadsides.

The international military and private security presence in all its various accents, dress and body shapes is felt and unnerved me. Even the row of red gun lockers lining the entrance of the Lebanese restaurant I ate at the first night seemed an almost apparition. My yoga mat was checked in alongside the AK47 of the previous guest, as its size and shape raised concerns.

What struck me most, however, is that life goes on in Kabul – bread continues to be baked, children play, goats are expertly woven through busy intersections by small boys, kites are flown and that the richest humus I’ve tasted was in small street in Kabul behind a row of red gun lockers.

Through this first long day alone, it occurred to me how many shaky assumptions of Afghanistan I had inevitably arrived with. It’s not until you personally encounter a place beyond that of the headlines and news stories that any real sense can begin to be made. In the three months that ensued, I absorbed to bursting many of the flavors of people I met and saw, remote provinces I was fortunate enough to have visited, life on the streets and inside Afghan families’ homes, as a guest sharing tea and conversation.

Although I had to renegotiate a life with curtailed freedoms, a stubborn veil that never sat still and many days spent behind locked doors and a high wall, this was a small price to pay for the privilege of having seen and felt Afghanistan for myself.

McAslan Bursary Award

Julia Bouvy was awarded £1,000 from the McAslan Bursary to undertake research into ‘The regeneration of embankment life in West Africa.’

Julia, who is in her final year of architecture and is taking DEP as a special route, spent three weeks working along the Senegal River in villages that are at risk of being affected by the construction of a new dam.

The Senegal River basin countries, which include Senegal and Mauritania, have witnessed numerous incidences of food shortage and a GDP that fell by half between 1979 and 1995. Senegal is currently the World’s 156th wealthiest country, out of a table of 177.

• The McAslan bursary ‘aims to support architectural and engineering students, graduates and newly qualified architects and engineers working collaboratively and committed to the progress of environmental and community issues in the UK or abroad.’

Reducing disaster risk, Peru

Isabel Fernandez took CENDEP’s degree programme part time before leaving in June 2007 for Peru to work with the NGO Rapid Latin America.

Isabel writes, My work has been as a consultant working in the department of Ancash with local communities on a UN funded programme called APELL (Awareness and Preparedness for Emergency at a Local Level). APELL trains civil defense committees against disasters in every community. In Peru every community by law should have such a committee, but the lack of resources in municipalities means this often doesn’t happen. Because these communities need to be prepared to help themselves in case of a disaster, this work is essential. They are vulnerable not only to earthquakes but also to floods, fires and road accidents.

I have been working with seven communities where we have led training in subjects including risk management, fire fighting, first aid training, evacuation and emergency planning among others.

After the earthquake in Pisco on the 15 of August last year I participated in two workshops organized by the Municipality of Pisco and NGOs.

The workshops developed united plans of action and included the participation of the Municipality, the National Committee for the Environment and structural engineers.

The experience has been great because I have worked with people who are willing to work hard in order to improve their quality of life, and to take some action to prepare for the future against disasters.

GOLFRÉ forum for global open learning

The Global Open Learning Forum on Risk Education (GOLFRÉ) aims to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice - knowledge as it exists in universities and research centres, and practice as is carried out in the field by NGO workers, community volunteers and government field staff. Now in its third year, GOLFRÉ offers distance education programmes in disaster risk reduction. GOLFRÉ was originated at a conference in Delhi by a group of NGOs and universities from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the UK, including CENDEP.

In 2007 GOLFRÉ launched the Certificate Course on Disaster Management for Field Practitioners. So far 105 participants have enrolled on the course from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, UK, Malawi and India. For further information visit www.golfre.org
Turning fear into hope: Alexandra’s urban renewal

Standing on the corner of Sweeper Avenue in one of Alexandra’s newest housing schemes, it is possible to watch the nearby construction of what will become the busiest intersection of the Gautrain, Johannesburg’s commuter railway that is being built in time for the 2012 football World Cup.

With streets named after footballing terms (Offside Street and Hat-trick Street are nearby), this new extension, officially handed over in November 2007 to its residents, is one of the latest completions of the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP), a nine year initiative backed by President Mbeki with expenditure to date of 1.2 billion Rand – about £734 million.

The ARP’s work concerns upgrading Alexandra, a 90 year old township of some 350,000 residents. Alex, like many large low income settlements around the world, is located next to and services a high income area, in this instance Sandton, which contains the highest concentration of wealth in sub-Saharan Africa.

However, unlike many other settlements, Alex is a legal settlement wherein many of the residents own freehold title - something which Alex’s residents have managed to hold onto, sometimes in the face of violent opposition during Apartheid.

With the advent of the Gautrain, Alex’s real estate value is due to increase even more. Yet the ARP is committed to upgrading Alex for its existing residents, rather than forcing relocation and selling the land for profit. According to Julian Baskin, Head of the ARP, this is a core principle of the ARP’s work: that Alex’s land belongs to its residents, regardless of income or status.

The ARP is currently building 12 housing projects ranging from migrant workers’ dormitories to family housing, and 26 infrastructure projects including roads, clinics, shopping centres and a new bus terminus. Before the ARP there was no street lighting.

One of the first activities was to build a large and high profile police station in the centre of Alex. Since then, reported crime in the township has fallen some 40%. This is all the more remarkable given that Alex is located in Johannesburg, one of the world’s most dangerous cities of 37% unemployment, where, according to Reuters, every day around 50 people are murdered.

Add to that deep inequalities in wealth and poverty (South Africa has among the highest inequalities anywhere in the world) and the traumatising legacy of Apartheid.

Julian Baskin attributes the success of the ARP to an approach he coins negotiated development, where decisions about improvements are made involving community groups, council officials, specialist agencies and others. A second feature has been a ‘block by block’ approach, wherein the shelter and services of a defined block are resolved before moving onto the next one.

ARP’s work can be seen at www.alexandra.co.za.

JOBBURG STUDY TOUR

18 architecture students taking the International Development and Emergency Practice (IDEP) design studio in the Department of Architecture took part in a ten day visit to South Africa’s capital city, Johannesburg.

‘Joburg’ was chosen as the site for the IDEP studio because of its extremes. Probably the wealthiest city in Africa, Joburg has one of the world’s highest crime rates, while South Africa itself has one of the greatest recorded inequalities between rich and poor anywhere in the world. The study tour focused on three different aspects of Joburg life. The first was ‘architecture of the struggle’ commemorating the fight against Apartheid, and included visits to Constitution Hill (home of the Supreme Court), The Hector Pieter- son Museum, the Apartheid Museum and landmarks in Soweto. The second concerned kitsch – the brash architecture of casinos and shopping malls, often copied from Italian renaissance.

The third aspect concerned low income settlements. Two days were spent in Alexandra township, a large low income settlement of some 350,000 people and scene of decades of political and economic struggle. The visit to Alex was hosted by the Alexandra Renewal Project (ARP), a large scale initiative which is building low income housing and providing facilities and infrastructure. Julian Baskin (below, second left), head of ARP took students to a range of housing schemes, schools, health clinics and a police station.

The challenge to students throughout the visit was to ask the question, ‘I see what I see, but what am I looking at?’ Too often judgements are made on the physical aspects of cities and settlements without considering the social, political and economic undercurrents that make for a city’s fabric.
**Polokwane poverty assessment**

DEP student Naomi Shinkins writes, The DEP field trip to South Africa took 18 students (including myself) to Polokwane, the capital of South Africa’s northern Limpopo Province.

As part of the fieldtrip we visited two sites close to Polokwane, the first being a government relocation scheme called Nobody and the second an informal settlement called Diseteng.

We completed three days of classroom-based training in PRA (participatory rapid appraisal) techniques with our partner, the housing department of Limpopo Provincial government. After a day of site visits, we were required to choose one of the sites where we would practice the PRA skills that we learned.

The purpose of carrying out PRA activities in each community was to gather as much information as possible about the daily lives in each settlement, so that their situations could be assessed and recommendations made to improve livelihoods.

I became part of the team working in Diseteng where we spent three more extremely enlightening, although tiring, days applying PRA tools to real-life situation. Finally we produced and presented a report of our findings and recommendations to the Limpopo Provincial Government and Polokwane Municipality.

Many of the PRA tools we learned and applied encouraged expression through drawing which, as an architecture student I found to be an excellent way of learning about cultures and circumstances I knew very little about.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of using PRA tools was their flexibility and how they created platforms for conversations that often took off in any direction!

The field trip was a truly memorable experience; working with government and local communities was a stimulating way to learn about a country and its people. Definitely a career path I will be pursuing!

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**Field trips 2008**

In January CENDEP organised two field trips to South Africa - a study tour of Johannesburg hosted by the Alexandra Renewal Project, and an assessment of two low income settlements in Polokwane, hosted by Limpopo Provincial Government and CENDEP’s Global Tutor Belinda Cowden.

Movie clips from both trips can be seen on YouTube.

DEP usually offers two optional field trips each year, in January and May. Previous January field trips have included India, Thailand, Peru, Cambodia and Jamaica. 2009’s field trip is scheduled for the Indian State of Tamil Nadu, to revisit communities affected by the Boxing Day tsunami. The May field trip is usually within Europe, with this year’s visit being to Armenia.

Students often undertake field work as part of their dissertation research. Through its network of Global Tutors CENDEP has established links in Peru, India, Thailand and South Africa.