

# EDUCATION FOR THE CITY WE NEED

Exploring how to integrate the UN-Habitat  
**NEW URBAN AGENDA**  
in higher education curriculums

Faculty of Architecture and The Built Environment, TU Delft  
7-9 June 2017

## Executive Report





URBAN  
THINKERS  
CAMPUS



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Audience at UTC. Photo by Ramses Grande



# Urban Thinkers Campus

## Education for the City We Need

Exploring how to integrate the UN-Habitat  
NEW URBAN AGENDA in higher education curriculums

Education for the City We Need: Exploring how to integrate the New Urban Agenda  
in higher education curriculums  
Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)  
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment  
Delft, The Netherlands

7-9 June 2017

### The UTC Organizing Committee

Chris Bartman (The Netherlands), Master student Urbanism  
Cristina Wong (Peru), EMU European Master of Urbanism  
Daan Leenders (The Netherlands), Master student Urbanism  
Floencia Rodriguez Balzarini (Argentina), EMU European Master of Urbanism  
Ijsbrand Heeringa (The Netherlands), Master student Urbanism  
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Jean-Baptiste Peters (France), EMU European Master of Urbanism  
Kritika Sha (India), Master student Urbanism  
Maricruz Gazel (Costa Rica), EMU European Master of Urbanism  
Mona Zum Felde (Germany), Master student Urbanism  
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Ramses Alejandro Grande Fraile (Spain), Master Student Architecture  
Reza Ambardi Pradana (Indonesia) Master student Urbanism  
Roberto Rocco (Brazil) Assistant Professor of Spatial Planning and Strategy  
Sahil Kanekar (India), Master student Urbanism  
Selina Abraham (India), Master student Urbanism  
Supriya Krishnan (India), Master student Urbanism  
Teis Bekken (The Netherlands), Master student Urbanism  
Vladimir Tapia (Ecuador), EMU European Master of Urbanism

Conference moderated by Sukanya Krishnamurthy (TU Eindhoven) , Carley Pennink (IHS, Erasmus) and Roberto Rocco (TU Delft)

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Report organised by Roberto Rocco

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# Introduction to the UTC

Between 7 and 9 June 2017, the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of the TU Delft organised an Urban Thinkers' Campus (UTC) on Higher Education for the New Urban Agenda (NUA), titled "EDUCATION FOR THE CITY WE NEED". As we know, the NUA will guide the efforts of a wide range of actors around urbanisation — nation states, city and regional leaders, international development funders and civil society — for the next 20 years. After the enactment of the document, attention has shifted towards IMPLEMENTATION: how to implement its principles? We believe that universities have a special role in preparing young professional and critical citizens to face the challenge of making our cities sustainable, prosperous, fair and inclusive. But in order to do so, we reached out to stakeholders from the academic and educational worlds, as well as NGOs, companies and governments to discuss how best to teach and learn issues related to and stemming from the New Urban Agenda.

The TU Delft UTC discussed strategies, methodologies, literature and practical exercises that can be implemented in higher education courses in Europe and elsewhere. Our attention is on social, economic and environmentally sustainable urban development everywhere, but the challenges of urbanisation in the Global South are truly urgent.

The main question addressed was: How to prepare young professionals to understand and implement the New Urban Agenda in very diverse national and local environments?

This is an initiative from TU Delft in partnership with the World Urban Campaign (WUC), TU-Eindhoven, IHS-Erasmus Rotterdam, and others, with the support of Delft Global Initiative, ARCADIS and others.



Sukanya Krishnamurthy, TUE. Photo Ramses Grande



We used the following premises to start the discussion:

Education for urban development is inter and multidisciplinary (TU Delft has a school of planning and design but we want to hear from other areas of knowledge and practice)

Staff and students are increasingly mobile and universities are internationalising quickly. Universities everywhere are responsible for educating young minds to tackle challenges of urbanisation on a global scale.

The Global South and the Global North share many problems of urban development, but the intensity of the problems varies dramatically, and so does implementation capacity.

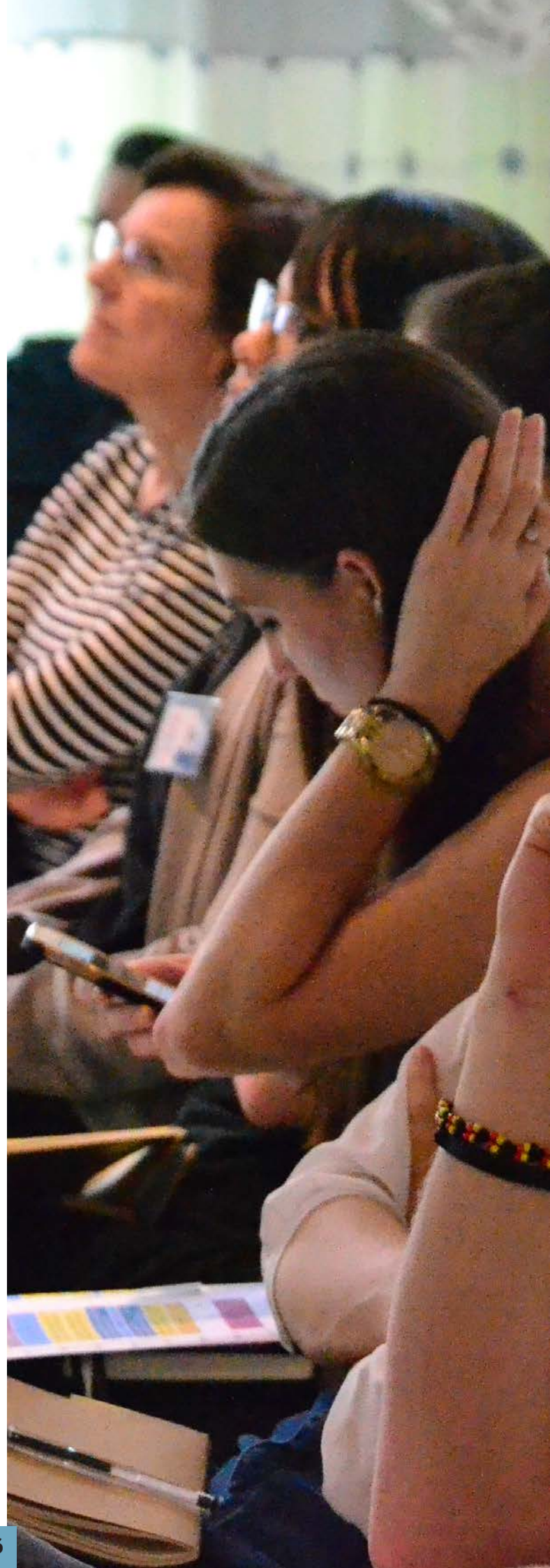
Knowledge about urban development in the Global South must be produced or co-produced by and with researchers and practitioners from the Global South.

Education in urban development must happen within frameworks of discussion on democracy, values and ethical challenges.

The WUC has established 10 drivers of change that will lead to the city we need. We believe that the 10 drivers are intertwined and cannot be completely separated. For this UTC, we concentrated on EDUCATION. This is because we believe Universities have a special role to play in preparing young citizens with critical minds and skilled professionals who are able to steer positive change.

Within EDUCATION, we emphasised other drivers of change that are specially related to planning and design of the built environment. These drivers of change were

1. GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIPS,
2. PLANNING & DESIGN,
4. LAND HOUSING & SERVICES,
5. ENVIRONMENT, 9. TECHNOLOGY
10. MONITORING and EVALUATION.







Audience UTC. Photo Ramses Grande

# Partners

The **Urban Thinkers Campus** model is an initiative of **UN-Habitat** conceived as an open space for critical exchange between urban researchers, professionals, and decision-makers who believe that urbanisation is an opportunity and can lead to positive urban transformations. It is also intended as a platform to build consensus between partners engaged in addressing urbanization challenges and proposing solutions to urban futures.

The **World Urban Campaign (WUC)** is an advocacy and partnership platform to raise awareness about positive urban change in order to achieve green, productive, safe, healthy, inclusive, and well planned cities. Its goal is to place the New Urban Agenda at the highest level in development policies. It is coordinated by UN-Habitat and driven by a large number of committed partners - currently 180 partners and networks - from around the world.

This UTC would not have been possible without the committed support of the World Urban Campaign, especially in the persons of Devina Meinzingen, Bingqing Hu (Jess), Christine Auclair and team. A special thanks go to Claudio Acioly from UN-Habitat for having suggested we organise this UTC.

The Chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy of the Department of Urbanism at TU Delft supported and sponsored this activity, especially Professor Vincent Nadin. The office of the dean at Bouwkunde, Professor Peter Rusell.

The team at ARCADIS Shelter Programme, especially Bert Smolders, for their continuing support of initiatives related to Global Development at TU Delft.

The team at TU Delft Global Initiative, especially Jenniffer Kockx, for sponsoring one of the speakers.

The International New Town Institute, for having facilitated one of the speakers.

The municipality of Quito and Fonds 1818.



Global Initiative

Science for the benefit of people. All people. Worldwide.



Fonds 1818

INTERNATIONAL NEW TOWN INSTITUTE







DK Osseo-Asare . Photo Ramses Grande



## WED 7 Introduction & Challenges NUA

CHAIR SUKANYA KRISHNAMURTHY (TU Eindhoven)  
**Berlage Room 1**

09.00	Registration
10.00	Prof. Peter Russell (BK dean) + Vincent Nadin (head of Urbanism) BR1
11.00	Secretary of Housing City of Quito Jacobo Herdoiza
	BREAK
12.00	Tom Lindsay: Strategy Delivery Manager at 100 Resilient Cities, Rockefeller Foundation
13.00	ROUND TABLE
	Lunch break
14.00	Mehrnaz Ghajeh: Co-founder @ Urban Emergencies/ University of Cambridge
15.00	Suchith Anand, Founder GeoForAll/ University of Nottingham: OpenCitySmart
	PARTNER GROUP DISCUSSION: Otto Trienekens: Head of the Veldacemie, Rotterdam /Pieter Graaf
16.00	BREAK
	PARTNER GROUP DISCUSSION led by Otto Trienekens: Head of the Veldacemie, Rotterdam /Pieter Graaf
17.00	Robert Hermans, Department of Statistics Labor, Income and Living Conditions, Statistics NL
18.00	PLENARY
19.00	DINNER
22.00	

## THU 8 Challenge of Cities & Environment

CHAIR ROBERTO ROCCO (TU Delft)  
**Berlage Room 1**

09.00	
10.00	Introduction from Delft Global (Jenni) followed by DK Osseo A
11.00	Theodore Klouvas - Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Orange Corners Africa
12.00	BREAK
	ROUNDTABLE: Entrepreneurship in education in Africa?
13.00	Lunch break
14.00	URBAN LAB: Lessons learned: Students share and exchange: Pecha Kucha presentations followed by discussion: How to educate young professionals for the challenges of inclusive, fair and sustainable urbanisation?
15.00	
16.00	BREAK
	Bert Smolders and Charlotte van de Water (ARCADIS)
17.00	Anne Loes Nillesen - De Facto Architecture and Urbanism Deltaplan Bangladesh
18.00	ROUNDTABLE: Education for WATER AND THE CITY
19.00	
22.00	



# FOR THE ED



## THU 8 parallel

URBAN LAB: Adaptive  
Planning for African  
New Towns

CHAIR RACHEL KEETON (TU Delft)

Berlage Room 2

09.00

PLENARY

fer Kockx: Program Manager Delft Global Initiative)  
Asare, AMP - New Towns Africa (BZ1)

12.00

URBAN LAB Adaptive Planning for  
African New Towns led by Rachel  
Keeton

13.00

Lunch break

14.00

URBAN LAB Adaptive Planning for  
African New Towns led by Rachel  
Keeton

15.00

16.00

BREAK

17.00

URBAN LAB Adaptive Planning for  
African New Towns led by Rachel  
Keeton

PLENARY

19.00

22.00

## FRI 9

Synergies: Research in  
and for the Global South

CHAIR CARLEY PENNINK (IHS ROTTERDAM)

Berlage Room 1

09.00

10.00

PLENARY

Alex Schafran - School of Geography,  
University of Leeds

11.00

Dick van Gameren & Nelson Mota -  
Global housing, TU Delft

12.00

BREAK

Darinka Czischke Ljubetic, AP TU  
Delft, Housing specialist

13.00

ROUND TABLE

Lunch break

14.00

Ana Chagas Cavalcanti - PhD candidate  
TU Delft, informal urbanisation

15.00

Laura Katharina Straehle - Architect at  
Powerhouse Company, Social entrepreneur

16.00

BREAK

Rodrigo Andrés Barrios Salcedo  
PhD candidate, Bauhaus Universität

17.00

Nishant Narayan - PhD candidate TU Delft  
Clean energy specialist

18.00

ROUND TABLE

PLENARY

19.00

22.00

# Speakers

(by order of participation)





**Professor Peter Russell (Canada),**  
Dean of the Faculty of Architecture  
and the Built Environment.

Before being BK's dean, he was Professor of Computer Supported Planning in Architecture (CAAD) at the RWTH Aachen University, where he has been Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and chaired the Dean's Council. He is a partner in architectural practice IP Arch GmbH and serves as vice-chairman of the German Architecture Dean's Council (DARL). Russell holds a bachelor in Environmental Design Studies from the Technical University of Nova Scotia, where he also obtained a master's degree in Architecture.



**Professor Vincent Nadin (UK),** head  
of the Department of Urbanism.

Nadin is Professor of Spatial Planning and Strategy in the Department of Urbanism, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology. He is visiting professor at South China University of Technology, School of Architecture and previously visiting professor at National Taipei University, Taiwan, National Cheng Kung University, Tainan, and Leibniz University, Hannover, Germany. He has led numerous international comparative research projects, including the EU, OECD, UNESCO UNECE, and others.



**Sukanya Krishnamurthy (India)**  
Moderator, Eindhoven University  
of Technology.

Sukanya is currently assistant professor at the Chair of Urbanism and Urban Architecture (Faculty of the Built Environment) at TU Eindhoven (NL). Trained as an architect and urbanist in India and Germany, She received her Ph.D. in Urban Studies and Architecture from Bauhaus University (Germany) in 2012. Prior to joining the Technical University of Eindhoven in Oct 2014 as an assistant professor in Urbanism and Urban Architecture, she worked as an architect, designer, and lecturer, researcher in Bangalore (India, 2006-07), Aachen, Dessau, Weimar (Germany, 2007-12) and Toronto (Canada, 2012-14).



**Mehrnaz Ghogh (Iran/UK),** Con-  
sultant in Urban Development at  
BuroHappold Engineering.

Mehrnaz is co-founder of Urban Emergencies: Emergent Urbanism (UE:EU), an independent research and consulting group exploring interdisciplinary perspectives on the implications of emergent risks on cities and their inhabitants. Mehrnaz's expertise on cities' resilience to risk stems from her involvement in a range of both governmental and non-governmental organisations across the UK, Middle East and China. She has worked closely with Tehran Municipality and the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES).



**Supriya Krishnan (India)**  
Host person  
Master student TU Delft, POLIS  
president 2016, M.Sc. Urban-  
ism-Honours (Risk Resilience and  
Critical Infrastructure) | TU Delft.

Developing resilient urban growth strategies for the next century with a focus on risk management, critical infrastructure and systems thinking. Supriya is orienting her studies towards urban resilience planning, cascading failures, critical infrastructure networks, contingency planning, flow risk, water sensitive cities.



**Suchith Anand (India/UK)**  
Co-founder GeoForAll.

Suchith Anand co-founded GeoForAll with a vision to make geospatial education and opportunities accessible to all. He promotes open geospatial science through the establishment of Open Source Geospatial Labs/ Research Centres in key universities worldwide as part of GeoForAll. GeoForAll aims to increase openness in Geo Education, helping students to become more creative and open minded, and contributing to building open innovation and increasing open knowledge for the benefit of society and for future generations.



**Jacobo Herdoiza (Ecuador)**  
Secretary of Housing, territory and  
Planning of the Municipality of  
Quito, Ecuador.

Jacobo Herdoíza, is an architect and planner graduated at the Universidad Central del Ecuador. He is the current secretary for Territory, Habitat and Housing for the city of Quito, where Habitat III took place in October 2016. He is managing a radical change in the urban landscape of Quito, a rapidly growing city. Jacobo will speak about his experience as secretary, about Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda and how he thinks the NUA should be implemented in higher education. Jacobo's contribution is sponsored by the Delft Global Initiative.



**Otto Trienekens (the Netherlands)**  
Veldacademie, Rotterdam.

Trienekens is co-founder and manager of Veldacademie, a knowledge centre for neighbourhood renewal. In the Rotterdam-based office, students from different backgrounds work on actual socio-spatial challenges. Students are actively brought in contact with realistic cases, while practise is fed with the ideas and insights of students. After ten years of experience, the concept of Veldacademie is now being adapted in other cities like Almere. At the conference, Otto will discuss the innovation of education in relation to practise.

**Thomas Lindsay (UK)**

Strategy Delivery Manager at 100 Resilient Cities, Rockefeller F.

Thomas Lindsay advises, researches and writes on the subject of risk and resilience. He works at 100 Resilient Cities – Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, and is co-founder of Urban Emergencies: Emergent Urbanism

(UE:EU), an independent research and consulting group exploring international and interdisciplinary perspectives on the implications of emergent risks on cities and their inhabitants. Thomas has a background in Architecture and obtained his Master of Philosophy in Architecture and Urban Design from the University of Cambridge.

**Dr. Wolfgang Stempfer (Austria)**

GB\*: Gebietsbetreuung Stadterneuerung, City of Vienna

Wolfgang is coordinator of GB-stern (Gebietsbetreuung Stadterneuerung), a decentral organisation for urban renewal, run by the City of Vienna. Spread around the city, private coalitions of designers, social workers and

legal services work on an inclusive and embedded way on small projects. Making the difference for a liveable city. Emerging from this experiences, dr. Stempfer did a research on the role of urban context in Architecture and Urban Planning studies.

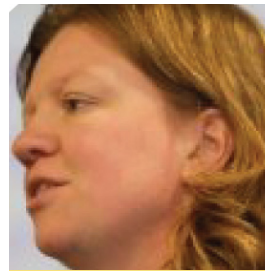
**Pieter Graaff (the Netherlands)**

Veldacademie, City of Rotterdam

Pieter is researcher and teacher at Veldacademie, a knowledge centre for neighbourhood renewal. In the Rotterdam-based office, students from different backgrounds work on actual socio-spatial challenges.

In his presentation, Pieter will share

the experience of Veldacademie as an example of a practical approach with regards to integrating the present urban context into design education. The opportunities and experience with linking other kind of studies will be highlighted as well.

**Jennifer Kockx (NL), Delft Global Initiative**

Jennifer is program manager at the Delft Global Initiative of the Delft University of Technology. Jennifer presented the Delft Global Initiative's vision and introduced DK Osseo-Asare, whose contribution Delft Global funded.

**Roberto Rocco (Brazil)**

Assistant Professor, Spatial Planning & Strategy, TU Delft.

Roberto is a Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the Delft University of Technology, TU Delft (The Netherlands). His main efforts of research are into GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY and SPATIAL JUSTICE

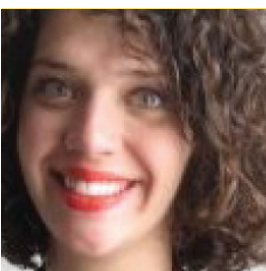
as frameworks that enable the understanding of urbanisation processes and as tools that enable planners and designers to elaborate strategies to achieve sustainable and fair urban development. Roberto graduated in Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of São Paulo, and has a PhD by TU Delft.

**DK Osseo-Asare (US/Ghana)**

DK-OsseoLow Design Office

DK is a co-founder with Quilian Riano of DSGN AGNC, an activist design think-tank, and is a principal of Low Design Office, an architecture studio that foregrounds low-cost, low-carbon building. His research recouples form-making with the social dimensions of the

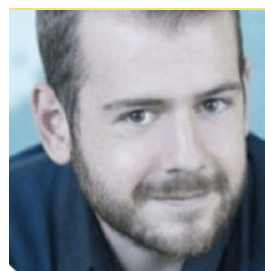
global environment, siting sustainability between technology and geopolitics. He received a Bachelor's in Engineering Design and a Master of Architecture, both from Harvard University, where he chaired the student group Social Change and Activism.

**Rachel Keeton (USA)**

Chair for the Urban Lab Adaptive Planning for African New Towns

PhD Candidate at TU Delft, Global Initiative Fellow. Rachel is Founder of Urban Anecdote, an office for contemporary urban research. They conduct independent research, publish articles, organize workshops and give lectures

on urban issues around the world. Rachel was also researcher and project managers at International New Town Institute, Almere. As a researcher and project manager, she was responsible for different projects related to the development of contemporary New Towns and cities.

**Theodore Klouvas (NL/Greece)**

Project Manager of Orange Corners Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands.

Theodore Klouvas is Project Manager of Orange Corners Africa at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. He is a young professional schooled in Architecture,

Urbanism & Building sciences, specialised in Urban Area Development with a strong passion for Entrepreneurship. He combines creativity and social empathy with analytical skills and organising capabilities, which he incorporates in innovative strategies and (project) designs.





**Kritika Sha (India),**  
Master Urbanism TU Delft

Kritika graduated in Urbanism at TU Delft, working on two parallel projects related to development in the global south, with a particular interest to the socio-economic elements of informal settlements. Along with the regular coursework, she was the editor-in-chief

of Atlantis (A quarterly publication by the students of the Urbanism and Landscape Architecture) and an active member of the student association – hence, collaborating with the UTC team was the next natural step.



**Cristina Wong (Peru),**  
EMU student.

Peruvian architect interested in research focussed on informal settlements of the global south. Having completed an architecture MSc in Spain, she's currently enrolled in the EMU postmaster programme. See some

of her work here: <https://www.instagram.com/titiwwong/>



**Maricruz Gazel (Costa Rica),**  
EMU student

Maricruz Gazel is a Costa Rican architect formed in her own country at Universidad Veritas. She has five years of experience working at recognized architecture firms in Costa Rica. Her interest for urbanism began during her architecture studies throughout

which she participated in various urban oriented studios and later became part of an association that aims to improve urban mobility for the greater metropolitan area of her country. Currently Maricruz is a full time student in the EMU-Postmaster program.



**Entela Shkreli (Albania),** Master student IHS.

Entela is mainly interested in the active modes of transport, walking and cycling. She was graduated in Civil Engineering with a focus on Transport Infrastructure at the Polytechnic University of Tirana. After studies she decided to invest her efforts in

Albanian society, by contributing in Civil Society sector. In 2012 she co-founded an NGO called GO2-go to Albania on two feet and two wheels. GO2 aims to improve the quality of life through sustainable development in the city of Shkoder.



**Sugandha Gupta (India),**  
Master student Urbanism, TU Delft.

#WomenSpatialActivism – A gender sensitive urbanism approach of the New Urban Agenda (Case of New Delhi, India). I studied Architecture in AMU, India which brought a sense of built environment in my life. I love being my own motivation which has given me

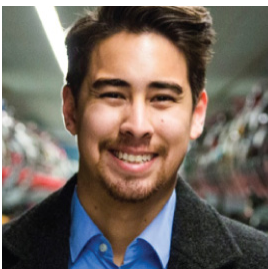
the drive to work towards creating a sustainable and inclusive world. I like working on problems as small as fixing a pin to issues like social inequality and climate change which requires thorough research, empirical knowledge, and a designer's instinct.



**Bert Smolders (The Netherlands),**  
Shelter program manager partnership UN-Habitat Arcadis.

Bert Smolders graduated in Delft in urban planning and design, worked for projects all over the world on the relation of urban planning and disaster prevention and response, esp. urban flood prevention. Presently program

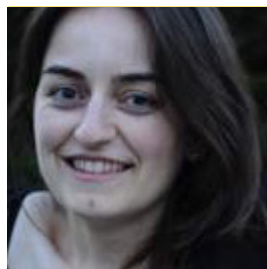
manager for the partnership of UN-Habitat and Arcadis organising technical support projects for UN-Habitat and supporting the new urban agenda, as co chair business and industry in the General Assembly of Partners in the process preparing for Quito and presently in the advice on implementation.



**Edgard A. Zúñiga León-York (Nicaragua)** MSc Student, TU Delft, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Geosciences.

Chairperson – LATITUD (Latin American Student Association of Delft) Currently pursuing a MSc degree in Transportation, Logistics, and Logistics at TU Delft, Edgard Zuniga is a Guatemalan born, Nicaraguan raised, Taiwan educated Mechanical Engineer with a high interest in merging the disciplines of transport

network design and urban planning within the academic environment, and proactively applying the knowledge acquired towards public institutions in developing Latin American cities.



**Charlotte van de Water (The Netherlands),** Environmental policy consultant at Arcadis.

Charlotte van de Water is an environmental policy consultant with a background in urban planning and design and human geography and planning. After working for several years in the Environmental Protection Agency of

Rotterdam (DCMR), she joined Arcadis she works in Brussels to international and European policy studies on sustainable urban development, urban governance and smart cities.



**Floortje van Sandick (The Netherlands)**, Master Student Architecture at TU Delft. member of the Feminist Group of TU Delft.

Floortje van Sandick is a master student at the TU Delft. She is one of the core organizers of the TU Delft Feminists, a grassroots and horizontal organization for intersectional

feminism led by students, PhDs and researchers at the TU Delft. It attempts to unite people, male, female and all genders beyond and in between on the topic of intersectional feminism in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) and works towards equity and inclusiveness at the university and beyond.



**Anne Loes Nillesen (The Netherlands)**, Founding director and Landscape architect, Defacto.

Anne Loes Nillesen is specialized in Landscape architecture in the domain of water and flood risk management. At her firm Defacto Anne Loes has worked on large-scale complex projects such as the Dutch Delta

Program and the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. She also worked on local scale coastal protection and resiliency projects and is now involved in a landscape study for a Galveston land barrier. In 2009 Anne Loes founded the Climate Adaptation Lab and the Delta Interventions integral MSc graduate studios at TU Delft.



**Carley Pennink, (US)**  
IHS, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Carley (BA, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; BFA, Parsons School of Design, NYC; MA Urban Management, Urban Management Centre, Rotterdam) is the Head of International Projects and Advisory Services at the Institute for Housing and Urban Development

Studies. She worked for the first ten years of her career as an architect and planner and as a project manager in the field of urban and social housing development. She joined IHS in 1994. At IHS, she leads the acquisition and management of the institute's project portfolio.



**Darinka Czischke (Chile)**  
Assistant Professor at TU Delft.

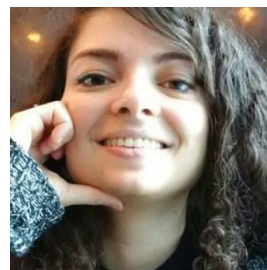
Darinka is a housing and urban specialist with over 18 years' international experience in research, teaching and consultancy across industry, policy and academia. Her work focuses on four thematic fields:

- 1) 'UNDERSTANDING HOUSING SYSTEMS';
- 2) 'SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, SOCIAL INNOVATION AND CO-PRODUCTION IN HOUSING'
- 3) 'INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT';
- 4) 'THE URBAN DIMENSION OF THE EU COHESION POLICY 2014-2020'



**Selina Abraham (India)**  
Master student at TU Delft.

Selina used to be junior architect at Studio Motley, and is now working as intern at the Veldacademie. She is originally from Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.



**Ana Rosa Chagas Cavalcanti (Brazil)**, PhD Candidate, TU Delft.

Ana Rosa Chagas Cavalcanti is currently a Ph.D. Candidate at the Delft University of Technology. Her intellectual reflection finds its roots in a field research started in 2008 and that lasted four years in the Favelas of Brazil, where she graduated in 2009 in Architecture

and Urbanism with a thesis on the favela Sururu di Capote. After her graduation, she continued to research favelas and informal settlements. In 2014 she founded the idea of the School of Favela Architecture, in the Favela do Telegrafo. Her work on Favelas has unfolded exhibitions at UCL Cities Methodologies (London, 2014).

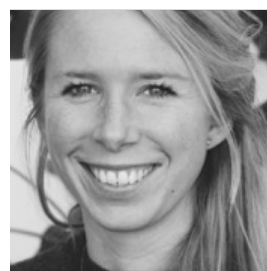


**Alex Schafran (UK)**,  
University of Leeds, UK.

Alex spent ten years as an immigrant rights activist, social worker and housing organizer in California and New York before becoming an academic. In addition to teaching at Leeds, he teaches in the Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences Po Paris and at

Sciences Po Bordeaux.

In his lecture "The future of the urban academy", he examines what major social and political roles higher education institutions which teach about urbanism and urbanization could play in the 21st century.

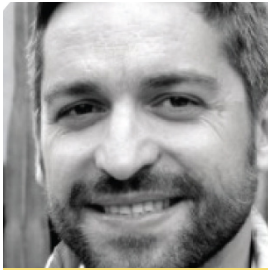


**Laura K. Strahle (Germany)**,  
Architect at Powerhouse Company /MSc Architecture (TU Delft).

I was born into a architectural family in the south of Germany. Although I was fascinated by the creative and exciting work of an architect, I decided to study International Management first and work for a year in this profession before

studying architecture at TU Munich. My fascination for having an impact on society even as a student, was triggered by my participation in several Design-Build-Studios at TU Munich which led me to Kenya and Zambia. My keenness to discover built society around the world made me come to TU Delft





**Nelson Mota (Portugal)**  
Assistant Professor, Architecture,  
TU Delft.

Nelson Mota graduated in Architecture (1998) and his MPhil (2006) from the University of Coimbra, Portugal, where he lectured in the period 2004/2009. His work as a designer was awarded in 2003 the Alexandre Herculano National

Architectural Prize in the category of design of public spaces, with colleague and in 2013 the Portuguese National Prize for Architecture in Wood with colleagues. He was the recipient of the Fernando Távora Prize in 2006 and authored the book A Arquitectura do Quotidiano (2010), runner-up in the Iberian FAD Prize 2011.



**Stephan van Berkel (The Netherlands),** Lecturer at the Haagse Hogeschool.

Stephan van Berkel has two masters, in architecture and urban planning at TU Delft. He worked at several architectural practices, among which Mecanoo and Waterstudio, contributing to the city App concept. Currently, he works as

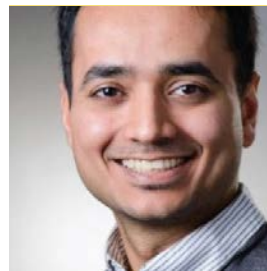
lecturer and researcher at the Hague University. He has been studying slums in Mumbai, Dhaka and Kampala. He has done in depth research into Bangladeshi garment factories, which have been object of attention after the collapse of Rana Plaza; a garment factory employing 3000 workers.



**Rodrigo Andrés Barrios Salcedo (Colombia),** PhD. candidate, Bauhaus Universität Weimar.

Andrés Barrios (1974, Bogotá), B.A. In Architecture, M.Sc. Urban Studies, Bauhaus-universität Weimar (Weimar, Germany), M.Eng Urban Design and Planning, Tongji University Shanghai (People's Republic of China). I have ac-

cumulated experience in the fields of architecture and urbanism for more than ten years now. My topics of interest are situated at the junction of the social, economic and technological processes driving urban spatial production.



**Nishant Narayan (India)**  
PhD Candidate at TU Delft.

I am a clean energy specialist and have completed my Masters in Sustainable Energy Technology (SET) from TU Delft. I am currently pursuing my doctoral studies in the topic of Integrated PV and storage off-grid energy system for low-income households in develop-

ing countries. This topic brings together sustainable energy for addressing (energy) poverty woes – the 2 topics close to my heart. Working towards a sustainable future is my mission.

## Urban Thinkers Campus in figures



**28  
Countries  
Represented**



**92  
Participants**



**7 Partner  
Groups  
Represented**



**19  
Organizations  
Represented**

# Organizations represented



# List of organization represented

Arcadis

Bauhaus Universität Weimar

100 Resilient Cities, Rockefeller Foundation

BuroHappold Engineering

City of Vienna

Delft Global Initiative

Eindhoven University of Technology (NL)

Feminists of TU Delft

GeoForAll

IHS, Erasmus University (NL)

LATITUD (Latin American Student Association of Delft)

Low Design Office

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

Municipality of Quito, Ecuador

Powerhouse Company Architecture

The Haagse Hogeschool

TU Delft (NL)

University of Leeds

Veldacademie, City of Rotterdam

# Countries represented

Albania  
Argentina  
Austria  
Brazil  
Canada  
Chile  
China  
Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Ecuador  
France  
Germany  
Ghana  
Greece  
India  
Indonesia  
Iran  
Italy  
Mexico  
Nicaragua  
Netherlands  
Peru  
Philippines  
Portugal  
South Africa  
Spain  
United Kingdom  
United States of America



# SDGs Addressed

## The Sustainable Development Goals

On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.

While we believe we must address all SDGs equally, this UTC has focused on SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). This is because we believe it is the mission of universities everywhere to prepare students to understand and implement SDGs and the New Urban Agenda. We also believe that urbanization processes offer an unparalleled opportunity to address all other SDGs, in order to deliver healthy, safe, inclusive and fair cities and communities everywhere.

High on our education agenda are SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced Inequalities, 13 (Climate Action) and so on.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# Logic for the UTC



Spatial Planning and Design education around the world needs to undergo a revolution if we wish to prepare critical minds and skilled professionals who will be able to steer the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the next 20 years.

The way in which planning and design are usually taught does not cater for the need to create sustainable, fair and inclusive cities. This is because many designers and planners are the product of an old paradigm of architectural education that privileges individual genius, design creativity and technocratic solutions, which often fail to prepare students to understand the implications of social,

economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability, including the crucial issues of spatial justice and the right to the city.

Most importantly, the relationship between society, people, governments and businesses and the built environment is not well understood. This poses the question: what can planners and designers actually DO in order to help deliver the city we need?

TU Delft is a leader in innovative education for the built environment. It fully embraces new paradigms of sustainability and resilience in light of the challenges of contemporary urbanisation. It understands that sustainability can only

occur when its three crucial dimensions occur simultaneously: the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability are interdependent. This means that technocratic or 'design' solutions are necessary but they are not enough: we need to understand the political, economic and social dimensions of urbanisation to be able to deliver effective solutions. This means that issues of governance, cultural practi-

Issues of governance, cultural practices, economic feasibility, political ideologies, all need to be understood and incorporated into the design and planning processes

es, economic feasibility, political ideologies, all need to be understood and incorporated into the design and planning processes.

TU Delft strives to create and disseminate knowledge in crucial areas of sustainable and resilient

development, such as renewable energy and water management. The Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment is a global learning centre for fair and sustainable cities and regions.

At TU Delft, we feel it is time for a frank discussion on how we educate the next generations of planners, designers, community organisers and managers to face the challenges of a world that is rapidly changing. We also believe that a greater focus must be given to urbanisation processes in the Global South, where capacity and institutions are faced with even bigger challenges of new and unprecedentedly rapid urbanisation.

# Summary of sessions

## 1st DAY

The event was introduced by the dean of the TU Delft Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Professor Peter Russell, by the head of the department of Urbanism, Professor Vincent Nadin and by Roberto Rocco, assistant professor in Urbanism.

The first day of this UTC discussed mainly the relevance of the New Urban Agenda and the relationship between practice, research and education. Though the contribution of Jacobo Herdoiza, Secretary of Housing, Territory and Planning of the Municipality of Quito, Ecuador, Thomas Lindsay (UK), Strategy Delivery Manager at 100 Resilient Cities (Rockefeller Foundation), Mehrnaz Ghojeh (Iran/UK), Consultant in Urban Development at Buro Happold Engineering and members of Veldacademie, a Dutch Foundation that seeks to articulate academic research and universities with 'real life' projects in partner cities.

Conclusions point towards the need of stronger links between educational institutions and local authorities (cities), because local authorities can open the door to the complexity of urban problems and a multitude of points of views and yet provide educational institutions with the relevant questions that must be answered. It is not only about the reality check of real assignments, but also a way to understand the challenges posed by a multitude of stakeholders with diverging objectives, pointing at the complex task of managing transition processes. Suchith Anand (India/UK), founder of GeoForAll, a foundation whose aim is to make geo-

spatial education and opportunities accessible to all through different strategies of accessibility to data and computing skills and tools, demonstrated how such partnerships can affect citizens and how capacity building programs for citizens can have a huge impact in "space literacy" (how people understand and use urban space).

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## 2nd DAY

The second day was divided between several topics, with the morning dedicated to a discussion of how education and entrepreneurship can work together in developing countries to produce impact in urban development. Theodore Klouvas, head of the Orange Corner programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave a passionate account of how a network of small offices in Dutch embassies throughout the African Continent can support innovation and how TU Delft has been supporting this network. This message was clearly given by Jennifer Kockx, head of the Delft Global Initiative, a platform that supports innovation for global development. The Delft Global Initiative is in fact an example of how innovation, entrepreneurship and education can (and must) walk hand in hand.

This discussion was followed by accounts from students from TU Delft and IHS Rotterdam about their research in the Global South and the challenges they faced. The conversation here gravitated towards the need to have more opportunities to bring students to top universities in the Global North and the challenges and perks of doing so. Here, the question was simple: what is the value of bringing students from the Global South to the Global North? Discussions about neo-colonialism were joined by the perception that, if correctly advised,

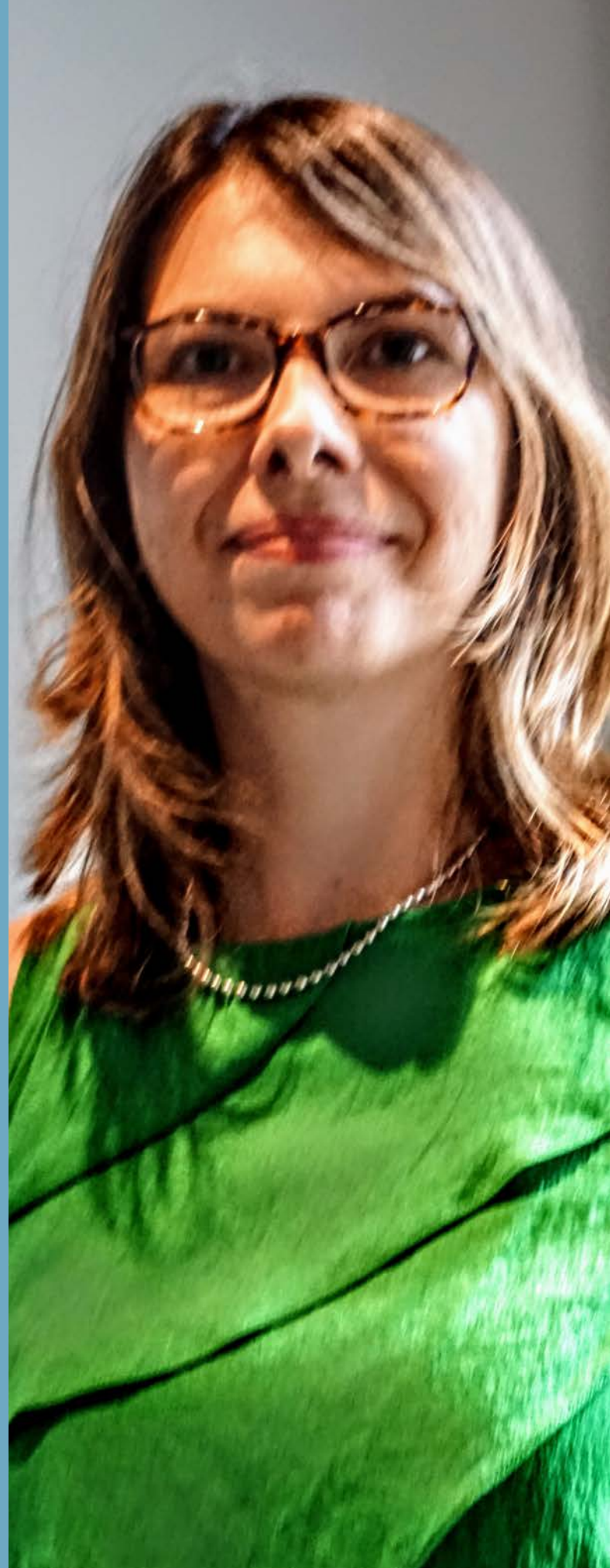
research developed in the Global North by students from the Global South can be enormously beneficial, because such students, if correctly coached, have the capacity to criticise the transferability of solutions and are able to articulate the knowledge gained into feasible interventions. In general, it was agreed that having students from the Global South and

North working alongside each other is incredibly beneficial, among other things because they are able to compare experiences and knowledge. Moreover, the group discussed the fact that young professionals are extremely mobile and cosmopolitan and may find themselves in the position of having to design and plan for contexts about which they know little initially.

The role of young professionals aware of the limits of transferability and conscious of the challenges of understanding the context, including its culture, informal practices and institutions was highlighted.

This debate was further enhanced by the contribution of Floortje van Sandick, member of the Feminist Group of TU Delft, a group that has been very active in questioning the prevalence of a white male perspective in education. Debate with Floortje and other students pointed at the need to diversify the points of view in urban development, in order not only to make the responses richer and more varied, but also in order to access the knowledge of groups that are generally silent and for whom the right to the city is always mediated by other voices. In other words, there is a need to recognise other types of knowledge other than the technocratic, male dominated knowledge that customarily leads urban development and excludes alternative voices.

The third part of the day included a vivid debate on education which puts water management at the centre of the debate, through the explanations of Bert Smolders and Charlotte van de Water from ARCADIS. This was a familiar discussion for TU Delft staff and students, who dwell on the rich Dutch tradition of urbanisation with water. But here the challenge is to bring sensitive water planning and design to contexts with very varied technical capacity. The discussion pointed to technology transfer and capacity building as tools for development, but again the problem of transferability and neo-colonialism were discussed. Most importantly, the connection of the university with UN-Habitat initiatives was also mentioned. The discussion was enriched by the account of Anne Loes Nillesen (The Netherlands), founding director and landscape architect at Defacto, a medium sized practice that has given consultancy to several water-related projects in the Netherlands and abroad, opening the door for discussions about the relationship between water management and culture, as well as water management and political culture. The comparative emphasis of Nillesen's presentation allowed the group to ponder on the profound impact that culture, informal practices and local politics may have on otherwise purely technical solutions. However, it is also clear that technical expertise is crucial, and it seems undesirable that technology transfer should stop. Again, the role of young professionals aware of the limits of transferability and conscious of the challenges of understanding the context, including its culture, informal practices and institutions was highlighted.



Darinka Czischke, Photo Ramses Grande





Bert Smolders, ARCADIS. Photo Ramses Grande



## 3rd DAY

The third day was dedicated to further discussing transnational research and practice with an emphasis on housing. The day started with Alex Schafran (US) from the University of Leeds, UK delivering a provocative challenge to universities to completely reform the way they approach the relationship between knowledge building and delivery and what needs to be done for us to achieve socially, economically and environmentally sustainable cities. In short, Schafran challenged the relationship between what is needed and the questions being asked by higher education institutes and proposed that universities must find new ways to deal with urban problems.

Here, the accounts of Nelson Motta (Portugal) from the Delft Global Housing group helped participants reflect on the value of comparative transnational research and model transfer. His account was enriched by a lecture by Darinka Czischke (Chile), Assistant Professor at TU Delft, who also highlighted the fact that the transfer of housing provision models from the north face difficulties when made without critique and that models for the Global South could emerge from the Global South itself. Czischke highlighted the absolute predominance of Anglo-Saxon literature and research in housing provision and claimed this is detrimental to the development of models adapted to local conditions in different parts of the world.

This was followed by two contrasting discussions, by Ana Rosa Chagas (Brazil), PhD candidate at TU Delft and Laura Straehle, award winning young architect and social

entrepreneur in Africa. Chagas presented methodological alternatives for knowledge formation stemming from everyday practices in informal settlements in Brazil, suggesting a path for decolonised knowledge building. Chagas' methodology involved renting and living in a shack in an informal settlement for an extended period of time and building knowledge "from within". Straehle, on the other hand, presented the graduation project she carried out in Africa, with little support from the University. She discussed the difficulties of carrying out a real-life

project and issues concerning North-South technology transfer, entrepreneurship and activism. These two presentations were complemented by contributions by Stephan van Berkel (The Netherlands) lecturer at The Hague Hoogeschool, Rodrigo Andrés Barrios Salcedo (Colombia), PhD candidate at Weimar University and Nishant Narayan (India), who all highlighted advantages and limitations

of research about the Global South being conducted in the Global North, issues of knowledge transfer and knowledge building, as well as issues about insiders and outsiders doing research in foreign contexts. Van Berkel reminded the audience about the differences in culture and informal institutions playing a big role in how information is collected, processed and understood.

The ensuing debate highlighted the differences between the two approaches presented earlier. Conclusions pointed towards the relative advantages and disadvantages of "knowledge-building from within" and "North-South knowledge transfer", with both being necessary and desirable under different conditions.

Conclusions pointed towards the relative advantages and disadvantages of "knowledge-building from within" and "North-South knowledge transfer"

# Key outcomes

**The main outcome of this UTC was a better understanding of the need to make education more agile and embedded into local governance networks, which might help the knowledge produced become more relevant to the growing complexity of city development and management. The list of recommendations can be seen below.**

**On the basis of the discussions held at this UTC, we claim that:**

**1.** Universities and other higher education institutions must actively seek to improve the relationship between local governments, research and education. Local governments know what are the pressing questions being asked. Universities are bound to enlighten local governments towards new questions and new solutions.

**2.** The engagement of higher education institutions in real urban management challenges must be constant and embedded in local governance. Universities and other higher education institutions must actively seek transdisciplinarity and ways to join up different actions, projects and stakeholders into coherent strategies for urban development, enabling students to deal with complex fields of knowledge.

**3.** Universities must work on trans-sectional education that contemplates urban development from alternative perspectives, such as gender equality, participation and democracy building, citizenship formation and the right to the city (including the right to public goods and the rights to individual goods that allow for the creation of socially stable and sustainable cities, such as shelter, education and health).

**4.** Universities must work on and enable students to understand how urban systems are embedded in natural systems and how cities can incorporate, rather than fight those natural systems (e.g. actions that harmonise urban development, water management and energy efficiency)

**5.** Universities must actively seek to “de-colonise” urban studies and urban development, pursuing knowledge-building and methodologies that contemplate local knowledge and in depth understanding of local contexts. At the very least, universities must actively work to prepare students to work in unfamiliar contexts, where they need to converse with local knowledge and work towards in depth understanding of local contexts

**6.** While local knowledge must be a priority, universities should not overlook the importance of knowledge transfer. Here, comparative studies are important to reveal the differences in formal (governance) and informal institutions that might impact outcomes of projects and policies in different contexts.



# The way forward

This was an atypical UTC and the results reflect the fact that the organisation failed to gather more decision makers on the floor for discussion on education policy. Universities are typically heavy and complicated institutions in which the pace of change does not match the pace of change of the societies where they are embedded. In other words, cities and their issues evolve quickly and maybe universities need to be more agile in order to catch up.

It is true, however, that universities are uniquely positioned to deliver change, because as heavy as they are, they are still well equipped to understand change using theoretical frameworks to understand and interact with real-world challenges. Local governments are perhaps too focused on practical day to day problems and must accommodate the political whims of the day. Universities are unique places where (hopefully) disinterested research and critical thinking can take place and where knowledge can be effectively disseminated.

In this perspective, the results of this UTC are a set of recommendations about education for the city we need. These recommendations have limited possibility to have a real impact on education policy, because of the lack of participation of key decision makers in education policy.

However, this experience has taught us several lessons concerning the organisation of such an event. We feel that we must work towards a list of teaching points concerning the New Urban Agenda and also collection of materials (texts, exercises, experiences) that support these teaching points. TU Delft is committed to this work, and we hope to produce these list and materials in the next years.



Carley Pennink, IHS. Photo Ramses Grande

# We have a New Urban Agenda: What Now?

*Originally published at Bnieuws 09 2016 – 2017, Published on Jul 21, 2017* itat III.

Text prepared by Roberto Rocco, senior assistant professor of Spatial Planning and Strategy, department of Urbanism, [r.c.rocco@tudelft.nl](mailto:r.c.rocco@tudelft.nl)

Between 7 and 9 June, the department of Urbanism organised an Urban Thinker Campus (UTC) to discuss how to integrate the New Urban Agenda into higher education.

But what is a UTC and what is the New Urban Agenda, and why should it be integrated into higher education? Why should we care about it at all?

Let's start with Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development that took place in the historic city of Quito, the capital of Ecuador, in October 2016.

Contrary to what you might think, this was not a boring gathering of arrogant technocrats discussing cities from their desks. It was a colourful, lively and oftentimes overwhelming festival of all kinds of people and institutions working to make cities liveable, fairer and sustainable all over the world. Numbers vary, but as many as 45.000 people attended the conference based in a park in Quito, with universities and conference centres around the city overflowing with parallel and alternative events.

The two previous Habitat conferences had a great influence on the way we think about cities. It is important that we understand how, so we can foresee the influence of Hab-

Habitat I took place in Vancouver in 1976, four years after the momentous 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. During the 1960s and 1970s, the world had witnessed unprecedented urban growth and governments started to notice the negative effects of rapid and unplanned urbanization. In Vancouver, governments recognized the impact of rapid urbanisation on the well-being of people, but the emphasis was largely on the provision of housing and services, often based on very technical discourses which put national governments at centre stage, and left local authorities out of the equation.

This happened well before the report that has shaped our understanding of the relationship between human settlements and the environment was released: 'Our Common Future', also known as the Brundtland Report, was published in 1987, and launched the idea that we must seek "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

If you are young, it might be difficult to imagine that before that report, talking about sustainability was seen as something of an oddity. The emphasis was on growth, production and technological progress. This was the world before the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), a world locked in the Cold War stalemate, with two main competing and mutually exclusive narratives about the path to take and the danger of a nuclear holocaust looming in the horizon. Those who



warned about the dangers of unsustainable urbanisation to the environment were not taken seriously enough.

This scenario had changed substantially when Habitat II took place in Istanbul in 1996, also four years after another crucial gathering concerned with the environment, the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of 1992. Habitat II was popularly known as the 'City Summit' and recognised that cities are engines of growth, but sustainable urbanisation should be a priority. It also called for a bigger role for local governments and citizen participation, giving rise to a wave of devolution and participatory policies. Cities (and citizens) finally started to take centre stage.

20 years down the road, and a lot has changed. The effects of climate change are now undeniable and the world is more interconnected than ever. Humanity has come to the realisation that the resources of our planet are indeed finite, and many governments have taken serious steps towards renewable energy sources, while humanity has become, for the first time in history, predominantly urban.

Habitat III in Quito and its outcome document, the New Urban Agenda, take all this in stock and reinforce the idea that sustainable urbanisation is an engine for development. But urban sustainability here is much more holistic, embracing its three essential elements: environmental, social and economic. The NUA seeks to create a mutually reinforcing relationship between sustainable urbanization and development, but it pays much more attention to the social and political aspects that underscore sustainability.

The idea is that by addressing Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), we can address most of the other SDGs agreed by the United Nations in 2015. If we wish to ensure "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs", then we must find the political, economic and technological tools that will allow that to happen.

Because the NUA is a binding document agreed and signed by all UN member states, it does have the potential to influence policy-making.

The NUA also introduces three 'enablers' for sustainable cities: local fiscal systems, urban planning, and basic services and infrastructure. In doing so, the NUA explicitly recognises the role of spatial planning and urban design as crucial tools that can steer and coordinate the efforts of a large number of stakeholders with conflicting

interests towards agreed goals.

Because the NUA is a binding document agreed and signed by all UN member states, it does have the potential to influence policy-making. According to some, it offers the first comprehensive approach to sustainable urban development for many countries.

The NUA has important shortcomings. Among other issues, it fails to spell out the 'right to the city' in its text, although the concept is very much implicit in several passages. Its main deficiency, however, is a lack of provisions to tackle the causes of some urban issues: financialisation of housing provision, extreme income disparities, red tapping that hinders opportunities for deprived households, etc. Many would argue that these issues are beyond what

the New Urban Agenda can do. Despite the many shortcomings, the NUA is a great step forward in the right direction. I don't agree with critics who say the New Urban Agenda is too generic, however. It needs to be generic, if it intends to speak to almost two hundred countries with very different urbanisation processes. I also don't agree with the opinion that it is too top down, simply because this is not true.

The NUA is the result of a long and arduous process of negotiation and input collection, from a myriad of stakeholders from all over the world. Obviously, some countries were more successful in incorporating citizens in the discussion than others, but independent NGOs were active everywhere, collecting input from citizens, and Urban Thinkers Campuses like the one we organised at TU Delft were one of their tools.

UTCs are UN-Habitat sponsored open platforms for critical exchange between urban researchers, professionals, and decision-makers who want to have a real influence on urban development. They are also a platform for consensus-making among partners engaged in specific actions to make cities more sustainable, inclusive and fair.

In the run-up to the New Urban Agenda, Urban Thinkers Campuses were instrumental to collect input from grassroots. Now, Urban Thinkers Campuses are being organised again to discuss what became the main issue arising after the enactment of the NUA: IMPLEMENTATION.

In the current round, 77 UTCs are being organised around the world, but the one organised at TU Delft is the only one ex-

clusively dedicated to a key element in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda: EDUCATION.

This is because the university is fully aware of its key role in preparing the young professionals and critical citizens who will implement the NUA in the next 20 years, and has fully embraced Sustainable Develop-

ment Goals and specially SDG 11 in its own vision.

One important step in this direction was the creation of Delft Global Initiative, the university's "portal, platform and booster for Science and Technology for Global Development".

Bouwkunde is not lagging behind, as demonstrated by the many studios and research groups dealing with issues of global urban

development, and more recently, with the three As initiative promoted by our dean, Peter Russell. The 'A is for Africa!' initiative, for example, is seeking for active partnerships with African institutions to help train young African professionals and aims to bring BK closer to Africa. The 'A is for Agility' initiative has also an important role to play in helping educate young generations of designers and planners from the Global South.

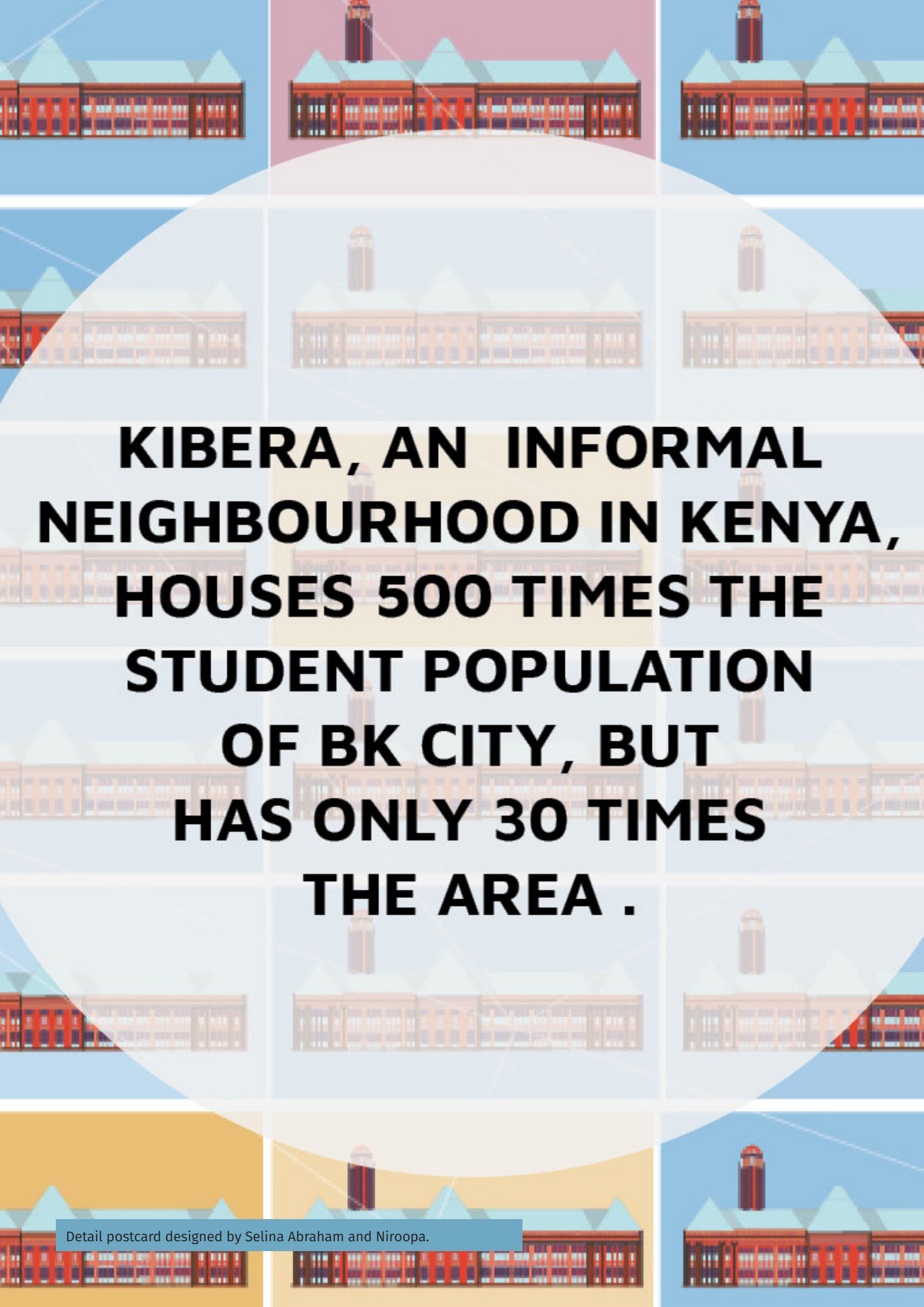
BK's UTC was titled "Education for the City We Need" and gathered almost 40 professionals, educators and policy-makers to discuss how to best integrate the NUA in higher education, during three days of intense debate and exchange. The outcome of the UTC will be made available in its website: <https://utctudelft.org> and in a publication to be launched in the second semester of 2017.

Now, Urban Thinkers Campuses are being organised again to discuss what became the main issue arising after the enactment of the NUA: IMPLEMENTATION.



Jacobo Herdoiza, Municipality of Quito. Photo Ramses Grande





**KIBERA, AN INFORMAL  
NEIGHBOURHOOD IN KENYA,  
HOUSES 500 TIMES THE  
STUDENT POPULATION  
OF BK CITY, BUT  
HAS ONLY 30 TIMES  
THE AREA .**

# We have a New Urban Agenda, and here is what we can do

*Text originally published at Bnieuws 02 2017-2018 ,  
Published on Oct 20, 2017 Beyond the Commonplace*

Text by Roberto Rocco, Assistant Professor of Spatial Planning and Strategy, Urbanism. [r.c.rocco@tudelft.nl](mailto:r.c.rocco@tudelft.nl)

This article is a follow up to the article published on B-Nieuws # 9, 2017, titled 'We have a New Urban Agenda: What Now?'. In that first article, I explained what the New Urban Agenda is and why it is important to discuss it, as well as why we organised a UN-Habitat-sponsored Urban Thinkers Campus at TU Delft. In the present article, I move forward to the preliminary conclusions of the UTC. A modified version of the present text was published at the New Urban Campaign Newsletter 'On the move'.

Maybe one of the main conclusions derived from the Urban Thinkers Campus organised at BK is that Spatial Planning and Design education around the world needs to undergo a revolution if we wish to prepare critical minds and skilled professionals who will be able to steer the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the next 20 years.

The way in which planning and design are generally taught does not cater for the need to create sustainable, fair and inclusive cities. Many planning and design schools follow an old paradigm of architectural education that privileges individual genius and design creativity and do not prepare students to understand the implications of social, economic and environmental sustainability, spatial justice and the right to the city. Most importantly, the relationship between those concepts and the built environment is not well understood. This poses the question: what

can spatial planning and design schools actually DO in order to help deliver the city we need?

One of the main challenges for planning and design schools is to offer education that is transdisciplinary. This is because cities are complex systems that must be understood from a multitude of complementary angles.

The lack of trans-disciplinarity in urban planning and design education is both a reflection of and results in sectoral urban challenges being fenced off in departments and administrations who barely communicate with each other. Isolated sectoral approaches fail to contemplate both the unintended consequences and the full strategic value of actions taken.

The reality of urban management in most places is fragmented, unimaginative and excessively technocratic, if not squarely inefficient and plagued by corruption. Well, we need to change that, and the best way to do it is through education and capacity building.

This is why we decided to organize an UTC focused on education for the New Urban Agenda at TU Delft. How do we teach the New Urban Agenda? And what do we need to teach/ learn in order to implement its core ideas? During 3 days in June, academics, members of the public sector, private sector and civic society, as well as students and members of the public got together at TU Delft in The Netherlands to debate precisely those questions.

Many people at TU Delft are convinced that universities have a very important role to play in supporting sustainable urban development around the world, and we have been reforming

our education in order to respond to the challenges of urbanization today.

Habitat III in Quito and its outcome document, the New Urban Agenda, reinforce the idea that sustainable urbanisation is an engine for development. But urban sustainability here is holistic, embracing its three constituent elements: the environment, economy and society. The NUA seeks to create a mutually reinforcing relationship between sustainable urbanization and development, but it pays much more attention to the social and political aspects that underscore sustainability.

The idea is that by addressing Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), we can address most of the other SDGs agreed by the United Nations in 2015. If we wish to ensure “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, as the Brundtland Report of 1987 put it, then we must be able to build socially sustainable, healthy, fair and inclusive cities. And in order to do that, we must find the political, economic and technological tools that will support sustainable urban development.

The NUA introduces three ‘enablers’ for sustainable cities: local fiscal systems, urban planning, and basic services and infrastructure. In doing so, the NUA explicitly recognizes the role of spatial planning and urban design as crucial tools that can steer and coordinate the efforts of a large number of stakeholders with diverging interests towards agreed goals. In this context, it is easy to see that most cur-

riculums in universities around the world must adjust to the evolution seen in the New Urban Agenda, that is, that we must pay more attention to the social, economic and political aspects that underpin sustainability and resilience.

It is crucial that planning and design schools go beyond their typical excessive faith in technocratic solutions and grandiloquent design in order to understand social sustainability as a central issue in sustainable urban development. Understanding governance, urban management and stakeholder involvement are essential issues for any plan or project to succeed.

**But what is social sustainability in urban development? It has several faces, but it concerns mainly the social and political aspects of urbanization processes.**

But what is social sustainability in urban development? It has several faces, but it concerns mainly the social and political aspects of urbanization processes. In this sense, social sustainability is a “reality check” for plans and projects. Are these plans and projects supported by the right stakeholders? Do they take into account the real

economic and technological capacity of implementation existing in a given society? Who wins and, most importantly, who loses? Do they promote spatial justice and the creation of public goods? Are the formal institutions of that particular society prepared to enforce the rule of law that will guarantee projects and strategies will be carried out effectively? What about informal institutions (to use a concept outlined by the ever so great Elinor Ostrom)? While things like corruption, nepotism and clientelism are unacceptable, we can’t bury our heads in the sand and pretend they don’t exist. Instead, we must find ways to strategically deal with them in order to uproot them. Social sustainability is a matter of democracy-building, as much as economic progress.



How to prepare students to face not only the technical challenges of today's cities, but to understand urban planning and design as vehicles for the articulation of different groups with conflicting interests? How to prepare urban planning and design students to be the articulators, synthesizers, and conjoiners of different kinds of knowledge necessary to steer sound urban development? How to explain to students their role in creating public goods for all?

At TU Delft, we apply the following model to Urbanism education.

In the Dutch tradition, Urbanism combines the physical sciences (notably engineering, environmental technology and information technology), the social sciences (notably sociology, political sciences, urban geography, management and aspects of psychology) and last but certainly not least, DESIGN. Design is the great tool that allows us (planners, designers, stakeholders, citizens) to visualize and project desirable futures. But we take a broad view on design: we design processes, where projects (buildings and infrastructures) play of course a central role.

Each of those disciplines has its own worldview and asks different questions. To answer those different questions, different methodologies are needed. So, in a transdisciplinary environment, we must find ways to articulate different kinds of knowledge that will allow us to tackle urban complexity effectively.

To those disciplines, we have added one crucial dimension that helps us decide on our way forward: ETHICS. Bouwkunde is entirely committed to including the ethical dimension in our education, with workshops and discussions with specialists and committed professionals. The UTC we organized gave us the opportunity to expand the discussion and include a wide range of committed professionals and other



Vincent Nadin, TU Delft. Photo Ramses Grande

stakeholders who can help us in the challenges ahead. Interdisciplinary studies and stakeholder involvement sound like great ideas, but they are difficult to achieve.

In light of the discussion with new and old partners, the results of this UTC are a set of recommendations about education for the city we need and concern higher education institutions, rather than governments:

Universities and other higher education institutions must actively seek to improve the relationship between local governments, research and education. Local governments know what are the pressing questions being asked. Universities are equipped to enlighten local governments towards new questions and new solutions.

The engagement of higher education institutions in real urban management challenges must be constant and embedded in local governance.

Universities and other higher education institutions must actively seek transdisciplinarity and ways to join up different actions, projects and stakeholders into coherent strategies for urban development, enabling students, teachers and decision-makers to deal with complex fields of knowledge. Universities must work on trans-sectional education that contemplates urban development from alternative perspectives, such as gender equality, minority rights, participation and democracy building, citizenship and the right to the city (including the right to public goods and the rights to individual goods that allow for the creation of socially stable and sustainable cities, such as shelter, education and health).

Universities must work on and enable students

to understand how urban systems are embedded in natural systems and how cities can incorporate, rather than fight those natural systems (e.g. actions that harmonize urban development, water management and energy efficiency)

Universities must actively seek to “de-colonize” urban studies and urban development, pursuing knowledge-building and methodologies that stem from or incorporate local knowledge vigorously. Universities must seek to create alterna-

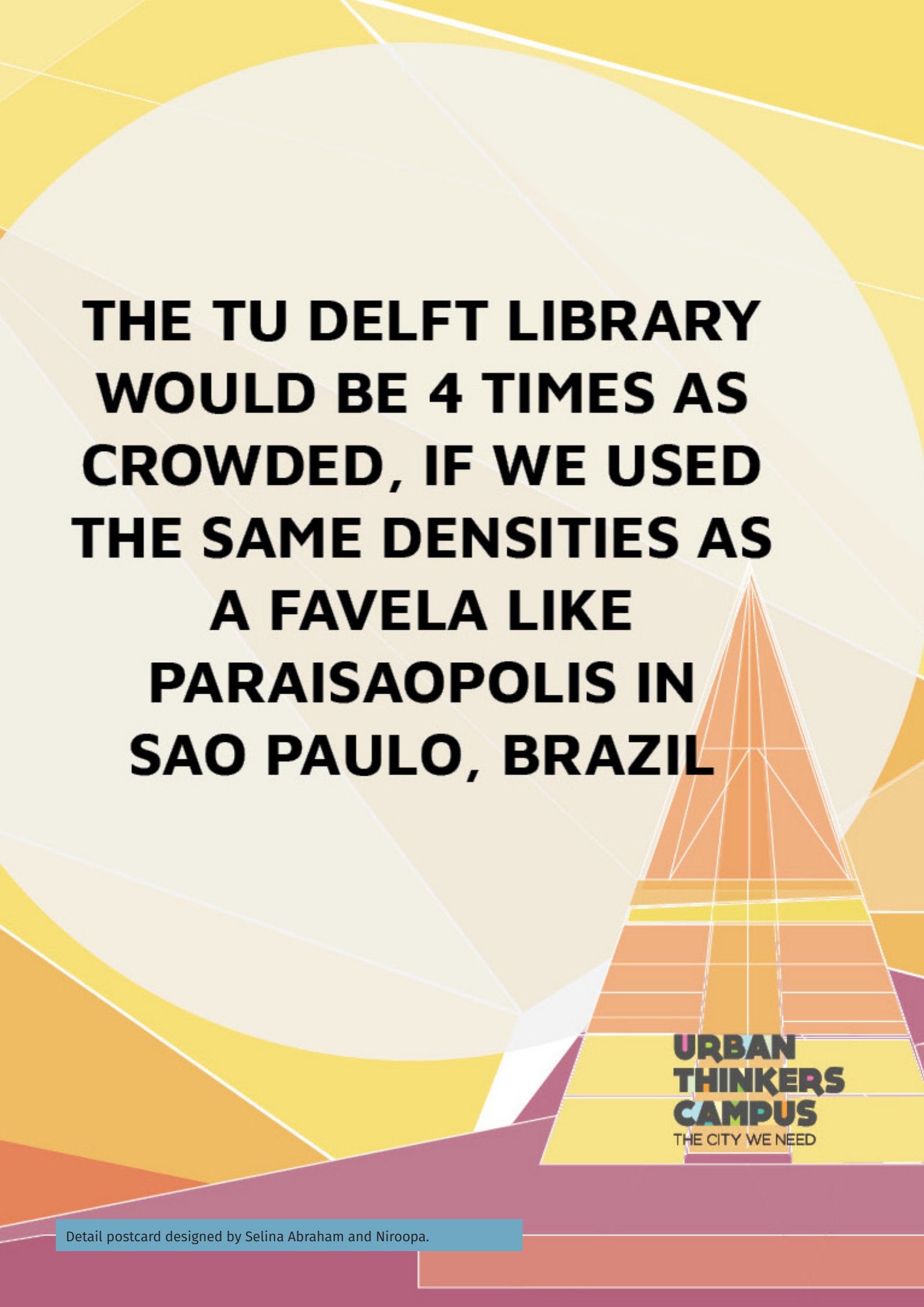
tive forms of dialogue between North and South, as well invigorate South-South knowledge transfer. At the very least, universities must actively work to prepare students to work in unfamiliar contexts, where they need to converse with local knowledge and work towards in depth understanding of local contexts.

While local knowledge must be a priority, universities should not overlook the importance of knowledge transfer. Here, comparative studies are important to check fitness of transferability, reveal the differences in

formal (governance) and informal institutions that might impact outcomes of projects and policies in different contexts.

While some of these items are difficult to implement, I must say many of these things are already taking place in our education, as witnessed by the 3 As initiative, which speak directly to some of those concerns. Platforms like the Delft Global Initiative and Veldacademie, studios like Global Housing (architecture) and Complex Cities and Delta Interventions (Urbanism), among many other initiatives, help us direct our efforts. But of course, much still needs to be done for us to be able to implement the new Urban Agenda and achieve the city we need.

**Universities must work on trans-sectional education that contemplates urban development from alternative perspectives, such as gender equality, minority rights, participation and democracy building, citizenship and the right to the city.**



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**URBAN  
THINKERS  
CAMPUS**  
THE CITY WE NEED





Student panel. Photo Ramses Grande.







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