

# UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS 2009



## BACKGROUND

### URBAN PLANNING EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- Urban planning and management is essential to solving urgent urban problems of the 21st century, yet current professional planning practices have sometimes failed to keep pace with the challenges.
- Often planning schools lack the academic staff, computers, library materials and studio space to carry out their work effectively. In some developing countries, it is common for academic staff to hold second jobs in order to survive on the salaries paid. It is quite common, also, for highly trained academic staff to seek posts abroad in order to gain access to facilities and resources that will facilitate such work.
- Many schools are not effectively networked within the broader discipline as they are not members of an international planning school association and they do not benefit from the input and questioning of a specialized accreditation system.
- Perhaps the greater educational challenge facing planning is the need for planning objectives and tools to be understood by architects, engineers, lawyers, administrators and the myriad of citizens and elected officials who must endorse planning interventions and support plans if they are to be adopted and implemented. University incentives in many countries do not support the education of non-degree-seeking students.

### GENDER

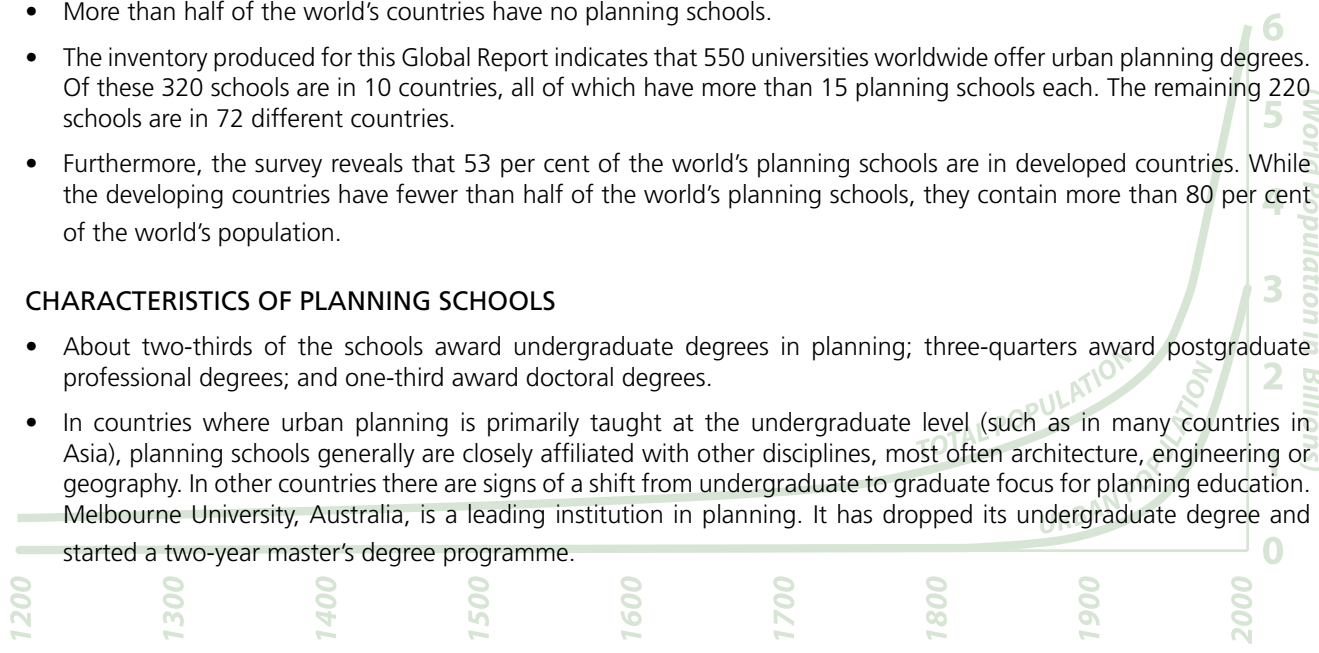
- Gender is not a common core part of the syllabus in many urban planning schools, despite awareness of its importance in planning practice. While about half of the planning schools are teaching social equity issues in their curricula, a minority of these specifically teach gender-related topics.
- Planners who have graduated from a planning course where gender was not in the syllabus, regardless of their gender, often fail to consider gender in planning. This reinforces the need for continuing professional development. The Royal Town Planning Institute in Britain has worked to advance gender awareness in planning practice during recent years, and has produced tools intended to help planners attend to gender-related issues in a practical manner.

### REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLANNING SCHOOLS

- More than half of the world's countries have no planning schools.
- The inventory produced for this Global Report indicates that 550 universities worldwide offer urban planning degrees. Of these 320 schools are in 10 countries, all of which have more than 15 planning schools each. The remaining 220 schools are in 72 different countries.
- Furthermore, the survey reveals that 53 per cent of the world's planning schools are in developed countries. While the developing countries have fewer than half of the world's planning schools, they contain more than 80 per cent of the world's population.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF PLANNING SCHOOLS

- About two-thirds of the schools award undergraduate degrees in planning; three-quarters award postgraduate professional degrees; and one-third award doctoral degrees.
- In countries where urban planning is primarily taught at the undergraduate level (such as in many countries in Asia), planning schools generally are closely affiliated with other disciplines, most often architecture, engineering or geography. In other countries there are signs of a shift from undergraduate to graduate focus for planning education. Melbourne University, Australia, is a leading institution in planning. It has dropped its undergraduate degree and started a two-year master's degree programme.



## PLANNING SUSTAINABLE CITIES

## ENHANCING THE RELEVANCE OF PLANNING EDUCATION TO 21ST CENTURY URBAN NEEDS

- Urban planning education has shifted focus from physical design to policy and social science research. During the last decade, however, there has been a resurgence of design in some schools.
- Worldwide courses combine design and policy approaches to planning, some regional variations exist. Planning schools in China and Mediterranean countries, for example, tend to focus on physical design; those in the United Kingdom and the United States tend to emphasize policy and social science approaches.
- On a global level, three-quarters of planning schools teach sustainable development, more than half teach participatory and deliberative planning, a similar number teach social equity, while one-third of planning schools teach climate change.

### TECHNICAL, COMMUNICATIVE & ANALYTICAL SKILLS

- Concerns have been raised that students from many developing countries go to developed one to obtain their planning degrees. It is suggested that when these planners return home they may be ill-prepared to take up the planning concerns in their own countries. It seems many planning schools in developed countries have taken note of such concerns, as many have responded to their significant enrolment of international students by offering specializations in international development planning, or by including various international curriculum components.
- Planning education in **Africa** is often closely tied to the educational systems of former colonial powers, often with emphasis on master planning, following the British tradition. While technical and physical planning education approaches dominated for many years, this has changed in recent decades, with greater attention being paid to expanded definitions of planners' roles to include economic development and environmental planning, as well as newer participatory and collaborative ideas. At the same time, there are many calls for reform of urban planning education in Africa in order to make planning more responsive to the needs of African peoples, to better prepare planners for work in the private and non-profit sectors, to better confront issues of state power and implementation, to better understand decision processes and capital investment issues, and to be more able to retain academic staff.

### CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS & PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

- Among the 550 universities worldwide that offer urban planning degrees, 342 are members of at least one or more of the planning school associations that are members of the Network, according to the Global Planning Education Association Network survey. This leaves 208 schools, or 38 per cent, that are not members of any such planning school association. Regional association coverage is particularly thin in Asia, where only 19 of the 161 planning schools there are members of a regional association.

### CAPACITY FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT OF PLANNING PRACTICE

- Planning schools now exist in at least 82 countries, including at least 45 developing countries. Average staff sizes at these schools are considerable; every continent has average staff numbers of eight (8) or higher and most continents have average staff sizes in excess of 20. This is a substantial system of planning education reflecting a total academic staff of more than 13,000.
- **Developing countries** are generally underserved by planning schools; only one-quarter of all developing countries have such educational facilities. Moreover, the bulk of the planning schools in developing countries are in a handful of countries. Given the unique circumstances of each country's planning system and the high costs of sending students abroad for higher education, the absence of planning education in so many countries is a compelling problem.
- Some countries, primarily **developed countries**, are increasingly treating higher education as a source of foreign exchange, and in a globalizing world, universities themselves are setting up offshore operations. Liverpool University's civic design programme in China and Carnegie Mellon University's business and computer science programmes in Qatar are two examples of this trend.
- Leading planning schools have recognized the nature of 21st-century urbanization problems and are familiarizing their students with theory and tools related to sustainability, globalization, social equity, climate change and the full range of specializations that are involved in effective plan-making. They view planning as an integrated practice that requires technical, analytic and communicative skills, including participation and conflict resolution in a multicultural context.

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