



1. 2. & 3.
Picture Libis
Community
in Valenzuela
City.
4. Student
Panel Critical
Urbanism
Studio year
2014.
5. A working
model for the
Studio 2015



#### CRITICAL URBANISM STUDIO

In the Critical Urbanism Studio students of the Development Planning Unit (The Bartlett, University College London) are exposed to the concept of design as a critically resistant and activist endeavour.

The studio hinges upon an extended and remotely simulated site analysis and phenomenological mapping, aimed at revealing qualitative and quantitative attributes of a case of informal urbanism from Valenzuela City (Metro Manila Region, Philippines), namely the United Libis Homeowners Association Inc., where the project leaders had previously run a project along with practitioners from the Community Architects Network (CAN, a programme funded by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights).

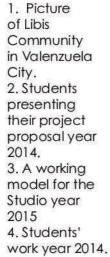
Participants are asked to delve thoroughly into the phenomenology of such site, and are stimulated not to automatically assume an effort toward physical building as singular solution – and, rather, to value an informed understanding of the place and its human and social component as essential.

The outcome of the studio are yearly shared with community leaders and other partners of the Development Planning Unit operating in the Philippines, fostering a constant exchange and contamination of ideas between a studio run in the Global North and an activist endeavour materializing in the Global South.











2. FOSTER THE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ROLE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS BY STIMULATING SOCIAL MODES OF PRACTICE BEFORE SPECULATIVE ECONOMIC PROFITABILITY

DESIGN AND THE CREATION OF POLITICAL SUBJECTS.

The overall aim of the studio is to rethink the role of the built environment practitioner, in order to respond to the challenges brought by the high level of contestation of nowadays' urban spaces. Participants are asked to reflect on the notion of 'critical urbanism', and to understand whether an urbanism emancipated from the capitalist forces that are shaping the contemporary cities could actually exist. How to imagine peopledriven processes? How to let them emancipate from logics of profitability and rather thrive on collective action and an immanently 'social' endeavour? Trying to answer such questions, the studio grounds in the methodology of the Community Architects Network, and in its deeply 'political' vocation: CAN's objective has been to empower urban poor communities across South East Asia, putting them at the centre of the process of urban transformation. In the same manner, the participants of the Critical Urbanism Studio are asked to keep in mind how their projects should eventually lead to the creation of new political subjects.





6. SHARE KNOWLEDGE, PROMOTE DISCUS-SION, REFLECTION AND AWARENESS, AND COLLABORATE IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE 'SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF HABITAT'

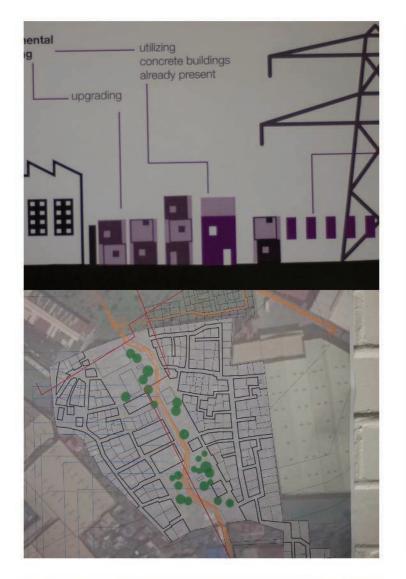


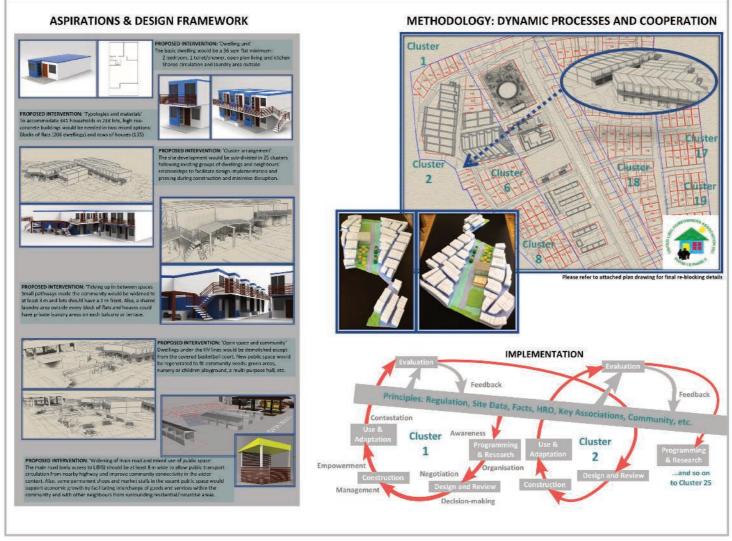
1. Picture of domestic electrical supply Libis Community in Valenzuela City. 2. Students discussing their project proposal during tutorials year 2014. 3. Students' work year 2014. A working 4. A model for the Studio year 2015.



In the studio, participants are free to determine what kind of intervention they – and the community, as they will interpret it – deem appropriate for the site. Tangible outcomes so far have imagined variations on the site's physical fabric (in terms of both housing and mixed-use individual and community spaces) and certainly forecasted an impact on the social one. Proposals have encompassed re-blocking of the housing units, re-thinking of the public spaces, inception of economic activities, self-managed production of construction materials.

The production of such outcomes periodically lead to collective discussion (twice a year with the community and other partners from the field) where ideas get contaminated and put again into circulation within the network of urban poor communities in South East Asia.





8. SUPPORT PARTICIPATORY, DEMOCRATIC, MULTICULTURAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PROCESSES AND APPROACHES IN STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY AS A FACTOR OF RURAL AND URBAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT







The activities of the studio grounds in a participatory process whereby urban poor communities along with community architects, academics and local authorities, were taking part in a collective endeavour toward a shared creation of the built environment. The organization of the studio reflects such participatory process: the background of the students is highly interdisciplinary and they are stimulated to reflect on the reality of the different actors of the urban transformation and on the multidimensionality of the transformation process itself. The sessions are organized according to different scales of analysis and design, from the household to the city level passing through the collective dimension of the community itself in so doing stressing the importance of building alliances and links at multiple scales in order to foster a truly open and inclusive process of transformation.