

# Introduction

By Dan Abramson, University of Washington

IN THE SUMMER OF 2004, a multi-national, multi-university, and multi-disciplinary group of students led by faculty of the University of Washington's College of Architecture and Urban Planning spent twenty-four days in the Chinese city of Quanzhou, Fujian Province, learning and demonstrating how tools of spatial analysis and participatory research can help to articulate diverging stakeholder interests in development at the community level, and can help municipal policy-makers acknowledge this diversity of interests. Their ultimate goal was to assist the Municipal Planning Bureau in its effort to establish a public discussion on appropriate development goals for the city's diverse communities, in the hope that the urban planning decision-making process could become more explicitly inclusive of community concerns.

THE STUDENTS worked directly with two communities in Quanzhou (pronounced in Mandarin like "Chwen-Joe"), a coastal prefectural city with approximately 400,000 population in its urban core. One community is a neighborhood designated for preservation in an economically and demographically declining corner of the city's historic center; the other is a burgeoning village at the city's expanding and increasingly industrial periphery.

IN THE FIRST of these communities, Quanzhou's "Cheng Nan" (South End) students encountered a problem that faces many historic inner-city environments: the differential assessment by various residents and municipal authorities of the historic value of the neighborhood's buildings and spaces. They proposed a process of discussion and decision-making designed to resolve conflicts between residents' aspirations for comfortable "modern" living conditions, local government and merchants' desire for improved business conditions and higher-level government and cultural authorities' policy to maintain architectural identity.

IN THE SECOND COMMUNITY, Huo Ju Village, new formally planned factories sit adjacent to an unplanned, formerly agricultural settlement that now houses a large population of migrant workers and business owners from distant provinces. Students examined the different concerns and perspectives of local villagers and "temporary" migrants, demonstrated how the process of researching these perspectives could be made a publicly accessible activity, and suggested possible spatial and policy strategies to accommodate both sets of interests in planning for further urbanization in the area.

PEDAGOGICALLY, the studio tested the possibilities of educational exchange between students from Mainland China, Taiwan and North America, and between professional students and social science/area-studies students. Disciplines represented by the student group included: anthropology, architecture, art history, China studies, forestry, geography, landscape architecture, public affairs, and urban planning.

THE RESULT of the studio were presented on July 16 at a national conference on "Democratization of the Urban Planning Decision-making Process," organized by the Urban Planning Society of China and hosted by the Municipal Government of Quanzhou. They are being further formatted for translation and display at a public exhibition in Quanzhou, and for dissemination by brochure to the communities concerned, municipal policy-makers, and urban planning and management professionals throughout China via the Urban Planning Society. The conference and the studio itself was the culmination of a participatory community planning initiative in this city supported by the Ford Foundation since late 1999.

BESIDES much logistical support received from the Ford Foundation, additional funding assistance came in the form of an International Mobility Grant by the University of Washington Marc Lindenberg Center for Humanitarian Action, International Development and Global Citizenship.



Non-local participants in the studio were, by institution and in alphabetical order:

**Beijing University**  
YANG Yudong, Doctoral student in Anthropology  
LUO Pan, Masters student in Anthropology

**Chinese Academy of Urban Planning and Design**  
TAO Tao, Senior Planner; China national coordinator  
ZHAO Peng, Senior Planner

**Ford Foundation Beijing Office**  
David WESTENDORFF, Consultant; guest reviewer

**National Taiwanese University Building and Planning Foundation, Taipei**  
HUANG Chung-hui, Masters student  
HSU Chun-yu, Planner  
LEE Yen-ju, Masters student  
John K.C. LIU, Professor; guest reviewer  
TENG Chia-ling, Masters student

**Sichuan University**  
XIN Jianan, Bachelors student in Forestry, University of Washington-Sichuan exchange program; assistant coordinator

**Southeast University School of Architecture, Nanjing**  
DONG Wei, Professor; guest reviewer  
DING Li, Masters student in Urban Planning  
Hu Mingxing, Postdoctoral researcher  
WU Ping, Masters student in Architecture  
XU Yehe, Masters student in Architecture

**University of British Columbia School of Community and Regional Planning**  
Michael LEAF, Associate Professor; studio guest instructor  
Leslie SHIEH, Doctoral student

**University of Washington**  
Dan ABRAMSON, Assistant Professor, Urban Design and Planning; studio co-instructor and coordinating international faculty member  
Wei BUCKINGHAM, Masters student in International Studies-China Studies  
Sylvia Ya-Ting CHAN, Masters student in Urban Planning  
Sophia Lan-Yin CHEN, Masters student in Urban Planning  
Frank CHING, Professor, Architecture; studio guest instructor  
Richard COCHRANE, Masters student in Public Affairs and Urban Planning  
Andrea FLOWER, Masters student in Urban Planning  
Jeff HOU, Assistant Professor, Landscape Architecture; studio co-instructor  
Katie IDZOREK, Masters student in Architecture  
Elizabeth JACKSON, Bachelors student in Art History  
Laurie KARLINSKY, Masters student in Urban Planning  
Liz MALY, Masters student in Architecture  
Eden MERCER, Masters student in Public Affairs  
Christie O'BRIEN, Masters student in Urban Planning  
Marc PHILPART, Masters student in Public Affairs  
Essence PIERCE, Masters student in Public Affairs and China Studies  
Jayde Lin ROBERTS, Doctoral student in the Built Environment; studio teaching assistant and facilitator  
Lee ROBERTS, Masters student in Architecture and Urban Planning  
Carl SEE, Masters student in Public Affairs  
Makie SUZUKI, Masters student in Landscape Architecture  
Candy WANG, Masters student in Architecture