



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA
E STUDI URBANI



Poliedra - Politecnico di Milano

I AND II LEVEL SPECIALISING MASTER



DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE, URBAN PLANNING
AND HERITAGE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

V EDITION - 2026/2027

MASTER'S OVERVIEW

The Master DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT (MDfD) is an exclusive proposal of Higher Education (First and Second Level Specialising Master) aimed to meet the growing demand for design experts capable of facing the challenging contexts of the Global South by bringing knowledge and skills that focus on the governability and quality of urban and regional development and also to acquire necessary tools to work within major agencies and organizations.

The Master is promoted by the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano with the participation of renowned experts from the world of International Cooperation, Profession and Research, and with the support of an extensive network of Partners including Multilateral organisations, Foundations and national and international NGOs.



EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The impacts of globalisation on cities and regions are creating huge socio-spatial imbalances, environmental emergencies and complex urban management problems, particularly in the regions of the Global South and in countries with emerging economies.

Operating in these places requires innovative professional skills to be expressly developed to be able to face the challenges of inclusive, sustainable urban development and seize the opportunities offered by transformations to improve physical and social contexts ("make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" - United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 11).

The Master MDfD has been devised to meet these demands in the firm belief that the design disciplines can play a leading role in these new urbanisation processes.

Indeed, there is ever growing demand from all sides for design experts capable of navigating the challenging contexts of the Global South by bringing skills and expertise that focus on the governability and quality of urban and regional development.

“MDfD sets out to train professionals with an international outlook capable of tackling the most difficult challenges posed by contemporary urban development with skill and creativity, based on an approach that blends research, design and innovation.”

These new professionals will be offered a broad overview of design at a variety of scales, in which architecture, planning and heritage protection are all aspects of the same approach to design which aims to develop effective strategies for defending and developing the regions in which they operate in environmental and social terms.

The aim of the programme is to produce professionals/consultants in the area of development-related spatial issues who can seek employment at the supranational, national or local scale, whether in the public, private or third sector.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Master offers a high level of technical specialisation for professionals in the area of development related spatial issues, wishing to find employment with:

_Multilateral organisations, and international agencies and networks which promote programmes for sustainable urban development at the global scale;

_Institutions, research centres, companies, foundations which promote/fund/develop programmes and partnerships between national governments and local administrative bodies in countries of the Global South;

_Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in field of international cooperation, involved in projects dedicated to the integrated development of local areas and communities;

_Non-profit associations, networks and professional studios dedicated to promoting design for spatial and environmental justice and the right to housing.





MASTER'S PROGRAMME

METHODOLOGY

The Master's programme takes an original approach to teaching and learning, using a methodology closely connected to the world of work and based on a "learning-by-doing" approach.

444 HOURS

lessons + design studios

2 WEEKS

*international on the ground
design workshop*

at least

350 HOURS

internship or project work



MODULES

A | THEORY

Descriptions and interpretations of the new global urbanism and main challenges that it poses for the design disciplines to foster strategies of inclusive, sustainable development in the contexts of the Global South.

B | TOOLS

Detailed examinations of tools for regional analysis, for promoting and managing projects, and for building and strengthening the capacities of local actors and of the communities involved.



MODULES

C | DESIGN STUDIOS

A detailed examination of design strategies at the various scales and the different spheres of action on which the Master's programme focuses: urban growth and local resource management, housing and community services, and protection of existing heritage.

D | ON THE GROUND WORKSHOP

The on the ground design workshop is aimed to test out the methodologies and tools acquired during the course. The case study is chosen to connect the workshop learning experience with a real project run by international organisations operating in the field in partnership with local institutions and the local community.

The Master's fifth edition workshop will take place in El Salvador.



MODULES

E | INTERNSHIP OR PROJECT WORK

International internship at an organisation or in a professional context related to the themes dealt with during the Master. This internship will thus act as a gateway to employment opportunities.

Chile, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, Morocco, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Peru, Rwanda, Turkey were some of the internships past destinations.

In some particular cases, the internship can be replaced by an equivalent project work.

F | FINAL THESIS

The thesis will focus, for the 1st level Master, on deepening a thematic study of one of the topics covered during the Master; for the 2nd level Master, it will concern a case study and a project proposal.

1500

*Master's total hours, including
lessons, practical activities,
design studios, internship or
project work, individual work,
final thesis*

60

*CFU granted, equivalent
to 60 ECTS*

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Call for application is open until
March 17th, 2026.

For further information please contact
formazione-poliedra@polimi.it

The First Level Specialising Master's course is reserved for candidates with an Italian Laurea (equivalent to Bachelor of Science) in Architecture, Engineering, Urban Planning, Design or other related scientific disciplines.

The Second Level Specialising Master's course is reserved for candidates with an Italian Laurea V.O. or Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale N.O. (equivalent to Master of Science) in Architecture, Engineering, Urban Planning, Design or other related scientific disciplines.

Both levels are also open to foreign students in possession of equivalent qualifications.



FACULTY

The Master's programme is promoted by DASTU (the Politecnico's Department of Architecture and Urban Studies), which is acknowledged as one of the most prestigious research centres in the field of architecture and urban planning in Italy and abroad. The programme constitutes one of the Department's actions in the field of international research and higher education dedicated to inclusive, sustainable urban development in the cities and regions of the Global South.

The syllabus will be taught by a team of DASTU teachers and researchers specialising in the themes and fields of application of the course, with the participation of prestigious teachers from other universities and world-renowned experts from research centres, multilateral organisations, and national and international NGOs operating in the contexts of the Global South.



DIRECTOR
PROF. CAMILLO MAGNI

He studied architecture in Milan and Madrid, in 2006 he obtained his PhD in architectural design at Politecnico di Milano, where he has been acting as Associate Professor. He participated in the international research project 'Casapartes' to build low cost housing in Latin America. Since 2008 he is the chair of "Architectes Sans Frontières - Italia" working in Argentina, Paraguay, Guatemala, Ghana, Egypt, Mozambique, Kosovo, Colombia and Cambodia. World Bank consultant, he has collaborated with the main Italian organization. In 2016 he won the Honor Mention in "Medaglia d'oro dell'architettura italiana" and the Silver Medal in the International Prize Sustainable Architecture. He also founded OPERASTUDIO, an architectural design firm in Milan and New York and from 2016 is editor for Casabella.



VICE DIRECTOR
PROF. LAURA MONTEDORO

Architect and urban planner, specializing in the History of Art, she is Full Professor of Urban Design and Planning at Politecnico di Milano, where she has been teaching since 1998. Since 2011, she has been involved in research on urbanization in Global South countries, with particular attention to the african cities and the growth models of reference. She is the referent of the Agreement between Politecnico and the architectural schools in Cabo Verde and in Marrakech. She has been part and scientific reference of different researches in Mozambique into the Polisocial framework. She is part of the scientific committee of the PIMI Project – Master and Doctoral training project funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Maputo. She is member of the PAUI Doctoral College.



VICE DIRECTOR
PROF. SONIA PISTIDDA

Architect and PhD in “Architecture, Urban Design, Conservation of Housing and Landscape”, she is Associate Professor at Politecnico di Milano. From 2001, she has been involved in teaching, consulting and research activities in the field of preservation, protection and enhancement of cultural heritage, participating in important cultural promotion activities and international cooperation projects in Albania, Iran, Armenia, Pakistan and Vietnam with organizations as Unesco and World Bank. She has collaborated to organize conferences and exhibitions and participated to international teaching programs. Her main interests and expertise includes the tools for preservation of cultural heritage, the relationship between conservation and project for built heritage and the issues related to the role of cultural heritage in a sustainable development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



LANGUAGE

ENGLISH

DURATION

18 MONTHS

SELECTIONS

MARCH 2026

COURSE START

JUNE 2026

TUITION FEE

€ 10,500

TEACHING METHOD

BLENDED

ON-SITE LESSONS

POLITECNICO DI
MILANO

ALUMNI

“Thanks to MDfD I now count with the necessary tools, knowledge and international friends and connections to start growing in my career on the humanitarian development sector.”

Melissa Miyashiro Terashima, Peru
Alumna MDfD3, I level

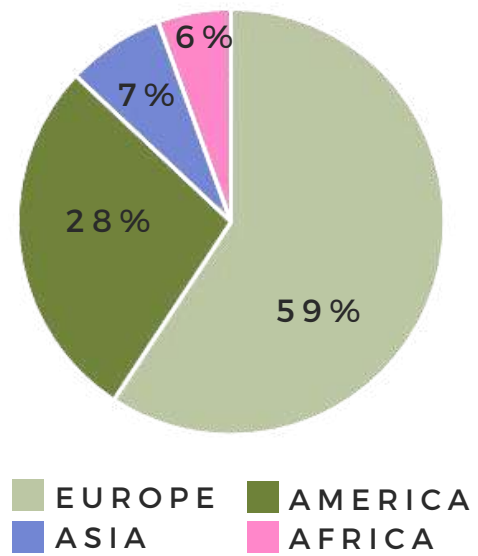
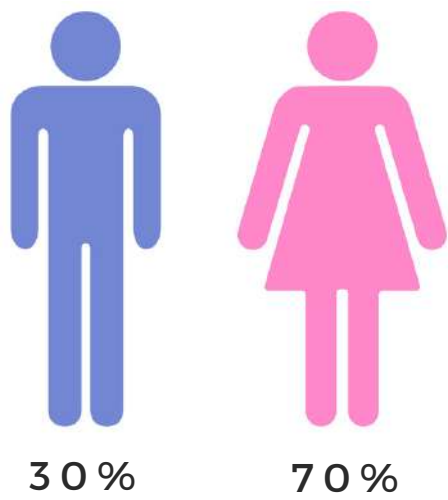
“MDfD contributed to my personal and professional development and it opened up to me different opportunities to work on projects in the development sector, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

Carla Procida, Italy
Alumna MDfD1, II level

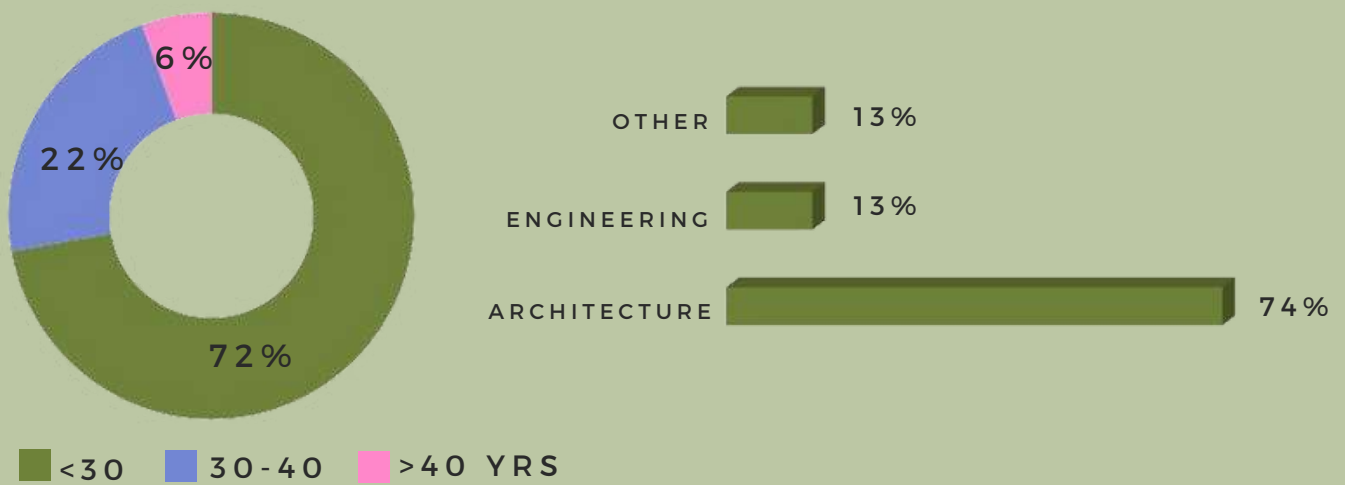
“I would recommend MDfD to everyone that is interested in continuing his path in international cooperation, because its holistic approach provides a wide range of future careers in the field.”

Enea Serjani, Albania
Alumnus MDfD1, II level





MDFD Alumni 2021-2024 by gender and by country



MDFD Alumni 2021-2024 by age and by background

PARTNERS





CONTACTS

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