



## Welcome to the Planning Society's Annual Trip - Destination Istanbul

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As planners, we are supposed to put into practice some of the principles that we profess. That is why this Planning Society worked according to the principle of member's empowerment. Its organisers were not decision-makers but facilitators. Projects were not delivered but carried out by members. We created an horizontal structure where everyone could have tools, resources and support to undertake any project. Members' commitment is the main explanation for the success of each of the many activities that our society organised this year.

Between the 21st and the 25th of June, a group of 34 society members embarked on a study trip to Istanbul. After much delegation and planning, the society had one its most fruitful events - which was the study field trip. The society chose Istanbul because of variant reasonings, the vast history the city enjoys, the beautiful intermixing of Asia and Europe, and lastly the entirety of Istanbul city's dynamics. The society networked with a local university, known as Minar-Sinam University, where we conjoined students to study a deeply historical, yet deprived area of Istanbul (Fener-Balat), which is headed towards demolishment because of current global capitalist forces. The deep history and social fabric the area is rooted in, makes it very sad to see that richness disappear. Hence, our society, Minar-Sinam university, local NGO's and residents helped us to understand the area; whilst our purpose there was to develop extensive strategies that can be employed. These strategies dealt with finding other developmental or creative solutions that can be implemented to evoke new thinking and modify the demolishment procedures to start in Fener-Balat. This project we encountered surfaced a new understanding for society members as to how planning theories we have learnt can be applied and materialized in the actual field.



Along the year a numbers of other study trips were organised by our members. It started with a study trip to Manchester where academics told us about the city's dynamics, structures and challenges. Then, came the time of sustainable enthusiasts, with the visit the eco-city of BedZED. Adding to this diversity, field trips were organised to Letchworth Garden City and London 2012 Olympic site.

LSE Planning Society was also very active in organizing conferences with academics and professionals. Different from traditional seminars, the spirit of these events was to foster constructive debate in a rather informal discussion, in which students could easily question and even challenge specialists' views. 'The Re-

sponse of Cities' consisted in four conferences addressing major challenges for contemporary cities. Academic approaches to climate change were illustrated and challenged by the practical vision of a GLA officer. LSE professors debated on various forms of innovation in developing countries. A professor from Cambridge challenged our beliefs by advocating a return of cars and highways in order to improve social equity. Finally, a whole team from the London Development Agency presented London's developmental priorities and the complex relationships between GLA and central government. All this was both fascinating and fun, and has probably contributed to refine our critical regard as planners...

We sincerely thank the commitment of each of the society's members, without whom this enjoyable and active society would not have been possible.

#### *Special Acknowledgement*

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Pablo Navarrete. **Istanbul Trip**: Ahmed Makia, and our Istanbul's partners: Murat Cemal Yalcintan & Ece Aksakoglu.