

Participant Profiles

Class of 2017

LSE **Cities** | Executive MSc in Cities



EXECUTIVE MSC IN CITIES

For the last decade, LSE Cities has brought together some of the world's leading urban thinkers and practitioners in its annual Urban Age programme in cities across the globe, from Mumbai to Johannesburg, Rio de Janeiro and New York. Internationalism is at the core of our research and teaching.

Now in its second year, the Executive MSc in Cities will see 23 professionals from 21 cities convene at LSE for five teaching weeks to explore how they and their organisations can deliver effective change in their cities.

Representing diverse sectors including local government, urban design, planning, infrastructure, real estate, urban resilience, social enterprise, education, digital strategy and project management, the class of 2017 embodies the necessary sectorial diversity to deal with the cross cutting challenges and opportunities that today's cities are facing.

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Spatial distribution of the class of 2017



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Ben Agyenim-Boateng

Ben is the Deputy Metropolitan Director of Town and Country Planning Department of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly in Ghana. He has worked with the Metropolitan Authority for the past thirteen years as a Town Planner and is currently leading a team to redevelop the city centre of Kumasi where he hails from. He has also started his own company, Dreams and Schemes Ltd., focusing on providing consultancy services in the areas of planning, architecture, surveying and real estate development.

Ben holds academic qualifications in planning (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology), MBA Strategic & Project Management (Paris Graduate School of Management), and is a member of the Ghana Institute of Planners.

*Senior Town Planning
Officer*

*Kumasi Metropolitan
Assembly*

Kumasi, Ghana



Nouf AlFalasi

Nouf works for the Department of Economic Development in Dubai as the Innovation and Creativity Department Manager. She is responsible for transforming the organization from a regulatory and service provider to an innovative agency able to shape the future using futuristic analysis and strategic foresight. As such, she manages key projects under the Dubai Future Accelerator initiative to turn ideas into unique innovations that will contribute to society. She also speaks at local and international conferences about innovation, employees' happiness and productivity focusing on ways to improve work environment, culture and capabilities.

Nouf has previously worked for a number of government entities, including a role in the Prime Minister's Office analysing competitiveness and innovation reports. She is also an active board member in committees and think-tank groups. She is a graduate from Kingston University in London with a Master's Degree in business administration and a Bachelor's degree in pharmacy.

*Innovation and Creativity
Department Manager*

*Department of Economic
Development*

Dubai, UAE



Sisto Andama

Sisto is the Chief Executive Officer of Sub Sahara Solutions LLC, a provider of professional technical and Management Support Services. Sisto is a multi-faceted individual, with specialities including mining and mineral exploration, renewable energy technologies, civil engineering, green design and built industry, construction project management, energy and minerals policy, energy efficiency, security management and administration, and African government relations.

Currently pursuing an Executive MSc in Cities at LSE, Sisto has a BSc in Construction Management and a BSc in Building and Civil Engineering Construction. Sisto is also an LEED Green Associate and a building analyst professional. He is a member of several professional bodies including the Construction Management Association of America, the Project Management Institute, the United States Green Building Council, the Building Performance Institute, the OSHE, the National Fire Protection Association, the Association of Professional Estimators of America, the Sierra Leone Institute of Professional Engineers, and the Value Engineering Association.

Chief Executive Officer

*Sub Sahara Solutions
LLC*

Washington DC, USA



Christine Armitage

Christine is the social development and social innovation advisor to the Mayor of Cali, Colombia. During the last two years she has been leading the city's place-based, social inclusion strategy. The strategy aims to fight poverty, exclusion and violence in the eleven most vulnerable communes of the city by focusing, articulating and coordinating the social investments of all branches of the local government. Its main goals are to reduce poverty, contribute to peace building, renew a sense of solidarity and responsibility (both among and within communities), design and implement social ties and build civil society's capacity to synchronize efforts and articulate social investment.

Before joining the public sector, Christine was the force behind the work carried out by Fundación Sidoc in Siloe, one of Cali's most underprivileged districts. As a result of her efforts, high-risk youth were brought into productive projects and cultural activities with the aim of strengthening community and individual identity.

Christine has a degree from London School of Economics and holds an NGO Management certificate from Georgetown University.

*Social Advisor to the
Mayor of Cali*

Fundación Sidoc

Cali, Colombia



Ian Armstrong

Ian is a director at DesignInc Sydney and has qualifications in Town Planning, Architecture and Urban Design. He has over twenty years international experience specialising in the design of large scale master plans with projects in Australia, the UK, China and the Middle East.

In Australia, Ian is experienced in all aspects of urban planning and architecture, including the delivery of large scale mixed use communities and transport orientated development.

Aside from his professional work, Ian has also been involved with teaching on the University of Sydney's Masters of Urban Design Course and has been a final year design judge in the architecture faculties at UTS and UNSW.

Director

Designinc, Sydney

Sydney, Australia



Yerlan Aukenov

Yerlan is the Deputy Mayor of Almaty city. In this position, he is responsible for the coordination of the energy complex, public utilities, industry, business, trade, small business, agriculture, and sanitary-epidemiological well-being of the city. He is also responsible for implementation of the state program on industrial-innovative development for 2015-2019 years and attraction of investment to Almaty city.

Most recently, he served as the Deputy Mayor of Kazakhstan Province from 2014 to 2015, where he was responsible for the coordination of industry, business, trade, entrepreneurship, tourism, natural resources, innovations and investments. Prior to that, he was a State Inspector of the Department of State Control and Organization of Territorials Operation at the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan from 2011 to 2014. In this role he was in charge of external relations, protocol, information communications and interaction with the Regional Election Commission.

Yerlan holds an MSc in Public Policy and Programme Management from the University of Bradford, UK and an MBA in Corporate Management from the International Academy Of Business.

Vice Mayor

Almaty City Administration

Almaty, Kazakhstan



Barry Cassidy

Barry is currently working in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia with projects in transit oriented development, FEMA Flood Map revisions, low-income refugee housing and architecturally sensitive infill projects. He has worked in commercial district marketing and development for over 40 years. In some of the urban districts he has had a combined responsibility, including housing. Most of the areas where he has worked have classic urban problems, such as disinvestment, social problems and physical issues.

Consultant

*Barry Cassidy Planning
and Development*

Downingtown PA, USA

Barry has worked in rural areas, as well as in the cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, and Memphis Tennessee in a variety of positions. In Philadelphia he has managed the South Street Headhouse District, the city's main entertainment district, as well as Kensington Avenue ('The Avenue') which presented all of the worst social ills the city had to offer. Early in his career, he was a union organizer in the Deep South, organizing predominantly minority industrial workers in the furniture industry. Subsequently, he became an expert grant writer and has secured millions of dollars for clients in the areas of adaptive reuse, transportation, the arts and brownfield redevelopment. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has awarded him Laureate status as an 'Agent of Change'.



Pauline Chan

Pauline is an urban designer with experience in master-planning, urban design, architecture, and community and stakeholder engagement in the private and public sectors. She is currently employed by the City of Sydney Council, working across council and state agencies to achieve good urban design outcomes for the city. Her role includes the development of public domain plans and public domain design codes, and co-ordination of the City of Sydney's Design Advisory Panel. She manages multidisciplinary teams, consulting and engaging with key stakeholders to plan for the future and deliver improvements for city precincts, notably for Sydney's Chinatown precinct, which won the 2012 Australian Institute of Landscape Architect's National Award for Urban Design. The latter led to the revitalisation of neglected laneways to include new public artworks, lighting projects and the rationalisation of a complicated traffic intersection to create a new well-loved public space for Chinatown.

Urban Designer

City of Sydney

Sydney, Australia

Pauline is also involved in the application of research and data to affect positive change in cities. Since 2007, she has worked collaboratively with eminent urban experts Gehl Architects to develop Sydney's Public Spaces Public Life Study and George Street Benchmarking Study, which has helped shape strategic directions for public spaces and streets across the city.



Ciarán Cuffe

Ciarán is a city councillor in Dublin's North Inner City, and chairs Dublin City Council's Transport Committee. He has served as a member of parliament, and as Minister of State with responsibility for climate change, planning and sustainable transport. In government, he reformed the Irish planning system to focus on evidence led decision-making and published legislation to tackle climate change. He chairs a Master's Programme in Urban Regeneration and Development at the Dublin Institute of Technology, and is a visiting lecturer at the Gengdan Institute of Beijing University of Technology, China.

City Councillor

Dublin City Council

Dublin, Ireland

He holds degrees in architecture and urban planning from University College Dublin



Mai-Ling Garcia

Mai-Ling has worked over the past decade to untangle complex government processes and support community innovation. She is currently the City of Oakland's Online Engagement Manager where she works to transform government processes and experience for Oaklanders. She is a co-founder of Oakland's Civic Design Lab, a collaboration space for government staff and the Oakland community.

Mai-Ling began her career working at Swords to Plowshares, a forty-year-old San Francisco-based service organization. As the agency's first policy analyst, she worked in the heart of San Francisco to identify and communicate the struggles of at-risk and chronically homeless military veterans. She has presented to the California State Senate, the U.S. Veterans Administration and other key decision makers on enhancing government processes. Later she joined the US Department of Labor to manage grants to hundreds of non-profit employment programs that included over one hundred community partners in eight western US States and Guam.

*Online Engagement
Manager*

City of Oakland

Oakland CA, USA

In 2012, she was named an Executive Management Fellow by the Federal Executive Board of San Francisco and New Leaders Council Fellow. In 2017, she was named one of America's top 100 local government officials by Emerging Local Government Leaders, a professional association for city government.



Rana Hajjar

Rana is a senior Project Manager who has been managing and delivering construction projects for the past twelve years across various cities in the Middle East region; mainly in Beirut, Dubai, and Doha. Prior to completing her MSc in Cities, her experience had been mostly in private sector projects, predominantly with the multinational consultancy firm AECOM.

Rana has effectively used her recent LSE degree as a bridge to transition to the Development sector starting with her 6-month consultancy project with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) which tackled gender-related challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Lebanon while accessing the housing market. The consultancy findings received wide acclaim by NRC and the key shelter sector actors in Lebanon and beyond. Subsequently, Rana has secured a project management role on an environmental project with a local NGO in Lebanon. The project, funded by the EU as part of a nationwide programme, involves an array of partners (e.g. unions of municipalities, American university of Beirut, specialist consultants etc) and aims at developing an innovative solid waste management solution primarily focused on the 3R's principle (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

Rana also holds academic qualifications in Civil Engineering (American University of Beirut, Lebanon), Project Management (American University of Beirut, Lebanon), and Sustainable Development (SOAS, London).

Senior Project Manager

Freelance

Beirut, Lebanon



Mahmoud Hesham El-Burai

Mahmoud is currently serving as the CEO of Dubai Real Estate Institute. He is also the Vice President of International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI, UK) and sits on the board of the International Real Estate Society (IRES). Mahmoud has been selected to be FIABCI representative at the United Nations Economic Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), and also represents the UN Global Compact in the MENA region and the Lead Affordability Working Group at the World Economic Forum.

Prior to his position at the Dubai Real estate Institute, Mahmoud worked for three years as Senior Director of the Real Estate Sector Development at the Real Estate Regulatory Authority of Dubai and spent several years as a Development Associate Manager at Dubai Holding. Mahmoud completed his bachelor's degree in engineering at the American University before continuing on to earn his Master's in Real Estate from the National University of Singapore. Mahmoud completed his MBA in Finance from his alma mater, American University of Dubai in 2010. He is now pursuing his DBA at Grenoble École de Management in France.

CEO

*Dubai Real Estate
Institute*

Dubai, UAE



Anupma Jain

*Senior Urban
Development Specialist*

*Asian Development Bank
Manila, Philippines*

Anupma is the Senior Urban Development Specialist in the Pacific Department of the Asian Development Bank in Manila, Philippines, where she has worked for the past thirteen years leading design and administration teams that deliver inclusive and resilient urban and water projects. Anupma has extensive experience in health and social development and strives to ensure projects are equitable, inclusive, and demand-driven. She has also conducted due diligence on more than fifty urban infrastructure projects, where she provided support on resettlement and indigenous peoples issues. To date, Anupma has nearly twenty years' experience in international development and has worked across different sectors and regions, including the Greater Mekong Sub-region, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Asia. Previously, she was the Practice Lead and Senior Director for Gender and Social Inclusion at the Millennium Challenge Corporation in Washington, DC.

Anupma holds a PhD in Social Policy and an MSc in Development Studies (Social Policy and Administration) from LSE, and a double BA in Economics and Anthropology (High Honours) from Brandeis University (Waltham, MA, USA).



Sharon Lewis

Technical Advisor

*Government Technical
Advisory Centre*

Pretoria, South Africa

Sharon is a Technical Advisor at the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) in Pretoria, where she works to strengthen public institutions and practice across the whole of government. Her professional mission is to undo the spatial divisions, inequality and dysfunction that is the stubborn legacy of apartheid in South African cities.

After becoming interested in the development and management of big cities as a student of Town and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, Sharon joined the public service in South Africa. She worked on human settlement policy at the Department of Housing and as a housing, transport and built environment specialist in the public finance team at the National Treasury.

Realising that city development is driven largely by the actions of local government, Sharon joined the South African Cities Network, a shared learning programme that connects the largest cities. Subsequently, she worked at the Johannesburg Development Agency, where she was responsible for planning and strategy to achieve spatial transformation through area-based development.



Ute Margarete Meyer

Ute is Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Climate-Engineering and is Professor of Urban Design at the University of Applied Sciences Biberach, Germany. As a member of the university's strategic board she is responsible for planning the school's interdisciplinary programme of resilience studies and conceiving an institutional network of trans-disciplinary science. Before taking the position of Dean, she was Director of the Institute of Architecture and Urban Development at the university and initiated research projects about the potential of resilient urban development in non-metropolitan areas.

Professor

*University of Applied
Sciences Biberach*

Stuttgart, Germany

Ute is one of two Principals of the urban design and consultancy practice bueroschneidermeyer in Stuttgart and Cologne, which she co-founded in 2003. The office has advised numerous municipalities in strategic planning and has conducted research for the Federal Institute for Building Research Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) and the Wüstenrot Foundation.

Ute is a member of the German Academy for Urban Development and Regional Planning (DASL) and the Association of German Architects (BDA). She studied in Germany, Italy and the United States and has a Diploma in Architecture and Urban Design from Stuttgart University and an MSc in Advanced Architectural Design from Columbia University.



Roope Mokka

Roope co-founded Demos Helsinki in 2005 a hybrid consultancy and think tank that is best known for its work on government innovation. Past projects include setting up the experimentation model for the Finnish Prime Minister's Office and similar work with other countries and cities' executive governance functions.

As an expert of societal change and innovation, Roope has fifteen years of experience working internationally with cities, governments, corporations and NGOs as a strategic-level advisor on future technologies, markets, and societies. He specialises in helping organisations weather transformations in the world around them and his work often involves cross-sector changes that influence the daily lives of individuals.

Founder

Demos Helsinki

Helsinki, Finland

In the context of cities, Roope has experience in activism, art, strategic visions and in planning and developing neighbourhoods. He has worked with city organisations, developers, transportation providers, start-ups, festivals, property owners and operators in developing urban areas and services. He has also authored and co-authored foresight publications from Finland's country brand (2010) to the world's first report on mobile games (2001).



Patrick Musoke

Patrick is the Deputy Director Strategy and Business Development at Kampala Capital City Authority. He began his career in Uganda Revenue Authority as a Tax Auditor in 1993 and rose to Strategy Manager in 2007. In 2011, Patrick left to join the Kampala Capital City Authority Restructuring Team and was appointed Deputy Director in Charge of Strategy Management and Business Development in 2012.

Patrick Holds a Bachelor's Degree in Statistics and Applied Economics and a Postgraduate Diploma in Income Tax Administration. He is a chartered accountant, a certified strategic planner under the Balance Card Institute, and a certified Balanced Scorecard Professional with the Palladium Kaplan and Norton Balance Scorecard Programme.

*Deputy Director Strategy
Management and
Business Development*

*Kampala Capital City
Authority*

Kampala, Uganda



Paul Okunlola

Paul is National Programme Officer at the UN-Habitat Programme Support Office in Abuja. He works to advance a sustainable, policy-oriented urban agenda in Nigeria by promoting inclusive planning, improved access to housing and basic services as well as slum upgrading, in line with the Habitat Agenda. In this role, he was among others, Project Coordinator for the State of Osun Structure Plans Project which involved the development and adoption of Structure Plans to guide inclusive and sustainable growth in the state's nine largest cities over a 20-year horizon.

In his earlier media career at The Guardian Newspaper (Nigeria), Paul was responsible for developing coverage and local/global analyses of human settlements and environment issues. He has carried out advocacy on sustainable urbanization through contributions to several local and international publications, including the UN-Habitat's State of the World's Cities Report 2004/2005 and, the International Real Estate Federation's THE HOMELESS: Perspectives by Sixteen International Journalists. Paul participated in the Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) Fellowship Programme and has served on the National Steering Committee of the GEF/UNDP Small Grants Project (SGP) in Nigeria. He holds both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Architecture and obtained professional training in Environmental Journalism.

*National Programme
Officer*

*United Nations Human
Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)*

Abuja, Nigeria



Yondela Silimela

Yondela has been the Executive Director: Development Planning for the City of Johannesburg for the past five years. She is responsible for the successful development of urban policy, and the conceptualisation and implementation of programmes, weaving together economic, social and sustainability objectives. Yondela also oversees operational responsibilities, including processing land use and building plan applications.

Yondela has over twenty years' experience in cities having led the National Urban Renewal Programme under President Mbeki. She also has extensive real estate experience from her tenure with the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), the largest asset manager in South Africa. She has a strong appreciation for strategic partnerships and has worked with the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank to advance some of the innovations she is pioneering for the City of Johannesburg.

*Executive Director:
Development Planning*

City of Johannesburg

Johannesburg, South Africa



Lukas Sokol

Lukas is the Urban Design Manager at the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC). He is responsible for advising the Abu Dhabi Government on matters regarding urban design, masterplanning, and strategic development. He heads the UPC's Urban Design Studio, which serves as an internal think tank and project design and development consultancy responsible for exploring, developing, and testing government initiatives.

Lukas also teaches the Urbanism module at the Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi as well as coordinating Learning and Development Projects between UAE Universities and the UPC.

Lukas studied architecture and landscape architecture at the University of Arizona, Danish International Study Program and Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile. He worked on planning and urban design projects in Panama, Japan, Korea, China and the US before joining the Urban Planning Council ten years ago.

Urban Design Manager

*Abu Dhabi Urban
Planning Council*

Abu Dhabi, UAE



Santiago Uribe Rocha

Santiago is the Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) for the City of Medellín, a city member of the 100 Resilient Cities Network, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation. Prior to becoming CRO, Santiago worked for three years as Executive Director of Social Innovation at Pigmalion Consulting. There he coordinated a number of research programs on topics ranging from disaster risk management to local youth's reproductive and mental health.

From 2007-2010, Santiago served as Administrative Assistant of Cultural and Economic Affairs at the Embassy of Colombia to the Republic of South Africa, where he coordinated official visits to Bogotá and Medellín to exchange experiences and expertise for the implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit Systems in cities including Cape Town, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela's Bay. In his appointment at the Embassy in Pretoria, Santiago was also actively involved in the organization of systematic exchanges between Colombia and South Africa in issues related to the peace process in Colombia, including organizing an official visit of former President F.W. De Klerk.

He received his Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology from the Universidad de Antioquia and was a visiting student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Chief Resilience Officer

*Resilience Office - 100
Resilient Cities Network*

Medellin, Colombia



Maria Vassilakou

Maria is currently serving as the Deputy Mayor of Vienna. She has been a member of the city government since 2010, responsible for several agendas including urban development and planning, energy planning, climate protection, mobility and transport, participation, and Vienna's smart city agenda. Maria has been engaged in city politics since 1996, first serving as a City Counsellor and Green Party speaker for immigration, human rights and diversity affairs. She later served as a member of government without portfolio and, from 2004 to 2010, as the head of the Green Party of Vienna and the Green Parliamentary Group. During her time in city politics she has been highly active in exchange and cooperation with cities all over the world and is currently responsible for the implementation of the cooperation memorandum between Vienna and Athens.

Maria's first steps in politics took her to the Austrian Students Union where she served as the elected representative of all foreign Students in Austrian Universities and later as the Secretary General of the Students Union. She holds a Master's degree in Linguistics and Psychology from the University of Vienna and has worked as a Research Assistant at the Department of Linguistics.

Deputy Mayor

City of Vienna

Vienna, Austria



Kevin Woods

Kevin is currently the City Manager for the City of Thornton, located at the base of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and has a rapidly growing population of 140,000. As City Manager, he oversees a workforce of 950 personnel with responsibilities that include all aspects of municipal management. Prior to Thornton, Kevin was the Town Manager of Stalling, NC for three years.

Before beginning municipal work, Kevin spent three years as Vice President for Versar Inc., overseeing major US construction programs throughout Afghanistan. Kevin's professional background includes twenty-six years as a US Army officer. He was branched and served in the US Army Corps of Engineers and had multiple command and staff assignments throughout the US and abroad. His final military assignment was as Deputy Commander for US Army South in San Antonio, Texas.

City Manager

City of Thornton

Thornton CO, USA

LSE Cities is an international centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science that carries out research, conferences, graduate and executive education and outreach activities in London and abroad. Its mission is to study how people and cities interact in a rapidly urbanising world, focusing on how the physical form and design of cities impacts on society, culture and the environment. Extending LSE's century-old commitment to the understanding of urban society, LSE Cities investigates how complex urban systems are responding to the pressures of growth, change and globalisation with new infrastructures of design and governance that both complement and threaten social and environmental equity.

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