

Participant Profiles

Class of 2018

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 third year, the Executive MSc in Cities will see 24 professionals from 22 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, social enterprise and education, the class of 2018 embodies the necessary sectoral 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 2018



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Joni Baboci

Joni is a planner, architect and all-around urban enthusiast. He is currently working as the General Director of Planning and Urban Development at the Municipality of Tirana, where he leads a team of 100+ architects, planners and engineers. His previous experiences include stints in the private sector as well as a multi-year experience leading a ground-breaking planning and architecture start-up for the Albanian Government nicknamed Atelier Albania. He has meddled with planning and development at different scales whilst working on the national plan for Albania, the regional plan for the coast of the country, and the regional plan for the economic generator of the country, the Tirana-Durres region.

*General Director of
Planning and Urban
Development*

City of Tirana

Tirana, Albania

His responsibilities at the Municipality of Tirana consist of the surprises, urgencies and expectations of a bustling vibrant capital in the centre of the Balkans. Collaborative creative processes, leading from behind, alternative planning methodologies and quick and practical fixes would best describe his daily duties; but dealing with administrative bureaucracy, piles of paperwork, building permissions and cross-institutional collaboration often gets in the way. He is extremely passionate about architecture and planning and is currently focused on exploring innovation in urban redevelopment while employing more sustainable, implementable and functional planning methodologies.



Jeff Craft

Jeff is a Partner at Studio tla, a Toronto-based Urban Design and Landscape Architecture firm. In his role as Principal and Design Director he provides firm leadership and oversight in the design and management of complex private and public development projects. Prior to joining Studio tla, Jeff was a Partner and Design Principal at the SWA Group, residing in Dallas and Shanghai. His clients include public agencies and the largest private developers of planned environments, civic, institutional, and mixed-use urban venues in North America, China, India, and the UAE.

Principal Urban Designer

Studio tla

Toronto, Canada

Jeff is recognized internationally as a leader in the design and development of award winning master planning projects and is a frequent lecturer and keynote speaker focusing on issues related to urbanization. He is a full member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects and holds CLARB certification. Jeff's academic qualifications include an Honour's Degree in Landscape Architecture and a Baccalaureate in Arts, both from the University of Guelph, Ontario Canada.



Caio de Noronha

Caio is a Brazilian diplomat currently posted to the embassy of Brazil in Kinshasa, DRC, where he works as Deputy Head of Mission. Responsible for the political, cultural and cooperation affairs between his country and DRC, he is witnessing first-hand the challenges related to the massive on-going urbanization process in Africa. Previously, Caio worked at the embassy of Brazil in Kuwait and as cultural attaché in Italy, where he was part of the team responsible for the participation of Brazil at the Venice Biennale and the Milan Expo 2015. Back in Brasília, Caio worked at the presidential palace organizing national and international trips made by Brazil's president.

Diplomat

*Brazilian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs*

*Kinshasa, Democratic
Republic of the Congo /
São Paulo, Brazil*

Being a Brazilian career diplomat for the past 10 years, Caio strongly believes that both city and state diplomatic actors can complement each other while engaging in activities to advance the interests of the city or the country overseas. In view of the growing role that cities play in international affairs, Caio is keen on exploring and developing the concept of city diplomacy.



Lealem Berhanu Desta

Lealem is the Deputy Commissioner of the Addis Ababa City Government Plan Commission. His main responsibilities focus on Urban Plan Implementation, follow-up and regulation. Prior to his current position, he served in the capacity of Deputy Manager in the Addis Ababa City Plan Project Office and participated in the planning process of the new City Plan for Addis Ababa.

Lealem has also served as Government Housing Development Project Office Manager at a Sub-City level, and has accumulated substantial experience in urban planning and development over the last 27 years. He holds a BSc in Architecture and Town planning from Addis Ababa University, is a registered professional architect and a member of the Association of Ethiopian Architects.

Deputy Commissioner

*Addis Ababa City
Government Plan
Commission*

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Ali Glisson

Ali serves as the Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Strategic Property Partners (SPP) where she is responsible for marketing and consumer-facing communications efforts for SPP and its initial project, Water Street Tampa. The phased Water Street Tampa development project is revitalizing the currently underutilized tract of land in downtown Tampa to create an urban, mixed-use waterfront district consisting of approximately nine million square feet of new commercial, residential, hospitality, cultural, entertainment, education, and retail uses, totalling over \$3 billion in private investment from SPP.

*Vice President,
Marketing and
Communications*

*Strategic Property
Partners*

Tampa, USA

Prior to joining SPP, Ali worked for the City of Tampa as Public Affairs Director where she was an advisor to Mayor Buckhorn, while maintaining responsibility for all marketing, public communications, and advertising for the City of Tampa. Glisson received her Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from the George Washington University.



Claudia Harari

Claudia is Creative Director at HLA (Harari Landscape Architecture). She is also the CEO and guides the studio in its creative and work line, focusing on urban scale projects which involve local and aesthetic values that make highly meaningful projects for users and the towns where they are located. As leader of the profession in Mexico, she lectures and sits in design juries nationally and internationally. Her project for the BBVA soccer stadium became the first LEED accredited Soccer Stadium in America and was declared “the most beautiful soccer stadium worldwide” by the BBC. In this and other large scale metropolitan parks and public spaces in Mexico, HLA is collaborating in changing the role of administering these spaces from local governments to the private sector. She has been influential in introducing Landscape Architecture as the new Urban Design practice in Mexico with the design of new urban developments, town centers, and urban redevelopments.

Creative Director

*Harari Landscape
Architecture*

Monterrey, Mexico

Claudia served at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design Alumni Council and City Parks Alliance board, belongs to the International Federation of Landscape Architects and the American and Mexican Societies of Landscape Architects. She was also included in Phaidon’s book 30:30 Landscape Architecture as one of the most influential upcoming landscape architects.



Brett Herron

Brett is a Member of the Mayoral Committee for Transport and Urban Development in the City of Cape Town. The Mayoral Committee is the equivalent of a government 'cabinet' and Brett was appointed to the Mayoral Committee by the Executive Mayor of the City of Cape Town. Brett's portfolio was created in January 2017, following a restructuring of the City's administration, to bring alignment between Transport, Spatial Planning and Housing (formal public housing). The key objective is to transform the spatial form of the city which still exhibits the apartheid spatial logic of segregation with poorer, mostly black, residents living on the outskirts.

*Member of the Mayoral
Committee: Transport &
Urban Development*

City of Cape Town

Cape Town, South Africa

Prior to the re-alignment of the city's administration, and the resulting political leadership's portfolio allocations, Brett was the Member of the Mayoral Committee for Transport. Brett is a lawyer by profession and has served as an elected public representative since 2009. He has been part of the City's Mayoral Committee since June 2010 - serving for one year as the Member responsible for Community Services until May 2011 when he took over the transport portfolio.



Simon Hodson

Simon is an EMEA Regional Director at JLL, responsible for Development & Land in the UK, where he specialises on residential led mixed use development. His career spans 30 years and over the last 10 years he has been advising clients on strategies to optimise value of several London landmark assets, including New Scotland Yard for the Metropolitan Police and Battersea Power Station. Both of these are under construction to be regenerated as residential led projects. More recently Simon has advised several London Boroughs on their own local asset strategies, where the schemes are of a much larger scale each comprising in excess of 15,000 new homes, with community/neighbourhood centres and employment space.

*Lead Director -
Development & Land*

JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle)

London, UK

Simon is also an advisor to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, where he joined a task Board to investigate the performance of 5 public bodies and their objective to release land for strategic housing supply. He is also a retained advisor to Defence Infrastructure Organisation (the property advisory unit for the Ministry of Defence) Simon attended the CBI Leadership Course in 2016/17, he is a Residential Council member of the Urban Land Institute, and holds a BSc (Hons) in Urban Estate Surveying.



Olusola Ikuforiji

Olusola Ikuforiji is an environment and water resources professional at the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, where she has worked in different capacities applying an environmental sustainability and climate resilience lens to investment projects spanning the water and agriculture sectors. In her current role, she is contributing to the development of water infrastructure projects that address climate resilience and advance sustainable management of water resources in sub-Saharan Africa. She has developed keen interest in the urban space and motivated to understand how resilience and sustainability can be forged in African cities. Olusola aims to promote integrated and inclusive infrastructure development in urban areas of Africa.

Environmental Specialist

*African Development
Bank*

Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Prior to joining the AfDB, she worked with the World Bank in Washington DC as a water resources management specialist. Olusola holds a Masters in Environmental Management from Yale University (New Haven, CT USA) and a Bachelor's of Science degree in Aquatic Biology from Lagos State University (Lagos, Nigeria).



Alex Johnston

Alex is a civic designer and social entrepreneur. In 2014, Alex founded Cities Reimagined, a civic design firm that employs principles of design to solve complex challenges in urban cities. Most recently, Alex has been based in Detroit, Michigan working on a public/private partnership to make business licensing and permitting a smooth and simple process for entrepreneurs.

Prior to her work in Detroit, Alex worked with public leaders in Central Virginia to create an innovative workforce pipeline to fill gaps in local manufacturing firms. This work was recognized by the White House Economic Council in 2015 through President Obama's TechHire initiative. When she isn't rapid prototyping and playing design games with public servants, Alex is playing fiddle in the Johnston Family Band and exploring new places and cultures. She is also a regular public speaker with emphasis on urban innovation and systems design.

Civic Designer

Cities Reimagined

Detroit, USA



Kari Kankaala

Kari is the Chief Sustainability Officer of the city of Tampere, Finland and is responsible for the city's sustainable growth and development policies and their execution. Kari is a member of the Prime Minister's Sustainable Development Task Force and was a member of the Minister of Environment's Task Force for Energy Efficient Finland 2017. He has worked on a broad spectrum of projects in strategic urban and economic development and is currently most actively involved with smart and sustainable city development and with the city's strategic initiatives on urban and economic development.

*Chief Sustainability
Officer*

City of Tampere

Tampere, Finland

Prior to joining the city in 2007, Kari held roles in the private and public sectors both in Finland and in the US, including CEO of a service business consultancy, director at an innovation fund with focus on high tech venture capital investments and technology transfer, as well as a research career in physics. Kari is a current and past board member of over twenty companies and has worked with and consulted organizations in the US, South Africa, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Vietnam, Japan and the European Commission, among others. He holds a PhD from Tampere University of Technology.



Gbolahan Lawal

Gbolahan is the Commissioner for Housing in Lagos State, Nigeria where he is tasked to oversee the planning and implementation of Lagos State Housing policies. These include a rent-to-own initiative which potentiates the movement of a large number of Lagos State residents to the home ownership ladder, and the Lagos Affordable Public Housing (LAPH) programme, a joint venture initiative with the private sector aimed at constructing 20,000 housing units within the next 4 years starting from year 2017 (tagged 20,000:Y2020). As the Commissioner for Agriculture and cooperatives between July 2011 and May 2015, the State's food security profile improved through interventions he oversaw across the agricultural value chain.

*Honourable
Commissioner*

Lagos State Government

Lagos, Nigeria

Gbolahan was commissioned as an ASP in the Nigeria Police Force and retired voluntarily as a Superintendent (1996 -2008). Gbolahan is a board member, Lagos State Security Trust Fund from 2011 till date. Gbolahan holds a BSc in Botany (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria) and an MSc in Violence, Conflict and Development (School of Oriental and African Studies, SOAS, University of London) along with an Advanced Management Programme (AMP) and a Certificate in International Housing Finance (Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, USA). Gbolahan is an alumni of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and World Bank Institute.



Daria Lozhkina

Daria is Head of PR department at Moscow City Government Press Service. Being responsible for liaison between the city government and the citizens, Daria has been involved in the process of implementation of grand-scale public projects such as Zaradie Park, renewal of 60s Soviet housing stock and construction of Moscow Railway Circle line. Alongside working closely with the policy-makers on major infrastructural and public realm projects, Daria has been engaged in monitoring and feedback process of several major e-platforms for effective dialogue between citizens and authorities and digitising the city government services.

*Head of PR Department
Moscow City*

*Government Press
Service*

Moscow, Russia

Daria holds an honours degree in International Relations from the Moscow State University. She has been actively engaged in State-led experimental project for government professionals 'Technology Platform 2.0', steering a group to investigate the development of intellectual systems and their beneficial use in local economies. She is also a guest lecturer at Moscow Government University and a delegate at international urban forums.



Sithole Mbangwa



Bill McCarthy

Bill has worked in real estate since graduating high school in 1978. In subsequent years, he has completed numerous university and professional programs in pursuit of professional and personal development. In 1988 Bill incorporated his own firm, where he develops, leases, manages and owns his own real estate portfolio, along with providing high level real estate consulting for selected third parties.

Bill also does extensive pro bono work for several organizations and has served as an Officer and Director of numerous organizations. He is the Past President of the Real Estate Institute of Canada and has written three real estate course textbooks.

Owner / President

*W.P.J. McCarthy and Co.
Ltd.*

Burnaby, Canada



Mika Rytönen

Mika is an extrovert and middle-aged Finn, living in Berlin. He has a more than 25 years of international experience in telecom and Intelligent Transport System (ITS) industries. Recently, he worked as the Director, Business Development at HERE Technologies. Prior to joining HERE, he had various roles in telecommunications and Smartphones business in Nokia Corporation. In addition, he has served as the first president and chairman of the board at the Car Connectivity Consortium (CCC) as well the supervisory board in ERTICO - ITS Europe.

Mika holds a MSc. degree in Computer Science (University of Oulu, Finland) and an MBA degree in International Finance (Helsinki School of Economics, Finland). He has also been a professional coach in Finnish baseball. His team won the silver medal in the highest league in Finland at 1996. While not travelling, he enjoys golfing, playing ice hockey, reading, losing weight and being a father to his four children.

Berlin, Germany



Piyali Sen

Piyali works at TATA Consultancy Services, a 20 billion USD company, where she blends technology, innovation & industry expertise to drive growth opportunities and efficiency for the private & public sector. Cutting across transportation, ports, airports, cities and utilities, she incubates consulting & digital transformation programs exercising the adoption of artificial intelligence, internet of things, analytics and evolving technologies.

Her work in energy management was awarded an industry best practice at the UK House of Commons. She opened doors for TCS into a new Central European market with the advocacy of an analytical model that forecasts consumer uptake of PVs & electric vehicles in urban & semi-urban regions. Other works include robotic process automation for verifying accuracy of utility bills, and predictive analytics to forecast breakdown of engineering assets. She has led the feasibility analysis of Bhutan's Economic City. She is recipient of an award of endorsement by the Indian Parliament.

A qualified architect & design thinker, Piyali has worked multi-culturally across Europe, Asia & Middle East with TATAs and Knight Frank. Having nomadically lived in Paris, Mumbai and global cities, Piyali found her home in London where she is now settled with her husband Indranil and daughter Tiasha.

*Consulting Partner -
Major Markets*

*TATA Consultancy
Services*

London, UK



Marc Steinlin

Marc is the founder and managing partner of IngeniousPeoplesKnowledge Consultants (I-P-K), a Cape Town-based boutique consulting firm. I-P-K specialises in designing and facilitating participatory transformation processes in the public sector and international development. In the past 12 years, he has advised a wide range of clients, among others UN specialised agencies (such as the ILO, WHO, UNAIDS), bilateral development agencies (e.g. the German Development Agency GIZ) and international NGOs. He advises on strategic processes, programme development, design thinking processes, knowledge sharing and team/network building by applying an approach that puts the complex nature of human systems, diversity management and participation at its centre. For the City of Cape Town, he contrived the participatory methodology for the 111 Wards Design Project in the framework of World Design Capital 2014.

Marc started his career with Helvetas, the largest Swiss NGO in the field of international development as a technical advisor and programme manager for knowledge management. He holds a Master's degree in Sociology and International Relations (University of Zurich), an Advanced Certificate in Development Cooperation (Federal Institute of Technology Zurich) and has developed his portfolio in change management through a wide range of specialisations.

Managing Partner

*IngeniousPeoplesKnowledge
Consultants*

Cape Town, South Africa



Tim Strege

Tim is Executive Director of the William Factory Small Business Incubator located in the Seattle/Puget Sound Region of the United States. In support of entrepreneurship particularly for underrepresented and disadvantaged populations, Tim organizes programs, engages in corporate and college partnerships, provides recommendations for public policies and oversees funding of start-up business assistance services.

Tim is former Deputy Mayor for the City of Tacoma, founding Chair of Pierce Transit, founding Chair of Community Health, former Chair of the Pierce County Law and Justice Commission and former Chair of the Housing Task Force of the Growth Policy Association. Tim served as Chair of Tacoma Public Utilities, was Executive Vice-President of the Job Training Executives of Washington State and was Executive Director for the Washington State Council of Vocational Technical Institutes. Tim holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Harvard University and a Bachelor's Degree from Pacific Lutheran University.

Executive Director

*William Factory Small
Business Incubator*

Tacoma, USA



Efrat Tolkowsky

Efrat is CEO and founder of Gazit Globe Real Estate Institute at IDC, an Israeli private university where she teaches urban economics and real estate finance & investment while conducting applicable research on issues of housing and real estate. In addition to her work at IDC, she also works in housing development in Tel Aviv City.

Efrat serves as a member of Tel Aviv City Council and has previously served as a board member for various firms owned by Tel Aviv city, including Atidim Hi Tech campus (co-owned by Tel Aviv University). She is currently a member of the Capital Market, Insurance and Saving Authority advisory committee and has previously served as a board member for various Tel Aviv Stock Exchange traded firms such as Bank of Jerusalem and Babylon.

*CEO Real Estate
Research Institute*

*Interdisciplinary Center
Herzliya*

Tel Aviv, Israel



Cecilia Vaca Jones

Cecilia is the Programme Director at the Bernard van Leer Foundation, a Dutch foundation devoted to global work in early childhood matters, where she is responsible for the management and implementation of a global strategy. In this role, one of her main objectives is to help scale effective programs and policies where city leaders, urban planners, architects, and innovators experience the city from 95cm (the height of a healthy three-year-old child) to really help change the landscapes and opportunities that shape young children's lives.

Programme Director

*Bernard van Leer
Foundation*

*The Hague, The
Netherlands /
Quito, Ecuador*

Prior to joining the Foundation, she was the Coordinating Minister of Social Development of Ecuador. In this position, Cecilia was able to help create, evaluate and adjust strategic policies in vital areas of social development including early childhood, social security systems, education, healthcare, urban development and poverty alleviation, always taking into account the diversity of cultural backgrounds in Ecuador. Cecilia has over 15 years of experience managing social development policies and programmes and she holds a master's degree in Social Policies for Sustainable Development (Bologna University) and a BA in International Relations (Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador).



Prajakta Verma

Prajakta is a civil servant currently posted as Joint MD CIDCO in Navi Mumbai and is responsible for commissioning of the largest greenfield airport of the country in Navi Mumbai. She is also working on planning the airport influence and notified zone of about 350 sq kms as a Special Planning authority. This is her first role in the area of urban planning and development. In her earlier role as Joint Commissioner of Sales Tax, she was in charge of investigating tax evasion crimes in the financial capital of the country viz. Mumbai. Prajakta has also worked in the area of water supply and sanitation in peri-urban areas within the State of Maharashtra. Her district stint equipped her with field experience in tackling the problems of malnutrition, open defecation and enabled her to successfully spearhead collective action in micro credit for women and sanitation among children.

Joint Managing Director

CIDCO

Navi Mumbai, India

Prajakta's future years as a civil servant will demand addressing complex urban and social problems in urban and peri urban areas in the State of Maharashtra (the most urbanised state in the country) and looks forward to this course to equip her to deal with these challenges creatively and vibrantly.



Raymond Wei

Raymond is an Associate Director of AECOM Ltd and is based in the Shenzhen Office, China. He is also a member of American Planning Association with LEEDGA certification. Engaged in urban planning and urban design works for more than 12 years, Raymond has participated in various multi-scale urban planning and design projects at different stages as well as being skilled in methods of urban research, land use planning and diversified scale urban design across the Asia-Pacific region.

Associate Director

AECOM

Shenzhen, China

Raymond has completed a number of urban planning and design works and has solid professional skills and familiarity with the procedures in all aspects of urban projects such as mixed-use development, new township planning, tourism & hospitality planning, infrastructure orientated developments and strategic comprehensive planning across the Asia-Pacific region.



Stephen Willacy

For the past six years Stephen has been working as Chief City Architect in Aarhus City Council in Denmark. Previously he was partner in the internationally renowned company Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects where he was responsible for developing international activity and research and development. He has also held the position of Associate Professor in Architecture at Aarhus School of Architecture for many years. The combination of working in private practise and public office combined with research and teaching enables a keen understanding of the complex processes and demanding roles and responsibilities architects and planners at political and local community level as well as in a global perspective.

Chief City Architect

Aarhus City Council

Aarhus, Denmark

As chief city architect, Stephen is special advisor to the Councils Politian's. He works as an intermediary and ambassador for architecture and sustainable urban development for Aarhus Municipality and brings essential insight and experience into relevant forums, inspiring and influencing key decision-making processes relating to Aarhus' future.

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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