

Blavatnik School
of Government

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Annual Report 2020–21



“

I couldn't think of a more meaningful moment – one of collective vulnerability – to join a group of aspiring leaders from around the globe to examine some of our world's greatest policy challenges.

NAOMI DUCAT, MPP 2020

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has been a clarion call to members of the Blavatnik School community. Managing the pandemic has taken public leaders into unknown territory. Among them are many of our alumni, current students, faculty members, and supporters. As you will read in this report, we have worked at speed to track and inform their efforts, and to provide the world with data, advice and training, and a place to cooperate even when that is difficult.

Building forwards after the crisis also requires breaking new ground. A greener, fairer, digitally enabled world beckons. It will take vision and hard work in several domains. We hosted the G7 High Level Panel on Economic Resilience at the School in May 2021, to chart out the new forms of international cooperation required. At the national level, we're laying out pathways for education, social services, public servants, technology, and climate (in collaboration with other colleagues across the University). New partnerships and collaboration will be vital, as underscored in our recent Building Back Better report on how the UK government could better harness business expertise.

Perhaps more than ever before, people across the world are depending on the decisions of their governments. The pandemic has made clear how far our jobs, our liberties, and our lives depend on those decisions. We are heartened that this is inspiring more people than ever to want to help improve government – as our record application numbers attest.



All our work and effort is made possible by the generosity and vision of those who give time, wisdom and funding in support of a shared and bold ambition to improve government worldwide. Their support enables and ignites our work, and those of you doing this have my heartfelt thanks.

The account of friendship in war-torn Yemen on page 43 is one example of how deep the sense of Blavatnik School community runs, and the spirit of service that defines it. Whether by supporting us, joining us, or simply following our events or mailings, I invite you to be part of it – and work with us towards a world better led, served and governed.

Ngairé Woods, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government

OUR FACULTY

Ngairé Woods

Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government, Professor of Global Economic Governance

Mara Airoidi

Director of the Government Outcomes Lab

Dapo Akande

Professor of Public International Law

Eric Beinhocker

Professor of Practice (Public Policy), Executive Director of the Institute for New Economic Thinking

Eleanor Carter

Acting Research Director (GO Lab)

Paul Collier

Professor of Economics and Public Policy

Pepper Culpepper

Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs and Blavatnik Chair in Government and Public Policy

Federica D'Alessandra

Executive Director of the Oxford Programme on International Peace and Security

Stefan Dercon

Professor of Economic Policy

Thomas Elston

Associate Professor in Public Administration

Richenda Gambles

Tutor for Admissions

Margarita Gómez

Executive Director of the People in Government Lab

Thomas Hale

Associate Professor in Public Policy (Global Public Policy)

Emily Jones

Associate Professor in Public Policy (Global Economic Governance)

Peter Kemp

Professor of Public Policy

Julien Labonne

Associate Professor in Economics and Public Policy

Clare Leaver

Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy

Anandi Mani

Professor of Behavioural Economics and Public Policy

Ciaran Martin

Professor of Practice in the Management of Public Organisations

Kate Orkin

Senior Research Fellow in Behavioural Economics (Centre for the Study of African Economies)

Anna Petherick

Departmental Lecturer in Public Policy

Lant Pritchett

Research Director, Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE)

Karthik Ramanna

Professor of Business and Public Policy, Director of the Master of Public Policy

Tom Simpson

Associate Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy

Chris Stone

Professor of Practice of Public Integrity

Maya Tudor

Associate Professor of Government and Public Policy

Adam Webster

Associate Professor in Law and Public Policy, Co-Director of the Master of Public Policy

Martin Williams

Associate Professor in Public Management

Jonathan Wolff

Alfred Landecker Professor of Values and Public Policy



WHAT WE DO

A world better led, better served and better governed.

At the Blavatnik School of Government, our mission is to improve government worldwide. We pursue it through research, teaching and engagement that is led by the needs of governments and the people they serve.

Better government ultimately relies on individuals, and on the communities and collaborations they form. The people working within, and partnering with, governments – their values, their knowledge, and perhaps above all their ability to work together – are just as important to us as the policy questions they face.

OUR APPROACH

We bring rigorous research to the big challenges facing governments; and we teach, convene and partner with the people who will grapple with them, today and in the future.

Part of the University of Oxford, we marry deep intellectual rigour with a real-world focus.

Our approach is characterised by optimism: we look at what works, wherever success is found, and try to help countries learn from other countries.

This approach is global. We believe it is exceptionally so. Our areas of research, our case studies and the countries of origin of our community cover most of the world.

In all of this, integrity is a dominant theme. Citizens all over the world want truly ethical government – and they are not convinced they are getting it. Integrity rests not only on good governance, but on policymakers at all levels knowing what moral values underpin their work, and adhering to them. This informs every aspect of our activity.

At the heart of our approach is bridge-building: forging coalitions across lines, whether of geography, culture, sector or ideology. We are driven by the belief that when people can talk across divides, we can heal fractured societies.

OUR DEGREE STUDENTS

Our degree programmes equip those who are passionate about public service to address some of this century's most complex public policy challenges.

The student profiles through this report give a small sample of this outstanding and distinctively diverse community of people, who learn from one another just as much as they learn from our faculty.

Our **Master of Public Policy (MPP)** is an intensive one-year postgraduate degree for current and future leaders, with a highly international and multidisciplinary approach. In any one year the class represents around 50 different countries and territories and ranges in age from 21 to 50. All win their places through a highly competitive process, and the majority are on scholarship support.

Our **Doctorate in Public Policy (DPhil)** is a three-year research programme for those wanting to bring in-depth rigour to real-world issues. Our doctoral students bring diverse and in many cases senior experience to the School.

Applied learning

Our doctorate attracts those looking to bring rigorous research to bear on current policy, while in the MPP, the application of learning is embedded throughout the year – including in specific applied policy modules, from negotiation to behavioural science to private finance. Modules on professional skills bring students into direct contact with senior practitioners currently at the heart of policymaking. Students have access to high-level mentors. They also undertake policy simulations which include group role-playing: recent simulations covered climate change, COVID-19, counter-terrorism and the governance of cyberspace.

The Dean's Forum and UK Public Policy Series give our students exclusive access to senior figures in public life, who give candid answers to wide-ranging questions. In the last year students have heard from former UK Prime Minister Theresa May (top right), former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, CEO of the Obama Foundation David Simas and several other leading figures.

Facing hard decisions under time pressure and uncertainty is the lot of government leaders everywhere – and not just during a pandemic. We aim to equip future decision-makers not only with conceptual and applied tools, but with reflexes for better judgement. Our MPP students gain practice in working through difficult decisions; exposure to diverse characters; and the chance to reflect on choices.

For decision-making practice, we have pioneered greater use of the case method (widely used in business schools) in public policy education. The question 'what should the protagonist do?' lies at the centre of a case study. Should the



London transport regulator issue Uber a licence? Should the Chilean finance minister liquidate the entire capital of the country's sovereign wealth fund to pay for emergency COVID relief? Should the London Met commissioner freeze the 'stop and search' policy in the face of protests that it disproportionately targets young black males? "The form of the question varies", explains Karthik Ramanna, MPP director and Case Centre director, "but the invitation remains the same: evaluate the evidence, consider the ethics, apply all your knowledge, and make a decision for yourself. In short, practise all your judgement skills."

The summer project is the final part of the MPP programme and allows students to synthesise all they have learned on a work placement. In summer 2020 our students carried out placements with 90 different hosts in more than 25 countries (sometimes working remotely for COVID safety), including the World Bank, the OECD, the World Health Organization and various government ministries.

Financial support

Our aim is that finance should be no barrier to the best current and future public leaders studying with us, helping to ensure that future leaders are truly representative.

All of our new doctoral students in 2020 had full funding. 78% of our 2020 MPP class are with us thanks to full (63%) or partial (a further 15%) funding.

The success of our students in securing scholarship support speaks both to the calibre of our intake and to the commitment of those funding scholarships (p.48) that finance should be no barrier to ensuring a new generation of leaders, from all walks of life, get the best education.

STUDENT PROFILE

VENIECIA LAYLOR

MPP 2020, Jamaican and Canadian

A human-centred approach
to welfare and social
policy



Veniecia Laylor is pursuing the MPP to deepen her understanding of the policymaking process and bridge the gaps between

research and practice. Her interest in welfare and social policy took shape during an internship with Amnesty International USA, where she worked on a project to improve access to reproductive healthcare services for Indigenous women in the US. "I recognised that you need policymakers engaged at various levels in order to drive lasting and effective change – particularly on non-voting issues and those that affect marginalised communities."

Keen to understand the major factors and obstacles that influence policy decisions, Veniecia took roles in Canada's federal government – in the Prime Minister's Office and later in the Associate Finance Minister's Office. She worked on diverse projects, including ongoing efforts to develop a 'quality of life' framework to enable Canada to pursue economic growth that is more inclusive, sustainable and equitable. Having been exposed to the multi-layered, intersecting nature of decision-making at the government level, Veniecia describes policymaking as a craft: "You have to weave together various dimensions: your knowledge and skills, data and evidence, the human experience, different political considerations and relationship management. The MPP merges these dimensions and gives you numerous opportunities to apply your skills through case studies and the summer project."

Veniecia is an All Souls Hugh Springer Graduate Scholar.

 Alumna Freshta Karim, MPP 2016,
 pioneer of mobile libraries for children in
 Kabul, Afghanistan



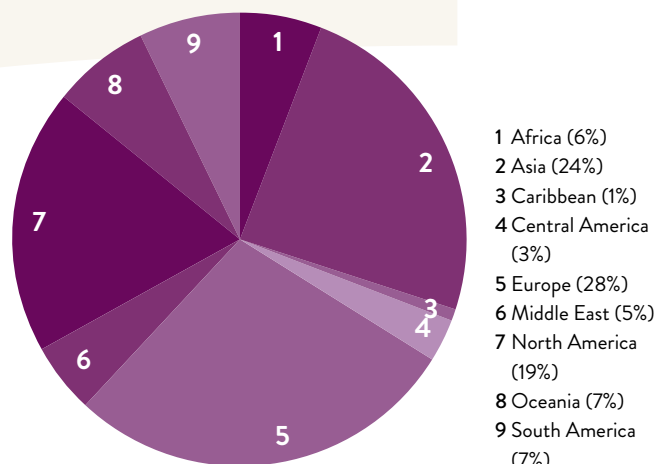
OUR ALUMNI

Thanks to our 772 alumni and over 260 executive alumni, our community is spread across every continent. As a network, these policymakers and changemakers reach across countries and sectors to collaborate, support one another, and find common reference in the values and conceptual tools they gained at the Blavatnik School.

Our alumni have been critical to the life of the School: helping recruit the next generations of students; offering advice and opportunities to those on course; engaging with School events and faculty research; and, most recently, contributing to efforts to move the MPP online in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Our alumni hold senior public sector positions in every global region, and include a UAE minister; elected representatives in Panama, Brazil, Ukraine, Canada and Mongolia; and senior civil servants across the world. Many more work in multilaterals and the third sector, including those who have founded NGOs. The alumni profiles spread throughout this report give a small flavour of the impact of our community.

All MPP alumni by region



ALUMNI PROFILE

GABRIEL SILVA

MPP 2015, Panamanian

Paving the way for political transparency in Panama

Elected to Panama's National Assembly in 2019, Gabriel Silva is striving to change the face of politics in Panama; from the earliest stages of his election campaign, he was determined to send a message to his fellow citizens that a more transparent, just kind of politics is possible.

"The MPP had a significant influence on my decision to run for office. Corruption is one of the biggest problems in Panama and the MPP enabled me to strengthen my knowledge of how to build strong institutions and enhance the quality of government."

Gabriel ran a grassroots campaign, enlisting a dedicated team of volunteers and knocking on doors to better understand the concerns and aspirations of his fellow citizens. "Every interaction on the campaign trail was an opportunity to raise people's consciousness about what they should expect from their elected officials", he says.

Gabriel is using lessons from his campaign to strengthen channels of communication with those he represents. He and his team continue to regularly knock on doors, and he has instigated fortnightly 'meet your Member of Parliament' sessions – inspired by research conducted during his MPP summer project – in which constituents can share their questions, concerns and policy ideas.

Gabriel has proposed the second-highest number of bills in the current parliament, over half of which focus on anti-corruption and transparency. Managing relationships with fellow Members of Parliament is one

of the major challenges of his work: while pushing forward anti-corruption projects that go against the interests of parliamentarians who benefit from the current system, he must garner support from these same parliamentarians for other, unrelated policies. Despite this challenge, Gabriel is steadfast in his commitment to good governance: "Whatever happens, I will never compromise my principles and values."

Beyond anti-corruption, Gabriel is working on innovative projects and policies spanning human rights and education, to cycling infrastructure and mental health. Working tirelessly to improve the lives of his constituents, he is cognisant that wider systemic issues in Panama's political system will not be fixed overnight; part of his legacy in parliament will be to inspire a new generation of politicians with a genuine desire to reform the system. "I view my work as part of a long-term project. As I consider how best to pursue this work in the longer term, I know it will involve supporting others with a commitment to public service to run for office."

Gabriel was a Chevening Scholar.



OUR EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

Those joining our executive programmes, whether on fellowships or for short courses, become part of our community – and they inform our work just as much as we hope to inform theirs.

Bringing experience up to the very pinnacle of seniority, they share invaluable insights with us and one another.

All executive programmes are chaired by a senior member of our faculty. By providing leaders with direct access to top thinkers and evidence-based insights, as well as to a multinational network of peers, we aim to directly improve government effectiveness.

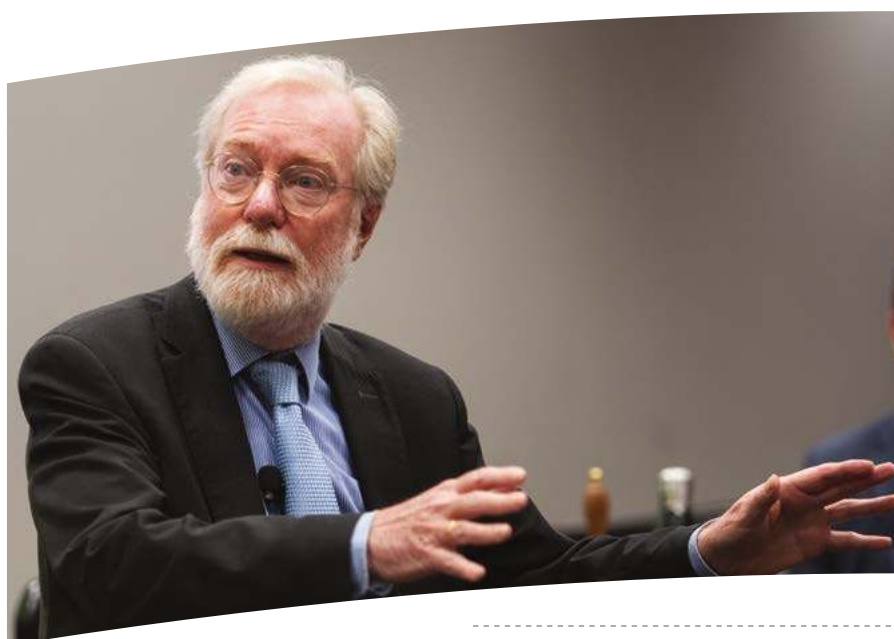
For those at the heart of government, it can be complicated and uncomfortable to dig into mistakes with direct colleagues, and hard to find external peers who understand what it is like to work in the public sector. Our programmes bring exceptional people together who are facing similar challenges but in different countries, as well as training national groups.



Programme participant Rebecca Kitteridge, Director-General of Security, New Zealand

Our flagship Public Leaders Programme suite is for those heading public organisations, or on course to hold top positions in future. While our work as a School draws heavily from multiple sectors, there are aspects of public-sector leadership roles – such as accountability, politics, scale, and devotion to the public interest – that are simply not experienced in the same way in the private or voluntary sectors. We tailor our core suite for the public sector, with examples and international peers from the public sector.

Our range of other executive programmes cover natural resource management; military judgement and leadership; governing digital transformation; and more. Through the pandemic our programmes have gone online or been hybrid, but many will return in person in 2021/22. But to reach as widely as possible, we also launched fully online short courses in 2020 (see p.32).



Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy

OUR RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Our core academic team of world-class faculty (p.3) and committed researchers cover a spectrum of disciplines relevant to good government, including politics, economics, philosophy and law.

Our faculty include professors of practice (such as Ciaran Martin, p.38), and all our academics work alongside our many visiting scholars and practitioners, who ensure that real-world perspectives and insights are always with us.

This mixed community of research and practice is one of the ways – alongside our teaching and executive programmes – that we ensure our research is informed by, and translated to, current policymaking.

Our research is rigorous enough to win major competitive grants (see p.45 for just one example) and applied enough that our faculty and researchers are constantly working with governments, whether through week-to-week engagement or in formal roles (such as Stefan Dercon's and Emily Jones's advisory roles in UK government, pp.34–35 and pp.40–41).

OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Collaboration is a key ingredient of good government, whether at the national, sectoral or personal level – and it is also central to how we work as a School. Many individuals and organisations work with us or support us in pursuit of a shared vision.

They are key members of the Blavatnik School community, sharing not only time and resources, but lessons on what makes for good government taken from their own sectors, experiences and networks.

Many individuals lend us their wisdom. Among them are our advisory board members (pp.58–59), who help us think about overall direction; the many renowned figures who speak at our events or in the classroom, always for free (see p.6); and the practitioners in constant dialogue with our faculty as we keep our research rooted in the realities of government.

We also benefit from a high-level group of people who generously give their time to our professional mentoring scheme, which offers MPP students an opportunity to discuss their career with leaders from various backgrounds.

And our work would not be possible without those who partner with us on projects or provide crucial financial support to our research and our students (see p.48–49).

STUDENT PROFILE

DONGFANG GUO

MPP 2020, Chinese

Bridging business and public policy to build a sustainable future



Growing up in a family of civil servants exposed Dongfang Guo to public service from an early age.

“My family members were extremely driven

in their mission, and tackling

social ills was consistently a theme of discussion in our household”, he says. Now following in his

family’s footsteps, he is passionate about finding ways to harness the power of the private sector

to address public policy challenges. Dongfang has worked in the fields of impact investment and social

entrepreneurship, with a focus on tackling socio-environmental issues and promoting sustainable business.

A highlight of the MPP has been the chance to learn from experts in his field of interest and beyond “We have opportunities to hear from social entrepreneurs, academic pioneers and political leaders on a weekly basis, which echoes the multidisciplinary approach of the School. This approach enables students to become well-rounded decision-makers with full perspectives.”

He has also enjoyed cultivating relationships with classmates who share his policy interests: “The MPP offers great opportunities for me to connect with those peers who share a common vision, enabling us to foster real synergy in the specific area of public policy that we care about. Oxford marks a new beginning for my journey in business and social impact, and I look forward to using lessons from the MPP to build bridges across sectors and deliver innovative solutions to major policy challenges.”

Dongfang is a Kwok Scholar.



Joe Daniel Price via Getty Images

OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Oxford was ranked the world's number one university for the fifth consecutive year in September 2020 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

Our students have second homes at 33 different Oxford colleges and the School is firmly rooted in the wider University, enriching our students' experience and allowing us to draw on the outstanding breadth and depth of disciplines across Oxford for research collaborations and to help policymakers.

OUR OUTREACH

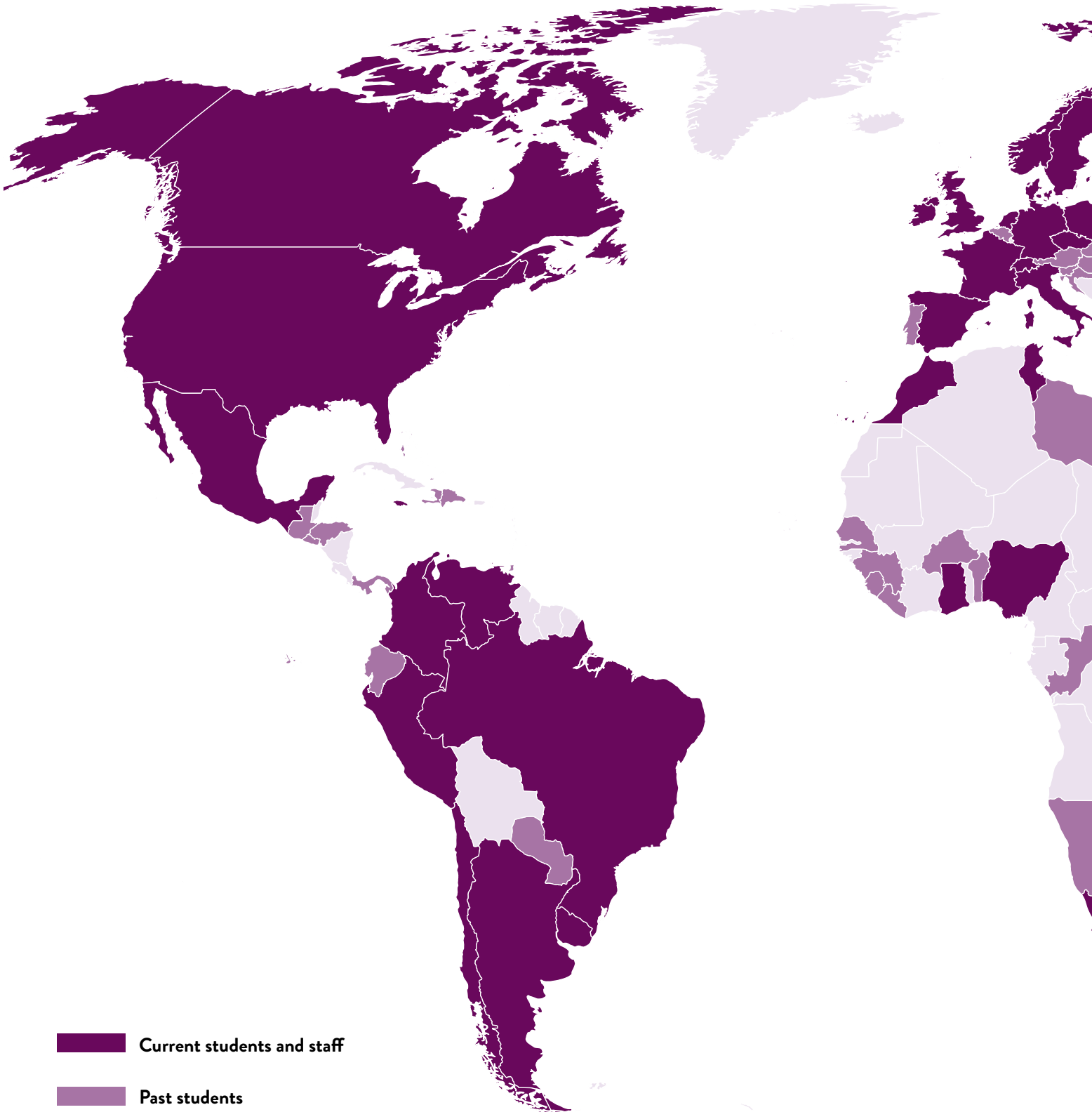
The Blavatnik School community is diverse and geographically wide-ranging. What unites us is a mission: to build trust, to bridge divides, and to forge more effective institutions. In the most expansive sense, our community includes anyone who cares about public policy and good government. Public outreach is therefore a crucial part of our activity.

We run around 50 public events a year, both in person and online (over the last year everything has either been hybrid or fully online). People join us from all over the world, with the average number of countries we reach in a single event being 26.

In 2020/21 we heard from Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Chair of the Board of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation and currently Director-General of the World Trade Organization; Carmen Reinhart, Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank Group; Frank Luntz, renowned US polling and political communications expert; and Kevin Watkins, Chief Executive of Save the Children UK. We covered topics ranging from the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, to the global race for COVID-19 vaccines, to the latest research on governance of emerging digital technologies.

Our digital and media engagement connects us to an even wider audience. In the last 12 months we have seen almost 800,000 visitors to our website across 1.3m visits, an increase of 150% over the previous year. People around the world spent a combined 1.3m hours watching our YouTube content. We have over 18,000 followers on Facebook, over 19,000 on Twitter, and 20,000 on YouTube. Our faculty's expertise appears extensively in the news media, from BBC News and the BBC World Service to the *Financial Times*, *Time*, *The Spectator*, *New Statesman*, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Le Monde* and Bloomberg.

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY



STUDENT PROFILE

HELLEN CHABUNYA

MPP 2020, Malawian

Championing women and young people in politics



Hellen Chabunya is a government relations and communications expert with over 12 years' experience across the public, private and non-profit sectors. She recently worked on the current President of Malawi's election campaign during the country's historic 2020 election which unseated the incumbent.

Dedicated to sharing her passion for public service and creating opportunities for others to succeed, she previously worked on a project helping youth and female aspirants prepare for elections in political positions, student unions and sports associations. Hellen is also the founder of Mbwabwa Secondary School, a social enterprise established in 2006 to provide accessible education to young adults, trafficked child labour victims and rescued survivors of early marriages.

An advocate for public sector transformation in her country, Hellen values the MPP's careful balance of theory and practice, which are enabling her to attain a broad spectrum of analytical competencies; post-MPP, Hellen hopes to use these skills to effectively scrutinise the implementation of government programmes and safeguard their intended public benefits.

Hellen is an Aall Scholar.

STUDENT PROFILE

ELSIE FUKOFUKA

MPP 2020, Tongan

Giving a platform to the perspectives of Small Island Developing States



Elsie Fukofuka is the Blavatnik School of Government's first ever student from the Kingdom of Tonga, an archipelago in the South Pacific with a population of 105,000.

"I value the opportunity to bring the unique perspective of Small Island Developing States into the classroom and equally to have those perspectives challenged," she says. Deeply committed to serving her country, Elsie has 15 years of experience working for the Government of Tonga. The multidisciplinary nature of the MPP is enabling her to build on her extensive experience across policy areas – in her most recent role as a senior officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, her work encompassed foreign policy areas from trade and human rights to development and regional cooperation.

Elsie has been undertaking the MPP online from Tonga, which is 12 hours ahead of Oxford – a challenging but rewarding experience: "It has taught me the invaluable lesson of how to navigate and make decisions around complex issues during difficult times. I think this builds character, strength and resilience which are essential for any public servant wanting to serve a Tonga that is bracing itself for the increasing threats of climate change, the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis that will follow. The firm grounding from the MPP has given me a greater sense of responsibility and a stronger desire to serve the people of Tonga."

STUDENT PROFILE

NANDITA
VENKATESAN

MPP 2020, Indian

A tuberculosis survivor excelling
against all odds

Nandita Venkatesan is a journalist and passionate healthcare advocate. Having fought a prolonged battle against two rounds of life-threatening tuberculosis (TB), she lost over 90% of her hearing due to the after-effect of a TB drug. This experience prompted her to speak up strongly for patient-centred care in tackling the infectious disease. She has addressed prominent national and international forums, including the 2018 United Nations General Assembly in New York. She was named as 'A Voice of Hope for TB Survivors' by *The Lancet* and received the Cavinkare Ability Award, a pan-India award awarded to four persons with disability in recognition of exemplary achievement against the odds. Prior to the MPP, she worked for India's largest financial newspaper, *The Economic Times*, and reported on the Indian healthcare system. She is using the MPP to further explore her interests in public health, media and accessibility rights.

Nandita is a Chevening/Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholar.

STUDENT PROFILE

GABRIELLE CESVET

MPP 2020, Canadian

Communicating politics to the
people from the highest levels of
government

Before coming to the Blavatnik School, Gabrielle Cesvet was a Senior Speechwriter for Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

She graduated from McGill University in 2015 with a BA in Political Science and History, before joining Prime Minister Trudeau's team as an intern. A year later, she started speechwriting.

Gabrielle wrote speeches in English and in French for more than four years, worked on two federal election campaigns, and eventually led Prime Minister Trudeau's speechwriting team during his second mandate. Her policy interests span the fields of economic justice, foreign affairs and climate change.



HIGHLIGHTS

Selected highlights from the last year,
April 2020 to March 2021.



A PEOPLE-POWERED PROJECT TO TRACK HOW GOVERNMENTS DEAL WITH COVID-19

As the world waited for vaccines, other government measures have been essential to contain the spread of the virus. Our tool is helping evaluate what works.

“

COVID-19 attacks the human body, but it's the body politic that has protected us – or not – over the course of this pandemic.

THOMAS HALE, ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY

”

The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker looks at what measures governments are putting in place to fight the spread of COVID-19, and puts it into a comparable format. Over the last year it has become the primary information source worldwide for comparative information on what governments are doing in response to coronavirus.

Launched in March 2020 by a small team of Blavatnik School faculty and students who were hoping to find answers to questions around COVID-19 policy, the tracker has grown significantly since then and now covers 187 countries, including subnational jurisdictions in the USA, Brazil, the UK and Canada. It collects data on over 20 policy indicators including school closures, international travel restrictions, facial coverings and vaccination policy.



Anna Petherick, presenting the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Its open data has been used by governments and media throughout the pandemic, and its findings have appeared everywhere – from the BBC, *Financial Times*, *New York Times*, *National Geographic* and *The Economist*, to speeches by New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and UK Leader of the Opposition Sir Keir Starmer.

The project is powered by a team of over 600 volunteer data contributors from all over the world, who collectively speak 90 different languages and have a variety of academic backgrounds (including Blavatnik School and other University of Oxford alumni).

Counting almost 4 million data points as the world approached the pandemic’s first anniversary, the tracker is becoming an invaluable tool for health policy experts and data scientists to make sense of the effects of governments’ responses to COVID-19.

In a recent *Nature Human Behaviour* paper, the team highlighted patterns in the timing of policy adoption and subsequent policy easing and reimposition, and illustrated how the data can be combined with behavioural and epidemiological indicators.

“One thing we found looking at the data is a substantial amount of what you might call ‘imitation’ or ‘herd behaviour’”, says Thomas Hale, Associate Professor of Public Policy at the Blavatnik School, who leads the project. “This is because governments have been very uncertain about how to respond, so they often look to others and imitate what they are doing.

“We also found that governments that were predicted to do very well weren’t always the ones that did best – this is enormously relevant, because with the help of the tracker, we’re beginning to be able to learn more about the conditions that make a country more or less resilient, and that’s going to be very important for the future.”

An important application of the data is to understand how policies relate to human behaviour, and a number of studies are already using the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker and similar data to try to estimate the effect of policies on behaviour and the spread of the disease.

www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker



RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has been the biggest challenge to face governments in decades – and our community has responded. Beyond our government tracker (pp.20–21), our faculty, researchers and alumni have been engaged in multiple aspects of the global challenge – from mass testing to education, and from policing to vaccine distribution. These pages give just some examples.



KATE ORKIN (FACULTY) SOCIAL SECURITY

“

I've been working with governments in developing countries to design **social security responses** such as unemployment benefits and cash grants. With the Centre for the Study of African Economies team, I have been advising the South African government on their emergency social protection response to COVID-19. This included rolling out a new monthly cash grant to 6 million unemployed people, rather than food parcels, based on rigorous evidence that cash transfers achieve greater gains in nutrition at lower cost than food parcels. We are now working to design a new set of interventions, including cash grants and job search assistance, to help young people find work.

Kate Orkin, Senior Research Fellow in Behavioural Economics

”

JO WOLFF (FACULTY) VACCINE ETHICS

“

I've been working on the **ethics surrounding COVID-19 vaccines** – from providing a framework for ethical vaccine distribution and discussing what models are best implemented by political leaders, to offering guidance on vaccine trials and modalities of administering vaccines. I've been co-chairing the ethics and governance working group for the WHO's Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, and provided evidence to a UK parliamentary committee on the ethics of vaccine passports.

Jonathan Wolff, Alfred Landecker Professor of Values and Public Policy

”





CHRIS STONE (FACULTY) POLICING

“

I've been comparing how **police forces** in different countries have been enforcing their own COVID-19 lockdowns. While restrictions on movement have been in place in most countries over the past year, there is a tremendous variation in the specifics of what different countries are requiring. Police forces are being asked to enforce very different versions of lockdowns, protocols and rules. Tragically, in some countries, the forcefulness of police responses – including deadly force – appeared to be far greater than justified by the danger presented by the epidemic or by the failure of some residents to comply with curfews and lockdowns. And in many more countries, the pandemic has proved a convenient excuse for repressing political dissent. Of course, some enforcement decisions proved better than others; no one expects emergency decisions all to be good ones, but what matters now is accountability. For example, governments need to account for how they trained their police forces to handle a pandemic, or how they failed to do so.

Christopher Stone, Professor of Practice of Public Integrity

”



MICHELLE KAFFENBERGER (RESEARCHER)

SCHOOL CLOSURES



I have been working on modelling learning losses caused by the pandemic. Results suggest that children could lose a full year's worth of learning from just a three-month school closure, which is in line with RISE research on **school closures** due to natural disasters. Remediation and reorienting instruction need to be done urgently to ensure that children do not suffer a lifetime of consequences from lost learning.

Michelle Kaffenberger, RISE Research Fellow



Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) is a £43m global research endeavour that seeks to understand how education systems in developing countries can overcome the learning crisis. Led through a partnership between Oxford Policy Management and the Blavatnik School of Government, it is supported by £36.8m in funding from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO); A\$9.85m from the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); and US\$1.7m from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

STUDENT PROFILE

LUYAO REN

MPP 2020, Chinese

Spearheading poverty alleviation projects in China, including in response to the pandemic



Before embarking on the Master of Public Policy, Luyao Ren was a public policy researcher in the provincial government of China, working primarily on economics and poverty alleviation. One research project saw Luyao lead a team working to drive industry development in a deprived village in Hubei Province in order to improve the economic self-sufficiency of the village's residents. This included creating reports exploring the possibility of establishing a local rose industry and kiwi fruits industry, and facilitating investment from her department to develop these industries. Overall, the research project saw the per capita income of residents increase by 20% and 500 local women gain employment opportunities.

At the onset of COVID-19, Luyao – a Wuhan native – supported China's pandemic response by working alongside colleagues to facilitate the donation of more than 93m yuan to medical institutions and the China Charity Federation, a nationwide non-governmental charity organisation.

Luyao is an Oxford-Creat Group Scholar.



EMMA MARTINHO-TRUSWELL (ALUMNA)

RECOVERY PLANNING

“

I'm working in a foresight team for the New South Wales government. Specifically I've been focusing on pathways out of the pandemic, particularly **vaccine scenarios**. At the moment I'm doing this one day per week while looking after my very new second daughter — she tends to sleep or feed through my video calls.

Emma Martinho-Truswell (MPP 2013, Australian)

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ZUZANA HLAVKOVA (ALUMNA)

MASS TESTING

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I volunteered for **Slovakia's nationwide COVID-19 testing** in November 2020. The mass testing was the first of its kind in Europe (the British government, for example, sent some observers). Preparations took about a week, after the government decided that nationwide testing was the only alternative to a strict lockdown. By the end of the weekend, we had tested 3.6m people which is nearly 70% of the population. A pilot mass testing which took place a week before in the most hit regions had already shown a slowdown in the spread of disease thanks to the measure. The testing was pulled off by tens of thousands of soldiers, doctors and volunteers in 5,000 testing sites across the country, set up and run by local authorities.

Zuzana Hlavkova (MPP 2018, Slovakian) pictured above in PPE

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ALUMNI PROFILE

ADIL SHAMJI

MPP 2017, Canadian

On the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic

A practising physician in emergency medicine, Adil Shamji is committed to helping Canada's most vulnerable and marginalised communities. Prior to the MPP, he spent a significant amount of time working in Canada's remote Arctic regions. Occupied by historically neglected Indigenous communities, these are regions where the need for healthcare is most acute. "I came to the MPP because the most serious problems I encountered were rooted in failed social policy", he says. "I wanted to amplify my impact and understand how to convince politicians to address the social determinants that lead to vast health inequalities."

Returning to Toronto after completing the MPP, Adil sought to carve out a niche for himself at the intersection of medical practice and public policy. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit. After helping his emergency department to prepare for what was to come, he was invited to work with Canada's largest organisation providing medical care to people experiencing homelessness. A number of empty hotels across Toronto were leased to provide shelter to homeless individuals; Adil was charged with providing medical leadership for primary care clinics in eight hotels with the most acute medical need, offering general practice services in addition to addiction and psychiatry services.

With the rollout of the vaccine, Adil has been working with this same organisation to maximise uptake within the homeless population, many of whom have a complicated

relationship with the healthcare system. "We had to leverage our knowledge and trust and it's very much an ongoing process – I'm leaning on everything I've learnt over the years, including behavioural insights that I gained during my time on the MPP."

The past year has only served to deepen Adil's conviction that government would benefit from the involvement of more people with science and healthcare backgrounds. "Toronto was hit hard by the SARS pandemic in 2003, yet the political memory was short-lived", he says. "Many of the lessons emerging now on how we could have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic are the same as those we supposedly learnt in 2003."

Looking beyond the pandemic, he is keen find a way to increase his interaction with policymakers. "I often reflect on advice that I was given by Ngaire – that I wouldn't reach my final destination as soon as I completed the MPP and that it will take many small steps to get there. I'm taking every opportunity that I can to have impact and it's great to know that I have the knowledge and support of the Blavatnik School behind me every step of the way."





DAPO AKANDE
(FACULTY)
CYBERSECURITY LAW

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The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a huge rise in cyber attacks, including against the World Health Organization and hospitals and medical research facilities around the world. With colleagues at the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict (ELAC), we brought together leading academics with experts from foreign ministries and national cybersecurity centres through virtual workshops which led to the formulation of the **Oxford Statement on the International Law Protections Against Cyber Operations Targeting the Healthcare Sector**. The statement explains that international law mandates governments to protect healthcare facilities against harmful cyber activities, essentially clarifying what the rules are. We also agreed on a second Oxford Statement that highlights rules and principles of international law that protect the research, manufacture and distribution of vaccine candidates against harmful cyber operations.

Dapo Akande, Professor of Public International Law

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MRUNMAI JOSHI
(ALUMNA)
COORDINATED GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE

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I have been working in the government of **Kerala's COVID-19 War Room**, a single-point agency established to resolve issues related to the pandemic. Our responsibilities include dealing with high-risk patients wanting to travel for medical attention, providing meals to migrant labourers, extraditing Keralites from abroad, and facilitating the movement of foreigners stranded in Kerala to their native countries. [...] The knowledge I gained during my time at the Blavatnik School is helping me at each stage of my work in Kerala's pandemic response. I have referred back to Foundations to reflect on the moral challenges of the pandemic, applied the skills I gained from Evidence in Public Policy to address supply and demand issues, and drawn on lessons from Politics of Policymaking to collaborate effectively with colleagues across multiple contexts. I will continue to draw on these lessons to address the longer-term social, political and economic challenges that have been brought to the surface by this pandemic.

Mrunmai Joshi (MPP 2018, Indian)

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ALUMNI PROFILE

ALEXANDER DIAZ

MPP 2014, American

Leading disaster relief and preparedness with Google's philanthropic arm

Alexander Diaz spearheads the global crisis and humanitarian aid portfolio at Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm. Working across natural disasters, humanitarian crises, and most recently the public health emergency resulting from COVID-19, he coordinates funding and technical support to respond to each stage of the disaster timeline. Alex manages a crisis connectivity team which provides critical technical support in the immediate aftermath of disasters; when Hurricane Dorian devastated the Bahamas in 2019, Alex sent teams into the field to install temporary WiFi in shelters, clinics and schools. As natural disasters become more frequent and more significant in size, disaster preparedness is an increasingly important aspect of his work – this ranges from improving disaster forecasting and alerts, to investing in resilient critical infrastructure.

Another segment of Alex's work focuses on using Google's data and technology expertise to move the humanitarian aid and development sector forward. An ongoing project with GiveDirectly – a non-profit

organisation which provides direct cash transfers as an intervention in both the development and humanitarian space – has seen Alex and his team develop a mapping tool that overlays publicly available data on the locations of the most socioeconomically vulnerable people with information from a given disaster that shows which areas have been hit hardest. This enables GiveDirectly to identify where their help is most urgently needed when disasters hit.

Alex's work spans multiple projects and partnerships, and covers all corners of the globe. With a strong sense of social justice, he is driven by a desire to “turn tightropes into walkways” to improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable populations.

Alex was a Rhodes Scholar.





TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A PANDEMIC

In a School where it's crucial to bring people together, we did more than just adapting to a remote environment. We embraced it as an opportunity for innovation.

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The Blavatnik School has one of the most active and enthusiastic cohort dynamics across the University, and if this pandemic has failed in any way, it has failed in eroding our enthusiasm.

MICHAEL O'KEEFE (MPP 2019, CANADIAN)

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MOVING THE MPP ONLINE

When the UK entered its first lockdown in March 2020, our MPP students (the class of 2019) were about to start their last term before the summer. Some of them moved back to their home countries; others remained in Oxford. Everyone in the School worked at speed to move all the teaching online – setting up pilot sessions, running practice sessions with alumni, supporting faculty members in exchanging ideas, and retraining some of the School's professional staff to work as online learning facilitators, handling the technical logistics of online sessions. It is thanks to these efforts that our students were able to continue their studies uninterrupted.

“

The effort that has gone into making things feel as normal as possible means that, although things may seem unfamiliar outside of the classroom, you're still benefitting from the personal learning experience and sense of community that make the MPP so rewarding.

KEIR MATHER (MPP 2020, BRITISH)

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PERFECTING OUR HYBRID TEACHING

By the time the new MPP class was ready to start in September 2020, the School had developed a new 'hybrid' teaching system, with some students joining lectures in person and others joining online. This system has enabled the School to respond flexibly to changing restrictions, as well as allowing for each student's personal circumstances.

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If you want to come to a place that challenges the ordinary and overcomes any given challenge, then come to the Blavatnik School... the staff and faculty have gone the extra mile to make sure that our experience at the School is a life-changing one.

SAMUEL DIAZ PULGAR (MPP 2020, VENEZUELAN)

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LEARNING FROM A CHANGING REALITY

As a school of government grounded in evidence and practice, learning from real-life policy issues is central to our teaching and research. This year we made the most of the learning opportunities that COVID-19 put in front of us, including adding a COVID-19 option to the more 'traditional' topics of climate and counterterrorism for the Policy Challenge simulations, and developing a case study that followed a day in the life of the chief medical officer at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

LAUNCH OF ONLINE COURSES

Making public policy teaching accessible through online education is now more important than ever.

How do you deliver on your mission to ensure countries across the world are better governed when travel for education – or indeed anything – isn't an option? In the best of times, Oxford can be difficult for some to get to, whether as a result of distance, costs, or time. During the pandemic, it has been next to impossible.

The long-planned launch of our online courses in 2020, then, turned out to be good timing. While the School adapted to the new normal by developing a robust hybrid teaching mode for programmes previously delivered in person (see pp.30–31), we also began offering something new: courses designed from the outset to be entirely online. These eight-week programmes aim to bring a Blavatnik School education to as wide an audience as possible.

For our debut courses, we tackle two of the biggest skills gaps in public administration today. In Evidence in Public Policy, participants learn the science of evaluating policy, to ensure their policies are built on solid foundations – facts, not opinions. Understanding how moral and ethical value concepts should inform public policy takes centre stage in Values and Public Policy.



Martin Williams, who teaches Evidence in Public Policy

In the first year, we have seen a hugely diverse group of participants, from their geographical location to why they decided to take the next step in their career development, and with varied roles, from policy advisors to assistant directors. We have welcomed participants from India, Nigeria, Australia and Brazil, most of whom joined to help them perform better in their existing roles. While most participants came from public administration, as expected, the programmes have found an audience with those in charities and non-profits, education and training, and social services.

This is just the beginning. Online programming will continue to help us deliver our mission and ensure everyone has access to the highest-quality public policy education.

Our online courses are delivered in partnership with Pearson. For more information, visit: www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/onlinecourses

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The long-planned launch of our online courses in 2020 turned out to be good timing.

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STUDENT PROFILE

BATOOL ASADI

MPP 2020, Pakistani

A trailblazing civil servant seeking to drive institutional reform

Batool Asadi had an impressive record in the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) before embarking on the Master of Public Policy, working on projects ranging from school enrolment to polio eradication. An advocate for institutional reform, she has worked extensively to combat corruption and improve integrity – all while acting as a trailblazer for women in the PAS.

Upon joining the civil service, Batool was confronted with restrictive gender stereotypes: “I was told women couldn’t undertake complex and challenging tasks involving problem-solving, law and order, policy implementation and so on. I took this as a challenge and wanted to show that it’s not acceptable to deny women’s ability to take on such roles.”

Batool was the first woman to serve as Assistant Commissioner in Balochistan, and she later became Deputy Secretary (Staff) to Balochistan’s highest-ranking civil servant, the Chief Secretary. The MPP is giving Batool a framework through which to analyse some of the policy challenges she encountered during her time in the PAS, where her responsibilities included giving input on draft legislation and facilitating policy implementation.

Batool’s desire to improve women’s representation was the driving factor behind her decision to pursue a career in public service.

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In order to make policies that work for women, you need women in power.

Being in a position of authority enables you to move things in favour of the worst-off people and give a platform to those whose voices often go unheard.

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With extensive insight into the skills needed to effect change at an institutional level, Batool views the development of soft skills such as listening and collaboration as one of the MPP’s key strengths. “Public service is often criticised for being too resistant to change and not listening to the voices of those it represents – the MPP is giving me the skills to work towards building a public service that works for everyone.”

Batool is a Vicky Noon Scholar.



“AID IS BEST SPENT AS PART OF LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS”

Faculty member Stefan Dercon’s new role sees him directly advise the UK government on effective aid spending. He shares his thoughts on working at the intersection of development and foreign policy.

In September 2020 Stefan Dercon (top right), Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School, was appointed Policy Advisor to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the UK government department tasked with foreign affairs and overseas aid. The FCDO had only been recently created by merging the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (the foreign ministry) and the Department for International Development (DFID, responsible for administering overseas aid). The UK’s aid budget suffered significant cuts over the past year: soon after the merger, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced a £2.9bn package of cuts, and in November, the government announced it was dropping the 0.7% of gross national income commitment to 0.5% for this year due to the financial impacts of COVID-19, bringing the total cuts to £4.5bn.

Tell us about your role as Policy Advisor to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

In UK government departments, unlike in most European countries or the US, ministers depend entirely on civil servants and only have a small number of direct advisors linked to the governing party. When the merger happened last year, the Foreign Secretary felt he needed more technical support on all matters of international development, and asked me to help. As a former DFID chief economist, I have always been seen as independent within the Department, and hopefully with something useful to contribute. My role now is to advise the Foreign Secretary directly on all aid spending and international development policy. All advice and proposals for his decision come through me. I filter and give my independent advice directly to him, although I am doing this as a civil servant working in his Private Office.

What do you make of the decision to merge the two departments?

It was obviously a political decision, and both the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister have given official statements on this. My job is to make sure that DFID’s expertise on international development is not lost, and to work on the upsides of this merger, making the most of the opportunities offered by a more integrated foreign and development policy. Take climate change, for example: in the past, the government would spend on programmes



that reduce emissions or help countries to adapt; now it is also able to use such programmes as part of negotiations, encouraging collective action.

Similarly, on issues of food insecurity and the risks of famine in settings like Yemen or Ethiopia, we have the chance to better integrate humanitarian relief with the diplomatic work on humanitarian access and the protection of vulnerable people in conflict. Having your ambassador in Berlin contributing to fundraising for a crisis, or the ambassador in Dubai focused on how some countries may be influenced to give better humanitarian access in Ethiopia, can only be a positive step. And so is a Foreign Secretary meeting with his G7 colleagues and able to discuss girls' education or famine risk in the developing world.

In the face of cuts to the aid budget, how do you go about advising on spending priorities?

It is clear that £4.5bn in cuts is brutal. However, the remaining £10bn is a substantial amount. The Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister set the areas of priority – climate change, global health, food security and girls' education. My advice focuses on how to spend most effectively within these categories using cost-benefit analysis and exploring where the marginal return is highest. But development spending is a multi-year activity and a country is often locked in with various spending commitments, some legally or politically stronger – for example with GAVI, the global vaccine alliance, the World Bank, or WHO. The constraints were many, and very hard trade-offs had to be made.

How do you reconcile the tension between providing aid based on need and providing aid based on economic or geopolitical interests?

In principle, I try to focus on neither. I prefer to focus on programmes that have impact. Spending just because there is need leads to poor spending, as it assumes that spending money on a problem will solve it. Spending on short-term transactional interests does not help anyone either: tied aid (where we spend in order to support UK firms) has been shown to be highly ineffective, while expecting quick quid-pro-quo overstates the size and role of aid even in poorer developing countries.

Having said this, the UK is driven by giving to places where need is high – more than 50% of the UK's bilateral aid goes to sub-Saharan Africa, and this has not at all changed. Furthermore, there has long been a relative bias towards certain countries – but this is not simply due to geopolitical or economic interest. The fact that the UK gives more to Commonwealth countries, or to East Africa and the Horn, is linked to the longstanding relationships it has with these countries. Aid is best spent as part of long-term partnerships – it is, then, no surprise that this apparent bias exists.

Stefan Dercon is Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School, where he continues to teach economics to our Master of Public Policy students and provide supervision for our DPhil students, in parallel with his FCDO engagements.

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR THE MPP

The class of 2020 is the biggest ever, and we have received the largest ever number of applications for 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the impact of government decision-making on the everyday lives of citizens – and the devastating consequences when values of good governance and global cooperation are rejected. Over the past year, the Blavatnik School's mission to improve government worldwide has felt more urgent than ever; in the 2020/21 admissions cycle, we received a record number of applications from those aspiring to join us in this mission.

From January to March 2021, the admissions team were tasked with sorting through 992 applications to the Master of Public Policy (MPP) – a 34% increase from the previous admissions cycle. The quality of applications was as outstanding as ever, and we received applications from 106 countries, with two countries represented for the very first time: Antigua and Barbuda, and Niger. In addition to geographical diversity, the MPP has continued to attract applicants with a range of backgrounds and experiences – the age range of this year's applicants was 21 to 58.

From the day that successful applicants receive their offer letters, they are welcomed into the Blavatnik School community. By the time they join in September, all of our offer holders will have had the opportunity to connect with alumni and a member of faculty (either the Course Directors, Professor Karthik Ramanna and Dr Adam

Webster, or Professor Jonathan Wolff). This year they have also been invited to engage in a number of exclusive events – a taster of the insights they will receive on the MPP – including the regular Dean's Forums featuring high-profile speakers from across the globe (see p.6).

The past year was record-breaking for the MPP in more ways than one. In September 2020, we welcomed our largest ever intake of students – a committed group of 145 leaders who have embraced the unique experience of studying through a pandemic (see p.30–31). The class of 2020 also has the highest ever number of scholarships awarded (see p.7), including a number of new scholarships introduced this year: the Eisenhower Global Leaders Scholarship, the Political Leadership Scholarship and the Jaime and Raquel Gilinski Scholarship (find out more about some of these new scholars on pp.48–55).

As we prepare to welcome our tenth intake of MPP students in September 2021, we are inspired by the continued growth of this global community of outstanding practitioners – a community driven by a shared commitment to excellence and to serving others in pursuit of a world better led, served and governed.





34%
increase in
applications

STUDENT PROFILE

FELIPE MARIÑO CIFUENTES

MPP 2020, Colombian

Keeping Colombia's citizens safe
with evidence-based security
strategies



Prior to the Master of Public Policy, Felipe Mariño Cifuentes sought to play an essential role in reducing crime in Bogotá. With a background in political science and government management, he started his career as part of a small team within Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce seeking to reduce violence among students in the city's schools. After almost nine years of different experiences in the security field, he became the advisor to Bogotá's Secretary of Security. He was tasked with enhancing the reach of the Secretary's office among citizens and law enforcement, with the overarching aim of improving the implementation of security policy.

Immediately prior to the MPP, Felipe worked as a consultant for the Pan-American Development Foundation, leading the design of security policies for cities in Colombia's conflict-affected Bajo Cauca region. He has been using the MPP to deepen his understanding of how to enhance partnerships between the public and private sectors in order to design and implement programmes with social impact in the sphere of violence and crime prevention.

Felipe is a Jaime and Raquel Gilinski Scholar.

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Ciaran led a fundamental shift in the UK's approach to cybersecurity.

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NEW PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE

Distinguished civil servant and pioneer in national cybersecurity joins the School.

In September 2020, Ciaran Martin joined the Blavatnik School of Government as Professor of Practice in the Management of Public Organisations after a 23-year career in the British civil service.

The founding Chief Executive Officer of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – a part of GCHQ, the UK government's organisation responsible for intelligence and security – Ciaran led a fundamental shift in the UK's approach to cybersecurity in the second half of the last decade. He successfully advocated for a sweeping change of approach towards a more interventionist posture, which was adopted by the UK government in the 2015 National Security Strategy, leading to the creation of the NCSC in 2016.

The NCSC model has been studied widely and adopted in countries like Canada and Australia. Ciaran's experience, which included publicly fronting the 2017 WannaCry ransomware attack, is already contributing in leading the School's work on cybersecurity and strengthening our practice-focused teaching and research on technology and government.

Prior to his work in national security, Ciaran held senior roles within the Cabinet Office, including Constitution Director from 2011 to 2014. In that role, he was the lead civil servant negotiating the basis for what became the 2014 independence referendum in Scotland with the Scottish Government. Drawing on his direct experience, Ciaran recently published insights on the constitutional issues related to a Scottish independence referendum. He argued that – either now or in the future – there could be a clash between the mandate of the Scottish electorate on one hand, and the laws of the United Kingdom as a whole on the other, over the question of whether to hold a further referendum. Positively received by the press, and launched at an online event attended by 266 people (and watched by thousands more on YouTube), Ciaran's paper also explored possible rules of any future referendum, the prospectus that should be put forward by the pro-independence and pro-Union sides, and possible reforms that might increase support for Scotland remaining in the Union.

ALUMNI PROFILE

JIEUN BAEK

DPhil 2016, American

A mission to bring freedom to North Korea

As an undergraduate student with her sights set on a career in medicine, Jieun Baek's aspirations changed markedly after hearing the testimony of a North Korean defector during her freshman year at Harvard. Since then, she has been dedicated to understanding the causes and consequences of human rights abuses in North Korea and possible routes towards freedom. "The speaker shared his experience of being sent to a political prisoner camp at the age of nine years old as punishment for alleged crimes against the regime committed by his grandmother", she recalls. "Sitting in a packed room and hearing his story was so impactful. I didn't know it at the time but my own grandfathers were born in North Korea – and yet I had the privilege to be born in a country where I have limitless freedom."

During her DPhil, Jieun examined first movers of dissent in authoritarian regimes, with a focus on Myanmar. She hopes that the findings of her research will ultimately be applicable in North Korea. "We already know that there are people with grievances at all levels of society but they're currently unable to express them in the ways we're used to seeing, such as through public demonstrations. When the country reaches a stage where this is possible, that is when I hope my research findings could be applied to enable reform."

Now a Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Jieun's work spans the policy, academic and NGO spheres. She has recently convened a working group of high-level policymakers and practitioners to examine how the US administration can align human rights, information campaigns and denuclearisation in an innovative policy approach towards North Korea. In addition to this full-time role, she is working to grow the NGO that she founded during her DPhil, Lumen, which seeks to provide access to uncensored sources of information and media within North Korea, as well as safe channels of communication.

Despite the immense challenges of working on this issue, Jieun's commitment is unwavering: "I consider this work to be my life mission and I can't think of anything more spiritually or intellectually rewarding."

Jieun received funding from the Blavatnik School of Government, the St Cross KT Soo Bursary and the Oxford-Burma fund.





Monty Rakusen via Getty Images

THE FUTURE OF UK TRADE

Research by Emily Jones is preparing the UK for international trade in the post-Brexit era.

The international trade landscape has changed drastically since the UK government was last tasked with negotiating trade deals almost 50 years ago. Developing a trade policy that is fit for the modern era is an urgent priority in the wake of Brexit, and one that brings opportunities for the UK to take a leading role on major global challenges. Emily Jones, Associate Professor in Public Policy and Director of the Global Economic Governance Programme, has been leading a research project which seeks to define and address the major challenges and opportunities around UK trade in this unique period of the country's history. This work has led to her appointment as specialist advisor to the UK Parliament's International Trade Select Committee.

You recently provided evidence to UK Parliament on the need for increased parliamentary oversight of trade agreements. Why is this important?

Nowadays, trade deals have a substantial impact on the everyday lives of citizens – from farming and food standards, to manufacturing and healthcare. With this in mind, there are strong arguments for subjecting them to the same level of democratic scrutiny afforded to domestic policymaking. Since leaving the EU, the UK has returned to a trade deal ratification process that is centuries old and doesn't enable this kind of scrutiny to take place.

There are also strategic arguments for increasing parliamentary oversight, such as conferring strength during negotiations: the US and EU, which both have extensive processes of legislative scrutiny, are renowned for arguing that their hands are tied domestically, enabling them to stand firm during negotiations.

But it's not just the UK Parliament who should be given increased oversight; the government should also legislate for engagement with devolved administrations where this is relevant. This would be a meaningful way for the government to demonstrate its respect for devolution, particularly at a time when questions around the future of the UK as a union are likely to become increasingly contentious.

The UK government has identified digital trade as a priority for its Global Britain agenda. How has your work addressed this specific area of trade policy?

Firstly, it's worth noting the extensive scope of digital provisions in trade agreements. They cover digital trade, that is, all digitally enabled transactions of goods and services. When you order something online, this counts as digital trade. If you receive financial advice from an accountant over the internet, this also counts. But digital provisions also cover areas including internet regulation, as well as data, which is at the heart of much of the digital economy.

In January, we convened academics, businesses, NGOs, trade unions and government representatives for a workshop to better understand the aspirations and concerns of major stakeholders. One notable outcome of the workshop was the myth-busting around GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation, a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy). We've heard a lot of arguments from politicians

and the media that GDPR is bad for business, but we found that both businesses and human rights organisations were in favour of maintaining these standards.

Overall there was clear consensus on the need to develop a digital trade policy that fosters commerce while upholding high protection standards for consumers and strengthening existing safeguards on privacy and human rights – these safeguards are in danger of being compromised if the UK pursues a policy of deregulation.

The UK government has a careful balance to strike between multiple interests – an open, inclusive approach which allows parliament to contribute to the discussion can help them achieve this.

The UK is in the spotlight as it prepares to host the UN COP26 climate summit in November. It also assumes the G7 presidency for 2021. Will these leadership positions influence the way in which the UK approaches its trading relationships?

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a timely reminder of the link between trade and climate policy – how can governments maintain access to critical goods and services during times of crisis? In January, we hosted another multi-stakeholder workshop – this one focusing on the future of trade policy – which found broad consensus on diverse issues, including aligning UK trade policy with other priorities in the areas of climate action and sustainability, but also on other global challenges such as human rights. The workshop led to the development of 'Trade for All', a principles-based framework outlining how the UK can create a joined-up trade strategy to create a fairer and greener international trading system. I'm really pleased that on this, too, we managed to get consensus from a broad coalition of stakeholders.

The upcoming COP26 summit and the UK's G7 presidency mean that – now more than ever – the UK has a responsibility to ensure global leadership through comprehensive, equitable, sustainable and progressive trade policy.

This work arises from activities funded by Research England's Strategic Priorities Fund allocation to the University of Oxford.

The research project is carried out in partnership with the International Chamber of Commerce UK.

STUDENT PROFILE

KEIR MATHER

MPP 2020, British

Breaking down barriers with the Political Leadership Scholarship

Keir Mather's motivation to pursue a career in public service stems largely from his upbringing in Hull, a city in northern England with high levels of poverty and deprivation. "I benefitted from a system in which political representatives ensured that people like me could receive a good education and go on to study at world-class universities", he says. "I feel a moral obligation to work towards ensuring future generations of children have those same opportunities."

Before the MPP, Keir worked as a Parliamentary Researcher for a UK Member of Parliament, covering intricate policy issues from Brexit to COVID-19. This experience at the heart of UK government gave him a deep appreciation of the relationship-building skills needed to be an effective public servant – skills which the MPP hones from day one: "The induction period highlighted that success on the MPP comes through collaboration and teamwork. You come to understand why people hold the views that they hold, which helps you to engage and work effectively with others."

Beyond the classroom, a highlight of the MPP has been the intellectually stretching discussions that come at unexpected moments – whether discussing a policy insight with a classmate over lunch, or chatting with a faculty member after class.

“

There's no city in the world like Oxford, where you're surrounded by such intellectually curious people who want to have in-depth discussions about big ideas.

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Keir is pursuing the MPP thanks to full funding from the Political Leadership Scholarship. True to the purpose of his scholarship, he hopes to return to his home city after the MPP to enter into local politics, with the ultimate aspiration of running for elected office to serve his community in the future.

Keir is a Political Leadership Scholar.

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER IN YEMEN

“ Since October 2019 I have been running a humanitarian mission in Yemen. I lead a dedicated team of 30 Yemeni staff, including doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists and engineers. It is not the first armed conflict I have witnessed, yet the scale of suffering, the destruction, and the continuous collapse of peace negotiations have been shocking.

One night I was invited for a modest dinner with a few other humanitarians at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). At the time, there were only about 200 humanitarians in total in the entirety of South Yemen and, given extreme movement restrictions due to security risks, we all kept a low profile and barely ever met. At the dinner I met Mariam, the ICRC Field Team Leader, a fellow MPP alumna who had graduated just one year before me. We embraced each other, overjoyed at this stroke of serendipity.

In January 2020 I fell ill with a severe case of malaria. Misdiagnosed in a local hospital, I was not administered treatment as early as I should have been. Mariam heard of my deteriorating condition and ICRC stormed into my compound, where I was lying under an IV drip to reduce my fever, falling in and out of consciousness. Their intervention saved my life, with Mariam sitting at my bed and feeding me as I slowly returned to health.

In March, when the pandemic broke out and the borders started shutting down, humanitarians were faced with the dilemma of whether to leave on the last UN evacuation flights, or to stay. Even before the pandemic the Yemeni healthcare system had effectively collapsed, with half of Yemeni hospitals destroyed or non-functional due to airstrikes and active fighting, so we knew the impact was likely to be catastrophic. Nearly all UN international staff and international non-governmental organisations staff chose to leave. Mariam and I decided to stay.

My team worked to rebuild and run health clinics, hire and train medical staff, provide medication and medical equipment, assist in births, vaccinate children, and provide access to safe water and sanitation systems in malaria, cholera and now COVID-19 outbreak zones. Meanwhile,

Despite hopeless conditions, two alumnae find strength in the sense of community. Aleksandra Wisniewska (MPP 2017) tells the story.

Mariam and her protection team visited detention centres to ensure humane treatment of prisoners, promoted international humanitarian law amongst armed actors, organised food distributions and – in light of COVID-19 – undertook dead body management.

Despite the lack of official numbers, the death toll in Yemen has been unspeakable – COVID-19 added to thousands dying from malaria, dengue fever and the biggest outbreak of cholera recorded in history. Mariam and I checked on each other daily. Visiting each other regularly gave us a precious sense of normality. Our friendship, forged in such unlikely circumstances, gave us a little semblance of a home far away from home.

As months went by, the fatigue started to set in. Mariam was showing early physical signs of exhaustion and ended her mission after a year in Yemen. This time I was privileged to be by her side, assisting her with medical care and preparation for her return home.

I have no doubt that the bond we have formed through the hardships here will stay with us for life. In the midst of uncertainty and everyday challenges, her camaraderie was my lifeline. We spent many evenings remembering our days at the Blavatnik School, and discussing how we can apply what we have learned during our shared experience to tackle challenges such as the Yemen war in the upcoming years through more direct policy interventions.

My experience in Yemen shows just how far the School community reaches and highlights the strength of its ties. Both Mariam and I remain immensely grateful for what we have gained from being part of the School. As I continue to learn and take on new challenges, I try to carry the School's ethos and vision with me, to contribute to our common endeavour towards a world better led, better served and better governed.”

Aleksandra K Wisniewska (MPP 2017), who wrote this piece, is Head of Mission (Yemen) at Polish Humanitarian Action. Mariam Mikadze Giorgiadze (MPP 2016) is a former Field Team Leader at ICRC Yemen.

ALUMNI PROFILE

MORGAN MOHR

MPP 2018, American

Transitioning to a new era in US politics



Since February 2021, Morgan Mohr has been working in the Biden Administration as Associate Director for Strategic Planning in the White House's Office of Political Strategy and Outreach.

She is an experienced political campaigner: after working on several campaigns in her home state of Indiana, she served as Deputy Operations Director on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential election campaign in Florida. After completing the MPP, she worked as Chief of Staff for Pete Buttigieg's campaign as he sought the Democratic nomination for president, building a \$100m campaign that grew from 50 staff to 500. Most recently, she was Deputy State Director for Biden's presidential election campaign in Nevada, which successfully increased its margin of victory from 2016.

“

Growing up, my surroundings made me acutely aware of how government affects people's lives.

”

Reflecting on her reasons for pursuing a career in politics, Morgan refers back to her experience growing up in Indiana: “I went to school in a typical Rust Belt city that was devastated by the recession. Growing up, my surroundings made me acutely aware of how government affects people's lives. I believe that pursuing a path in politics is the most direct way for me to effect change.”

Morgan was a Rhodes Scholar.

ALUMNI PROFILE

ZEINA AMMAR

MPP 2013, Lebanese

Combatting exploitation of migrant workers in Lebanon



Zeina Ammar is the Advocacy and Communications Manager for Lebanon's Anti-Racism Movement, a non-governmental organisation seeking to improve the lives of migrant

workers in Lebanon. Driven by an uncompromising sense of justice, she supports migrant workers to self-advocate on the issues that are most important to them: Lebanon's *kafala* sponsorship system is at the top of the agenda. Widely criticised as a form of modern-day slavery, this system excludes migrant workers from labour laws and creates an exploitative power dynamic between migrant workers and their employers. “The system is entrenched in laws and policies, but also in the customs, traditions and cultural values of Lebanese society”, Zeina says. “In addition to policy change, our aim is to recalibrate people's mentalities towards migrant workers.”

As the dual crises of Lebanon's economic collapse and COVID-19 exacerbate the difficulties faced by migrant workers, Zeina's advocacy efforts have contributed to a dramatic increase in media coverage of the current system's injustices. “We are seeing increased willingness from policymakers to engage with the issue, as well as interest from new donors. Reaching the agenda of these parties was the first stage of the battle, and I hope to see change accelerate from here as we continue our efforts to tackle the oppression faced by migrant workers.”



ELLE CARTER AWARDED FUTURE LEADERS FELLOWSHIP

Helping government and other stakeholders commission better services.

The Government Outcomes Lab's research director Eleanor Carter has been awarded a Future Leaders Fellowship by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) worth up to £1.2m to investigate how government can better manage public services outsourcing.

In the UK in 2019, the fallout from the collapse of probation contractor Working Links saw considerable concern over outsourcing. Eleanor's work focuses on informing policymakers on how to deliver better social outcomes and greater value from public spending, "helping avert further public contracting fiascos and boost the quality of services experienced by some of the most disadvantaged members of society", she says.

Through the project *The governance of multi-sector public service delivery networks*, Eleanor will investigate if current government practice of contracting individual public service providers is fit for purpose in a world where people interact with a vast range of services. She explains: "In the past, governments have purchased a single service – the probation service being a good example. Instead, we need to focus on a network: a network of different provider organisations and specialist charities delivering coherent, holistic, wraparound support."

Eleanor is the first Future Leaders Fellow in Oxford's Social Sciences Division and only the third in the University. The UKRI's Future Leaders Fellowships scheme is designed to establish the careers of world-class research and innovation leaders across the UK.

Eleanor's project will mobilise experts from a range of disciplines and government bodies: policy researchers, economists and public law specialists, as well as policymakers in the UK's Department for Work and Pensions and the Government Inclusive Economy Unit within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

The Government Outcomes Lab (GO Lab) is a centre of academic research and practice established in 2016 as a collaboration between the Blavatnik School and the UK government. The GO Lab provides independent expertise and advice on how governments can develop fruitful cross-sector partnerships to deliver greater social impact and value.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) convenes, catalyses and invests in close collaboration with others to build a thriving, inclusive research and innovation system. It is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the UK government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

ALUMNI PROFILE

ZELJKO JOVANOVIC

MPP 2016, Serbian

Advancing Roma rights with the Open Society Foundation

Zeljko Jovanovic is Director of the Open Society Foundation's Roma Initiatives Office, where he seeks to address the social, economic and political challenges faced by Europe's Roma community. He oversees investments in skills and education (including facilitating the establishment of the Blavatnik School's Roma Education Fund Scholarship) and helps Roma youth to build a positive sense of identity in the face of stigma. At the collective level, he is working to mobilise the Roma community – Europe's largest ethnic minority – to engage in politics, civil society and the media, from encouraging members of the community to vote in elections or stand for office, to supporting the establishment and development of new Roma-led organisations.

Zeljko's own political engagement began during his teenage years as a pro-democracy activist under the autocratic rule of former Serbian president Slobodan

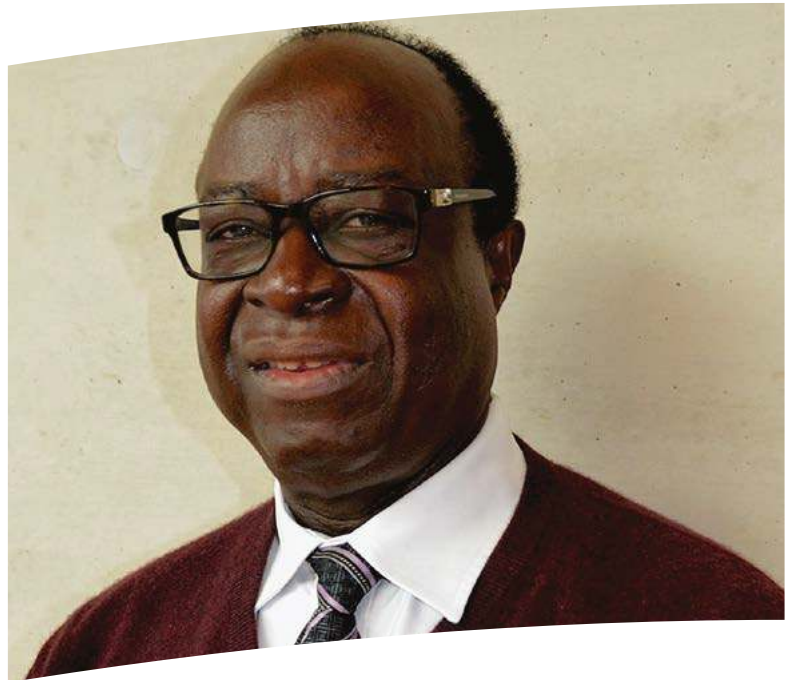
Milošević. "When regime change failed to bring positive changes for the Roma, I made the decision to commit to fighting for our community," he says. Since this time, he has seen mixed progress in improving the plight of the Roma community; an increased awareness of the issues they face has not translated into meaningful action from governments of today. "Amidst growing right-wing nationalism, disruption of liberal democracy and the crisis of trust in institutions, anti-Roma sentiment is growing. At this time, our mission to give a political platform to the Roma community, and to equip a new generation of leaders with the skills to drive change from within government, has become increasingly urgent."



“

What could not have been told from reading the long list of his achievements was his humility. He was a true public servant.

”



REMEMBERING BENNO NDULU

Economist and public leader Professor Benno Ndulu passed away in February 2021. He believed in the power of digitalisation for inclusive growth.

“Benno Ndulu exemplified outstanding public leadership. A brilliant, humane man with wonderful humour, whose incisive mind made sense of complex issues, and whose empathy kept him in close touch with all those he served”, says Ngaire Woods, dean of the Blavatnik School.

An economist and the former governor of the Central Bank of Tanzania, Benno was a Visiting Professor at the Blavatnik School and a senior advisor on our Digital Pathways at Oxford programme.

Benno’s involvement with the School began in late 2017 with the inception of the Pathways for Prosperity Commission on Technology and Inclusive Development, of which he became academic co-director with Professor Stefan Dercon. The Commission focused on providing evidence and policy recommendations about technology’s potential for inclusive growth to developing countries’ governments.

In 2020, as the Commission concluded its work and developed into the Digital Pathways at Oxford programme, Benno remained closely involved as a senior advisor to support the programme’s aim of facilitating inclusive digital transformation.

“That he was an extraordinarily prolific man was evident from his résumé – central bank governor, set up Tanzania’s revenue service, long-time World Bank senior economist, established a pan-African economic research network, was on President Ramaphosa’s economic advisory council”, says Elizabeth Stuart, Executive Director of Digital Pathways at Oxford. “But what could not have been told from reading the long list of his achievements was his humility. He was a true public servant, deferential to everyone in his urgent desire to support progress, when others in his position might have demanded deference to themselves.”

Just before he died, Benno was due to present an important study on how to tax digital systems in sub-Saharan Africa. His paper, in which he set out detailed evidence and guidance for African policymakers addressing the impacts of digitalisation on the economy, was presented by co-author Cornel Joseph and Stefan Dercon at a memorial event in March 2021.

SECURING A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR ALL

A range of individuals and organisations make our work possible.

The School's inception was thanks to a generous gift from our founding donor, Sir Leonard Blavatnik, and we have since then been privileged to receive support from a wide range of donors, funders, and friends of the School. Our work is only possible thanks to their generosity, allowing us to pursue the shared mission of a world better led, better served and better governed.

While we collaborate with several of our funders on shared goals, we retain absolute academic independence from all our donors and funders.



SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships help us to ensure that we can continue to bring together at the School the next generation of political and public leaders from across the world.

Funding from the following sources has supported the MPP classes of 2019 and 2020 and will support MPP students joining us in 2021:

- Aall Foundation
- Africa Initiative for Governance
- All Souls Hugh Springer Graduate Scholarships
- Anglo American Plc
- Beit Trust Wadham College Scholarships
- Blavatnik Family Foundation
- Chevening Scholarships
- Clarendon Scholarships
- Commonwealth Shared Scholarships
- Eisenhower Global Scholars
- Fondation MKS
- Islamic Development Bank Scholarships
- Jaime and Raquel Gilinski
- Jardine-Oxford Scholarships
- Jardine-Exeter Scholarships
- John Swire & Sons Ltd
- Kwok Scholars Association
- Lemann Foundation
- Luksic Family
- Oxford-CREAT Group Scholarships
- Oxford-Thai Scholarships
- Oxford-Pershing Square Scholarships
- Poler Family Foundation
- Political Leadership Scholarships
- Rhodes Scholarships
- Standard Bank Africa Chairman's Scholarships
- University College Burma Scholarships
- Vicky Noon Educational Foundation Oxford Scholarships
- Weidenfeld-Hoffman Scholarships
- Westpac New Zealand Spirit of Service Scholarships



OTHER FUNDERS

We are delighted to acknowledge the individuals and organisations who share the School's vision and continue to support our research and other projects, including:

- Africa Initiative for Governance
- Alfred Landecker Foundation
- Blavatnik Family Foundation
- Inamori Foundation
- Lemann Foundation
- Microsoft Corporation
- Mohamed Noah Foundation
- Tun Razak Foundation

In addition, a number of our projects are supported by research funding bodies, with such research income totalling almost £6m in 2020/21.

In addition to those listed here are individuals and organisations who have contributed anonymously.

“



Receiving a Luksic Family Scholarship allowed me to study in one the of the best universities in the world and meet an incredible class of wonderful, diverse and brilliant people. It truly made my academic dreams come true.

VALENTINA ROSAS, MPP 2018,
LUKSIC FAMILY SCHOLAR

”

“



The perspectives I have gained from the MPP will stay with me throughout my career, while the lifelong network of dear friends I have made along the way will be a constant anchor to the School and a guide for the rest of my life.

ARUN JAIN, MPP 2019,
WESTPAC NEW ZEALAND SPIRIT OF SERVICE SCHOLAR

”



ALUMNI PROFILE

JULIANA MOURA BUENO

MPP 2017, Brazilian

From climate change to COVID vaccines – driving social impact in Brazil

Juliana Moura Bueno is using the skills she developed during the Master of Public Policy as a senior political advisor in the British Embassy in Brazil, where she leads the domestic politics portfolio. Her work entails a mixture of relationship-building – at the governmental, legislative and judicial levels – and translating the Brazilian political landscape for the UK perspective. Juliana's work forms the backbone of the British mission in Brazil, supporting strategy delivery across a range of policy areas – from science and technology, to economics and trade. Driven by the opportunity to create social impact, she has

facilitated conversations between the UK and Brazilian governments on COVID vaccine delivery, and is working on preparations for the UK-hosted COP26 climate change conference, encouraging Brazil to adapt its climate strategies to meet best practice.

Juliana was a Lemann Scholar.



SPOTLIGHT ON: POLER FAMILY OXFORD SCHOLARSHIP

Every scholarship that we are able to offer to our students makes a world of difference – to the recipient, the School community and the communities they go on to serve. We were therefore delighted by the decision of the Poler family to generously endow a scholarship at the School, providing full support each year for an exceptional student from Africa. This is in addition to the support that the Poler family had already provided for the eight Poler scholars who we have welcomed to the School since 2016.

As an endowed scholarship, this support will be available to students for many years to come, ensuring that the financial support that the best prospective applicants need to study here is available from the outset.

We look forward to welcoming the first recipient of the endowed Poler Family Oxford scholarship to the School in September 2021.

PARTNER INSIGHT: THE LEMANN FOUNDATION

The Lemann Foundation strives to make Brazil a more just and equitable place by guaranteeing access to high-quality public education for Brazilians of all backgrounds while supporting the development of leaders committed to the social transformation of Brazil.

The School's partnership with the Lemann Foundation supports outstanding Brazilians committed to social change. Each year, the partnership provides funding towards tuition and college fees for students undertaking the MPP at the School. Brazilian change-makers consolidate their skills and knowledge here, with the ultimate aim of addressing questions and ideas that dominate Brazil's intellectual, academic and public service life. The Lemann scholars are committed to serving their nation while sharing lessons and best practice and establishing partnerships with their global peer group as part of the School community.

The programme also establishes fellowships for senior practitioners and academics to further develop their understanding of specific policy issues and solutions.

“



After four years of working in international development, I knew that it was the right time for me to pursue a graduate degree. The MPP programme at the Blavatnik School of Government was the programme that most aligned with my career goals, and without the Poler Scholarship, this opportunity would have been out of reach.

SALMA AIT HSSAYENE, MPP 2019,
POLER SCHOLAR

”

“



The MPP has been a unique opportunity for me to learn about the world. I have learned much about global geopolitics, and the challenges we are facing as an international community. Issues such as climate change, internet security and state capability have become much more familiar to me.

DAVI MAMBLONA MARQUES ROMÃO, MPP 2019,
LEMANN SCHOLAR

”

ALUMNI PROFILE

LOUISA CHINEDU-OKEKE

MPP 2018, Nigerian

Providing policy insight at the highest level of Nigerian government

For Louisa Chinedu-Okeke, the Master of Public Policy (MPP) provided a stepping stone from consulting for the public sector to a career at the heart of the Nigerian government, where she now works as Special Assistant to the President on Finance. Embedded within the Vice-President's office, she contributes to weekly economic reports that analyse policy impact and give the Vice-President a snapshot of the country's economy and finances. "The MPP helped me to understand the economy of the nation", she says. "The lessons on writing policy memos and briefs have also been invaluable for my current work." Recently, Louisa has been working with a committee set up to monitor and evaluate the

implementation of Nigeria's economic sustainability plan, created in response to the economic impact of COVID-19. With a focus on job retention and creation, this work enables her to play a role in alleviating the impact of the pandemic on Nigeria's citizens.

Louisa was an Africa Initiative for Governance (AIG) Scholar.





“



The MPP has been a truly pivotal and transformative experience in my life. It has ignited my desire for lifelong learning through public service.

NASIR MOHAMMED, MPP 2019,
AIG SCHOLAR

”

PARTNER INSIGHT: AFRICA INITIATIVE FOR GOVERNANCE (AIG)

Africa Initiative for Governance brings proven private-sector innovation, leadership and funding in a private-public partnership to attract, inspire and support future leaders of the public sector. The initiative enables high-calibre individuals to drive best practice standards of governance across Africa, ensuring sustainable economic growth and social justice.

Established in 2016, AIG's partnership with the Blavatnik School of Government is built on the vision of identifying outstanding West Africans who have the potential to transform the public sector in their home country. The AIG scholarships are a unique opportunity for five talented and committed students from West Africa to come to Oxford each year to study on the one-year MPP.

The scheme also supports a visiting Fellow of Practice, a senior public service official whose outstanding work has made a significant contribution towards improving public service either in their region, country or globally. The AIG Fellow spends time working with the academic community at the Blavatnik School and the University of Oxford, sharing their expertise and focussing on a topic of interest to their home country.

“



The Eisenhower Global Scholars Program is an exciting new way to expose more young American leaders to the rest of the world and to extend the extraordinary legacy of Dwight D Eisenhower, one of our greatest presidents and military leaders, to new generations of young Americans. We look forward to their taking their place in the ranks of Eisenhower Fellows who build bridges across borders and cultures.

DR ROBERT M GATES,
FORMER US SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
EISENHOWER FELLOWSHIPS CHAIRMAN

”

SUPPORTER VIEW: EISENHOWER GLOBAL SCHOLARS

“ Eisenhower Fellowships (EF) identifies, empowers and connects innovative American and international mid-career professionals through a transformative fellowship experience and lifelong engagement in a global network of dynamic leaders. Eisenhower Fellows make a lifelong commitment to enhancing understanding through direct dialogue to create a world more peaceful, prosperous and just.

The Eisenhower Global Scholars Program adds a vibrant new youth dimension, sending two American university graduates to the University of Oxford for an academic year of postgraduate study at the Blavatnik School of Government leading to a Master of Public Policy degree. The individuals must first win admission through the Blavatnik School's independent and highly competitive process. The programme then covers tuition, living and travel expenses, and welcomes the Global Scholars into EF's extensive global network of influential leaders, providing opportunities for mentorship, engagement and collaboration well beyond the academic year of study.

”

Kindly written by George de Lama, President of Eisenhower Fellowships

STUDENT PROFILE

NAOMI DUCAT

MPP 2020, American

Putting human rights on the national security agenda

A business and strategic communications specialist, Naomi Ducat worked as a management consultant for the US Department of Defense before embarking on the MPP. Working alongside leaders who aspired to transform their organisations for the better reinforced her desire to become an active participant in policymaking.

With a keen interest in working to strengthen and evolve the US's multilateral relationships, Naomi was motivated to apply for the MPP due to its international environment and outlook: "Studying on a programme that pertains to foreign affairs and international public policy while in a multilateral environment has been incredibly valuable. The diversity of viewpoints not only prepares us to better understand the perspectives of others, but also encourages us to question our own before we promote them in the collective environment."

The course structure, which combines theory and practice, as well as a multitude of opportunities for professional development, has enabled Naomi to cement her new knowledge and skills. She envisages using lessons from the MPP to recharacterise discussions around national security, highlighting topics that are often left off the agenda.

While pursuing the MPP this year has brought unique challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Naomi is making the most of the opportunity to draw lessons from the current circumstances: "I couldn't think of a more

“

The issue of human rights violations is critical to global security, but it's often compartmentalised or merely condemned symbolically. I hope to reshape the agenda and reprioritise key human rights issues such as human trafficking within the security context.

”

meaningful moment – one of collective vulnerability – to join a group of aspiring leaders from around the globe to examine some of our world's greatest policy challenges and dissect the underpinning principles shaping how we deal with the trials of our time.”

Naomi is an Eisenhower Global Scholar.



GOVERNANCE AND ADVISORY ARRANGEMENTS

Management Board

Responsibilities: To govern, manage and regulate the School's strategy, budgets and senior appointments

Members include: Dean, Heads of Divisions, Heads of Departments

Meeting frequency: Three times a year, in Oxford

Strategy and Resources Group

Responsibilities: Responsible for strategy and key resourcing decisions of the School

Membership: Dean, Vice-Dean, all tenured faculty, COO and Associate Dean, Director of Finance and Resources, Director of External Relations, Director of Development

Meeting frequency: Minimum of eight times a year

Senior Management Team

Responsibilities: Delegated decision-making responsibility for operational and urgent decisions in line with the direction set by the Strategy and Resources Group

Membership: Dean, Vice-Dean, COO and Associate Dean, senior professors, Director of Finance and Resources, Director of External Relations, Director of Development

Meeting frequency: Fortnightly

Academic Advisory Board

Responsibilities: Advise on all aspects of the School's academic activities, including programmes, student engagement, faculty recruitment and development, and academic life

Membership: Deans/ Presidents/Heads of School from prominent public policy institutions around the world

Meeting frequency: Termly conference calls

International Advisory Board

Responsibilities: Advise on the strategy and priorities of the School

Membership: Globally renowned leaders from all parts of the world

Meeting frequency: Annual meeting in Oxford, and ad hoc requests from the Dean for advice

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The Blavatnik School of Government was founded with a £75m donation from Sir Leonard Blavatnik, with funding divided into three parts for:

- Our building
- Operating costs
- A challenge/incentivisation fund to support and reward the attraction of new gifts

Since then, our work has been further supported by multiple funders and donors.

Source of research awards

The Blavatnik School continues to diversify its research portfolio. The tables below show the balance of funding sources supporting the School.

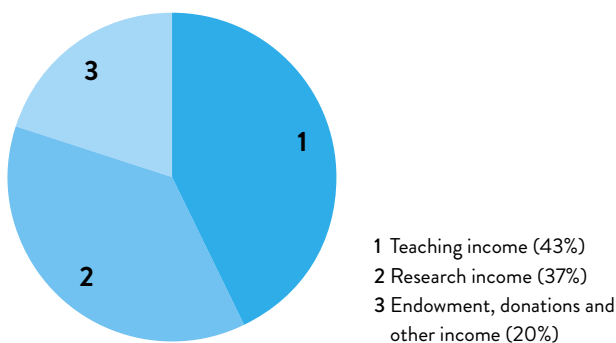
Key financial principles

- Ensure the School’s financial plans enable our mission and ambition.
- Ensure long-term sustainability through building an endowment, diversifying sources of income and generating new revenue streams.
- Ensure value for money and exercise vigilance on costs in all transactions.

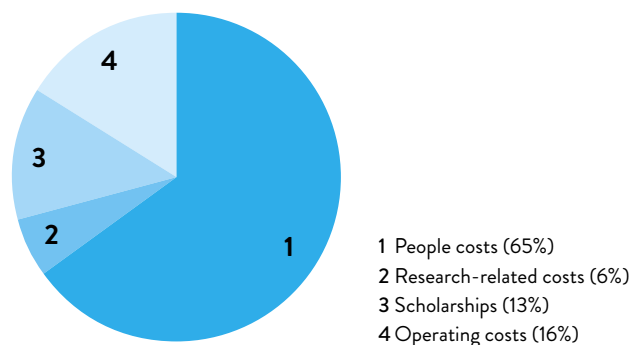
Highlights in 2020/21

- £6.9m in teaching related income
- £6m in research related income
- £5.2m invested in endowment
- 78% of MPP students and 100% of new doctoral students are fully or partially covered by a scholarship

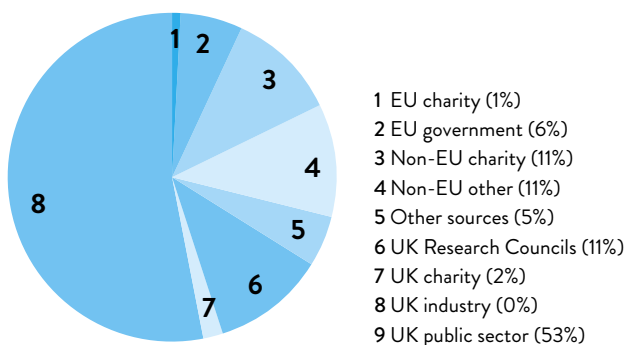
Blavatnik School income sources 2020/2021



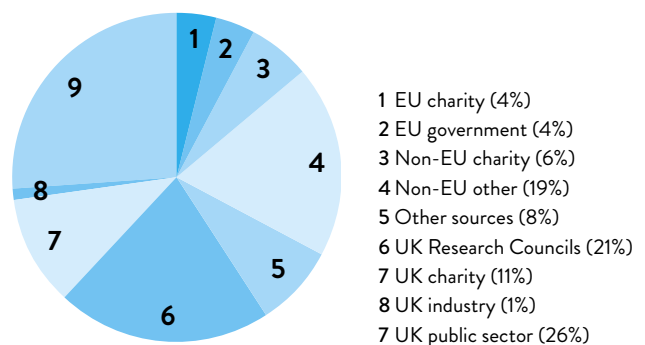
Blavatnik School expenditure 2020/2021



Research portfolio by value



Research portfolio by number of grants



ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

Our Academic Advisory Board in 2020–21 comprised leading figures in public policy education who advised us on all aspects of academic life.



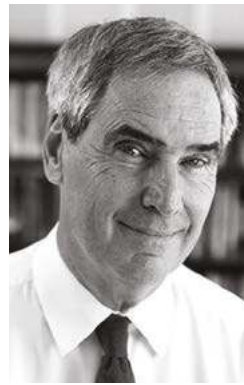
Yann Algan
Dean of the School
of Public Affairs,
Sciences Po



Douglas Elmendorf
Dean of the Harvard
Kennedy School



Henrick Enderlein
President of the
Hertie School



Michael Ignatieff
Rector and President
of Central European
University



Xue Lan
Dean of Schwarzman
College, Tsinghua
University



Vali Nasr
Former Dean of
Johns Hopkins
School of Advanced
International Studies
(demitted July 2020)



Enase Okonodo
Deputy Vice-
Chancellor of Pan-
Atlantic University



Danny Quah
Dean of the Lee
Kuan Yew School
of Public Policy,
National University of
Singapore



Cecilia Rouse
Dean of the
Princeton School
of Public and
International Affairs
(demitted March
2021)

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Our International Advisory Board in 2020–21 comprised globally renowned leaders who provided ambassadorship and advice on strategic direction.



John Browne
(Chair)
Former CEO, BP



**Aigboje
Aig-Imoukhuede**
Founder and
Chairman of
Africa Initiative for
Governance



Pêrsio Arida
Former Chairman
of BTG Pactual and
former Governor of
the Central Bank of
Brazil



Shobhana Bhartia
Chairperson and
Editorial Director at
HT Media Limited



Jin-Yong Cai
Former CEO of
the International
Finance Corporation
of the World Bank
Group



Mark Carney
Former Governor of
the Bank of England



**William Jefferson
Clinton**
42nd President of
the United States



Sally Davies
Former Chief
Medical Officer for
England



Mathias Döpfner
Chairman and CEO
of Axel Springer AG



Jaime Gilinski
Banker and
philanthropist



**Philipp
Hildebrand**
Vice Chairman of
BlackRock



John Hood
President and CEO
of The Robertson
Foundation



Andrónico Luksic
Vice Chairman
of the Board of
Directors of Banco
de Chile



Maria Ramos
Former Chief
Executive Officer
of ABSA Group
Limited



Eric Schmidt
Former Executive
Chairman of Google
and Alphabet



Hidehiko Yuzaki
Governor of
Hiroshima
Prefecture

The word "CONNECT" is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font. To its left is a light blue, semi-transparent rectangular shape that overlaps the text.

You can keep up to date with the School and our activities via our mailing list and social media channels.

Subscribe to our news or events newsletters which include information about lectures, talks and seminars at the School: www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/maillinglist

Read regular insights from our faculty, students and the wider School community: blogs.bsg.ox.ac.uk

Many of our talks and events are filmed or livestreamed on our YouTube channel:

 [YouTube.com/c/BlavatnikSchool](https://www.youtube.com/c/BlavatnikSchool)

You can also find us at:

 [Twitter.com/BlavatnikSchool](https://twitter.com/BlavatnikSchool)

 [Instagram.com/BlavatnikSchool](https://www.instagram.com/BlavatnikSchool)

 [Facebook.com/BlavatnikSchool](https://www.facebook.com/BlavatnikSchool)

 [LinkedIn.com/school/blavatnik-school-of-government](https://www.linkedin.com/school/blavatnik-school-of-government)



www.bsg.ox.ac.uk