

Blavatnik School  
of Government

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

Annual Report 2019–20



“

*Each new friend here is a  
new world, a new language  
and a new perspective.*

YAIR LEIBEL, MPP 2019

”

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# INTRODUCTION

**We bring this annual report to you in the midst of a pandemic. Nothing could highlight more starkly the life-and-death importance of good government to the lives of every individual. Improving government worldwide is the mission of the Blavatnik School of Government, and it has never felt more urgent.**

This report is split into two main sections: **Challenges** and **People**. The big challenges facing all governments, from climate change to the current pandemic, are only tractable if there are people dedicated to solving them, armed with the right tools, knowledge and networks. We bring deeply applied research and policy engagement to the big challenges; and we teach, train, convene and partner with the people who will grapple with them, today and in the future.

This report describes some of the ways we have done so across the year April 2019 to end of March 2020, plus some elements post-March relating to COVID-19.

As you will see in these pages, 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 its broadest sense, our community includes everyone who cares about good government and strong societies. If you are reading this report, it includes you. I hope you will find, in the pages that follow, both interest and inspiration.

*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

## **Paul Collier**

Professor of Economics and Public Policy

## **Pepper Culpepper**

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

## **Thomas Hale**

Associate Professor in Public Policy (Global Public Policy)

## **Miles Hewstone**

Professor of Social Psychology and Public Policy

## **Craig Holmes**

Departmental Lecturer in Public Policy

## **Emily Jones**

Associate Professor in Public Policy (Global Economic Governance)

## **Peter Kemp**

Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor of Public Policy

## **Nikolas Kirby**

Leverhulme Fellow in Philosophy and Public Policy, Director of the Building Integrity project

## **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

## **Kate Orkin**

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

## **Ingo Outes**

Departmental Lecturer in Economics and Public Policy

## **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**

Departmental Lecturer 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

## **Stewart Wood**

Fellow of Practice

Note: Faculty will sometimes be referred to by name only rather than by title in the report.



# CHALLENGES

**At the Blavatnik School, our research, teaching and engagement are led by the needs of governments and the people they serve. That means not only focusing on those challenges dominating the agendas of governments and their citizens, but ensuring our approach to them is rooted in the real needs of policymakers – whether we are undertaking research, or teaching or convening those who are (or will be) implementing solutions.**

Our approach is characterised by optimism. There are examples of success all over the world in tackling big issues and improving lives. We find them; do the research to understand deeply why and in what context they were successful; and then help policymakers from other countries understand whether their contexts would allow similar success – and if not, how they might create the right conditions.

As this translation from country to country shows, our approach is also 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.

Finally, we are practical. We are more interested in our evidence landing on the desks of policymakers in real time than having it appear in the pages of learned journals after the event – though there is plenty of the latter, thanks to the academic rigour characteristic of our faculty and researchers.

In this section you will find several examples of major topics occupying governments and their citizens. On each issue we undertake research, teaching and engagement with policymakers. These three areas of activity form a virtuous circle. We conduct **research** to obtain the evidence that will assist policymakers in making better policies and better decisions; we **teach** current and future policymakers (through degrees and executive programmes) to give them the skills and the insight to use such evidence well; and we **engage** with them so that they can challenge us – both on the conceptual frameworks our research generates, and on the relevance of the issues we study.

# SPOTLIGHT ON... COVID-19

First reported in China in December 2019, and declared a pandemic in March 2020, coronavirus has changed all our lives. On top of illness and death, it has led to unprecedented restrictions on movement and activity in countries all over the world – radically changing daily life and creating a huge economic shock. Blavatnik School researchers rapidly turned their research attention to many aspects of the situation, while our students and alumni have also been responding.



Photo: Robert Jaeger / APA / AFP via Getty Images

## TRACKING GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Our tool compares worldwide policy responses to the pandemic.

Understanding the effect of government responses to the virus, and whether increasingly strict measures can affect the rate of infection, has been the focus of the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. The project systematically tracks and compares policy responses across the world (for example, school closures or travel restrictions) and aggregates the scores. The data has provided insights into countries' readiness to exit lockdown by cross-checking it with recent WHO recommendations. The data is collected by a team of students and alumni across the whole University and across the world, under the leadership of the Blavatnik School's Tom Hale, Anna Petherick, Toby Philips, Beatriz Kira and Samuel Webster.

The tracker has received widespread media coverage – including in the *Financial Times*, *New York Times*, BBC News, and *The Economist* – and its data is being used and cited by governments (including heads of state in India, New Zealand and Trinidad and Tobago), businesses and international organisations alike.

## MAKING POLICY AMID UNCERTAINTY

**‘No-regret’ policies are those worth doing whatever happens next.**

Policy-makers are looking beyond the immediate crisis to how countries will emerge from lockdown and address the huge economic blow it has dealt. Writing for the Centre for Global Development about the uncertainty surrounding the health, economic and social outcomes of the COVID-19 crisis, Stefan Dercon, Professor of Economic Policy, outlines his approach: “Policymaking is as hard as it can possibly be. Measures that are sensible at the time they are taken may prove highly costly and ineffective in retrospect. No-regret policies are those that are worth doing now regardless of which scenario actually plays out.”

Stefan’s ideas for actions to take immediately focus on areas where developing countries could be proactive: from investing in community health care and vaccine development, production, and distribution; to preparing now for a better recovery for economies, firms, and families.

## BRINGING THE PANDEMIC INTO OUR TEACHING

**Policy unfolding in real time.**

COVID-19 has underlined the life-or-death importance of good government, and provides real-world, real-time examples of a wide range of policy challenges. You can read on p.58 about how we have incorporated the pandemic into our teaching at the same time as adapting our operations in the face of the closure of our building. Our Case Centre for Public Leadership was well placed to produce rigorous individual case studies at speed, including one about our local hospitals trust (see p.58).

## CHALLENGING MISINFORMATION IN SOUTH ASIA

**Our student tackles false coronavirus information.**

Challenging misinformation, panic and discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic with a particular focus on South Asian communities was the focus of our MPP student Serene Singh, who created the project Hello South Asians from scratch. Rallying the support of fellow students from 53 countries, the project has already created over one hundred pieces of informational material and infographics in more than 20 South Asian languages.

## POLICING THE PANDEMIC

**New restrictions on citizens mean new police powers.**

A concern brought up by the coronavirus for all countries is the role of police forces in enforcing the new restrictions on citizens. Chris Stone, Professor of Practice of Public Integrity, researched the increase in police powers, and how police are using their new powers in different countries. In some countries, the lack of preparation for the crisis has led to a strict (and in some cases brutal) police enforcement of emergency orders and new criminal laws, for example in the Philippines (where police were told to shoot anyone not respecting lockdown), Nigeria and South Africa. But while in some contexts the friction between police forces and citizens has increased, in others respect and appreciation for the police has been growing.

# SPOTLIGHT ON... PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

The performance of a country's public sector determines to a great extent the quality of the lives of its citizens, including their ability to access the most basic necessities. But while elements of public sectors in some countries are beacons of success, others have been too slow to innovate and incapable of collaborating effectively, either internally or with other partners. Our work on public service delivery, on civil service effectiveness, and on the performance of people in government aims to help.

## PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT

Recruiting, motivating and retaining brilliant people in public service.

Public servants must uphold high standards of transparency, accountability, commitment and professionalism while dealing with complex objectives, often against a challenging political backdrop. Recruiting, motivating and retaining brilliant, determined and entrepreneurial people in the public service is therefore an urgent but difficult challenge faced by countries across the world.

In October 2019 we launched the People in Government Lab, an interdisciplinary research centre focused on this global issue. The Lab's Executive Director is Margarita Gómez, an alumna of the Blavatnik School whose previous experience includes being principal advisor to the Minister of Public Safety in Mexico; designing reform of the military education system for the Mexican Army and Air Force; and founding the first policy lab in Mexico focused on applying behavioural sciences and experimental methods.

*The People in Government Lab is funded by the Brava Foundation.*

## HELPING THE PUBLIC SECTOR WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

The public sector does not operate in isolation – most governments collaborate, partner and outsource in the delivery of public services. How to do this best?

The Government Outcomes (GO) Lab at the Blavatnik School, led by Mara Airoidi, brings robust academic research to the question of how governments can best collaborate with the private, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors.

GO Lab has particular expertise in Social Impact Bonds, a policy tool aimed at improving social outcomes that has been pioneered in the UK, and more broadly in outcomes-based commissioning, in which services are procured against defined outcomes.

The team's work has had a direct impact on UK national and local government. Mara was consulted as part of a proposal for a \$100m International Education Outcomes Fund, which, if it goes ahead, will determine how a large chunk of UK aid money is spent. GO Lab thinking was also evident in the launch by the UK Treasury of a £40m 'Shared Outcomes Fund' in late 2019, for government departments to bid into.

At the regional level, GO Lab sits on the advisory board of the 'Outcomes for Londoners' programme, which is determining how the Greater London Authority can orient its £300m annual spend on adult education and skills towards outcomes. The team has helped shape the next phase of a £50m reform investment fund in Greater Manchester.

*GO Lab is principally funded through an ongoing partnership between the School and the UK government's Office for Civil Society.*



GO Lab helped shape the next phase of a £50m reform investment fund in Greater Manchester.

*Photo: Anthony Devlin / Getty Images*



## ENSURING SCHOOLS, ROADS AND HOSPITALS GET BUILT

A collaboration with Ghana's civil service leads to a new way to tackle the problem of unfinished infrastructure projects.

Abandoned public sector building projects – schools, roads, hospitals – are a common sight in many developing countries. This causes great frustration among citizens and donors, since infrastructure is crucial for social and economic development.

The abandonment of projects is often attributed to corruption. But Martin Williams, Associate Professor in Public Management, has shown that this is not the main issue.

Working with the government of Ghana to sift records of over 14,000 small local government projects, he found that one-third of projects that were started were never completed, consuming almost 20% of all local government investment expenditure.

He also found that this was not the result of corruption, but an inability to maintain consistent expenditure priorities.

In January 2020, the Ghanaian government began to create its own database on infrastructure projects as a direct result of Martin's work. The database will help them track projects to completion.

*Martin's research was funded by the International Growth Centre (IGC). The project came about following a request from the head of the Ghanaian civil service, Nana Agyekum Dwamena, and relied on extensive collaboration between researchers, the Office of the Head of the Civil Service and the Civil Service Training Centre.*

“

*One-third of projects were never completed.*

”

## COMPARING CIVIL SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

**An international comparison of government administrations supports learning between nations.**

Every country in the world has a group of officials responsible for supporting the core functions of government – from collecting taxes, to providing policy advice to senior ministers, to managing national public finances, to setting the pay and performance expectations for public servants. Yet often the role of these actors, and their impact on the lives of citizens, are hidden by a popular presentation of the activities of ‘the government’, a phrase which combines both the political leadership and the technocratic administration.

The International Civil Service Effectiveness (InCiSE) Index shines a spotlight on the role of these officials. It provides a relative assessment of the effectiveness of 38 civil services across 12 key activities and attributes. This puts information in the hands of citizens, increases the political salience of civil service effectiveness, and supports leaders in pinpointing the reforms they need to undertake and which countries they might learn from in designing and implementing them.

In May 2019, the Blavatnik School launched the second InCiSE Index. Our website hosts an interactive dashboard of InCiSE data that allows users to compare the effectiveness of any one of the rated countries against another, either overall, or within one specific function or attribute. We have had feedback from governments in France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand and the UK that they are using the results in targeting their reform efforts.

*The InCiSE Index is a collaboration between the Blavatnik School of Government and the Institute for Government. It is supported by the UK Civil Service and has been funded by the Open Society Foundations. Calum Miller, the Blavatnik School's Chief Operating Officer and Associate Dean, leads the project at the School.*



# SPOTLIGHT ON... INTEGRITY

Citizens all over the world want truly ethical government – and they are not convinced they are getting it. Ethical government relies 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.



## NEW PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE

Criminal justice expert working with South Africa on recovery from state capture.

In June 2019, Chris Stone (left) joined the Blavatnik School of Government as Professor of Practice of Public Integrity.

A lawyer by training and criminal justice expert, Chris has been an advisor to public defenders, police leaders and public prosecutors around the world, assisting at the creation of the Crown Prosecution Service of England and Wales, the National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa, and the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Chris was president and director of the Vera Institute of Justice 1994–2004; Guggenheim Professor of the Practice of Criminal Justice at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government 2004–12 (and faculty director of the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations there 2007–12); and president of the Open Society Foundations 2012–17, which he built into one of the largest philanthropic organisations in the world focusing on good governance, pluralism and human rights.

Chris has been working with the South African government for two years on recovery from state capture, the phenomenon whereby, under the Jacob Zuma presidency, one business family appeared to dominate not only government contracts, but how ministries operated.

## THE ROLE OF MORALITY IN POLICY

Our faculty bring frameworks from philosophy to bear on real-world dilemmas.

“In policy, there are a lot of questions that we tend to treat as technical but that are actually ethical”, says Jo Wolff, Alfred Landecker Professor of Values and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School and author of *Ethics and Public Policy: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Routledge), the second edition of which was published in August 2019. “Take train crashes. They cause, on average, a handful of deaths each year in the UK. Technologies exist that would save the lives of some of those who die. Yet these technical innovations would cost hundreds of millions of pounds. Should we spend the money? How can we decide how to trade off life against financial cost? These are moral questions.”

Such moral questions and trade-offs have come to the fore during the pandemic, as governments everywhere have to weigh up different harms – such as the immediate impact of coronavirus versus the impact on people of economic damage. Along with other philosophers at the Blavatnik School, Jo helps current and future policymakers apply frameworks from moral philosophy to real problems in order to navigate such dilemmas.

## VALUES WITHIN OUR TEACHING

Integrity is a foundational aspect of all we do, which is why the module in our Master of Public Policy degree that covers ethics and values is called Foundations and comes right at the beginning.

One of the consistent messages from senior government practitioners is that they want policymakers who are not just skilled, but also have a moral compass. The ‘Foundations’ module in the first term of our MPP, taught by our philosophers, challenges students to think deeply to explore their own basic moral and political outlook, and reflect formally on the values and goals that do, and should, apply in public policy. They are introduced to philosophical concepts and ethical dilemmas facing governments around the world.

We also include issues of integrity and the public interest in every executive programme – including as a daily element in our flagship programme for the leaders of public organisations (see p.69).

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## DIANA DAJER

MPP 2014, Colombian

Training Colombia's public servants to increase transparency in government



Diana Dajer (MPP 2014) is enthusiastic about using innovative methods to increase government integrity and build citizens' trust in government. She is the co-founder (with husband and DPhil 2014 alumnus Juan David Gutiérrez) and former director of Policéntrico, a start-up focused on participatory processes. "Participatory democracy has the potential to be a vital tool in getting people engaged across the spectrum of society," Diana says. She is now the Director of Colombia's Instituto de Estudios del Ministerio Público, which carries out research and training to improve public servant performance. This includes supporting efforts to tackle corruption and increase government transparency as part of the work of the Procuraduría General de la Nación (Office of the Inspector General), of which the institute is a part. "The MPP led to a string of excellent professional opportunities that have brought me to where I am today," Diana says. "Now I have this opportunity to see how we can better react to calls to create a more inclusive, transparent form of government in Colombia."

## THE INTEGRITY OF INSTITUTIONS

Working in Brazil and Australia to make sure integrity rests within institutions, not just individuals.

"I would argue that the most important form of public integrity is institutional, not individual", says Nikolas Kirby, applied philosopher and director of the Building Integrity programme at the Blavatnik School. "Our primary governance aim should be to create public organisations that do three things robustly and efficiently: pursue clear purposes, operate within the constraints of legitimacy, and keep their commitments. The integrity of individual public officers within an organisation is, in this framework, merely a form of stewardship for the integrity of their institution as a whole."

This conception of public integrity has informed a recent once-in-thirty-years government review of Australia's civil service, and is the basis for work in Brazil (see right).

*The Building Integrity programme is funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the Amersi Foundation, an ESRC IAA grant, and UKRI's Global Challenges Research Fund.*

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 Anti-corruption protest in Brazil.

*Photo: Victor Moriyama / Getty Images*



## WORKING IN BRAZIL

Policymakers in Brazil are working with Blavatnik School academics to understand corruption in the economy and to design training and frameworks that will improve integrity at federal, state and city level.

Over the past year, our academics have been working increasingly closely with Brazilian leaders. Two representatives in the Brazilian Congress, one a Blavatnik School alumnus, merged their staff to create a specialist unit to work on anti-corruption and integrity-building, taking advice from Nikolas Kirby and Anna Petherick (Departmental Lecturer in Public Policy).

In July 2019 Anna was nominated as one of five official scientific advisors to Brazil's Comptroller General's Office, providing advice to Comptroller General Wagner Rosario and his team.

Beyond the federal government, Anna and Nikolas have run several training sessions at the Lemann Foundation's offices in São Paulo, underlining the power of the School's partnership with the foundation (see p.80). Attendees have included officials from State Courts of Account and civil society representatives from across Brazil. Nikolas and Anna have also engaged with state governments, most recently in Rio de Janeiro.

## GENDER AND CORRUPTION

How corruption intersects with gender issues, including sexual harassment.

It is a known problem that sometimes sexual favours are solicited in return for other types of favours. Yet in most legal systems, this form of corruption is not in practice covered either under sexual harassment law or under anti-bribery law, with the latter sometimes only looking at hard currency rather than the currency of sexual favours. This problem – and potential ways forward – was highlighted by Anna Petherick in a 90-page report about the intersection of gender and corruption commissioned by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Her report included a section about policies to both promote gender equality and reduce corruption.

# SPOTLIGHT ON... TECHNOLOGY

No futurologist or sci-fi writer predicted just how radically individual lives and wider society would be reshaped by digital technology, the internet and the data explosion – and the pace of change is not slowing. How can governments keep up, both harnessing and regulating technology for the widest benefit? From tackling online misinformation to considering how the developing world can best harness technology, our community of researchers and alumni are looking at how the ever-changing technological landscape influences everything governments do.



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An engineer climbs a 5G network mast.  
*Photo: Wolfram Schroll / Bloomberg via  
Getty Images*

## TO HUAWEI OR NOT? THE 5G DECISION IN INDIA

China's role in 5G presents a dilemma for many governments. One of the case studies we use in teaching considers the issue with a focus on India.

In 2019–20, governments around the world confronted the same major technological decision: who should build their 5G networks? 5G, the fifth generation of mobile telecommunications, promised a new era that would connect massive numbers of objects at very high speeds, transforming societies and their economies. 5G promised technologies such as remote surgery and fully driverless cars. However, given the novelty of the technology, experts from the private sector, governments and academia had not yet formed a consensus about the potential risks of hyper-connectivity, nor how best to secure these new networks.

To build and maintain 5G networks, governments would require long-term trusting relationships with private players. Who policymakers chose as their partners and how they managed these relationships were not only technological decisions, but political ones. By 2019, Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei had emerged as the clear frontrunner in the race to build the world's 5G infrastructure, offering end-to-end solutions that were cheaper, faster and higher quality than those of its rivals. However, given the company's alleged close ties to the Chinese government, several Western intelligence agencies suspected the company would install 'backdoors' into its equipment, allowing the Chinese government to conduct espionage activities and disrupt national security. The company's strongest critic, the United States, banned the use of Huawei in its networks, urging its allies to do the same and use substantially more expensive alternatives.

Immersing students in this context, the case study from the Blavatnik School Case Centre on Public Leadership focuses on the Indian government's decision on whether to use Huawei in its 5G networks. If India acted fast, 5G could add \$1 trillion to the economy by 2035. But like other countries around the world, India's decision involved a series of trade-offs. With important diplomatic and economic relations with both China and the USA at stake, finding an answer to the 5G problem would prove challenging. Meanwhile, seeking help from experts with diverse specialties and priorities provided a plethora of conflicting advice.

In the Blavatnik School classroom, students consider how governments can build sustainable and trusting relationships with private-sector actors, particularly in the technology sector. As they work through the case decision, participants break the complex problem into manageable segments, select experts to call on, and learn how to parse and synthesise the advice they receive. Most importantly, the case prompts students to be creative in their problem-solving and replace dichotomous, zero-sum approaches with strategies for building mutualistic relationships.

The case was developed from a number of published and declassified government sources, in addition to interviews with key personnel from Huawei, its rivals, mobile-phone operators, the UK and Indian security establishment, and academic cybersecurity experts.

*More about the Case Centre for Public Leadership on p.58.*

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## AÏDA NDIAYE

MPP 2016, Senegalese

Driving Africa's digital development



As Public Policy Lead (Sub-Saharan Africa) at Facebook, Aïda Ndiaye works with governments, NGOs, businesses and civil society across Africa, representing their voices inside Facebook and helping them adapt to the challenges and opportunities of technological advancement. She works to build consensus on tackling pressing public policy issues in the technology sphere, from combatting misinformation to the regulation of big tech.

With a long-held interest in Africa's development, Aïda values the opportunity to drive programmes and policies that benefit governments and their citizens across the continent. She continues to play an active role in the Blavatnik School community, including collaborating with the Pathways for Prosperity Commission research programme (see right). Ongoing mentorship from Blavatnik School faculty plays a significant role in guiding Aïda as she works at the forefront of the digital technology revolution in Africa.

*Aïda was an Oxford-Poier Scholar*

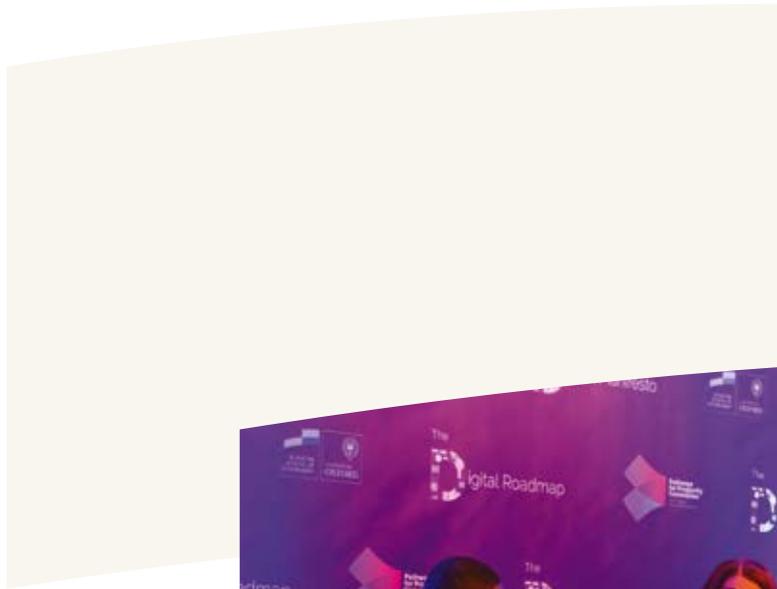
## A DIGITAL ROADMAP FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD

**Concrete steps developing countries can take to maximise the benefits and minimise the liabilities of digital technologies – so that everyone can capture the upside in this new era.**

In 2018, discussion of technological change was focused on richer countries and was extremely negative: all about job losses caused by automation. In just two years, culminating in January 2020, the Pathways for Prosperity Commission, based out of the Blavatnik School, led the transformation of this narrative to a more optimistic and pragmatic conversation. The impact of their work is directly seen in the current actions of governments and multilaterals, including in South Africa, Ethiopia, Mongolia, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the World Bank.

Over two years, the Commission engaged with academics, governments, policymakers, civil society activists and private sector leaders, going to Nairobi, Washington, D.C., Delhi, Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, Kigali, London, Ulaanbaatar, Johannesburg, Addis Ababa, New York and Beijing. This engagement and analysis resulted in five major reports, a final report (The Digital Roadmap), a global Digital Manifesto, which distilled two years of enquiry into specific recommendations on how to implement an inclusive digital economy, and a policy resource, the Digital Economy Kit.

In combination, these reports have been downloaded almost 12,500 times, and have been covered by leading international outlets including the *Financial Times*, BBC, *Le Monde*, CNN International, CNBC Africa and Bloomberg, as well as multiple outlets across Africa and Asia.



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The Pathways for Prosperity Commission Digital Roadmap report launch. Left to right: Bonney Tunya (moderator), Melinda Gates (Pathways for Prosperity Commission Co-chair) and Strive Masiyiwa (Pathways for Prosperity Commission Co-chair).  
 Photo: Khadija Farah | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

## Impact on multilaterals

The World Bank is using the Commission's work to shape its thinking (for example in the forthcoming World Development Report) and its investments (the Digital Economy Kit work has played into its grant-making priorities for the world's poorest countries). Trade Ministers of the Commonwealth Secretariat are shaping their plans around the Commission's research. The African Union's draft digital transformation strategy leans heavily on Pathways language and concepts, as does the International Telecommunication Union's Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development.

## Impact in the developed world

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has reframed its whole digital strategy around one of the Pathways reports, with an insider noting that "the Commission is doing what we at DFID would want to do, if only we had the time". Mastercard Foundation, one of the largest philanthropic organisations in the world, is using Pathways research to shape its investment decisions for youth employment – calling Commission reports "their bible". The Centre for Global Development (CGD) in Washington, D.C. has set up a new programme on data governance, explicitly taking up the baton from the Commission. The World Economic Forum is establishing a new Platform on Sustainable Development in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, partially based around Pathways analysis, launched in Davos in January 2020.

Photo: Ishan Tankha /  
Pathways Commission



## Impact in the developing world

Most importantly, Pathways for Prosperity has had direct impact in the developing world, where the practical Digital Economy Kit has been refined through pilot phases in Ethiopia, Mongolia and South Africa. In these phases, the Commission supported dialogues with key stakeholders, local partners and governments, to help them agree on priorities for national digital strategies.

In South Africa, the work has been tied into President Ramaphosa's Public-Private Growth Initiative, and there is now a clear, realisable strategy for the creation of half a million jobs in globally traded services. This plan, which was agreed by the Department of Trade and Industry, the industry association for business outsourcing (BPESA), and Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, includes a provision that one in five of the jobs created will go to excluded young people.

In Mongolia, a digital strategy was produced in partnership with the Cabinet Secretariat, which plans to use it to draft new laws and propose new investment projects. The Chief Cabinet Secretary said that the level of engagement and co-creation during the dialogues inspired

him to establish a Digital Council, which is a public-private initiative aimed at building a cohesive approach to digital transformation in the country – in other words, to continue the work that the Pathways Digital Economy Kit started.

The emphasis on a whole-economy approach resonated in Ethiopia, too, where the Ministry of Innovation and Technology is submitting the digital strategy to the Ethiopian Cabinet to take forward. Now the government wants to use the digital economy to signal to the world that the country will be more open in regulatory terms.

In addition to these three pilot countries, Benin, Malawi and Bangladesh are also starting to adapt and use the Digital Economy Kit to develop their own digital strategies. A range of other countries are in discussions to do the same. The Commission has signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN Technology Bank to roll out digital assessments in their partner countries. The Commission also has an emerging partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA): working together to find the best way to integrate the Digital Economy Kit into its digital identity and digital economy programmes.

## Taking the work forward

The Pathways for Prosperity Commission's work will now be taken up by a five-year research and policy engagement initiative at the Blavatnik School, partnering with a South African university (WITS) and an Indian think tank (IDFC), among others, with a focus on the governance of technology and a continued emphasis on inclusion. This new programme, Digital Pathways at Oxford, is already working with officials in Benin to upgrade their digital plans.

*The Pathways for Prosperity Commission was established to examine how the digital age can benefit the world's poorest people. It was co-chaired by Melinda Gates, Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, and Zimbabwean entrepreneur Strive Masiyiwa; and founded and managed by the Blavatnik School of Government, under academic co-directors Stefan Dercon, Professor of Economic Policy, and Benno Ndulu, former Governor of the Central Bank of Tanzania.*

*Digital Pathways at Oxford is supported by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and UKRI's Global Challenges Research Fund.*

### ALUMNI PROFILE

## JONATHAN PADILLA

MPP 2016, American

Creating an inclusive digital economy



Jonathan Padilla (MPP 2016) is an Associate Director at the Stanford Future of Digital Currency Initiative, helping central banks deploy new technologies in the fields of digital currency and emerging tech. "With the development of digital technologies, we are seeing the next massive upheaval of the financial system," he says. "We need to ensure that the system is designed to lift people up and create opportunity." The international and multidisciplinary perspectives Jonathan gained during the MPP have helped him to collaborate with international partners across the technology and financial sectors. He recently joined PayPal as Head of Blockchain Strategy, where he leads a technology team contributing to the creation of an inclusive digital financial system.

*Jonathan was a Start-Up Nation Central Scholar*

# SPOTLIGHT ON... EDUCATION

**Education is the foundation of success, both for individuals and societies. But even before COVID-19 took 1.6 billion children out of school, over 800 million children and youth were not on track to learn the skills needed to thrive now and in the future. Progress on getting children into school (or, post-pandemic, back into school) is not enough: many are in school, but are not learning. This learning crisis demands urgent action – and we are acting, through programmes at the Blavatnik School as well as the work of our wider community.**

## MOVING FROM BEING IN SCHOOL TO LEARNING IN SCHOOL

**Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) is a £43m project that is refocusing the conversation about education.**

“It has been fantastic to see, over the life of the project, a growing global momentum to solve the learning crisis”, says Clare Leaver, RISE Research Co-ordinator and Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School. “Government officials are seeking out our expertise in an effort to raise learning outcomes for all children.”

Rather than focusing on the individual effects of supplying more books, buildings, or years of school, RISE investigates how school systems succeed or fail depending on how well all of their components, including infrastructure and people, work together. It is a multi-donor, multi-country project jointly led by the Blavatnik School.

In 2019, RISE increased its research base by adding a team in Nigeria to teams in Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tanzania and Vietnam, and bringing four additional team members to the Blavatnik School base, who synthesise Oxford-based research and research from the country teams.

## Embedded in Ethiopia: The Ethiopia RISE team has a desk in the Education Ministry

When Ethiopian State Education Minister Tsion Teklu Maru joined the Education Ministry in May 2019, RISE research was on the list of reading materials that formed part of her induction. She subsequently invited the RISE Ethiopia country research team to run a series of orientation workshops for her team on their research. Now, the RISE team has a desk within the Ministry.

Thanks to this close relationship, the team has been able to put evidence at the heart of education reform in Ethiopia. They have helped assess implementation of current goals; reviewed current policies; informed policy reform; and helped create an information flyer and presentations explaining the reforms, increasing understanding at all levels, from the central government to individual districts.

*RISE is supported by £36.8m in funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), 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. The programme is led through a partnership between the Blavatnik School and Oxford Policy Management. Clare Leaver, Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School, is Research Co-ordinator; Calum Miller, the Blavatnik School's COO and Associate Dean, is Co-Director; and Lant Pritchett, also based at the Blavatnik School, is Research Director.*

## WORKING OUT HOW BEST TO DELIVER EDUCATION POLICIES

### Even the best policies fall down if their delivery goes wrong. What works?

While the international community has focused on building knowledge about what needs to happen to improve learning (including through our RISE programme, above), less attention has been paid to how to do it across central, district, regional and school administrations.

It has been suggested that one way is for a government to use a 'delivery approach' – that is, an institutionalised process or structure that aims to improve policy implementation by combining a set of managerial functions in a novel way. Increasing numbers of governments across the world have been adopting delivery approaches, but to date there has been almost no independent research on their effectiveness, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

The Blavatnik School and the Education Commission are partnering for three years to tackle this evidence gap. The DeliverEd Programme has launched applied research projects in five countries using a delivery approach – Ghana, Pakistan, Tanzania, Jordan and India.

*The Education Commission and the Blavatnik School of Government are working with the University of Toronto to direct the DeliverEd research across five countries. Clare Leaver, Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School, is the Research Co-Director with Martin Williams, Associate Professor in Public Management at the Blavatnik School, Calum Miller, Associate Dean and COO of the Blavatnik School, and Karen Mundy, Professor of International and Comparative Education at the University of Toronto. DeliverEd is supported by £3.9 million in funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). Leading research organisations are responsible for each country study.*

### STUDENT PROFILE

## HANNAH FOXTON

MPP 2019, British

A former teacher advocating social equality



After completing a BA in English Literature at Oxford, Hannah Foxton spent two years as an English teacher in a secondary school (for students aged 11–18 in the UK) in Hull, Northern England, as part of the Teach First Leadership Development Programme. The programme recruits and trains teachers to work in schools with high levels of deprivation in an effort to close the attainment gap between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. Passionate about tackling social and economic inequality, Hannah is using the MPP to understand how effective policymaking can address the multiple underlying factors that keep people in poverty.

*Hannah is a Clarendon Scholar*

*See also profiles of current students Shabana Basij-Rasikh (MPP 2019, p.53), who founded a school for girls in Afghanistan; Jennifer Opare-Kumi (DPhil 2019, p.54), who spearheaded the national scale-up of a numeracy and literacy intervention in Botswana; and Yair Leibel (MPP 2019, p.44), who founded a school for refugees.*

# SPOTLIGHT ON... NATIONALISM AND MINORITY RIGHTS

75 years ago, the world watched in horror as the genocidal scale of the persecution and murder of Jews and other minorities in Germany became apparent – the culmination of the extreme populist and nationalistic Nazi ideology. In 2020, nationalism and populism are in the ascendant once more in many countries. Protecting minority rights as a way of standing up to oppression is an ongoing project – one that has seen huge advances in many places, but regression in others.



## ALFRED LANDECKER PROGRAMME

### Values for a better democratic future.

With antisemitism on the rise and minority rights increasingly under threat all around the world, ensuring the collective protection of vulnerable groups is not just a challenge of the past. The Alfred Landecker Programme is focused on understanding these threats, as well as recommending and advocating policies that strike the right balance between the protection of the most vulnerable and the celebration of distinct national cultures, in a way that benefits the integrity of democratic institutions.

Professor Jonathan Wolff (left) is the inaugural Alfred Landecker Professor of Values and Public Policy, heading research on values for a better democratic future. In his lecture on occasion of the programme's launch, Jo considered parallels between the 1930s and the 2020s, the values and ideologies that underlie these trends, and how they can be countered in tolerant democratic societies.

The programme was made possible thanks to the Alfred Landecker Foundation, established in honour of Alfred Landecker, who died at the hands of Germans when he was deported in 1942.

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*The Alfred Landecker Foundation is dedicated to promoting a deeper understanding of the mechanisms behind the infringements of minorities' rights, based on the understanding that this is what nationalists and populists have thrived on in the past and do so again. We support a future based on shared values and respect for the individual, where antisemitism and discrimination of minorities have no place – and the Blavatnik School, with its emphasis on values and integrity in public leadership, and its work on strengthening the institutions of civil society, makes the perfect partner for us.*

PROFESSOR DAN DINER, CHAIR OF THE ALFRED LANDECKER FOUNDATION

”

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## ALEX OLIVARES

MPP 2017, Chilean

Advocating for Chile's indigenous population



Alex Olivares (MPP 2017) works in the Chilean government's Indigenous Matters Coordination Unit to improve the lives of Chile's 1.5 million indigenous people. Drawing lessons from Australia's work on closing the indigenous gap in health and life expectancy, Alex is developing a participatory process to create a 10-year programme addressing key policy challenges on indigenous matters. Working with various stakeholders – from government ministries to individuals in the indigenous community – Alex uses the communication and negotiation skills he developed from the MPP's applied modules every day. "The final policy challenge was the most insightful, relevant and practical experience in my professional life," he says. Alex is motivated by the opportunity to use public policy to establish a long-term legacy that will have a positive impact across Chile.

*Alex was a Zegarac-Pollock Family Foundation Scholar and a Louis Dreyfus-Weidenfeld and Hoffman Leadership Scholar*

## NATIONALISM AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

Nationalism is not intrinsically good or bad – its outcomes depend on context and narrative.

In Europe and most of the Western world, the rise of nationalism greatly concerns those who see it as paving the way to the destruction of democratic values as witnessed in the early 20th century. It's a perspective strongly guided by history and emotional experience. But at the very same time as the Second World War was ravaging Europe, former colonial countries such as India and Indonesia were starting to engage in the struggle for self-determination, often appropriating and adapting nationalism as a tool to create and unify new democracies. Nationalism has in some cases contributed to the creation of public goods too – for example, in post-war Britain national solidarity powered the creation of the National Health Service; in the US inclusive national ideals have supported the expansion of civil rights and women's rights.

Nationalism is "the most powerful political ideology in the world today", says Maya Tudor (above), Associate Professor of Government and Public Policy. Starting from the principle that nationalism is a resource that is not intrinsically good or bad, Maya explores the conditions under which nationalism helps build a democracy.

Her conclusion is that national narratives built on race, religion or ethnicity are less likely to sustain democracy. This is because a definition of citizenship based on such fixed categories creates 'second-class' citizens who are targeted in moments of crisis.





## STUDENT PROFILE

## BENJAMIN IGNAC

MPP 2019, Croatian

Standing up for  
Roma rights

Prior to the MPP, Benjamin Ignac was a communications and advocacy manager at the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), working on strategic litigation in an effort to raise awareness of rights violations and generate legal and policy change. Ben's work covered issues from racial profiling and police violence to access to education. The latter is an issue of which he has personal experience; Ben, a Croatian Roma, spent his first two years of primary school in a segregated system. "I had two separate experiences in the same school in terms of the quality of education," he says. "Desegregation and access to quality education are still major issues facing the community." Ben is using the MPP to further explore his interests in social justice and environmental policy, building on an academic background in geography. "I'm in a privileged position within the Roma community, and I want to use this position to think about how I can improve the lives of those who are less advantaged."

*Benjamin is a Roma Education Fund Scholar*

# SPOTLIGHT ON... CLIMATE CHANGE

We inhabit a planet in great peril. Climate change is already altering lives and landscapes, and is set to cause enormous suffering without radical action. How do we limit and adapt to it, and what are the right approaches when national governments and multilateral bodies aren't moving – or can't move – fast enough? These are burning questions for leaders and citizens alike, and many members of the Blavatnik School community are grappling with what is arguably the number one challenge of the 21st century.

## SMALL PLAYERS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

17 international sub-state initiatives have the potential collectively to reduce global emissions by nearly one third.

Cities, regions and businesses have a vital role to play in our efforts to prevent and mitigate the devastating impacts of climate change. Thomas Hale, Associate Professor in Public Policy, has been examining how these non-state actors (NSAs) contribute to the reduction of global emissions, and working to give them a platform in UN and national decision-making.

NSAs have the potential to help countries achieve – or even over-achieve – their commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement, according to a 2019 report co-authored by Tom and launched at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September 2019. NSAs that collaborate through joint international initiatives, often working alongside governments, are able to maximise their impact; the 17 high-performing initiatives analysed in the report had the potential to reduce emissions by an amount equivalent to nearly one-third of global greenhouse gases. This would be enough to keep the global temperature rise within 2°C,

rather than the 3°C or more that national pledges under the Paris Agreement are on track to reach.

While these statistics offer a glimmer of hope, further action is needed to limit global temperature rises to 1.5°C (the Paris Agreement's central aim). "National governments must incorporate commitments from NSAs into their Paris Agreement plans," says Tom. At the UN Climate Change Conference COP25 in December 2019, he worked with negotiators to help draft a mandate to extend NSA inclusion in the UN climate process.

*'Global climate action from cities, businesses and regions' was co-authored by researchers from the Blavatnik School of Government, the NewClimate Institute, Data-Driven Lab, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and the German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik. The research was funded by the ClimateWorks Foundation.*



## TIPPING THE BALANCE TOWARDS A POST-CARBON SOCIETY

**The right interventions in socioeconomic systems could tip things in the right direction.**

Climate change ‘tipping points’ usually refer to a critical threshold after which the disastrous impact of climate change becomes irreversible. Less research has been directed towards identifying tipping points in the opposite direction – towards a post-carbon economy.

As part of their work on the Post-Carbon Transition Project, hosted at the Oxford Martin School, Blavatnik School faculty Eric Beinhocker (top right), Professor of Practice in Public Policy, and Thomas Hale, Associate Professor in Public Policy, have been working to identify sensitive intervention points in socioeconomic systems to trigger these positive tipping points.

Eric has also called for the creation of a carbon abolition movement, whereby deadlines putting a complete stop to carbon emissions by mid-century or sooner are enshrined in national law, consistent with the commitments made in the Paris Agreement. In articles for *Democracy Journal* and *The Guardian*, he argues that this would cause companies to shift their business models and financial markets to allocate capital in ways that would unleash a wave of innovation. Tom, in turn, has outlined a theory of ‘catalytic cooperation’, explaining how a critical mass could ‘tip’ laggards into action.

### STUDENT PROFILE

**BYRON FAY**

MPP 2019, Australian

**Mitigating climate change impacts in developing countries**



Byron Fay has dedicated his career to addressing climate change, leading on technology transfer for Australia in the Paris Agreement negotiations, and, as an advisor to the Co-Chair of the Green Climate Fund Board, managing the approval of \$1.2 billion worth of funding for private-sector-focused climate projects in developing countries. Byron is using the MPP to deepen his understanding of how to build broad, mutually beneficial coalitions across business, government and the community to unlock the growth and resilience potential of enhanced climate action.

# SPOTLIGHT ON... STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

Standards and regulations are technical elements of good governance, but underpin trust and legitimacy. If rules are corruptly or poorly designed or enforced, then the entire social system for economic and political organisation is undermined. How do we ensure integrity and fairness in the way standards are set and regulated?



## GUARDING THE GUARDIANS

### Restoring integrity to the audit industry.

At least since the 2008 financial crisis, the audit industry across the world has been subject to intense public scrutiny – how did the gatekeepers of capitalism miss some of the biggest governance failures in recent times? Over the past two years, this scrutiny has resulted in a number of government inquiries in the UK into the future of audit.

Karthik Ramanna's independent report for PwC in 2019, 'Building a culture of challenge in audit firms', gained widespread attention and provided the opening quote in the UK government's Brydon Review on the future of auditing, as well as being cited numerous times within it.

Karthik had argued that the scrutinising role of the auditor has been corrupted by high-margin consulting profits, which had also been used to capture the auditing regulators. His wider work looks at how, in certain industries, regulation is 'captured' by self-interested parties. "When the pool of people with the relevant expertise to sit on regulatory bodies is very small – as is the case in accounting, financial trading, auditing and large swathes of the tech industry – those regulatory bodies become populated by those from the industries they are regulating", he explains. "Even if the individuals no longer have direct commercial interests, they will tend to sympathise with the sector, leading to weak regulation." Karthik describes the broader phenomenon whereby certain areas of life are dominated by a small number of people with relevant expertise as "thin political markets".

## REINING IN THE BANKS

Pepper Culpepper, Blavatnik Chair in Government and Public Policy, is leading Banklash, a €2.5m project examining the interplay between bank regulation, public anger and the content of the mass media in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, with lessons for how emotions and politics are important even in technical areas of regulation.

*Banklash is funded by a European Research Council grant.*

## HOW BIG-INCOME RULES AFFECT LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

### What happens when rich countries set the standards.

Emily Jones (left), Associate Professor of Public Policy (Global Economic Governance), has been leading a team looking at how banking standards set by rich countries with trillion-dollar banks affect lower-income nations. With case studies from 11 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, the team shows how regulators adapt standards to the local context, and suggests how the rules of the game can be written to benefit everyone. Emily's book on the topic, *The Political Economy of Bank Regulation in Developing Countries: Risk and Reputation*, was published by OUP in March 2020.

Emily and the team have presented the research to, among others, the International Monetary Fund, central banks in Ghana and the UK, Ministries of Finance in Ghana and Nigeria, and the UK's Department for International Development. The research was cited in the World Bank's flagship Global Finance and Development Report for 2019–20.

*Emily's book can be accessed for free anywhere in the world thanks to funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).*

# SPOTLIGHT ON... POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

The steady reduction in global poverty since 1998 has been a success story. However, more than 700 million people, 10% of the world's population, still live in extreme poverty, and the COVID-19 pandemic will dramatically worsen this, turning a 22-year tide of progress. The UN estimates that by the end of 2020, a further 8% of the world's population – half a billion people – could be pushed into destitution. Applied research on tackling poverty, then, matters more than ever. With a strong focus on development economics, Blavatnik School researchers have long been at the forefront – while many of our students and alumni are on the front line of the fight.



Photo: Phil Clarke Hill / Corbis via Getty Images

## COGNITIVE DROUGHTS

Income uncertainty depletes mental attention, compounding the many challenges faced by the world's poor. How can the psychological implications of this uncertainty be mitigated?

Uncertainty has long been a central feature of life for the world's most economically disadvantaged. Income uncertainty has risen by around 30% in developed countries such as the US, mostly for the poor. In most developing countries, farming is still the dominant occupation and it is riddled with rainfall uncertainty. What are the psychological effects of being preoccupied with worries induced by such uncertainty and risk, and how do they impair decision-making?

Anandi Mani, Professor of Behavioural Economics and Public Policy, addressed this question in a field study with farmers facing significant drought risk in the Ceara region of Brazil. The research demonstrated that the mere risk of a drought significantly depletes mental attention, causing IQ test performance to drop from that of a typical high-school student to that of an elementary school one. "Such depletion of mental attention could explain many seemingly self-defeating behaviours of the poor, from lower productivity

and tardiness with appointments, to fewer conversations with their children which are linked to poorer vocabulary and school learning", Anandi says.

Anandi is exploring the implications of these findings for the design of insurance products, which can help mitigate the adverse cognitive effects of drought risk. She is also investigating how adoption of proven profitable agro-technologies may help reduce the psychological pressures from income uncertainty.

*Anandi's research has inspired the creation of an app. The Daily Money Platform, from US-based fintech company Even, allows employees to access wages they have already earned before payday, and helps them budget.*

*Anandi is also advising a UK pension scheme which is interested in applying the research design in her 'cognitive droughts' working paper to study the challenges of financial uncertainty for self-employed people.*



## UNCONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS

Direct cash payments to poorer households can combat persistent poverty.

Unconditional cash transfers are direct payments of money to economically disadvantaged people that impose no requirements on the recipients. “These transfers give people the agency to work out how to meet their own needs”, says Kate Orkin, Senior Research Fellow in Behavioural Economics at the Blavatnik School. “Recipients often use the money to address issues that might not even be identified by more top-down poverty intervention methods.”

Kate has been working alongside Stefan Dercon, Professor of Economic Policy, Mahreen Mahmud, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Development Economics, and Richard Sedlmayr (DPhil 2015), a recently graduated DPhil student, to improve cash transfer design.

One piece of research is a randomised control trial in 415 Kenyan villages on whether adding a short motivational video and goal-setting exercise made cash transfers more effective.

Social psychology and other work shows that psychological constraints inhibit some poor households from undertaking high-return investments; the video and goal-setting is intended to encourage such investments. In a successful trial run by Stefan and Kate in Ethiopia, viewing similar videos increased the likelihood that recipients used new agricultural technologies, saved and accumulated assets, and spent a higher portion of income on children’s education.

*Carried out in partnership with GiveDirectly, this research is funded by Fidelity Charitable, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Good Ventures, the Fell Fund, and UKRI’s Global Challenges Research Fund. The work comes under the Mind and Behaviour Research Group at the Centre for the Study of African Economies, based at the School. The group brings together economists, psychiatrists and psychologists to investigate the psychological impact of living in poverty and use findings to improve policy.*



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Trial participants in Homa Bay, Kenya, wait for a village meeting ('baraza') with the NGO GiveDirectly to get information about their cash transfer programme and agree to allow the NGO to work in the village. Meetings are conducted before villages receive cash transfers. *Photo: Kate Orkin*

## ALUMNI PROFILE

### CHRISTOPHER TWISS

MPP 2015, British

Coordinating civil society action on malnutrition

Christopher Twiss (MPP 2015) works with over 3,000 civil society organisations across 53 countries as Head of the Civil Society Network at the Scaling Up Nutrition

Movement. He leads a team delivering training and programmatic support to the network's members, enabling them to press for policymaking and investment on malnutrition, and hold governments to account on their commitments. "A lot of the most significant global challenges can be better addressed by focusing on human development and, in particular, the first 1,000 days of life," he says. The summer project and applied skills elements of the MPP gave Christopher the professional experience he needed to apply for jobs in the development sector: "My time on the MPP enabled me to become someone who can influence policy, rather than remaining an outside observer."



## ALUMNI PROFILE

## MEHREEN SHAHID

MPP 2013, Pakistani

Combatting maternal mortality in Pakistan



Mehreen Shahid (MPP 2013) is the founder of Safe Delivery Safe Mother (SDSM), an NGO combatting the leading causes of maternal mortality in Pakistan.

Around 14,000 women die during childbirth in Pakistan every year, with the loss of excessive blood after delivery (postpartum haemorrhage, or PPH) being the leading cause; yet around 70% of these PPH cases are preventable and treatable. As part of SDSM's work, Mehreen developed a two-part curriculum on the causes, prevention and treatment of PPH, which is delivered to government-deployed health workers. The curriculum includes a behavioural skills module, which addresses the socioeconomic constraints that are often the primary factor preventing maternal healthcare access, and seeks to ensure that a skilled birth attendant is present at every delivery. The curriculum has been officially integrated into the training undertaken by all health workers in the maternal health department of Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province.

SDSM has trained over 700 health workers so far, which will affect over 200,000 deliveries annually. It is now seeking to address other leading causes of maternal mortality and to expand its work nationally. "When people ask me when my journey started, I tell them it began with a scholarship to study at the Blavatnik School," Mehreen says. "I was given the opportunity to build my skills and am now pursuing a mission I strongly believe in – and one that is urgently needed in Pakistan."

*Mehreen was an Annemarie Schimmel Scholar*

## Digital technology in developing countries

The Pathways for Prosperity Commission's work on digital technologies in developing countries has highlighted the concrete steps developing countries can take to maximise the benefits and minimise the liabilities of digital technologies (see 'A digital roadmap for the developing world', p.18).



## THE ROLE OF CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

**Stability is central to prosperity.**

State fragility is a key driver of extreme poverty, as well as of mass migration, terrorism and trafficking. The International Growth Centre, a partnership between the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government and the London School of Economics (LSE), runs a programme on state fragility and has also established a Council on State Fragility, composed of eminent world leaders who will build consensus on new approaches. The Council's co-chairs are Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former president of Liberia; David Cameron, former UK prime minister; and Donald Kaberuka, Special Envoy for the African Union Peace Fund, Rwanda's former finance minister, and seventh president of the African Development Bank (2005–2015). Members include Mo Ibrahim, Olusegun Obasanjo (President of Nigeria 1999–2007), and the Blavatnik School's Paul Collier. Rafat Al-Akhali, Fellow of Practice for Strategic Projects at the Blavatnik School and a former Yemeni minister, is the Convenor.

"In contexts of state fragility, we face radical uncertainty – and identifying effective approaches to address state fragility requires experimentation and active learning", says Paul Collier. "This is what we hope to achieve in our work with national and international actors."

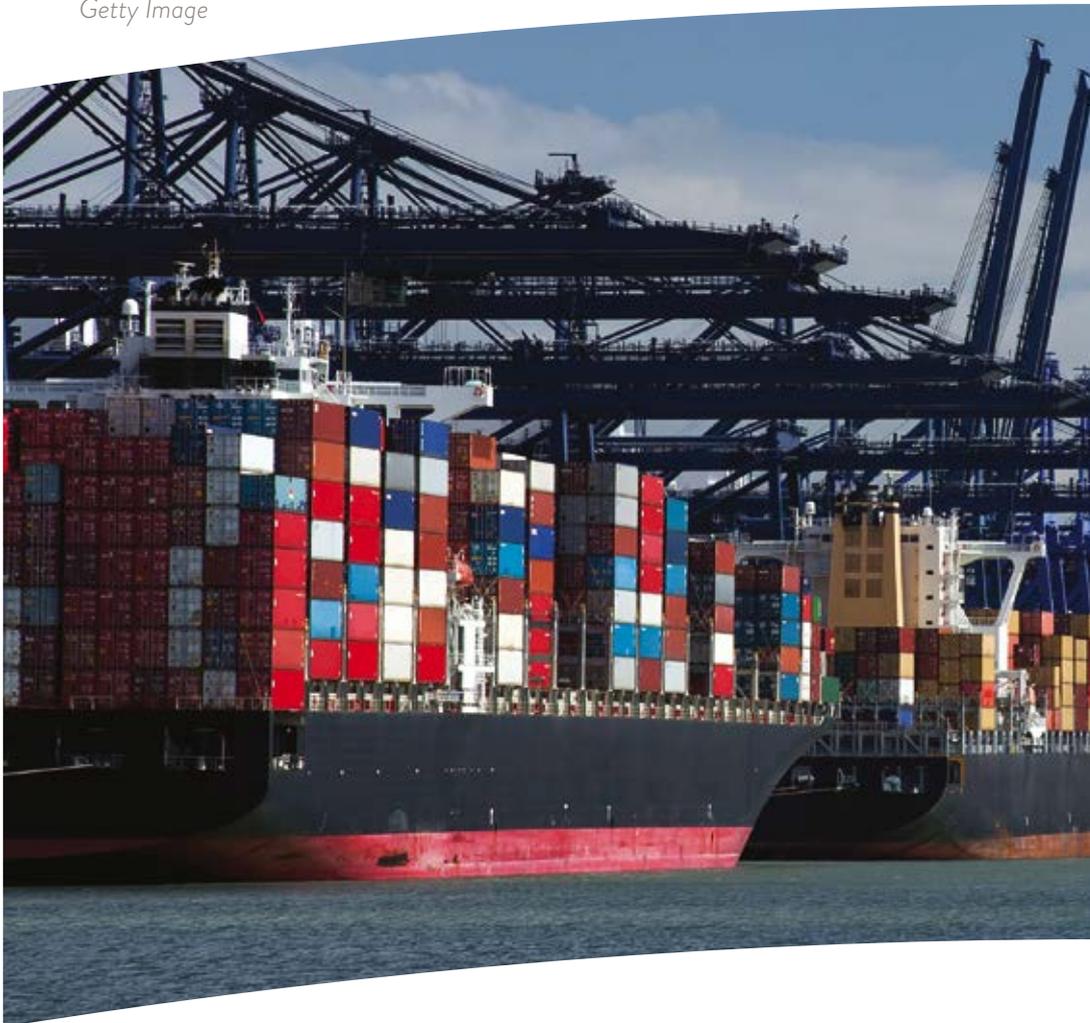
Under this banner, the Blavatnik School once again hosted in 2019 the Development Finance Institution (DFI) Forum (above), with high-level representatives from 31 DFIs and academic institutions, to explore practical solutions to the challenges of working in fragile and conflict-affected environments. DFIs play a vital role in these environments by supporting private sector development and reducing the risk of private investment. DFIs in attendance included the African Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance Corporation and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

*See also 'Spotlight on conflict' (p.42).*

# SPOTLIGHT ON... TRADE

COVID-19 has caused an unprecedented disruption to global trade – but the year leading up to it was hardly normal, with the escalating trade war between the US and China; the World Trade Organization in crisis; citizens' growing disillusionment with globalisation; and the UK leaving the world's largest trading bloc (albeit under transition arrangements). At the Blavatnik School, we continue to work on trade and global economic governance.

Photo: John Lamb/The Image Bank via  
Getty Image



## AFTER BREXIT: WHAT DOES UK TRADE POLICY LOOK LIKE?

**The UK has left the EU. When transition arrangements end, it will need to have struck deals with all its trading partners.**

“The UK government has set itself a more ambitious trade agenda than any other country in recent history”, says Emily Jones, Associate Professor of Public Policy (Global Economic Governance). “Brexit means the UK must determine its own trade policy and negotiate trade deals with other countries for the first time in more than 45 years.”

There is much at stake. “Trade is the lifeblood of the UK economy. It allows us to be one of the biggest nations of tea drinkers and to export Minis around the world. The terms we negotiate will fundamentally affect our ability to maintain high environmental, labour, human rights and animal welfare standards, and to meet our international commitments on climate, the environment and sustainable development.”

Emily, along with Ngaire Woods, our dean, has been helping the UK government on this challenge and opportunity, as well as engaging in public commentary. Ngaire is a member of the Trade and Economy Panel for the UK’s Department for International Trade, and Emily sits on two government advisory committees for the department – one on how to ensure that UK trade policy supports development, and one on how to ensure trade is environmentally and socially sustainable. Emily also helps train UK civil servants on trade policy and stakeholder engagement.

Ngaire and Emily’s public comment and expertise has appeared in various media outlets, including BBC Radio 4, the BBC World Service and the *Financial Times*.

### More engagement on trade

- Emily Jones has been advising on EU-Africa trade relations as part of a European High Level Group on Trade Policy Innovation that draws in senior officials as well as private sector representatives from European and African countries.
- Emily Jones spoke at a World Trade Organization Advanced Trade Policy Course on a panel alongside ambassadors from Sweden and Guyana.





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*Photo: World Economic Forum /  
Boris Baldinger*

## DEAN IN DAVOS

Our dean, Professor Ngaire Woods, moderated three sessions at Davos in January 2020 that all touched on trade within a wider context. 'The United Kingdom after Brexit' asked how the country could allow for greater cohesion with its neighbours and the world. 'Strategic Outlook on Africa' looked at how on how policymakers, business and innovators will shape the future of the continent. 'Democratic capitalism: dead end or shared destiny?' noted that 60% of voters feel that elections foster little change, and asked about the way forward for democracy and capitalism.

Sir Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, also spoke at Davos, in a peer-to-peer exchange with Colin Mayer of Oxford's Saïd Business School exploring the future of the corporation.

# SPOTLIGHT ON... CONFLICT

**Tens of millions of people live under the scourge of war. On top of the direct casualties and misery, conflict weakens or destroys governance, stifles economic development, and creates mass movements across borders, rendering people homeless and stateless while leaving the countries they arrive in struggling to cope. In 2019–20 the Blavatnik School community made contributions around peace-building, strengthening fragile states, supporting refugees, and improving and implementing the international law that governs conflict and prohibits atrocities.**

## BLAVATNIK SCHOOL WORK HELPS MAKE STARVATION OF CIVILIANS A PROSECUTABLE WAR CRIME

**In December 2019 starvation of civilians in internal armed conflicts was made a war crime, prosecutable by the International Criminal Court – a major step forward for the protection of civilians, underpinned by Blavatnik School input.**

In the war in Yemen, far more people have died from lack of essential supplies than from bombing. Starvation of civilians is an all too frequent feature of armed conflict – sometimes as an unintended consequence of military activities, but sometimes as a method of warfare.

There is a broad consensus that this is morally repugnant, and condemnation is reflected in many instruments of international law; but previously the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court only included starvation in *international* conflict.

Switzerland had proposed an amendment to apply it to non-international armed conflicts too. The Blavatnik School's Professor Dapo Akande and colleagues in the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict (ELAC), based at the School, advised the Swiss government on how to frame the amendment, and then organised a series

of events aimed at persuading states of its merit, including at the annual meetings of the Assembly of States Parties to the Statute of the International Criminal Court and of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Rome Statute was amended by unanimous decision.

*ELAC worked with the Swiss government, the World Food Programme and the International Bar Association's War Crimes Committee on the Rome Statute amendment.*

*ELAC organised the events on Soleimani and Yemen covered on p.43 and p.45. ELAC receives funding from the Planethood Foundation and has also had funding from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Irish Department for Foreign Affairs for work relevant to the areas covered in this report.*



## WAR IN YEMEN

Considering the ‘world’s worst humanitarian crisis’ with a Yemeni ex-minister now based at the Blavatnik School.

As the war in Yemen enters its fifth year, the warring parties have made gradual progress towards implementing the UN-brokered Stockholm Agreement, which includes demilitarising the city of Hodeida and allowing for a safe humanitarian corridor. Yet violence rages on in areas not covered by the agreement, deepening what the UN calls the ‘world’s worst humanitarian crisis’. The rising toll of civilian deaths and risk of famine have also heightened public scrutiny of UK and US military support to the Saudi-led coalition.

A panel event at the Blavatnik School in June 2019 assessed the prospects for peace, the role of international actors, and the ethics of arms sales that perpetuate the conflict. Rafat Al-Akhali (above), Fellow of Practice in Strategic Projects at the Blavatnik School of Government and formerly Yemen’s Minister of Youth and Sports, spoke alongside other School experts.

## STUDENT PROFILE

## YAIR LEIBEL

MPP 2019, Israeli

Founder of a school for refugees



Yair Leibel is the former headteacher of the International School of Peace for refugee children in Lesbos, Greece. He helped establish the school as part of a collaboration between a Jewish youth movement and a Palestinian youth group. Following initial trust-building efforts with refugees on the island, the school became an important part of life for the community – not only for the students, but for the wider network of parents, neighbours and teachers, who are all recruited from the community of refugees on the island. Reflecting on the challenges he faced in the school's fundraising and development efforts led to Yair's decision to embark on the MPP. He is now developing a deeper understanding of how institutions and policymakers operate, with a view to forging meaningful partnerships to drive change on a larger scale.

Yair remains optimistic about the potential of creating more peaceful, just societies across the globe: "Lesbos showed me that people – whether Syrian, Afghan, Iranian, Israeli – are capable of working together, and most people want to do the right thing. We need to make better use of our resources and promote the idea that there is room for everyone." After the MPP, Yair hopes to return to the Middle East and invest in trust-building between the various communities in Israeli society and the wider region.

*Yair is a Public Service Scholar and a Zegarac-Pollock Family Foundation Scholar*

Photo: Mission Photo / Eric Bridiers



## RENOWNED WAR CRIMES PROSECUTOR JOINS BLAVATNIK SCHOOL

**Stephen Rapp, who made history bringing perpetrators of atrocities to justice, joins us as a Visiting Fellow of Practice.**

Stephen Rapp is a Visiting Fellow of Practice 2019–20 at the Blavatnik School, attached to the programme on Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict. He was Ambassador-at-Large heading the Office of Global Criminal Justice in the US State Department (2009–15); Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (2007–9), where he led the prosecution of former Liberian President Charles Taylor; and Senior Trial Attorney and Chief of Prosecutions at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (2001–7), where he headed the trial team that achieved the first convictions in history of leaders of the mass media for the crime of direct and public incitement to commit genocide.

## ADVISING GOVERNMENTS ON THE LAW OF CONFLICT

During 2019–20 Dapo Akande, Professor of Public International Law, has advised governments and multilateral bodies around the world on the law of war.

Selected examples include...

- In May 2019, in a ruling regarding prosecution of then Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) adopted some of Dapo's ideas relating to the immunity of heads of state from the jurisdiction of the Court.
- In summer 2019 Dapo was one of three academics invited to appraise the work of the ICC at a meeting of ICC states parties organised by the UK Foreign Office. It was the beginning of a process of review, likely to lead to reforms to how the Court operates.
- Dapo is the international law adviser in the ongoing enquiry into the conduct of New Zealand Defence Forces during the conflict in Afghanistan, and in particular the actions of the New Zealand SAS during Operation Burnham in 2010, in which it has been alleged that they committed war crimes against civilians.

## RESPONDING TO THE US KILLING OF A TOP IRANIAN GENERAL

In January 2020 a leading Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani – considered by many to be the second most powerful person in Iran – was assassinated in a US drone strike approved by President Donald Trump. It caused outrage in Iran and beyond; provoked Iranian missile attacks against US bases in Iraq; and marks the first time the United States has carried out a strike against a military official of another country outside of a declared war zone.

In early February the School held a public event on the assassination chaired by Tom Simpson, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy and former Royal Marines Commando, and involving doctoral student Brianna Rosen (DPhil 2018), who previously supported the US National Security Council on Middle East policy issues. There was a lively discussion on the legality and morality of the strike, and its implications for the future of targeted killing and drone warfare.

Dapo Akande, Professor of Public International Law, was widely quoted in the media on the legality of the killing, and participated in an event in the UK Parliament on the implications for international order.

# SPOTLIGHT ON... THE NEW GENERATIONS

Those born after 1980 face starkly different economic, social, technological and environmental prospects than previous generations. In a host of areas, they are demanding change. Most importantly, they are leading change, both from within government and outside it.

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Maria Soledad Nuñez Mendez,  
Blavatnik School alumna and former  
Housing Minister for Paraguay.

Our eighth Challenges of Government Conference examined the generational shift that politics is experiencing around the globe and the impact of changing conditions and prospects on younger people.

Over two days in autumn 2019, the conference brought together close to 500 delegates to discuss the issues that mattered most to those under 40, from technology to climate change to generational equality.

We convened a diverse group of activists, thinkers, politicians and practitioners from many countries and from multiple generations; from bestselling authors to current and former young government ministers. The vast majority of invited speakers were under the age of 40 and several were graduates from our own Master of Public Policy degree. We heard from one of the youngest ministers in Asia (Syed Saddiq); young former ministers from Paraguay and Yemen; mayors from Liberia, Afghanistan and Germany; and young elected politicians from Canada and the UK.



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Kate Forbes MSP





# PEOPLE

**The first part of this annual report touched on some of the big challenges facing governments and citizens. At the Blavatnik School of Government, we teach, train, convene and partner with the people who will deliver the solutions, now and in years to come.**

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.

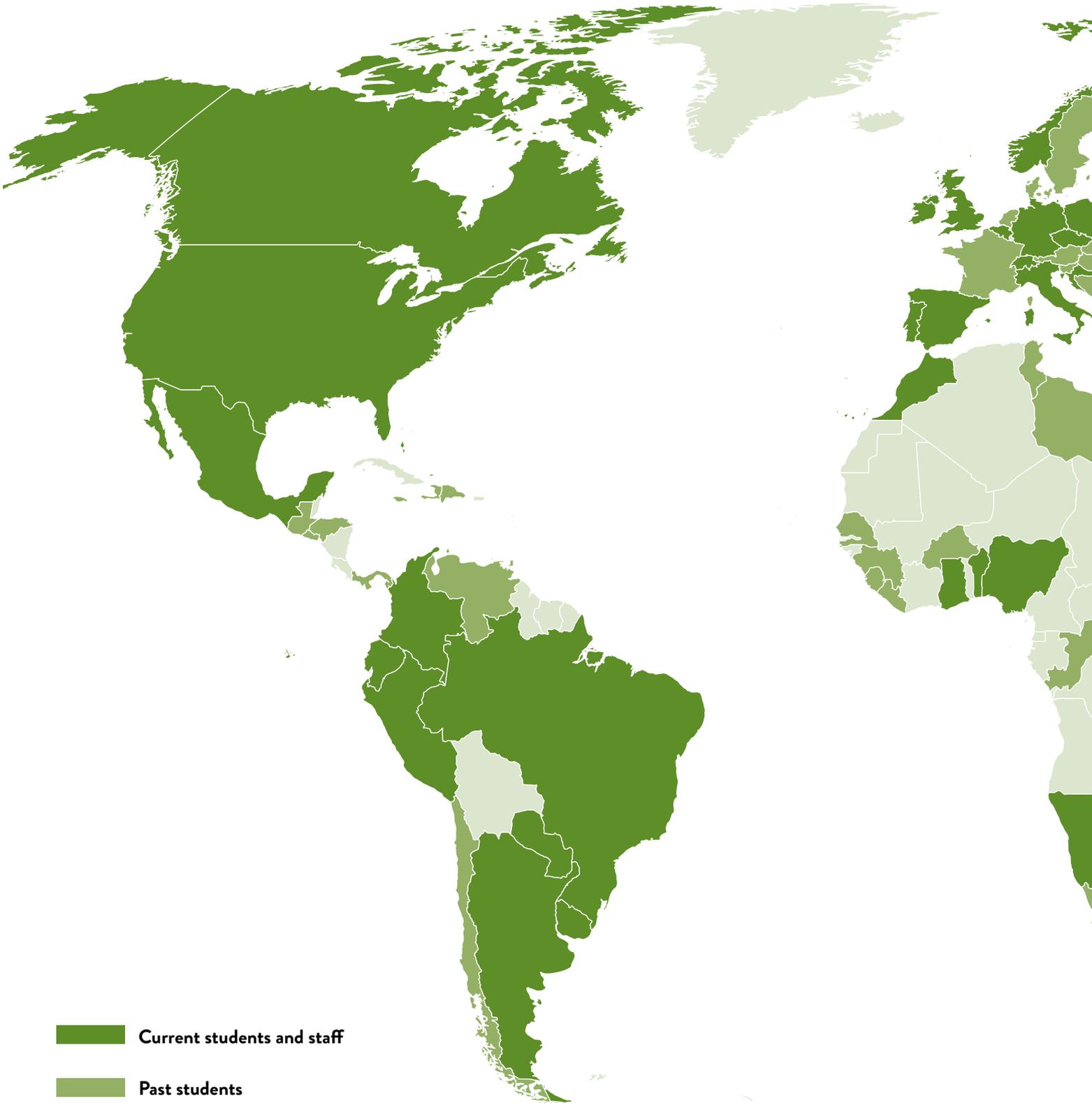
Our own community – academic and non-academic staff; students; alumni; partners and supporters; and our wider network – is a mission-driven collective of people seeking positive change in the world. Some are based within the School; others are practitioners on the front line of better government; others are in organisations who share our vision. Together we pursue the mission of a world better led, served and governed.

At the heart of our approach is bridge-building: forging unlikely coalitions across divides, 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.

In both our degrees and executive programmes, we aim to create an environment in which people from very different backgrounds and positions might come together in a trusted space to explore ideas – without prejudice and from first principles. We bring individuals together from vastly different countries, backgrounds, professions and educational disciplines, to learn together and from one another, and in doing so to challenge their previous assumptions.

As these pages will show, our students, executive participants, staff, visitors, partners, supporters and alumni are diverse and geographically wide-ranging. But in the most expansive sense, we consider our community to be anyone worldwide who cares about public policy and good government. Public outreach is therefore a crucial part of our activity. In 2019–20 we ran around 50 public events, as well as webinars that allowed easy engagement across the world. Our digital and media engagement connects us to an even wider audience. We have 16,000 followers on Facebook and 15,000 on Twitter; while 155,000 hours of Blavatnik School content was viewed on YouTube in the past year. Our faculty's expertise has appeared 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



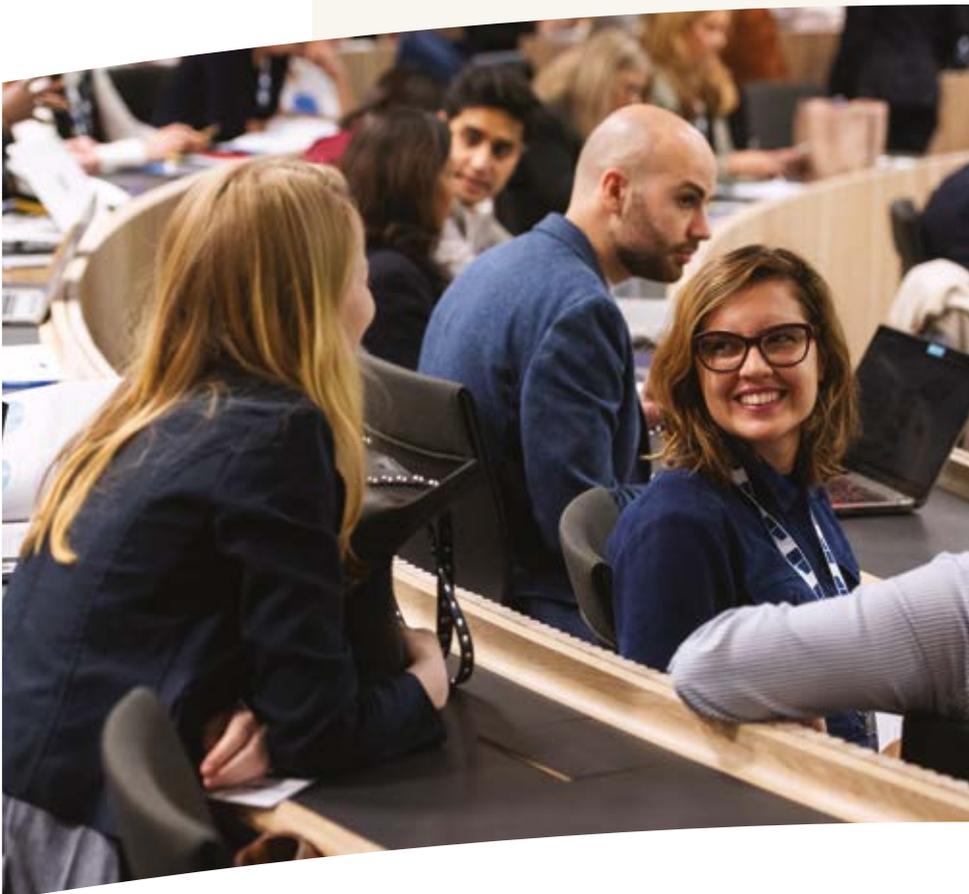


# OUR DEGREE STUDENTS

**Our degree programmes equip those who are passionate about public service to address some of this century's most complex public policy challenges, and draw together an 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. Students range from brilliant recent graduates who show great promise for public service to those who are already senior in their careers. The class of 2019 represents 50 different countries and territories and ranges in age from 22 to 49. All have won 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 are researching issues from health to virtual schooling to energy systems and climate change. They bring diverse and in many cases senior experience to the School.



## STUDENT PROFILE

## SHABANA BASIJ-RASIKH

MPP 2019, Afghan

Championing women's education

Shabana with staff and students from the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA) at an all-school assembly.

*Photo: SOLA*



Born and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan, Shabana Basij-Rasikh was just six years old when the Taliban gained power, banning girls' education and forbidding women from going out in public without a male chaperone. Shabana's parents sent her and her sisters to a secret school, facing the risk of severe repercussions in the case of an encounter with the authorities. "There were a few close calls, and I used to beg my parents not to make us go to school," Shabana says. "It wasn't until later that I gained an appreciation of the immense sacrifices my parents made for me to receive an education."

At the age of 15, Shabana gained a place on a one-year study exchange programme in the US. She was struck by the way that girls in the US could take their education for granted: "I wanted Afghan girls to have this same level of certainty for their future." This experience planted the seeds for her future work as the founder of the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA), an all-girls boarding school for students in grades 6 to 12 (from the age of 10 to 18 years old). The school accepted its first grade 6 students in 2016 and has welcomed a new intake of first-year students every year since then. Recruiting students is a delicate task, with safety and security considerations creating major obstacles; despite this, SOLA's current students come from 26 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces – a statistic Shabana cites as one of her greatest achievements. The impact of SOLA's outreach efforts is visible at the start of the school term, when new students and their families are welcomed to the school: "It's powerful to see girls from across the country begin to form bonds, and to see parents who have taken a massive leap of faith have their minds put at ease by interacting with parents of older students."

SOLA's mission is to equip its students with the skills to become Afghanistan's future changemakers. Having dedicated her own career to addressing Afghanistan's

challenges, Shabana came to the Blavatnik School to better understand how to build partnerships with policymakers: understanding how they think, the constraints they face and the opportunities for effective collaboration. Shabana highlights the diversity of the MPP as one of the programme's greatest strengths: "Being in a classroom where nobody is in the majority creates a unique learning environment. The School does a brilliant job in induction week of creating a positive atmosphere to bring everyone together and I have developed some amazing friendships." This supportive community has been paramount in allowing Shabana to balance her ongoing commitments to SOLA while she undertakes the MPP.

As a global ambassador for Girl Rising, a global campaign for girls' education and empowerment, Shabana wants to draw attention to girls' education as an overlooked solution in efforts to address global challenges. "There are various pieces of research which demonstrate the positive outcomes that educating women has on issues from health and climate action to eradicating poverty," she says. "The 130 million girls who are currently out of school across the world are not a problem – they are the solution to our challenges." She is currently working on an initiative with MPP classmates and fellow Weidenfeld-Hoffmann scholars to create an interactive map of these 130 million girls, using a country-based approach to analyse the most effective policies for accelerating their access to education. "We want to give visibility to these girls and continue to make the case for their right to education until it becomes a priority for all governments."

*Shabana is a Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholar*

## STUDENT PROFILE

JENNIFER OPARE -  
KUMI

DPhil 2019, Ghanaian

Improving youth mental health and  
educational outcomes

Prior to the DPhil, Jennifer Opare-Kumi (DPhil 2019) worked as a programme manager at Young 1ove, a grassroots NGO in Botswana founded by fellow DPhil student Noam Angrist (DPhil 2016). She spearheaded the national scale-up of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), a basic numeracy and literacy intervention which has been shown to improve learning outcomes by focusing on teaching groups based on skill level rather than age. For Jennifer, the Blavatnik School's focus on bridging academia and practice was central to its appeal, and she values the opportunity to learn from world-leading experts: "The School constantly attracts thought leaders, academics and policymakers to challenge our thinking and enrich our research, and the DPhil programme's small size allows for a really supportive intellectual community." Her DPhil research examines the impact of TaRL on youth mental health outcomes, with a view to finding cost-effective ways to support mental health and learning in low-resource environments.

*Jennifer received a Blavatnik School of Government Scholarship, in partnership with Exeter College.*

## STUDENT PROFILE

ONYEKACHUKWU  
EROBU

MPP 2019, Nigerian

Improving access to  
healthcare

Onyekachukwu Erobu is a trained medical doctor and holds a master's in public health from the University of Warwick, UK. Her policy interests lie in primary healthcare and universal health coverage. Prior to the MPP, she led the execution of several health interventions in Nigeria, including the 2018 Ulera Ekiti initiative, which provided free health screening and treatment to 15,000 Nigerians without prior healthcare access and heralded the rollout of Ekiti State's compulsory health insurance scheme. Onyeka is using the MPP to learn more about how global health financing strategies can contribute to efficient healthcare delivery in low-resource settings.

*Onyekachukwu is an Africa Initiative for Governance Scholar.*

## STUDENT PROFILE

## ZIRUI HUANG

MPP 2019, Chinese

Sustainable social  
entrepreneurship

Zirui Huang is the founder of Zirui Studio, a social enterprise offering sustainable hand-knitting and weaving opportunities to disadvantaged women in Guizhou Province, one of China's least economically developed regions. The MPP will enable her to bridge the gap between policymakers and textile industry stakeholders to work towards collaborative, sustainable policy outcomes. Having access to a supportive School community has been a highlight for Zirui, and she has particularly enjoyed connecting with fellow MPP classmates who share her dedication for fostering women's empowerment. After graduation, she intends to return to China and continue her work at Zirui Studio, implementing the practices and ideas she has gained during her time in Oxford to help build a more sustainable textile industry and bring much-needed opportunities to disadvantaged rural women in China.

*Zirui is a Kwok Scholar.*



“

*I am inspired every day here by the people around me – by their ideas and their drive to create a better world.*

ZIRUI HUANG, MPP 2019

”

## STUDENT PROFILE

## TIM NUSSER

MPP 2019, German

A voice for young people  
in politics

Having barely turned 23 years old when he started the MPP, Tim Nusser is one of the youngest students in the MPP class of 2019. An American Studies graduate with a passion for politics, Tim previously served on the board of the Young Liberals, the youth wing of Germany's Free Democratic Party, and was successfully nominated to run as a Free Democratic Party candidate in Germany's 2017 federal election. He was drawn to study at the Blavatnik School due to its emphasis on public service, as well as the opportunity to study in an international environment. The culture of intellectual curiosity has been a highlight of his time in Oxford, and connecting with students from various disciplines has broadened his perspective and brought varied insights to classroom discussions.





## OUR DEGREE STUDENTS: APPLIED LEARNING

Applied learning is central to our degrees. The MPP uniquely positions students to gain the academic knowledge and professional skills to address some of this century's most complex public policy challenges. Our doctorate attracts those looking to bring rigorous research to bear on current policy, providing robust training for understanding particular challenges and for evaluating, devising or implementing solutions to the issues governments face.

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 also undertake policy simulations which include group role-playing.

## Learning in lockdown

**When the coronavirus pandemic changed everyone's lives, we acted quickly to recreate the MPP's interactive, personalised teaching style in the virtual classroom.**

As a school of government working at the forefront of public policy challenges, we must respond and adapt quickly to an ever-changing world – including in how we deliver our teaching. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, a collaborative effort across the whole School enabled our 124 MPP students to reconvene – from almost every major-inhabited time zone – in the virtual classroom at the start of Trinity term.

We prepared for the move with test sessions involving over 100 alumni volunteers from 50 countries. With online platforms offering functions from polling to breakout rooms, we have been able to maintain the interactive, peer-driven, highly personalised teaching style that is a key characteristic of the MPP.

We also brought the global response to the pandemic into our teaching content, as the ultimate real-world, real-time study of public policy in action. Policy Challenge II, in which students participate in a negotiations simulation, included a COVID-19 option.

Faculty members initiated a community of practice for online teaching to exchange ideas and share successes.

Meanwhile, professional staff from various parts of the School have been trained and redeployed as online learning facilitators, handling the technical logistics of online sessions and managing the class. With classes running smoothly, students can concentrate on engaging with course material and participating in discussion.

The connections students make with each other are one of the lasting impacts of their time at the Blavatnik School. With the help of technology, traditions such as the weekly Friday night social and regular coffee mornings continue unhindered; drop-in sessions with faculty offer a valuable source of academic and personal support; and whole-class meetings give everyone the opportunity to stay in touch. Other elements of life at the School, such as events and speaker visits, are continuing in an online format.

Perhaps most noteworthy is the spirit among our students. In adapting to this immense upheaval, the MPP class of 2019 have displayed their dedication to learning and to supporting one another through adversity. These qualities will serve them – and the world – well as they go out to build a world better led, served and governed.

## Hearing it first-hand

**Eminent figures field our students' questions.**

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. Over the past year students have had the chance to quiz Bill English, former New Zealand President (2016–17); Sunil Chandra, Vice President of Google (2007–19); Suma Chakrabarti, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); Janice Charette, Canadian High Commissioner; Monica Juma, Cabinet Secretary for

Foreign Affairs, Kenya; Gus O'Donnell, former UK Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service (2005–11); Lindiwe Mazibuko, former parliamentary leader for the opposition Democratic Alliance, South Africa (2011–14); Ifueko Omoigui-Okauru, former Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) of Nigeria and Chairman of the Joint Tax Board (2004–12); and Christian Turner, former International Affairs Adviser to the UK prime minister and Deputy National Security Adviser (2017–19).



## Learning from real dilemmas: COVID-19 in hospitals

A teaching case study was developed in real time as the pandemic unfolded in Oxford.

It is 17 March 2020 and you are the chief medical officer at Oxford University Hospitals, one of the largest and most respected hospitals in the UK. In between a busy stream of meetings, as you seek to prepare the hospital for an anticipated peak of COVID-19 patients in two weeks, you receive an email from a staff surgeon.

The surgeon and his team no longer want to continue certain elective-surgery procedures over fears of contagion due to insufficient specialised protective equipment. The central government health authorities are requiring these elective procedures to continue, to prevent overwhelming the medical system when the crisis peaks. The central health authorities argue that standard protective equipment already available to medics is sufficient; but your medics have learned from Italy that such standard equipment can put them at risk. How would you respond?

Faced with the impending crisis, national government guidance was changing frequently and sometimes seemed to contradict itself. Even whilst the prime minister was

urging the general public to comply with certain quarantine restrictions, central health authorities were unclear as to how these restrictions applied to medics. All this added to the confusion, anxiety and distrust. As chief medical officer, you have to find a way to stay compliant with current national health directives while maintaining the safety – and morale – of your front-line health care workers.

This dilemma is at the heart of the latest case study from the Blavatnik School Case Centre on Public Leadership, which is directed by Karthik Ramanna, Director of the MPP, and facilitates the applied element of the MPP by presenting real policy challenges. Through the case, students experience some of the most pressing challenges of public management. How do you build an institutional culture that can cope with a crisis? How do you manage difficult communications? How are government directives translated through the various bureaucratic layers of a vast public institution like the NHS into actual practice on the ground?

## Teaching excellence recognised

### Teaching awards for our faculty in 2019–20.

Emily Jones, Associate Professor in Public Policy, was selected for a 2019 Teaching Award by the University's Social Sciences Division. The award highlighted her commitment to incorporating diverse and enriching learning experiences and assessment types into her courses.

Thomas Elston, Associate Professor in Public Administration, won an Early Career Teaching Practitioner award in 2019 from the British Academy of Management, the UK's leading authority in the academic field of management. The award recognised his incorporation of fly-on-the-wall television documentaries into the case study method – developed for the public sector management class of the MPP.

## Putting learning to work within organisations

### The MPP is capped with a summer work placement.

The six-week summer project is the final part of the MPP programme and allows students to apply what they have learned to real policy situations through a work placement. In summer 2019 our students carried out placements with 82 different hosts in 31 countries. Host organisations included the UK's Behavioural Insights Team, Facebook, the OECD, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Anglo American, Audit Scotland, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), International Financial Corporation, the Economist, the United Nations, the Australian government and WPP.

## Our doctorate

### Deep research with real-world application.

Our Doctorate (or DPhil as it is known in Oxford) in Public Policy is a full-time three-year programme, bringing together the rigorous research Oxford is renowned for with real-world problems.

Our doctoral students are practitioners who come to us because they want to carry out precise research that answers policy questions, drawing on rigorous concepts, theory and methods from multiple disciplines. Brianna Rosen (DPhil 2018) and Muhammad Khudadad Chattha (DPhil 2018) are two examples. Brianna had a career in the US government prior to joining the School, providing analysis and insights in support of senior policymakers involved in the Iran nuclear negotiations; her research now focuses on the moral dimensions of state-actor use of force in the context of asymmetric warfare. Muhammad worked as a senior member of the Inland Revenue Service in Pakistan and is now conducting research on issues of public finance, civil service reform and political economy.

## OUR DEGREE STUDENTS: ATTRACTING AND SELECTING THE BEST

The students in our community have won places through a highly competitive process that reaches widely.

Our admissions team faced the best kind of tough choices in 2019. The Blavatnik School received a total of 802 applications from 104 different countries for 124 places on our Master of Public Policy, and 142 applications from 55 different countries vying for just seven places on our DPhil (doctorate) in Public Policy.

The quality of applications was very high; testament to the outreach work we do each year and the support of our network in scouring the world for committed and outstanding people. Our alumni (p.62) encourage brilliant people they are working alongside to apply. Our faculty discuss our degrees when they engage with policy communities around the world. Our partner organisations in a huge range of different contexts (p.74) are essential in spreading the word and bringing in outstanding applications.

For the MPP, all applications are assessed against our three selection criteria: academic and analytical excellence; commitment to public service; and evidence of leadership and impact potential. Our MPP assessment approach is holistic and, because our applicants include people from highly different contexts and with very different types and levels of experience, it requires extensive judgment and deliberation.

DPhil applicants are assessed against three criteria: academic excellence and evidence that they are sufficiently prepared to carry out their stated research; the quality, originality and policy relevance of their proposed research; and evidence that they have the ability to become a significant changemaker in their chosen field.

## OUR DEGREE STUDENTS: 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.

Six of our new doctoral students in 2019 had full funding and the seventh fee funding. 77% of our 2019 MPP class are with us thanks to full (65%) or partial (a further 12%) 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 that finance should be no barrier to educating a new generation of leaders from all walks of life. A list of scholarships and those who support them can be found on p.76.

### Training the next generation of elected leaders

**New scholarship aims to improve diversity and calibre in politics.**

A number of our students go on to hold elected office, and in the last year students and alumni started a 'Ready to Run' group to share insights on running political campaigns. In 2019 we also announced a specific new scholarship to support individuals aiming to run for elected office in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

The **Political Leadership Scholarship** is a fully funded scholarship aimed at improving the diversity, calibre and training of public leaders in the UK and Ireland by making it more accessible to study public policy at Oxford early in their career. The scholarship is available to those in the UK or

## STUDENT PROFILE

## ISAAC AGYIRI DANSO

MPP 2019, Ghanaian

Overcoming the odds to make it to Oxford

Hailing from a semirural area of eastern Ghana, Isaac Agyiri Danso's journey to the Blavatnik School has been the latest in a series of against-the-odds achievements. After enrolling in an accounting course at the University of Professional Studies, Accra, limited financial support left him with nowhere to live. He met someone who opened up their church – a small building located next to a large public dump site – to accommodate him. Isaac slept on the church floor and cleaned every morning in exchange for his accommodation. Despite the difficulty of his living situation, his persistence paid off: he qualified as a chartered accountant within two years (the shortest time that anyone had completed the programme), picking up several subject awards and qualifying national best in his final exams to become Ghana's youngest ever qualified chartered accountant at the time.

After graduating, Isaac worked in accounting and law in the public sector. Finding himself increasingly involved in negotiations and policy issues, he decided to apply for

the MPP: "I was drawn to study the MPP at Oxford because of the teaching methodology. The use of case studies (see p.58) means you're regularly presented with everyday policy issues and get the chance to discuss them." Receiving the Standard Bank Africa Chairman's Scholarship enabled Isaac to take his place at the School. True to the purpose of his scholarship, he hopes to use his time on the MPP to understand how he can advance good governance in Africa: "A lot of African countries have enormous wealth in resources and resource endowments, yet they are still poor. I want to contribute to creating better policy for more efficient use of these resources."

*Isaac is a Standard Bank Africa Chairman's Scholar*



Ireland who have successfully applied to our MPP and who aim to run for elected office in the near future.

The first round of three scholarships have been awarded for the academic year beginning in September 2020. As a result of the scholarship, we have seen particularly strong applications from candidates who are experienced and actively engaged in politics.

*The School is further able to support diversity in UK politics thanks to a short programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic future politicians (see p.70).*

## Other new scholarships

The **Jaime and Raquel Gilinski Scholarships** have been made available for the upcoming MPP class of 2020 through a generous donation from Jaime and Raquel Gilinski. This full funding was available to two outstanding students ordinarily resident in Colombia or Panama, and has gone to two exceptional Colombians.

The **Eisenhower Global Scholars Program** provides full funding for four outstanding American students, starting in 2020. Sponsored by Eisenhower Fellowships, the Global Scholars will benefit from the eminent Eisenhower Fellows networks.

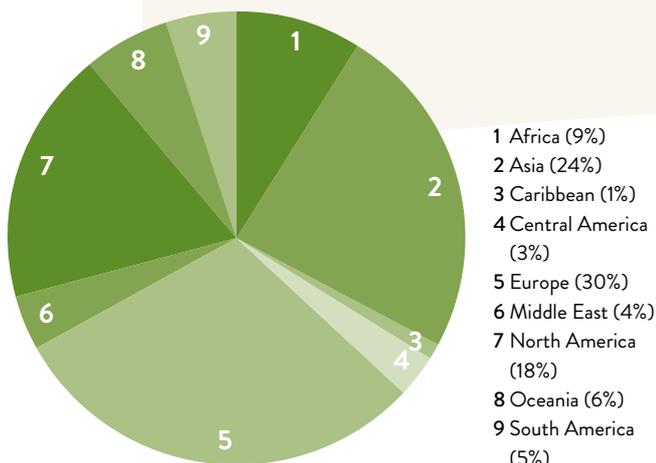
# OUR ALUMNI

Thanks to our 654 alumni and our other supporters and partners, our community is spread across every continent. This global network of policymakers and changemakers can reach across countries and sectors to collaborate, support one another, and find common reference in the values and conceptual tools they have been given in their time at the Blavatnik School.

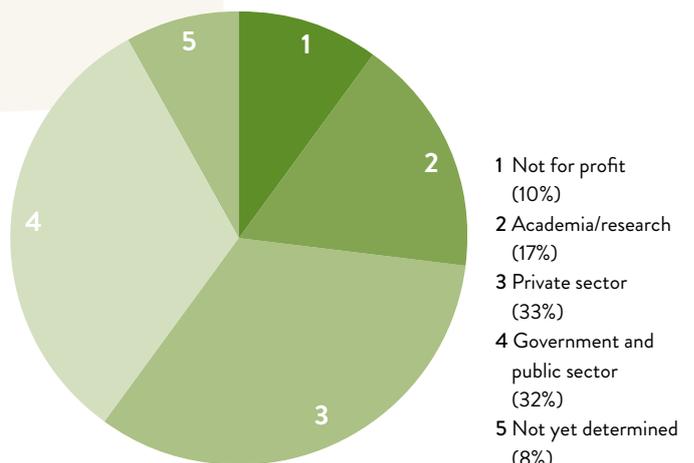
Our alumni have been critical to the life of the School: helping recruit the next generations of students; offering advice and opportunities to those on course; engaging with School events and faculty research; and, most recently, contributing to efforts to move the MPP online in response to the coronavirus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

All alumni have access to an online community platform, which facilitates discussion, debate and mutual support across time zones. Over the past year we've held alumni webinars on topics from digital transformation in government to policing during the coronavirus pandemic, and in-person alumni meet-ups have also been held across the globe, from Geneva to New Delhi.

All MPP alumni by region



All MPP alumni by sector



## ALUMNI SHAPING PUBLIC LIFE

**Our alumni community hold senior public sector positions in every global region.**

A number of Blavatnik School alumni have been elected to public office, dedicating their careers to serving those whom they have been entrusted to represent. They include representatives in the Ukrainian Parliament, the Panama National Assembly, the federal Brazilian House of Representatives, the Provincial Parliament of Ontario, Canada, and the Citizens' Representative Parliament of Bayanzurkh District, Mongolia.

Many alumni are also playing pivotal roles in the life of their countries or regions as appointed senior public officials. They include the Minister for Youth Affairs in the United Arab Emirates, the Vice President of the Centre for International Knowledge on Development, China, an Assistant Governor in the Central Bank of Malaysia, and the Deputy Director General of International Relations at Mexico's Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation.

### ALUMNI PROFILE

## MARIAN SCHREIER

MPP 2012, German

Germany's youngest mayor shining a spotlight on local issues



In May 2015, Marian Schreier (MPP 2012) took up office as Germany's youngest mayor, having won 71% of the vote share in the town of Tengen, southwest Germany. The strategic communications component of the MPP, during which he learnt from experienced practitioners, equipped him with the skills to run a successful campaign; these communication skills continue to prove useful for translating the reasoning behind policy decisions to the citizens of Tengen in his day-to-day work.

The breadth of the MPP prepared Marian for the diversity of issues he deals with in his job – from tourism to refugee settlement to disaster prevention. As the COVID-19 pandemic moved to the top of the political agenda, Marian drew on the scientific understanding he developed during the MPP to coordinate measures to combat the pandemic in Tengen.

Marian is a strong believer in the power of local politics. He returned to the Blavatnik School in 2019 for the Challenges of Government Conference (see p.46), participating in a panel on the nature of municipal government in the face of the increasing global growth of young, urban populations. He is currently preparing to return to his home city of Stuttgart to run in the November 2020 mayoral elections.

## ALUMNI INNOVATION

Our alumni engage their problem-solving and critical thinking skills to make a difference in the lives of communities across the globe.

The MPP teaches students to think creatively to find solutions to problems. They carry this approach with them.

### Helping voters compare and understand election policies

Helping voters understand policy can play a vital role in increasing election participation and strengthening democracy. A new website, Policy Local, allows voters in New Zealand to see all the elections in which they are eligible to vote and compare candidates against each other on specific issues. The website was launched by Policy, a company co-founded by Chris McIntyre (MPP 2018). Voters can browse with candidate names hidden to make their choices free from pre-existing biases. Policy Local covers 574 elections across the country and more than 3,500 candidates, and has published over 50,000 policies in total at [policyclocal.nz](http://policyclocal.nz).

### Training women to become solar lamp entrepreneurs

Fairoz Ahmad (MPP 2017) received a UK Commonwealth Point of Light award for his work on the 'Mother of Light' programme, training women in rural Indonesia to become solar lamp entrepreneurs and in turn reducing poverty, lowering toxic emissions and improving rural health. The programme is run by Chapter W, a non-profit organisation founded by Fairoz.

### Better information for disabled people

SociAbility, founded by Matthew Pierri (MPP 2016), is an app empowering greater social inclusion for disabled people through better venue accessibility information. The mobile platform allows anyone to quickly find and contribute detailed accessibility information for local hospitality and retail venues. SociAbility recently won a Toyota Startup Award, receiving €25,000 in grant funding and a place on the Toyota Startup Accelerator programme for social mobility startups.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## ERDENE ELBEGDORJ

MPP 2015, Mongolian

Creating local connections



Serving in the UN Peacekeeping Forces in South Sudan, Erdene Elbegdorj (MPP 2015) applied for the MPP having witnessed the negative impact that failures in governance and policymaking can have on millions of people. In 2017, he was elected as Bayanzurkh District Citizen Representative, serving one of Mongolia's most deprived regions. Forging connections on the doorstep during his election campaign prepared Erdene for the locally engaged nature of the role, where his main responsibilities lie in organising community-based action and citizen engagement in democratic processes. In the upcoming 2020 election, he intends to run for a city council position. Having invested in developing personal connections with the citizens he serves, Erdene is keen to maintain an understanding of their challenges and aspirations as he progresses in his career.

As Erdene engages with regional young leaders and citizens from his local community, he is seeking to counter the divisive politics of resentment that threatens to take hold in various parts of the world. "The Blavatnik School showed me that politics can be fuelled by hope," he says. "In my political career, I hope to build stable and enduring policy initiatives that demonstrate how effective policymaking can have a marked positive impact on people's lives."

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## SANTIAGO ROSAS LORENZO

MPP 2016, Venezuelan

Improving citizen safety in El Salvador



Santiago Rosas Lorenzo's (MPP 2016) work as a citizen security advisor for the government of El Salvador is highly impact driven. He leads a team promoting evidence-based public policy around citizen security, working on issues from law enforcement and anticorruption, to rehabilitation and reinsertion. Santiago credits the MPP with helping him understand how to bridge the gap between academia and law enforcement practitioners. By encouraging him to adopt a long-term mindset towards policymaking, the MPP has enabled him to look beyond the electoral cycle in his efforts to improve citizen safety, strengthen El Salvador's institutions, and contribute to wider state-building efforts.

*Santiago was a Chevening Scholar*

“

*The Blavatnik School showed me that politics can be fuelled by hope.*

ERDENE ELBEGDORJ, MPP 2015

”

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## VERA KICHANOVA

MPP 2016, Russian

Addressing architectural challenges

As a policy researcher at Zaha Hadid Architects, Vera Kichanova (MPP 2016) works on projects across the globe, from transport hubs to concert halls.



The breadth of Vera's work requires her to get to grips quickly with local policy issues, as well as deeper political and cultural contexts, to develop proposals that align with government strategies. She regularly uses the policy memo writing skills she developed during the MPP to brief designers and engineers at the beginning of a project, condensing broad, deep research into concise information.

Vera has turned her attention to some of the most pressing challenges faced by the architecture sector, including sustainability demands and rapid urban growth. She is developing an organisational database on passive housing strategy – designing houses with reduced energy and water demands – and sustainable urban design, facilitating the development of evidence-based proposals that meet sustainability requirements.

As a Blavatnik School alumna, Vera belongs to a supportive lifelong network, and she has made the most of opportunities to connect with her fellow alumni: "At the Blavatnik School, you become part of a truly global community. It's powerful to know that there is a worldwide network of people who I can reach out to for advice and support as I continue to build my profile as an urbanist."

*Vera was a Hill Foundation Scholar*

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## LISA YASKO

MPP 2016, Ukrainian

Strengthening Ukraine's voice

Lisa Yasko came to the Blavatnik School to learn how to improve life for Ukraine's citizens. She was elected as a Member of Parliament



as part of the Servant of the People Party in 2019, and highlights the international focus of the MPP and the experience of studying at a highly regarded institution as significant factors in her selection for the party list. She is also the youngest Head of the Ukrainian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), leading a delegation of 24 members from different parties. In this role, Lisa grapples with the challenges of reaching consensus and representing the delegation's views fairly, while seeking to strengthen the Ukrainian voice at PACE. "I cannot think of anything that could have prepared me more for the challenges of a career in politics than studying the MPP at Oxford," she says. As a member of the Ukrainian parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs and Interparliamentary Cooperation, Lisa also works with diplomats and ambassadors to improve Ukraine's international relations, and to enhance and reform interparliamentary cooperation. She is currently committed to creating a white paper on Ukraine's foreign policy with African countries. Lisa is motivated by the opportunity to strengthen political institutions and contribute to political stability in Ukraine.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## FATIMA ALFAHIM

MPP 2017, Emirati

Fostering international relations  
for the UAE

As a Head of Section in the American Affairs Department at the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fatima is motivated by the opportunity to collaborate across borders to find sustainable solutions to global policy challenges. The multidisciplinary nature of the MPP equipped her with the flexibility and adaptability needed in her work as a diplomat, and the applied nature of the course helped her to develop valuable creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Fatima's long-term goal is to serve as an ambassador for the UAE, promoting long-term stability in the Middle East region and beyond.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## EMILY MEDIATE

MPP 2017, American

Improving America's flood  
response

Emily Mediate is using her expertise in public health to inform the work of the American Flood Coalition, where she is Chief of Staff. She works on policy issues arising from the immediate impacts of flooding, such as diseases and housing instability, to long-term impacts, such as mental health problems and infrastructure challenges. As well as the subject-specific knowledge that she gained on the MPP, Emily developed the skills to think strategically about policy issues and identify the most effective avenues for driving change. This is vital in her current role, where she works with local stakeholders to identify the challenges they face before working with policymakers at the national level to implement policy change.

*Emily was a Rhodes 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.

This engagement with senior policymakers also improves our understanding of the world and makes us better teachers to those at a more formative stage of their career.

Alongside our short programmes and fellowships, we have launched a new online course for policymakers, the eight-week **Evidence in Public Policy**. The use of evidence in policymaking has rarely been more salient, and practitioners from around the world will be joining us on the programme throughout the year ahead.

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Marlene Forte QC, Attorney General  
of Jamaica

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 Ritu Sain, Director, Ministry  
 of Housing and Urban Affairs,  
 Government of India.



## CONVENING THE HEADS OF MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES

**Our flagship executive programme brings the heads of public organisations to Oxford to learn from acclaimed academics, leading practitioners and one another.**

The inaugural two-week Executive Public Leaders Programme in July 2019 drew together 18 participants from 15 countries, including two multilateral institutions. The group included New Zealand's Director-General of Security, Jamaica's Attorney General, Chile's national director of educational investment, the UK Ambassador to Brazil, the Permanent Secretary of local government in Kosovo, and the head of the UN Technology Bank.

Across two intensive weeks the group dived into discussions, debates and simulations covering (among other things) decision-making, people and performance, technology, and partnership and negotiation.

Integrity – personal, professional and institutional – was a thread running through every day of the programme. “We ran daily confidential discussions breaking down dilemmas participants had faced”, says Chris Stone, Professor of Practice at the Blavatnik School and co-director of the programme with Calum Miller, the School's COO and

Associate Dean. “The bonding and trust within the group was incredible. Many expressed surprise going into the programme at the amount of time devoted to integrity, and all said afterwards that they rated it among the most valuable elements.”

“The course provided rich, multi-layered learning and enduring relationships”, says Rebecca Kitteridge, Director-General of Security, New Zealand. “It was a remarkable experience in my career”, says Jaime Tohá, Chile's director of educational investment. “The teaching method, content and colleagues made it a learning process that gives us a powerful practical tool to implement as heads of our institutions.”

Vijay Rangarajan, UK Ambassador to Brazil, says: “It was a fantastic wake-up call. It took many of us with senior but partial experience, and widened the spotlight, putting our shared experiences into a powerful context. A lot of practical ideas, and things to mull over. And fantastic socially!”

## INCREASING DIVERSITY IN BRITISH POLITICS

Increasing diversity in government creates an opportunity to enhance trust and help governments better understand the needs of the communities they serve. The Blavatnik School is helping foster BAME future leaders.

During the summer of 2019, 30 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) future political leaders from across the UK convened in Oxford for the pilot Pathway to Success Leadership and Development Programme, which aims to equip BAME individuals with the tools and knowledge required to stand for political office.

Participants were welcomed by Lord Simon Woolley, founder and director of Operation Black Vote. They received a week of intensive coaching from Oxford academics and practitioners across a range of fields, including an insight into the inner workings of Whitehall from Marcus Bell, director of the UK government's Race Disparity Unit; a political campaigning session from Parag Mehta, a seasoned US presidential campaign strategist; and an overview of Roma history and the challenges of racism from Dijana Pavlović, an actress and Roma rights activist in Italy. Participants also visited the Houses of Parliament, meeting with then Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow, and put their debating skills to the test in a lively exchange at the Oxford Union.

*The programme was led by Operation Black Vote and the UK's House of Commons in collaboration with the Blavatnik School of Government, Magdalen College and Lloyds Banking Group. It forms part of a diversity and inclusion strategy to tackle under-representation at senior levels in the House of Commons.*

*The School is further able to support diversity in UK (and also Irish) politics thanks to a new scholarship for those wanting to study the MPP and then run for office (see p.76).*

## EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIPS

Firmly rooted in the Oxford tutorial tradition, our executive fellowship programmes immerse fellows in an academic environment and in the School's global network of practitioners, while enriching our community with their insights.

The **Transformational Leadership Fellowship** is a bespoke programme crafted for a very select number of leaders at the pinnacle of their careers who seek space to reflect on how they might use their strengths towards a broader public mission. Our current Transformational Leadership Fellow is Tonye Cole, co-founder and former Group Executive Director of Sahara Group, an energy conglomerate with operations spanning several African countries.

Our **Hong Kong Fellows** programme welcomes civil servants from the Hong Kong government for an intensive eight-week programme tailored to help them reach the next level of leadership.

The **Caixin Visiting Fellowship Programme** is an eight-week bespoke engagement programme for senior journalists or business managers from major Chinese media group Caixin Media.



Participants on the Oil, Gas and Mining Governance course.



Participants on our **Oil, Gas and Mining Governance** intensive five-day course, which had a record number of participants in September 2019. Countries with such resources face opportunities to create prosperity, but challenges in ensuring extraction does not cause economic instability, social conflict and environmental damage. Eminent economist Sir Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy, leads the programme for the School, supporting those working in the management and governance of these non-renewable resources to address the opportunities and challenges to learn from one another.

# OUR APPLIED RESEARCH COMMUNITY

**Our core academic team of world-class faculty and committed researchers cover a spectrum of disciplines relevant to good government, including politics, economics, philosophy and law. Within our building, they work alongside fellows and visitors of practice 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 thinking is informed by, and translated to, current policymaking.

Our **visiting fellows of practice** in 2019–20 included renowned prosecutor of war crimes Stephen Rapp (p.44); Gail Gibbons, social worker and CEO of young people's charity Sheffield Futures; Ifueko Omoigui-Okauru, former head of the Federal Inland Revenue Service of Nigeria, with us thanks to our Africa Initiative for Governance partnership (p.78); and former CFO of the World Bank Joaquim Levy, with us thanks to our Lemann Foundation partnership (p.80).

Our **Permanent Secretary Fellowship** programme establishes a relationship between a current Permanent Secretary – the most senior civil servant of a government ministry in the UK – and the Blavatnik School. Our 2019–20 fellow is Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary of the Department for International Development.

The **Heywood Fellowship** is a new visiting fellowship created in memory of Jeremy Heywood (UK Cabinet Secretary 2012–18). It also brings a UK Permanent Secretary to the School, but additionally releases them from their day job. In 2019–20 we welcomed Sir Oliver Robbins, formerly the UK's chief Brexit negotiator (see right).

Our **executive programme fellows** (see p.70) bring insights from the corporate world and from China (including Hong Kong).

Our **DRC Visiting Research Fellowship** was created as part of the UK Department for International Development's wider engagement with the Development Research Centre (DRC) of the State Council of China, which produces and disseminates research on China's domestic development, its overseas aid, and its engagement in global governance.

We also benefit from the input of leading academics beyond our core faculty and researchers. Our **visiting scholars** in 2019–20 include Professor Donald Moynihan, inaugural McCourt Chair at the McCourt School of Public Policy and expert on public sector reform; and medical scientist Professor John-Arne Røttingen, Chief Executive of the Research Council of Norway, Adjunct Professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and until recently the founding Chief Executive Officer of CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.

*A full list of faculty can be found on p.3.*



## Heywood Fellowship

Sir Oliver Robbins (above), previously the UK's Chief Negotiator for Exiting the European Union, joined the School between September 2019 and March 2020 as our inaugural Heywood Fellow. His career in the UK civil service included roles as Principal Private Secretary to Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, Deputy National Security Advisor to Prime Minister David Cameron, and second Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. In July 2016, David Cameron appointed him the Permanent Secretary responsible for coordinating the government's approach to withdrawing from the European Union. After Theresa May became Prime Minister, Olly set up and led the Department for Exiting the European Union, while continuing to act as the Prime Minister's EU Sherpa, and the senior official responsible for coordinating both advice on EU exit and negotiations with the EU. From October 2017, he moved back to the Cabinet Office as these coordinating functions were brought directly under the Prime Minister. He was appointed Companion of the Order of the Bath in The Queen's Birthday Honours, 2015. He was made a Knight Commander in the Order of St Michael and St George in 2019 for public service.

# OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Many individuals and organisations partner with us in pursuit of a shared vision; offer their time in support of our teaching or thinking; or provide the financial support that makes our work possible. 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.

## OUR PARTNERS

Partnership working is crucial for governments – and for us

We research how governments can better serve their citizens through effective partnership working with organisations in all sectors. Training in this kind of effective partnership working is a key element in our some of our executive programmes, as well as in our advisory and training work with governments. We take our own advice – seeking partnerships with those who share our goal of better government.

Our longstanding partnerships with the Lemann Foundation and the Africa Initiative for Governance are prime examples (p.78), as is our new work with the Landecker Foundation (p.80). But as shown by the many references to collaborators and partners through the ‘Challenges’ section of this report, the last year has seen us working in partnership with numerous organisations in our pursuit of better government – from the Brava Foundation (People in Government Lab, p.8) to the UK government’s Office for Civil Society (Government Outcomes Lab, p.9).

Some of these partnerships also involve funding support, and where this is the case the organisations are acknowledged below.



### Neuroscience, mathematics and art in the Blavatnik School

Our partnership with the Inamori Foundation, which awards the international Kyoto Prize, allows us to bring three eminent figures from different disciplines to the School each year for the Kyoto Prize in Oxford – drawing in departments from around the University. The Blavatnik School shares the Inamori Foundation’s goal of the betterment of humankind, and the pinnacles of endeavour represented by the work of the Kyoto Prize laureates showcase what can be achieved in flourishing societies. In 2019 we welcomed mathematician Masaki Kashiwara, neuroscientist Karl Deisseroth, and artist Joan Jonas (above).

## GIVING TIME

**Our community includes those who lend their time and expertise in shaping our research and training current and future leaders**

Many individuals offer their time and insights to contribute to the School's mission. Among them are our advisory board members (p.86), who help us think about overall direction; the many renowned figures who speak at our events or to our students, always for free; the practitioners in constant dialogue with our faculty as we keep our research rooted in the realities of government; and those who mentor students (below).

### Professional skills mentoring

Our professional skills mentoring scheme gives MPP students an opportunity to discuss their thoughts about their professional life with leaders from a variety of backgrounds. We thank our 12 mentors for 2019–20, mentoring 45 students between them:

- Cyrus Ardalan, executive board member of a number of institutions
- Andrew Caaney, co-founder, Asiability Ltd
- Dame Frances Cairncross, economist, journalist and former Rector of Exeter College, Oxford
- Zena Creed, Communications Leader, IMAGINE, and former government communications professional
- John Crompton, non-executive director, former investment banker and government official
- Dame Helen Ghosh, Master of Balliol College and former permanent secretary of two UK government departments
- Major-General Andrew Mackay, CEO of Complexas Ltd, formerly commander of British forces in Helmand, Afghanistan
- Jennie Richmond, founder and director of Impact Works Associates, formerly senior in Comic Relief and Oxfam GB
- Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, Principal of Somerville College and former leader of the House of Lords
- Folashadé Soulé, Africa Advisor, Stiglitz-Spence Commission on Growth and Economic Transformation
- Xinlei Sun, Deputy CEO, China Construction Bank, London
- Lord Wood of Anfield, member of the House of Lords, former special advisor to prime minister Gordon Brown

## FUNDING A SHARED VISION

The work of the School is only possible thanks to the vision and generosity of a wide range of donors, funders and other supporters, including our founding donor, Sir Leonard Blavatnik (right).

We collaborate with several of our funders on shared goals (see 'Our partners' above), but we retain absolute academic independence from all our donors and funders.

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



### Scholarships

Scholarships help us ensure that the leaders of the future educated at the School can come from all backgrounds and all parts of the world.

Funding from the following sources has supported the MPP classes of 2018 and 2019 and will support MPP students joining us in 2020:

- 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
- Eisenhower Global Scholars
- Felix Scholarships
- Fondation Mahmoud-Shakarchi pour Oeuvres et Bienfaisance
- Islamic Development Bank Scholarships
- Jaime and Raquel Gilinski
- Jardine-Oxford Scholarships
- John Swire & Sons Ltd
- Kwok Scholars Association
- Lemann Foundation
- Luksic Family
- Open Society Foundations
- Oxford-CREAT Group Scholarships
- Oxford-Pershing Square Scholarships
- Oxford-Thai Scholarships
- Poler Family Foundation
- Political Leadership Scholarships
- Rhodes Scholarships
- Roma Education Fund
- Standard Bank Africa Chairman's Scholarship
- University College Burma Scholarships
- Vicky Noon Educational Foundation Oxford Scholarships
- Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Scholarships
- Westpac New Zealand/State Services Commission
- Zegarac-Pollock Family Foundation

### Other funders

Our research and other projects are supported by a range of individuals and organisations who share our vision of a world better led, served and governed, including:

- Africa Initiative for Governance
- Alfred Landecker Foundation
- Amersi Foundation
- Beecroft Trust
- Blavatnik Family Foundation
- Brava Foundation
- Charles Koch Foundation
- Inamori Foundation
- Lemann Foundation
- Mohamed Noah Foundation
- Planethood Foundation
- Tun Razak Foundation

In addition, a number of our projects are supported by research funding bodies, with such research income totalling over £6m in 2018/19.



## Remembering Malaysia's 'Father of Development'

In November 2019 we welcomed Sultan Nazrin Shah of Perak, the Deputy King of Malaysia (above), to the School to mark the renaming of our Lecture Theatre 2 to the Tun Razak Lecture Theatre. Tun Razak, one of the leaders of the Malaysian independence movement, became the nation's first Deputy Prime Minister (1957–70) and second Prime Minister (1970–76), and is remembered as Malaysia's 'Father of Development'. On returning power to Parliament in 1970 after being handed emergency powers, he said: "If you want to serve the people, too much power is no good."

Two Malaysian foundations made philanthropic donations to the School to honour the legacy of Tun Razak through the lecture theatre renaming: the Noah Foundation (a private foundation) and the Tun Razak Foundation (a government foundation).



## Partnership spotlight: Africa Initiative for Governance

Africa Initiative for Governance (AIG) is a not-for-profit founded by Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede (above) to inspire public sector transformation in Africa, based on the belief that a strong, ethical and efficient public service is critical to realising Africa's long-term growth and development goals.

Recognising the enormity of the challenge they seek to address, and the effort and resources required, AIG seeks out partners who share their vision for good governance and excellence in public service. As a result, they work with governments, academic institutions, think tanks and others. Their pioneering initiative brings proven private sector innovation, leadership and funding to the public sector, in a private-public partnership that seeks to attract, inspire and support future leaders of Africa's public sector. Their strategic partnerships include collaborations with Nigeria's Federal Civil Service, to address issues of culture and

performance, and the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, a leading private-sector economic think tank.

In 2016, AIG signed a five-year partnership with the Blavatnik School of Government. Under this partnership AIG awards at least five MPP scholarships to outstanding Nigerians and Ghanaians from all backgrounds. Upon graduation, AIG Scholars are expected to return to their home country and apply their experience as change agents in their country's public sector. AIG also awards the AIG Fellowship at the School to outstanding senior public service officials. To date 25 men and women have benefited from AIG scholarships and fellowships. The partnership has expanded to jointly hosting dialogues aimed at finding solutions to the challenges of public sector governance in Africa.

“

*We believe that partnerships based on a shared vision and shared values are necessary to amplify our work. They enable us to make a meaningful impact on real issues that hamper public sector performance. We decided to work with the Blavatnik School because we believe that this leading institution with a vision of a world better led, served and governed is an ideal partner for us.*

AIGBOJE AIG-IMOUKHUEDE, AIG FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN

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“

*The MPP for me was a statement of intent: a commitment to improving the health of people, especially in Africa and Nigeria.*

EFOSA EDOBOR (AIG SCHOLAR, MPP 2017), SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HEALTH TO THE GOVERNOR OF KADUNA STATE IN NIGERIA.

”

“

*The academic course content was diverse, and the mix of skills in governance and politics useful for my work in Nigeria.*

LOUISA CHINEDU-OKEKE (AIG SCHOLAR, MPP 2018), SPECIAL ASSISTANT ON FINANCE TO THE NIGERIAN PRESIDENT.

”

“

*The MPP meant that I had access to world class professors, [and being] part of the wider Oxford community afforded me access to life-changing personal development opportunities ... the context-specific, and often bias-bursting, perspectives of my classmates afforded me the opportunity of soul-travelling to nearly 60 countries without leaving the walls of the School.*

EMMANUEL TAIWO (AIG SCHOLAR, MPP 2017), CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISOR AT THE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

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Jorge Paulo Lemann, founder of the  
Lemann Foundation.



## Partnership spotlight: Lemann Foundation

Our partnership with the Lemann Foundation supports outstanding Brazilians to study on the MPP, with the 2019 intake including a specialist in evidence-informed public policy from Brazil's Ministry of Justice, a sociologist who works on health outcomes for indigenous people and other vulnerable groups, and a lawyer focusing on Brazil's social and economic development.

The 2019 Lemann Visiting Fellow of Practice, distinguished economist Joaquim Levy, is a former Minister of Finance of Brazil, former Chief Financial Officer of the World Bank, and was President of the Brazilian Development Bank from November 2018 to June 2019. His recent focus is on how innovation and investment can help Brazil both grow and move towards carbon neutrality.

“

*The MPP meant gaining the confidence and the feeling that I should never accept mediocre targets or solely bureaucratic activities ... [I can] clearly identify the values behind the technical decisions.*

CAIO FIGUEIREDO CIBELLA DE OLIVEIRA (LEMANN FELLOW, MPP 2015), POLICY ANALYST AT THE OECD WORKING ON MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS' RIGHTS AND PRIVATISATION OF SOES IN BRAZIL AND CAPITAL MARKETS DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA.

”

“

*The MPP was a wonderful and deep experience that enabled me to connect with great leaders around the world, and sharpen my analytical skills to better serve my country through politics and public policies.*

JOÃO FRANCISCO ARAÚJO MARIA (LEMANN FELLOW, MPP 2015), ADVISOR AT THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY FOR BRAZIL.

”

# OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Oxford was ranked the world's number one university for the fourth successive year in September 2019 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.



Our students have second homes at 31 different Oxford colleges and the School is firmly rooted in the wider University, allowing us to draw on the outstanding breadth and depth of disciplines across Oxford for research collaborations and to help policymakers.

Practitioners spending time at the Blavatnik School can connect with other parts of the University to dig deeply into relevant topics. During his time on our Permanent Secretary Fellowship scheme, Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary at the UK's Department for International Development, spent time with researchers from various Oxford departments, including the Oxford Department of International Development and the Faculty of Law. Our Transformational Leadership Fellows, leaders in the corporate world, have enjoyed Oxford tutorials with political scientists, a historian, a theologian and an economist, amongst others.

# OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

We are a global School, but we are situated in a diverse city, with pockets of deprivation sitting alongside its famous dreaming spires. In 2019–20, the Blavatnik School found new ways to engage meaningfully with the city of Oxford.



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Layla Moran, MP for Oxford West and Abingdon.

2019, we hosted a popular discussion event with representatives from local charities, the City Council and academia to identify steps that the University, employers and individuals can take. Over 270 people attended and BBC South TV covered the event.

With the 2019 UK general election called for December 2019, we hosted a hustings for our local constituency (Oxford West and Abingdon).

Some of our students carried out their summer project placements at local government institutions in 2019, and in the last year, we organised and delivered over 50 public events, all of them free and accessible to everyone in the Oxford community. We also participated in the annual Oxford Open Doors weekend, which throws open the doors of iconic buildings to local people each year.

With Oxford being one of the least affordable places to buy (or rent) a house in the UK, housing and homelessness are two interlinked pressing issues for the city. In November

According to candidates, it was the best-attended hustings they'd spoken at, with over 300 in attendance. Local newspaper *The Oxford Mail* covered the event.

Student induction in September included information about some of the public policy issues that Oxford city faces. A list of volunteering opportunities in the city and its surrounding areas was disseminated among students and staff.

MPP students from the class of 2018 also led the third year of 'Policy Slam', a day of hands-on policymaking with local school students.

# 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 & Associate Dean, Director of Finance & Resources, Director of External Relations

*Meeting frequency:* Minimum of eight times a year

## 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

## Senior Management Team

*Responsibilities:* Delegated decision-making responsibility for operational and urgent decisions in line with the direction set by SRG

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

*Meeting frequency:* Fortnightly

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Our income is from three primary sources: teaching revenue, research funding and philanthropic donations.

We continue to diversify our research portfolio, and the bottom two charts below show the balance of research funding sources supporting the School.

The School was founded with a £75 million donation from Sir Leonard Blavatnik, and a large number of other philanthropic donors also make our work possible.

We retain absolute academic independence from all supporters.

*Note:* The University of Oxford financial year runs August to July, whereas this report covers April to March, so the financial information given here includes some forecast data including the period covering the coronavirus pandemic.

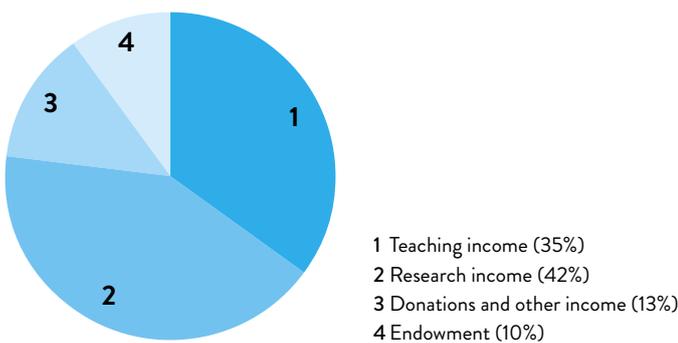
## Key financial principles

- 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.

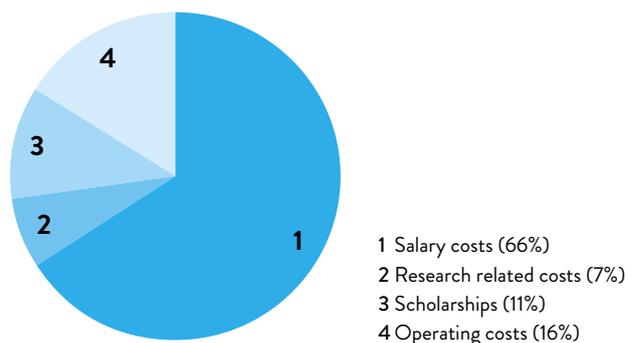
## 2018/19 progress

- 4% growth in research related income from £6.1m in 2018/19 to £6.35m in 2019/20
- £35.6m invested in endowment generating £1.59m income in 2018/19
- 77% of students are fully or partially covered by a scholarship

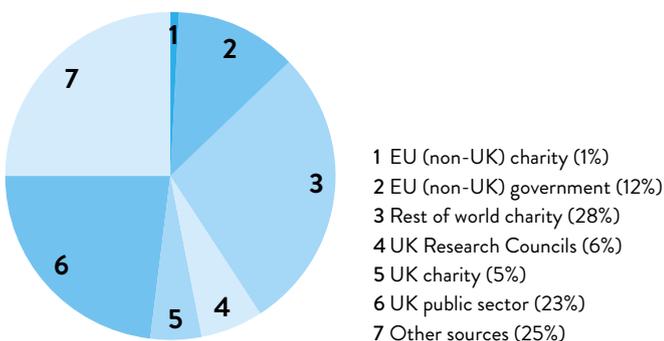
### Blavatnik School income sources 2019/2020



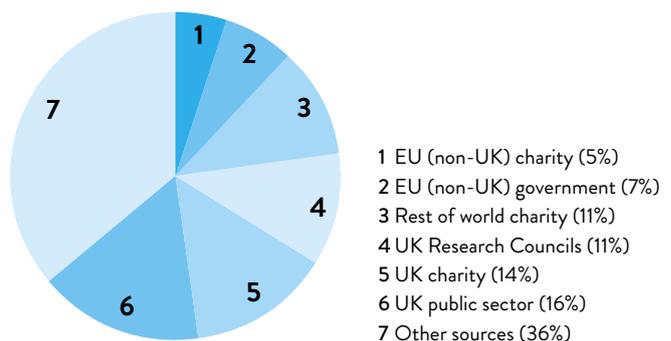
### Blavatnik School expenditure 2019/2020



### Research portfolio by value



### Research portfolio by number of grants



# ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

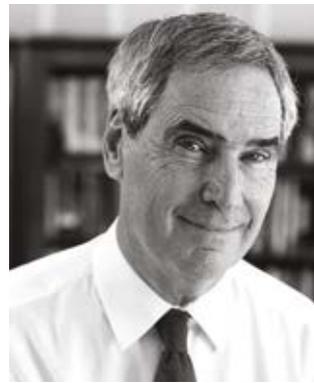
Our Academic Advisory Board comprises leading figures in public policy education who advise us on all aspects of academic life.



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Public Affairs, Sciences Po



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Hopkins School of  
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**Enase Okonedo**  
Dean of Lagos Business  
School



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International Affairs

# INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Our International Advisory Board comprises globally renowned leaders who provide ambassadorship and advice on strategic direction



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(Chair)**  
Former CEO,  
BP



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



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BTG Pactual and  
former Governor of  
the Central Bank of  
Brazil



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McKinsey &  
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of ABSA Group  
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