

Participant Profiles

Class of 2024

LSE **Cities** | Executive MSc in Cities



EXECUTIVE MSC IN CITIES

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

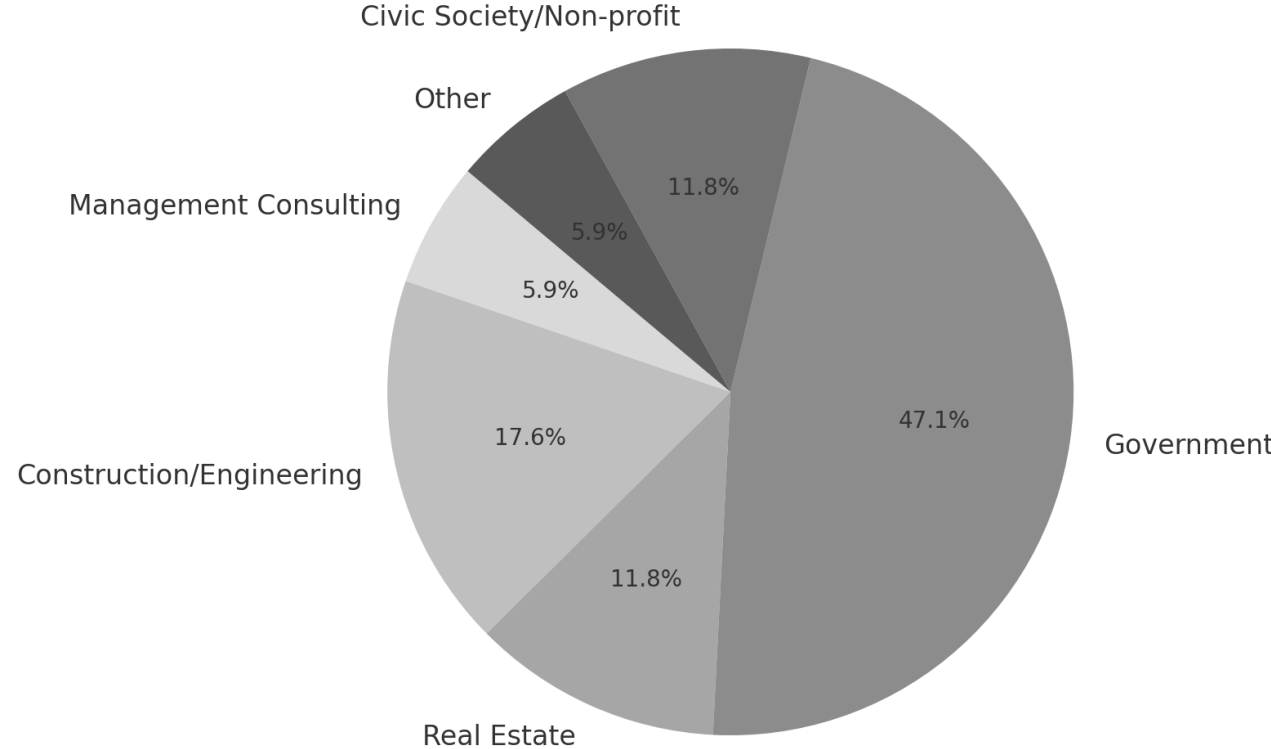
Now in its ninth year, the Executive MSc in Cities will see 19 exceptional professionals from 19 cities convene for five teaching modules to explore how they and their organisations can deliver effective change in their cities.

Representing diverse sectors including government, urban design, planning, social development, infrastructure, and architecture, the class of 2024 embodies the necessary sectoral diversity to deal with the cross cutting challenges and opportunities that today's cities are facing.

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2024/25 COHORT PROFILE

SECTORS REPRESENTED



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION



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Alejandro Ruiz

Alejandro Manuel Ruiz Ojeda is a civil engineer with comprehensive academic training in financial, economic, and real estate development, gained through various diplomas and courses at leading universities. With over 35 years of family experience in residential development in Yucatán, Alejandro has grown to lead his own real estate development company, specializing in residential, industrial, and commercial projects. His firm also features an in-house architecture studio, allowing for integrated project design and execution.

Alejandro is deeply passionate about community building, dedicated to creating well-designed, livable spaces that elevate residents' quality of life. He is a strong advocate for the integration of innovation and technology in real estate, actively implementing digital tools to streamline construction processes, optimize urban planning, and enhance citizen engagement.

In addition to his development work, Alejandro has been actively involved in land regularization projects, particularly with ejidal lands, helping communities secure legal land titles and increase their property values. His commitment to sustainable urban growth is also reflected in his role as the youngest member of the advisory board of CANADEVI Yucatán, a key business chamber for the housing sector. In this capacity, he works closely with government and regulatory bodies to improve housing regulations and address the evolving needs of the state.

Engineer

Grupo Fuora

Merida, Yucatan



Anderson García Cristóbal

Anderson has developed a professional career with more than ten years of experience, both in central government and local government, promoting initiatives in urban planning, housing and neighbourhood upgrading programs in Perú.

Among the responsibilities that he has assumed in his professional practice are the coordination of regulatory instruments on issues related to Policies and Regulation in Housing and Urban Planning, and the management of Urban and Territorial Development Plans. Likewise, he has been an Advisor to the Ministerial Office of the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation of Peru. Currently, Anderson is consultant on different initiatives on social management and governance of urban development.

He is professor of Sociology at San Marcos University (Lima-Perú), and he was Lead Researcher in the Program for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy on issues of rental housing promotion and urban informality.

Urban Governance Specialist

Independent

Lima, Perú



Babu Abdul Khadeer

Babu Abdul Khadeer is a distinguished civil servant with over a decade of leadership in India's urban development and public policy sectors. Armed with a Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering from PSG College of Technology, where he was recognized as the "Best Outgoing Student," Babu has applied his technical expertise to address complex urban challenges.

As the Municipal Commissioner of Cochin, Kerala's financial capital, Babu led critical reforms in waste management. He launched the 'Roots' campaign to educate schoolchildren on waste segregation and introduced the 'Green Army' of 1500 Haritha Karma Senas, improving waste collection and empowering local women. He also spearheaded environmental projects, including a compressed biogas plant for waste-to-energy conversion and biomining for legacy waste management.

In his role as Director of Cochin Smart Mission Limited, Babu oversaw smart city projects like smart street lighting and the Integrated Traffic Management System (ITMS). In Delhi, he introduced structured waste collection schedules and mobile compactors, improving quality of life for millions. Currently pursuing the Executive MSc in Cities at the London School of Economics, Babu is committed to driving sustainable, resilient, and equitable urban development in India.

Municipal Commissioner, Cochin Corporation

Government of Kerala

Chennai, India



Erlan Zhakin

Erlan is a seasoned international business development executive with over 10 years of experience in leading the implementation of social and urban infrastructure projects. Specializing in PPP contract strategies, concessions, and public investments, He has successfully driven growth in both the quasi-public sector and private business and has been actively involved in the topic of urban infrastructure and planning. With a focus on expanding market share and enhancing competencies, Erlan has led projects across Central Asia, Eastern Europe and North America, contributing to the strategic growth and development of key regions.

Director of International Business Development

BI Group

Astana, Kazakhstan



Hazza Altamimi

Hazza Al Tamimi is the Data Lead Analyst at the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA). In this role, Hazza leads the 'Family Friendly Abu Dhabi' initiative, focusing on transforming public spaces to promote child well-being and community connectivity. With a background in project management and data analysis, Hazza has been pivotal in shaping strategies to create inclusive, family-oriented environments across the city. His work includes overseeing pilot programs, collaborating with government stakeholders, and integrating data-driven insights to inform urban planning efforts. Throughout his career, Hazza has gained experience in urban transformation, strategic planning, and community engagement, bringing a thoughtful approach to building resilient, child-friendly spaces. His ability to connect with diverse groups and facilitate impactful change has been a hallmark of his professional journey.

Data Lead Analyst

Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA)

Abu Dhabi, UAE



Jenna Hutchings

Jenna Hutchings, an Early Child Development specialist, is a mother, and a passionate advocate for sustainable urban development in Harare. She believes that the city is the perfect setting for societal change—small enough to spark action, large enough to be counted. Climate change drives her efforts to co-create a sustainable, equitable and accessible Harare. Since 2022, Jenna has partnered with active mobility stakeholders and the City of Harare’s Traffic and Transportation Department to rethink mobility, organise “Open Streets” events, and implement “Safe School Zones.” Recently included in Cohort 7 of the Urban95 Academy and one of ten cities chosen to attend the Residence Week, she brings a unique Early Child Development perspective to urban planning. Jenna’s approach involves networking, breaking down silos, integrating diverse skills, and engaging civil society to address Harare’s pressing challenges, including road safety, pollution, food and water security, sustainable transportation, and community development. Her work advocates for practical solutions that enhance quality of life, promotes child development, and creates more connected communities. Jenna’s commitment to these causes makes her a vital force in the movement towards a more sustainable Harare.

Aspiring Urbanist

Self employed

Harare, Zimbabwe



John Hall

John is the Director for Regions and Cities Partnership and Delivery at the UK Department for Transport. He leads for the UK Government on its relationship with the UK Mayoral Combined Authorities in terms of transport and oversees the UK Government’s network of independent Sub-National Transport Bodies, including Transport for the North. He is the Senior Responsible Officer for the key national transport infrastructure funding schemes for cities, including the Transforming Cities Fund and the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements. He is responsible for national policy on mass transit and is the Government sponsor for the proposed new mass transit scheme in West Yorkshire. He also works with Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority to support the delivery of the Government’s priorities for transport in London, including agreeing and implementing funding settlements and ensuring TfL remains financially sustainable.

John is a highly experienced strategic leader in Government with a strong background in delivering programmes which have delivered real outcomes across a wide range of policy challenges for cities and urban environments. This has included leading on implementation of Sir David Norgrove’s review of the family justice system and, as Director for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, establishing the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), a scheme which supported the 83 local authority areas with the most significant numbers of rough sleepers.

Director, Regions and Cities Partnership and Delivery

Department for Transport

London



Juan Felipe Yepes

He currently works as a Institutional and Public Policy Innovation Leader for the Public innovation Lab of the City of Bogotá (iBO), and as a government innovation professor at Javeriana and Andes University in Bogotá. He is a political scientist, with a master’s in international Cooperation, graduate from the Innovation and Leadership in Government Program at Georgetown University. His professional experience has been especially in innovation issues serving as: Director of the Center for Social Innovation for the Colombian Agency for Overcoming Poverty; Director of the Public Innovation Laboratory of Bogota (LABcapital); public innovation consultant for the Department for the Public Function of Colombia; and public innovation mentor for the “Global Mayors Challenge” of Bloomberg Philanthropies. He has also worked on open government and knowledge management issues for foundations and international cooperation agencies. Author of the Public Innovation Index of the City of Bogota

Institutional and Public Policy Innovation Leader

Public Innovation Lab, City of Bogota (iBO)

Bogota, Colombia



Kamila Lukpanova

Kamila Lukpanova is a recognized project management expert in the fields of culture and tourism in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Her career in the governmental sector began with her role as Deputy Director on the organizing committee of the 28th Winter Universiade in Almaty. She remains an active member of the city administration, where she contributes to promoting the city, organizing events, and enhancing communications. Kamila’s experience in the social sector also includes involvement in state projects focused on education and public healthcare in rural areas.

Her pioneering project, “TANA,” which modernized the libraries of Almaty, has become a successful model, sparking a nationwide transformation of libraries, including those in rural regions.

Currently, Kamila is leading initiatives to create multifunctional spaces in Kazakhstani villages, such as community centers and modernized libraries. She is also spearheading the establishment of the Republic’s first Destination Management Organization (DMO), aimed at promoting Almaty as a top tourist destination. Kamila holds academic degrees in international journalism and public administration from KIMEP University, Kazakhstan, and in global media and communication from the University of Warwick, UK.

Founder

TANA Public Fund

Almaty, Kazakhstan



Kelle Barfield

Kelle Barfield is president of the Warren County Board of Supervisors and owner of Lorelei Books and Delta Warren Properties, a historic property management company in her Mississippi (USA) hometown. Her 38-year career in nuclear energy includes current consultancies with the International Atomic Energy Agency and in support of the U.S. State Department’s Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology programme. She serves on the Mississippi Commission on School Accreditation and on the board of directors of the Mississippi Main Street Association (president elect), the Warren County-Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce, and the Warren County Forestry Association (president).

Barfield holds academic credentials from the University of Southern California (doctorate of education), Syracuse University (master of science in communications and management) and University of Texas (bachelor of journalism).

Elected official and business owner

State of Mississippi

Vicksburg, Mississippi USA



Kevin O’Hare

Kevin O’Hare currently serves as the Deputy White House Liaison for the U.S. Department of Transportation. In this role, he supports the Office of the Secretary and senior-level Department officials on policy and personnel matters. He brings a decade of experience in transportation advocacy and political management. In 2014, Kevin led the effort at his local metropolitan planning organization to expand the governing body with local school board leaders. He played key roles in two transportation referendums to expand mobility options in his hometown of Tampa, serving as both Outreach Director in 2018 and Campaign Manager in 2022. Kevin is a ardent supporter of Vision Zero policies and played a role in the passage of Tampa’s first Vision Zero adoption in 2015. Prior to his current role, Kevin was the Director of Transportation and Planning for the Westshore Alliance, a special commercial district representing the largest employment center on the west coast of Florida. In this capacity, he focused on active transportation policy advocacy by collaborating with business executives and neighborhood leaders to advance shared priorities. Kevin holds a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of Tampa.

Deputy White House Liaison

U.S. Department of Transportation

Tampa, Florida



Marko Illic

Marko Illic is a General Manger of Bimbo / Beotim, group of family companies based in Belgrade. His role is related to strategic leadership of the activities in the fields of retrofitting of commercial buildings, energy efficiency and workplace safety. Company has a presence in the markets around The Balkans region and serves a range of sectors including retail, manufacturing, logistics and public institutions. Before joining family business, Marko had a management role in number of multinational companies in various European countries. He holds academic qualifications in Economics (University of Belgrade, Serbia), Asian studies (University of Belgrade, Serbia) and Business (CASS Business School, City University - UK).

General Manager

Bimbo / Beotim

Belgrade, Serbia



Mehmet Kalyoncu

Mehmet Kalyoncu, born in Gaziantep in 1992 and originally from Trabzon, is an architect and business leader with a diverse background in design, education, and non-profit work. He graduated from Istanbul Technical University’s Department of Architecture in 2014 and has studied at Oxford University, Architectural Association University, and completed training at Harvard University, Babson College, and Tufts University. Kalyoncu has held various roles at Kalyon Holding and served as an Executive Board Member at iGA Istanbul Airport from 2015 to 2022, continuing as a Board Member since 2022.

In 2016, he co-founded the Türkiye Design Council to promote design innovation and support young designers in Türkiye. He was the president of the Real Estate Investors Association (GYODER) from 2020 to 2023 and remains on its Board. Kalyoncu is also involved in multiple non-governmental organizations, including the Gaziantep Education and Service Foundation and the Turkish Design Council.

A music enthusiast, Kalyoncu started at the Üsküdar Music Society at age 9 and has composed several pieces, including “Entrustment” and “Voice of Gaza.” His work reflects a commitment to blending cultural, social, and economic development through design and the arts.

Chairperson

Kalyon Urban Investments

Istanbul & London



Mohamed Resk

Over 10 years of work experience in management consulting. During my career, I have delivered more than 20 engagements across three consulting firms in four MENA markets. Most projects I have led focused on designing and implementing governance frameworks to manage complex strategies and transformational initiatives. On a personal level, I have lived in several cities in Africa and MENA. I spent my childhood years in Bujumbura, then Kinshasa, before moving back to Cairo where I attended high school and university. In 2016, I moved to Riyadh for a short spell. Finally, in 2018 and until the present time, I started a new chapter in Dubai where I am still predominantly servicing clients in Saudi Arabia through weekly travels. I graduated from the American University in Cairo with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics, and I am fluent in Arabic, French and English.

Director

EY

Dubai, UAE



Naomi Mwara

Naomi is the Founder of Flone Initiative, an organization working to create a safe and professional public transport industry in Kenya. She has worked in various transport consultancies including research projects and development of policy papers. She was among the lead organizers of #MyDressMyChoice campaign that saw thousands of women protest gender-based violence in the Kenyan public transport. She has been involved in transport projects in Kenya, Egypt, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania. She has been a speaker at TED Global Stage, Sustainable Transport Award, Transforming Transportation, MOBILIZE Conference among others.

Executive Director

Flone Initiative Trust

Nairobi, Kenya



Nutan Godse

Nutan Godse is the Project Manager cum Urban Management Specialist for Ranchi Smart City, India. She is a part of Public Sector Consultancy team of Grant Thornton Bharat LLP. She has been appointed as a key resource of Project Management Unit for Special Purpose Vehicle at Ranchi Smart City Corporation Limited (RSCCL), India.

*Project Manager Cum
Urban Management
Specialist*

Grant Thornton

Ranchi, India

In this role, she is responsible for the implementation and management of the Smart City projects in Ranchi. She is empanelled with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), India as a consultant for Place Making Mission for 100 Smart Cities in India. Her varied works focus on research, analysis, critical thinking, innovation, design, problem solving, strategy planning and project management. During her professional practice I have worked on the projects from public sector as well as private sector which include smart city projects from India and urban regeneration and redevelopment projects. Her work with government authorities and public sector started at Bhubaneswar Smart City, India and later at Amravati Capital City, Andhra Pradesh.

Prior to joining Grant Thornton, she had worked with Adani Group on Dharavi Redevelopment Project in Mumbai. She holds academic qualifications in Urban Design (University of Westminster) and Architecture (Pune University, India).



Sultan Alkhuraissi

Sultan Alkhuraissi is an executive with over 20 years of experience in urban operations, general management, and strategy execution. He is the Chief Operations Officer at the Royal Commission for AIUla, where he oversees planning, operations, economic and social development, and administration. Previously, Sultan held a key executive role at the Royal Commission for Jubail, managing city operations for Jubail and Ras Alkhair, where he led transformative initiatives to improve operational excellence. At the Expenditure and Project Efficiency Authority, he supported government entities in establishing asset and facility management offices and contributed to the National Manual for Asset and Facility Management.

Chief Operating Officer

*Royal Commission For
AIUla*

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Sultan's expertise includes transformation, operations, and city management, with a focus on establishing functional units, leading improvement initiatives, expanding businesses, and executing strategies. His academic credentials include the General Management Program at Harvard Business School, the Advanced Management Development Program for Real Estate at Harvard Graduate School of Design, a Master's degree in Building Science and Technology, and a BSc in Building Engineering.

Sultan is a member of the International City Management Association (ICMA), the Saudi Council of Engineers, and the Association for Facility Engineering (AFE).



Tomás Raspall

Tomás Raspall is the Director of the Road Safety Office at the National Transportation Safety Board of Argentina (JST). In this role, he leads an interdisciplinary team that conducts research on road transportation and road safety in Argentina. The work at the JST centers on developing strategies to reduce traffic-related fatalities and injuries while promoting safer and more sustainable mobility practices. Recently, the JST has begun to collaborate with local governments in the creation of comprehensive mobility and road safety plans, which include proposals for land use planning and the design of urban and transportation infrastructure.

In addition to his role at the JST, Tomás has been a Professor of Public Policy Analysis and Political Science at the University of Buenos Aires since 2012.

Before his current position, Tomás spent eight years as a legislative advisor in the Argentine House of Representatives, where he specialized in analysing, evaluating, and drafting legislation related to housing, urban planning, and transportation.

Earlier in his career, he conducted academic research on urban policies at the Gino Germani Research Institute at the University of Buenos Aires.

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

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