Bob Dylan first sang “The Times They Are a-Changin’,” back in 1964, but his words are relevant today as the air is once again filled with expectations of change—political, economic, and social. The question is, what do such changes mean for the field of urban planning?

In the ’60s, Dylan (now a Nobel laureate in literature) was reflecting upon a time filled with social and political protests that demanded civil rights, environmental protection, and gender equality. What did it mean then to be a professional urban/regional planner? What kind of a mindset and skills were expected of a professional in this field? More generally, how was professionalism defined at that moment when conventional norms were seriously questioned in so many ways?

One theme affecting professionalism was a revolt against what Herbert Marcuse called “technical reason,” a focus on empirical rationality. This criticism stemmed from the argument that professional advice couched in
technical jargon deliberately hid the political significance of so-called technically devised policies. The root issue, according to such critics, was that technocratic planners did not want to disrupt the political status quo in which they enjoyed political power.

There were other critiques of conventional professionalism as well. Some questioned whether professional knowledge was truly autonomous, free of pressures from the state and markets forces, as professionals claimed. Others questioned the use of professional knowledge to suit nationalist goals when signs pointed toward the growing need to protect the ‘global commons.’ Still others challenged the hierarchical organizational structures within which professional knowledge was produced at the dictates of the state and market. These critics demanded that professional knowledge be democratized through decentralization of knowledge generation. The key issue at the time was accountability: How could professionals be made more accountable to their ultimate client—the public?

To be accountable, the planning process had to be democratic and participatory, requiring a gradual and somewhat slow process of decision-making. The importance of efficiency in the use of time and resources (hallmarks of conventional professionalism in the first half of the last century) was downplayed by those who argued that it was social cohesion that should be primary goals of public policies—even if that required a long, drawn-out, deliberative process involving widespread citizen participation.

It is intriguing that nearly 50 years after Dylan wrote the famous lyrics quoted above, the changing political, economic, and social landscape is once again raising questions about what professionalism is and how professional knowledge should be assessed. What criterion should be used today to assess good planning? Conversely, what constitutes bad planning, useless knowledge, or unprofessional behavior?

In one sense, this new questioning of professional norms is similar to the scrutiny applied in the 1960s—even though the recent criticisms have emerged from the right side of the political spectrum, while in the 1960s it was clearly rooted in left-leaning ideologies. For example, technical knowledge is once again suspect, as is evident in the blatant disregard for scientific knowledge of global warming. Similarly, questions are again being raised about what political motives might underlie scientific and technical research. There is also a surprisingly similar advocacy for the disruption of conventional norms, of bureaucratic procedures, and of the social status quo of knowledge production in general. Fueled by old-style anti-intellectualism, the new skepticism regarding scientific rigor and technical know-how is blatantly disruptive.

This disruptive tendency is legitimized, however, by a new trend in business practices, one that stands in stark contrast to the type of disruption advocated by the disgruntled youth of the 1960s. While the 1960s disruption threatened business motives, the current mood for disruption draws its inspiration from successful business practices—particularly in the information and communication technology-based enterprises that fueled a new round of profit-making possibilities in the first decade of the new century.

There are other differences as well. For instance, decision-makers have become impatient with the slow speed of professional action; they now favor getting things done quickly and in bold strokes, even if those strokes are misguided. The focus has shifted from enabling public policies to emerge from organizational understanding to celebrating the destruction of policies in the name of a efficiency. This new efficiency is rooted in nationalistic thinking, not internationalism or global concerns. The good news is that the new nationalism has refocused professional attention on local problems—that of the poor and unemployed. The worry is that the new sensibility of localism is not informed by the complexity of multiple global interconnections that have steadily intensified over the last 50 years.

Most importantly, there is now a new disregard for both the experiential and technical knowledge of professionals. What was once considered a professional asset—long work experience, in many different organizational settings, under difficult circumstances—is now considered a hindrance and roadblock to quick, disruptive, and unilateral action by unpredictable leaders. There was a time when professional knowledge was sought after to predict future outcomes; now, it is the opposite: Unpredictability is seen as a more effective strategy to address “wicked problems” of the kind that have frustrated planners for years.

There is a peculiar freshness in the new approach, I must admit; it is not based on any particular paradigm, whether that be Keynesianism, monetarism, or supply-side economics. Yet, the new freshness is unnerving too because its conceptual foundation is unclear. At best, it is a hodgepodge of uncoordinated action at multiple scales, from local to national. In contradiction to what we know to be the guiding principles of markets, states, and civil society, the new professionalism is explicitly hostile to a principle-driven approach to public policy. The new approach does not acknowledge the comparative advantages of each domain and spatial scales of social interventions; it simply asserts that within all domains and at all scales what matters most are bold, disruptive, individual leaders who must be free to act. Within this paradigm, adhering to the democratic deliberative process is seen only as a way of slowing the pace of social transformation.

What to make of this new professionalism is a very important question for our time. Both planning academics and planning practitioners must respond to the challenges the new professionalism poses and hold it accountable—even if that slows down the process of social change.

It is intriguing that nearly fifty years after Dylan wrote the lyrics of his famous song —"The times they are a-changin" the air is once again filled with a new expectation of change.
Introducing Louise Elving

SPURS has also benefited from Elving’s experience consulting with the World Bank on housing programs in Botswana. In fall 2016, the SPURS/Humphrey Program was delighted to welcome Louise Elving as a lecturer and program advisor. From the beginning of her career, Elving has worked to promote social justice through community development that serves all people equitably, with a particular focus on opening up opportunities for those whom the mainstream economy leaves behind.

As a principal at VIVA Consulting, a women-owned, Boston-based firm, Elving has worked with more than 40 neighborhood-based organizations throughout the United States to plan and implement community revitalization programs. On clients’ behalf, she has managed the development of more than 4,000 units of mixed-income and affordable housing, including scattered-site housing, service-enriched housing for people with special needs, mixed-income rental projects, and major public housing redevelopments with hundreds of new homes. Her work has also involved creating service programs for families and children, new infrastructure, schools, and locally based commercial activities. In addition, Elving has helped city, state, and federal public agencies design programs and policies to resolve foreclosures, secure home financing, and upgrade community design. Community development organizations often seek her advice on strategy and on training staff to meet new challenges.

This year at Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) Elving has organized and taught, along with Director Bish Sanyal, a pair of required seminars for the Fellows: American Planning, Politics, and Culture in the fall and Leadership: Creating Change and Being Changed this spring. She has also been advising Fellows on their professional placements, assisting them in finding public agencies, nonprofits, professional practices, and other places where they can work to enhance their skills and gain a fuller understanding of American organizations, politics, and programs.

Drawing on her experience assembling public and private financing to rebuild distressed communities, Elving has also led an informal seminar on affordable/mixed income housing. She and the Fellows have discussed how to use diverse financial, regulatory, and land-use tools to create accessible housing opportunities in both the United States and their own countries.

SPURS has also benefited from Elving’s experience consulting with the World Bank on housing programs in Botswana and with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on the U.S./China Housing Innovation Initiative in the early 21st century. She served for many years on the board of directors of the Citizens Housing and Planning Association in Boston and now chairs the board of Homeowners Rehab Inc. in Cambridge, MA. She has also been a member of the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Visiting Committee. Elving has an MCP from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an MA from the University of Chicago, and an undergraduate degree with honors from Cornell University.
The SPURS/Humphrey Program’s collaboration with Roxbury Community College (RCC) got off to a great start this year! As an initial introduction to the partnership, a majority of Fellows traveled to RCC in September to tour the campus and learn more about the history of the neighborhood and its relationship to the school. Fellows met with students and faculty and visited the community garden.

Throughout the semester, a number of Fellows gave presentations on their fields of interest in RCC classes, primarily urban economics and Spanish language classes. Presentation topics ranged from “Earthquake Resistance Housing in Bhutan” to “Planning and Protest in Peru.” Fellows thoroughly enjoyed meeting with RCC students and hearing their personal stories. RCC students in turn gained a global perspective from the Fellows.

In November, more than 40 RCC students visited the MIT campus and attended a faculty talk: “Gentrification, Race, and Urban Planning Post-Election.” Students, Fellows, and faculty discussed the question of how cities will fare in the Trump era. Conversations helped RCC students better understand the role of urban planning and helped Fellows discover how entrenched inequality is in American society. After the talk, students and Fellows toured the MIT Museum to see some of MIT’s major contributions to science and technology.

On February 28, 2017, a joint seminar on “Democracy: Past, Present, and Future” was held at the RCC campus. It was well attended by RCC students and faculty, SPURS/Humphrey Fellows, and outside members of the RCC community. The speakers were Laura Gang, volunteer coordinator for the Greater Boston chapter of We the People Massachusetts, and Professor Bish Sanyal, director of the SPURS/Humphrey Program. In the spring, the partnership activities will include class presentations, joint community service, and social activities. The partners will also discuss how to continue to improve the collaboration moving forward.

Students, Fellows, and faculty discussed the question of how cities will fare in the Trump era.
OPEN METROPOLIS: MONITORING METROPOLITAN LATIN AMERICAN CITIES
By David Gomez-Alvarez, SPURS Fellow and Ricardo Martinez-Campos, MCP ’17

Across Latin America, there is a strong need for understanding the metropolitan phenomenon, and this need has been recognized by current governments and political figures. Some state and national governments are returning to centralizing measures as a way to consolidate power in metropolitan institutions that can then address problems faced at this scale. Unfortunately, little has been done or even discussed about this.

The main challenge in Mexico and Latin America more generally is not only that the metropolitan scale is not well understood. There are also no references to metropolitan governance in the region, which makes it even more difficult to describe this phenomenon in a way that can help us evaluate its evolution and its importance.

The opportunity to take on the SPURS Project Grant was the proper incentive to develop our proposal. We were also bringing knowledge from different metropolitan areas/case studies that we had previously studied across Mexico and Latin America. The seed grant project, called “Open Metropolis: Monitoring Latin American Cities,” aims to trigger a broader discussion around the importance of measuring the “metropolitanization” phenomenon in the region, and to contribute to the measurement of Latin American metropolitan cities through our proposed indicators. Therefore, the main outcome of this project will be to set up the structure of basic indicators around which the metropolitan phenomenon discussion can take place, and from which governments and institutions across Latin America can draw insights for dealing with the phenomenon.

Despite the fact that different initiatives have recognized the importance of the metropolitan phenomenon, few if any have attempted to conceptualize, operationalize, and develop metrics and indicators associated with this phenomenon. In this sense, this project is designed to help fill a gap in the metropolitan agenda.

The process of building the indicators has begun. We expect to build a qualitative analysis of where we are, how this is understood, and where we are going. During December and January, we met with stakeholders that are currently launching metropolitan governance initiatives in the major Mexican cities of in Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey. This is very important to understanding what has worked, what has not, and what missing factors may need to be measured. Our principle in the project is that to evaluate metropolitan governance, we first need to measure it. These case studies are important as they will give use real tools to measure the success or failure of past implementations.

At the same time, we are building the first deliverable of the proposal: a paper in which we will describe how metropolitan areas and governance should be measured and with which indicators. Case studies will be used to compare outcomes. This indicators matrix will summarize the complexities of measuring social, urban and economic development goals within Latin American cities, and it will acknowledge the lack of initiatives that specifically target measuring “metropolitanization” at a regional scale.

The project will consider what has previously been done in the field in an attempt to measure cities’ development and performance across the globe; consolidate the research framework for the matrix indicators; and develop a platform to host findings, metrics, and discussions. We really hope that this initiative will endure through time, fed by future research, and will help governments, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and relevant stakeholders gain a better understanding of the “metropolitanization” phenomenon and how to plan better cities and societies.
STUDY OF THE VULNERABILITY OF SMALL ISLANDS TO CLIMATE CHANGE
By Otto Thomasz, SPURS/Humphrey Fellow, and Valeria Vidal, MCP Student

Small islands have a high level of exposure to climate change due to the combined impacts of an increased frequency and intensity of hurricanes as well as, especially, sea-level rise. This project will explore specific metrics to evaluate socioeconomic vulnerability to climate change, analyze the costs and benefits of adaptation measures, and explore ways to finance the resettlement of a small island’s population.

Recommendations will draw upon a series of interviews from various key stakeholders in this field. The aim of this project is to provide a comparative study on the response to climate-related challenges by islands in Southeast Asia and Latin America. We hope that this will provide insights into best practices and ensure future cooperation in the Southern Hemisphere.

SHIFTING THE LENS OF URBANIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA: A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES

On April 28, 2017, a colloquium on “Shifting the Lens of Urbanization in Latin America: a new understanding of intermediate cities” will be held at MIT. This colloquium is organized by Tais Borges, Analía Garcia, and Sofia Garcia, SPURS/Humphrey Fellows, and Ricardo Campos, Francis Goyes, Latinx DUSP students. The objectives of the colloquium are:

1) building an understanding of the ongoing process of urbanization in Latin America’s intermediate cities,

2) presenting a new urban agenda for this type of cities, and

3) creating a network that fosters a more involved understanding of the regions’ urbanization processes.
Workshops

**MEASURING SOCIOECONOMIC VULNERABILITY: CUSTOMIZED INDICATORS FOR BETTER PUBLIC POLICIES**

During MIT’s Independent Activities Period (IAP), the Department of Urban Studies and Planning offered Measuring Socioeconomic Vulnerability: Customized Indicators for Better Public Policies. This course teaches participants different ways to measure social vulnerability, including outlining the limitations of different approaches. It aims to bring up-to-date concepts into the decision-making process of different public policies.

Different methods for summarizing socioeconomic data were presented during the course and analyzed by means of geospatial analysis (using a geographic information system). Pros and cons of upscaling and downscaling different geographical levels were discussed, as were the visual interpretation of the results of relative and absolute indices.

The course took advantage of the outstanding experience that the City of Cambridge, the City of Boston, and the MIT Office of Sustainability (MITOS) have acquired in the last years in setting the worldwide standard for future climate risk assessment at the city level.

Speakers from the City of Cambridge (John Boduc, environmental planner), the City of Boston (Mia Goldwasser, climate preparedness program manager), and MIT (Brian Goldberg, MITOS project manager) were invited to share their experiences concerning socioeconomic vulnerability to climate risk assessment at a city and university campus level.

The course was the first step in the creation of an international network of researchers and practitioners that will explore metrics for a better evaluation of socioeconomic vulnerability to climate risk, including not only the relation of socioeconomic variables to critical infrastructure, but also issues such as social capital, commuting times, and social media connectivity. The aim of the network is to foster the construction of micro indicators that will better describe social vulnerability within a city or region in order to implement specific adaptation measures and design emergency preparedness strategies.

Cases presented by students and practitioners focused on mobile phone connectivity during hurricanes (New York City), social media dependence in the distribution of supplies after catastrophes (Tibet), contradictions between rural and urban assessments (Mexico), locations of hospital services after an earthquake (Haiti), vulnerability assessment in shantytown displacements (Buenos Aires), and vulnerability assessment to climate change at the city level (United States) and in rural areas (Argentina).

Mariano Eriz, MIT SPURS Research Fellow (2015–2016) from Buenos Aires and Esteban Otto Thomasz, MIT SPURS Research Fellow (2016–2017) and researcher at Buenos Aires University, were the instructors for this workshop. Bish Sanyal, Ford International Professor of Urban Development and Planning and director of the SPURS/Humphrey Program was the faculty advisor.
METRO LAB

The Metro Lab Initiative offered a two-week IAP session sponsored by the MIT-SUTD Collaboration and organized by Gabriel Lanfranchi, SPURS Fellow 2015, and David Gomez-Alvarez, SPURS Fellow 2017. The session had two modules that could be taken together or separately. Each module offered classes in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. In the first module, “Bridging the Metro Gaps,” metropolitan challenges and their potential solutions were addressed and developed for different sectors. The second module, “The Shaping of a New Metropolitan Discipline” focused on how different disciplines and methods can be applied. A poster session was held on the last day of each course that was open to the MIT and Harvard communities.

CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF ARGENTINA

On February 21, 2017, the SPURS/Humphrey Program hosted a conference on regional development featuring a delegation of six high-ranking decision-makers from Argentina. The Department of Urban Studies and Planning event was organized by the SPURS leadership with Mariano Eriz (SPURS/Humphrey Fellow 2015–2016), Otto Thomasz (SPURS/Humphrey Fellow 2016–2017), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Argentina.

The invited speakers were the minister of internal affairs of Argentina, Rogelio Frigerio, and the governors of the provinces of Corrientes (Ricardo Colombi), Mendoza (Alfredo Cornejo), Misiones (Hugo Passalacqua), Neuquén (Omar Gutierrez), and Salta (Juan Manuel Urtubey).
Planning and development activists around the world confront similar challenges in diverse countries. In 2016, the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) /Humphrey fall seminar U.S. Planning, Politics, and Culture focused on some of the most difficult issues facing American cities: community development, housing, race, equity, and climate change. Key questions that emerged—and that also arise in many other places—include:

- Where should the poor live? Is it better to invest in upgrading distressed neighborhoods or to encourage residents to move to communities of opportunity?
- Where should people of different races and ethnicities live, together or in separate enclaves?
- How can neighborhoods and cities be made more equitable, so that they serve a wide range of people at a variety of income levels?
- How should cities protect residents from the growing environmental risks caused by climate change?
- Should scarce public resources be invested only to help the poorest households or also to assist families that struggle financially but have somewhat higher incomes?

These questions have no easy answers! Responses to them in the United States have changed as attitudes have evolved...

The seminar also described the physical impacts related debates have had on the built urban environment. The 2016 presidential campaign was in full swing during the seminar, so Fellows also had a chance to explore how these issues were being debated nationally. The course featured a number of guest lectures by faculty from MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning as well as from government leaders from the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Fellows heard from public officials and university researchers who are devising strategies to make Boston and Massachusetts more climate-resilient. The deputy director of MassHousing also presented the current policy, economic, demographic, and social issues that recently led this premier state housing finance organization to dedicate $100 million to creating workforce housing throughout the state.

For a closer look at city government and regional activities in Eastern Massachusetts, the seminar took Fellows on site visits to the Boston Planning and Development Agency (formerly Boston Redevelopment Authority) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Fellows toured the target neighborhood revitalization area for Urban Edge, one of Boston’s notable community development corporations. Seminar attendees took a walking tour of Urban Edge’s entire Jamaica Plain focus area, visiting two of its new and renovated housing projects.

Through this combination of presentations, site visits, and discussions, the course introduced Fellows to how American planners are debating and addressing major urban dilemmas. Fellows were then asked to reflect critically on how their home cities and countries could both benefit from and inform planning community debates on these challenging issues.
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FORUM ON GENDER EQUITY

In fall 2016, the SPURS/Humphrey Program held a series of six workshops led by lecturer Louise Elving and PhD associate, Linda Shi on the topic of gender equity in preparation for the annual Global Leadership Forum (GLF) in Washington, D.C. The series explored the women’s rights movement in the United States, Fellows’ experience of gender relations in their own countries, and readings such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s We Should All Be Feminists. A joint presentation by SPURS/Humphrey Fellow Tigist Kassahun Temesgen and Harvard Loeb Fellow Rahel Shawl, both architects from Ethiopia, detailed how unequal access to education and employment in the fields of design and planning produces a male-dominated profession that entrenches design principles that inhibit women’s full participation in society.

These discussions, often heated and passionate, shaped the Fellows’ GLF presentation, which was delivered by Temesgen and Fiza Afzal, an architect from Pakistan. Temesgen and Afzal argued that physical space mediates how domains such as law, religion, economic development, education, and conflict translate into the built environment and individuals lived experience. To illustrate their point, Fellows included three narrated stories in the presentation. In the first, a woman from Egypt spoke of her inability to own land and qualify for housing in her own right, challenges that affected her marriage prospects and economic status. A woman from Ethiopia spoke of how difficult it was for her to use public transportation to get to university. Finally, a woman from Peru revealed the particular challenges women face in poorly run markets, ranging from a lack of bathrooms to security concerns.

The Fellows then provided examples from around the world that demonstrate how planning can be used to address these challenges. Examples included designing housing programs that prioritize women; making public investments in improving urban slums; upgrading public markets with storage space, shade, and better lighting; and involving women in the design of places and urban improvements. The multimedia presentation was powerfully and concisely delivered, and it made a very positive impression at the forum.

Humphrey Fellows at the Global Forum in Washington
At a time when new national leadership is overhauling a variety of U.S. social policies, the SPURS/Humphrey Program has introduced a new seminar that will consider how to provide leadership that promotes equity. Leadership: Creating Change and Being Changed will center on the messy and complex work of leading organizations and movements to advance the interests of communities and vulnerable people.

Over the years, SPURS/Humphrey Fellows have aspired to many different leadership roles, including elected official, national minister, head of a professional consulting firm, director of a public agency, founder of a nonprofit, university professor, regional governor, community leader, and more. This seminar will give Fellows an opportunity to reflect on what approaches, skills, and attributes might be needed for one of these roles.

The seminar will cover many aspects of leadership, recognizing that there are conflicting views about what good leadership entails. Questions for discussion may include:

- What overall concepts of leadership exist? For example, the German sociologist Max Weber, among others, made a distinction between charismatic leaders who lead by inspiration (or fear) and bureaucratic leaders who focus on directing organizations.

- Do good leaders focus on process? Do they see their purpose as identifying a goal in response to a problem and then assembling and shepherding people to achieve the goal?
• Is a leader’s main responsibility to identify and promote the work of others?

• What does it mean to “lead from below”?

• Do good leaders command or suggest?

• Are some traits, such as courage, decisiveness, and intelligence, inherent to good leaders?

• Are good leaders thoughtful, truthful, trustworthy, and supportive, or are effective leaders egotistical, demanding, and self-promoting?

• Are there essential skills for good leaders? For example, are negotiation, communication, or supervisory skills necessary?

The seminar will also consider ways in which becoming a leader can shape the individuals, such as through risk taking, compromise, or other changes in behavior.

This course will feature guest lectures by public officials and academics who have thought extensively about the many ways leaders exert influence. The speakers have a wide range of leadership experience, at scales from a neighborhood to a nation, and have worked with public agencies, nonprofits, unions, political and social movements, and in electoral politics.
Professional and Social Events

BOSTON TOUR

This tour, which takes place during orientation week for the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows, provides a great introduction to the City of Boston, highlighting more than 20 popular tourist sites. The tour features lots of little-known facts, interesting insights, a view of unique neighborhoods, and a boat ride on the Charles River.

TRIP TO NEW YORK

SPURS Fellows meet with the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative team to learn more about the idea of economic democracy and the attempt to implement this in the city.

LOEB/SPURS FELLOWS’ DISCUSSION

The SPURS/Humphrey Fellows met the Loeb Fellows at a get-together held at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. The topic of the discussion was the social agenda behind the design and policies that shape the built environment. The intent of this discussion was to call out the shared and convergent social intent of our representative disciplines and to question the true value of our social impact.
Presidential Debate Night was an event co-hosted by SPURS/Humphrey Program and the student council for MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning. SPURS/Humphrey Fellows and graduate students watched the first U.S. presidential debate of the 2016 race. This event sparked a rich discussion among attendees and led to further political interest and events later in the fall.

The holiday party was the last event of 2016. The event centered on giving SPURS/Humphrey staff and Fellows the chance to enjoy time together. It was also a celebration of Christmas; many Fellows learned and sang carols and had a traditional Christmas dinner. Fellows brought their families or significant others to share this special time.

The SPURS/Humphrey Fellows gathered for a Thanksgiving dinner celebration in the fall. During this dinner, the program hosts explained the meaning and history behind the holiday, providing some background for further discussion. Fellows shared information about similar celebrations in their home countries, and all offered words of thanks for something in their lives.
SPURS/HUMPHREY FELLOWS: HUMANIZING THE PLANNING PROCESS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUITY

By James Rojas, an urban planner, community activist and artist

Achieving gender equity requires urban planners to rethink standard community engagement practices in order to help women articulate their needs and build the leadership skills necessary to participate in civic discourse. This year, the annual SPURS/Humphrey Program retreat provided a rare opportunity to explore gender equity from a global perspective. The rural, tranquil landscape of Bethel, Maine, was the perfect venue for the Fellows to get to know each other through an equity workshop. The good weather enabled the group to work outside on the lawn with stunning views of the lake.

**Individual activity**

As a gender equity icebreaker, the Fellows were asked to build their first childhood memory of a safe place outside their home. They had 15 minutes to reflect and then reconstruct their memory place from a selection of hundreds of small objects. Once the Fellows started to explore and touch the objects, the creative process got under way. They began to organize objects on construction paper, their hands moving furiously as their designs unfolded.

Then the group was instructed to stop building! In a fun and informative exercise, the Fellows next presented their childhood memories to the group. The Fellows told their stories with conviction and enthusiasm while their colleagues listened with great attention. Once the presentations were over, the memories were synthesized into the planning framework. This framework helped the Fellows understand the fundamental role human stories play in urban planning.

As a wrap-up to this first activity, the participants were asked to state themes that were common to the memory stories. The themes that emerged were family, community, nature, physical activity, access, sharing, curiosity, imagination, and familiarity. No matter where, when, or how the Fellows had grown up, they shared similar experiences and values with others.

Storytelling humanized the planning process for the Fellows, erasing all gender, age, racial, cultural, economic, professional, and personality differences. Through storytelling, the Fellows quickly became empathetic toward each other and bonded. Building their stories with objects allowed participants to investigate the physical details of place. For example, most of the models had trees, landscape, animals, people, and elements that connected them to the space, such as a bench, playground equipment,
or a rock. The models provided rich visual and spatial information about what creates place for the Fellows and what they might wish to bring forward into the future to produce places that matter to them.

**Collaborative Problem-Solving**

For the next collaborative activity, Fellows were placed in mixed-gender teams. Each team was then asked to build a gender-friendly city location based on their childhood memories, experiences, and imagination in 15 minutes using the same objects.

Building with objects on imaginary maps allowed the Fellows to illustrate and negotiate ideas that would have been difficult to describe using words alone. As team members tested their ideas with their colleagues, models began to fill the tabletops. When time was up, each team briefly presented its solution to the group.

- Team One focused on making streets safe and accessible through a traffic-calming design.
- Team Two focused on children, designing a playground in a vacant lot between buildings.
- Team Three focused on nature and had a river running through the site to create a relaxing environment.
- Team Four focused on transparency, providing an open street view so that women would feel safer.

Members of each team spoke with conviction and enthusiasm about their project. As a wrap-up, the Fellows were asked to name common themes again. They cited safety, openness, access, beauty, comfort, nature, family, children, and transparency.

The Fellows collaborated and negotiated in a safe space to generate new opportunities to bring men and women together to create a gender-friendly place—an activity that was important because they learned from each other. Imagination and physical experience were valuable for every team.

As the workshop ended, it was clear Fellows had gained an understanding that we live in a world in which women’s experiences are not always highlighted or respected in the urban planning process. The workshop created a space in which female Fellows could take the lead and were comfortable expressing themselves. Differences were peeled away to reveal shared values, facilitating equity.

**Humanizing the Planning Process**

For this workshop, providing a relaxed setting for the Fellows was the first step to creating an equitable environment. Urban planners strive for inclusion but can nevertheless forget what makes us human and the importance of considering how we relate to one another.

The SPURS/Humphrey Program brings together midcareer professionals from developing countries to study urban planning for one year at MIT. This year’s cohort consisted of nine women and six men from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and from all walks of life. In this workshop, tapping into female Fellows’ on-the-ground knowledge of place provided some inclusive, in-depth data related to the development of gender-friendly cities. While all SPURS/Humphrey Fellows naturally experience the world through their own lenses, which define who they are and what they value, this workshop enabled Fellows to share, respect, and celebrate their different perspectives.
After being accepted into the SPURS/Hubert H. Humphrey Program, I arrived at MIT in August 2016. I was informed about the immense resources and opportunities that the Humphrey Program and my host university—MIT—provide. Therefore, I came to MIT with a high motivation to explore ecological and equitable urbanism and the role of gender in spatial planning.

The question that interested me was: How can we design equitable inclusiveness in an eco-urban environment for a fair and transparent city at various scales? I hoped to learn and exchange expertise to acquire the necessary tools and strategies to produce gender-sensitive and ecological urban environments in all my future projects. I also wanted to create and maintain a strong link with resourceful institutions such as MIT in order to strengthen the links between design practice and the knowledge-based industry with the goal of helping to achieve equitably inclusive and sustainable urban development.

As a feminist, I have had a long-standing plan to launch an association of university women in Ethiopia. My goal is to engage and empower female graduates to achieve educational and practical professional success in the areas of architecture and urbanism. Thus, contributes to reducing poverty among women and girls.

I was encouraged to start this association and work on gender-focused projects after I became a lecturer at the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture and Building Construction—Addis Ababa University. Working with my outstanding students but limited resources, I started witnessing several gender disparities arising from the fast socioeconomic development in Addis Ababa. Due to the lack of gender-sensitive processes of education, design, planning, and implementation, women’s challenges to equally benefit from the city’s resources were rising each day.

While making cities a ladder of economic development, we should create an inclusive spatial strategy for both rural and urban societies so they benefit equally from available opportunities and resources. We need to pay attention to the undeniable differences between women and men that require gender-sensitive interventions. For instance, to promote equal access to work/study and other growing opportunities, there should be close proximity between the main socioeconomic infrastructures and neighborhoods; transportation and efficient road networks should be route-optimized; safety and security should be improved by providing adequate street illumination and signage. Such features benefit everyone, but they are often of greater importance to women than men. For example, if traveling between their neighborhoods to education/employment opportunities takes too long or is unsafe, women may be forced to stay home and satisfy their gender roles.

If more women participate in the design and planning of physical spaces, the result will be more gender-sensitive and equitably inclusive. With this strong belief, I plan to start the association that brings together volunteer women architects and planners to work on participatory research projects focused on various ecological and equitable spatial designs strategies. The goal for this group is to identify sustainable practical design interventions for transformative projects that can contribute to policymaking aimed at achieving “fair cities.” Ecological and equitably inclusive solutions strengthen capacities for social innovation and can help develop the local economies of rapidly urbanizing countries.

After a yearlong stay here, I can say that I have benefited from the courses/seminars/workshops that I found at MIT and Harvard. The multinational and multidisciplinary learning and working environments have provided me the basic tools that I need. My shared experiences with the amazing SPURS/Humphrey Fellows and staff, as well as with professors and students at MIT, have played a wonderful role in my short time here. They have expanded my thinking, challenged my ideas, and we have created new experiences together. I will cherish these forever!

It is thus with great pleasure that I record this successful one-year journey that the SPURS/Humphrey Program has provided to me. It will always remain a major resourceful steppingstone in my career and a powerful, long-lasting, lifetime experience.

My deepest and heartfelt thanks to the SPURS/Humphrey Program, MIT, and SPURS/Humphrey Fellows!
GENDER EQUITY, INCLUSIVENESS, MOBILITY, AND SAFETY: RECONFIGURING MY COMFORT ZONE
By Heba Allah Khalil, Humphrey Fellow, Egypt

As a mid-career woman, I have achieved a lot socially and professionally. A mother of two, an Associate Professor at Cairo University and an urban planning and housing expert for several local and international organizations, I felt I needed a replenishment to compensate for years of giving to my profession. I decided to apply for an overseas program, the Humphrey Fellowship that would match my dual academic/practical nature. However, I welcomed this opportunity with some hesitancy: what about my family, my students and my way of life? I had many internal debates and consultations until I finally decided to get out of my comfort zone and take the leap.

I was enthusiastic to learn that this year’s Humphrey topic is gender equity and thought it relevant to myself. I was astonished to learn that equal pay is not guaranteed in USA. Struggle for women’s rights is still an active cause globally, including this country! Working with my inspiring colleagues, the MIT SPURS fellows, we prepared a presentation about gender equity and space, highlighting some challenges that urban planning and design can positively improve, namely: land and housing tenure, safety in public spaces and access to services. In too many places, every day, women encounter barriers and difficulties that our work as architects and urban planners may be able to ameliorate for the hope of a better inclusive future.

Bringing my sons along, ages eleven and seven, was one key factor in my decision to take this fellowship. I was lucky that they were given places in a very inclusive public school in Cambridge, MA. The teachers respect and teach children to respect diversity, acceptance and inclusiveness. However, reality is not always perfect. I found some residues of segregation/separation in different districts around Boston. In some areas I would feel that people, buildings and streets look different as if there is a certain intrinsic coding system. It made me understand that existing in the same space does not necessarily translate to inclusiveness or equity. With a headscarf on, I sometimes attract attention; nevertheless, it is not a harmful one. On the contrary, some people went out of their own way to express their regret for the current US government’s situation with countries of Muslim majority. I think I am lucky to have witnessed this year’s American election first hand. It helped me understand the diversity of Americans as well as their differences and respect the way many are analysing their situations for better future performance. I believe the power of this country lies in its diversity and its regulated systemic approach to solving problems, not relying on a single individual.

Moving around the Cambridge/Boston area using public transportation requires planning that, previously, I had briefly experienced in Europe. In Cairo, I drive everywhere and suffer from the all-day rush hour! In Boston, public transportation is not bad, but on weekends, the schedule changes with fewer buses’ times and routes posing a mobility challenge. Although I sometimes revert to Uber, I do try to walk for exercise; however, walking can be challenging in a sub-zero climate for an Egyptian! Walking could also potentially be unsafe, as I was advised not to walk alone at night. Yet, I still behave according to my Cairene assessment of risk and safety, which differs from the scale here.

I am grateful that I got support from my family to pursue my ambition to study abroad. They also had to get out of their own comfort zone. Indeed, this year has been a lifetime adventure that challenged my perception of my capabilities and my comfort zone. Living on MIT campus in family housing, people meeting me for the first time would always assume that I am here with my husband and would ask me about his studies. My answer always comes as a surprise: I am the Fellow here with my kids. A stereotype that reflects the mindset when seeing a woman with a headscarf and children! It reminds me how far I have travelled from my comfort zone as a Humphrey Fellow at MIT.

I was enthusiastic that this year’s Humphrey discussion topic is gender equity.
REFLECTIONS ON THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!
By Gail Loraine Kromoredjo, Humphrey Fellow, Suriname

Being in the United States during the presidential election has been a unique experience. The two candidates for the presidency were Hillary Clinton, from the Democratic Party, and Donald Trump from the Republican Party. As a Humphrey Fellow in the United States, listening to the news and debates that took place between the two candidates convinced me that Clinton would win the election without a doubt.

On November 8, before going to bed, the early election results showed the outcome that I had anticipated. But things took a different turn, and plenty of us got a surprise when the final results came out: Trump had won the presidency.

Qualifications that made me believe that Clinton would be the next president, despite all the negativity the Republicans had used to describe her, and which Trump lacked were her years of relevant public experience, knowledge, and the skills to lead a nation; the well-defined plans and proposed actions on how to lead America in such important areas as global economic development, human resources, natural resources, capital formation and technology; and an intelligent and strong team of advisors to support her.

But here we are today, with the fact that regardless of all the above qualities, millions of Americans voted for another approach. You might wonder why that is. Well, let’s consider what people typically look for in a leader. A leader is a person who influences a group of people toward the achievement of a goal.

Trump spoke words that were clear and consistent, and he made millions of people believe he would make America stronger and safer, that he would “make America great again.” His harsh criticisms of the news media, minorities, and others resonated with many voters. He may not have had the public experience of Clinton, but he knew what many individual people wanted to hear and what they would believe.

The signed executive order on January 27, 2017, which includes a 90-day ban on entry to the United States by individuals from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen was very shocking for me as an international student. Even though my country was not included in the list, it was instantly clear what Trump is capable of doing.

Will banning more Muslim countries improve homeland security and protect the United States from Islamic terrorism? Will building a 30-foot-high wall at the Mexican border stop immigrants from crossing into the country illegally and keep out drug smugglers? If one has read the technical details of the design of this wall, one would agree with me that this action is absurd.

After signing an executive order to restart construction on the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline oil project, a project that was halted during President Obama’s administration, President Trump tweeted this message: “The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive.”

I would say not having a plan on how to lead a country results in this type of decision-making. Trump is not showing any sign of leadership in his short time in office. Firing those who do not support his decision-making is not going to help him make America better.

What is awaiting America and every other country concerned about global warming? The answer to this question has in most ways been answered and more concerning actions are to be expected. Whether individuals shared Clinton’s vision and mission or whether they voted for Trump, there are significant unclear, worrying aspects that will only be answered as Trump leads this country on his terms. Will a new approach create war and unstable global development, or will it advance the interests of both America and people around the globe? Will this be a time for the Republicans to rejoice? Or, will this create new opportunities for everyone? What can be done? I think America can be great again if the people are educated to make wise decisions and engage better in the election process.

Gail Loraine Kromoredjo
Through the tireless efforts of Debbie Levey, many SPURS/Humphrey alumni have been contacted to update the program’s records. Hopefully, this will lead to record-breaking alumni attendance for the SPURS 50th Anniversary Celebration on October 12, 2018.

Levey has written newsletters and feature stories (mostly on engineering topics) and has corresponded with MIT alumni for more than 40 years. Thanks to the enthusiastic alumni response to her Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering newsletter, she has learned MIT history directly from graduates dating back to the 1920s. Now semi-retired, she loves writing to SPURS alumni from around the world and getting them back in touch with the program.

Om Prakash Mathur SPURS ’71 (India) spent 10 years with the U.N. Development Programme, splitting his time between Iran and Japan, before returning to India and eventually joining the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. Now at age 83 he works half-days at the Institute of Social Sciences and continues to travel widely. He hopes to attend the SPURS 50th anniversary event in October 2018.

Due to changing frontiers, Borislav Stojkov SPURS ’71 (Yugoslavia/Serbia) notes that he has lived in seven different countries without ever leaving Belgrade. His decades of experience include town planning and spatial planning for Belgrade, then Serbia. During the Balkan wars, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees appointed him director of the Agency for Accommodating Refugees in Serbia. In 2014–2015 he prepared the new Spatial Plan of Republic Srpska (one of two entities in Bosnia Herzegovina).

Alberto Leonel de Cervantes Grandjean SPURS ’77 (Mexico) worked for decades in the private sector, including in his current position as vice president for development at the Gran Reserva Golf Resort and Country Club in Mexico. His government experience, mostly between 1971 and 1986, included a variety of planning positions for the state of Jalisco, and an ongoing long-term position with the Mexican Urban Land Institute Management Committee.

During her long career working with the University of the Philippines as well as local and international agencies, Zenaida Alunan Manalo Humphrey ’80 (Philippines) has held many positions related to policy formulation, spatial planning, land-use planning, integrated area development, housing, tourism, industrial estates development, and regional growth. Since February 2006, she has been a resettlement volunteer for a project involving the poor urban families in Manila.

Antonio A. Balgos SPURS ’81(Philippines) left government service to manage his family’s fishponds when the prawn industry was booming, then ventured into real estate. He organized the Teodorica Corporation and continues to develop another site into a well-designed, commercial-residential urban enclave.

Along with colleagues in the economic planning ministry of the Philippines, Ernesto S. Gorospe SPURS ’81 (Philippines) built the foundations for a more decentralized regional planning and budgeting system for an area of the national government. Recently, he established a new company with former government colleagues to provide master planning consultancy services for state colleges and universities as well as local government units.

Lirio Calixto SPURS ’81 (Philippines) now splits her time between Australia and the Philippines.

Tomás Netzahualcóyotl Rico-Mora SPURS ’81 (Mexico) wrote a concept paper, “Ending Poverty in Uzbekistan: The Role of Infrastructure Investment and Public-Private-Producer Partnerships (4P)” that was a winner in a short-essay contest organized by the World Bank. He is interested in increasing local awareness of the critical developmental constraints and opportunities faced by marginalized urban, rural, and indigenous communities in Mexico and other countries.

“MIT introduced me to the new world of personal computers; I returned to my consulting firm with an Apple IIe and proselytized about computers,” writes Annette Hochstein Humphrey ’84 (Israel). Later she joined the Mandel Foundation and helped establish institutions in Israel that educate professional leaders in education and social service. Besides serving on the board of the foundation and of other philanthropic institutions, she and some friends established Restless Books (www.restlessbooks.com), which publishes English translations of literature from around the world.

Robert Denize Humphrey ’86 (Haiti) lives and works in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Last summer Marina Alberti SPURS ’88 (Italy) published a new book, Cities that Think Like Planets (UW Press 2016). She is professor of urban design and planning and director of the Urban Ecology Research Lab at the University of Washington.

Sophremiano Antipolo Humphrey ’89 (Philippines) spent many years in various jobs to provide planning and evaluation of development programs in Western Mindanao. He also held many responsible positions at the University of Southeastern Philippines (USeP), receiving awards and citations for his contribution to public service.

Sandra Beatriz B.C. Zarur SPURS ’92 (Brazil) retired from Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), where she worked in genetic resources and biotechnology to help preserve the traditional knowledge of Brazilian indigenous people. Now she has a new career as a wildlife photographer.

Narayanan Edadan SPURS ’96 (India) worked with the Asian Development Bank as an urban development consultant for many projects until 2015, then joined the World Bank as the housing consultant for managing post-earthquake housing reconstruction in Gujarat. Currently he is assessing housing damage for the World Bank caused by the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria.

Jacob Carlos Lima SPURS ’01 (Brazil) has been a sociology professor at the Federal University of São Carlos since 2004. “I continue with research in economic sociology and sociology of work, graduate and undergraduate classes, and students’ orientation.”
SPURS Newsletter

Alumni Updates

Yi Wang SPURS ’01 (China) is a professor in the Tsinghua University School of Architecture and has published a book, A Century of Change: Beijing’s Urban Structure in the 20th Century.

Carlos Reimers SPURS ’02 (Venezuela) joined the School of Architecture and Planning at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Previously he had taught at the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas A&M University, and Simon Bolívar University in Caracas, where he was the chair of the School of Architecture between 1997 and 2001. He has been a technical consultant on social and low-income housing for the Inter-American Development Bank and has served as senior housing advisor to many NGOs and low-income community organizations.

As a professor of landscape architecture and architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Elizabeth Dean Hermann SPURS ’03 (USA) teaches interdisciplinary courses on many topics, including the urban built environment; transdisciplinary design in the context of social and economic development; and critical cartography considering issues of displacement, place, and identity. She is founder and codirector of DESINE Lab Collective, an independent applied research lab where faculty, students, and alumni from RISD and Brown University work with partners to develop and implement design-based, integrated, multi-scale social and economic strategies for under-resourced, post-conflict, and post-disaster societies.

Dzenana Bijedic Humphrey ’03 (Bosnia) obtained her PhD and joined the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sarajevo. "For seven years, I was vice-dean for international cooperation at the Faculty of Architecture, a member and organizer of several scientific conferences, author of numerous papers on sustainability in architecture, and wrote two books."

Berhanu WoldeTensae Humphrey ’04 (Ethiopia) received his PhD from the University of Lyon II and Laboratoire Aménagement Économie Transports (LAET) of École Nationale des Travaux Publics de l’État (ENTPE), France. "In 2008 I left the Addis Ababa city government and joined Addis Ababa University, where I hold the chair of urban and regional planning of the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building and Construction, and City Development."

Zaklina Gligorijevic Humphrey ’04 (Croatia) joined the Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade and soon was appointed director of the main city planning office. "The following four years were challenging, dynamic, and demanding in our efforts to achieve better plans, wiser city policies, and healthy communication between different sectors, even as the city faced the global economic crisis and legislation change."

Justyna Martyniuk-Peczek SPURS ’04 (Poland) is associate professor in the Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Gdansk University of Technology, and publishes extensively on her research and design studies.

Daniel Easer SPURS ’04 (Germany) earned a PhD, worked for the United Nations for two years, and then joined American University in Washington, DC. "I received tenure in 2015 and am excited to focus on producing scholarship in the years to come."

Nestor Trejo Humphrey ’06 (Venezuela) was appointed Mérida city public services manager in the midst of an environmental crisis regarding sanitation and waste management services. He conducted an international education program between Venezuelan and Angolan universities to train African petroleum engineers.

Harry Edelman SPURS ’06 (Finland) is professor of sustainable design and development at the Tampere University of Technology. He has also established a startup company, Edelman Group, focused on integrative urban developments.

Fenghua Liu Humphrey ’07 (China) worked in the Hainan Provincial Development and Reform Department as division chief for 10 years. She is deputy associate director of the Hainan State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, in charge of the evaluation of state-owned company managers.

In 2009, Patricia Acosta Humphrey ’07 (Colombia) joined the School of Political Science and Government Urban Management and Development Program at the Universidad del Rosario, Colombia, and has engaged in such projects as an international research initiative on affordable housing and slum upgrading.

Miller (Yongming) Wang SPURS ’07 (China) now works for the giant mining company Rio Tinto, where he offers technical support to the company’s customers and sales. He also analyzes the Chinese steel market.

Emil Bayramov Humphrey ’08 (Azerbaijan) is a geospatial data specialist for the onshore and offshore petroleum and gas industry at BP in the Azerbaijan–Georgia–Turkey region. He earned a SM in geographical information systems from Lund University in Sweden, and a PhD in natural sciences (geospatial and remote sensing technologies) from Dresden University of Technology in Germany.

D’Artis Kanc SPURS ’08 (Latvia) works as a senior scientist at the European Commission and in parallel at the University of Leuven, Belgium.

Sergio Jose Gutierrez Hernandez SPURS ’08 (Mexico) became national advisor for urban development for the Mexican Senate. In 2010 he returned to politics and became the national head in one of his party’s sectors. Recently he joined Interlogis, a major industrial real estate company in Latin America, as its global head.

Xiaohui Chen Humphrey ’09 (China) is head of urbanization and the urban-rural planning research center of Jiangsu province, providing technical policy to the provincial government. She joined the International Society of City and Regional Planners and organizes international events.

Gabar Mustafa SPURS ’10 (Sudan) earned his PhD in engineering from Brown University in 2013 and teaches at Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts. He recently published his second book on sustainable infrastructure development, Optimal Engineering Strategy for Sustainable Infrastructure: Water and Sanitation Case Study from Eastern Sudan.

Back at the Southeast University in Nanjing, Xingping Wang SPURS ’10 (China) hosted an important research
program funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China, followed by another research program supported by China National Social Science Foundation. “In 2016, a joint research center between MIT and my university on urban and rural issues will be set up, and I have some roles in this center based on my experience at SPURS.”

Ugyen M Tenzin Humphrey ’10 (Bhutan) is the chief urban planner in the Department of Human Settlement, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, in Thimphu, Bhutan. “I am also interested in studying the relationship between spatial planning and the promotion of Gross National Happiness, Bhutan’s development philosophy.”

Lukasz Pancewicz SPURS ’12 (Poland) joined the Municipal Planning Bureau in Lodz, Poland, as a senior level planner/designer and worked on the main structure plan for the city, which faced a severe population decline while being on the verge of rapid modernization. He is an adjunct professor at the Gdansk University of Technology and is interested in the practical aspects of urban regeneration.

Gabriela Maria Rembarz SPURS ’12 (Poland) feels that her MIT experience has helped her start a new line of implementation research. In November 2014, she and Justyna Martyniuk-Feczek ’04 gave a presentation, “Absorbing MIT Under Creative Tension” at a SPURS seminar.

Bayarmaa Darimaa Humphrey ’13 (Mongolia) became a board member of the Union of Mongolian Architects. She teaches architecture and urban design at Huree University in Ulaanbaatar and has been head of the Education Commission of the Union of Mongolian Architects since 2015.

Youbo Zhuang SPURS ’13 (China) is an associate professor in the Landscape Architecture Department, School of Architecture, at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Rex Xiao Wang SPURS ’14 (China) joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as an economist to work on energy strategy and project economic analysis. Previously he had worked for the China Investment Corporation, the country’s sovereign wealth fund, where he conducted macroeconomic research for the United States, Europe, and China, and carried out sectoral analysis, including analysis of infrastructure and real estate.

Waqar Shah Humphrey ’14 (Pakistan) finished an MSc in sustainable energy at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Thanks to SPURS, he says he now takes a more holistic approach to issues of sustainability.

Magdalena Rembeza SPURS ’15 (Poland) is an assistant professor at Gdansk University of Technology. She is writing a book and involved in activities connected with revitalization in Poland. “SPURS forced me, in a positive way, to feel more responsible for global urban development, but most of all for people who are less privileged.”

Moe Thida Humphrey ’15 (Myanmar) has contributed many new planning ideas to her Myanmar government office. She is busy supporting changes in her office and her country.

Due to the changing political situation caused by the post-coup state of emergency, Sezen Genc Furnmage Humphrey ’16 (Turkey) and her husband, an Australian citizen, have moved to his country. She now works as senior planning officer from the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment, Australia.

For the past 20 years, Brijesh Dixit Humphrey ’16 (India) has been working in the Mechanical Engineering Department of the Indian Railways. He says, “As one of the world’s largest railway systems, it employs 13 million people, loads 3.3 million tons of freight, and carries 22 million passengers every day.”

Nimfa de Leon Fellowship Fund

Please consider supporting the Nimfa de Leon Fellowship Fund. The Fellowship will be awarded to one outstanding member of the DUSP community each year who shows exceptional commitment to supporting the academic and professional development of the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows.

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SAVE THE DATE
SPURS is celebrating its
50th anniversary
on October 12, 2018.

An event in honor of the occasion will be held at the MIT Media Lab.

If you have any contributions or suggestions, please email us at spurs-program@mit.edu.