



MIT Chancellor Phillip L. Clay with 2009-2010 SPURS/Humphrey Fellows, faculty, and staff



**AMERICAN PLANNING AND  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**SPURS FACULTY**

- CHERIE MIOT ABBANAT** MCP  
Lecturer in Communications
- ALICE H. AMSDEN** PhD  
Barton L. Weller Professor of Political Economy
- XAVIER DE SOUZA BRIGGS** PhD  
Associate Professor of Sociology and Urban Planning
- JOANN CARMIN** PhD  
Associate Professor of Environmental Policy & Planning
- DIANE E. DAVIS** PhD  
Professor of Political Sociology & Head, International Development Group
- RALPH A. GAKENHEIMER** PhD  
Professor of Urban Planning, Emeritus
- ANNETTE M. KIM** PhD  
Ford International Career Development Assistant Professor of Urban Studies & Planning
- RICHARD LOCKE** PhD  
Alvin J. Siteman Professor of Entrepreneurship & Political Science
- JOHN DE MONCHAUX** MArch UD  
Professor of Architecture & Planning, Emeritus
- KAREN R. POLENSKE** PhD  
Professor of Regional Political Economy & Planning
- BALAKRISHNAN RAJAGOPAL** PhD, SJD  
Associate Professor of Law & Development, Interim Head, International Development Group, Director, MIT Program on Human Rights & Justice

- BISHWAPRIYA SANYAL** PhD  
Ford International Professor of Urban Development & Planning, MIT Faculty Chair, 2007-2009
- LAWRENCE SUSSKIND** PhD  
Ford Professor of Urban & Environmental Planning & Head, Environmental Policy Group
- JUDITH TENDLER** PhD  
Professor of Political Economy
- J. PHILIP THOMPSON** PhD  
Associate Professor of Urban Politics
- CHRISTOPHER ZEGRAS** PhD  
Ford Career Development Assistant Professor of Transportation & Urban Planning

**2009-2010  
HUMPHREY FELLOWS**

- MAHMUD ALI**  
Bangladesh
- FRANCISCO XAVIER BARRETO**  
Mozambique
- DALEEN BRAND**  
Namibia
- BOUBACAR SIDIKI DIAWARA**  
Guinea
- IVAN FERNANDEZ DE CORDOVA**  
Ecuador
- ALICIA GUAJARDO ALATORRE**  
Mexico
- NADINE MUSTAPHA HAGE ALI**  
Lebanon
- CLEMENT PHILIPPE HOUNTONDJI**  
Niger
- MAHA ISSA**  
Iraq
- SUNG-MIN LIM**  
South Korea
- EMRE OGMEN**  
Turkey
- UGYEN TENZIN**  
Bhutan
- DELMO VILELA**  
Brazil

**SPURS ADMINISTRATION**

- BISHWAPRIYA SANYAL** PhD  
Director, SPURS Program
- NIMFA DE LEON**  
SPURS Administrator
- RALPH A. GAKENHEIMER** PhD  
Professor of Urban Planning, Emeritus
- CHERIE MIOT ABBANAT** MCP  
Lecturer in Communications
- PATTI FOLEY**  
Administrative Assistant
- GRAHAM DENYER WILLIS**  
PhD Assistant
- XIN LI**  
PhD Assistant

**2009-2010  
SPURS FELLOWS**

- GABAR ABDEL MUSTAFA**  
Sudan
- HAILIN SONG**  
China
- XIN YUAN**  
China

**EDITORS**

- NIMFA DE LEON
- XIN LI
- GRAHAM DENYER WILLIS

**LAYOUT & DESIGN**

- YANG LIU

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

- YANG LIU
- HAILIN SONG
- XIN YUAN



Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES  
77 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, ROOM 9-435  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139 USA

P | 617 253 5915  
F | 617 258 0382  
E | SPURS-PROGRAM@MIT.EDU

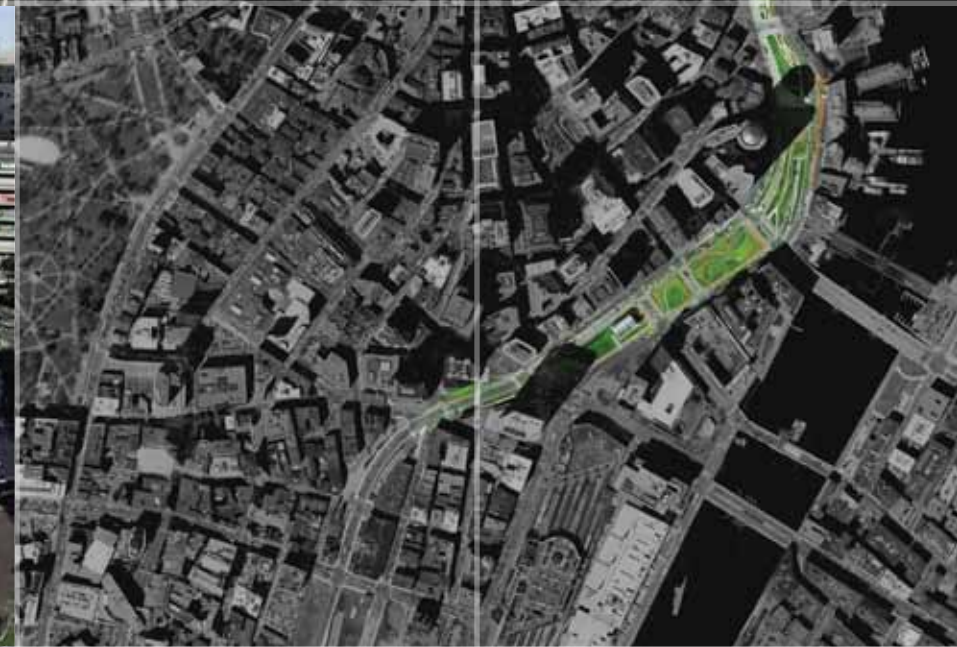
WEB.MIT.EDU/SPURS/WWW



BOSTON BEFORE BIG DIG



BOSTON AFTER BIG DIG





BISH SANYAL, FORD INTERNATIONAL PROFESSOR,  
URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING  
DIRECTOR, SPURS/HUMPHREY PROGRAM

The SPURS/Humphrey Program has twin objectives. The first is to provide opportunities for mid-career professionals from newly industrializing nations to retool themselves for a year at MIT. We expect that the retooling, supported by a year of self-reflection away from their usual work, will prepare the Fellows to play leadership roles when they return home at the end of the year.

The second, equally important, objective of the program is to create a global cadre of professionals who are familiar with the United States and have both professional and personal contacts with U.S. citizens and professional institutions. We try to fulfill this objective in multiple ways, starting with pairing incoming Fellows with host families and making sure that all Fellows cultivate professional affiliations with U.S. institutions for at least 30 working days before they are granted certificates for successful completion of the program. In between, all Fellows are given numerous other opportunities to cultivate professional and personal links with U.S. citizens and institutions. For example, most Fellows live in MIT dormitories with either undergraduate or graduate students. Through daily contact with the students, the Fellows gain a good understanding of the students' habits, hopes, and inhibitions. In some dorms, Fellows have been assigned resident scholar status and have organized special events on themes related to their home countries. This too creates opportunities for interaction and friendship between the Fellows and students.

Our effort to foster such relationships is not limited to the Fellows' living arrangements. Weekly seminars, which used to focus solely on newly industrializing nations, are now centered throughout the fall term on U.S. urban and regional planning efforts. These discussions are led by U.S. planners and scholars who help the Fellows make contacts at U.S. institutions. Some Fellows have developed professional affiliations through such networking. We also encourage the Fellows to engage in some form of community service, whether that be giving lectures at local elementary and secondary schools, or working with volunteer agencies at the grassroots level to assist needy families. This too gives the Fellows some insight into American society, but from a different perspective.

We also organize many social and cultural events over the two semesters to familiarize the Fellows with U.S. cultural habits. Starting with a visit to Plymouth Plantation in the fall, we celebrate Halloween with a pumpkin-carving contest; we organize a traditional Thanksgiving dinner in November and host a Christmas/holiday party in December; and we also take the Fellows to traditional New England events, such as the legendary Boston Marathon, the Head of the Charles, or simply bowling.

After such deep and prolonged immersion in U.S. culture and institutions for a year, do the Fellows develop long-lasting relationships with U.S. citizens and institutions? Even though most Fellows

keep in touch with me, or Nimfa de Leon, or the other program facilitators at least for a year and sometimes longer after they return home, in general, they develop stronger connections with one another than with U.S. citizens and institutions. To an extent, this is expected because the Fellows spend a considerable amount of time together experiencing both the joys as well as the anxieties of being in the United States, away from their comfortable houses, prestigious professional positions, and established networks of friends, relatives, and colleagues. At MIT, the high intensity of the academic environment adds yet another factor that influences the Fellows' interactions, as they seek and provide mutual support to navigate through a new and very demanding learning environment. Whatever else may contribute to the way the Fellows develop emotional attachments and institutional connections, by the end of their one-year stay in the United States, in general they seem to develop closer ties with other Fellows than with U.S. citizen or institutions.

Does this mean that the SPURS/Humphrey Program is not fulfilling one of its objectives? This is the question that motivates us to review whether the Fellows' view of the United States evolves over the year that they spend here. We ask the Fellows, before they arrive, about their impressions of the United States—good and bad—and then try to monitor whether such views have evolved, become more nuanced, or changed as a result of their participation in the program. At this stage, our sample is too small to allow us to generalize; still, some tentative propositions may be worthwhile to ponder. First, most Fellows return home with a deeper attachment to the United States. True, they may form more lasting friendships with other Fellows, but the memories of such friendships are grounded in settings and activities that are distinctly American. To put it another way, the program provides the setting for the Fellows to flourish without being heavy-handed about what the fellows must give back to this country in return. Their memories—particularly of American universities and

their surroundings—has a lasting impact on the Fellows, because the university campuses are bastions of free speech and the Fellows are often surprised by how openly U.S. citizens can criticize their government. Since many of the Fellows come from countries with varying restrictions on free speech, this particular aspect of the United States is almost always fondly remembered by the Fellows.

Fellows are also left with strong impressions of American universities because the relationship between faculty and students is so different in U.S. universities than in the Fellows' home countries. Many Fellows have remarked how egalitarian and non-hierarchical the student-faculty relationships are at U.S. universities. It is we who have to remind them that students do get evaluated by the faculty, and that just because the faculty members are addressed by their first names, that does not mean they are not respected by the students! The Fellows are also impressed by the faculty's work habits and serious commitment to scholarship and learning. This is what most Fellows would like to re-create, if they could, in reshaping universities in their home countries.

Finally, even though the Fellows may not form long-lasting friendships with U.S. citizens, they consistently remark that American people in general are very friendly, helpful, and, yes, independent! In other words, the Fellows notice that Americans in general organize their days and evenings around what they want to do and achieve, not what others expect them to do, as in many developing countries. Many Fellows comment about how Americans are helpful with street directions, if asked, and even with other requests regarding how to operate electronic gadgets or such other objects. The Fellows notice that average Americans are very busy—almost too busy—and this is how they explain not having very close American friends by the end of the year. To put it another way: most Fellows fall in love with America—the physical setting, the democratic norms and non-bureaucratic ways of lives, and the varied peoples—



Bish Sanyal

white, black, brown, and all shades in between—but they share such sentiments more with other Fellows than with American friends.

I consider my job as director of the SPURS/Humphrey Program to create the setting for Fellows to better appreciate the American way of life so that when they return home they will be able to speak about the United States in an affectionate as well as intelligent way. It would be nice, of course, if the Fellows kept in touch with us, or any other U.S. citizens and institutions, and if we could build on our relationship to jointly tackle some of the world's most difficult problems. For the moment, however, I am satisfied with what I sense each Fellow returns home with: immense respect for the U.S. university system; deep affection for the vitality and innovative impulse of the American people; and a genuine gratitude for the multiple opportunities the fellowship program offers them, making the year spent in the United States a major turning point in their lives. ■



NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR 2

    2009-2010 MONDAY 4  
    SEMINAR SERIES

LEARNING TO BE CAPITALISTS: 6  
ENTREPRENEURS IN VIETNAM'S  
TRANSITION ECONOMY

JOURNEYS IN JOURNALS 8

HOME AWAY FROM HOME: THE 9  
HOST FAMILY EXPERIENCE

FRIDAY SEMINAR SERIES: 10  
AMERICAN CULTURE AND  
PLANNING PROFESSIONALS

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP 11

SPURS/HUMPHREY FALL 12  
RETREAT—FALMOUTH

FELLOWS AS RESIDENT 13  
SCHOLARS

HOLIDAY EVENTS 14

ALUMNI/AE UPDATES 15





Enrique Penalosa and Fred Salvucci speak at the joint seminar with the Affordable Housing Institute.

## 2009–2010 MONDAY SEMINAR SERIES

### LEARNING AND COMPARING: AMERICAN PLANNING AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The SPURS/Humphrey Monday Seminar Series is a year-long course focusing on real-world issues in the field of urban and regional studies and planning. The purpose is to introduce the Fellows to planning practices in the United States, engage them in planning debates, and stimulate their thoughts on similar issues in their home countries. The series serves as a platform for conversation among the Fellows and invited speakers by encouraging mutual learning among practitioners, scholars, and professionals. In the fall, the course covered three segments: American and development planning was the central theme, supplemented by affordable housing, as well as writing and communication.

#### American and Development Planning

**Ralph Gakenheimer**  
*Professor of Urban Planning, Emeritus, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT*

The SPURS/Humphrey Program draws the Fellows into the MIT and American planning environments by utilizing their skills and interests. Questions often asked by the Fellows are: How is planning practiced in the United States? What do planners do in public agencies at the various levels of government, or in non-profit organizations? Answers to these questions are elusive, even at MIT. The Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) is the largest planning department in the United States by a considerable margin offering well over a hundred courses of study. Each is specialized by sector and creative design. Many are targeting future possibilities of

application rather than teaching current practice. There remains a significant gap between course content on the one hand and basic practice on the other. How do planning offices carry out their work? Who do they seek as collaborators in accomplishing sector plans? How do they track and induce agreement for new action? How do they relate to the planning arms of higher and lower units of government among local, state, and federal agencies? How do they isolate viable options for action toward a sustainable environment, for instance, from among the many policies and programmatic actions encouraged in the literature?

In this year's SPURS/Humphrey Fellows program, we seek to close this gap. We have created discussions through a speaker series by bringing guests from government, practice, and consultancy, as well as from academia, to grapple collaboratively with empirical planning questions. Many of these speakers were graduates of DUSP who returned to answer difficult and pointed planning questions, particularly related to the complexity of participatory justice. They were also faced with a number of unexpected questions. These often came from the Fellows, who have been continually reflecting on the dearth or weakness of planning institutions in their home countries.

This entry-way into American planning has been successful in its intent to provide a rapid portrait of how practice works in this country. We look forward to continuing this course in the future.

**SEPTEMBER | 28**  
Urban Planning from a Local Public Office Perspective

**Stuart Dash**  
*Director of Community Planning, City of Cambridge*

**James Barnes**  
*Director of Community Development, City of Lawrence*

The Fellows are introduced to the range of responsibilities of local planners, relevant organizations of professional skills, and basic land planning activities in a general town/city planning office.

**OCTOBER | 26**  
The City-State-National Relationship  
**Amy Schectman**  
*Director of Public Housing & Rental Assistance, Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

**Yanni Tsipis**  
*Senior Vice President, Colliers Meredith & Grew, Boston*

Discussions centered on the roles of the state and national government in local development, and relations with community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in terms of general support, special sector program, and funding options.

**NOVEMBER | 2**  
Urban Planning and the Environment  
**Robert P. Mitchell**  
*Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, Special Assistant for Planning Initiatives, Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development*



Fellows attend American planning seminar with Robert Mitchell and Eran Ben-Joseph.

**Eran Ben-Joseph**  
*Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning and Chair of PhD Committee, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT*

Planning for sustainable development is a long-term task. It requires planners' active engagement in reshaping their notions, skills, and approaches for building a sustainable living environment with respect to transportation, housing, land use, and social justice.

**NOVEMBER | 23**  
Downtown Revitalization and Redevelopment

**Maggie Super Church**  
*Project Manager, Lawrence Community Works Real Estate Development*

**Larry Bluestone**  
*President, Bluestone Planning Group*

To ensure an effective revitalization strategy, planners are no longer simply in charge of planning, zoning, and regulating as outsiders; rather, they are part of the local community, working with local people, institutions, and local businesses.

#### The Affordable Housing

The affordable housing seminar, jointly organized with the Affordable Housing Institute, aims to exchange ideas and practices worldwide on the construction/demolition of affordable housing and the informal power structure that affects housing projects.

**SEPTEMBER | 21**  
"Demolition Dilemma"  
**Enrique Peñalosa**  
*Former Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia*  
**Fred Salvucci**  
*MIT Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Associate, Center for Transportation & Logistics*

Whether in Chicago's public housing, or in a slum in Bogotá, the decision to demolish existing housing requires a series of reflections on costs and benefits. Speakers reflect on when the decision makes sense, how and with whom the decision should be made, and the consequences and challenges of implementation.

**NOVEMBER | 30**  
Informal Power Structure Impacting Slum (Re)development and Vice Versa

**Diane Davis**  
*Professor of Political Sociology and Head, International Development Group, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT*

**Liza Weinstein**  
*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Northeastern University*

Informal/illegal power structures, such as organized crime and land mafias, not only make it risky for public and private investors to partake in community and housing development, but they also pose greater security risks for local inhabitants. This seminar focused on the barriers that illegal power structures pose considering that development projects, even in coherent communities, can generate a great deal of internal conflict.

#### Writing and Communication

**Cherie Miot Abbanat**  
*Lecturer, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT*

Writing and communication practicum focuses on helping the Fellows organize their thoughts, present their work, and communicate with practitioners in a professional and effective way. From this segment, the Fellows will learn communication and writing skills such as writing emails, journals, professional affiliation letters, and academic papers.

**OCTOBER | 5**  
Professional Affiliation Letters

In this session, the Fellows learn how to write professional affiliation letters, including basic letter writing structure, tone, and style. The key to writing any cover letter is to make sure that the Fellows' skills and experience are highlighted. Potential employers need to know how talented our Fellows are and how much they can contribute to the organization through their professional affiliation work.

**NOVEMBER | 16**  
Reflection Paper on American Planning

This session introduces the Fellows to the basics of how to write a professional paper, how to structure expectations, how to construct an argument, and the differences between a summary and an argument. The Fellows are guided to look at a range of topics, including the Declaration of Independence and real memos written by policy makers, in order to work on these topics.

In the spring, Fellows will start with a new session on development planning. The Fellows will engage in international development planning, drawing primarily from the experiences of two developing countries with major contemporary planning challenges. Over the course of the semester, the group-work seminar will focus on the reconstruction of institutions and infrastructure in Iraq and the institutionalization of planning in Bhutan, a country where planning processes do not currently exist. ■



# LEARNING TO BE CAPITALISTS: ENTREPRENEURS IN VIETNAM'S TRANSITION ECONOMY

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008

ANNETTE M. KIM  
FORD INTERNATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING, M.I.T.



This book has considered a puzzle: why have some countries transitioned to capitalism so rapidly?

I have focused on solving one part of Vietnam's transition puzzle. Its fastest growing city, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), has a real estate industry that ranks as the worst place in the world for private capital to invest. Nevertheless, Vietnam's domestic housing market has flourished. And most intriguingly, hundreds of entrepreneurs and private firms emerged within the first decade of transition to develop large investment projects. Where did these people come from? How could they conduct business in such an inhospitable economic environment? The aim of my research was to help fill the gap in our understanding of economic transition by directly engaging this first generation of entrepreneurs. I lived in Vietnam and developed extended case studies to find answers.

My research eventually led me to the concept of social cognition. Social cognition's framework provides insights into the process of institutional change that better explain the diversity of transition outcomes than either the historical materialist or the neoclassical frameworks. It illuminates how market capitalism developed so rapidly in Vietnam despite conventional wisdom, why political connections and financial resources were not enough to determine the success of firms, why private firms did not emerge as readily in Hanoi as they did in HCMC, and why developers in Warsaw, Poland, emerged under the conventional set of reforms.

## Learning from the New Capitalists

I realized that my case firms, despite being an eclectic group in terms of size and productivity, ownership, domestic and foreign participation, political power, and social position, all shared a common understanding of the way private land development works in HCMC. This motley group of entrepreneurs possessed a new

and shared cognitive paradigm.

The fiscal socialism model of land development was not only a significant change for Vietnam, but also completely unlike the conventional model of the way land development is supposed to work in a market economy—the model that development projects, overseas technical assistance, and capacity building projects presuppose. Rather than having secure property rights and enforcement of contracts through courts to encourage private investment, property titles were distributed after the land rights were sold, the project was financed by customers, and the construction was completed. Because it seems untenably risky to invest in property one does not own, policy experts have consistently viewed Vietnam's institutional framework as severely backward for a market economy.

The obvious question arises as to why the fiscal socialism system emerged, rather than the conventional one. My fieldwork showed that it was the result of a social and political process. The state played a large role in the construction of fiscal socialism because it controls all land development through ownership, urban planning, and permits and approvals. Its bureaus decide which land parcels may be developed by private parties and thus which current land occupants must eventually relocate.

But HCMC's private market and entrepreneurialism did not form in response to a grand master plan designed by the state. For one thing, the government does not have the public finance to develop most of its plans. Nor can it command private entities to perform, as it could with state-owned enterprises during the era of central planning. Rather, the way the new system was structured requires a definition of power broader than state coercion and the manipulation of political elites. Some theorists have defined power as the strategic alignment of interests.

The state needed public finance to fund the infrastructure development of its rapidly sprawling city and to bolster its legitimacy. Meanwhile, large segments of the exploding urban population, whose household incomes had tripled through trading, were seeking better housing options after decades of public neglect, as well as investment opportunities for their surplus. In the beginning of transition, with the city's need for heavy capital investments for economic development without effective means for the state to access private savings, the firms filled a role in mediating the interests of these parties. They were the deal makers who could take household savings and build the city's infrastructure. But the rural population contested the share they received for being dispossessed and relocated for new urban development projects, to the point that they also shaped the terms of the land transfer and the firms' project location, size, and profitability. In other words, the less powerful members of society still had an important role in shaping the social construction of fiscal socialism through their resistance.

Identifying the alignment of interests helps us understand why the various social groups would choose to participate in the new economic system. But for these people to see and adapt to the new order required a socialization process. In other words, the reformation of the economy involved reconstructing cognitive paradigms in society as well as in the developers. One indication of the social cognition process is to observe how power struggles were fought in public discourse. The central and local governments faced limited resistance through public demonstrations and editorials in state-run media, but these acts were just the tip of the iceberg of social dissent that the state could not ignore. Society had generated several narratives about the transition, such as stories about the greediness of ward officials and private developers. But it had also generated narratives about

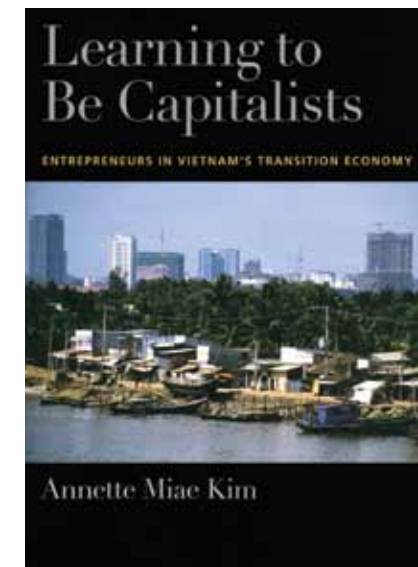
the greediness of farmers and the need for rapid economic development. The tension between these competing narratives did not have a primary forum, such as a supreme court; rather, interpretive narratives and knowledge about conflicts and acts of resistance spread throughout society into its cognitive collective. The new economic system and the very material transfers of land and finance were enabled and shaped by the boundaries and definitions being constructed through this society-wide negotiation process.

Furthermore, the strategic alignment of interests throughout society is still not enough to explain how the firms could turn potential opportunities into reality. By Western standards, the substantial risks in this arrangement should still have inhibited investment. I observed that within the new paradigm of fiscal socialism, the firms that emerged still had to find practical ways to manage the risks and make projects work. Specifically, in order for the case firms to complete the four critical steps in urban land development projects, they had to create institutional arrangements of their own through private contracting and relationships. In chapter 3, I outlined the considerable institutional diversity in the ways the firms found land to develop, negotiated land compensation, collected development finance, and processed the many permits and approvals needed. The creation of these practical micro-institutional arrangements allowed HCMC's unusual market to function while formal project approval and property titles distributed at the end of the project, customers supplying the bulk of development capital, and local government working closely with the developers.

Thus the reformation of the entrepreneurs' cognitive paradigms made fiscal socialism practicable. Social cognition, however, means that the cognitive paradigms change not in just individuals but with the other members of society with whom they interact. Very important in understanding the change in these entrepreneurs is the change in some bureaucrats, in particular local wards and districts, that made fiscal socialism a practical reality in HCMC... Furthermore, the vicarious learning exhibited by the developers and local state actors was assisted by HCMC's

informal social structures more than the formal, legal ones. The spread of entrepreneurialism in HCMC was shaped by the openness and extensiveness of its social networks and the availability of intermediaries. People were open to meeting people and sharing information. New people could enter the market without extremely strong political connections because they could develop them. Furthermore, the looser social norms about laws and regulations held by the bureaucracy in the south encouraged people to experiment and create new economic relations.

The importance of these informal, social structures and their cognitive



nature became even clearer when we compared HCMC's situation to that of Hanoi. Although both cities are in the same country, with uniform laws and policies, and both have very high housing demand, private development firms did not emerge in Hanoi as they did in HCMC.

It was more than the bureaucracies that impeded the formation of firms, however. As evidenced in the statistical analysis of market prices in both cities, presented in chapter 6, households in Hanoi's new housing market possessed such deeply embedded norms about legal formalism that they would reduce the asking price of their own properties if they did not have property title papers in hand. In short, the fiscal socialism system could not have emerged in Hanoi because neither the political economy nor the cognitive structures allowed sufficient

agency in state and private actors to create new relations and actions. That is, even if individual agents had simple profit maximizing interests (instead of the social, interdependent ones we observed), they would have had difficulty performing entrepreneurial actions because the rest of society was not willing to engage with them. Which district officials would protect their projects? How many Hanoi households would pay installments for an unbuilt house for which they would not receive title until several years later? Individual Hanoians who wanted to enter the real estate business could relocate to the south and work there, but the reverse was not true. The unimaginability of new relations and actions is central to the variation we observe in transition economies.

This comparative example does not imply that Hanoi does not have the right cultural traits for capitalism, or that HCMC was somehow more naturally entrepreneurial... And, the kinds of social networking and social norms present in HCMC were not necessary for private investment in other places. In a comparative analysis with Warsaw, we saw that Polish developers did not learn how to develop projects from one another and did not collaborate or socialize with one another. Instead of networking, they paid attention to foreign firms and learned from them as unofficial apprentices. We also saw that Warsawians were sticklers about legal documents and notaries, much like Hanoians. But the firms took advantage of legal formalism and redeployed it in the post-Communist housing system. Despite being touted as an exemplar of conventional transition reforms, most of Warsaw's property contracts were not formally correct nor could they readily be enforced in courts...

In summary, housing markets and private firms developed rapidly in HCMC and Warsaw through a reconstruction of socially shared cognition that supported a strategic re-alignment of interests. This new paradigm, along with practical knowledge, spread through social processes of vicarious learning and the particular pathways of attention structured by their respective societies. The location of these happened to be in very different places between the transition societies. ■



## JOURNEYS IN JOURNALS

CHERIE MIOT ABBANAT, LECTURER IN COMMUNICATIONS

Over the last three years, MIT's SPURS/Humphrey Program has supported our Fellows to work on their writing and communication skills while at MIT. In our writing and communication workshops, we read and analyze real business memos, academic papers, cover letters, and resumes in order to compare and contrast American writing styles and structures. At the same time, we require our Fellows to keep journals in which to write down their thoughts and impressions on a weekly basis. As they write in their journals, they try out new ideas, work on composing sentences and paragraphs in English, and record their experiences. Their journals are an informal and personal space where their ideas flow freely.

Through journal writing, the Fellows record and reflect on their experiences reading, writing about, and living with American culture. Below we have chosen a few excerpts from our Fellows' journals to share with you. Their writings trace their individual and our collective journey through American and MIT culture this year.

### The Falmouth Retreat

This year our fall retreat took place in Plymouth and Falmouth, Cape Cod, including a visit to Plimoth Plantation. In their journals, many Fellows reflected on the weekend, creatively expressing their views on the history of the area.



*"Two peoples, one story" was the theme we experienced when we learned about the Wampanoag and the English settlers who arrived in New England in 1660. What I found most interesting was that some of the homes*

*from 1667 are not too different from the homes that some people in my country occupy in 2009. Not much has changed, including methods of cooking using a stone fire pit and wood to feed the fire.*

*-- Boubacar Sidiki Diawara, Guinea*

*I enjoyed the Plimoth Plantation tour. It made me travel back in time to 1627 to experience the tough life those people were*



*a wood floor for the house or keep a dirt floor. Also, it was quite an experience to hear them speak with their accents as they told their stories and helped you feel as if you were a member of the community.*

*-- Nadine Mustapha Hage Ali, Lebanon*

*The history of the US is not as long as some other countries in Asia or Europe, but it is amazing and impressive; from the immigrants, steps on this land 400 years ago, the people of the United States have set up the strongest and*



*most powerful country in the world. Yet, the history of America predates the immigrants' settlements and can be traced back thousands of years through an understanding of the Native American culture. For me, this was the first encounter with the idea that the Native Americans lived in New England for over 10,000 years!*

*-- Hailin Song, P.R. China*

*The retreat to Falmouth, was a moment for sharing stories and getting to know peers. In addition, our debate about the proposed changes to the American health-care system was intriguing. We compared the US system to our own systems and this exercise helped us better*



*understand the challenges faced by the US government. So, we gained a new understanding about ourselves and health-care systems.*

*-- Francisco Xavier Barreto, Mozambique*

*living. It was interesting to watch them carry on in their daily lives, doing the usual things like farming and cooking and worry about things that we take for granted today such as whether they should add*

### Volunteering in America

In addition to their studies, many of our Fellows volunteer their time to work with local non-profit organizations. One of these organizations, Aspire, asks volunteers to help sort and package used textbooks to send to areas around the world. Here's one observation.

*I work for Aspire, where I help select and pack medical books for Iraq's universities. While I was working there, I discovered that the managers had tried to send books to my country, Mozambique, but haven't been successful and invited me to join the effort to complete this part of the project. It was at that moment that I felt the importance of this course, because I remembered that a long time ago I was able to complete my studies using donated books. It seemed to me that I could make a difference for education in my own country.*

*-- Francisco Xavier Barreto, Mozambique*

### What One Thing You Would Change about the United States?

As we work on writing skills, we sometimes give Fellows a question or two to think about and to answer. These questions jump-start the writing process and help to generate thinking so that we can discuss their response and ideas with the class. This year, at our retreat in Falmouth, we asked students to reflect on the following question:

What one thing would you propose to change about the United States?

Here are a few of our Fellows' responses:

*I would change the US media. The US media gives its audience more than they need. For example, when Michael Jackson died, the time spent covering that event was too long. Two months were spent talking about his relationships with his father, the intricacies of his family, etc. In fact, the media didn't really even discuss how he actually died for quite some time because so much time was spent on his family problems.*

*-- Boubacar Sidiki Diawara, Guinea*

*I would change the "American Dream" concept, which to me seems to be more about controlling the actions of the public. While the concept of the "American Dream" em-*

*phasizes that everyone is equal and everyone has the same opportunity to advance him or herself, this is not true. In reality, the economic and social differences among people of different groups*



*shows this. As an example, a black child living in the slums of New York will not have the same access to high quality education and the advantage of a high quality of life as will a white child living in a prestigious neighborhood in the suburbs. The American Dream is a fallacy that is used by the capitalist system to convince people that they should work harder and longer hours.*

*-- Emre Ogmen, Turkey*

*I would like Americans to learn more about other countries, most especially where these countries are located in the world. I do believe that geography should be taught in primary school, secondary school, and high school. Learning geography and focusing on other countries in the world would help the US be more open-minded and less prejudiced.*

*-- Clement Philippe Hountondji, Niger*

*I would simplify the US. Why would you have a penny, a nickel, and a quarter when all these denominations are just a multiple of a penny? I suspect that there is a reason, a history, perhaps a tradition, or some cultural aspects that are associated with these coins. But, it certainly complicates a simple life.*

*-- Ugyen M. Tenzin, Bhutan*

The Fellows will continue to travel and to write in their journals throughout their year at MIT. We expect many more insights, observations and realizations as a result of their journeys. ■

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME: THE HOST FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Far away from home, the Fellows find hospitality in the MIT Hosts to International Students Program which matches international students with American families to help them adjust to life in the United States. This year, almost half of the Fellows benefit from the program. Here are two Fellows stories on the establishment and growth of this unique cultural relationship.

### My American Family

by Ugyen M. Tenzin, Bhutan

Deciding to join the Hosts to International Students Program was probably one of the best things I did prior to coming to the United States. Though I have read about the ways of American life and have seen American movies and television, it did not give me a complete picture. Finally coming to live it and have locals tell me about it were a completely different experience. In their first email, my host family wrote 'Hi Ugyen, we are your American family and we want that you feel welcome to Boston and to our house in ...' In brief, they wrote 'loved' to do and what we could do together after I arrived. While I was still trying to get used to the idea of leaving my wife and son back home, the exchange of emails and ideas with my host family about life and living in the US made me almost long for my arrival here.

I have a wonderful host family, a happy couple full of joy and zest for life. Every day with them is a great source of learning and knowledge. They have not only introduced me to the way an American family would live, but I have also had the privilege of sharing in their adventures and experiences from their travels around the world. They have a beautiful, large house whose beauty and warmth are enhanced by the largeness of their hearts. They have hosted international students for many years and they host students from different countries simultaneously. This provides a great opportunity for the students to develop among themselves friendship and understanding of the different countries and cultures.

My first meeting with my host family was an unforgettable event. I arrived at the house quite unsure of myself. But my self-doubts were immediately dispelled by the warm laughter of my hostess—a natural response to the cool and apt humor of my host. The quiet candlelit garden get-together dinner in their backyard came alive with

laughter and happiness. I was awoken the next day by the strong aroma of coffee to the typical 'American breakfast' of juices and pancakes. Another memorable event was a birthday party hosted for me and another international student—complete with birthday cakes, birthday songs, gifts and toast! What makes these get-togethers even more special is that they always invite some of their friends to join us, which adds a new dimension to our experience.

I have probably learned more about the United States and its people and culture from my interaction with my host family than I have from my efforts over the last so many years of my life. They have not only been my family but have also taught me invaluable lessons on hospitality, friendship, and cross-cultural understanding. I now see how individual efforts can help people prepare, adjust, and adapt to a new way of life and how their experiences can be positively impacted. I wish that one day my host family would give me the honor of showing them my country.

### My Host Family

by Delmo Vilela, Brazil

The communication with my host family has been a great experience from the very beginning. I was invited to stay in their home for ten days even before the Humphrey Program began. I was able to learn about their habits and culture, visiting places like Walden Pond in Concord, the farm where they buy food, stores, libraries, and markets in their neighborhood. In exchange for their hospitality, I helped them with some activities in their house. My host family has hosted students from all over the world over the years, so they know well how to treat guests from different countries and cultures. I feel very comfortable being with them. Today we are almost like a real family. We stay in touch every week; sometimes we have lunch together; they help me a lot. The program is extremely important for me because I have an opportunity to know this kind family and it gives me a fabulous first impression of American culture. ■



Delmo and his host family.





Boston downtown/Chinatown field trip with Tunney Lee.

## FRIDAY SEMINAR SERIES:

### AMERICAN CULTURE AND PLANNING PROFESSIONALS

Created as a complement to the Monday seminar series on American planning, the Friday seminar is designed as a combination of professional and social activities for the Fellows, taking place both at MIT and outside on field visits. This year, the seminars included a series of professional development leadership workshops, field visits to significant organizations and urban neighborhoods as well as special cultural celebrations of the United States like Thanksgiving and the Christmas holiday.

The first Friday seminar started on September 11 and was used as an opportunity to remember and to take a look at the present. John Tirman of the MIT Center for International Studies spoke about the United States after the September 11th attack. His talk was a perfect way to start the seminar series, as it reminded us of the social, political, and economic impacts of cultural misconception.

The Friday seminars also include a series of professional development workshops

both at MIT and Harvard. This fall, the SPURS/Loeb workshop took place at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD). After listening to a presentation on affordable housing projects in developing countries, the Fellows exchanged with their US counterparts, the Loeb Fellows, their experiences and ideas regarding how to house the poor in different political and cultural contexts. The leadership workshop, led by Judith Stein of the MIT Human Resource Department (HR), is the first SPURS collaboration. The two sessions in the fall were highly successful and interactive as the Fellows brought their diverse personal experiences to the table, in discussing how planning is often shaped by cultural and historic processes. (See page 11 for more details.)

The seminars also included two field visits. The first of these was a walking tour of the significant planning sites of Boston and Chinatown led by Professor Tunney Lee. The Fellows learned about the processes and politics of urban renewal, community development, and ethnic

neighborhoods, concluding with a dim sum lunch in the heart of Chinatown. The second field visit, to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) was coordinated by a SPURS alumnus, Victor Rivas, who arranged to have the chief financial officer of the MBTA and four of the MBTA's top transportation engineers speak about financial challenges, procurement, and the operations of this key urban institution. The experience of both of these visits proved beneficial, as the Fellows established possible professional connections.

Lastly, the Friday seminar has been enriched by its focus on the United States' own cultural and historical events. As in years past, the SPURS program celebrated both Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays with evening events that brought together the Fellows, their families, faculty, and staff. (See page 14 for more details.) ■

## LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP



Judith Stein

Leadership is an important component of the SPURS/Humphrey Program. This year the program added a new workshop to enrich the leadership skills and experience of the Fellows. Over the course of the year, Judith Stein, organizational development consultant, MIT Human Resource Department, will provide regular workshops to the Fellows focusing on management and leadership topics so that they may most effectively apply new information or processes when



Diawara, Hailin, Ivan in a team effort to draw a horse.

they return to their home environments. To date, she has offered two workshops: What is Leadership? and Strategic Planning Process. In the spring, she will conduct three workshops on project planning and implementation, and two sessions on managing people for maximum results.

The workshops have been enthusiastically received by the Fellows, who see them as an opportunity to share their personal

experiences as leading professionals in their own countries. Many vibrant perspectives have emerged as a result, making the workshops a comparative experience that sparks new approaches and understandings on how and why to lead. The interactive nature of the workshops—full of discussions and team building—have proved an enriching source for group exchanges and camaraderie. ■



Fellows visit Waterfire in Providence.



Delmo (third from left) is pictured in a local newspaper for volunteering at a micro-tourism event in Framingham.



Boston Harbor tour with Victor Rivas



SPURS/Loeb seminar at Harvard.



Fellows attend the annual International Development Fair.



Alicia presents photos she took for a course project.



## SPURS/HUMPHREY FALL RETREAT—FALMOUTH

This year, the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows headed south for their fall retreat, visiting the beaches and bogs of Falmouth, Cape Cod. The weekend was brimming with activities, from discussions about the year ahead to learning about the history of Falmouth and Massachusetts.

On the way from MIT to Seacrest Resort in Falmouth, the Fellows visited Plimoth Plantation, taking in some of the Colonial history that shaped the lives of both Pilgrims and Native Americans indelibly. The group also visited the Mayflower in the harbor at Plymouth, a replica of the vessel that pioneered the settlement of New England.

Arriving at the resort, the group was happy to receive a visit from Jay Smith, a historian of the Falmouth Historical Society. He spoke about the history of society and industry in the Falmouth area, underscoring the processes of immigration and population change that occurred as the economy of the area transitioned from whaling through cranberry harvesting and on to recreation and tourism in recent years.

In the evening, the Fellows gathered with SPURS Program faculty and staff—including Cherie Abbanat, Annette Kim and Ralph Gakenheimer—for a group dinner in the dining area overlooking the ocean. As dinner wound down, and with the sun setting over the bay, the Fellows shared what they had learned about each other's countries. Everyone was delighted to learn about the homes of other Fellows and to hear surprising odd facts, such as that Guinea is home to the world's only live-birth frog species.

The next day, the Fellows had a busy session with Abbanat. They began their communication and writing seminar for

the year by talking about how they had imagined the United States prior to their arrival. Over the year, the Fellows will be engaging in a reflective journaling exercise as part of their training in professional language, communication, and writing.

After a delightful lunch in the sun, most of the Fellows opted to go on a hike of the local area which was led by Brian Abannat, through a local neighborhood, around a cranberry bog, up a sand pit (which temporarily became a ski hill), past a rope swing (which was well used), down a freshly paved bike path, through a cow herd underpass, and finally back along a winding path through the woods leading towards the ocean. Upon arriving back at the resort and still full of energy, a number of the Fellows struck up a soccer game on the beach. At dinner that evening, the group enjoyed a topical discussion related to health care. Fellows discussed the differences and challenges of providing health care through private, semi-private or public channels, as it related to their home countries. A broad set of experiences and perspectives emerged, from Fellows whose countries had publicly provided health care services to others whose health was managed primarily by the private sector. Fellows had divergent perspectives on how health care should be provided, but some consensus emerged that health care provision would benefit from both public and private systems.

On Sunday morning as most of the faculty headed back towards the city, the Fellows traveled with SPURS staff to a local outlet mall where they could find goods to prepare themselves for the imminent 'fall' in temperatures. On Sunday evening, as the Fellows got off the bus at MIT with bags of goods, they looked not only ready for winter, but also for bed. ■



Maha and Ralph hiking in the woods.



Diawara and Francisco running down the sand pit.



Delmo, hanging out.



Clement, Nadine, and Diawara touring the Mayflower.



Clement, Graham, and Yang playing soccer.

## FELLOWS AS RESIDENT SCHOLARS



Fellows attending presentations by iHouse students.

### INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

For three years, SPURS has enjoyed a partnership with the International House for Global Leadership (iHouse), a residential program for undergraduate students. This year the partnership has taken off as SPURS/iHouse Fellow in Residence Emre Ogmen and iHouse Coordinator Zahir Dossa have organized collaborative activities to bring the MIT undergraduates together with their potential mentors, the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows.

The first of these events took place in late October as the two groups—40 people—met at New House student residence for a series of presentations by iHouse students on their international work in the summer of 2009. They did not disappoint, showcasing entrepreneurship, innovation, and cultural sensitivity in undertaking projects spanning from the construction

of treadle pumps in West Africa to the design of storage prototypes for the transportation of stem cell grafts for cornea disorders in India. This event, which both programs hope will become an annual tradition, proved to be a great success, spurring relationships as SPURS Fellows recognized the importance of the technology and innovation of the iHouse students.

The second SPURS/iHouse event—the first in a speaker series—celebrated the work and experience of SPURS Fellows. On November 9, Maha Issa, an urban planner, architect, and Humphrey Fellow from Iraq, made a compelling and heart-wrenching presentation on the reconstruction of Iraq, putting pre- and post-war environments in contrast. Maha's talk was a remarkable display of human resilience and an important plea for forgiveness as a core aspect of

reconstruction and reconciliation for the country. This was a particularly powerful presentation, as the students and faculty in attendance came away with a grounded picture of how conflict not only destroys infrastructure, but also reshapes the social relations of a country.

As the year progresses forward, SPURS and iHouse are continuing with this series of Fellow presentations. The hope is that by exposing the iHouse students to the lived experiences of the Fellows, we can help further the iHouse goals of bringing about important social change on a global scale. With every year that the SPURS/iHouse partnership accrues, its collaborative richness and importance for mentorship grows in scale. In 2009-2010, we are seeing this vividly as the two groups grow closer together. ■

### ASHDOWN HOUSE

Ashdown House, a dorm for graduate students, has awarded two Humphrey Fellows, Nadine Hage Ali and Alicia Guajardo Alatorre, the residential scholarships for 2009-2010. Nadine and Alicia have been playing an essential role in bringing Fellows from developing countries together with MIT students who are interested in international development. They organized multiple social activities, including book readings, a salsa dancing lesson, and coffee hours. During one of the book reading group activities, Maha Issa, a Humphrey Fellow, shared a moving poem she wrote in memory of her father (see page 15). ■



Ashdown House book reading.



## HOLIDAY EVENTS

### THANKSGIVING

The SPURS Thanksgiving celebration was once again a great success. This year's Thanksgiving dinner was held on November 20 at the top of Tang Hall, overlooking Back Bay and the city of Boston. The Fellows, faculty, and staff came together with their families to give thanks and count their blessings.

The significance of Thanksgiving was especially meaningful to the Fellows, who in the fall visited Plimoth Plantation, gaining a rich understanding of the New England history and culture that is so central to the Thanksgiving holiday. Fellows were treated to a special American feast of turkey with all the fixings, plus the traditional apple, pumpkin, and pecan pies. At dinner, guests were asked to express a couple of words of thanks. This generated a number of very moving, fun, and thoughtful statements that brought the group together in laughter, empathy, and happiness. Some Fellows also entertained the group with Iraqi and French poems, Chinese, Ecuadorian, and Mexican songs, and a lively Bhutanese song and dance that just about brought the house 24 stories down. ■



Fellows at the Thanksgiving gathering.



Fellows participating in Ugyen's Bhutanese dance and song.



Clement's poetry reading.

### To the Memory of My Dear Dad

By Maha Issa, Humphrey Fellow

*In hard times  
During moments of hardships  
In happy hours  
During moments of friendship  
I remember him*

*His kind loving soul  
His calm sound voice  
Still ringing in my ears  
Don't give up my child  
Never be disappointed*

*There is always hope  
Just be patient  
Just be calm  
Just be smart  
You'll reach out  
Fate is there  
Reach out for it*

*Fight for your belief  
Stick to your faith  
Fight for your freedom  
Never give up  
My dear daughter*

*Be armed with science  
Be armed with ethics  
Those are your shelter  
Those are your topics  
My dear daughter*

*Be proud of me  
My dear Dad  
I'm in the land of science  
I'm in MIT  
You were in Berkeley  
I'm in MIT*

*Following your steps  
Following your advice  
In the place of peace  
Please Rest in Peace  
My dear Dad*



Ashdown House pumpkin carving contest.

On October 29 the Fellows participated in the Ashdown pumpkin carving contest. A group of five Fellows created within 30 minutes and with only one set of carving tools, a two-faced masterpiece—one side featured a ghost house and the other a flying bat. In the end, the Fellows' skill, talent, creativity, and most importantly, team-working spirit won them second prize among more than 20 entries. ■

### CHRISTMAS

For the SPURS/Humphrey Program, the holiday season is not complete without the celebration at Bish Sanyal and Diane Davis' home in Jamaica Plain. With a pianist on hand to greet the Fellows with the holiday carols and Min-Kyung Kwak, Sung-Min Lim's wife, playing the violin, the evening was the culmination of what the fall term was like for the Fellows—full of joy and peace to everyone. ■



Singing a Portuguese song.



Singing holiday carols.



Min-Kyung Kwak playing the violin with Sung-Min assisting.

## ALUMNI/AE UPDATES

**Xiaohui Chen** and **Adam Pinto** (Humphrey 2008-2009) are collaborating on a city build project in Benin with possible funding from the China Development Bank. Adam visited Xiaohui in China recently to discuss the project and make presentations to Xiaohui's organization, Jingsu Institute of Urban Planning and Design, and Nanjing University.

**James Dorbor Jallah** (Humphrey 2006-2007) has been appointed deputy minister for sectoral planning in the Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs, Liberia.

**Fenghua Liu** (Humphrey 2006-2007) was appointed vice mayor of Wanning City for one year. She is in charge of development and planning, commercial industry management and ocean industry. Wanning is a coastal city, with tourism and tropical agriculture as its main industries.

**Piotr Lorens** (SPURS Fellow 1996-1997), head of the Department of Urban Development, Architecture at Gdansk

University of Technology, is collaborating with the SPURS Program to award the SPURS/Gdansk Scholarship to one or two post-graduates and young scientists from Poland for a period of four years to study at MIT starting in 2010.

**Richard Tomlinson** (SPURS Fellow 1986-1987) counts his year in SPURS as the most rewarding and intellectually stimulating period of his academic career. For the last ten years, he has been a visiting professor in the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa and has primarily served as a consultant. Richard's last major consulting job was to manage the team that prepared South Africa's HIV/AIDS housing policy (draft). In 2007/2008, he was a visiting professor at Columbia University, during which time he wrote an article titled 'The Influence of Google on Urban Policy in Developing Countries' and another article on the Beijing Olympics (under consideration). In 2009 he took the position of chair in urban planning, Faculty of Architecture, Building, and Planning, University of Melbourne.

Upon his return to Palestine in the summer 2007, **Raed Yacoub** (Humphrey 2006-2007) contributed to the establishment of Voices Beyond Walls, a participatory media initiative that supports creative expression and human rights advocacy among impoverished youth through digital storytelling workshops, new media production, and global dissemination of their work. Through this initiative, Raed cofounded a digital storytelling program in the West Bank that included the First Palestinian Youth Media Festival held in Ramallah. Raed is currently a student at Lund University in Sweden where he is doing a master's program in Society, Science, and Technology at the Center for Innovation, Research, and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE).

**Joseph "Soso" Salukvadze** (SPURS Fellow 1998-1999) is a professor in human geography at Tbilisi State University, Georgia. For nine years, he has also been a visiting professor at Technical University of Munich, teaching land management. ■