



**SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES  
& HUBERT H. HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**



## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR: THE PROCESS OF RE-ENTRY

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There was a time, not long ago, when mid-career Fellows from developing nations traveled to MIT solely to learn how to foster technological innovations for economic development. This model of learning was a one-way street: the Fellows were to transfer technical know-how learned at MIT to their own nations, which needed new technologies to increase productivity and rapidly industrialize. At that time, the SPURS Program (started in 1967) was designed to facilitate one-way learning: mid-career Fellows enrolled in courses at MIT offered by internationally known scholars; they attended weekly seminars featuring development experts from international institutions who shared their knowledge of the industrialization process; and the Fellows learned about U.S. culture and social norms by participating in events such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the Boston Marathon.

We live in a different world now. The United States is grappling with severe economic problems as well as stiff competition from abroad, and developing nations are facing unprecedented pressures for democratization and rapid urbanization that are challenging conventional views of economic and political modernization. The two trends may appear disconnected, but a look at the Arab Spring in the Middle East and the Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States reveals some commonalities.

Both emerged from questioning conventional approaches to economic growth, and both have raised questions about the relationship between formal political processes and equitable economic development. Both “movements”—if we can use that term—have questioned the efficacy of governance by political elites and have drawn attention to the neglected needs of individuals and communities marginalized in the formal political and economic processes. In a way, there is some similarity between these events and the social upheavals of the 1960s, when low-income urban communities in the United States organized against urban renewal and demanded civil rights for all. The current protests in both settings are demanding the empowerment of marginalized people and communities, changes that would require new rules for civic, political, and economic engagements. And while the two movements have flourished in very different settings, they are part of the same world—one that is now more integrated than ever before, economically, technologically, culturally, and even politically. As the protesters shout “The world is watching you!” governments everywhere recognize that their actions can no longer be justified simply by trotting out old notions of territorial sovereignty.

The SPURS/Humphrey Program at MIT acknowledges that the world is very different now than it was in 1967 when the one-way learning model was formulated. As we rethink what should be our model today for educating mid-career professionals from developing countries, we have benefited from an institutional initiative formulated by the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program. This initiative—titled Associate Campus Partnership Program (ACPP)—was created relatively recently to extend the benefits of the Humphrey Pro-

gram beyond the campuses of established universities that currently host Humphrey Fellows. ACPP’s purpose is to encourage Humphrey Fellows to interact professionally as well as personally with students from different and smaller colleges than those at which the Fellows are based. This contact spreads the knowledge and professional connections the Fellows bring from across the world beyond the confines of the host campuses to community and regional colleges, which are eager to internationalize their curricula.

MIT applauds this initiative and wants to build on it to create a two-way flow of knowledge by developing new local-global linkages. MIT’s partner in this new effort will be Roxbury Community College (RCC) in Boston, an institution with a long history of serving an area of Boston that is low-income and culturally diverse. Well-known for institutional innovation, RCC emerged out of a struggle between the community and the city in the late 1960s to stop the construction of an interstate highway that would have bifurcated the community. Currently, RCC serves a predominantly black student population (52%) from Roxbury, Mattapan, and North Dorchester. In addition, 14% of RCC students are Latinos, while Asians, White, and other groups—all typically low-income—constitute 28% of the student body. This diverse student body is currently served by faculty members who share a deep commitment to Roxbury and its citizens. By partnering with the SPURS/Humphrey Program at MIT, RCC can further cultivate among its students the confidence that they can contribute to the betterment of the world beyond their immediate neighborhood—and that they are not alone in their struggles. Getting to know the Humphrey Fellows promises to give RCC students new perspective on how common societal problems are

tackled around the world, while providing Fellows an inside look at Roxbury and its historical struggles—a two-way learning street.

With this scenario in mind, the Humphrey Program at MIT is moving forward to create an associate partnership with RCC. Our goals can be summarized as follows:

- 1 Expose the MIT Fellows to innovative grassroots community development practices in Roxbury so they may learn how some low-income neighborhoods in the United States have successfully mobilized resources and built physical infrastructure and social networks. These lessons will be very useful for the Fellows to take home, since the majority of the world’s urban populations live in communities with very limited financial resources.
- 2 Extend the international reach of the SPURS/Humphrey Program beyond Cambridge, Mass., where the Fellows usually reside while at MIT. True, Cambridge is a cosmopolitan city, but Fellows can contribute even more by also sharing their international views in Roxbury—a community vastly different from Cambridge. In the process, the Fellows can help RCC students gain an understanding of urban development issues around the world and help them develop an interest in learning new languages and traveling abroad.
- 3 Create an intellectual and institutional pathway to attract RCC students to enroll in degree programs at MIT. The link with MIT may also open the institutional doorway for RCC students to enter other elite academic institutions and to compete successfully for jobs.

We are witnessing a new phase in the relationship between the United States and the world—a phase no longer marked by a one-way flow of knowledge, power, and finance. This new phase will be a two-way flow of mutual and reciprocal learning that ideally will lead to cooperative problem-solving. MIT’s associate partnership with RCC is a step in that direction, and we are grateful for the support of the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program as we begin this new experiment in learning.

MIT’s Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) Awarded Support from the Institute of International Education (IIE)

The Institute for International Education (IIE), which administers the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, has selected the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS), a part of MIT’s Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) to continue receiving funding for the next five years. In a highly competitive process, SPURS was the only program in the United States to be part of a Planning school to have been selected. Since 1979, SPURS has maintained a strong collaboration with IIE and has welcomed more than 150 Humphrey Fellows from Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern and Central Europe, and continues to be a driving force within the DUSP community.

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## American Planning Seminars

Drawing from their diverse experiences, speakers discuss the institutional, social, financial, and political agendas of urban planning.



The American Planning Seminar Series was offered to the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows again last fall, organized for the third year in a row by Ralph Gakenheimer, professor of urban planning. Taking into account feedback from previous Fellows, this year the series used a more informal format to encourage Fellows to ask questions and to bring their own knowledge and experience to the topics on the agenda. Speakers began their sessions with brief introductions followed by discussions of successes and failures in their past or current projects. These discussions generated a great deal of interest and provided Fellows with a forum for talking about issues they were confronting in their work back home.

### Introduction to American Planning

*Speaker:* Ezra Glenn, former director of planning for Somerville, MA, assistant to the chair of DUSP; Comments: Professors Ralph Gakenheimer, James Buckley, and Bish Sanyal. Ezra Glenn talked about making the transition from sociologist to urban planner and shared his experience

working as a planner for the city of Somerville and his views on local planning issues in the United States.

### Urban Revitalization and Redevelopment

*Speakers:* George Proakis, director of planning for Somerville, MA, and Andrew Grace, urban designer for the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). While Boston has been successful in maintaining its urban prosperity, just two miles north of Boston, Somerville has experienced economic decline.

### Pragmatism in American Planning

*Speaker:* Charles Hoch, professor of planning, University of Illinois, Chicago. Focusing on what knowledge planning education contributes to practice, Charles Hoch shared his findings from a 2007 survey of planners in the United States.

### Planning Process, Politics and Finance of Housing in Boston

*Speakers:* Louise Elving, principal, VIVA Consulting, and Noah Maslan, director of real estate, the Urban Edge

Louise Elving and Noah Maslan talked about affordable housing in Boston and Cambridge with an emphasis on the planning process, politics and finance, and the public-private relationship.

### LAND USE REGULATION AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

*Speakers:* Edith Netter, Edith Netter and Associates, and Gregor I. McGregor, Greg McGregor and Associates. Lawyers in the private sector, Edith Netter and Gregor I. McGregor presented the power of zoning, the space of negotiation for rezoning, and rigidity of environmental regulations for brownfield redevelopment.

### Intergovernmental Relationships in American Planning

*Speakers:* Frederick Salvucci, MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics, former Secretary of Transportation for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Drawing from his own experience, Frederick Salvucci gave an overarching introduction to the struggles of megaproject planning. He said political party transition, changes of leadership, resource scarcity, or any other minor incident could easily delay or dismantle a megaproject like Boston's Big Dig.

### Federal, State, Local Participation in Transportation

*Speakers:* Katherine Fichter, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and Eric Plosky, Volpe Center of the US Department of Transportation, Cambridge, MA. This session generated an engaging discussion on issues of political, fiscal, economic, and social relationships among the three levels of government, using a high-speed rail initiative and regional transit upgrades as examples.

## Professional Development News



team to contribute and perform each individual duty and responsibility at a very high level of proficiency.

To help Fellows hone their leadership skills, the SPURS/Humphrey Program organized a three-session Leadership Workshop, which was conducted by Stuart Krusell, associate director of the MIT Leadership Center. With vast experience in international development issues, Krusell worked closely with the Fellows and introduced them to the "Four Capabilities Leadership Framework," which uses case studies and group work to establish that four capabilities are central to effective leadership: visioning, sense-making, relating, and inventing new ways of organizing.

tions where many stakeholders are negotiating a complex set of issues. The MGA is an important tool for preparing and conducting negotiations. The four phases of the mutual gains process include preparation, creating value, distributing value, and follow-through.

The third talk took place on February 22, 2012 with the participation of the Cornell Humphrey Fellows. The discussion also included a short negotiation activity called "The Three Party Coalition Exercise."

### Leadership Workshops

An effective leader has the ability to get a group of diverse and talented people to work together toward a common goal. Although this sounds easy in principle, inspiring individuals to work collaboratively can be quite a challenge. Generally, leaders—many of whom have strong personalities—find ways to affect others in a positive way; they use their strength to the benefit of others and have a lasting and determining influence on peoples' performance. In order to succeed as a talented leader, one needs everyone on the

This capability framework was developed over a four-year period by MIT faculty at the Sloan School of Management, and tested in diverse, real-world settings. The discussion of these capabilities sparked a lively conversation among the Fellows, who used their own values and experiences to debate the effectiveness of "command and control" leadership versus a model of "cultivate and coordinate."

"Today, in a world where technology has created a truly global society, where the pace of change is constantly accelerating and where complex environment and economic problems abound, how we think about leadership may be more critical than ever," Krusell said during the introductory session of the workshop.

During the first and second sessions, Krusell praised what he referred to as the "incomplete leader": he made the case with the Fellows that no leader is perfect, and that the best ones do not try to be. Instead, incomplete leaders concentrate on honing their strengths and on finding others who can make up for their limitations.

The leadership workshop will finish in the spring, when the Fellows will resume their discussion and have more opportunities to explore both individual and collective leadership cases in the context of planning decision-making processes in the public realm.

### Team Building Workshop

Given the constant need to retool and reflect on their policy-making, planning, and leadership skills, the Fellows attended a one-day team-building workshop on how to use negotiation to build, participate in, and manage effective teams. Natalie Sanchez, a negotiation analysis consultant and research fellow of the Harvard Center for International Development, conducted the workshop. The seminar was intended to help the Fellows build a foundation of skills they can use to interact with and engage with one another over the course of the program. Using a negotiation framework, Fellows were

exposed to a methodology that seeks to explain the ways in which communication between individuals and teams takes place and how it can be shaped to better meet the objectives of both the individual and the team.

This workshop was designed to expose Fellows to major tensions that are inherent to successful team building. Through simulated negotiation



scenarios, a short negotiation skill lecture, and a conflict management tool for understanding and resolving disputes, the Fellows learned ways to create a balanced mix of analytical and interpersonal skills that can enhance their powers of communication, persuasion, and influence.



## Professional Site Visits



**Leaders experienced in local public finance, sustainability, economic development, and regional planning agencies meet with the Fellows to share their insight.**

To compliment the wealth of classes the Fellows take at MIT, the SPURS/Humphrey Program arranges a number of professional visits to leading planning institutions in the Boston area, where officials of the agencies and organizations give lec-

tures and presentations. Last fall, the Fellows took advantage of four local professional visits, where a variety of issues of interest to the Fellows were discussed at length.

The Massachusetts Bay Transporta-

tion Authority (MBTA) was the first agency to welcome the Fellows at their headquarters. In a stimulating exchange, the Fellows heard James Rust, MBTA's director of financial planning, describe how Boston's rail and transit system is managed, as well as the Authority's legal and financial structure and fiscal challenges. In addition, Andrew Brennan, MBTA's director of environmental affairs, outlined the agency's sustainability initiatives. The Fellows were engaged in a lively discussion on the benefits and challenges of having a cleaner and more efficient vehicle fleet, as well as an increased focus on energy management and on making continuous improvements to systems and infrastructure.

The Fellows had the chance to meet with the top management of the Boston Redevelopment Authority's (BRA) policy planning branch. Andrew Grace, BRA's senior planner, hosted the Fellows at City Hall,

presented a few of the ongoing initiatives, and shared his views on how the BRA is shaping both the aesthetics and economy of Boston's neighborhoods and downtown. The Fellows were interested in the city's transition from labor-intensive manufacturing to technology and service jobs. In a thought-provoking conversation, the Fellows analyzed the consequences of the economic dichotomy of Boston's industrial development, with its urban economy specialized in the financial, business, professional services, educational, and medical sectors, while its suburban economy is more specialized in high technology and defense.



In a third professional visit organized by Professor Ralph Gakenheimer, the Fellows visited the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), a regional planning agency serving the 101 towns of metropolitan Boston. Joel Barrera, MAPC's deputy director, along with three members of his staff, detailed the many activities that MAPC oversees, including sound municipal management, sustainable land use, protection of natural resources, efficient and affordable transportation, a diverse housing stock, public safety, economic development, an informed public, and equity and opportunity among people of all backgrounds. The MAPC staff was very impressed with the Fellows' analysis of regional planning governance in the United States as compared to that in their home countries. So many Fellows were engaged with

MAPC's mission to advance equity and development that Barrera invited them to join future sessions.

The Fellows also visited the Massachusetts State House and observed the Senate in session. Finally, they were hosted by World Bank officials during their Global Leadership Forum in Washington, DC. Ani Dasgupta, director of the Reform Secretariat, along with his colleagues Sumila Gulyani, Julia Bucknall, and Aleem Walji discussed with the Fellows about the functional scope of the World Bank and how it differs from a traditional commercial bank. Asked about how the World Bank deals with so many diverse economies, Dasgupta told the Fellows that development strategies vary significantly from case to case based on the direct requirements of each particular country.

One interesting discussion centered on the growing role of the World Bank in dealing with global issues, e.g. climate change, Millennium Development Goals, and other matters relating to global governance and the joint cause of global community. Although it is highly challenging for the World Bank to seek consensus on these issues across different countries with divergent interests, the Bank seems to have taken on a remarkable role in serving its agenda of development against all odds.

There are three more professional visits in store for the Fellows this April, when they will be hosted by the UN Development Programme, World Economic Forum, and the New York City Department of City Planning Authorities.



## Connecting with Others



### Harvard Loeb/SPURS Fellows Collaborations

The Loeb Fellows at Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD) hosted the fall joint seminar with the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows. Invited speaker Michael Hooper, GSD assistant professor of urban planning, talked about housing development projects for slum dwellers in African countries. This topic triggered an engaging discussion about equity, project management, and poverty among the Loeb/SPURS Fellows.



On February 29, the SPURS/Humphrey Program hosted the Loeb Fellows for a talk on "Senseable Cities" by Carlo Ratti, associate professor of the practice of urban studies and planning at MIT, as well as director of the Senseable City Laboratory. Ratti's research focuses on studying and predicting how digital technology is changing the way we describe, design, and occupy cities.



### SPURS & DUSP Connections

Through their own initiative, the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows organized a discussion series that further deepened interdepartmental collaboration with undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students.

The SPURS Discussion Series is designed to focus on critical issues for international development practitioners, ranging from natural disaster recovery and urban upgrading projects to regional planning challenges, democracy, and governance. All SPURS/Humphrey Fellows will present their own work to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) faculty and students. Two sessions took place during the fall 2011 term, and three are planned for the spring 2012 semester.



## SPURS/Humphrey Program Establishes Campus Partnership with Roxbury Community College



novative grassroots community development practices in Roxbury and how low-income neighborhoods in the United States mobilize scarce resources to build physical infrastructure and social networks.

Through the leadership of Jose Alicea, RCC associate dean of graduate students, the second joint seminar was held at the RCC campus with the talk "A Community Response Leading to the Stopping of I-95." The Roxbury community played an essential role in successfully stopping a plan to construct I-95 right through downtown Boston. Karilyn Crockett, a doctoral candidate at Tufts University, presented the research questions and findings of her dissertation study into this historical process and event, followed by commentaries of DUSP Professors Mel King and Tunny Lee, who personally witnessed, participated in, and influenced the grassroots movement.

Inspired by the Hubert H. Humphrey Program's vision to extend its alliances to a larger number of US citizens, particularly those residing in significant minority populations, the MIT SPURS/Humphrey Program established a partnership with Roxbury Community College (RCC), a college in the Roxbury Crossing neighborhood of Boston, MA.

faculty and students as well as MIT faculty and Fellows confirmed mutual interests in sharing knowledge, programs, and activities.

In the fall term, the partnership started off on September 28, 2011, with an eventful meeting with RCC faculty and students and a cohort of MIT faculty who specialize in community development. Participating MIT faculty included Amy Glasmeier, Xav Briggs, Phil Thompson, Karl Seidman, Ceasar L. McDowell, and Christopher M. Jones. The Fellows exchanged ideas with RCC students and faculty regarding in-

Two more events are planned for the spring term. The first event was held on February 16, 2012, and focused on income inequality with a discussion on the "Occupy Wall Street Movement." Jan Wampler, MIT pro-



fessor of Architecture, talked about his involvement in the design of the winterized housing for “Occupy Boston.” He spoke about how to address the problem of creating a safe, cheap, and effective structure for winter encampments. Atul Pokharel, DUSP doctoral candidate, talked about his paper on “The Occupy Movement.” The peaceful and continuous occupation of urban space in the economic heart of the city that begun to pose difficult dilemmas for city governments, residents, and

other institutions. RCC faculty and students had a chance with MIT faculty and Fellows to engage in discussion of the future of the movement.

The second spring event will engage the Fellows and RCC students in a community service project. RCC has a long history of activism and engaging its students in service learning projects that range from small community gardening projects to expansive economic development plans that are designed to receive state and

federal financial support. The goal is for the Fellows to participate in one of two community service events scheduled from April 20 through April 22, 2012. We expect the event to last an entire day so that the Fellows and the RCC students have time to reconnect with one another and explore the community in Roxbury as they work toward completing their projects. This final meeting will mark our first year of partnership with RCC. ■

## Maine Retreat

Retreats provide an excellent opportunity for participants to discuss issues while getting to know one another better in a more relaxed environment. Last September, the SPURS/Humphrey Program sponsored a retreat at the Maine Houses in Bryant Pond, Maine. Located in the Western Maine Mountains, it was the perfect place for the Fellows to interact and unwind after the bustling frenzy of adjusting to MIT and settling down in their new homes in Cambridge.

Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP) faculty, staff, and Fellows enjoyed the opportunity to discuss and share their first experiences in the United States. Having already spent a few days together, the Fellows talked about the group activities they had enjoyed and discussed what they looked forward to for the rest of their fellowship year. ■



## The Process of Reentry

### How do Fellows cope with reverse culture shock?

For many Fellows, studying abroad is one of the most intellectually enriching experiences of their lives: it broadens perspectives, generates new ideas, fosters tolerance, and often leads to better understanding of new cultures and different beliefs, dispelling cultural stereotypes. While most of those who leave their home countries are aware of the kinds of challenges they are likely to face in their host country—even long before beginning the experience—few anticipate the reacclimatization struggle that often occurs when one returns home after spending a considerable time in the United States.

Many of the current SPURS/Humphrey Fellows will encounter “reverse culture shock” after completing their fellowship program at MIT, making this a good time to reflect on the challenges previous Fellows have faced in their work and at home after returning to their countries of origin.

Other Humphrey campuses are also addressing this issue. An article by Gary Weaver, a professor at the American University School of International Service, on the “Process of Reentry” was forwarded to us by University of California at Davis coordinator Dr. Gwynn Benner. In this article, Weaver reveals that reentry may be even more difficult than adjusting to the sociocultural institutions of an unfamiliar country. Weaver states that this is so in part because: 1) most foresee no problems in readapting to their native cultures, 2) at home, everyone expects the returnee to fit in quickly, and 3) the increased global-mindedness (of the Fellows) is sometimes accompanied by increased intolerance of parochialism in those at home.

Weaver writes that “sojourners often assume that the journey ends when one arrives home. In truth, the psy-

chological sojourn does not end until one has successfully overcome reverse culture shock.” This resonated with those of us who work with the SPURS/Humphrey Fellows, because every year we hear from former colleagues about how difficult this readjustment process is and how important orientation for reentry is for them. With this in mind, we contacted SPURS/Humphrey alumni dating back to the 2000 cohort, and collected some of their comments.



We hope their insights and suggestions are valuable for Fellows who are now preparing for this transition.

### On reentry challenges

“The first difficulty I encountered was the lack of facilities. I was compelled to work in a not very congenial atmosphere, with an intermittent supply of electricity and an inefficient Internet connection. My country’s time management ethics and lack of work culture were challenging too. I used to be nostalgic of my MIT days.”

—Ananda Bhattarai, Court of Appeal Judge, Nepal, Humphrey Fellow 2002.

“After returning home, no Humphrey Fellow fully fits into her/his former space in their previous social, family, and working environment anymore. This is the first unavoidable

issue every Humphrey Fellow faces after the fellowship year. Every Humphrey Fellow should be aware of this issue. I think this is the best first step to face it successfully in the future.”

—Eva Balasova, Senior Urban Planner, City of Bratislava, Slovak Republic, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

“The main challenge I had to deal with after the fellowship was to relocate myself in what I socially assumed was my own space. To promote a new idea might not be welcomed all of a sudden, no matter how enthusiastic you are about it. In that sense, I realized that humbleness is a great asset to start over, no matter where you come from.”

—Emil Rodríguez Garabot, Consultant and Project Coordinator, Atebey Coordination Center, Dominican Republic, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

“For me, my main challenge consisted of rearranging my normal life in Colombia again. It meant having less time for the multiple commitments that I have in my personal and professional lives.”

—Paula Moreno, President of Visible Hands Corp. and Senior Advisor of International Agencies and Los Andes University, Colombia, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

“After a couple of weeks, I realized that my lifestyle in the United States completely changed the way I see the world in many ways. For one, people placed great expectations on me. Also, many gaps and misunderstandings in communication arose when it came to discussing any sort of issue. I felt I was like a man from another world. I lost easy access to many services which were part of my daily life in the US: journals, newspapers, the MIT library, and even Pandora and Netflix. Not to mention the exasperatingly slow Internet connection back home.”

—Fuad Jafarli, Director, Center for

Urban Studies and City Scope Ltd., Azerbaijan, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

"When I was at MIT studying the technologies of sustainability, I learned to think globally, with strategic plans, interacting with nature, taking on considerations of the environment, the urban pressures, and respecting the Earth's system. In my country, these issues are still not being discussed and are not part of my country's national interests. Until very recently, people here didn't understand the importance of green infrastructure techniques that I strongly advocate for and wrote my thesis on."

—**Zaynab Abaas**, Architect & Urban Planner, Instructor, University of Baghdad, Iraq, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

"It was challenging for me to get hold of my kids because they were out of control, but now they are behaving. At my work place, official politics did play its role and it was difficult for me to readjust in my old position. I am still struggling and hope to get over it soon."  
—**Syeda Shabnum Najaf**, Sr. Urban Planner, Government of Punjab, Pakistan, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

#### On readjustment strategies

"One of the challenges that applied to me was a question of scale in returning to my home country. Given the plethora of opportunities that are available in the US, the opportunities available in an island economy appeared restrictive in various dimensions including size and resources. One of the best ways to handle these challenges is to have the proper mindset and cultivate the right frame of mind for change. Having a flexible approach starting from oneself is the best way to address this paradox. In my case, it was also helpful to maintain the valuable link with other Fellows and keep in touch with them. One of the items that serve to provide this link is the online community available upon

joining the State Alumni (alumni.state.gov). Fellows can learn a lot from peers at that level. Also, the idea of mentoring Fellows that followed us at MIT was beneficial as it allowed us to share our experiences to help the new Fellow adapt. I managed to meet up with the Fellow when she came to my home country for a seminar after she herself returned to her home country. It proved to be a great experience, and MIT was very much at the heart of our discussions."  
—**Sanjai Bissessur**, Officer in Charge IT Security Unit, Ministry of ICT, Mauritius, Humphrey Fellow 2006.

"There were many challenges on returning home, but once you are empowered with knowledge and experience you can translate challenges into opportunities through positive thinking and innovativeness. I am now stably settled at work and I think making a big difference in the private sector than if I were in the public sector. You know what gives me strength is when you design a project and implement it. The results will be visible by having a social or an economic impact on the communities thus making a change."  
—**Fred Kalema**, Land Use Planner/Managing Director, Rwanda, Humphrey Fellow 2006.

"It seems to me that I started this process already during my Humphrey year. Working on my individual career statement was very helpful. I began to share my US experience and my goals with people that were important to me. The objective was to open a window on the professional I was becoming before going back home. This helped my colleagues in my country gain a better understanding of the renewal process I was going through. I needed to adjust, but I also needed them to adjust."  
—**Adam Pinto**, Urban Planner Consultant, ATEPE (Dakar, Senegal), Benin, Humphrey Fellow 2008.

"While at MIT, I never would have thought that my return would have

been such a difficult one. My town didn't have too much to offer, especially in professional matters, so I found myself unemployed for the next 10 months. During this time, I relied on my family. My father advised me, gave me hope, and made me understand that life's disappointments make us braver and stronger."  
—**Beatrice Lajci**, Urban/Spatial Planning Officer for UN Habitat, Kosovo, Humphrey Fellow 2008.

"I relied a great deal on the vast network of contacts I developed during the SPURS/Humphrey year at MIT. The practical experience of professional development encouraged me to run for the first Capital City mayoral elections in Bhutan. Though I narrowly lost the election in this instance, I remain optimistic for opportunities of improving the urban domain in Bhutan as a result of my experience with the SPURS/Humphrey Program."  
—**Karma Wangchuk**, Team Leader, United Consultancy, Bhutan, Humphrey Fellow 2007.

#### On MIT as a transition facilitator

"The SPURS/Humphrey Program provided an environment for me to broaden my horizons. There is no way to experience MIT and not catch "the bug"—this desire to transform. Solutions at MIT are constructed in a collective process through discussion, reflection, and practice. Through many conferences, lectures, workshops, technical visits, discussion groups, meetings, and visits to organizations, I have not only gotten to know my country better, but I have a more profound understanding of the world."  
—**Jane Silva**, Fund Manager, Grants and Co-financing Management Unit, IDB, Brazil, Humphrey Fellow 2007.

"MIT helped me a lot both in terms of getting my new job, but also in doing my work better. The reason is fourfold. First is persistence. During my fellowship year, I met many ob-

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## Leadership in Times of Crisis and Transition

by **Jagadish C. Pokharel**, former Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, PhD, MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning

The following is an excerpt from the speech delivered at the 2011 SPURS/Humphrey Program graduation ceremony.



I share your feelings at having had an opportunity to be in this wonderful program under the aegis of very capable academic leaders. Twenty-one years ago, I was involved in the program in different capacities and I still cherish those moments. I interacted with wonderful midcareer professionals from different countries, and we have remained in close contact. The program is uniquely placed to bring together participants like you to share experiences and to be enriched by the invaluable truth-seekers at MIT and in other institutions around this "Benares of the West"—the Greater Boston area.

Every moment you have spent here has contributed to your ability to see and understand things differently. I too have felt that every moment at this institution has helped build my capacity to face and lead my world differently. As years pass by and you forget the details, there will remain certain "mantras" and "sutras" that these gurus have given to you that will guide you as you engage yourself in your "Karma," or

work; that, at least, has been my experience in professional life. When you are facing the difficult choices in your "Karma Bhumi" (workplace), often under stress and confusion, the words of wisdom that you have heard and acquired from these gurus will provide you the light and guidance to stand, act, and win—like the words of Krishna to Arjuna in the epic war of the Mahabharata.

All this knowledge and wisdom together will make you feel a kind of completeness in knowing and doing things. This feeling has enabled me to engage myself in my Karma Bhumi, Nepal, over the years in both crises and normal situations. I have moved confidently with hope and courage while charting a middle path between the overtly competing extreme tendencies in the country.

I recall all those lectures by world-renowned academicians and practitioners who spoke very simply but left an unforgettable impression on me. I would like to convey my high-

est regard and respect to these thinkers for sharing moments with us.

The usefulness of the thinking tool of Donald Schön, the legendary philosopher-planner in the department, was perhaps the most frequently referred to when giving shape to planning processes in the recurring political transitions in which I had to perform. For thinking, doing, and delivering in a politically unstable context, "Beyond the Stable State" became a mantra. I am sure many of you who come from developing and democratizing nations where political stability is too precious an assumption to make find his guidance invaluable. How to think, act, and deliver in a perpetually unstable context is what most of you would like to take home when you go to your respective destinations.

Over the two decades after my return I witnessed two major crises and turning points in the political history of my country. These changes and crises gave me an opportunity to test the knowledge and skills that I had acquired at MIT.

The first period began with the post-democratic changes of the 1990s and ended with the intensifying conflict [that marked] the beginning of new millennium. We experienced an almost mesmerizing effect of freedom and people's power. At this time, I served on commissions and as an advisor in order to learn more about Nepal, having just returned from abroad. During this period, I was engaged in the country's policy making from outside government, and did not occupy an official position although several were offered to me.

This was a period where growth and equity moved together at a very memorable speed and with relative harmony. I was involved as an independent professional in the beginning. Later, I became involved as a national-level planner—a member of the planning commission. The state was no longer the only actor. It was transforming to play the role of facilitator, referee, guardian, and regulator. Nepal adopted major economic reforms and the international donor communities were largely pleased with the progress.

Regular, fair, and participatory elections made decentralized governance possible and helped link people with state affairs through their representatives. This was a period when people felt a rare kind of political stability. Later, it became clear that there were strong undercurrents working against the seemingly stable state, and within a few years the country plunged into major armed conflict. As the conflict gained prominence in the mid-1990s, I joined the National Planning Commission as a member responsible for transport, local development, governance, and environment.

In hindsight, I feel that we planners had to be partly blamed for not seeing this trend toward conflict. Consequently, we were not innovative or bold enough in our approach to take timely action to arrest the possibility of these dramatic changes. We had based our plans on the assumption of “equal playing field” as well as the “same level of development” for everyone. The reality was different. In countries like mine, there were areas and communities separated by more than two or three hundred years of development. We did try to reform governance to decentralize and devolve power and resources to the lower levels of government and community to address these variations. Our effort to devolve power, however, was not without resistance. First was the resistance of the bureaucracy, which engaged in “selective neglect.” And second were powerful

politicians at the center who thought decentralization of power and resources to the local bodies would weaken their control. Thus, even our assumption that regular elections would redistribute resources and power was not entirely valid.

We were gradually sliding into conflict, and for the first time in the history of Nepal we faced a violent conflict waged by armed Maoist rebels. At the same time, the far right and royalists also used this opportunity to attack the liberal democracy that began in the 1990s. The nation saw the brutal face of violence and terror for the first time in the nearly 250 years of its existence.

National planners did not have many prescriptions for this period of conflict. The assumption of stability was invalid and the state was becoming more concerned with meeting violence with violence. Political parties were displaced from their constituencies. There was no new investment and investors left the country. The majority of youth either joined the rebels or left the country for employment. Civil society and non-government organizations concentrated their activities in the cities, district headquarters, and other safe places. The state apparatus was systematically destroyed and displaced—physically and mentally. Office buildings were destroyed and people who tried to maintain relations with state agencies were punished. In most rural areas, the state disintegrated.

In these difficult years, national planners had to change their plans and implementation strategies. We tried to integrate security and development by focusing on the construction of large infrastructure projects, such as roads and hydropower projects, using the army. We also planned small community works such as schools, health posts, and drinking water facilities in rural areas in order to reestablish the link between the state and people.

As the conflict intensified, our strat-

egy began to fail. The entrenched structural disparity was unlikely to be lessened by incremental, technocratic approaches. Gradually, security took first priority over development works. Our strategy to “win the hearts and minds of people” in conflict did not work, and after the king again took power at the turn of the century, I resigned.

In 2006, we entered a new political context. The Far Left rebels and Democrats had joined hands and defeated the Far Right, symbolized by the king. An interim constitution was jointly promulgated to guide policy until a new constitution was drafted by the constituent assembly. With this the country officially entered a new peaceful phase, the third, of post-conflict political transition through negotiations and dialogue.

I was chosen to lead the National Planning Commission during this critical transition. I suspect I was acceptable to my own political party because I had demonstrated my political allegiance by resigning when the king took power. And I was perhaps acceptable to the other parties in part from my reputation as a professional who could work together with others and get things done.

Nepal's transition required a different approach from that taken in other post-conflict transition countries. In Nepal, neither side had won: it was a negotiated settlement. Therefore, the concept of “consensus” became the most powerful mantra for the transition. We implicitly suggested the same model for development works as well. Thus, I had members in the planning commission from all over the political spectrum. Managing this diversity and getting a plan for transition was the challenge.

For this post-conflict period we designed a three-year interim plan with the goal of supporting the reestablishment of the state through the reconstruction of destroyed physical infrastructure, rehabilitation of

displaced people, and by generating employment. We also made a point to demonstrate that excluded communities would receive special attention through basic services. Road construction in remote areas became a national movement. This focused strategy was relatively more successful than others. The moral of this was that in crisis and transition, institutions like ours had to be proactive and see to it that its plans were implemented.

The story did not have the same happy ending as the opening of the roads, however. Every time political alliances changed and a new government was formed, my team and I resigned and made way for a new team. When asked whether this was necessary, my answer has always been the same: development plans follow the theories and ideologies guiding a government. If you have different ones, then it is better for you to leave and give a chance to the others to test their ideas.

Overall, the most intense, engaging, and interesting things happened when I had to make the annual budgetary allocations for the projects and programs in these plans. It was interesting to find how little interest political leaders showed in the macro planning process and overall national development, yet how intensely they watched and tried to influence resource allocation to the project and programs related to their districts and constituencies. Interestingly, once I was kept hostage for about five hours in my own office!

In political transition, planners do not have the protective cover of professionalism or other rules. One has to be prepared to directly face the people. Institutional barriers and processes are broken and things happen as peer pressures and power. Once the prospective beneficiaries realize that there is no process or institutional arrangement to protect the decision maker, they apply even more pressure. The formal planning process is then broken, and resource

allocation becomes questionable.

Political economy in transition gets special meaning. You need to be sensitive to who is benefiting from your decisions because the most influential and powerful tend to benefit more. It is not uncommon to be pressured to allocate resources that you would not otherwise allocate. We should be prepared for such moral dilemmas to be passed on to the planners and bureaucrats—especially at times when there are no rules, or when strong enforcement of existing rules is absent.

In summary, 1) working in evolving political contexts requires delivering in a continuously changing context. Stability is a privilege and an exception. We should be ready to work in instability and be able to target and shoot while the ship is moving or shaking; 2) in crisis and transition you have many choices but succeed only if you focus on a few important ones; 3) in the post-conflict transition from a popular uprising, people have unrealistically high expectations from the change; they want many things to happen fast. How you deliver while keeping their hopes alive is the major challenge.

Finally, congratulations. As you return to your own countries and assume leadership positions, I wish you success. I know some of you will be working in more stable situations than others, but remember, we should constantly be thinking beyond what looks stable in a particular moment.

*cont'd from page 12*

stacles—language for instance—that I had to overcome. Second is encouragement. At MIT, the most important factor that helped me face many obstacles was that no one would ever tell me ‘no, you can’t.’ On the contrary, I was always encouraged to try. Third is observation. As I interacted with people from many different countries, I learned their cultures, religions, and traditions, and acquired a more global perspective. Finally, new academic knowledge. A month ago, I was invited to have an interview with a US professor, and the discussion went very well. He felt that he could have more fruitful conversations with me because I had more knowledge and a more solid background than my colleagues.”  
—Fan Tu, Associate Professor, Zhejiang University of Technology, Zhejiang, China, Humphrey Fellow 2010.

“My Humphrey Program fellowship gave me an opportunity to find a better position when I returned home. When I returned to work, everything was the same. At home, everybody was happy with my return. About the preparation to return home, I think that every case is different. For me, it was easy but I know that in some cases there were problems in their adaptation. One suggestion could be to work with some people who are knowledgeable with this kind of situation and offer it at the end of the year.”  
—Christian Asinelli, Undersecretary of States for International Project Evaluation, Argentina, Humphrey Fellow 2010.





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