

Dirk Holshausen



Co-Chair

Dirk is a Zimbabwean Chevening scholar and is currently pursuing an MBA at Saïd Business School.

Before coming to Oxford, Dirk founded “The List”, Zimbabwe’s first networking event for the future leaders of the country’s top 100 companies. Each monthly event brought together over 150 future CEOs from organizations across industry, including the World Bank, Coca-Cola, Barclays, Unilever and Emirates. Over this time, he also worked as a management consultant coordinating a portfolio of projects, ranging from improving the national distribution of drugs as part of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, to advising one of the fastest growing telecoms companies in sub-Saharan Africa on performance improvement strategies. Prior to this, Dirk served as a British Army Officer, leading teams around the world, including deploying to Afghanistan on frontline operations twice.

After his MBA, Dirk intends to focus on private equity in Africa.

Sara Leedom



Co-Chair

Mostly recently, Sara is the founder and principal at Leedom Consulting, a non-profit management consulting firm based in San Francisco, and she has spent a decade working on high-visibility social impact issues from affordable housing development to HIV prevention.

Prior to attending Oxford, Sara was living and travelling in West Africa and Ethiopia, surveying a broad range of entrepreneurs, NGOs, youth and elders about issues facing their communities. She is a founding member of African Entrepreneurship Collective accelerator in Rwanda, is the Ghana Portfolio Manager of the SBS Venture Fund, and serves as a mentor/consultant to the Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology in Accra. She has a BA in English, with a focus on linguistics and African literature, from Mary Washington College.

Tara Sabre Collier



Vice Chair

Sabre is the co-founder and managing partner of EOSS Consulting, an economic development consulting firm based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is also a 2012-13 Skoll Scholar with Oxford University’s Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship. She has collaborated with government, non-profits, and entrepreneurs on economic development initiatives in Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Peru, USA and Jordan.

Prior to her MBA, she completed her MPA in International Management & Policy at New York University and her BA at Spelman College. She speaks English, Spanish, Portuguese and French and is an occasional blogger and documentary filmmaker, having produced films on equity and social issues in Cuba and Brazil.

Sweta Penemetsa



Vice Chair

Sweta is currently pursuing an MBA at Oxford Saïd Business School. Most recently, Sweta spent time working with a private equity fund that invests in financial institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, while seeking both financial and social returns.

She has several years of experience in investment banking, investor relations and working with companies in the emerging markets. Before Oxford, Sweta worked in Bank of New York Mellon’s Depository Receipts division, serving clients in Russia, South Africa and the Middle East across a range of sectors. Prior to this, she was in investment banking at Fox-Pitt, Kelton, focusing on M&A and Equity Capital Markets in the financial services industry. She holds a BA in Mathematics from Rutgers University – New Brunswick.

Andrei Stephens



Committee Member

Andrei is an MBA candidate passionate about development and empowerment in emerging economies. He is excited to leverage his background in financial research, services, and entrepreneurship to support an educational and engaging conference that exposes the SBS community to innovative and exciting opportunities.

John Hodges



Committee Member

John is a Rhodes Scholar from Cape Town, who completed a Bachelor of Business Science at UCT, before reading the MSc in African Studies at Oxford. His research focussed on the South African labour market. Following the MBA at Saïd Business School, John intends to pursue career interests in renewable energy and private equity.

Kosuke Furutani



Committee Member

Kosuke is currently an MBA candidate at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, where he is a member of Green Templeton College. He was previously involved in Japanese development assistance to southeast African countries, focusing on the health sector and working to enhance economic ties between Japan and African countries. He is particularly interested in Public-Private Partnerships for promoting economic activity in Africa.

Tom Verghese



Committee Member

Tom is currently pursuing an MBA from the Saïd Business School (SBS) at Oxford University.

He began his career in the Global Corporate Investment Banking division at Bank of America Securities in New York where he executed billions of dollars in equity and equity linked financing, including Initial Public Offerings, convertible debt instruments, and other equity derivative for companies in the healthcare, energy, general industrial, financial services, real estate, consumer, and telecom sectors. These deals included in-depth financial analysis and the use of complex valuation methodologies as well as extensive exposure to top management teams in the Fortune 500.

Tom then moved to the African Aurora Business Network (AABN) based in Accra, Ghana where he provided entrepreneurs with advisory services and facilitated capital introductions. At AABN he worked with multi-lateral institutions, SMEs, NGOs, and entrepreneur networks to implement solutions to issues such as, access to finance, youth unemployment, and gender equity. He has worked in salient developing world industries such as e-waste, agricultural technologies, and microfinance.

Immediately prior to joining SBS, Tom worked as an Associate Director at Excelsior Firm, a capital advisory firm in Nairobi, Kenya. During his time at Excelsior, Tom structured pan-African health systems with a focus on pharmaceutical distribution and integrated health providers. Tom received a B.A. in Finance from Georgetown University.