

Bio notes of DEALS experts attending WUF 11

Jeroen Diepemaat, Alderman of the city of Enschede (The Netherlands)

Since 2018, Jeroen Diepemaat has been an alderman for the city of Enschede, where his portfolio has included urban development, housing and culture. Prior to this, he was city council member for Enschede while simultaneously working as a policy adviser, account manager and board secretary for TSN Home Care, from 2014 to 2018. He has also been active politically at the European level, as president of LYMEC, a pan-European liberal youth organisation. Jeroen sits on the VNG Commission - Europe and International, with the portfolio of Global Sustainable Urban Development, and he is an Advisory Board Member for VNG International's Governance of Inclusive Green Growth in Cities (DEALS) programme.

Irene Oostveen, Senior Project Manager, VNG International (The Netherlands)

Irene Oostveen is an international senior project manager in the field of capacity development of local/regional governments and associations of local governments. In almost two decades with VNG International, the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), Irene has acquired an extensive experience in municipal management; capacity building; international cooperation; as well as conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. Irene is now sharing her expertise through trainings and technical assistance activities for local politicians and civil servants in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Irene has been leading the Governance of Inclusive Green Growth in Cities (DEALS) programme from its inception in 2017. She has a master's degree in International Relations and International Organizations.

Luis Felipe Vásquez Correa, VNG International (Colombia)

Felipe Vásquez is a scientist and consultant specializing in inclusive sustainability, housing, waste management and circular economy policies and programs. In Colombia, he has worked for the National General Comptroller Office on environmental and financial audits of local governments and public institutions. He has also independently advised private companies in the sanitation, construction, and oil and gas sectors. He has presented in scientific conferences on four continents. Currently, Felipe works as local expert for VNG International's DEALS programme in the city of Pereira (Colombia). He is also an advisor for CEMPRE Colombia, a non-profit national knowledge centre on recycling and circular economy. He holds a PhD in Industrial Ecology.

Carlos Alberto Maya López, Mayor of the City of Pereira (Colombia)

Carlos Alberto Maya López is the mayor of the city of Pereira (Colombia) since 2020, after being the city's Secretary of Finance from 2016 to 2018. Trained as an accountant and public administrator, he has worked as a university professor as well as an advisor for dozens of companies in the fields of taxation, finances, accounting, and management. He sits on the board of several public services organisations. His development plan aims to turn Pereira into a city for its people, modern and intelligent. He recently completed an international master's degree in Smart City Management, with the Zigurat Global Institute of Technology.

Ángela María Aguirre Valencia, Manager, City of Pereira (Colombia)

Since 2020, Angela Aguirre is the Manager of Social Affairs of the city of Pereira. Her areas of focus include the rights of girls and women; the welfare and future of children through education; new opportunities for feral dogs and cats, as well as the beautification of the city. She is a public accountant, specialised in tax management and administration.

Johan Alexander Osorio Cano, Manager, City of Pereira (Colombia)

Johan Alexander Osorio Cano has been named manager of Pereira's sanitation company in 2021, after having worked as a lawyer for the municipality and as the Secretary of Social Development, among other roles in the public sector. He also has experience in the private sector, as legal director and administrative manager for various organizations. He is a lawyer specialized in Criminal Law and Criminology.

Robert Meerman, Project Manager, VNG International (The Netherlands)

Robert Meerman has extensive experience in managing water-related programs. He has worked on strengthening social contracts in fragile settings as well as working on city deals in more urban areas in Africa. Robert has extensive experience on water management, WASH and food security, specifically from a rainwater harvesting angle, and has worked with international partners such as DGIS, USAID, IFAD and SDC in East and West Africa. He has been developing businesses, partnerships and strategies, designing and managing projects and programs, monitoring and evaluating, ensuring knowledge management and capacity building. He is project manager of the DEALS program in Sèmè-Podji. He holds a Master of Business Administration.

Nicole Osuji, Project Manager, VNG International (The Netherlands)

Nicole Osuji is interested in post-conflict settings, especially from an international cooperation and development angle. Her past experiences include diplomacy within American and Kosovar diplomatic missions, and field experiences in rule of law, democratisation and good local governance in the Western Balkans. With VNG International, Nicole is involved in local governance projects in Benin (integrated water management and waste management), and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (security governance and stabilization). She has a master's degree in French Law & Common Law, with a specialisation in International and European Law.

Jonas Gbènamèto, Mayor of Sèmè-Podji (Benin)

Inspector of Financial and Postal Services by training, Sèdozan Jonas Gbènamèto is, since 2020, the mayor of the city of Sèmè-Podji, a city of more than 200,000 inhabitants in the Republic of Benin. Before entering the municipal political scene, he was twice elected as a deputy and was appointed by his peers as their representative to sit as a judge at the High Court of Justice of Benin. A very active political player, he is currently a member of the Political Bureau of the Bloc Républicain political party.

Alexandre Dossou, President of the Sèmè-Podji Focal Team (Benin)

Since 2020, Codjo Alexandre Dossou has been a local elected official at the head of Agblangandan, a district in the city of Sèmè-Podji. For more than 20 years, he has dedicated himself to the local concerns of his community, as head of one of the districts of the district he now leads. He has also long been active in local youth organizations as well as the local committee of the Red Cross in Benin.

Giorgia Silvestri, DRIFT (The Netherlands)

Giorgia Silvestri is a consultant and researcher in transition management for DRIFT, a world-leading institute for research on sustainability transitions. Her research focuses on sustainability science and sustainability transitions, ranging from environmental governance and policies, participatory methods, learning processes and stakeholder engagement strategies. She is an Advisory Board Member for VNG International's Governance of Inclusive Green Growth in Cities (DEALS) programme. She has a master's degree in Environmental Sciences.

Anne-Marie Schreven, VNG International, Pathein Office (Myanmar)

Anne-Marie Schreven is a development professional with over 25 years of experience, mainly in Asia and Africa. Her areas of expertise are capacity development in local governance and leadership for organizational change. In 2017, she joined VNG International in Myanmar, as country representative and team leader of community development and local governance projects, focusing on strengthening capacities for democratic local governance. As a consultant, she is also leading project evaluations and organizational capacity assessments.

Naw Htee Ku Paw, VNG International, Pathein Office (Myanmar)

Htee Ku has over 10 years of experience in working with different international NGOs in Myanmar, such as The Leprosy Mission International, ActionAid International, German Agro Action, and DanChurchAid, working in different programmes to promote human rights, equality, and active citizenship. She is currently the project coordinator for VNG International's Governance of Inclusive Green Growth in Cities (DEALS) programme in Pathein City. In this role, she is interacting with different stakeholders to support the fast-growing city, so that Pathein can move forward as a green, clean, and sustainable city. Htee Ku has an academic background in regional and rural development planning.

Yin Yin Min, VNG International, Pathein Office (Myanmar)

Yin Yin Min has worked in the humanitarian sector for more than 12 years, both in government and non-government institutions. She has a rich experience in participatory development, policy advocacy on gender and social inclusion, and local governance strengthening. She has been working on women empowerment, integrating diversity inclusion, and engaging multi-stakeholders in different projects in rural and urban areas. She is currently a Gender and Social Expert for VNG International in Myanmar. Yin Yin is passionate about the power of transformative gender equality and of inclusive decision-making of local governance to build a peaceful and democratic society. She holds a Master of Science in Gender and Development Studies from the Asia Institute of Technology.

Daan Stelder, Project Manager, VNG International (The Netherlands)

Daan has worked with VNG International since 2015, where he is involved in managing projects in South Sudan, Mozambique, and in urban development and decentralisation in Ghana, among other projects. His past projects involve disaster preparedness in the Philippines, local government resilience in countries dealing with mass migration in the Middle East, and the Local Government Capacity Programme in Burundi, Central America and Rwanda. He has a master's degree in International Relations and International Organisations.

Prince Aboagye Anokye, City Focal Point for DEALS Kumasi (Ghana)

Prince Aboagye Anokye is a teacher, consultant, and researcher, with expertise in urban administration and management. His focus is on urban mobility, urban housing, informal settlement upgrading and urban regeneration; urban planning and management; urban economics and municipal finance; as well as the legal and institutional frameworks for urban planning and management. He is currently working as programme expert for VNG International's Governance of Inclusive Green Growth in Cities (DEALS) in the city of Kumasi, and as researcher and professor at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Samuel Pyne, Mayor, Kumasi (Ghana)

Hon Samuel Pyne, the Mayor of Kumasi is a Sustainable Development expert and holds M.A in Governance and Sustainable Development (GSD) from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast. He holds an M.A. in Local Governance Administration and Organization from the Local Government Institute, Accra and a Bachelor of Education in English from the University of Education, Winneba. Hon. Samuel Pyne has been an active participant in the political landscape of Ghana and held various executive positions in the internal party structures of the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and rose to become the Ashanti Regional Secretary 2010-2022.

He is also a local government practitioner and has been an Assembly member (Councilor) in Aowin Suaman District Assembly (1989- 1990) in the Western North, Afigya Sekyere District – Assembly (2006 – 2008), Afigya Kwabre District Assembly (2008 -2010) all in the Ashanti Region. During his tenure as an Assembly Member, he served as the Chairman (Convener) for the Social Services and Environmental Sub-Committees at Afigya Kwabre and Afigya Sekyere Districts irrespectively.

Michael Agyemang, director of planning, Kumasi (Ghana)

Charles Kwasi, urban planner, Kumasi (Ghana)