

# DONGFANG GUO, BRIDGING BUSINESS AND PUBLIC POLICY TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Growing up in China among a family of civil servants exposed Dongfang Guo (MPP 2020) to the challenges of public service from an early age. “My family members were extremely driven in their mission, and tackling social ills was consistently a theme of discussion in our household,” he says. Now following in his family’s footsteps, he is studying the [Master of Public Policy \(/study/mpp\)](/study/mpp) (MPP) as a Kwok Scholar.

Dongfang explored a [range of funding opportunities \(/study/mpp/mpp-fees-and-funding\)](/study/mpp/mpp-fees-and-funding) when applying to the MPP: “There was an abundant choice of scholarships both at departmental and university level.” The [Kwok Scholarship \(http://kwokscholars.org/index.html\)](http://kwokscholars.org/index.html), which provides full funding for up to

two students each year from Hong Kong or mainland China, aims to support a new generation of aspiring leaders to positively shape the future of Hong Kong and China.

“It’s an amazing feeling to be fully funded for a master’s programme at a world-class university like Oxford,” says Dongfang, “The vision of the Kwok Scholarship echoes my own life pursuit of initiating positive changes in the field of business and social impact.”

With an academic background in business, Dongfang’s policy interests lie at the intersection of business and society: “There is immense potential for policy decisions that harness the power of the private sector to address public challenges.” He has worked in the fields of impact investment and social entrepreneurship, with a focus on tackling socio-environmental issues and promoting sustainable business. “Pursuing the MPP is enabling me to build upon my existing knowledge and examine issues through the complementary lenses of business and public policy,” he says.

A highlight of the MPP so far has been the chance to learn from experts in his field of interest, such as the pioneering philanthropist and venture capitalist Sir Ronnie Cohen, who delivered a talk on [using impact investment to reshape capitalism and drive positive change](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYlo3ddt1ug) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYlo3ddt1ug>).

“We have opportunities to hear from social entrepreneurs, academic pioneers and political leaders on a weekly basis, which echoes the multidisciplinary approach of the School. This approach enables students to become well-rounded decision makers with full perspectives.”

Dongfang has also been impressed by the highly professional nature of the MPP, and the opportunity to interact with classmates who have extensive experience in the field of public policy.

“My classmates come from a range of backgrounds and, regardless of the professional path they choose, they are intellectually curious and driven by a common sense of purpose to serve global societies.”

He has also found among his classmates those who share his passion for sustainable development and impact investment: “The MPP offers great opportunities for me to connect with those peers who share a common vision, enabling us to foster real synergy in the specific area of public policy that we care about.” Through interacting with classmates from across the world, Dongfang is seeking to cultivate a truly global mindset: “The Blavatnik School’s global environment gives you invaluable skills for addressing the complex challenges of our increasingly interconnected world.”

While moving to a new country and adapting to academic life can be challenging under any circumstances, this year’s class have faced this upheaval in the unique context of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, the Blavatnik School has [adapted to changing restrictions](https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-05-14-how-mpp-community-has-adapted-changing-restrictions-term) ([/news/how-mpp-community-has-adapted-changing-restrictions-term](https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-05-14-how-mpp-community-has-adapted-changing-restrictions-term)) to provide an innovative, personalised learning experience while fostering a supportive community. Additionally, Dongfang has found his college community at St Edmund’s Hall to be a valuable source of support – from his college advisor, who helped him adjust to life in Oxford, to his [college ‘household’](https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/colleges) (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/colleges>) [an assigned group of students living in close proximity who are not required to socially distance from one another] – one of whom is a fellow MPP student.

“Oxford marks a new beginning for my journey in business and social impact – I look forward to using lessons from the MPP to build bridges across sectors and deliver innovative solutions to major policy challenges.”

*Dongfang is a Kwok Scholar.*

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