

Astrid is an independent Austrian-Ugandan urban economist, based in Hong Kong, with over 16 years of experience. She works across research and practice, in diverse roles across governmental, academic and non-governmental organisations, supporting cities around strategy generally and specifically to strengthen their financial systems, with a focus on unleashing new opportunities for sub-national financing, including climate finance. She holds an MSc in Public Financial Management from the SOAS in London and an MA in International Economics and International Development from Johns Hopkins University. In 2016, she was nominated by the University of Cape Town as one of Africa's Young Leaders and in 2020 she received Johns Hopkins University's Outstanding Recent Graduate Award, for her work on urbanisation.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

(full list of projects available on request)

Urban Advisor / Researcher / Independent Consultant

Various (Selected Examples Below)

Uganda and Hong Kong

January 2020 – Present

Climate Finance

- Expert, NDC 3.0 Localisation - UNESCAP
- Expert, Climate Finance Tools for Subnational governments - GIZ
- Team Lead, Evaluation UK-Nigeria Infrastructure Advisory Facility programme, Nigeria - Montrose
- Expert, Public Climate Finance Mobilization, C40 Climate Finance Facility – C40 and GIZ
- Expert and Coordinator, Coaching cities for access to Climate Finance for ComSSA – FMDV
- Advisor, C40 Cities, Finance Advisory Group and CFO Network – C40 Cities

Housing

- Expert, Land and Housing Finance, Nairobi - UNHabitat
- Expert, Local Finance for SDGs in Africa - UNDP

Municipal Finance

- Expert, Land Value Capture, Kigali - GIZ
- Expert, Urban Infrastructure Finance, Kigali - SWECO
- Expert, Municipal Climate Finance, Washington DC – World Bank
- Researcher, Local Government Finance, Myanmar – The Asia Foundation
- Expert, Intermediary City Finance, Paris - OECD
- Expert, Land Value Capture, Egypt – UNHabitat
- Senior Researcher, Municipal Finance, – African Development Bank and BigWin Philanthropy
- Expert, Municipal Finance, London – ODI
- Expert, Municipal Revenue Reform, Iraq – UNHabitat
- Expert, Land Value Capture, Africa – Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
- Urban Economist, African Development Bank – Urban and Municipal Development Fund
- Senior Advisor, African Property Tax Initiative – University of Sussex/University of Toronto

Research and Evaluation

- Research Committee Member – African Cities Research Consortium
- Advisor, Urban Infrastructure: Data and Evidence Review – Vivid Economics (for CDC Group)

Urbanisation – Strategy and Governance

- Lead, Prime Ministers Fellowship Programme on Urbanisation, Bahrain – Prince's Foundation
- Governance Advisor, Secondary Cities Institutional Programme Uganda – Espelia
- Urban Economist, London School of Economics – International Growth Centre
- Urban Specialist, Cities, Infrastructure and Growth Programme, Uganda – Cardno
- Research and Advocacy Lead, G20 Urbanisation Advocacy – African Centre for Cities

International Growth Centre (LSE and Oxford University)

Policy Director

Head of *Cities that Work* initiative

Senior Country Economist for Cities and Manager for *Cities that Work*

Senior Country Economist for Uganda

Country Economist for South Sudan and Uganda

Kampala, Uganda

December 2019 – December 2020

October 2018 – December 2019

March 2017 – October 2018

October 2016 – March 2017

June 2015 - September 2016

- Led IGC's country programmes, flexible engagements and initiative teams across Africa and Asia as well as in the London Hub, including managing senior policy professionals, budgets, and strategy
- Providing a national and global leadership role in translating IGC's research into policy impact
- Directly managing a team of 21 people, with a wider staff remit of over 60 people
- Developed and led the *Cities that Work* programme in the IGC, working in over 34 cities, in 26 countries with significant reputation for delivering accessible evidence-based advice
- Secured new external funding for Cities that work, and led the delivery of these contracts from diverse funders, including DfID, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and European Commission
- Partnered with leading academics in frontier, policy relevant research on urbanisation

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) / Evidence ActionDeputy Country Director (interim)
Manager, East Africa Expansion**Kampala and Mbale, Uganda**December 2014 – June 2015
August 2012 – July 2014

- Under IPA: Led and managed a country office of over 100 staff and a budget of 4.5 million USD per year carrying out a diverse portfolio of research
- Data collection and analysis for randomized control trials including, contributing to academic articles
- Under Evidence Action: Establishing a full new organisation including developing operations, HR and financial management systems for Evidence Action in Uganda including, recruiting, developing, and managing a team of over 40 staff and managing program budgets of 1.6 million+ USD
- Scoping and start up work for Evidence Action in Uganda, Rwanda, and Malawi
- Developing innovative financing mechanisms, including setting up carbon crediting program.

The FARM Project / Abt Associates

Analyst

Central, Western and Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan

July 2011 – July 2012

- Designing and programme management of 6000 on-farm demonstration trials across three states
- Collecting and analysing data and capacity building of national staff on statistical techniques
- Rural agricultural policy development with the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Ministry of the East African Community, Government of Kenya

Economist /ODI Fellowship

Nairobi, Kenya

September 2010-July 2011

- Technical support for Kenyan government on the EAC monetary union and common market
- Speech writing for the Prime Minister, Minister and Permanent Secretary and Speaker of Parliament
- Representing the Kenyan Government in inter-ministerial as well as regional EAC meetings.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- Mawazo Institute, Board Chair (2023 – Present)
- Local Government Revenue Initiative (LoGRI), Advisory Board Member (2022 – Present)
- Local Public Sector Alliance, Board Member (2022 – present)
- University of Bergen, Global Research Programme on Inequality, Research Affiliate (2021-2023)
- University of Lagos, ARUA Centre for Excellence for Urbanisation and Habitable Cities (2019-2023)
- International Growth Centre *Cities that Work* Council (2015-2021)
- Makerere University Business School, Economics Association (2016-2018)
- Johns Hopkins University Bologna Centre Advisory Council (2010-2014)

AFFILIATIONS**Africa Urban Lab, African School of Economics**

Fellow

Fumba Town, Zanzibar

July 2025 – Present

African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town

Lecturer and Research Associate

Cape Town, South Africa

January 2023 – Present

ODI

Research Associate

London, United Kingdom

October 2023 - Present

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATES

SOAS, University of London
Master of Science, Public Financial Management

London, United Kingdom
December 2022

Johns Hopkins University, SAIS
Master of Arts, International Development and International Economics

Washington DC, USA and Bologna, Italy
May 2010

University of Warwick
Bachelor of Science, Economics, Politics and International Studies

Coventry, United Kingdom and Madrid, Spain
July 2008

- Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain (October 2006-June 2007);

SELECTED TEACHING

- African School of Economics, African Urban Lab (April 2025 – Present)
- University of Cape Town, MA Sustainable Urban Development (July 2023 - Present)
- University of Toronto (November 2020 - Present)
- University of Oxford, MSc Sustainable Urban Development (January 2019-Present)
- Science Po (November 2023)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

(full list can be found on <https://urbanasti.com/voice/>)

- [African cities and climate change](#), The Conversation (2023)
- [Global climate finance leaves cities out](#), The Conversation (2022)
- *Financing and Funding Secondary Cities* in “[Dynamics of Secondary Cities in Africa](#)” (2022)
- [Women are at the heart of African cities. The continent needs urban policies that empower them.](#) with Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, Mayor of Freetown and Jennifer Musisi, City Leader in Residence at Bloomberg Harvard City Initiative, CityMetric (08th March 2019)
- with Kopanyi, M. (2018) [Taxing vacant urban land in Kampala](#). London: IGC
- (2018) [An Overview of Municipal Finance for the City of Hargeisa, Somaliland](#). London: IGC
- with Andema, F. (2017) [Efficient and Effective Municipal Tax Administration: A Case Study of Kampala Capital City Authority](#). London: IGC
- with Lustig, N., Jellema, J., and Wolf, S. (2016) [Commitment to Equity Assessment: Uganda](#). Brookings, Washington D.C.

SELECTED RECENT SPEAKING AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

(full list can be found on <https://urbanasti.com/speaking/>)

- 11/2023 Africa Investment Forum, Presidential Mayoral Initiative, Keynote Presentation
- 06/2022 – Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (selected):
 - Keynote Presentation – [Future Cities: Sustainable Urbanisation](#)
 - CNBC Africa – [Why Urbanisation is Africa's Biggest Opportunity](#)
- 22/05/2022 – Davos World Economic Forum, Presenter – *Cities, Not Camps*
- 11/11/2021 – COP26 (selected)
 - Commonwealth and Prince's Foundation – [Call to Action for Sustainable Urbanisation](#)
 - AfDB – UCLGA [City Action for Climate Finance and Resilient Infrastructure](#)
 - Nordic Development Fund [Green and Liveable Cities in Africa](#)
- 10/07/2020 – [Voice of America What is Africa's Next Normal?](#)
- 26/06/2020 – [BBC World Service The Real Story: How will COVID-19 change our cities?](#)

LANGUAGES

- English, German (Native)
- French (Spoken, Reading: Working Proficiency, Writing: Limited Working Proficiency)
- Spanish (Limited Working Proficiency)