

## EDUCATION

---

**Doctor of Philosophy, School of Education** 2023 - present

Deakin University, VIC, AU

Dissertation: *Embedding Values: The Compromise and Contest of Assembling an Educational Platform*

Supervisors: Prof. Julian Sefton-Green, Dr. Kate Mannell, Dr. Luke Heemsbergen

**MA International Affairs, Major in Applied Quantitative Methods** 2015 - 2017

The New School, NY, USA

Thesis: *Men, Media & Politics: The Historically Undervalued Work of the Filipina*

Supervisors: Prof. L.H.M. Ling & Prof. Michael A. Cohen

**BA Political Science, Major in International Relations + Economics** 2011 - 2015

University of San Carlos, CEB, PH

Thesis: *Decentering ASEAN: Sister-city Relations in Fostering Regional Identity*

Supervisor: Atty. Archill Capistrano

**Certificate in Graphic Design\***

2018 - 2019

Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

**Graduate Researcher, ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child**

*Building a Database for Children's EdTech*

April 2024 - present

- Analyse and synthesize publicly available information of EdTech companies in Australia.
- Develop static and interactive data visualisations used during data collection workshops.
- Develop and execute communication and engagement strategy for EdTech companies, startups, and other stakeholders.

*HDR Liaison Officer*

April 2024 - July 2025

- Organise monthly community building activities with fellow centre graduate researchers
- Designed governance processes to increase the representation of HDR community in the centre's decision-making meetings
- Launched the Future Leaders Fund, a dedicated ECR development fund, using a participatory planning approach

*Parental Guidance: Screen Use Guidance for Parents*

Oct 2024 - July 2025

- Develop a stakeholder management strategy for Melbourne-based groups
- Built relationships with local migrant community groups, libraries, and childcare centres in West Melbourne.
- Organised and supported the conduct of hybrid focus group discussions

## MELISSA DE LA CRUZ

[m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au](mailto:m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au) | Williamstown, VIC 3016

### *Cebu City Government, Philippines*

#### *Strategic Projects Manager*

*Sept 2022 - July 2023*

- Collaborated with public health and education officials to design a COVID-19 vaccination program for 200,000 public school students
- Projected target schools based on a locally-managed database developed to target schools and neighbourhoods to conduct onsite vaccinations over 6 months

#### *Board Secretary, Disaster Council*

*Jan 2023 - April 2023*

- Restructured an engagement strategy to 32 of 35 (90%) members of the Disaster Council
- Drafted 33 Board Resolutions disbursing Php 35 million for response & preparedness activities, 7 Internal Council Rules, and 5 Technical Working Group reports.

#### *Chairperson, Local School Board*

*June 2021 - Aug 2022*

- First female chairperson in the History of the City's Local School Board
- Introduced landmark service design strategies to increase equity and ease of access for 127 schools to city services.
- Secured the passage of 100 Board Resolutions which broke ground on 4 new school buildings, refurbished a school gym into the city's only dedicated gymnastics facility, and developed a warehousing platform.

#### *Director, Mayor's CoLab*

*June 2020 - June 2021*

- Launched the first strategic design unit in Philippines local government
- Designed initiatives impacting education outcomes during the COVID-19 Lockdown: EdHub, EdRadio, and Community Wifi

### *Research Director, Star City Group (formerly Bits and Atoms)*

*2017 - 2021*

- Coordinated a global network of cities experimenting and piloting self-driving cars
- Negotiated new research projects with Company Executives and global thought leaders
- Advised cities, corporations, and universities in adopting civic technology projects

### *Research Assistant, Global Urban Futures Project (The New School)*

*2015 - 2019*

- Designed workflows for cross-disciplinary research projects
- Managed the marketing and communications of Urban Research series
- Coordinated the publication of key research reports with a target global audience
- Led partnership building activities with grassroots groups

## MELISSA DE LA CRUZ

[m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au](mailto:m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au) | Williamstown, VIC 3016

### SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

---

#### *Filipino-Australian Student Council in Victoria*

Director of Learning

*Aug 2024 - Aug 2025*

PhD Student Representative

*Aug 2023 - Aug 2024*

- Developed the concept of the annual International Research Forum on the Philippines in consultation with stakeholders such as La Trobe Asia and Philippines Consulate General.
- Expanded FASTCO's partnerships with the Filipino Academic Community in Victoria

#### *Volunteer, GradMAP*

*Sept 2024 - Sept 2025*

#### *AltMobilityPH*

*June 2020 - June 2021*

#### *Councilor, University of San Carlos Supreme Student Council*

*Mar 2014 - Mar 2015*

### AWARDS

---

#### **Deakin University, Australia**

- ARC COE Digital Child Future Leaders Fund (\$1,135), AARE 2025 Symposium
- ARC COE Digital Child Future Leaders Fund (\$2,981.28), Lego Serious Play
- ARC COE Digital Child HDR Liaison Officer Top-up Scholarship (\$6,650)
- Australian Research Council's Postgraduate Research Scholarship

#### **Cebu City Government, Philippines**

- Mayor's Special Awardee (2022)
- Plaque of Recognition, Philippines Independence Day (2022)

#### **The New School, New York City, USA**

- Studley Graduate Program in International Affairs, Michael Cohen Award (2017)
- Provost Scholarship, The New School (2015 - 2017)

#### **University of San Carlos, Cebu, Philippines**

- Cum laude honours (2015)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

---

### **Journal Articles**

1. Zomer, C., Zhao, X., De La Cruz, M., & Sefton-Green, J. (forthcoming). Edutainment 2.0 or eduwashing? The production of educational legitimacy for children's apps.
2. New School Urban Intelligence (2019) Auditing Urban Intelligence: Interfacing Place-Based Knowledge. Leonardo Electronic Almanac (MIT Press).

### **Book Chapters**

1. De la Cruz, M.R. (2022) The Global City. In F. Cruz, et al (Eds.), The Contemporary World. Manila, PH: C&E Publishing
2. Simet, L. and De la Cruz, M.R. (2018) Rethinking Informality in the Times of New Global Agendas and Technological Change. (Action Aid)

### **Reports and Other Publications**

1. Pangrazio, L, et. al (2025) Checklists for apps and platforms in early education. ARC COE Digital Child Resources for Early Educators. Web link: <https://digitalchild.org.au/research/publications/reports/checklist-for-digital-tech-in-ecce/>
2. De la Cruz, M.R. (2022) Sustainable Education in Cebu City. Cebu City Government for the Department of Interior and Local Government
3. Marini, M. et. al (2022) A RHODE TRIP: Lessons for the future of mobility from the Little Roady Autonomous Micro Transit Pilot. Rhode Island, PI, USA: Rhode Island Department of Transport.
4. De la Cruz, M.R., et. al (2021) *Cebu City's Addiction Recovery Program* (2021). Quezon City, National Capital Region: Galing Pook Foundation Awards.
5. De la Cruz, M.R., et. al (2021) *Overdue: A Strategic Plan for Cebu City Public Library*. Cebu City, PH: Cebu City Government.
6. Green Climate Fund (2021) *Sectoral Guide: Cities, Buildings, Urban Systems*. Seoul, SK: Green Climate Fund.
7. Townsend, A et al. (2020) *The Most Important Mile: Inclusive Futures for Local Delivery*. Perth, AU: Minderoo Foundation.
8. Bits and Atoms LLC. (2020) *Global Atlas for Autonomous Vehicles in Cities* for Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative on Cities and AVs

9. Cohen, M. Et al (2019) Pathways to Equitable Economic Growth in Cities. Brussels, BE: Cities Alliance. Web link:  
[https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/PathwaysToPricing\\_WebFinal.pdf](https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/PathwaysToPricing_WebFinal.pdf)
10. Bits and Atoms LLC. (2018) Autonomous Vehicle Future Scenarios. National League of Cities. Washington, D.C, USA
11. Global Urban Futures Project (2018) The Habitat Commitment Project: Monitoring & Assessing Progress at the City Level
12. STAE and Bits and Atoms LLC. (2018) Using Twitter reports to analyse the tension between parcel delivery and bicycle lanes.
13. DeGeorge, A., De la Cruz, M., Le, A. (2017) LibWork. AECOM Urban SoS: hOUR City Challenge
14. Global Urban Futures Project (2017) Access to Clean and Safe Water for Categra di Dialogo. Vatican City
15. De la Cruz, M.R. and Kim, Y. (2016) East Asia and the Pacific. Habitat Commitment Project. Orr, B. et. al. ISBN 978-0-692-75573-0. 16-18.
16. Moser, C.; Simet, L.; De la Cruz, M.; Kim, Y.; Roberts, J. (2016) Gender and the Habitat Commitment Index. Habitat Commitment Project. 34-36.

## **Essays**

1. De la Cruz, M.R. (2022) 'A campaign like no other.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link:  
<https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/field-notes-a-campaign-like-no-other-8d5fde7ea90a>
2. De la Cruz, M.R. (2020) 'Broad Strokes: Away from Defeatist words and Towards a New Civic Life.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link:  
<https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/broad-strokes-a5991efeed7>
3. De la Cruz, M.R. (2018) 'Seven hrs of Jackson Heights.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link:  
<https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/seven-hours-of-jackson-heights-c291a0c81cf3>
4. De la Cruz, M.R. (2018) 'Borderscapes, time travelling + Lesvos field notes.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link:  
<https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/borderscapes-timetraveling-lesvos-a71e99b86bfc>
5. De la Cruz, M.R. (2018) 'Master of None.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link: <https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/master-of-none-abce6533b6e6>

## MELISSA DE LA CRUZ

[m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au](mailto:m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au) | Williamstown, VIC 3016

6. De la Cruz, M.R. (2018) 'Lucky No. 9.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link: <https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/the-general-6c0dc994dba1>
7. De la Cruz, M.R. (2018) 'A Decade of Bread.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link: <https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/a-decade-of-bread-a11f89476ca0>
8. STAE and Bits and Atoms (2018) Using twitter reports to analyse the tension between parcel delivery and bicycle lanes.
9. De la Cruz, M.R. (2017) 'Building Nairobi.' Melissa De la Cruz: trying to be thought-full. Web link: <https://medium.com/@meldelacruz/building-nairobi-what-ive-learned-about-china-s-newest-infrastructure-project-4e11cf6d46e8>
10. De la Cruz, M.R. (2017) Guidebooks as Knowledge. Words in Space. [www.wordsinspace.net/urbanintel/2017/03/08/guidebooks-as-knowledge/](http://www.wordsinspace.net/urbanintel/2017/03/08/guidebooks-as-knowledge/)

## Multimedia Work

1. Star City Group (2020) Ghost Road Trailer. Web link: <https://www.starcitygroup.us/ghostroadbook/>
2. The New School GPIA (2019) Migration Studio Series: Lesvos. Web link: <https://vimeo.com/311236615>
3. De la Cruz, M. (2018) Women's March NYC. New York: NY: OSM Magazine. Web link: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/200040783>
4. De la Cruz, M.R. (2017) Out of the Shadows: Stories of Trafficked Filipino Men and Women. Web link: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/200040783>
5. Our Turn (2016) Our Turn: The Real Issues - For Youth, By Youth. Web link: <https://www.facebook.com/ourturnmedia>

## CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

---

### Conferences Organised

1. New Stakeholders, New Beliefs: How EdTech is Reshaping Educational Values, Association of Australian Researchers in Education. Newcastle, NSW Australia (November 2025)
2. (with Filipino-Australian Student Council of Victoria). *Filipino Graduate Researchers Reception*. Philippines Consulate General in Melbourne. Melbourne, VIC Australia (April 2025)

## MELISSA DE LA CRUZ

[m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au](mailto:m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au) | Williamstown, VIC 3016

3. (with ARC Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child). *SMART Day: Centre ECR and HDR Workshop*. Deakin University, Australia (August 2024)
4. (with Filipino-Australian Student Council of Victoria). *International Research Forum on the Philippines*. La Trobe Asia, Australia (August 2024)
5. (with Public Information Office, Cebu City). *InfoWorks*. Cebu City Government, Philippines (Feb 2021)
6. (with AltMobilityPH, Department of Interior and Local Government, and Pasig Transport). *Metro Cebu Bike Workshop* (Aug 2020)

## Conference Presentations

1. AusSTS: Bridging Worlds in EdTech Platforms (July 2025)
2. Embedding Educators: A relational approach to value creation on digital platforms. European Conference on Critical EdTech Studies (June 2025)
3. Alfred Deakin Institute: Local Impacts of Global Digital Infrastructure (Nov 2024)
4. Assembling Values: Creative Labour in EdTech. REDI HDR Symposium: Digital Technology and Education. Melbourne, VIC, AU. (October 25, 2024)
5. The Everyday Lives of EdTech Creatives. School of Education Research Conference. Waurin Ponds, VIC, AU. (June 24, 2024)
6. Exhibiting Artist, Data Through Design Artist Roundtable, 'Not a Number Exhibit,' New Lab Brooklyn, NY, March 2019

## INVITED TALKS + PANELS

- 
1. Keynote, Digital Child WIP Connected Sessions, Embedding Values: The Contests and Compromises of Assembling an Educational Platform, July 2025
  2. Moderator, Art as a Path for Filipino Youth, FASTCO Likha at Lahi, June 2025
  3. Moderator, Navigating the Australian Higher Education Landscape, FASTCO Filipino Graduate Researchers Reception. Philippines Consulate General in Melbourne, April 2025
  4. Moderator, Work Rights, Employment Opportunities, and Career Growth, FASTCO Post Arrival Orientation Seminar, March 2025

## MELISSA DE LA CRUZ

[m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au](mailto:m.delacruz@deakin.edu.au) | Williamstown, VIC 3016

5. Panel presentation, GradMap PH, How to Apply to Grad School: AU/NZ Edition, October 5, 2024
6. Moderator, Filipinos in the Care Economy, FASTCO International Research Forum on the Philippines. La Trobe Asia: Melbourne, Australia, August 2024
7. Keynote, Wrap Up 2023, University of San Carlos Carolinian Political Science Society, May 20, 2023.
8. Guest Lecture, On Lesvos Studio, 'BTS: Research, Planning, and Execution,' The New School International Photojournalism Course (Glenna Gordon), March 15, 2019
9. Guest Lecture, Research Design Lecture for Secondary School, 'Building your Research,' Singapore School of Cebu (Niña Davide), January 2019
10. Guest Critic, 'Urban Intelligence,' The New School (Shannon Mattern), Nov 2018
11. Guest Critic, 'Data Visualization in Monitoring and Evaluation,' The New School (Mark Johnson), Nov 2018

## PROGRAMS + INITIATIVES LED

---

1. Virtual Values (2024)
2. Balik Eskwela: PabakunaTa Extrabonanza (2023)
3. School Repair Works + Service Manual (2022)  
sit.io or School Inventory Tracking Innovation Platform (2022)  
Quick Response Team (2022)
4. Andam Eskwela Citywide Launch (2021)
5. Overdue: A Strategic Plan for the Cebu City Public Library (2021)
6. Cebu City Design Manual / Visual System (2021)
7. Cebu City Education Initiative (2020)  
EdRadio, EdHub, AccessEd, Community WiFi
8. Bloomberg Aspen Initiative on Cities and Autonomous Vehicles (2017 - 2020)  
Little Roady Autonomous Micro Transit Pilot  
Urban Transformation by AV  
Global Atlas of Cities and Autonomous Vehicles

9. Our Turn: The Real Issues - For Youth, By Youth (2016)
10. Habitat Commitment Project (2015-2018)
  - World Urban Forum: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2018)
  - HCI 2.0: Monitoring & Assessing Progress at the City Level (2018)
  - Access to Clean and Safe Water for Catedra di Dialogo (2017)
  - UN Habitat 3: Quito, Ecuador (2016)
  - Habitat Commitment Project: Assessing the Past for a Better Urban Future (2016)