



## Bio – Vanessa Leon

CEO, Pinchina  
Collaborative Member

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Vanessa Leon is founder and CEO of Pinchina, an international urban planning firm established in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake. As a Haitian American urban planner, her primary interests are in strengthening the physical, social, and economic wellbeing of vulnerable communities in Haiti as well as in the broader Caribbean region. She is also an adjunct professor in the Urban Studies Department at Queens College.

Her prior experiences include working as manager of public policy at the American Institute of Architects in Washington DC and as a policy consultant to New York City's Office of Financial Empowerment. Ms. Leon has previously served as Vice-Chair at-large for the International Division of the American Planning Association. She was inducted into the Haitian Roundtable's 1804 List as one of 2015's "Top 5 to Watch" among Haitian-Americans. Ms. Leon was also one of five Haitian-Americans selected by the Haitian Embassy in Washington D.C. for the 2015 Haiti Future Leaders Fellowship where she worked with Haiti's Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation. Ms. Leon was also selected to participate in the Next City Vanguard class as one of 2014's "40 Urban Leaders Under 40" and has been profiled as an emerging professional in a feature article of the American Planning Association's November 2014 issue of *Planning* magazine.

Ms. Leon is currently pursuing a doctorate in public and urban policy at the New School's Milano School for International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy in New York City. As a scholar practitioner, her research endeavors to strengthen the institutional capacity for promoting integrated urban development in developing countries such as Haiti.

She earned a Master of Urban Planning, with a concentration in Economic Development and Housing Policy, from New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brandeis University in African and African American Studies and in American Studies, with minors in Education Studies and in Social Justice and Social Policy.