

Meeting with Researchers from the Global South

28 June 2018

We had a good meeting to share initial ideas about how the DSA might better support scholars from the south, with approximately 60 people present. SW opened the event explaining that DSA is a membership organisation, with activities need to be self-organised by members. However DSA does have some funds that can be used to support specific initiatives, so delegates are encouraged to put forward suggestions of activities they think would be useful and they would like to be involved in.

- A main topic discussed was how to enable increased participation of global south scholars in the DSA. An existing mechanism is study groups. We spent some time discussing whether these would be most usefully organised on regional or thematic lines? Some felt that it would be most helpful to have regionally based groups who might share common issues and would have more chance to meet in person. Others felt that this could limit their chances to interact more broadly. Delegates were encouraged to look at the existing list of study groups to see if there is one they would like to join and to contact the convenors if so. If members have ideas for a new group they would like to form, they should contact Kathy Hochstetler, the study group convenor. All information about study groups and how to start a new one is available on the DSA website. To facilitate our ability to network with one another, it will help if everyone completes as fully as possible their entry in the registry of members. That would enable us to search one another e.g. by country as well as area of expertise/interest. One delegate shared that there is already an Indian social policy association supported by the DSA based in Delhi, India, and encouraged South Asian delegates to join it.

Action:

All: Check study group pages on DSA website and take appropriate action

All: Complete own entry in register of members

SW: Encourage existing study groups to open meetings to virtual attendance, especially if they have members who are not resident in the UK

Indian SPA rep: Send information on Indian Social Policy Association meeting to NomadIT for posting on DSA website

- The issue of institutional membership was raised – can development centres in the South be institutional members of DSA? SW stated that as yet only Centres based in the UK are members, although DSA does work with other associations, i.e. EADI (European Association of Development Institutes) as an affiliated partner, and others on particular issues (e.g. Social Policy Association; British Association of South Asian Studies)

Action:

SW: Consult with Council on this issue and report back

- People expressed appreciation of free membership for global south members. We agreed the need for a mechanism to winnow list – annual request if wish to stay signed up – not just leave as long list because no membership fee

Action:

NomadIT: Devise annual check re membership status of those who don't pay fees

- There was a general comment that DSA not well known – need to raise its visibility. SW explained she is aware of this and DSA is recruiting a Communications Officer, who will improve the website and hopefully raise the DSA profile.

Action:

SW: recruit and work with new communications officer

All: send items of interest to NomadIT for posting on website

- Delegates generally responded positively to the idea of some kind of pre-conference ‘training’ event as held by some associations. We agreed that it will be important to keep this research focused and recognise the limits of DSA remit (i.e. not a technical training organisation). Some thought it would be good if this were offered to groups who were not researchers themselves, e.g. to parliamentarians.

Action:

All: Contact SW with suggestions as to what kind of pre-conference event would be useful

SW: Work with council members and organisers of DSA2019 to organise pre-conference event

- Welcome practitioner panels but would have liked more time for these

Action:

All: Feedback more specifically to SW what you would like to see as practitioner panels

SW: Work with organisers of DSA2019 to ensure practitioner panels are well represented

- Enthusiasm for engaging more directly e.g. with mayors of municipalities. Differences in views whether this is more usefully done on a regional basis or bringing people to the UK. Possible also to have a ‘DSA roadshow’ in which some members from UK attend a meeting elsewhere.

Action:

All: Consider whether engaging directly with people in local government would be useful, and if so how this would best be organised. Share ideas across the group and with SW

- We discussed the fact that DSA has no ‘house’ journal. SW explained that Council will be supporting the Journal of International Development, which used to be its journal, in their search for a new editor. Some members noted that panel convenors had suggested there was potential for special issues.

Action:

All: Follow up with panel convenors if there are plans for publication

- We closed by reflecting on the importance of networking and our mutual interest in knowing each other better as a basis for future research collaboration

Action:

All: Ensure own entry in registry of members is complete and up to date.

Keep in touch!