

# NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE (NRI) / DEVELOPMENT STUDIES ASSOCIATION (DSA) WORKSHOP

**10 April 2018, Queen Anne Building, University of Greenwich, London SE10 9LS**

## **Background**

Achieving sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition have always been core to the international development agenda. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in place, there is growing recognition of the need for cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration, leading in the UK to the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). This workshop is the first of a series co-sponsored by the DSA and ESRC in 2018-19 bringing together researchers in development studies and other disciplines (medicine, engineering, the natural sciences, law and humanities) with policy makers and practitioners, to identify good practice in interdisciplinary research and build future capacity for interdisciplinary research to address global challenges. This first workshop will draw on the significant experience of NRI and its partners of combining agricultural, plant and food sciences with development studies to strengthen sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition.

While adoption of good agricultural and food technologies is essential to ending hunger, existing technologies and economic opportunities are often ill-suited to the needs of the rural and urban poor, women and young people in different countries and local development contexts. To meet the global challenges, these contexts, and their interactions with changing environments, markets, diets, policies and power structures, and the impacts on producers and consumers, north and south, need to be better understood. This requires engagement of different social and natural science disciplines with stakeholders and research users to address how to bring about a sustainable transformation of smallholder farming, achieve responsible agri-investment, mitigate food waste, maintain healthy and productive ecosystems, manage the trade-offs between environmental, social and economic objectives, and protect against climate change, while also taking relevant and promising technologies and innovations to scale, and ensuring that farming and food markets contribute to sustainable local economies and landscapes and deliver accessible nutritious products. Development studies has key contributions to make, and the workshop will provide a platform to initiate discussion towards greater collaboration with agricultural, plant and food scientists and amongst research partners and users.

## **Workshop objectives:**

- Introduce the workshop series and its objectives
- Provide space for researchers from different disciplines policy makers, practitioners and research funders working on sustainable agriculture and food systems, to share experiences of collaboration.
- Demonstrate the value added of social science enquiry in navigating social, political, economic, institutional, demographic and cultural contexts and changes affecting agriculture, natural resources and food systems, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Identify opportunities and constraints in achieving effective interdisciplinary collaboration and reflect on how best to address synergies and tension productively so as to maximise impacts.
- Enable networking and discuss how to generate more effective partnerships to address global challenges for sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition.
- Produce resources identifying different modes of cross-disciplinary, international collaboration assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and providing case studies of 'lessons learned' to strengthen future GCRF and allied research.

## Anticipated agenda

Time	Content	Presenters
10:00	Introduction and welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. David MacGuire Vice Chancellor, UoG</li> <li>• Prof. Sarah White – DSA president</li> <li>• Brief background and outline of the agenda – NRI</li> <li>• GCRF, ESRC and DFID: Opening remarks – current challenges and opportunities</li> </ul>
10:45	<p>Panel Session: Evolving perspectives and case studies: <i>Changing approaches to interdisciplinary research on agriculture, food and environment - questions for reflection during the day.</i></p> <p>Followed by plenary discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changing paradigms in research to strengthen food security and sustainable agriculture – NRI panellists,</li> </ul> <p><u>Case Studies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRI's Cassava and root crop research:</li> <li>• Plant Sciences and sustainable agriculture: NRI / Kew Gardens</li> <li>▪ Food and nutrition security: NRI / London School of Tropical Health</li> <li>▪ Perspectives from UoG Health &amp; Education</li> </ul>
11:30	COFFEE BREAK	
11:45	<p><u>Discussion / break out groups</u></p> <p>Experiences of cross-disciplinary collaboration, synergies, tensions and how to address them' how to strengthen relevance, engagement and impacts.</p>	<p>a) Sustainable agriculture and plant science b) Food security and nutrition</p> <p><u>To cover:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactions between social science and other perspectives</li> <li>• features and models of good practice</li> <li>• engaging with Southern partners</li> <li>• principal constraints faced</li> </ul>
12:45	LUNCH	
13:30	Examples of good practice, challenges, problems, methods, new approaches and opportunities in integrating natural and social sciences to address development challenges	Short pitches from NRI and other development studies researchers, 5 – 10 mins each. Topics likely to include: root crops and gender, economics and water resources management, rangelands and climate change, post-harvest losses, farmer financial services; IIED and NRI research on social and environmental trade-offs in agriculture; approaches to sustainable landscapes research
14:30	Break out groups - continued	<p>To draw conclusions and identify lessons learned on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• key contributions of social science perspectives</li> <li>• models of good practice in interdisciplinary research,</li> <li>• ways forward to overcome current constraints</li> </ul>
15:30	TEA BREAK	Conclusion / synthesis of group findings
15:45 16:15	<p><u>Lessons learned, conclusions, and next steps:</u> Feedback to plenary</p> <p>Closing panel &amp; discussion</p>	<p>Break out group rapporteurs</p> <p>Feedback from panel presenters and DSA / NRI convenors</p>
17:00	CLOSE	