

Annual newsletter 2026 – 2027

**The School
of Global
Development**



A year in DEV

**Research, education
and advocacy**

UEA University of
East Anglia
Norwich



World Top 20
for Development
Studies

QS World University
Rankings by subject 2024

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Cover image: *Professor Martin
Scott giving a talk at one of
the events at the International
Journalism Festival*

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2026 - 2027

Welcome to a year in DEV



John McDonagh Head of School

The last year has seen a few changes and developments in the School. We have moved again(!), from the ZICER building to the first floor of the Elizabeth Fry Building. Whilst we didn't ask for another move so soon after the last, it seemed to happen relatively smoothly and we are grateful to the UEA Porters and DEV Faculty Professional Services colleagues for this. A few months in and we are starting to feel more settled again. We have pleasant neighbours: Economics on the floor above, Human Resources colleagues close by and a much more spacious kitchen. Another positive is we have been able to accommodate our Norwich Institute of Sustainable Development (NISD) and Postdoctoral Research Associate colleagues within the School, rather than in a separate building.

Another big change was the full integration of the DEVCo (formerly Overseas Development Group) into the University's centralised research support services: RIN. This took place at the start of this year and so far, colleagues seem to be coping. Former DEVCo colleagues, Hannah Ings, Sarah Russell and Val Skipper still spend a good deal of time supporting DEV, albeit from within RIN, but Katharine Trott left UEA to take up a position as Research Governance Coordinator across the Norwich Research Park (NRP) in the main hospital (NNUH). It would be difficult to overstate the importance of ODG/DEVCo and staff in the history and evolution of the School, but nothing

remains the same for ever and this seemed to be the right time to make this change.

There's no doubt that the research funding environment has altered dramatically in the last few years. We remain busy and ambitious with bidding activity but have all noticed the trend of increasing competition for fewer opportunities. We are targeting new and non-traditional funders when we can and using internal review and other mechanisms to ensure we submit only the highest quality proposals. We have had some good successes in the last year including Anna Macdonald's British Academy Mid-career Fellowship, Yafa El Masri's award from the Independent Social Research Foundation and funding from the John Innes Foundation for the second phase of the NISD work.

We have had another active year of new course development in DEV. To make room for these we again reviewed all existing courses and component modules to ensure we are offering the most attractive course portfolio possible to prospective students. The new undergraduate BA: Politics, Economics and Development will be our first collaboration with the UEA Politics School, with our first intake in September 2027. We have continued to work on our PGT (Master's) portfolio too with a new MA course in Digital Global Development also planned for launch in 2027. All master's courses will have a January start variant from next academic year, and we are also

planning to launch a number of two-year Master's variants with a full work placement year following on from the taught first year. We have introduced several new field course options across our programmes, mindful of the contribution they make to student experience. We were also successful with our application for accreditation of our Geography and Global Development course by the Royal Geographical Society.

All this course development work requires huge and sustained effort from many colleagues in the School and elsewhere in the University. We now need to publicise our new courses strongly and so are also broadening our marketing and admissions efforts adding in two 'taster days' planned for local sixth forms and a greatly expanded programme of academic visits to schools in the region.

We haven't seen much staff turnover in the last year thankfully. Our three fixed term colleagues: Anuprita Shukla, Thi Bogossian and Will Haynes came to the end of their contracts last year and have already been missed in the School. We are currently fortunate to have Suzanne Temwa Gondwe Harris teaching media and development while Ludek Stavinoha is working on a funded research project (ISRF) and Selma Benyovszky teaching on some of our geography modules covering for Yafa El Masri who also has some ISRF funding buy-out. Staff always move in and out of roles and the current deputy Head of School, Adrian Martin, will step down from this role in the summer, handing over to Maren Duvendack. I'd like to thank Adrian on behalf of the School for the contributions he has made in

this role across most areas of School activity.

Finally, in any year there are always many things that happen to make us very proud of our staff and students. A few examples from this year are:

- The prestigious 2026 International Communications Book of the year award from the International Studies Association, for **Martin Scott** and colleagues' book 'Capturing News, Capturing Democracy: Trump and Voice of America'.
- Five DEV students made it to the finals of the annual UEA "Change Makers" contest. This competition is run by UEA Student Enterprise where a shortlist of students participate in an 11-week accelerator programme designed to help them grow and develop their ideas into ventures, turning early ideas into reality. Well done to **Bridget Manyange, Mao Suzuki, Lamma Ewi, Bayardelger Lkhagvadorj** and **Yuliia Malska** for getting so far in this competition.

- A huge congratulations to **Suzuki Taiyo** for becoming the first student to complete the UEA Award Impact Certificate through UEA Career Central.

- The Destinations survey data showing the proportion of recent DEV undergraduates in graduate level employment or further study were excellent in this year's survey: 94%.

With apologies for omissions but I hope these examples demonstrate that DEV remains a diverse, engaged and exciting place to work and study!

Hello and Goodbye

Hello

Dr Selma Benyovszky
*Teaching Fellow in Global
Development (YEM Buyout)*

Dr Ashley Cahillane
Research Associate

Dr Suzanne Temwa
Gondwe Harris
*Teaching Fellow in
Global Development*

Dr Matthew Heaton
NISD Impact Manager

Dr Jack Heslop
Research Associate

Mrs Rebecca Matless
School Administrator

Mr Matthew Osbourne
Research Fellow

Dr Anuprita Shukla
Research Fellow

Dr Samuel Wilby
Research Associate

Goodbye

Dr Anuprita Shukla
*Teaching Fellow in
Global Development*

Dr Thi Bogossian
*Teaching Fellow in
Global Development*

Dr Will Haynes
*Teaching Fellow in
Global Development*

Katharine Trott
DEVCo Centre Manager

Conor Franks
School Administrator

School stories



DEV alumni reunion in Tokyo

Meeting DEV alumni in Tokyo in March 2026

The alumni dinner held in Tokyo, Japan, in March 2026 was a truly memorable occasion, bringing together a vibrant gathering of many former DEV students.

The dinner was hosted in a lovely venue in the heart of the city. The evening welcomed graduates from different years with the oldest having graduated in 1978, but also some fresh-faced graduates from 2025!

As guests arrived, there was an immediate sense of camaraderie. Old friendships were rekindled with laughter and enthusiasm, while new connections formed effortlessly among those who had never met before but shared fond memories of DEV and the UEA campus. The room buzzed with animated conversations and DEV graduates exchanged stories about their time at university—unforgettable DEV socials, favourite lecturers, field trips and fond memories of campus life.

The Japan Alumni Association made a tremendous effort by organising this dinner which featured amazing Japanese cuisine. Highlights of the evening included the numerous speeches where all alumni spoke about how their time at UEA had shaped their careers and their personal growth. Their reflections sparked nostalgia and pride, reminding everyone of the lasting impact of their university years.

By the end of the night, it was clear that the event had been a resounding success. Filled with laughter, storytelling and genuine connection, the Tokyo alumni dinner was a jolly good time that left everyone looking forward to the next reunion.

NEW MA Digital Global Development

How are digital technologies transforming the way we tackle the world's most pressing challenges?

That's the central question at the heart of our exciting new course, which explores how Artificial Intelligence, mobile platforms and emerging technologies are reshaping global development, governance and social change.

The need for this kind of thinking has never been greater. Digital technologies are fundamentally changing the way development is imagined, implemented and experienced across the globe. From mobile banking reaching rural communities for the first time, to social media driving civic engagement, to AI tools analysing satellite imagery in disaster response mapping, the pace and scale of change is remarkable.

The course draws on current research and expertise from across development studies, data science, and the field of ICT4D (Information and Communication Technologies for Development), ensuring students engage with cutting-edge scholarship, real-world case studies and live policy debates.

Students will leave with more than just an understanding of these processes. They will gain a mix of practical skills and critical insights needed to navigate both the opportunities and the challenges of this global transformation. These are skills that are increasingly sought after across international development organisations, NGOs, government and the growing tech-for-good sector.

If you know someone who would benefit from this kind of forward-looking, interdisciplinary training, please do let them know about this exciting new course.

Stories of Home

Stories of Home is a collaborative project between DEV-UEA, Norwich University of the Arts (NUA), The Bridge Plus+ and Tuaila Milanca, a Norwich-based writer from Guinea-Bissau.

Adopting a storytelling approach, the project explores migration and community heritage through Tuaila's stories, which draw on her memories growing up within the Balanta community in southern Guinea-Bissau, as well as on stories passed down to her by the elders.

Through this collaboration, Tuaila's stories were transformed into visual narratives by NUA students, creating an engaging and accessible way of sharing culture, heritage, and ways of life – a particularly timely need in the current climate of rising anti-immigration sentiment. Tuaila and I accompanied the creative process as it took shape, which included a visit to NUA to view the students' illustrations in progress.



The visit prompted meaningful and emotional conversations amongst all those involved and provided Tuaila with a unique opportunity to see her memories and lived experience come to life through the students' artwork.

Five of these illustrations were distinguished and selected for awards by a jury composed of Tuaila Milanca herself, Maria Abranches (DEV) and Glyn Brewerton (NUA). The awards were presented at a project celebration event held at NUA. Two of the winning entries will be published as comic books, with three key aims: (1) raising

awareness of an underrepresented culture in the UK; (2) preserving and strengthening a sense of belonging amongst the Guinean diaspora, particularly its younger generations; and (3) giving voice to people through storytelling. In Tuaila's words, "I feel like a dream has come true."

Written by
Maria Abranches



A recruitment visit to Nairobi



David Girling (DEV) and Doyinsola Adetula (UEA) visited Nairobi, Kenya in a recent recruitment trip that proved both fruitful and memorable.

The visit highlighted the remarkable depth of UEA's connections in Kenya; connections that, as the trip quickly revealed, run through families, careers and communities alike.

The first stop was the Uniserv Education undergraduate fair at Crawford International School, where the pair met a remarkable range of people. Among them was a school counsellor whose wife had studied at UEA, and a prospective student with two brothers who had both studied here. It was a vivid reminder of just how strong UEA's reputation has become in Kenya, passed down through word of mouth and family experience.

The following day, David and Doyinsola attended the Uniserv Education postgraduate fair. The event brought a special energy, with DEV alumni joining on the day to share their experiences with prospective students. One alumnus had travelled all the way from Mombasa to be there. The team photo from the event captures it perfectly – David and Doyinsola pictured with two alumni and a fair visitor, the photo taken by a brand-new DEV student who had just received their visa.

Alongside the fairs, David met with the British Council and a number of agents during the visit. DEV has welcomed a significant number of Kenyan



students onto its postgraduate taught programmes this year and we hope these conversations will strengthen that connection further.

A particular highlight was a visit to the University of Nairobi, where David delivered a guest lecture on Charity Representations to an audience of undergraduate students. Before the lecture, David met with senior staff to share DEV's research and build academic partnerships in the region.

David also had the chance to meet up for a Chai Masala in person with Brian Otieno, who for the past three years has delivered a guest lecture from Nairobi for the Humanitarian Communication module, speaking to students about his career as a development photographer. It was a long-overdue face-to-face meeting with a valued friend of the department.

Kenya has clearly become a place where UEA, and DEV in particular, has deep and growing roots. We look forward to welcoming the next generation of Kenyan students to Norwich very soon.

Project Design and Management



Employability day with consultants from Aleph Strategies

The Project Design and Management module is notorious for being a lot of work, but students managed to have fun on an employability day, developing their knowledge and skills whilst working with two of the consultants from Aleph Strategies, Jonathan Rider and Asra Memon (DEV alumni, who studied PDM).

For the morning session, Jonathan and Asra took students through the current development work landscape from the point of view of working in a consultancy. With cuts to aid budgets and the rapid transformation of this sector due to AI, it was a hugely valuable insight into the value of real

community connections, working with recipients, and the importance of getting into the field to evaluate impact.

In the afternoon, groups produced 'elevator pitch' presentations of their project proposal before being questioned and getting feedback. This was the Dragon's Den part of the day and allowed students to utilise what they had learnt and challenge themselves. All the groups received great feedback.

In between two fairly intense sessions, it was great to have a Potluck lunch by the Broad. We were really lucky with the weather and even luckier with the food – it was fabulous trying out all the regional dishes and people's specialities. With it being such a good day, we are hoping to make this an annual event!

"Leading NBP's evaluation before Aleph Strategies taught me that in development work, PDM isn't a planning tool - it's a discipline of accountability, where a project's credibility isn't built in design, but forged under the scrutiny of those who've seen many fail in the field."

Rayyan Shahid

Change Makers:

Empowering students to make meaningful change



"Change Makers gave me an opportunity to explore solutions to real-world problems and transform ideas into meaningful projects. Although the journey involves challenges and trial and error, it is a valuable experience for learning, growing, and meeting inspiring people."

Mao Suzuki



DEV students showcase ventures at UEA's annual pitch event

What is Change Makers?

Change Makers is UEA Student Enterprise's flagship entrepreneurship contest, offering a shortlist of talented students the chance to take part in an intensive 11-week accelerator programme. Throughout the programme, participants receive mentorship, workshops, and hands-on support designed to help them develop their ideas, refine their business models, and build the skills needed to turn early-stage concepts into real viable ventures.

The finale is the culmination of all that hard work: a live pitch event where finalists present their projects to a panel of experienced industry professionals and make the case for why their venture deserves to succeed.

Our DEV finalists

We are incredibly proud to have had four ventures from our DEV community represented among this year's finalists. Each project reflects the creativity, social awareness, and entrepreneurial spirit that defines our student community.

Mao Suzuki - Zero-Waste Refill Shop

A sustainable retail concept offering ethical, affordable, and environmentally friendly household products through a refill model, reducing single-use plastic waste and making conscious consumption accessible to everyday shoppers.

Lamma Ewi - SOLARVARA

A circular-economy venture operating in Cameroon that uses solar dehydration to preserve surplus agricultural produce, while converting organic waste into manure and animal

feed. SOLARVARA tackles food waste and resource inefficiency in one elegant, community-rooted solution.

Bayardelger Lkhagvadorj and Yuliia Malska — MindMove

A range of eco-friendly, well-being board games designed to build confidence, emotional balance and human connection, proving that sustainability and mental health support can go hand in hand, and that play is a powerful tool for positive change.

Bridget Manyange - Imara Project

A secure, offline digital tool enabling women and girls in Kenyan informal settlements to safely store evidence of gender-based violence. Imara addresses a critical gap in access to justice, giving survivors a private and reliable means of documentation when internet connectivity cannot be assumed.

Turning knowledge into impact

Seeing our students present with such confidence, clarity and conviction was a reminder of what entrepreneurship education is really about. Not just learning frameworks and theories, but developing the courage and capability to tackle real problems in the world. From gender-based violence in Kenya to food waste in Cameroon to mental wellbeing in our own communities, these ventures reflect a generation of entrepreneurs who want their work to mean something.

We are proud of every single finalist, and we can't wait to see what comes next.

Written by
Mao Suzuki

Media students visit the Perugia International Journalism Festival



In April 2026, several students on the MA in Media and Global Development attended the International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Italy – along with the course director, Martin Scott.

The annual festival brings together journalists, editors, policymakers and researchers from around the world to discuss the challenges, ethics and innovations shaping contemporary journalism. The festival's venues include grand auditoriums, historic churches and smaller theatres dotted around the city centre.

Here, three students reflect on their experiences of the festival.



Left: DEV students in front of the Fontana Maggiore, in central Perugia

Bottom Left: Professor Martin Scott giving a talk at one of the events at the International Journalism Festival

Top Right: Professor Martin Scott giving a talk at one of the events at the International Journalism Festival

Juan Francisco Osorio Acero

Being an international master's student, I have been encouraged to develop a critical approach to everything, but critical thinking can feel ineffective when it stays far from the spaces where decisions are made. For that reason, attending the International Journalism Festival in Perugia alongside my course director and classmates gave me a clearer picture of the media development landscape and where our ideas can travel.

Throughout our course, we have explored why strong media ecosystems matter for healthy democracies. These ideas sound clear in theory, but arriving at a festival billed as international, I found myself asking: who is leading the conversation, what counts as relevant and what should we do about it? Noticing that voices from regions like Africa and Latin America were not visible enough was something that concerned me and my classmates, and it became one of the richest discussions of the trip.

That kind of critical engagement cannot happen in a classroom alone. This experience connected us not only to the current debates around media development but also to organisations and journalists from a wide range of backgrounds and it made the ideas we study feel real, urgent and worth acting on.

Nida Adil Abbas

It was an amazing experience to engage with sensitive topics such as the wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Lebanon and Afghanistan, gender inequality and new storytelling. There were real survivors who shared their lived experiences, which left everyone in the hall speechless. After attending sessions for three days, my personal experience is that although journalism is a very powerful way to stop war or spread awareness, it involves many risks, including threats to life and safety. A journalist may work freely, but sometimes they pay a heavy price. This festival made world news feel very small, as people were gathered from all around the world.

The event was also one of the best platforms for making contacts. As a media student, I learned how journalists work under pressure and constant threat. Most of the sessions were held inside church auditoriums, which elevated the spirit of the discussions. For me, the most memorable moment was giving a standing ovation and recognition to the survivors, which created a powerful feeling of solidarity, as if we were all standing with them. Overall, it was a truly memorable experience that I will cherish for a lifetime.

Kazuki Fujiwara

Perugia is a fantastic city. The venues for the sessions were stunning and simply moving from one venue to another felt like experiencing the history of the city. The sessions provided not only insights into current journalistic trends but also a deeper understanding of the challenges journalists face, including processes of trial and error and a sense of solidarity. In this sense, the festival strongly resonated with the modules I have taken at UEA, which help me understand the gap between academic knowledge and practice.

The range of topics was also very diverse, and I felt that if you attended with a clear purpose, you could definitely achieve it. My own aim was to learn about safety practices in conflict reporting, and I was able to meet someone who established a safety team at Thomson Reuters. Speaking with him was particularly inspiring and relevant to my research.

At the same time, I sometimes felt like an outsider as a Japanese participant. The festival presents itself as 'international', but it seems mostly centred on Western journalism, with no space for perspectives from East Asia. This made me reflect on whose voices are prioritised and whose are marginalised. The fact that one of my fellows could not come to Perugia due to visa issues might also reflect inequality between countries. These findings strengthened my motivation to amplify voices that are excluded from such spaces.

If I had attended simply as a Japanese journalist, I might have ended up merely admiring the event. Instead, it encouraged me to reflect on what I can contribute. It was an unforgettable experience and has motivated me to move forwards.

Just Transformations to Sustainability

Below: Applied Drama Group in their performance about the River Rights



Explore how our students learn to facilitate dialogues for more equitable and just environmental management.

Our third-year undergraduate students from the Just Transformations to Sustainability (JT2S) module have done incredible work this year. JT2S is a very hands-on module, where students learn about participatory methods that can facilitate dialogues for more just and equitable transformations to sustainability and apply them in real ongoing initiatives.

This year students worked with four methods: photo-voice, participatory power analysis, the River Basin Game and applied theatre. The task for all was to assist different groups in Norfolk fighting for an effective implementation on the recently sanctioned River Rights for the Wensum River. The photo-voice group worked with the Wensum Riverkin, the participatory power

Below: Photovoice workshop with members of the Wensum Riverkin



analysis group worked with Norwich City Counsellors and environmental NGOs, the River Basin Game group worked with the Norfolk Rivers Trust and the applied theatre group developed a play about the Rights of Rivers for our JT2S students (see photos).

The students received praise for their great work facilitating discussion about a range of topics: nature rights, identity and connection to the Wensum River and power relations and (un)equal sharing of water from all the groups they worked with. This is an example from Sarah Eglington, coordinator of the Wensum Riverkin, who assisted our students in the application of the Photovoice project:

"It was wonderful to take part in the photovoice project and work with students and others who care about the River Wensum. Hearing the stories and connecting with the participants was really inspiring, and the students did a great job facilitating our discussions. Well done, and thank you!"

Below: Playing the River Basin Game with users of the Wensum River catchment



The students from the Photovoice group wrote their own reflections about the value of the process:

"Stepping back and reflecting on the whole project, what struck us most was how much people had to say. We came in with a structure and a method, but what participants brought with them - the personal histories, the memories, the real emotional connection to the river - that wasn't something we could have planned for, and it's what made the project feel genuinely meaningful.

Reading through the captions, the range is remarkable. Someone wrote about swimming there in the 1960s, someone else moved by an unhoused person sheltering along the bank, another frustrated by signs discouraging people from the water. These aren't just photos of a river, they're photos of people's lives, with the river running through them.

One thing this process really reinforced for us is the value of listening in research. Rather than directing the

Below: Participatory power analysis workshop with representative of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust



conversation, our role was to create the space and then step back, and watching what emerged when we did, that was probably the most valuable part of the whole experience. The photos and captions speak for themselves, and we hope they give the Wensum a voice that a report or dataset just couldn't."

Written by
Iokiñe Rodriguez

You can learn more about the Wensum Riverkin Photovoice project here: www.instagram.com/wensumriverkin_



Exploring Development in East Anglia

Last autumn all first year and visiting DEV undergraduate students were invited on an overnight field trip exploring parts of Suffolk and Norfolk.

The group stayed in a restored Tudor barn on a working farm and used the farm as a base to explore why they chose to study in DEV, what sustainable future means in the context of global development and the links between place and key themes in global development.

On the first day, students got to know one another and, in small groups, looked

Rodriguez led students to construct their own 'River of Life' to map out how they came to be studying at UEA and in DEV. After a dinner made from local farm produce, the group excelled at a pub quiz run by DEV's Yafa El Masri.

On the second day, Clare Shelton led the group on a walk around the farm, where everyone collected materials from the woods and meadows. The group then used these materials to construct art exhibits about what a sustainable future looks like for them.

On the way back to Norwich, the group stopped in Thetford, and Will Haynes led the group on an exercise to make

an Instagram reel linking what they saw in Thetford to some of the key themes in global development, such as gender, poverty, livelihoods, education and culture. On returning to UEA, student groups presented their reels to the whole group.

The trip was an excellent opportunity for students and staff to get to know one another, create friendships and get to know our local region. Thanks to the DEV FPS team for making the trip a success, and to our hosts in Suffolk at Milden Hall Farm for an excellent stay.



Staff Research

Below: Women farmers in Egypt choosing their favourite wheat varieties in a participatory varietal selection.



Training the next generation

Equipping future crop breeders with expertise in gender-responsive breeding and policy.

DEV researchers took part in a training event to teach policy and gender-responsive breeding techniques to early career plant scientists from across Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan and the UK.

The training involved twenty-two researchers hosted at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) for the 2025 AfriPlantSci training, a two-week plant science training event to train and connect young plant scientists. Now in its third iteration, the 2025 AfriPlantSci event focused on wheat improvement with the School of Global Development-led sessions teaching researchers how to engage with policymakers and design more equitable varietal improvement.

Plant science and crops breeding has resulted in tremendous improvements to raise harvests and improve resilience to biological and climate pressures.

A challenge in plant science, however, is that labs are often distant from the field, risking a separation of crop breeding targets from local needs. Another challenge is that politics and regulation are changing the use of breeding technologies, but early career bio scientists often have little exposure to how policy works and how to interact with policymakers.

A goal for the 2025 AfriPlantSci was to provide training across and beyond plant science disciplines, to also introduce participants to tools to encourage more equitable trait targeting and to improve integration with policymaking.

Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development researchers Dr Matt Heaton, Mr Christopher Darby and Prof. Nitya Rao teamed up with ICARDA-based researcher Dr Dina Najja to provide training on policy-focused sessions and tools for gender-responsive breeding.

The sessions introduced the G+ tool, developed by the CGIAR Gender and Breeding Initiative, to assist breeders in making equitable breeding decisions.

The G+ tool comprises two parts: (i) A customer profile tool that identifies and disaggregates gendered differences in knowledge and decision-making in crop adoption decisions; (ii) A product profile query tool that examines both potential positive and negative gender-related impacts of those traits. Participants were able to trial the use of this tool and workshop on how they could include the approach in their future research.

The policy sessions focused on the process of policy creation and the role of researchers as knowledge and evidence providers. The session was followed a day later with an event at the British Embassy in Morocco, where participants could meet government officials and learn more about the public sector components of bioscience regulation. The team continues to remain in touch with the participants to support them as they build their career.

Written by
Matt Heaton



Birds of the Bay statue, Morecambe Bay

The artistic influence of the sea is largely overlooked in policy research, despite art having a significant effect on human-environment relations.

Art and literature express powerful aspects of the sea, foster pride in place, and generate emotional and creative thinking. These dynamics have great potential to inspire community engagement with coastal change and governance, as well as bringing different types of voices and perspectives into policy conversations.



I have addressed this research gap through my work on the Horizon Europe funded project, Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning Leading to Ecosystem Services (MARBEFES).

With the support of Professor Johanna Forster (UEA), Professor John Brannigan and Dr Dorota Kolbuk (both University College Dublin), I have analysed twenty-first-century literature and artworks set in Morecambe Bay, in northwest England. I have combined this with local community-engaged work through fieldwork, interviews, a public questionnaire, a focus group, and a workshop in the Bay.

Morecambe Bay

Morecambe Bay is Britain's largest intertidal area, covering 310km². It has a huge tidal range, with the tide receding for approximately seven kilometers. You wouldn't want to get caught when the tide comes back in, faster than galloping horses, as locals say. The Bay is an expanse of sandbanks, mudflats, seagrasses, and saltmarshes, making it highly ecologically important and a crucial feeding and nesting ground for migrating birds. Over a quarter of a million birds visit the Bay each year.

Yet, climate crises and ecological degradation, among other issues, are putting increased pressure on this fragile habitat. Like many UK seaside regions, Morecambe Bay is home to some of the most economically deprived neighborhoods in the country, meaning that it also has immense ongoing social issues.



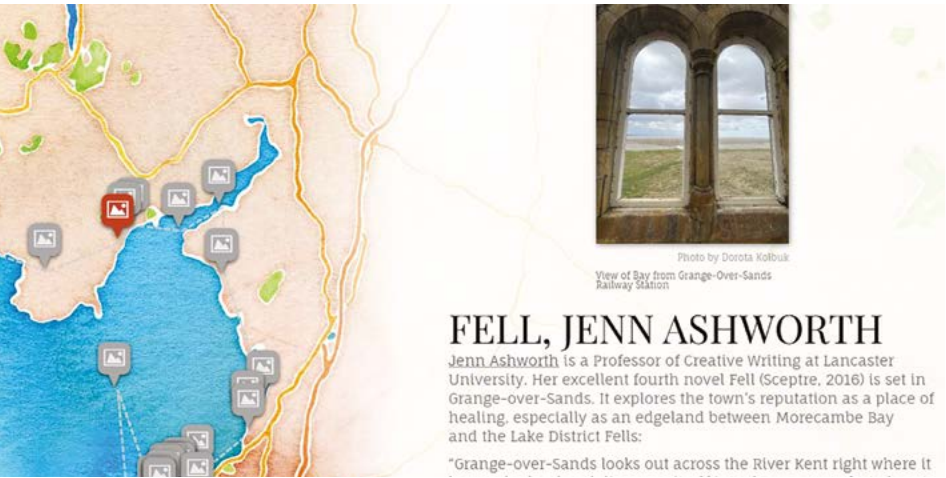
Morecambe Bay

Morecambe Bay's Art and Literature

One of the elements artists and writers have strongly responded to is the dangers of the Bay's quicksands, storms and rapid tides. For some artists, these dangers provide mood, intrigue and drama, yet for others, they become a meaningful way to explore the range of the sea's forms and a range of human emotions, including loss, grief, and anger.

For example, Jenn Ashworth's gothic novel, *Fell*, explores grief and the Anthropocene in the Bay. Such critical explorations, if thoughtfully absorbed, can reflect or foster patterns which help to heal broken relationships between the sea and human societies, or between humans themselves. They may also provide insights on local identity and serve as compelling ways to engage local stakeholders in governance dialogues.

I also ran a creative notetaking workshop in the Bay, inviting in the voices of lower-income residents who expressed anger at persistent poverty, but also joy in their relationship with the Bay.



Story map: Art and the Healing Powers of Morecambe Bay.

Story map and article

To make the research accessible to local communities and policymakers, I created an online story map of over 35 artworks emerging from different parts of the Bay. The research will also inform an academic article and book chapter.

Written by
Ashley Cahillane



Educating boys for gender equality



Lifting barriers: Educating boys for gender equality is a 3-year Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE-KIX) project designed to identify, understand and scale up effective strategies to tackle boys' disengagement from education, with a focus on addressing harmful gender norms and promoting gender equality more broadly.

Since its inception in 2023, several of UEA's UNESCO Chair for Adult Literacy and Learning for Social Transformation research group members have been involved in the project's various research and training activities. The School of Global Development is leading on the research arm of the project, which includes 3 distinct phases:

1 An initial cross-country scoping study in 2024 led by UEA UNESCO Chair members Catherine Jere, Thi Bogossian, Hodges Zacharia and Ben Jones, with support from Victoria Cann (IIH) and Sushan Acharya (our UNESCO Co-Chair and research partner based at Tribhuvan University Nepal) examining promising programmes and interventions that have the potential to address boys' disengagement, while addressing challenging gender norms, attitudes and stereotypes. Report now published: www.unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000398404

Below Left: meeting to review progress of interventions at an urban primary school in Blantyre, Malawi.

Right: Sydney Chumbu, CAVWOC staff, and Humphrey Fakota, teach discuss intervention outcomes using a Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) technique.

Below: REM method used to map out school activities by SAVWOC staff Sydney Funk and Humphrey Dokota.



- 2** In-depth case study research conducted in 2025 with schools in Cambodia and Malawi to understand specific challenges faced by boys and to inform the development of a global intervention model for schools. In Malawi, this research was conducted by our UNESCO Chair research partner, the Centre for Social Research (CSR). Colleagues Joseph Chunga, Janine Kayange and Wisdom Bhunu worked closely with UEA colleagues Catherine Jere and Hodges Zacharia, who provided support in research design and training in participatory research methods. Findings were disseminated in June 2025.
- 3** A one-year pilot of the intervention model, adapted for the Malawi context. The pilot is being implemented by project partners, the Centre for Alternatives for Victimised Women and Children (CAVWOC), with CSR leading evaluation activities.



During September 2025, the project began this third phase, when 11 schools across four districts in Malawi began training sessions for teachers and community-based facilitators to implement a gender-transformative intervention to address boys' disengagement from education. This work will run for an entire school year and includes: supporting gender responsive teaching and classroom practice that acknowledges the needs of boys and girls; introducing a curriculum that opens up dialogue around gender norms and stereotypes, including harmful and restrictive masculinities; setting up boys' clubs, and working with pupils and parents to understand how such norms affect attitudes to education. The hope is that attitudes will change as a result of these pilot studies, contributing to improved participation in education and more inclusive learning environments.

In January 2026, during a visit to Malawi, Catherine Jere was able to join the CAVWOC team for an end-of-term review meeting with teachers and community facilitators in one of the schools. Participatory, creative methods were used to gain insight into the progress, challenges and opportunities emerging from the intervention's activities. Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) was used by participants to map out key activities and their outcomes. Such rich data will form an important part of the pilot's final evaluation. Between April and June 2026, a series of three-day training workshops led by DEV's Catherine Jere were run in Cambodia, Lesotho and Malawi to introduce the *Guide for Developing Gender-Transformative Teaching and Learning Materials*. Convened by UNESCO in partnership with national Ministries of Education, UEA and Equimundo, the training brought

together curriculum developers, teacher educators, and education professionals to strengthen their capacity to develop, review, and revise teaching and learning materials through a gender-transformative lens. Such capacity-building activities will support the sustainability of this research going forward.

This research is supported by the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX), a joint endeavor with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. For more information on the project, please visit the UNESCO Lifting Barriers pages or contact Catherine Jere.

Written by
Catherine Jere

The hidden cost of AI imagery

in charity and development communications



Artificial intelligence promises speed, cost savings and creative flexibility. For cash-strapped charities, that's an appealing offer.

However, my recent research, co-authored with Deborah Adesina, a former master's student at UEA's School of Global Development suggests the sector should think carefully before embracing it.

Our report, *Artificial Authenticity*, analysed 171 AI-generated images and over 400 public comments across campaigns from 17 major organisations including Amnesty International, WWF, Plan International and the World Health Organization. With humanitarian budgets under pressure and the promise of faster, cheaper content hard to ignore, many charities and NGOs have begun turning to AI-generated visuals for their campaigns. Our findings suggest that that temptation may be coming at a significant hidden cost.

Key findings

When AI-generated imagery is used in charity campaigns, the cause itself tends to disappear from public conversation. Rather than engaging with the humanitarian issue, audiences get drawn into debates about technology, authenticity and trust. Of the comments we analysed, fewer than 20% actually engaged with the charitable cause, while the majority focused on AI ethics, image quality, or whether the visuals were 'real'.

Transparency didn't offer much protection either. Although 85% of the AI images were labelled as such, disclosure alone did not prevent backlash. In undisclosed campaigns, audiences adopted what we describe as an 'investigative tone', scrutinising the imagery rather than connecting with the message behind it.

We also found a recurring problem of what we call 'message-medium misalignment'. WWF Denmark, for instance, faced public criticism for using energy-intensive AI tools to promote environmental causes - an irony that climate-conscious audiences were quick to point out.

Below left: AI generated image from 'Breast Cancer Now'

Below right: AI generated image from 'WWF Denmark'

There are nuances worth acknowledging. Some organisations have turned to AI as a way to protect vulnerable individuals from being photographed or filmed in difficult circumstances. This is a genuine safeguarding consideration. Yet we found that donors often prioritise their own desire for an 'authentic witness' over a beneficiary's right to privacy, complicating the picture further.

Why it matters

At the heart of our concern is something quite simple: charities exist because people care about other people. The moment audiences start questioning whether what they are seeing is real, the emotional connection that drives support is put at risk. AI is not inherently wrong, but if it begins to overshadow the human story at the heart of charitable work, organisations could lose far more in trust than they gain in efficiency.

Practical recommendations

Our report offers concrete guidance for charities and development organisations navigating this landscape, including involving local communities in the AI creative process, from generating prompts to approving final imagery and working with technology providers to develop humanitarian-specific tools with built-in bias detection and ethical guardrails. Communications teams are also urged to invest in proper training around ethical AI use and prompt engineering before adopting it in their workflows.

Written by
David Girling

 www.charity-advertising.co.uk

A Journey to the Pluriverse of Peace

in Colombia

Below: *Ut est et officatibus escilgent lant ratem que ella conemquam con explaut quam nonse nis endit remquae nonseque viduciet rem evendis enihil molorum renatiatur.*



On 23 November 2025, DEV launched a co-produced, peace-building exhibition in the Centre for Remembrance, Peace and Reconciliation in Bogota, Colombia called 'A Journey to the Pluriverse of Peace'.

The exhibition followed a participatory research project led by Prof. Iokiñe Rodríguez and Dr Cristina Sala Valdes in conjunction with Universidad de Ibagué, Universidad Santo Tomás called the School, Territory and Post-Conflict Project. We worked with eight community organisations from the South of Tolima studying and helping to make visible local peacebuilding strategies. The eight organisations include Asomeht, Herrerajuvenil, Red de Mujeres Chaparralunas por la Paz, Fupapt, Asocalarama, Aproxocal, Aproipol and Ascafesagrado.

The organisations showed through the exhibition how territorial peace is built every day by:

- reviving cultural practices and local memory
- shaping public environmental policies
- defending women's autonomy and rights
- strengthening coffee-based livelihoods and local economies.

The exhibition was open for two months. In addition to the 4000 people on average who visit the Centre for Remembrance, Peace and Reconciliation monthly, 315 people who formed part of school-guided tours also visited the exhibition during this time.

The exhibition was funded by the University of East Anglia and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UKRI) through Impact Accelerator funding from UEA, in partnership with: Universidad Santo Tomás, Universidad de Ibagué - Paz y Región, Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación (CMPR), QUANTIC.



Written by
Iokiñe Rodríguez

 **Learn about the Pluriverse of Peace Project at: www.pluriversodepazentolima.net**

Raising the visibility of women's needs



Left: Women farmers in Egypt choosing their favorite wheat varieties in a participatory varietal selection.

Right: Matt Heaton gives the keynote at the UK-ASEAN Precision Breeding Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Women are integral to food systems and yet their needs are often overlooked in the development of new crops and the agricultural extension systems.

Research from the School of Global Development and the Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development is uncovering the needs of wheat farmers across Egypt and Kenya, to act as a guide for gender equitable crop breeding targets and uptake systems.

Wheat is a major crop, supplying around 20% of calories consumed. As part of the UK-CGIAR Centre, researchers are designing wheat with innate resistance to fungal rusts (removing the need to spray fungicides) and containing higher iron content (to reduce the prevalence of anemia). Researchers at the School of Global Development, Dr Matt Heaton, Prof. Nitya Rao and current student,

Ms. Deima Daujotaite are working with wheat supply chain actors to understand local needs for wheat improvement and deployment.

Egyptian and Kenyan farmers welcomed rust resistant varieties for the yield resilience it offers as well as removing the need to purchase costly fertilisers. Kenyans particularly welcomed the prospect of removing the need for costly fungicide which ultimately results in local wheat being undercut by Chinese wheat imports.

However, the story is different for iron biofortification, other nutritional improvements, and baking traits. These traits are generally disregarded by men, who prioritise increasing yields for economic returns. Women, however, prioritise these nutritional and baking traits most of the time on account of their role in preparing wheat products and managing household nutrition.

Financial pressures influenced how much women focused on quality traits. In Kenya, farmers are under

great financial pressure by the end of the season, with many completely selling their harvests. As such, women farmers were less interested in adopting nutritional traits, as these benefits were unlikely to benefit the household. Women in Egypt were the opposite, drawing only from their own wheat supplies and therefore were motivated to adopt varieties with nutritional and quality improvements. The project is working with breeders to understand how best to include these traits in crop improvement to boost local nutrition.

The project also identified gendered concerns arising from changing delivery of public agricultural extensions. Extension services are intended to support farmers to realise greater and more profitable harvests. Extension systems are particularly important for more marginalised groups, such as women, who face greater access barriers to better technologies and trade. Women farmers across Egypt and Kenya value extension but a concerning trend is that they appear to be losing contact with extension actors. Changing government budgets and shifts to digitised extensions have removed the physical presence of extension workers from the field. These findings are being written up into policy briefs and used as part of multi-stakeholder workshops to ensure that public extension remains accessible for women.

The project is now in its second year of fieldwork, involving behavioral economics experiments to clarify the varietal attributes influencing adoption decisions. The findings will be used to inform both the breeding strategies for more nutritious and resilient wheat, and the deployment for equitable and long-term adoption.

Written by
Matt Heaton

UK-Malaysia Precision Breeding Forum

9 MARCH 2026



DEV research recognition

DEV research recognised as part of FCDO funded UK-ASEAN Precision Breeding Symposium

DEV research was presented as keynotes in Malaysia and Vietnam as part of the FCDO funded UK-ASEAN Precision Breeding Symposium (9 - 16 March) on changing precision breeding regulation and their relevance for ASEAN countries. The presentations draw on Dr Matt Heaton's work on precision breeding regulation as part of his role with the UK-CGIAR Centre.

Precision breeding is a new technology which allows more precise improvements to breed products than previously possible. This allows breeders to make more targeted changes to agricultural products to specific needs and reduce the timeline. These timeline reductions are important

for crop breeders to respond to the climate, production and nutritional challenges facing food production. This could include creating more climate crops which require fewer inputs while increasing nutritional content. Such innovations are of interest across ASEAN countries, which are some of the most climate vulnerable locations and highly dependent upon local agriculture for food and economic security.

Matt's presentations focused on changing global regulations around precision breeding. While precision breeding is faster and more targeted than conventional breeding, the products are indistinguishable from those that could have been produced using traditional methods. Regulations are therefore changing around the world to determine how to govern these new technologies as part of agricultural development plans.

ASEAN countries are in varying stages of regulatory change around precision breeding technologies. A major takeaway from the conference is the importance of harmonisation of regulation to enable research, development and deployment of precision-bred products.

The findings from the symposium are feeding into an emerging UK-ASEAN Precision Breeding network, working to enable the development and uptake of products to support nutritional, climate and livelihood of security across the region. The network brings together research across policy, natural and social science to guide how best to converge on regulatory consensus across borders. It is hoped that the new network will feed into wider UK-ASEAN collaborations around research and food security.

Written by
Matt Heaton

Gender and Development: Debates for a changing world

DEV hosted an international conference entitled **Gender and Development: Debates for a Changing World** on June 19-20, 2025.



Group photo of conference participants outside The Enterprise Centre.

Panel reflecting on Gender Dynamics in Education, June 19th, 2025



This conference brought together senior and early career academics, development practitioners, activists and students to think about contemporary challenges for us as a Gender and Development Community. The University of East Anglia played host to similar conferences in 1994 and 2015. We reconvened in 2025 to collectively explore what has changed, what remains unchanged and what new dilemmas and challenges we experience today.

Despite progress over the past 30 years, since Beijing 1995, critical challenges persist to the achievement of gender and wider social justice. These include persistent gender-differentiated inequalities in employment and livelihoods, especially in the context of a changing climate, political participation, health, education, sexuality and violence, amongst others. The aims of this conference were twofold: to reflect on the current state of the art in Gender and Development debates, and to foster feminist solidarities and collective action within a changing global context.

In an era of fake news and AI generated content, it is increasingly important to engage critically with processes of knowledge production and how these relate to global economic, social and cultural processes, examining both their material and symbolic dimensions, challenging prevalent assumptions

and hierarchies, but also privileging perspectives that are rooted in the lived realities of men, women and queer people, those who remain at the margins and whose voices are hardly heard.

The growing concern today is with issues of gender and social justice in research, policy and practice, in the face of a backlash against feminist gains. Reflecting on the different dimensions of justice – recognition, redistribution and representation – as articulated by Nancy Fraser in the late 1980s is critical today, distinguishing between intrinsic and more instrumental approaches to justice, but also the interconnections between them over time and space. How might we, as academics and practitioners, collectively navigate – and counter – the gender equality backlash, and build feminist solidarities for a more just future.

The conference had three plenary discussions, over the two days, reflecting on context, strategies for negotiation and change, as well as imagining feminist futures. With key thinkers in the field of gender and development – Ruth Pearson, Maxine Molyneux, Gita Sen, Diane Elson, Naila Kabeer, Sheila Bunwaree and Jennifer Piscopo – the plenaries further served to make an intergeneration link, reflecting on the past and looking to the future.

Panel on Gender, Climate Change and Resilience with two panellists from DEV.



Additionally, the conference saw 54 presentations in 15 parallel sessions, diving deep into a range of themes relevant to gender and development. These included sessions on gender, climate and resilience, livelihoods, labour and environment movements, migration, education, health and social care, access to resources, gendered politics, conflict and governance, sexuality, violence and identity, amongst others. Apart from scholars based in the UK, we also had participants from Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria. Several DEV staff, PGRs and master's students participated as volunteers, helping organise the conference, as communicators throughout the conference, but also as presenters, engaging with the debates.

Several of the papers presented during the conference will form contributions to a Handbook of Gender and Development: Critical Engagements with Gender and Social Justice, to be published by Edward Elgar by the end of 2026/early 2027. Nitya Rao and Ulrike Theuerkauf of DEV are co-editors of the Handbook and took the lead in organising the conference.

Written by
Nitya Rao

Establishing farmer genebank users for resilient agriculture

Connecting genebanks with farmers offers an overlooked but potentially rapid and democratised system to support agricultural resilience efforts.

A new impact study led by Dr Matt Heaton highlighted how ‘Genebank User Groups’ established by the Global Crop Diversity Trust across five African countries enabled farmers to harness diverse varieties to support local resilience and diverse livelihoods.

Crop diversity underpins world agriculture, providing the range of crops and their varieties to support global food systems, and the genetic diversity required for crop breeding. However, this diversity is increasingly being lost from the field due to pressures from climate change and shifts to a narrower subset of modern varieties. The good news is that crop diversity remains within genebanks, but a challenge is that farmers rarely have access to this diversity, despite the potential benefits it could offer.

Genebanks are like a backup hard drive, but one that contains plant species rather than data. Within their walls, they conserve huge numbers of accessions of species to ensure humanity is able to continue to draw on and use these collections in the future.

Many genebanks contain a large number of crop accessions, but these collections are generally only used by plant scientists rather than farmers. Also, importantly, genebanks come in two groupings – large, international genebanks and smaller, national genebanks. What makes national genebanks so promising for local engagement is that they contain great numbers of crop accessions



Below: Farmers evaluate different sorghum accessions growing at a demonstration field at the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) training centre in Busia, Western Kenya. Photo by Neil Palmer, ©Crop Trust.

from local contexts, making them well-adapted to growing conditions and user preferences.

As part of the Seeds for Resilience Project with Crop Trust, farmers’ groups were connected with national genebanks to review key crops and stimulate local seed system diversity. These ‘Germplasm User Groups’ improved farmers’ knowledge of genebank resources and resulted in the identification in each of the five African countries of new varieties and potentially useful traits.

For instance, Bambara groundnut is an important crop in Ghana which project farmers went from growing two varieties to twenty of because of collaborating with genebanks. Similarly, Ethiopian farmers began to grow heirloom wheat and barley varieties that they previously believed to have been lost. Other success stories were captured across Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia.

Farmers valued not only access to these accessions, but the group learned how to draw on diversity for resilience. Importantly, the farmers chose which

varieties they wished to grow from a large collection, ensuring that the approach supported diverse needs and was consistently reported across gender and farm size.

These benefits were rapid and low cost. Whilst breeding programmes generally work on timelines of ten to twenty years to bring innovations to farmers, the GUG farmers were growing new varieties within the first few years. These collaborative groups also required little financial investment to establish and genebanks received national funding to supply seed for ongoing exchange.

National genebanks are therefore a potentially low-cost rapid response treasure trove to support local resilience and livelihoods whilst improving local biodiversity. The GUG model is readily transferable and scalable through collaboration with farmer seed producer groups.

Written by
Matt Heaton

Student voices



Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Global Development: Innovation or inequality?

What does it mean to practice global development in the age of AI? Should development practitioners trust AI systems to make decisions about vulnerable communities?

These questions lingered as students and practitioners gathered for a Development Innovation Summit exploring the promises and risks of AI in global development.

Learning from global voices

To explore these issues, UEA DEV organised an Innovation Summit under the theme Global Development in the Age of AI: Ethical Dilemmas, Threats and Opportunities for Impact. This summit examined how the AI technological breakthrough has improved efficiency and created new opportunities while also raising ethical concerns within the development sector.

The summit began with a panel exploring how students use AI, its limitations, its influence on democracy and its role in monitoring and evaluation for development impact.

What stood out was not only the range of knowledge shared but also the cultural diversity of the panel, which enriched the discussion. Ruby-May Elger (UK) reflected on studying at a time when AI tools were widely available. While she acknowledged that AI has simplified academic work, she also emphasised the need for caution in its use.

Drawing on his journalism background in Japan, Kazuki Fujiwara discussed how AI shapes democratic processes while stressing that journalists have a responsibility to guide citizens in engaging critically with such tools. Deo Ochieng (Kenya), a monitoring and evaluation specialist, highlighted the importance of human judgement in interpreting data. “Evidence in development must resonate with people and stories, not just numbers,” he noted.

What responsible AI means

The summit also featured expert insights from Loksan Harley (Homelands AI), Kit Powney (Top 3 Charity Leader in the UK), and Dr Emil Dauncey (Open University). Their sessions explored responsible AI governance, examples of its use within the charity sector, and agency and responsibility in development practice.

Throughout these sessions, participants engaged critically with the arguments beyond the simplistic view of whether to use or not use AI.

The summit also saw the launch of the report “Artificial Authenticity: The Rise of AI-Generated Images in Charity and Development Communications” by David Girling and Deborah Adesina Wonders, touching on current conversations about authenticity and audience trust in AI-generated imagery.

Beyond technology alone

For students preparing to enter the development sector, the summit was timely. It curated a space for students to engage critically with emerging technologies rather than passively accept them. The strong interest in responsible AI use is key to the importance of approaching technological innovation with caution, ethical awareness and human judgement.

As organisers, the summit was a valuable learning experience. From planning to execution, it highlighted the importance of collaboration, effective organisation and strong management skills. We are grateful to the School of Global Development for its technical and financial support, particularly to David Girling for his guidance. We also thank the student volunteers, Nida Addil Abbas, Ooreoluwa Bamiduro, Wambui Muchaba, Becky Waugh, and Juan Osorio Acero, whose logistical, technical and creative contributions made the event possible.

As we continue to engage with AI in our studies and future careers in development, an important reflection remains, it is not only what AI is capable of, but what kind of world we want those capabilities to serve.

Written by
Belindar Kwamboka and Ruth Mpinganjira

Say yes to things that feel slightly beyond you



When I decided to study a master's degree at UEA, I did not know what to expect. The classes started, and everything moved so fast. Before I had even settled in, I was applying for placements and thinking about what I would do after my course.

Fortunately, I quickly understood that being an international student is not only about readings, coursework and lectures. My experience became richer when I started reaching out to lecturers and classmates to discuss and share my thoughts, even through the insecurity of communicating in my second language. That discomfort, I learned, is worth pushing through. Some of the most valuable things that have happened to me this year began with a conversation I was not sure I was ready to have.

It was through one of those conversations, with a lecturer and adviser, that I came across an

opportunity that completely changed my experience at DEV. Being the communications intern for DEV has been, honestly, so much fun. What I did not expect was how much access it would give me: to events, to people, to stories I would never have heard otherwise. I could research and learn about speakers before meeting them, then actually sit in the room and hear them speak.

I covered a range of events: the DEV Innovation Summit, where students organised panels around the role of AI in the development sector; research seminars exploring education imaginaries and conflict journalism; and the Professional Skills Workshops, where practitioners came in to teach us tools we rarely encounter in academic settings. Those sessions covered everything from influencing policy and advocacy, to branding, photo voice and photography, filmmaking, and how to write a grant application. Each one connected the classroom to a world that felt suddenly much closer.

Working closely with the communications team also taught me about professional culture in the UK, and how to build messages and communicate more strategically. Everything I had studied began to feel more grounded. Hearing from alumni through the Fireside Chats added another layer, offering perspectives on what life after DEV can actually look like.

For me, the internship has been about access. Access to people, to conversations I might not have found my way into otherwise, and I think that is what the student experience should be: exploring every opportunity the university offers, not only the ones that appear on your timetable.

That belief is also what led me beyond my course entirely. I joined the Latin Social Dance Society, where I dance salsa with other students, and the Catholic Society, which runs Mass on Sundays and Wednesdays and gave me a quiet, grounding rhythm to the week. I have recently joined the committee of the Latin American Society, a space where my culture and language feel at home. These communities did not just fill my calendar. They gave me my actual friends and the support network that carries me through the harder days of living far from home.

If I could offer one thought to an incoming international student, it would be that the degree matters, but so does everything around it. Talk to your lecturers. Say yes to things that feel slightly beyond you. Find the people who make you feel less foreign. The learning that stays with you longest rarely happens in a lecture hall alone.

Written by
Juan Osorio



Right: The School of Global Development organised a pub quiz night that we won thanks to having people from different parts of the world, which gave us broader perspectives and wider general knowledge.

Below left: During the first week of classes, the Media and Global Development students enjoyed a friendly bowling match — a great opportunity to get to know each other better and strengthen relationships.

Below right: Students from Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and Colombia came together as part of the Latin American Society and shared part of their culture through traditional food during Go Global.



Far left: While looking for more activities and societies, I came across the Photography Society, which organised a photo walk that allowed me to discover more of Norwich and connect with more people.

Top left: My first visit to see Norwich City

Top right: Walking through Norwich, I came across Paddington Bear — a character who came from Latin America and learned how to survive in England, eventually becoming part of British culture and winning people's hearts.

Left: The Latin Social Dance Society created a routine to perform during Go Global, an event that brings together cultural expressions from different countries around the world. This photo was taken during the final rehearsal before the performance.



THE DEV FARM:

Where soil nurtures seeds and ideas together

Hold your hand over your heart and close your eyes for a moment. Imagine you are at the edge of UEA campus on a beautiful morning where students and staff with muddy boots but smiley faces work and laugh together, growing plants and hope.

Back in the classrooms, books are open and computers are working but here in this corner of UEA something different is happening and, more importantly, something is growing. Welcome to the DEV Farm. The amazing, creative and meaningful corner of the School of Global Development.

A dream with two bullocks

In 1973, DEV became the first school in the country to offer undergraduate degrees in Global Development. Along with this offer, there emerged the idea that a student cannot understand the complexities of Global Development by sitting in the classroom alone and that the realities of human development happens in the fields, localities and in the soil.

The DEV farm was born

In the early days of the farm, it was alive in the greenest way. DEV Farm had two amazing oxen named "Left" and "Right" and later two magnificent bullocks named Gunder and Frank who gained the affection of leading developmental theorists of the time. In 1982, at the Royal Norfolk Show, Gunder and Frank, along the DEV staff were introduced to Queen Elizabeth II. Yes, you read that correctly the two bullocks met the Queen!

The Farm experienced multiple ups and downs. Later in 1997, Claire Short the Minister for Overseas Development at that time officially opened a new version of the Farm. Each revival held fast to the common spirit to learn about food,



farming, and sustainability beyond the theoretical approach in the classroom. It must be lived, felt and experienced.

Beginning of a new chapter

Then in 2022-2023 something amazing happened. DEV academic, Oliver Springate-Baginski began negotiations to use a parking space located at the corner of UEA as a new site for the Farm. Slowly, a community of students, staff and passionate volunteers came together to continue the journey. They sowed green manure crops to make the best soil for growing vegetables and, with shared purpose, they planned, dug and planted together with learning and enjoyment. The 2023-2024 DEV Newsletter described it as, "very much a work in progress," and, honestly, what better way to describe something truly worth doing?

Importance of the farm

Here are the reasons that make the DEV Farm more than just a patch of land at the corner of the university. It is a living experience where we can explore solutions to the big questions that we ask in the classroom and debate in our seminars. Questions about sustainable agriculture, food security and land rights that, in our DEV farm, meet real



seeds and soil. It is the bridge between what we read and what we feel under our fingers.

It is connecting the generations of people who lived here. The DEV Farm connects old and new. Students here today are caring for something that graduates from thirty years ago still smile about. Gunder and Frank are gone – but the curious, down-to-earth spirit they stood for lives on in every tree planted and every seed sown.

The farm is what DEV people call "DEV-love." It is the physical expression of why this School was built; the belief that the world gets better when people learn not just to think differently, but to act differently too.

Come and see for yourself

The DEV Farm is open, growing, and waiting for you. Whether you are a first-year student, staff member, or someone who just want to take break from the screen and feel fresh air, come and visit the farm. Bring your questions, your curiosity and your boots and enjoy!

Written by
Kashif Ali

From Global Development student to changemaker



Over the past two years, my studies have completely reshaped the way I see the world.

From environmental degradation and colonial legacies to human rights violations, I've explored global challenges through political, economic, media and environmental perspectives. While this has been eye-opening, it has also been frustrating at times, because simply learning about these issues and writing essays does not, on its own, create real change.

Questioning development systems

One of the most challenging aspects of Global Development studies is confronting the reality that many systems we once believed were 'right' can contribute to further problems. Although our lectures introduce us to alternative ideas, they don't always provide clear solutions, which can leave students feeling overwhelmed and unsure of how to take action.

A turning point for me was reading Doughnut Economics by Kate Raworth, which emphasised the importance of implementation and practical change. Inspired by this, I joined the social enterprise society, Enactus, in my first

year which motivated me to move beyond theory and start working on real-world solutions.

Turning knowledge into action

I am now developing a zero-waste refill shop project in collaboration with Youth Climate Solution and Jaz, a third-year Development student. Our aim is to create an on-campus space where students can access ethical, environmentally friendly products that are both affordable and accessible. Through my studies, I realised that many students are aware of global issues such as exploitation, yet often feel powerless to do anything within the existing systems. This project is about turning that awareness into action.

With support from the Enterprise Centre, I have been able to develop business and grant proposals, secure funding, and even launch a successful pop-up shop. As an international student, navigating business opportunities can be challenging, but with the support of my peers, especially Jaz, I have been able to bring this idea to life. The project has since been recognised as a Top 10 finalist for the UEA Changemaker Award, and I am continuing to grow it further.

What keeps me going

Although my studies can sometimes feel intense, I am incredibly grateful for the community around me. My coursemates constantly inspire me through thoughtful discussions, and my lecturers are genuinely passionate and supportive. Looking ahead, I will be joining KPMG Japan as a business consultant after graduation. I hope to work in areas such as sustainability, economic security and geopolitics, and to contribute to influencing large corporations to adopt more sustainable and circular practices.

Written by
Mao Suzuki



Study abroad/ placements

From science to development:

A transformative journey at UEA

With hindsight, my decision to enrol for the MSc in Global Development Management can be described as an inspired, career-defining one. When I submitted my application and accepted the offer, little did I know the magnitude of the effect it would have on my mindset, outlook, personality, career, and even my family life.

Stepping into the unknown: embracing interdisciplinary learning

From the first lecture, I realised I had signed on for an adventure. Having been a science student, I suddenly found myself learning from anthropologists, sociologists, economists, development practitioners, and media experts. I wondered what I had become involved in.

However, I discovered that my lecturers and professors were supportive, helping me transition seamlessly. They encouraged me to apply my scientific background within the development field, which helped my confidence. Before long, I was immersed in perspectives, gender studies, welfare and evaluation, impact assessment, project management, globalisation, and business development.

Choosing growth: the development work placement decision

The high point of my academic journey was the Development Work Placement (DWP) module. I chose this pathway over writing a dissertation because I recognised early on that, as someone transitioning into the development sector, gaining practical experience would be invaluable.

The application process itself was both challenging and competitive, but it became a powerful opportunity for personal growth and self-reflection.

Resilience in action: turning setbacks into opportunity

After applying to several organisations, I was shortlisted for an interview with Amref Health Africa UK for the role of Prospect Research Intern. I believed I had performed well, but I was not selected. Naturally, I was disappointed, particularly because, as a healthcare professional of African descent, I felt a strong connection to the organisation's mission.

Rather than give up, I reached out for feedback. I was encouraged to learn that I had performed well but had been edged out by a more experienced candidate. This feedback restored my confidence and motivated me to keep going. Then, just five days later, I received an unexpected email from the Amref HR team offering me the placement. I was absolutely thrilled.

From classroom to career: a transformative placement experience

My three-month placement as a Prospect Research Intern at Amref Health Africa UK proved to be a truly transformative experience. Beginning with an in-person induction in London, alongside two classmates, I was introduced to a hybrid working environment—my first experience of remote collaboration and virtual meetings.

During the placement, I undertook a wide range of tasks, consistently

delivering to a high standard and receiving positive feedback. I developed skills in prospect research in line with GDPR principles, philanthropy and fundraising, due diligence, grant applications, CRM database use and relationship management.

A particularly meaningful project involved identifying and engaging mid-level donors among UK-based Nigerian medical professionals. By leveraging my connections within the Medical Association of Nigerians Across Great Britain (MANSAG), I facilitated links between Amref's fundraising team and the organisation's leadership. This experience highlighted the value of networks, cultural insight and initiative in development practice.

The mentorship and support I received from the Philanthropy and Fundraising team made the experience both enriching and memorable. My analytical report was deeply informed by these experiences and the skills I developed.

A journey of growth: reflecting on impact and gratitude

Looking back, this journey has been one of profound transformation. I have grown academically, professionally and personally, discovering new strengths and capabilities along the way.

I remain deeply grateful to my lecturers at the School of Development, my course adviser—David Girling, the DWP team, Amref Health Africa UK, and the University of East Anglia for providing an environment that nurtured growth, exploration, and self-discovery.

This experience has not only shaped my career path but has also redefined my understanding of impact, purpose, and possibility.

Written by
Adetokundo Afolabi

A placement year in Uganda

Below left: Ben receiving a certificate of appreciation for his time at UHfH

Below right: Ben and a UHfH beneficiary in the Namuwongo Community Centre



Last year, I had the opportunity to complete a placement year for nine months in Uganda.

The first part of my placement was with Uganda Hands for Hope (UHfH), a small NGO who provide free education, health care, and food for children living in the Namuwongo slum, the second largest urban slum in Kampala. I initially worked in their library, creating a welcoming environment for children and classes to read in. Although this was rewarding, I felt like I had come to Uganda looking for a more direct way of contributing to UHfH, something I mentioned to both the Project Head and the NGOs founder.

As luck would have it, the founder was heading back to England with his family, creating an opportunity for me to support the Project Head in the daily running of the NGO. This included modernising the registration systems, reforming the small loans business, and improving safeguarding measures throughout the school.

After five amazing months at Uganda Hands for Hope, I moved on to Windle International Uganda. This is a much larger NGO, whose mission is to

empower refugees and conflict affected communities by providing quality education, university scholarships and vocational skills development. This was different to my time at UHfH, as I was further removed from the beneficiaries which meant I experienced slow, bulky bureaucracy – not a fan! My role was to help find alternative sources of funding, especially after Trump cut all USAID funding. I learnt a lot at Windle and I'm grateful for the experience, especially my 10-day field trip to rural, West Uganda.

This trip was the best experience I had in Uganda, as I was able to visit some of the most rural and isolated schools in the country where we were delivering child protection resources as a part of the governments approach to ending violence to children. Out of the 35 schools I visited, Kyaka II was the school that sticks in my memory most. Located in the Kyaka II refugee settlement for people fleeing the violence in the DRC, this school looked like many of the others I had visited during my placement year. Long, squat classrooms sitting in orange soil and corrugated iron roofs made teaching in the rain a deafening experience.



As Trump had cut USAID funding, they had lost almost half of their budget, forcing them to reduce their teaching staff by almost a third. Each classroom was crammed with children, eager to learn, with ratios often reaching 120 students to 1 teacher. Although a challenging sight, I felt proud to be studying and working in this environment. The experiences I have gained from my studies, both in the classroom and the field, will help me navigate the very real challenges facing people today.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that this would not have been possible without the support of UEA and my parents. I want to especially thank Sophie Bremner and Zoe Bone, as they were always there to support me when I needed it. I would highly recommend that all students consider doing a placement year, as it is invaluable experiencing real-world issues that take place outside the classroom.

Written by
Ben Bishop

A year at the University of Hong Kong

Below: Ut est et officinibus escilient lant ratem que ella conemquam con explaut quam nonse nis endit remquae nonseque viduciet rem evendis enihil molorum renatiatur.



When first presented with the vast array of options for my year abroad, my imagination immediately ran away with the prospect of new and exciting opportunities.

I found myself wondering where I would be living and studying for the next year of my life. What kind of people would I meet? What would the food be like? Do I want to be somewhere cold, decked out from head to toe in thermals and thick winter jackets, or do I want to spend the year living in shorts, flip-flops and a linen shirt? For me, the latter was more tempting, which quickly ruled out the University of Iceland.

After deciding to pursue a year in the sun, I set two additional criteria for choosing my destination: somewhere with a distinctly different culture and language to England, and somewhere geopolitically exciting. After much indecision, I finally settled on the University of Hong Kong, which ticked all my boxes (and scratched that geopolitical itch) and, as I was soon to discover, offered much more.

My year studying at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) has been a challenging one, with long nights in the library, lightning-paced city life, and the initially daunting task of making new friends in a city where free time is a

rare luxury. Despite this, I found myself in a place filled to the brim with vibrant culture, fascinating people and a constantly evolving urban environment. Not to mention the ability to escape to verdant and breathtaking national parks, beaches and islands.

My experience

With endless academic opportunities, if there is a particular topic of interest, no matter how niche, it is likely that HKU offers a course in it. I took a module on how AI influences humanitarian responses and conflict, which broadened my understanding of how this rapidly evolving technology is already shaping the world, as well as its potential to influence humanitarian efforts in the near future. Consequently, I was inspired to take an AI ethics class in my second semester, allowing me to develop a better grasp of the social, philosophical, and environmental debates surrounding its use.

However, studying at HKU is certainly a challenge, particularly when adjusting to a different teaching style, one that is more reminiscent of A-levels than my university experience thus far, with a greater number of assessments. Be prepared to be thrown in at the deep end. When discussing my year abroad with a UEA professor prior to leaving,

I was advised to be prepared to fall asleep at my desk. Whilst I have not quite reached that point, a walk around the library during the assessment period revealed that reality for a surprising number of students.

Nevertheless, my biggest academic shock was transitioning from the personable and supportive staff at UEA to feeling like just another number at HKU. At times, it felt as though I were a cell on a spreadsheet and moved through the system anonymously, with emails going unanswered and already slow bureaucratic processes becoming increasingly drawn out.

The campus, much like the rest of the city, is always busy. Nestled against the base of Victoria Peak and blending into the surrounding cityscape of skyscrapers, it can feel overwhelming at times. However, despite the university's constant hustle and bustle, there are spaces to escape the fray. The Bridge, a green and quiet suntrap suspended between two buildings, offers a much-needed oasis to relax and enjoy views of the harbour.

Making friends in this often described as 'lonely' city, is as much of a challenge as you might expect. Local students often seem less inclined to socialise outside their existing circles

and are highly academically focused. As a result, exchange students tend to stick together, and larger groups arriving from the same university may feel little incentive to branch out beyond existing cliques.

There are also structural factors that make socialising more difficult. Many university societies are primarily geared towards Cantonese speakers, creating an obvious barrier. In addition, there is no students' union or bar on campus, and the lack of informal social spaces limits opportunities for interaction outside of lectures.

Moreover, the shortage of student accommodation for exchange students creates another significant barrier. In my case, I was informed just two weeks before arriving in Hong Kong that I had not been allocated housing. I soon discovered that I was far from alone, as many exchange students found themselves in similar situations.

However, despite these hindrances, I was able to build a small but close group of friends, with whom I had the pleasure of exploring the region.

Favourite places to visit

Hong Kong offers endless opportunities, with a huge variety of sights to see, food to eat and hikes to enjoy.

Exploring the city

After taking in the towering canopy of glass and concrete that defines Hong Kong Island's skyline and navigating the termite-hill-like maze of interconnected shopping centres, make your way to Kowloon, specifically Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po, for a taste of 'old' Hong Kong.

These areas are a seemingly endless maze of bright lights, incredible street food, and bustling markets, offering the perfect opportunity to practise both your Cantonese and your bartering skills. Here, the atmosphere feels worlds away from the polished glitz of Central.

Escape to nature

If a last-minute escape from the city is what you need, Hong Kong's many protected parks and hiking trails are never far away. With around 70% of the territory made up of green space. Whether you are an experienced hiker or a beginner, there is something for everyone.

For some of the best views of the city, the Victoria Peak hike—starting close to HKU—offers a relatively quick route to stunning panoramic scenery and can easily be completed between lectures.

My food highlights

If food is your passion, Hong Kong will not disappoint. With access to a melting pot of East and Southeast Asian cuisines, the city offers something for everyone. However, it is essential to start with the local classics: dim sum for plump, shrimp dumplings, cha chaan tengs for that classic milk tea and diner-style French toast, and simple dishes such as char siu pork with rice.

Street food is equally unmissable, from deep-fried stinky tofu to curried fish balls, available on almost every corner. Above all though, you must visit a dai pai dong. These traditional open-air food stalls, now a dying breed, serve dishes cooked over roaring kerosene flames and, in my opinion, offer some of the best flavours in Hong Kong. My favourite is Oi Man Sang—there is almost always a queue, but the wait is well worth it.

Advice to prospective study abroad students

For anyone unsure about taking part in a year abroad, it is worth considering just how rare and valuable this opportunity is.

For those already planning to go, congratulations, you are about to take on what will likely be one of the greatest challenges of your life so far. However, with perseverance, a spirit of adventure, and an open mind (alongside support from your university if needed), it will also be one of the most rewarding. A year abroad offers the chance to navigate new environments, broaden your perspective, build confidence and gain independence in ways that are difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Written by
Toby Vickers

Fieldwork in Kenya: bringing Global Development to life



As part of my Development Work Placement, I visited Kenya alongside the Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development for two months.

I worked with the socioeconomics team at the Kenyan Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KARLO), taking part in the UK-CGIAR project on the adoption of high-iron and disease-resistant wheat. During my stay, I gained valuable experience in collecting, transcribing, organising and analysing qualitative interview data on wheat farmers. I learnt the importance of communication and the level of coordination needed to maintain organised data collection systems.

While spending most of my time transcribing interviews and organising files, I had several exciting moments during my placement, one being the Nakuru national agricultural show. I was able to engage in stimulating conversations with many key players in the agricultural sector of Kenya, such as the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) and Kenya Seed Co. Discussing critical topics surrounding worries and opportunities within agriculture in Kenya.

The highlight of my trip however was the fieldwork in Narok. I was lucky to receive a chance to assist in collecting interview data from Narok farmers, alongside the socioeconomics team. This included a 5-day excursion, locating and interviewing local farmers on the challenges people face in wheat production. While proving difficult at times, this excursion was a success, with over 40 interviews collected. I had the chance to also interview some of these farmers and the experience left me intrigued because certain conversations and themes correlated across the interviews recorded over that one week.

I believe such personal experiences are crucial to capture in social research, especially when aiming to introduce a new product for a group that feels underrepresented in their field. Many wheat farmers implied that they no longer want to produce wheat due to the lack of market or care given to them from larger corporations. By identifying issues, we are already emphasising the importance of training and showcasing new products and minimising the issues that may come from lack of exposure. With this process, we are also able to identify many small and

Left: Deima meeting the KARLO team.

Right: Interviewing farmers in remote parts of Narok, Kenya.



large-scale farmers across Narok and other regions, who will then be informed of any new changes in the wheat production process.

With this experience, I was able to provide insight as a co-author on a research paper on gendered approaches to extension services in Kenya and Egypt. The paper highlights the importance of public-private partnerships and their need for gender-responsive approaches to benefit diverse farmers. Women are central to providing livelihood security; however, they are continually excluded from support systems, including extension services. The end of the paper calls for a change in the way women are recognised as farmers and to improve inclusivity in extension services to help overcome challenges that women face to achieve food security.

Written by
Deima Daujotaite

Alumni stories



DEV staff and alumni

Alumni reunion

This May, we were delighted to welcome alumni back to campus as part of the University of East Anglia alumni events programme.

It was a wonderful occasion to reconnect, share stories, and reflect on the memories and experiences that have shaped life at DEV over the decades.

A highlight of the evening was the screening of 50 Years of DEV, a documentary produced by Ayoola Jolayemi (DEV grad 2022). The film offered a compelling journey through

the history of the School, sparking rich conversation about its past, present, and future, and reminding us just how much has been built over half a century.

The documentary is also available to watch on YouTube (devschooluea) for those who were unable to attend.

Moments like these speak to the strength and warmth of the DEV community, and to how far we have all come together.

 **devschooluea**



From UEA to global impact:

my journey to redefining value



Looking back at my time at the University of East Anglia, I often think of the early morning seminars on migration, afternoon classes on conflict and governance, and becoming absorbed in my social anthropology essays during late night library sessions.

Those three incredible years offered far more than an academic foundation; they gave me a 'systems thinking' lens that has since become the cornerstone of my professional life.

My journey since graduation

Since walking across the stage in 2023, my career has been a fast-paced exploration of the intersection between communication, sustainability and global development.

After UEA, I continued my studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), completing a Master's in Development Management. One of the highlights of that experience

was serving as a Graduate Consultant for UN Women in Georgia, where I contributed to the work on gender-sensitive governance frameworks and policy recommendations supporting the country's EU accession ambitions – an experience that reinforced the critical role that inclusive governance plays in durable progress.

Advocacy through strategy

Since then, my work has taken me across several international contexts, allowing me to apply the critical thinking skills I developed at UEA's School of Global Development to a range of global challenges.

At the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) in New York, I supported the assessment of communications strategies across United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), helping to strengthen how development priorities are communicated and implemented.

I later worked with the International Youth Alliance for Peace, advising on strategic communications for initiatives supporting youth-led peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka. In parallel, I collaborated with the

Left: A mountain peak surrounded by clouds at sunrise

Below: Theodora Gaiganis



Global Human Rights Defense in The Hague, where I managed partnerships and stakeholder engagement to amplify the organisation's mission.

Driving the global narrative on value

Today, I work in Communications at the Capitals Coalition, a global collaboration building a resilient economy that values what matters. In this role I work at the intersection of communications, impact valuation, and sustainability, connecting the dots between how we talk about value, how we measure it, and how we put it into practice. It is so interesting to build narratives, relationships, and influence that bridge economic thinking with sustainability.

By embedding the value of natural, human and social capital into decision-making we can create an economic system that accounts for all value, and move towards a more equitable and resilient future.

A message to the DEV community

If my journey has taught me anything, it is that a degree in Global Development is an incredibly versatile and powerful tool. It equips you with both the analytical precision to understand complex challenges and the strategic perspective needed to reshape systems.

To my fellow DEV students: stay curious, stay engaged and never underestimate the power you can have in driving meaningful change.

Written by
Theodora Gaiganis



Manasa during fieldwork in Mysore, South India with a local smallholder farmer

BLACK SHEEP:

Building a climate adaptation tool for South Asian agriculture

Climate science has made extraordinary progress in projecting future climate change: hotter seasons, more erratic monsoons, shifting growing windows and compounding extremes that arrive faster than agricultural systems can absorb them.

What the science has been slower to do is translate those projections into something directly useful to the people making decisions on the ground such as the extension worker advising smallholders in Nepal's Terai, the district agricultural officer in Bihar and the policymaker designing a crop diversification programme in Odisha.

That translation problem is the starting point for BLACK SHEEP (Building Local Adaptation through Collaborative Knowledge Systems for Holistic Environmental & Economic Policy).

BLACK SHEEP is an interactive, open-access decision-support tool developed as part of my PhD research at the University of East Anglia (ENV/DEV),

where my work sits at the intersection of climate science, agronomy and development policy. The web application draws on CMIP6 multi-model climate ensembles and the Eco Crop parameter database to assess present and future climate suitability for 545 crop species across 814 districts in India and Nepal. For any given district and crop, users can see how suitability is projected to shift between the historical baseline and the 2041–2060 window, explore crop-specific growing calendars, examine climate extremes and interrogate model uncertainty — all within a single interface designed to be accessible beyond the research community.

At the heart of the tool is a feature called crop suitability for climate analog matching. Select a district, and BLACK SHEEP identifies other locations whose present-day climate most closely resembles that district's projected future by matching crop suitability.

The logic is straightforward but powerful; if we want to understand what adaptation to a warmer, drier Bihar might look like, we can look at places that already farm under those

conditions today. Analog matching turns an abstract future into a set of living, working examples — a practical anchor for planning conversations that too often remain hypothetical.

The past two months have been a period of focused architectural development. The application is now successfully deployed on Posit.

These technical developments are directly connected to the broader intellectual ambitions of the PhD and part of a PVC Impact project at NISD. My interdisciplinary thesis, *Windows into Future Climate Change: Informing Adaptation Policy in the Global South part of the Leverhulme Critical Decade for Climate Change program*, is built on the premise that climate adaptation tools are only as useful as their ability to cross disciplinary and institutional boundaries — from climate modelling to agronomic knowledge, from academic output to policy uptake. BLACK SHEEP is the applied expression of that argument. Two papers are currently in preparation, the first presenting the tool and its methodological framework, the second developing the crop-suitability analog concept as a multi-dimensional framework for agricultural climate adaptation. Professor Arjan Verschoor (DEV/NISD) is currently overseeing stakeholder engagement for the app through a series of workshops in various regions of India and Nepal.

The work ahead involves continued refinement of the interface and methodology, deeper integration of stakeholder feedback and extending the tool's reach toward the communities it is ultimately designed to serve.

Written by
Manasa Sharma



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Development Studies

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