

## DSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES

Friday, 21 June 2019, 12.45 – 13.45 pm – Open University

Note: These minutes will be submitted to the 2020 AGM for approval.

### [1] Attendance & Welcome

- 1.1 **Present:** Sarah White (Chair – President - SW), Laura Hammond (Secretary - LH), Dan Brockington (Treasurer - DB) and James Howard (NomadIT – DSA Administration - JH), Council members and members of the Association.
- 1.2 President Sarah White welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

### [2] Apologies from Council Members

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Bookie Ezeomah.

### [3] Approval of Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the AGM held at the University of Manchester on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were approved without amendment. There were no matters arising.

### [4] President's Report

SW presented her President's reports which included the following items.

#### **4.1 2019 DSA Conference**

We are very pleased again to have a very successful conference, with three outstanding plenaries stimulating us to think in new ways about the past out of which development has come and the future towards which it may go. The initial suggestion of 'opening up development' as the theme for DSA2019 brought questions about whether it was too vague, too open, but I think it has proved to be a very strong theme throughout the conference, which has guided both panel and plenary sessions – as well as many more informal discussions.

We were restricted in our numbers this year by OU catering constraints, but nonetheless have had a full house of 528 registered and c. 450 daily attendance. 50 panels and 305 papers in the programme.

OU, JDS & DSA together contributed £36k for bursary funding. This provided support for 78 people, 67 of whom are based in the global South. 5-6 of those we allocated funding dropped out; 5-6 visa denied; 5-6 didn't hear in time about visa.

#### **4.2 President's Activities**

The workshop series has taken most of my time this year – both attending and producing the reports. This is discussed in more detail below. The following is a summary of my activities overall.

- October 8 Heads of Centres

- October 11-12 EADI Development Centres Meeting
- October 15; October 22 Interdisciplinary workshops
- November 6 Council meeting
- November 12-13 Interdisciplinary workshop
- DSA2019 Panel selection
- January 22 Interdisciplinary workshop
- February 1 Council meeting
- March 4; March 21 Interdisciplinary workshop
- April 25 Interdisciplinary workshop
- June 18 Council meeting

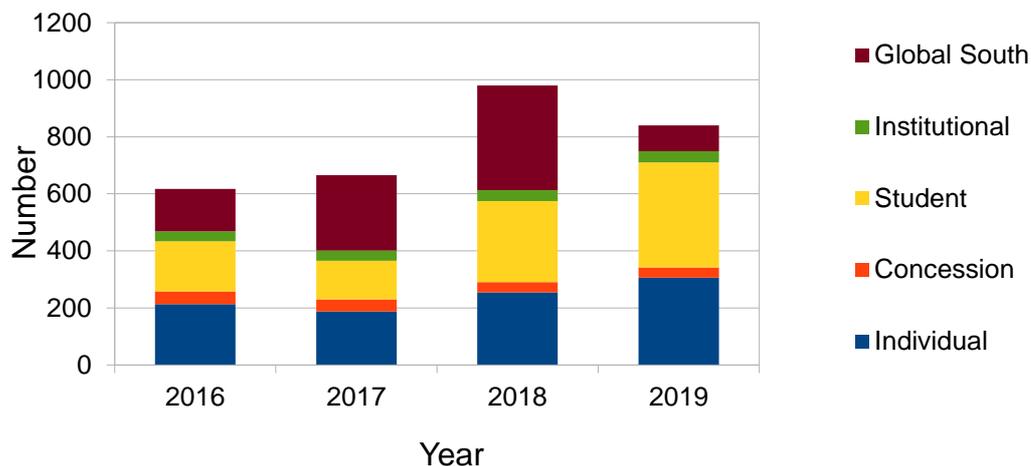
### 4.3 Heads of Centres meeting

We held a Heads of Centre meeting October 8 2018. The main business was the REF consultation and the opportunity to discuss directly with the REF anthropology/DS chair, Deborah James. This was very well appreciated by the HoCs and REF champions who attended. Following the meeting I submitted a response to the REF consultation expressing the concerns raised in our meeting.

### 4.4 Membership

As the chart shows, our membership has been rising in the past years. The fall in Global South membership is an artefact – this year we have asked members to confirm that they wish to stay with the DSA, whereas earlier their membership automatically rolled on from year to year, producing a significant number of ‘ghost’ members.

Membership breakdown



### 4.5 DSA/ESRC/Development Centres’ Workshop Series 2018/19: ‘Meeting the Challenges: Interdisciplinary research for global development’

‘Meeting the Challenges’ was a series of seven interdisciplinary workshops organised by the Development Studies Association and hosted by Development Studies centres around the UK, with funding support from the Economic and Social Research Council, October 2018-April 2019.

Each workshop had a distinct focus:

- Zoonoses and One Health (IDS Sussex)
- Ethical research in contexts of post-conflict and displacement (Reading and Bath)
- Frontiers in urban infrastructure research and action (Manchester and Sheffield)
- Responding to environmental change (UEA and John Innes Centre)
- Educational Inequality, Poverty and Development (Bristol)
- Water and Sustainable Development (Bradford)
- Towards More Equitable Interdisciplinary Partnership (SOAS).

In total, 224 people attended the workshops, 40 of these were from institutions in the global South. Attendees included academic researchers at all stages of their careers, MSc and PhD students, development practitioners, consultants and policy makers, social entrepreneurs and research funders. Academics were not only social scientists but also engineers, natural scientists, architects, planners, archaeologists and lawyers.

Videos of keynotes and interviews, plus a report on each workshop are available on dedicated pages on the DSA website (<https://www.devstud.org.uk/interdisciplinary-research/>). A panel on the series was held at DSA2019. A final briefing, summarising key findings from across the series, will be prepared over the summer.

#### **4.6 Communications**

We now have a 0.6 FTE Communications Officer, Amy Lunt, who is based at University of Bath and is in post until October 2020. Our communications objective is:

To position the DSA as a hub for Development Studies in the UK, so that it offers:

- **Insight** – explaining what Development Studies is and why it matters
- **Knowledge** – sharing publications, events, conferences, research
- **Networking** – helping to connect people
- **Membership** – supporting and celebrating the work of members

The immediate priorities are:

- Complete overhaul of the website, content and structure
- Share outcomes of the workshop series
- Revise form and content of Bulletin

#### **4.7 Journal of International Development (JID)**

We are planning to participate in the rebranding of JID as the Journal of Global Development. DSA, through Council, is discussing how to make it distinctive leading journal for the field.

Preliminary work at rebranding, constituting the Editorial Board, etc. will be done in 2019, then there will be a preliminary call for special issues (which is likely to be the main format of the publication), with the new launch in 2021.

#### **4.8 Business Plan**

A new business plan (2019-22) was discussed at Council in February 2019. The revised version was then posted on the website and members were invited through the April Bulletin to respond with comments. The Bulletin included the summary statement we had agreed to characterise Development Studies. No comment was received. The Business plan is therefore recommended for formal adoption to the AGM.

This would require some minor re-drafting of the Constitution (in the AGM), which at present states as ‘Objectives’:

‘The objectives of the Association shall be to advance knowledge of the alternative processes and methods of socio-economic change, which studies are commonly referred to as development studies, through inter-disciplinary studies, meetings, conferences, and the dissemination of information about research results, operation and practice, course curricula, and training schemes.’

It was proposed to alter this. The following text was proposed to the membership:

The Development Studies Association (DSA) is the UK’s learned society for international development. It exists to promote and advance international development as a field of study, research and action, with a mission to *deepen understanding of how global poverty and inequalities are produced, sustained and may be overcome, and how a better future may be advanced*. The DSA is a membership organisation, with both individual and institutional members, and is wholly funded through its membership premiums and activities.

Membership debated a number of items in the text, including whether the term ‘international development’ should be replaced by ‘development studies’ or another term (e.g. global development). It was also suggested that mention should be made of environmental sustainability as a core concern. Finally, it was suggested that the paragraph should be edited into multiple sentences for ease of reading.

The membership agreed that the text needs to be changed along these lines, authorised Council to come up with final text which will be communicated in the Bulletin, and then will be communicated formally to the Charities Commission.

In the Business Plan we list our current objectives as:

1. Advance connections between people that will extend and deepen understanding of development issues
2. Raise the profile of the UK development studies community and provide a platform for its collective voice
3. Build the institutional strength of the DSA
4. Nurture the future of development studies in the UK through support to students, early career researchers and Higher Education teachers
5. Promote greater inclusiveness, diversity and equity within the development studies community

It is therefore proposed:

1. The new wording is approved to replace the existing statement of ‘Objectives’ in the Constitution, with a heading of ‘Purpose’
2. The Business Plan 2019-22 be adopted.

The Membership accepted the Business Plan, subject to the above revision of the Objectives.

#### **4.9 Future Conferences**

- DSA 2020, Birmingham University, ‘New Leadership for Global Challenges’
  - June 17 – 19, 2020
- DSA 2021, University of East Anglia, ‘Decentring Development’

- June 29 –July 1 2021
- DSA 2022, Theme to be confirmed by Council
  - *UCL, June 22 – 24* (still to be confirmed)

During the discussion, a question was raised about why the conference calendar was shifted to June, which it was argued may be inconvenient for some people, especially with family responsibilities. The shift was started in 2018 and it was seen as popular by most members who were canvassed at the Bradford conference.

#### **[5] Annual Trustees Report year end January 2018**

DB presented the Treasurer’s report. Over the past year, Council has been working on trying to bring its surplus down (which is necessary given our status as a non-profit organisation) particularly through recruitment of the Communications Officer and support for the Interdisciplinary Seminar Series. The Association is moving in the right direction in terms of using resources.

The Full Treasurer’s Report is available on the website.

Actions taken:

The Statement of Accounts was approved by acclamation.

#### **[6] Appointment of the Independent Financial Examiner**

The nomination of Sterling Partners as the DSA’s External Financial Examiners was confirmed by acclamation.

#### **[7] Nominations and Elections**

We have two valid nominations: PB Anand, University of Bradford and Rama Dieng, University of Edinburgh. Both were elected by acclamation.

DSA Secretary Laura Hammond has tendered her resignation from the role of DSA Secretary, though she will continue on Council until the end of her term in 2021. Council proposed to the AGM that Uma Kambhampati, who was elected onto the Council last year, takes on the position of Honorary Secretary. No other nominations were received. Her nomination was approved by acclamation.

#### **[8] Any other business**

##### **Global South Participation**

Several members registered their concern that DSA needs to be more intentional and inclusive of representation from global South in the conference as well as on Council. There are issues related to inequalities in access to publication, travel, visas, etc. that need to be considered, and global North colleagues may not be fully aware of them.

SW responded by saying that before beginning of the 2019 conference, we had a Global South workshop which was successful at getting these discussions started, and formed some recommendations. She proposed that we have a Standing Issue at each Council meeting and that we ask the African Study Group to canvass GS members to send in their issues and recommendations that they would like Council to discuss. We would do

this for one year, and propose that Council consider including a GS representative on Council in future.

There is already an Africa regional study group, which might be able to represent African colleagues' interests within the organisation. Another suggestion was made by a member to put forward a Latin America group, and that perhaps using the Association's LinkedIn space is a way to have subgroups for discussions relevant to diversity.

SW responded that other regional study groups are certainly possible, but that any proposal must come from the members. There is a South Asia study group, which is made up of people who work ON South Asia, not only those who are based in South Asia.

Council member Julian Quan (JQ) clarified that tasking a regional study group to represent global South issues and concerns would only be a temporary solution until greater representation on Council could be ensured. GS members would need to be consulted about whether they are happy for the Africa Study Group to take on this role.

Another member said that they appreciated the spirit of the conversation, but that we run risk of essentialising Africa, and instead there is a need to establish a diversity committee to take this forward.

A member suggested that we might link up with INASP, an Oxford-based NGO to secure journal to promote access for academics in the GS.

SW agreed that it would be useful to have a working group that would take forward diversity issues. This is meant to be the beginning of a conversation rather than the end. It is important to be mindful that Council has limited resource to support new initiatives but within its capabilities it is happy to do so. She also appealed to DSA members to be more involved during the year, not just at conference or at AGM.