

DSA AGM President's Report 2019

1. 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.

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

3. Heads of Centres meeting

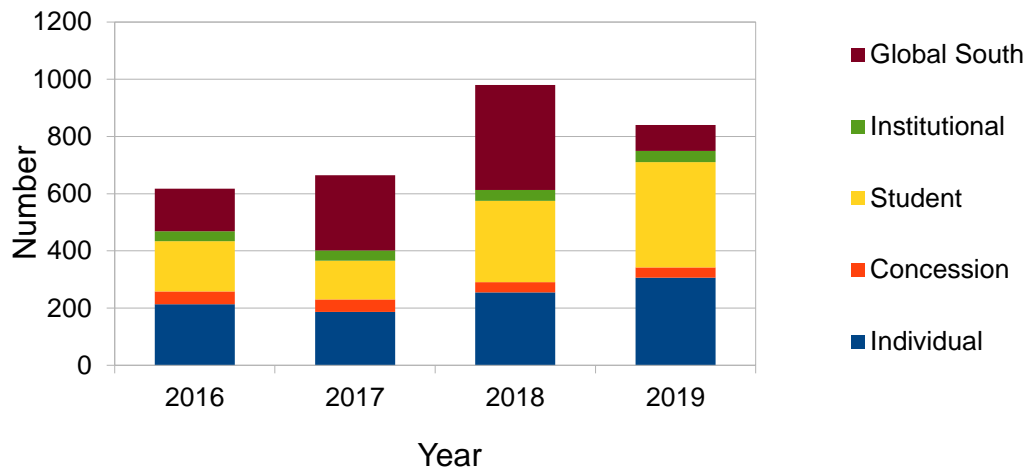
We held a Heads of Centre meeting October 8 2018. The main business was the REF consultation and the opportunity to discuss directly with the REF anthropology/DS chair, Deborah James. This was very well appreciated by the HoCs and REF champions who attended. Following the meeting I submitted a response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

4. 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



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/workshopseries/>). 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.

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

7. 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.'

We propose to alter this to 'Purpose':

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.

If this is approved at the AGM we can propose the change formally to the Charity Commissioners.

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.

8. Future Conferences

- DSA 2020, Birmingham University, 'New Leadership for Global Challenges'
 - June 17 - 19 2020
- DSA 2021, 'Decentring Development' University of East Anglia,
 - June 29 –July 1 2021
- DSA 2022, '*Just urban futures: equity in an urbanising world,*'
 - UCL, June 22 – 24 (still to be confirmed)