

# Collaboration in a (post-) pandemic world – the need to reconnect and rethink priorities

Global Sustainable Futures  
second annual online conference 2021

Documentation Parallel Session

## Teaching and Capacity Development in Higher Education

Collaborative approaches to capacity building in higher education can assume many shapes. The session portrayed four examples, where staff at Chalmers or University of Gothenburg joined efforts with colleagues on other continents to establish educational programs and benefit from mutual learning. First, Emilio du Cruz Brandao with his team at Chalmers and in South Africa described the Reality Studio concept and its innovative approaches to architecture and urban design. Second, Erik Sterner presented an innovative double-degree Master's programme, where students address real-world problems such as climate issues, developed jointly with colleagues at University of Cape Town. Third, Rodney Stevens described the Platform concept, where geology students perform case studies with a systems approach to find solution to challenges such as polluted surface

water in the Niger delta and pollution in irrigation systems in Syria. Finally, Camilla Orjuela of GU, collaborating with a team at University of Rwanda, School of Conflict Management, presented their collaboration around a PhD sandwich program in peace and development.

### Learning by doing

A common feature appears the emphasis on learning from practical experience and of valuing the lessons to be found in the journey itself of designing and implementing of novel programmes.

### Moderator and presenters

Moderated by Anders Burman, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg

#### **Reality Studio 2021: Hyperlocal engagement and global knowledge exchange**

Presenters: Emilio da Cruz Brandao, Shea Hagy, and Liane Thuvander, all Chalmers University of Technology; Carin Combrinck, University of Pretoria

#### **Creating a Collaborative MSc on Climate Change and Sustainable Development (3CSD):**

Status, challenges and success factors  
Presenters: Erik Sterner, University of Gothenburg, and Edwin Muchapondwa, University of Cape Town, South Africa

#### **PLATFORM for initiating international cooperation project with a close connection between research and capacity building**

Presenter: Rodney Stevens, Dept. Earth Sciences, University of Gothenburg

#### **Rwanda-Sweden collaboration in PhD education**

Aggee Shyaka Mugabe, Center for Conflict Management, University of Rwanda  
Camilla Orjuela, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

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## Food and Health

Presenters from South Africa, Pakistan, Sweden and Tanzania in the parallel session on Food and Health provided a range of different scientific research fields, but at the same time they told similar stories about benefits and challenges of the collaboration.

The research covered subjects such as drinkable water, antibiotics, dental root treatment, and banana juice production. The latter is a Tanzanian project to reduce post-harvest losses and to produce a low viscosity juice with commercial potential. Many Africans use water from rivers to drink, which may not be healthy. Water delivered through pipes would be much better. As hospital visits may be costly, it is tempting to get antibiotics directly from the pharmacy but the consumption increases, research from East Africa shows. Finally, a Pakistan-Sweden collaboration found that a common canal root treatment might not be as efficient as previously expected.

### Collaboration enabling factors

All presenters were asked to discuss their experiences of collaboration in low- and middle-income countries. Collaboration contributes to the development of research environments in low- and middle-income countries, was one perspective. Another one was that co-authorship with a high-income country partner university makes journal editors look more favourably on papers for publications, as was pointed out by Amna Riaz from Pakistan. Bureaucratic obstacles were also mentioned, including getting a visa to Sweden for collaborative work, which sometimes turns out to be time-consuming.

### Moderator and presenters

Moderated by Göran Bondjers, University of Gothenburg and Ulf Svanberg, Chalmers University of Technology.

#### **“Is the uMsunduzi Riverwater, South Africa, safe for drinking?”**

Presented by Zesizwe Ngubane, Durban University of Technology, South Africa. Co-authors: Ekaterina Sokolova and Viktor Bergion, both Chalmers University of Technology

#### **“Why is there an over-use of antibiotics in children under five years of age in East Africa?”**

Presenter and author: Matilda Emgård, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg

#### **“Lack of evidence for popular dental root canal treatment”**

Presented by Amna Riaz, Pakistan Institute of Medical Science, Islamabad, Pakistan. Co-author: Furqan Ali Shah, University of Gothenburg

#### **“Developing the best banana juice – what to think about”**

Presented by Nuria Majaliwa, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania. Co-authors: Oscar Kibazohi, University of Dar es Salaam, and Marie Alminger, Chalmers University of Technology  
Article: Proteomic potential of East African Highland Bananas (EAHBs) for banana juice extraction: comparison between juice-producing and cooking cultivars

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## Land and Society

The session illustrated the diversity of university collaborations ranging from technical and anthropological research, to teaching and long term institutional building. Matteo De Dona described the complexity of listening to science after having studied differences in the set up, culture and output from scientific advisory bodies tied to UN environmental conventions. Greater transparency about how research is influenced by values can make it easier for policymakers to make use of findings. The Covid lockdown has hit informal traders in Kenya very hard. Richard Kiaka showed that Saving and Loan groups, a grassroot financial innovation, have managed to adapt their rules and functions to the situation. To some extent this has cushioned the negative effect of Covid 19 for group members. The search for an alternative to conventional cement is well on its way. Luping Tang shared findings from promising trials with lower carbon footprints but hinted that it might take decades to take this solution to scale.

The long-term collaboration between Gothenburg and Rwanda on trees and climate change is paying dividends in terms of academic capacity, the number of joint publications and societal impact. The involvement of stakeholders e.g. forestry and agriculture agencies as research partners has increased the uptake of research findings in policymaking.

### Enabling factors for collaboration

Lock downs and travel restrictions have hindered but far from stopped ongoing research collaborations. Examples of enabling conditions for continued collaboration included institutionalised forms of collaboration, like monthly virtual meetings (Rwanda), secondment programmes, EU funding, that contributed to make networks robust (EU-Asia) or strong individual networks (Kenya).

## Moderator and presenters

Moderated by Liane Thuvander, Chalmers University of Technology

### “Epistemic framings: making sense of soil and land globally”

Presenter: Matteo De Donà, University of Gothenburg.

### “Enacting resilience in grassroots financial innovations in Kenya through institutional complexities”

Presenter: Richard Dimba Kiaka, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, JOOUST, Kenya. Co-author: Maria-Jose Zapata Campos, University of Gothenburg,

### “Non-conventional concrete with less environmental impact”

Presenter: Luping Tang, Chalmers University of Technology. Co-authors: Huai-Bao Le and Quoc-Bao Bui, both at Ton Duc Thang University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

### “Societal use of key research findings: examples from Rwanda”

Presenter: Johan Uddling Fredin, University of Gothenburg.