

DD871 Key Challenges in Global Development – 15 June 2021

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to Student Hub Live. Well, I know that for sure Beverley and Eleanor are looking forward to the session, and so am I, because we're going to take a look at the MSc. We're looking at specifically DD871 *Key challenges in global development*. So something we've been talking about a lot today. And I'm sure that the conversations will continue along the lines that we've had earlier.

But now, I'm joined by Charlotte Cross, who is teaching the MSc Global Development, as well as DD102, some of you Level 1 students may be interested to know. She's also working on several research projects, including collaborations with colleagues in Kenya and Tanzania to look at ways to improve access to cancer care in East Africa. But Charlotte, I guess, things must be quite tricky now you can't travel.

CHARLOTTE CROSS: Yeah. Very sad not to have the opportunity to spend as much time in Tanzania. We're doing a lot of, yeah, online workshops, like everybody.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. But amazing what you can achieve online probably and without the jet lag. Now, Mark, you're teaching the MSc Global Development. And you're interested also in global health in East Africa. But your focus is a bit different. You're interested in maritime culture and how heritages can be opportunities for developers.

MARK LAMONT: Yeah, that's right. So we work with a small women's group that is planting mangroves. But also, there was a way of organising a restaurant. And so the community built traditional canoes and a dhow to take people, tourists in this case, to that restaurant. So it's a bit about bringing cultural or marine cultural heritage into development.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. And all about getting sustainable ways for people to have additional incomes and activities and also, I guess, become real centres of their community.

MARK LAMONT: Yeah, the fisheries have really declined. And so there's a need for new ways of gaining a livelihood. So ecotourism is one option.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. Well, that sounds really, really exciting. So let's take a look at the module specifically. It's called Key challenges in global development. So what do you mean then by that term, key challenges in global development? And also, why is it important right now? Charlotte, I wonder if we might start with some thoughts from you?

CHARLOTTE CROSS: Sure. So maybe I'll start by thinking a bit about what we even mean by global development, which is quite a big and difficult question in itself, I suppose. So I think it's something that people could define in lots of different ways. But broadly, in this module, and when we talk about development generally, we're often concerned with processes of change, and what the implications are for important social concerns, like inequality, health, social justice. And basically, I suppose, whether people are able to live a life that they consider to be good, a life that they value.

So we're interested in understanding both how, kind of, long-term processes of change might impact on this. So perhaps something like the climate emergency, but also in trying to understand ways in which people go about trying to make their own lives or the lives of other people better through, I don't know, perhaps volunteering for their local food bank or working within, say, charitable organisations and things like that.

KAREN FOLEY: Interesting. Often, the term development, though, is something that's, sort of, often associated with poorer countries, isn't it?

CHARLOTTE CROSS: Yeah, I think, I guess that could be the image that comes to mind for a lot of people, maybe thoughts of, I don't know, Comic Relief or posters encouraging you to give money to support a school in - somewhere in East Africa or something. But I think in this module, we really think of development a bit, a bit more broadly, hence, using the term global development. I think we only really, I guess, have to think about our experiences in this country in the UK over the past few years, which have really shown the extent to which issues of deprivation, inequality, injustice, you know, are really things that matter for us here as well. Just think about the pandemic, for example. I think the data's really shown the disproportionate impact that this has had on people living within deprived areas even in a very wealthy country, like the UK.

KAREN FOLEY: We started today thinking about food security and also sustainability. And you're quite right. It is something that's not just, you know, an issue for the poorer countries because those things like inequalities, injustices, and even, you know, the choices that we make that underpin things like our values, et cetera, are really sort of inherent in our society, as well as elsewhere, but in quite different ways. We've asked people at home what important global development challenges they see. And this is what they said. The key thing here seems to be the wealth gap.

So as you mentioned, Charlotte, there with COVID, the extent to which we're seeing differences within different populations in the UK, but also internationally. There are big issues there. People are talking about things like geography. We've been talking about borders. Scottish independence is coming up. Other things like climate, and we've been looking at environment.

But there are also other things, as you mentioned before, things like local input and the contrast there between things like the global - global inequalities, global health, et cetera. Other things that are important here in terms of development are things like education, so things that we take for granted. And how these may shift. Attitudes - things like hate, for example. And also, our international relations, things like Brexit.

So throughout all of this, and I think because we're all social scientists here we can see that there are very many complex issues, Charlotte or Mark, are there any things you want to pick up on in terms of what our viewers have said on that word cloud?

MARK LAMONT: Well, I just think that it's interesting because the global - we understand the global to be about interconnection. And obviously, in that word cloud, there's the question of the gaps that are there or even the contradictions. And this course, I guess we try to get the students

to think in terms of those as, as global challenges. They're not challenges only in the global South but the global North.

And that's that connection point that we try to make so explicit at the core of the teaching. That many of these issues that are problematised impact on all nation states. And so we've kind of arranged it around looking at those challenges as something that each country has a stake in. And I think that's reflected also in the SDGs. But the wealth gap is - yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: What's the SDG? Is that the sustainable development goals?

MARK LAMONT: Yeah, so it's sustainable - I think we have an image of the sustainable development goals.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, let's take a look and talk us through them.

MARK LAMONT: Well, they came out of the Millennium Development Goals. And the distinction is really that this new set of targets for development from 2015 were drafted up to draw attention to the global North's role in the connection between, let's say, the outcomes of development in the global South and the global North were interconnected. So really, from 2015, we have seventeen development - sustainable development goals.

The emphasis is on sustainability because, obviously, that is - the system needs to - to provide for future generations. And yet, we are sort of meeting some of these goals. And in other goals, we're not meeting them as quickly as was projected. And they were meant to be - the targets were meant to be achieved by 2030.

But the number of different issues that are involved here are really overwhelming. And so in this, in this module, what we try to do is we try to look at six issues through four challenges. And the six issues, for example, are migration and environmental sustainability. But the big four challenges that we really focus on in this course are conflict, justice, governance and transformation.

KAREN FOLEY: And how did those challenges then help to gain an understanding?

CHARLOTTE CROSS: I think we see them as challenges that really cut across all of these individual issues. So thinking about some of the things that people have mentioned that we can see in the word cloud, mentioned things like borders, climate change. We try to think about - you know, the challenges are relevant to trying to understand and address all of these issues.

So the first challenge that we look at in the module, for example, is conflict. And the word conflict, you know, might sort of bring up images for a lot of people of, I don't know, armed conflicts. So like the image that we have here - this shows some UN peacekeepers in North Darfur in Sudan in an area that's been affected by a lot of violence. And this, this kind of organised conflict and violence is certainly something that we are interested in understanding. And it is something that we look at in the module.

But we also try to think about conflict a bit more broadly as something that doesn't just apply in those kind of circumstances, but that we need to think about if we want to understand and

address any kind of development issue. So development, we can really see it as something that is, you know, it's inherently conflictual. It's always shaped by competing interests and ideas, different visions about what a desirable future might look like. And what we should be doing to achieve it.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. And one of the other challenges that we heard about was justice. So I wonder if you can tell us a little bit about how that sort of relates to global developments?

MARK LAMONT: Yeah, I think actually this is something that maybe COVID is a good example of thinking about justice issues because COVID really showed us the gap in questions of justice, just in terms of maybe the distribution of the vaccines. We see that, you know, some countries had a real struggle to get the vaccinations in place. For many, I mean, obviously, it's a very complicated factor, but access to this - this image, in fact, is showing Sputnik V, which was rolled out in East Africa. Basically, because the access to some of the mainstream pharmaceutical, like AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines, were not available. And so there was kind of a rush to find a suitable generic vaccine.

There's kind of like an almost like a vaccine race in some countries to play politics in some senses. And that plays into the question of inequalities that are at the heart of some of these sort of justice global justice issues. Obviously, there's a link between socio-economic insecurity and infection rates, even though in COVID that was kind of turned on its head because, in fact, some of the more wealthy places were not as - were more badly affected than some of the places that have had long-term socio-economic insecurity, places like Kenya, for example, where I do my research.

But it also shows you how politics are involved in these justice issues. And so we would see, for example, with the vaccines, that countries played the kind of nationalist card with the different vaccines in the sense of trying to, to win favour in different government circles and so forth. So justice is, is one of the issues that we deal with. And it's, obviously, linked to questions of migration and socio-economic insecurity.

KAREN FOLEY: And another big challenge, Charlotte, is governance. This was something that was picked up in our work cloud earlier when we asked people at home about some of the key challenges here. So why did you decide to focus on governance in terms of a module that focuses on global development?

CHARLOTTE CROSS: I think, OK, I'm going to return I think again to the example of the pandemic to show why we think it's important. So, those of you that are based in the UK may remember that our prime minister was very fond of saying at one point that he was following the science in responding to the pandemic. And, you know, scientific research has been really important, of course, in discovering vaccines and new treatments and so on. But having, kind of, scientific - you know, the existence of a vaccine, or knowing how to treat a disease is really only part of the story. And responding to the pandemic also raised all these questions about, you know, we had to create new rules, new ways of interacting with each other, new expectations around how other people would behave and so on. It raised loads of questions. You know, should the police be stopping people asking where they're going in their cars and so on?

So all of these kind of challenges, and you can see some, I think this is in Sheffield, the image here, these are all kind of governance challenges, right. So governance basically refers to systems for managing social relations. So, it's about how authority is allocated between different actors, and how they're allowed to exercise it. It's about, you know, how resources are distributed between and within society. So in the module, we look at the ways in which this might happen through kind of formal rules, like, for example, laws that were passed in the UK stopping people from going overseas at points.

But also, we're interested in forms of governance that, you know, aren't written down, the more informal ways of shaping our behaviour. So I don't know. There were lots of examples, I think, early on in the pandemic, particularly of people using social media, for example, to shame other people who were perceived to be breaking rules. So this kind of - these informal ways in which norms are shaped are also really important here.

And within global development, there's been a lot of attention, a lot of debate about what kind of governance is good for development. And I don't think there's much agreement on that. And of course, it relates very much as well to questions of justice, you know. What do we think is fair? What kind of development is really desirable?

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. Let's end by seeing the word cloud about positive transformation. And Mark, I'm going to ask if you can talk about this as the final key challenge that you've looked at. So here, we can see that some of the key challenges people say are important are things around education.

So bringing about positive transformation involves, I guess, making people aware of these things. And of course, doing so may involve doing a module, et cetera, but also other things like localisation, collaboration, things like soft power, internet, and sort of commodities, I guess, are really important as well. Being able to talk together and communicate and not forgetting some of those basic aspects. So, so can you, just briefly, because we are out of time, Mark, just end with some thoughts on the notion of transformation as a challenge?

MARK LAMONT: Yeah, thanks. Well, I guess if you ask anyone these days, there's a real appetite for seeing a new world. And I think there's kind of a general consensus across the world that there's a need for transformation. Of course, global development is really about that. It is about sort of two elements of it. One is that we, through long-term processes, the world is changing. Through technological innovations, through migration exchange of ideas, through political changes, the world is changing. But we also have in mind a vision for that change.

So I guess that's where it touches upon the focus that we saw in the world cloud on education, because, obviously, we need new ways of thinking about how to do things. And certainly, that notion of transformation is that social changes is not enough. The challenges that we're facing require a much more radical restructuring of the basic way in which we live and the way in which we organise ourselves. So now, with the focus on global development, transformation really is about that kind of far-reaching changes that affect all countries in this interconnected world.

KAREN FOLEY: Charlotte and Mark, thank you so much. Some huge issues there. And I think you've brought them to light in a really, really interesting way, certainly lots for us to think about. So thank you very much for coming to fill us in on some of those important aspects.

We're going to have a quick break now because our next session is about international relations masters. So to get you geared up for that, we're going to show you a video about the BA (Honours) in International Studies and also one of our Who's Who videos, which features Dr. Filippo Boni. I'll see you very soon for that next session.

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