



L-R: Professor Matt Baillie Smith, Northumbria University; Professor Shekhar Seshadri, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, India; Dr Renu Khosla, Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence, India; and Professor Ravinder Kaur, IIT

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Tackling global challenges at North East summit

International development experts from across the world gathered in Newcastle upon Tyne this week for the fourth annual Global Challenges Summit.

Organised by Northumbria, Newcastle and Durham Universities, the summit aimed to highlight new ideas being used to tackle sustainable development challenges, including poverty and food security, health and well-being,

sustainable water and climate change.

The event celebrated the innovative and life-changing research being carried out by academics and development organisations all over the world, promoting the welfare of people living in developing countries.

The North East has developed a reputation as a centre of excellence for sustainable development in recent years, with Northumbria, Newcastle and Durham universities all involved in UK Research and Innovation's recently announced Global Research Hubs.

Funded through a £200m investment, the 12 Hubs will work with governments, international agencies, partners and NGOs across 85 countries to develop creative and sustainable solutions which help make the world safer, healthier and more prosperous.

Academics from Northumbria University's Centre for International Development, Newcastle University's Global Challenges Academy, Durham University's Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, and the Global Challenges Centre for Doctoral Training at Durham University spoke about their involvement in the Hubs and how they are working together to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Collaboration was one of the key themes of this year's summit, as Professor Matt Baillie Smith of Northumbria University explains: "The Summit provides a forum for sharing understanding, insights and innovation in research to address global challenges in developing countries, as well as an opportunity to develop new partnerships to maximise the positive impacts of the research."

Dr Elisa Lawson of Newcastle University said: "The co-production of gold standard research and initiatives that can inform policy and change people's lives for the better is what we excel at here in the North East. Working together locally and globally with a focus on the sustainable development goals can only make the world a better place for all."

Professor Louise Bracken, Executive Director of Durham University's Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, added: "Research and collaboration are crucial to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Collaboration

enables us to work with people in each country who understand local policies, challenges, and landscape, ensuring we are making real impact to address global challenges. The summit was an excellent opportunity to see the collaborative work of the three universities and how we are working together to deliver the SDGs.”

The summit featured a number of invited speakers including:

- Liberty Oberlander, from the Association of Commonwealth Universities
- Dr Renu Khosla, from the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence, in India
- Professor Ravinder Kaur, from the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi, India
- Professor Shekhar Seshadri, from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, in India.

Issues under discussion during the Global Challenges Summit included the enablers for excellent global challenges research and practice; how diverse disciplines and sectors can come together to best achieve positive impact in development; and how universities can best respond to the UN Sustainable Development agenda.

This year’s summit also featured a New Voices panel, in which post-graduate students from all three universities shared their global challenges research and enterprise activities, inspiring the audience with their current projects and ambitions for their future plans in sustainability and international development.

The 4th annual Global Challenges Summit took place on Tuesday 9 July at Northern Stage, Newcastle.

Find out more about global challenges and international development research at each of the universities involved by following the links below:

[Northumbria University Centre for International Development](#)

[Newcastle University Global Challenges Academy](#)

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