Alumni talk November 22nd 2025

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen – it is a pleasure to be here once more. But as Robin has told us "time is limited" so in the words attributed to Henry VIII when addressing his wives – "I will not keep youUtoo long".

After some 60 years of experience with the Department including an already lengthy period of retirement, it is good to have this opportunity to reflect on various aspects of its evolving offers to students – undergraduate and graduate. Geoff has talked about the very early establishment of rigorous quantitative methods as a core component of the syllabuses. Mark will comment on the key role that the teaching of economic history has always played. I would like to focus on how the gradually increased *international* focus of the Department emerged from the early 1980s.

From the University's foundation in the 1960s and until the early 1980s, the student intake had been predominantly UK-based with just a few European students and an even smaller number from further afield. But from 1982 we had the Thatcher reforms and the strong incentive these gave to actively recruit from further afield. Having myself worked in Africa and later in the World Bank , I was all too aware of the dearth of technically trained economists in many parts of the developing world. As a very young man I had the privilege just after Independence of meeting Julius Nyerere - the first President of Tanzania. He told me that there was only one higher degree economist in the country. I was equally aware of the gaps in our own syllabuses that needed to be filled if we were to have a role in remedying this vital shortage of economists across the developing world.

EXAMPLES included the fundamental challenges encountered by economies where agriculture prevails over industry; the distinctive problems a macroeconomist faces in African or Asian economies compared to those in the UK; and the difficulties statistical offices encounter when conducting household and labour force surveys within societies characterized by substantial subsistence communities.

One response which Jeff Round and myself came up with was to propose new Diploma and Masters programmes in *Quantitative Development Economics* – a label designed to differentiate us from the more descriptive/political economy-style of development teaching at places such as the IDS in Sussex. The underlying idea was to retain much of the rigorous quantitative and theoretical core of the established Warwick degrees, but to supplement these with specialised policy and some theoretical topics of greater relevance to students from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

After approving the idea, the department was quickly successful in obtaining scholarships from the EU and the World Bank. And above all we were well equipped with some experienced faculty to teach the new materials: Graham Pyatt; Ravi Kanbur now at Cornell; Jeff Round; myself and soon after Andy Mackay – later Department head at Sussex; Tony Addison later Chief Economist at UN WIDER in Helsinki; Laurence Haddad now a global authority on food security and previously head of IDS Sussex; Andre Croppenstedt; and the erudite John McKinnon who combined his economics with an intense interest in writing and reviewing poetry !

In preparing for this talk I totted up the number of students who went through the QDE programmes from about 1987. By 2007 it added up to some 180 and, amazingly, from 45 different countries – mostly non-European. Some went on to complete PhDs, including our Honorary Graduate Mahmoud Mohieldin as well as Clara de Sousa from Mozambique, Robert Osei and Robert Quartey (both now professors in Ghana) and Roberto de Santis. I am personally very proud of this record – of course we would not claim that QDE was the only component of the Department's success in terms of its improved offer to international students, but it was surely a major contributor.

It is even more heartening to note the distinction achieved by many of our graduates.

Just a few examples:

Mark Bowman: now the Vice-President for Policy at the EBRD, and previously Director General International Finance at the UK Treasury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's deputy at the G7, G20 and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Clara de Sousa: currently serves as the Division Director for the Sahel countries at the World Bank. Previously, she managed the IDA Strategy and Operations unit, overseeing its replenishments, and held the position of Executive Director at the Central Bank of Mozambique.

Makhtar Diop: A Senegalese national who after leaving Warwick completed a Phd at Nottingham and then returned to his home country where he soon became Senegal's youngest ever Minister of Finance – a role in which he radically improved the country's international investment rating. From there he moved to the World Bank where he became in succession Director for East Africa; Director of Operations and Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean; Country Director for Brazil; Vice President for Africa (responsible for all of Sub-Saharan Africa). In March 2021, he was appointed the Managing Director and Vice President of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the. World Bank. He is the first and still the only African to

hold this prestigious position in what is the world's largest source of private financing for developing countries.

Mahmoud Mohieldin: After studying for the Masters in QDE, Mahmoud completed his PhD at Warwick and then returned to Egypt where he first held a number of technical jobs in various Ministries before becoming the Country's Minister of Investment – from where he led major regulatory reforms that greatly benefitted the private investment climate in Egypt. In 2010 he moved to the World Bank as Managing Director – assuming responsibility from the World Bank side for the 2030 development agenda and its current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Then in 2020 the UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Mahmoud as the UN's Special Envoy on *Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and so the SDGs. Today he continues in that role and remains a high-profile and extremely energetic participant in global debates about energy, reforms of the international financial architecture , climate change and of course the SDGs.

Jan Dehn. After leaving Warwick, Jan studied for a PHd at Oxford, became an ODI Fellow working in Uganda, and then an Economist at the World Bank. He moved first to Credit Suisse First Boston and later became an influential trader and adviser in emerging market sovereign bonds at the large Ashmore Group. Significant financial success there has permitted an early retirement.

Peter Quartey: Peter is currently a professor at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), the head of the Department of Economics and director of the Economic Policy Management Programme of the University of Ghana.

Paul Ladd: Paul was given an Honorary Doctorate by Warwick in 2016 . He is the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission, Europe (UNECE) Sustainable Development Unit. Prior to this he was Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD); an adviser at the UK Treasury, Chief Economist at Christian Aid, and DFID's economic adviser for Southern Africa.

Jennifer A. Barugh: Jennifer has been the Director of Exchequer Strategy for the Government of Scotland since 2024. After completing her masters in QDE she first took up an ODI Fellowship in Lesotho before joining the UK's DFID where she eventually became the head of the DFID office in Uganda where, among other things she managed programmes dealing with refugees from both Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Bheki Lange: Bheki became a distinguished South African diplomat He was exiled in May 1976, initially to Tanzania but later for studies in the Soviet Union and then to Zambia. In returning to South Africa after the election of the ANC, he eventually became the Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic to

Russia to August 2010 and then to China to December 2014. Probably now retired.

Roberto de Santis: Roberto is the Senior Lead Economists at the European Central Bank. On completing his Ph.D. at Warwick, he worked initially at the Kiel Institute of World Economics in Germany.

Of course, we have no way of knowing how these former QDE students would today rate the importance of their short period of post-graduate study at Warwick. But I do know as one of the teachers, that these programmes gave them a good solid knowledge of economic principles and practice that hopefully helped them avoid just a few of the many pitfalls of delivering policy advice in their respective later roles. It also gave Warwick a valued body of now highly experienced alumni in many different countries.

Alan Roe

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