

### YESI FELLOWS SCHEME: PIONEERING RESEARCH ACROSS BOUNDARIES

The **YESI Fellows scheme** is a groundbreaking environmental sustainability research initiative. It supports short-term, high-impact projects led by University of York (UoY) staff and collaborators that:

- Cross disciplinary and faculty boundaries
- Foster deep collaboration with external partners
- Accelerate environmental sustainability solutions that wouldn't be possible otherwise

## YESI Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellows Scheme

LAUNCHED 2022

YESI Knowledge Exchange Fellows lead projects connecting researchers with end users to tackle real-world environmental challenges, aligned with YESI's core themes: Environment and Health, Resilient Socio-ecological Systems, and Food, Water and Waste.

### AT A GLANCE

- 14 projects awarded
- 14 departments/centres
- across all 3 faculties

### OUTPUTS

- **£3,031,521** grants submitted
- **£1,108,251** awarded
- 1 paper submitted, 6 in preparation

**In collaboration with:** North York Moors National Park, Action Aid, NHS, The Alliance of Sustainable Building Products, York Explore, Climate Thinker India, The National Archives

## KE Fellows Project Spotlights

### Embedding environmental quality into Nature-Based Interventions for health (2023/24)



Project workshop participants, standing in front of the Humber Bridge

Led by Dr Laura Harrison (Environment and Geography), this Knowledge Exchange project connected early-career researchers with local organisations to explore how environmental quality can strengthen the health benefits of Nature-Based Interventions.

It revealed the need for better integration between health and environmental goals, and stronger links between NHS services and community nature programmes. The findings are now informing new resources to support more effective evaluation and practice.

York: Making air pollution visible research project “The YESI Knowledge Exchange Fellows scheme has allowed for a project to be funded that generally falls outside the spheres and size of UKRI grants. The bridging of art-science has real advantages when communicating to the public, allowing us to visualise a topic from a different angle.” — Dr Daniel Bryant, Dept of Chemistry, University of York

## Understanding the ‘overlapping’ risks of climate change and urbanisation 2022/23

Led by Dr Anika Haque (Environment and Geography) and Prof Helen Elsey (Health Sciences) this Knowledge Exchange project, explored how climate change and rapid urbanisation in Dhaka, Bangladesh, intersect to impact gendered wellbeing—and how different sectors understand and respond to these overlapping risks.

By bringing together environment, health, and development stakeholders, the team identified barriers to coordinated action and offered systems thinking training to build local capacity. Insights were shared through a policy brief and video, highlighting the urgent need for integrated, gender-responsive approaches.

Vlog:



## YESI Discipline Hopping (DH) Fellows Scheme

LAUNCHED 2022

YESI Discipline Hopping Fellows form cross-disciplinary University of York teams to spark new ideas and collaborations across Arts, Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences—tackling environmental challenges through fresh, interdisciplinary approaches.

### AT A GLANCE

- 11 projects awarded
- 15+ departments
- across all 3 faculties

### OUTPUTS

- £6,762,881 grants submitted
- £400,000+ awarded
- 2 MSc projects, 2 papers & 3 in preparation

We have supported discipline hopping projects in departments across all 3 faculties of the University of York in collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute at York and Intelligent Games and Game Intelligence (iGGi)

## DISCIPLINE HOPPING PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Craftwell 2022/23

Led by Prof Peter Coventry (Health Sciences) and Dr Aimée Little (Archaeology), this Discipline Hopping project explored how outdoor archaeology-inspired craft workshops—such as ancient bead- and pottery-making—can support student wellbeing.

The study found that these hands-on, heritage-based activities in natural environmental settings were well received and helped participants feel more connected, mindful, and engaged.

With strong participation and positive feedback, the project shows promise for wider use of heritage crafting to promote mental health and social connection—core aspects of sustainability.



Workshop participants

Connecting blue carbon research project: "YESI Fellows Discipline Hopping funding helped us connect with the wider UK coastal community, linking academia, conservation groups, and land managers. We're now building on these conversations to pursue further interdisciplinary funding." — Dr. Kelly R. Redeker, Dept of Biology, University of York

# INTERNATIONAL FELLOWS SCHEME

LAUNCHED 2022

The YESI International Fellows scheme enables University of York staff and global academic partners to visit each other's institutions, build interdisciplinary collaborations on environmental sustainability, co-develop research outputs, and strengthen international networks.

## AT A GLANCE

- **18** projects awarded
- **11** departments/centres
- Fellows from all **3** faculties in York

## COLLABORATORS IN:

Benin, Brazil, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Serbia, Sri Lanka & Türkiye

## OUTPUTS

- **£185,987** grants submitted
- **£18,300** grants awarded
- **£30,535** awaiting decision
- 3 papers submitted, 5 in preparation
- **3** partner institutions (Nigeria, Pakistan, Ghana) completed Climate Fresk Facilitator training
- Seedcorn funding from Valuing Voices: **£10,000**
- **City Nature Challenge 2025** - from York to Kano

## NEW FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS (MoUs/Lols)

- Bayero University Kano (Nigeria), Lahore College for Women (Pakistan). Others in progress.
- University of Eswatini (Eswatini)
- Enabled co-applications to HEC (Pakistan), TetFund (Nigeria), ACU, Brazilian CNPq

Leadership, logistics and health in the local leafy green supply chain IF project: "The YESI Fellows Scheme was an incredible opportunity to collaborate with like-minded researchers across the world. It brought much-needed focus to a critical, under-researched area, and the funding made it possible to unite people, generate valuable findings, and build lasting collaborations." — Dr Emelia Darko Adzimah, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana

## INTERNATIONAL FELLOWS PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Multicultural Perspectives on Urban Green Spaces (2023/24)

This International Fellows project, led by Dr Katherine Brookfield (UoY) and Dr Aysha Hanif (Lahore College for Women University, Pakistan), brought together researchers, community members, and policymakers to explore how different cultural groups perceive and use urban green spaces.

Through UK site visits and cross-cultural knowledge exchange, it laid the groundwork for inclusive research that ensures green space benefits are accessible to all.

Aysha has continued to share insights in public forums and media in Pakistan, highlighting the global relevance of the work.



Lahore College for Women University (LCWU), Pakistan



Aysha and Katherine, with other international fellows and workshop participants

Integrating sustainability into university teaching International Fellows project: "The YESI International Fellowship was a great opportunity to reflect on our own approaches, question current education and research practices, and to play with shared utopian visions for environmental sustainability through education. The fellowship has sparked a collaboration that will extend beyond the scheme. Thank you!" — Lynda Dunlop, Dept of Education, University of York and Violeta Orlovic Lovren, University of Belgrade, Serbia





Bayero State University, Kano,  
Ghana



Participants undertaking Kano's first City Nature Challenge, 2025.  
Dr Mohammed joined this bioblitz during her stay in York and through use of the iNaturalist App, has started to record the biodiversity in Kano City, Nigeria

## Diversifying Livelihoods for Flood-Resilient Communities (2023/24)

This International Fellows project, led by Dr Nicola Favretto (University of York) and Dr Umme Khalid Mohammed (Bayero University Kano, Nigeria), explored how alternative livelihood strategies can support flood resilience among women farmers in Nigeria's drylands. Focusing on Jigawa State, the collaboration examined gendered vulnerabilities and enablers of resilience.

The project produced a co-authored paper, a seminar series, and helped catalyse Kano State's participation in the global City Nature Challenge—demonstrating real-world impact beyond academia.

## IMPACT AT A GLANCE

YESI's Discipline Hopping, Knowledge Exchange and International Fellows schemes are catalysts for environmental innovation at York — transforming ideas into action and research into real-world change.

- **Leadership Pipeline:** Researchers at all career stages gain vital experience as Principal Investigators — building confidence, visibility, and nurturing the next generation of interdisciplinary sustainability leaders.
- **Collaborations that Count:** Fellowships sparked bold new research across disciplines and forged powerful, cross-sector links with policy makers, land managers, conservation groups, communities and global partners.
- **From Insight to Impact:** Workshops, stakeholder engagement and pilot studies led to new tools, follow-on funding bids and long-term partnerships — enhancing YESI's reputation as a go-to hub for sustainability expertise.
- **A Culture of Connection:** By enabling inclusive, high-impact spaces for research, YESI is shifting the culture towards collaboration, clarity and real-world relevance — reinforcing York's global profile and leadership in environmental sustainability research.

**Foodscapes as Nutrition Intervention Tools in Global South - A New Agenda project:** "The YESI International Fellows Scheme is uniquely "international-user-friendly." It's broadened my outlook on using interdisciplinarity to tackle sustainability and has truly transformed my research approach. The new collaborations and global connections are the icing on the cake—thank you YESI and the ever-supportive YESI Team!" — Dr Abena Boakye, KNUST, Ghana

## YESI Fellows schemes pump-prime world-leading environmental sustainability research collaborations

- £9,980,389 grants submitted across all schemes
- £1,526,551 funding awarded
- £2,664,032 in funding currently awaiting outcomes

Additional award: Fellowship covering 5 years of Postdoc salary