**Lisa Smith, School of Criminology (17.06.22)**

My name is Professor Lisa Smith, I’m based in the School of Criminology, where I’m a Professor of Criminology and also the Head of School.

My research has always been kind of at the interface between criminology, psychology, law and forensic science. So I’ve worked with a number of people across the university, most recently, and kind of the longest-term project, I’ve been working with folks in Genetics, so the Department of Genetics and Genome Biology, on a project looking at improving access to justice for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in low-resource environments. Just to give you an example, we’re working in Kenya - Keyna has quite an endemic sexual and gender-based violence issue, and really limited capacity to properly investigate and prosecute perpetrators, and one of the clear challenges that they have is the collection of forensic DNA from survivors within 72 hours of sexual- and gender-based violence occurring. And so we’ve worked quite closely with a number of different partners in Kenya, most notably with the Wangu Kanja Foundation, which is an NGO, working with survivors of sexual violence to develop a new DNA evidence testing kit, which is quite interesting because from a scientific point of view it’s not ground-breaking by any means, but I think the interdisciplinary aspects of this project have enabled us to work across criminology, law, genetics, and forensic science, and with survivors and NGO groups to co-develop a really simple, low-cost but effective kit that is currently in use in a number of medical clinics in Kenya to help survivors provide physical evidence to corroborate their claims of sexual violence.

All of those different sectors have got different goals, and different KPIs that they’re trying to achieve, and so it’s again trying to bring everybody together and find all the common ground between different agencies, and then bringing that together with academic research - again, to realise how you can all bring something to the project that’s going to have good outcomes in areas where you all want to see outcomes, so in the case of our project, justice for survivors is what we’re all looking for, and we’re all coming at it from slightly different angles, but we realise that if we work together we can achieve some change in that common area we’re all interested in.

My advice to people is always to take their projects and look at them from lots of different perspectives and see where the gaps in knowledge in a particular programme of research are; once you identify where you’ve got some gaps, then it’s really important to engage with mechanisms at the University like LIAS to try and start identifying people with that expertise that you can work with.

I really love - so Victoria Park being obviously right next to campus is a lovely walk around, but I really love the Peace Walk part of Vicky Park, it kind of connects Victoria Park with University Road, and it’s just really nice, it’s always got really lovely flowers planted, it’s always got people sitting on the benches reading books or chatting or whatever, it’s just a very, very quiet walk that just connects that Park with University Road.