**Caroline Upton, School of Geography, Geology and the Environment (16.06.22)**

I’m Caroline Upton, I’m a Professor in the School of Geography, Geology and the Environment. I’m a human geographer, an environmental geographer, so I’m based in the Bennet Building.

I’ve been involved in projects with colleagues who are earth observation remote sensing specialists, I’ve been involved in projects with ecologists, conservation biologists, anthropologists, livestock arrangement and management specialists, so a whole host of different people and different groups. I’m involved in a couple of things - I’m involved in a LIAS-funded project around net zero in pastoralist landscapes, so working again with quite a range of different backgrounds, working with not only academic partners but local NGOs and practitioners which is really important to me; it’s only a really small project that one, but it’s kind of thinking about what are the key, what’s the understanding at the moment of the actual and potential impacts of net zero energy transitions on pastoralist landscapes, and what are the questions that we want to ask, not only as academics, but as those communities themselves, given that the use of these kind of landscapes may be accelerating as people think about 2050 net zero commitments, for example.

So that’s one, then there’s another one which is in Indonesia looking at drought and peatland fires in Indonesian Borneo - that’s a much larger project both in terms of the scale and the duration of it, and that’s working with colleagues of different disciplines in Leicester, but also other UK universities, and then partner institutions in Indonesia, in other universities and organisations within the country, and again, we’ve got a whole host of different disciplines and backgrounds enrolled in that, so that’s really exciting.

One of the things that is really important to me is developing those partnerships with, not only in-country academics, but also with activist groups, with NGOs, with local communities etc., so I think that kind of transdisciplinary element, so we’re not only thinking about academic disciplines and knowledges, but thinking about diverse knowledges beyond that, and the very critical aspects they bring to thinking through these issues is really important.

For me personally, I think, as with probably most academics, we’re quite comfortable in our own little silos, and it’s quite easy to revert to that, particularly under pressure of deadlines, of deliverables etc., so I think it’s sort of constantly being open to challenging yourself, to being challenged, feeling uncomfortable, and to being humble, and to thinking ‘what is it that I can learn from this situation?’ I think that’s kind of the way I like to do things, but yes, it is kind of hard!

I tend to just, if I have the chance, to just go and sit in Victoria Park, and find a nice shady spot and just kind of chill out there for ten or fifteen minutes, so that tends to be my escape place.