

# Professor Paul R. van Gardingen FRSA

B.Sc. (hons.) Ph.D. (Canterbury, New Zealand)

[www.pvqglobal.uk](http://www.pvqglobal.uk)

ORCID  [0000-0002-6395-1968](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6395-1968)

 [paul-van-gardingen](https://www.linkedin.com/in/paul-van-gardingen)



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## Personal Details

**Place of Birth:** Christchurch, New Zealand.

**Nationalities:** New Zealand, British (Previously also Netherlands).

**Higher Education:** PhD (Plant Physiology): University of Canterbury, New Zealand (1984-1987)  
BSc (Hons, 1<sup>st</sup> Class), Plant Physiology: University of Canterbury, New Zealand (1981-1983)

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## Global Leadership in Higher Education, Research and Innovation

A results-focused leader in global research and higher education with over thirty years of experience working in over 50 countries.

An academic focus inspired by research on global development, environmental sustainability and innovation has delivered activities in the research and higher education sectors as well as having extensive experience working for the public and private sectors and civil society.

- **Drives sustainable and resilient growth** within organisations whilst also valuing and building diversity within the groups I have led or worked in partnership with.
- **Builds high-value strategic relationships** to support business growth and delivery, whilst raising global profile and reputation, which in turn enhances global student recruitment and research income.
- **Promotes entrepreneurship and innovation**, growing the core business functions of research, education and innovation in the fields of higher education, research and innovation.
- **Works in partnership**, locally, nationally and globally to develop highly skilled students and researchers, who in turn deliver value to society and the economy.

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## Career History

### Current Roles

- Professor of International Development. School of Geography, Geology and Environment University of Leicester. June 2017 – January 2020: Honorary Chair February 2020 –
- Independent Researcher and Consultant. Sustainable Development and Higher Education
- Member of the UK-BEIS Technical Advisory Group (ODA Research). Jan 2021 –Present

### Previous Roles

• Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Global Engagement, University of Leicester	May 2018 – Jan 2020
• Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, International and Development Research, University of Leicester	Jul 2017 – May 2018
• Professor of International Development. University of Leicester	Nov 2016 – current
• Director, Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) Programme	Sep 2010- Sep 2016
• Director: Research Into Results (RIR) Limited (University of Edinburgh subsidiary company)	Sep 2010 – Sep 2016
• UNESCO Chair of International Development, The University of Edinburgh (Personal Chair)	2008 - 2016
• Senior Lecturer, (Sustainable Development) The University of Edinburgh	2003 – 2008
• Lecturer (Crop Science), The University of Edinburgh	Aug 1991–2003
• Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (NZ) Post-Doctoral Research Fellow	Nov1989–July 1991
• AFRC Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh,	Nov 1986–Oct 1989

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## Career Highlights and Achievements

**Current Roles:** (see [www.pvgglobal.uk/activity/current-activities/](http://www.pvgglobal.uk/activity/current-activities/))

- Independent Consultant: Higher Education and Global Research
- Member of the UK-BEIS Technical Advisory Group (ODA Research). Jan 2021 –Present
- Honorary Chair in International Development, University of Leicester. February 2020 –Present

Since February 2020 I have held an Honorary Chair in International Development in the School of Geography, Geology and Environment. A core area of my research is the evaluation of academic impact and equity of partnerships in UK-funded development research ([www.pvgglobal.uk/activity/devpubmetric/](http://www.pvgglobal.uk/activity/devpubmetric/)). Results from this work is being used by BEIS and UKRI to inform the next phases of the Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund.

I am currently working on projects to build capacity for science, innovation and research in East Africa and Kurdistan.

### University of Leicester

- **Deputy-Pro-Vice-Chancellor. Global Engagement** (and previously DPVC International and Development Research. Strategic university leadership driving growth of global research and innovation and global engagement.
- Lead academic / PI responsible for circa £3 million of new development research funding (GCRF-QR)
- Designed and led delivery of Leicester's GCRF Strategy (commended as exemplary by Research England).
- PI for additional proposals to GCRF exceeding £19 million.
- Delivered Leicester's approach to managing Brexit risk and transition planning changing from a reactive to a much more proactive, engaged and active process working closely with BEIS and UUK.
- Led the development of the University's Global Engagement Strategy and owned the process to build a delivery plan and associated KPIs. Following the appointment of Leicester's new VC (November 2019), this work was integrated into the development of a new University Strategic Plan.
- Leading Leicester's approach to building a Duty of Care Policy and delivery systems for international working.
- Leading the development of a major new initiative to engage with the private sector to create opportunities for young people in Africa through education, research and enterprise. The work is now continuing independently of the University in partnership with the Baroness of Leicester.

### Previous Posts

- Contributing to the conceptualisation, design and managing the delivery of the UK's Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation Programme (ESPA). ESPA, valued at around £43 million, was the UK's largest research investment in global environmental science at the time. Direct Management of £12 million and up to 15 staff. Indirect management of £43 million programme involving over 1000 researchers in 53 countries.
- Major contributions to DFID's environmental science portfolios, commencing with research in Indonesia, and then expanding to a global remit and into science policy. Lead researcher for UK-Indonesia Tropical Forestry Management Programme (1991-2000)
- Leading major change processes to respond to major external political drivers for research. These included responding to the creation of DFID and its new priorities for poverty alleviation (DFID Forestry research in Indonesia), the establishment of the MDGs and SDGs (DFID and NERC/RCUK) and responding to the major changes for development science (ESPA) when the 2010 UK Coalition Government was formed.
- Creating a successful and profitable subsidiary company at the University of Edinburgh (Research into Results) with an annual turnover averaging £1-2 million p.a. Held the roles of Company Director and *de facto* CEO.

### Research Highlights

- Principal Investigator or manager with responsibility for over £20 million of UK Research Funding. (see: [Annex 5](#))
- Strategic leadership and management of the £43 million ESPA Programme.
- 73 academic publications and 47 technical papers. H-Index 20. [www.pvgglobal.uk/publications/](http://www.pvgglobal.uk/publications/)

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## Key Skills and Capabilities

### Strategic Leadership and Delivery

Highly experienced in the development of strategies for delivery of global higher education and research.

Examples include:

- Leading the production of a new Strategic Framework for Global Engagement at the University of Leicester supporting research and education.
- Developed and implemented the University of Leicester's GCRF Strategy, which was commended by Research England as being exemplary, one of only three research-intensive institutions in England to get this recognition.
- Leading and managing global / multicultural teams for the delivery of world-class research and higher education. I have worked in the UK and in most major developing countries.
- Highly experienced in leading processes of change management, including responding to major political processes including Brexit, and transitions including the establishment of DFID in 1997 and the major changes for public service delivery following the 2010 UK General Election.
- Developing ESPA's Strategies which were highlighted by external reviewers of the programme as examples of global best practice.

### Major achievements include:

- Leading activities to growth and diversify the University of Leicester's global education portfolio with key areas of success in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. As a result of this work, Leicester's TNE numbers were projected to grow by over 250% by 2026 representing an increase of more than 2500 full-time students.
- Leading diversification of Leicester's global research portfolio. Research income, measured by value of new grants, doubled to £17 million in 2018, and in the same year international research income exceeded 25% of the University's research activity. Growth came from the combination of global challenge research (ODA) and industrial sources.
- Leadership and management of the globally respected £43 million UK Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation programme (ESPA) involving over 1000 researchers in 53 countries.
- Leadership and management of the UK Government's support for the African Union and Government of Rwanda to grow systems for research and innovation which led to the current system for HE and research in Rwanda.
- Leading and managing delivery of the research component of the UK-Indonesia Tropical Forestry Research Programme (ITFMP) and associated SYMFOR project (both DFID funded) from 1991-2000.

### Research Leadership

*All of my professional activities are led or inspired through the application of world-class research*

Highlights include:

- Scientific leadership and management of global research programmes including ESPA, the UK's ITFMP and SYMFOR.
- I established the Nairobi Alliance as a strategic partnership between the University of Leicester and four major research-intensive universities in Africa, the Nairobi Alliance. Through the Alliance I am leading work on innovation for development, sustainable and the fate of plastics in the environment in Malawi and Kenya.
- My current research on innovation for development continues to track ESPA's research outcomes and impacts (using UKRI data in the public domain) and is informing the design of the next phases of GCRF and the Newton Fund. (see: [www.pvgglobal.uk/devpubmetric](http://www.pvgglobal.uk/devpubmetric)).

A common theme of my career has been the [application of data analytics](#) and working with complex datasets or developing new techniques. Each of these areas are supported by highly cited [publications](#).

### Global Engagement

I have extensive experience of working in a wide range of professional and cultural contexts, having worked during my career in over 50 countries. I have experience working in Europe, China, India, Sub-Saharan Africa, the ASEAN region, South America and Oceania. Further details regarding these activities are available as an interactive map at [www.pvgglobal.uk/partnership](http://www.pvgglobal.uk/partnership).

## **Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

Innovation and entrepreneurship have been an important part of my career as a way of building impact, ensuring that research is put into use to benefit society, the economy and environment. At the University of Leicester, I promoted the role of innovation and enterprise as a key pathway to impact for Leicester's global challenge and ODA research. At a strategic level, this was an important theme in the GCRF Strategy I produced and the Nairobi Alliance that I developed as a key GCRF partnership and Initiative at Leicester. Through the Alliance, I worked closely with the University of Nairobi and OCED to promote the linkages between innovation, enterprise and sustainable development.

In my earlier work, as ESPA Director, I promoted the use of social enterprise models as a way to build impact from research, which included creating a highlight successful subsidiary company at the University of Edinburgh, which hosted both the ESPA Directorate and DFID's agricultural Research into Use programme. Other relevant examples that I delivered whilst at Edinburgh, included leading the design of a process to deliver Rwanda's new Science and Innovation system, and leading the UK Government's support for the African Union on their continental science and innovation programme as a follow-up to the UK's 2005 G8 Presidency and Commission for Africa Report.

## **Senior Management**

I have held management roles with increasing levels of responsibility starting with work on the UK-Indonesia Tropical Forestry Management Programme (1991 onwards), leading to my Director-level post in ESPA, and my role of DPVC Global Engagement at the University of Leicester. I am experienced in working as a member of institutional senior leadership teams in both higher education (University of Leicester) and as a research funder (ESPA). Both of these roles required excellent internal and external communication skills. They also provided valuable experience of acting in a senior role as an ambassador for my organisation.

I am experienced in leading and managing teams that link academics, professional services and the business sector, working in ways that cross disciplines and cultures, whilst ensuring that the application of academic excellence is used to empower the delivery of results to benefit society. I ensure the teams I am responsible for are empowered to be successful; having a set of clearly defined strategic objectives, adequate staff and financial resources and plans for future development.

At the University of Leicester my leadership role as DPVC involved managing delivery relating to global education and research activities. I worked in partnership with the leadership teams of the University's three academic colleges and the professional services teams for External Relations, Research and Enterprise, Finance and Planning. I would build task-orientated teams with these groups and manage delivery reporting to the Executive Board. This approach of matrix management was used to tasks including developing the new Global Engagement Strategy/Framework and managing the University's institution-wide response to Brexit. I had direct management and budget responsibility for the University's central support of global challenge research (>£1 million p.a.). My role also included supporting senior staff development through mentoring to enhance their delivery of results and management of their teams and resources.

At the University of Edinburgh, I held the post of Director of the UK's Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation Programme from 2010 to 2016. As ESPA Director I was the leader of the UK's £43 million investment in global environmental research, which involved a team of over 1000 researchers working in 53 countries. I had direct budgetary responsibility for nearly £12 million and the ESPA Directorate, a team of up to 15 people reported to me.

At the University of Edinburgh, I established and led a development-focused subsidiary company "Research into Results (RIR)". RIR was designed to overcome the problems of traditional University management and financial systems to provide a more flexible and fleet-footed platform to deliver global research and development activities including hosting the ESPA Directorate. RIR had a 6-figure annual turnover and was effectively run as a social enterprise with substantive annual operating surpluses reinvested in the University in research and education. I was a Company Director for RIR and was the *de facto* CEO of the company for much of this period.

## **Global Education, Student Recruitment and Transnational Education (TNE)**

As DPVC Global Engagement at the University of Leicester I had responsibility for creating a strategic approach for the growth of international recruitment and the revenue generated from the University's global education offer. Working with Professional Services teams and academic Schools, an approach was developed that focused on a small number of high-value partnerships. Actions were then initiated to ensure that these were delivering high-quality education, enhanced student satisfaction, employability. I supported colleagues to build more sustainable business models forming part of a portfolio of activities designed to provide enhanced resilience through diversity.