



International innovation and impact recognised with prestigious award

A professor in plant nutrition from the University of Nottingham has won a prestigious Innovator of the Year award for international impact, in recognition of his world-leading research into solving hidden hunger.

Professor Martin Broadley, alongside Louise Ander of the British Geological Survey, were presented with the award by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) for their pioneering work on GeoNutrition and the spatial aspects of hidden hunger. This project is supporting international efforts to reduce micronutrient deficiencies (MNDs) in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. These MNDs are often called 'hidden hunger' because they can arise even when a person's energy intake is adequate and can cause a profound disease burden at population levels.

The BBSRC awards are designed to recognise the full breadth of impacts that BBSRC investments in research have, from creation of spinout companies or social enterprises, to working in collaboration with business and NGOs, to working with policy makers, both in the UK and abroad.

Collaborative ethos

Professor Broadley said: "Louise and I are delighted and honoured to share this award. The judging panel were interested to hear how a project with its roots in innovative approaches to spatial micronutrient mapping in the UK, which was in fact supported with BBSRC funding, is now being applied on cross-national and regional scales. What clearly impressed them further was the collaborative ethos of GeoNutrition, how we communicate and work with our partners and empower local, long-term solutions to this global challenge by building their research capacity."

Dr Ander added: "Our international partners want to work with us; they no longer need to. By funding equipment, training and supporting PhDs in Malawi and Ethiopia, we are building real partnerships. This is a real accolade for the University, BGS and our UK partners but what is truly significant is that our international collaborators share this honour with us."

Evidence for improvement

The Geonutrition project aims to improve baseline evidence on the prevalence and causes of MNDs, and test a promising strategy to alleviate MNDs called biofortification which seeks to improve the micronutrient content of food crops.

A £4.4m grant from the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) is helping the Geonutrition team gather analysis and data on MND's. Teams of researchers and technicians from Nottingham and Malawi are currently sampling soils and cereal crops in Malawi to build up a national picture of the quantities of nutrients in soil and crops, which in turn critically affects human health.

Data from this sampling will be used to support decision making in both policy and industry sectors; and test agricultural and food systems interventions to reduce MNDs in geographical contexts.