



Great Minds Think Alike... But Also Differently

An Interview with researchers at the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research:

Lisa Saksida Western University, Neuroscientist

Philippe Aghion Collège de France, Economist

Adrian Owen Western University, Neuroscientist

Matilde Bombardini Massachusetts Institute for Technology, Economist

Daron Acemoglu Massachusetts Institute for Technology, Economist

Daniel Trefler University of Toronto, Economist

What is the role of collaboration in research?

Lisa Saksida

Collaboration is essential to what I do because, especially with the development of modern technologies for looking at the brain, it's impossible for one person to be an expert in all of these different areas. A meta-philosopher in one of the very early CIFAR meetings, who it turned out had developed a theoretical framework that was very very similar to mine, however, he was coming from this completely different perspective and a completely different literature, so it was great to realize that we were actually coming from these very different perspectives and had come to the same kind of answer to the question that we were asking.

Philippe Aghion

You want to understand how the growth, the economic growth and the dynamics of institutions interact with each other. Also you want to understand how the formal institutions interact with the evolution of culture. And to answer that, you need an economist, but you also need sociologists, biologists, that's why we have these groups... political scientists. That's why we need this diversity in the group because we need to interact and have the various views on this very basic question.



Adrian Owen

If you try and address a question like the relationship between brain, mind and consciousness, you're going to require a really diverse group of people and those people aren't all going to be at one university. You know one of the great things about our program and the way the program is funded is that it is a team that is made up of people with really diverse interests, from very different parts of the world.

Matilde Bombardini

I work at the intersection of economics and political science. What is the optimal policy and why does it not get chosen? And CIFAR is essentially the best department in the world in terms of political science and economics and economic history.

Daron Acemoglu

If I can get an idea passed through my CIFAR colleagues, then I feel so much better when I go and present it somewhere else because it's already been stress-tested.

Daniel Trefler

So what has CIFAR done? It has created these topics that you can't even dream of thinking about until CIFAR came along.