



Delivering world-class research, learning and teaching that transforms the knowledge, action and leadership needed for more equitable and sustainable development globally.

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Director's foreword

Peter Taylor



The world seems beset by multiple challenges, with the rules-based order that for decades has been a feature of global cooperation experiencing significant turbulence.

Climate change, rising inequalities, protracted conflict, global health security, gender rights, and the governance of emerging technologies like AI, all require international cooperation. But geopolitics are being upended, and democracy is under threat. So too are global research projects, with trust in science under attack in many parts of the world.

Faced with such instability, we have called out recent policy changes by the US administration, and shifts in UK government policy on aid, and immigration. We have used our voice and platforms to underscore the damage that will ensue and the inequities that will deepen because of declining official development assistance contributions around the world.

We believe that evidence is the foundation of deliberative, democratic processes, and we are painstaking in our efforts to co-create knowledge through working with partners. In an increasingly difficult funding and policy environment, support to generate the knowledge and evidence which show what works, where and why is more important than ever.

We have continued to draw on the depth of our research to ensure that our learning and teaching programmes are exceptional. Extremely high levels of satisfaction among students, and our many contributions to knowledge and global engagement, are reflected by our number one ranking in the world for Development Studies for the ninth year running.

As 2025 is the end of our current strategy period, this Annual Review explores and reflects upon the impact that our work has had in the wider world. The case studies and stories illustrate how we are making a tangible difference and playing a role in genuine positive change. IDS would be nothing without its people and my thanks go to them for their dedication to nurturing a more just, equitable and sustainable world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Taylor".

Chair's statement

Deepak Nayyar



We live in tumultuous times. The shifting sands of geopolitics in our world have caused an upheaval in the international trading system and eroded the principle of multilateralism which provided the foundations of the erstwhile world order. The consequences – the growing swagger of autocratic regimes, trading relationships realigning around national security priorities, and brutal ODA cuts – will accentuate the multiple crises of climate change, global health and food insecurity, in times to come. In the face of growing political uncertainty, rising economic inequality, conflict within countries, wars between countries with no end in sight, and technological changes on the horizon, it is the poor and the marginalised who will be most vulnerable.

At IDS, we will not shy away from defending our vision of a more equitable and sustainable world. Collaborating with partners around the world to develop and deploy first-class research and evidence to shape policies and programmes is more critical than ever. Our commitment to enable community engagement to develop real-world solutions is unwavering. Despite the current turmoil, the power of collective action to shape a more resilient and inclusive future provides reason for hope.

Our innovative teaching and research programmes are equipping the next generation of thought leaders with the tools and critical analysis to be able to make their mark on some of the most pressing issues of the age. The world will need careful thinking and collective action to address these myriad challenges.

As the period of our 2000–2025 strategy draws to a close, this Annual Review provides an opportunity to examine the longer-term influence of our work through the featured impact stories and selected highlights. They demonstrate real change for good. Everyone involved should feel immensely proud. We enter our next strategy period on a sure footing, with a renewed determination to tackle the formidable global challenges.

Our vision and mission

We want a more equitable and sustainable world, where people everywhere can live their lives free from poverty and injustice.

Our commitments:



Upholding climate and environmental justice



Reducing extreme inequities



Fostering healthy and fulfilling lives



Nurturing inclusive, democratic and accountable societies

We will transform the knowledge, action and leadership needed through our world-class research, learning and teaching.

Our strategic priorities:



Collaborating across sciences, sectors and communities to do research that brings progressive change



Building future leadership for development



Championing the use of evidence for social and environmental justice



Working with partners to expand international research and mutual learning networks for development



Creating a sustainable, resilient and equitable institution

Our impact

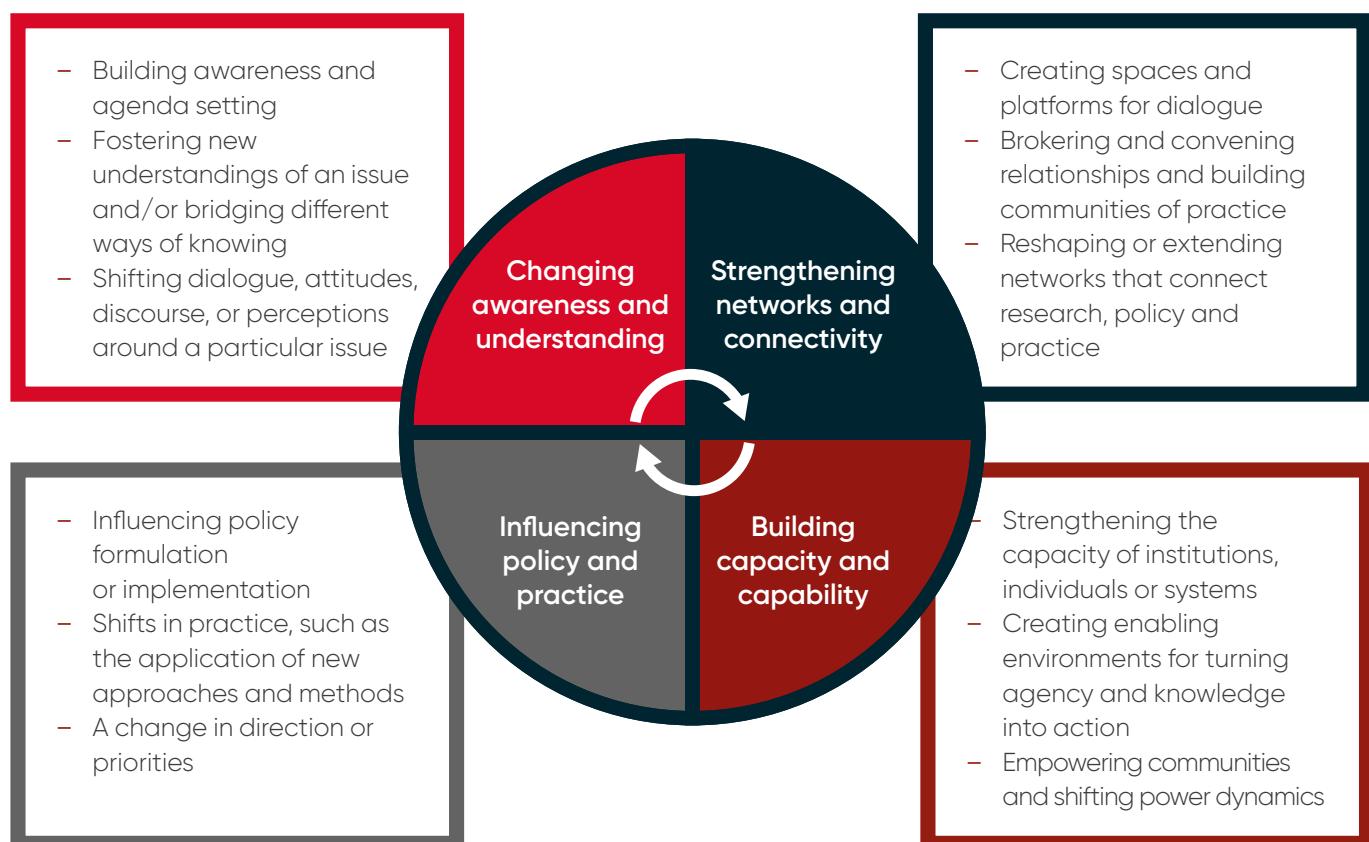
We directly and indirectly influence change in multiple ways. However understanding IDS' impact is not always straightforward: the systems within which IDS seeks to catalyse change are complex, making change processes themselves uncertain and non-linear. The 'wheel of impact' framework recognises the four main change processes to which we make significant contributions to the change we would like to see.



The small wheel of impact icon that appears alongside each story of impact in this report (shown in the margin here) illustrates the type of impact we have focused on in this story. These impact stories are a snapshot or highlight from the last 12 months, from a larger project or programme often spanning several years. During the life cycle of this work, it is likely that multiple types of impact will be achieved beyond what is captured in this report.

As we are in the final year of our strategy period, we have also taken the opportunity to look at the longer-term impact we have made for each of our commitments.

Wheel of Impact





Volunteers at Very Local Food Hubs (VLFH) in Brighton & Hove, a community organisation working to promote affordable access to fruit and vegetables in the city. IDS Working Paper 619 [Grass-roots Innovation for Justice in Urban Food Provisioning](#), written with partners connected via the [Food Equity Centre](#), provides an account of the power of community-led innovation and solutions born from lived experience and solidarity, and makes the case for empowering community organisations and projects as frontline innovators by providing the funding and supportive infrastructure they need to thrive.

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Highlights

N°1

world ranking for
Development Studies in the QS World
University Rankings by Subject

▷ 1,094

items in global
online media

444

contractual research,
learning and
funding partners

+ 850,693

engagements with IDS content including
website, event registrations, newsletter
subscriptions and social media

3104

published journal
articles authored
by IDS staff

297 

master's and PhD students learnt
with us between September 2023 and
September 2024, including 74 students
on scholarships from across 35 countries

87 ✓

participants from
30 countries completed
IDS specialist short courses

97 %

master's student
satisfaction level

Awards, honours and appointments



Jing Gu

(Research Fellow) Named a 2024 Top Scholar by ScholarGPS, ranked #65 globally for lifetime contributions, impactful publications, and influence on business and development, placing her in the top 0.5% of scholars worldwide.



Mick Moore

(Professorial Fellow) Mick, a political economist, has been ranked #1 in the world for another year for lifetime achievement in Development Studies in the 2024 ScholarGPS rankings.



Sarah Stephens

(Postgraduate Researcher) Won the Tata Varsity Challenge Social Impact Award for developing a digital legal assistant which is being piloted in legal advice centres in Tanzania. Appointed to the Online Procedure Rule Committee, advising on digital justice services in England and Wales.



Nasreen Jessani

(Head of the Knowledge, Impact and Policy Cluster) Appointed as Extraordinary Associate Professor at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Also appointed as Consulting Editor to Evidence & Policy.



Palden Tsering

(Postgraduate Researcher) Won the RGS-IBG 2025 Area Prize for the best journal article by an early career researcher, looking at property and land governance in pastoral China.



Lídia Cabral

(Research Fellow) Appointed to the UN High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition to draft its report *Building resilient food systems*, launched by the Committee on World Food Security.



Dominic Glover

(Research Fellow) Was Visiting Professor to the College of Development Communication, University of the Philippines Los Baños, November–December 2024, and gave an invited talk in the SEARCA Agriculture and Development Seminar Series.



Deepa Chopra

(Professorial Research Fellow) (Attended on behalf of IDS) IDS was recognised as a Care Champion at the 2024 Asia-Pacific Care Champions Special Event, part of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review.



Max Gallien

(Research Fellow) His book *Smugglers and States* won the 2025 APSA-IPSA Theodore J. Lowi First Book Award and was described as 'an important contribution to cross-border studies' on stability and security in North Africa.



Amrita Saha

(Research Fellow) From January 2025, appointed as committee member of the Royal Statistical Society's International Development Section, which aims to promote effective use of statistics for the public interest in developing countries.



Gauthier Marchais

(Research Fellow) Won the Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book Award awarded by the Comparative and International Education Society for co-editing *Education and Resilience in Crisis*, which explores how interconnected crises affect teaching and learning.



Sunisha Neupane

(Postgraduate Researcher) Was the winner of the University of Sussex's Three Minute Thesis competition for her research into maternity care in rural Nepal.

Commitment 1: Upholding climate and environmental justice

Through community-based research, cross-sector partnership and innovative approaches, IDS shapes debate and policy around the world on climate and environmental justice. Our commitment to transformative climate justice builds on three decades of research projects that unite varied voices and perspectives. IDS aims to help find sustainable pathways of transformation, putting communities' and marginalised people's experiences at the centre of policymaking.



Iterative learning with communities to improve climate preparedness

In western India, IDS and partners used innovative visual methods to track seasonal variability with marginalised communities in order to document how they cope with climate extremes. This revealed that their adaptive capacities are weakening.

As part of the British Academy–funded project [Anticipating Futures: Forecasting and Climate Preparedness for Co-located Hazards in India \(ANTICIPATE\)](#), researchers engaged with community members of all ages, genders, castes and religions using photographs to document the everyday effects of living with climate-related shocks and stressors.

A participatory photo elicitation session exploring the lived experiences of co-located hazards, using images captured by researchers.
© Shibaji Bose



Over two years, our researchers earned the trust of local people in a village that had had little contact with external organisations (such as NGOs). They held discussions on extreme weather events, indigenous weather forecasting methods and climate preparedness.

The project findings have had a strong impact, locally and globally. The local headmaster plans to use the research materials to teach secondary students about climate change and the relevance of traditional knowledge and preparedness.

The findings fed into a policy roundtable on climate preparedness organised by the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute. The project helped to launch a [Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)-funded Future Leaders Fellowship project, RELIABLE](#), on institutional climate preparedness across South Asia and the UK.

Long-term impact: IDS research on just transitions builds influence and alliances

IDS has been influencing debate and policy on climate and environmental justice for 35 years – as charted in the [IDS Bulletin 'Environmental Change: Development Challenges Revisited'](#) (January 2025). Over that time, IDS has produced a significant body of work on just transitions spanning continents and sectors such as energy, agriculture and mining.

Research including [policy briefings](#) and [working papers](#) on mineral extraction reform are strengthening the case for increased civic participation in managing natural resources. For instance, *Power and Just Transitions*, a (2026) book by IDS Research Fellow John Gaventa, examines power relations and community mobilising during coal industry decline in Appalachia in the US.

Amplifying marginalised voices in resource-rich but economically poor regions was the aim of the Just Transitions Learning Project. Supported by the Ford Foundation, the project grouped IDS and University of Sussex researchers alongside partners in Africa and Latin America. It has since become a platform for strategic alliances among civil society groups working on climate and energy issues. [The Natural Resource Governance Institute \(NRGI\) was a lead partner](#) in Colombia. It developed a process to integrate grass-roots perspectives into just transition narratives. According to NRGI, the project's efforts to collaboratively build a meta-narrative across regions and sectors was unprecedented.

Another partnership, Spaces for Change (S4C) in Nigeria, connected civil society with state policymakers through a new technical committee on climate change. Subsequent developments included a draft Imo State Climate Law and a new weekly radio programme – 'Climate Justice Hour' – airing under-represented voices.

Channelling our influence in this area, a new project in southern England advocates for agricultural wilding as a viable, fair solution at a critical time for UK farming and land use policies. The Roots of Change: a Just Wilding Transition for the Agri-food System project is part of the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme.

Commitment 2: Reducing extreme inequities

IDS research seeks to understand what drives extreme inequity, marginalisation and exclusion in various contexts and what can be done to counter the impacts. Yet tackling extreme inequities takes more than research alone: IDS forges links between people and organisations to ensure that valuable findings are shared, discussed and acted upon.



Networks nurtured to support disability-inclusive research

IDS has coordinated the [Disability Inclusive Development Network](#) as part of an initiative to support disability-inclusive research and knowledge systems. Supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the initiative connects ten research networks carrying out disability-inclusive research across different countries, with different partners.

A key ambition – deemed vital to the initiative's success – was to increase the skills and confidence of early career researchers working on disability inclusion. Through a series of online meetings held between December 2023 and July 2024, convened by IDS, 22 early career researchers from Botswana, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, the UK and US exchanged their experiences and concerns, developed research skills, and networked with peers. A follow-up in-person workshop was co-organised with Stellenbosch University in October 2024.



'The workshop was a transformative experience. It provided me with new insights, practical tools, and a network of colleagues who share my passion for disability-inclusive research. The most important takeaway is the reminder that research is not just about producing knowledge – it's about creating impact.' – Banya Ojok, workshop participant

Several participating researchers mentioned acquiring high-quality skills – such as good research practice, data protection, coding, ethics processes, and academic writing. An early career professional with disabilities described gaining confidence through involvement in the networks, and as a result had joined another project which they then influenced to ensure it was disability-inclusive from the outset. Another participant reported feeling empowered to participate in various conferences at home and abroad.

Long-term impact: IDS expertise in conflict research helps improve education in crisis settings

To overcome the extreme inequities experienced during violent conflict, it is vital – but highly challenging – for children and young people to continue their education. Over the last seven years, IDS has contributed to major advances in understanding education in conflict-affected contexts, resulting in shifts in policy and practice, and improved learning conditions for teachers and pupils.

IDS has documented and measured the severe violence that teachers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Niger face and analysed its multiple causes and effects. The research was undertaken with the EU-funded Building Resilience in Crisis through Education (BRiCE) consortium, which IDS was invited to join on the strength of our expertise in conflict research.

Findings from BRiCE, presented to the European Commission by IDS researchers, have been attributed as directly influencing a new round of teacher-focused EU funding: the Regional Teachers Initiative For Africa. The Global Fund's 'Teachers Cannot Wait' call for research into teachers in crises meanwhile exemplifies wider shifts in donor thinking.

The BRiCE research spurred real changes for educators, teachers, and pupils in DRC and Niger. IDS partnered with the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de Bukavu in DRC to develop a pre-service teacher training module deployed to conflict-affected contexts. With support from an GPE-KIX (Global Partnership for Education-Knowledge and Innovation Exchange) grant it is now being scaled to reach 132 teacher training institutes, which will result in many thousands of teachers being trained in the coming years.

Our growing reputation in this field has led to approaches for advice on methods from academics and programme implementers linked to the FCDO-funded Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) programme. IDS was also the lead author of *Education and Resilience in Crisis*, which won the notable Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book Award from the Comparative and International Education Society – the leading US education research organisation – an indication of greater global attention to this area.

Commitment 3: Fostering healthy and fulfilling lives

For many years, IDS has sought to broaden the lens on what causes ill health to encompass social and structural inequalities. Our work with global partners seeks ways to improve people's health and wellbeing through more effective and responsive systems and interventions – with the prospect of benefiting millions of people as a result.



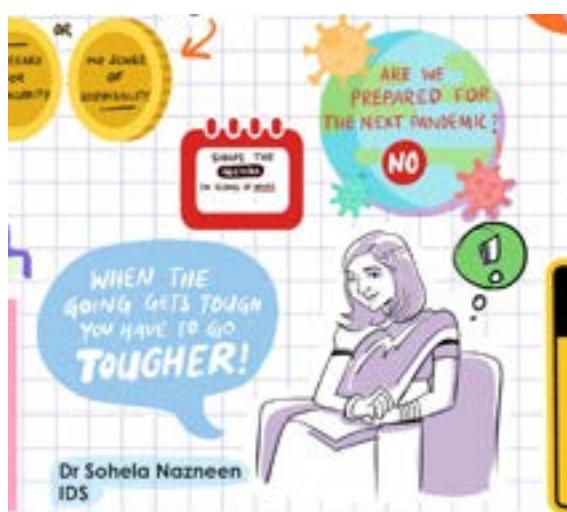
CLEAR: Consortium builds trust and evidence in post-pandemic Bangladesh

A wide-ranging consortium led by IDS has investigated various social and political impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis on Bangladesh, to draw lessons for handling future shocks.

Funded by the UK's FCDO, the Covid-19 Learning, Evidence and Research (CLEAR) programme centred on strong, equitable partnerships among IDS, the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), and other Bangladeshi, UK and US research organisations. Studies focused on social protection, secondary impacts of health measures, and education.

CLEAR-funded research findings have reached international policymakers. The World Health Organization (WHO) referenced work by Bangladesh's International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research on serosurveillance in urban slums regarding Covid-19 vaccination. Evidence from the IDS-BIGD [Becoming Poor](#) study was presented to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

An excerpt from illustrations capturing the conference held to synthesise findings from the CLEAR programme.
© Syed Rashad Imam Tammo



The programme also developed capacity within national research organisations. The [Durdiner Diaries](#), on coping strategies of people newly affected by poverty, helped young researchers at BIGD to hone method and analysis skills such that some have now secured scholarships for further training abroad.

The project's synthesis of findings on citizen–state relations presaged

some of the problems – poor accountability, low trust, corruption – cited by the protesters who toppled Bangladesh's government in August 2024.

Long-term impact: Major health reforms in China supported by IDS collaboration

An initial connection between IDS and Chinese academics in the early 1990s evolved into a sustained partnership that contributed to one of the world's largest health system reforms. Not only has this long-standing partnership helped to improve health care for millions of people, it also provides strong evidence that international collaboration can support health system change.

The collaboration emerged from an academic exchange in 1991 between IDS and Shanghai Medical University, and from a subsequent series of research projects on rural and urban health. A large World Bank, UK Aid and Chinese government project provided an opportunity for IDS to support Chinese experts working in ten provinces to test different health reform approaches. Learning from those experiences contributed to China's rural health reforms launched in the early 2000s, which ultimately impacted the health care coverage of around 800 million people.

Rather than attempting to prescribe solutions, IDS researchers worked with Chinese experts to access international experience relevant to developing locally appropriate solutions. Chinese partners welcomed this approach. Relationships were established that have endured.

Despite rising international tensions, IDS has continued to work with its Chinese partners – for instance, on antimicrobial resistance and health technology innovation. By maintaining trusted relationships, facilitating mutual learning, and providing evidence-based analysis, the partnership shows how development impact can be achieved even in challenging geopolitical contexts.

The partnership also signposts a way ahead for transdisciplinary research and policy engagement on global health challenges. IDS is already a crucial partner for UK policymakers seeking to understand and engage with China's health and development initiatives. IDS researchers have participated in UK government delegations to China and the partnership continues to generate new evidence and analysis on emerging health challenges, while responding to shifting global power dynamics and their impact on health outcomes.

Commitment 4: Nurturing inclusive, democratic and accountable societies

Enabling people of all backgrounds to influence how their lives unfold is vital to nurturing more inclusive, democratic and accountable societies. IDS develops research practices with trusted local partners that help people both to cope with crises, and to take the initiative to shape their lives for the better.



BASIC: Improving how people receive social assistance in Uganda

IDS research into making social assistance more effective is finding ways to help vulnerable people meet their basic needs in contexts of chronic poverty in Uganda. Although the government runs a social assistance scheme, marginalised people must navigate multiple barriers to access the help it offers.

The IDS-led [Better Assistance in Crises \(BASIC\) research programme](#) studied the experiences of marginalised people in remote parts of Uganda. The aim was to understand how to deliver social assistance more effectively to help vulnerable people cope with crises and meet their basic needs.

A local government official speaking during a community exercise on verification of beneficiaries.
© BASIC



By collaborating with local partners and assistance providers, the research led to much-needed improvements in the Ugandan government's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) cash transfer scheme.

These included siting payment locations within eight kilometres of people in

need; making it easier for authorised assistants to collect payments for those too frail to travel; ensuring physically weaker individuals get support first; and improving the dignity of service provision, encouraging staff to be more respectful and empathetic.

Involving beneficiaries in shaping social protection policies and valuing their lived experiences as essential expertise are now recognised as important for delivering more effective assistance.

Long-term impact: Success of IDS approach lies in involving marginalised communities in change-making

Three projects that employed a transformative IDS participatory approach are showing how major impacts can be achieved by engaging marginalised people in analysing and addressing the problems that affect them. The success of the approach across diverse contexts suggests its potential contribution to forging more inclusive, democratic and accountable societies.

Pioneered by IDS in the early 2000s, the Systemic Action Research (SAR) approach looks at systemic rather than surface-level change. It engages diverse actors across a system to become agents of change. Importantly, the approach recognises that marginalised communities have capacity for analysis and often produce more nuanced understandings than external professionals of issues affecting their lives.

In Mali, action research groups set up as part of SAR have successfully mediated long-standing conflicts over fishing practices, dam management, and farmer and herder disputes. Similar groups also found solutions to help women set up soap-making businesses. This increased the women's incomes, reduced their need to move to conflict-prone mining areas, and strengthened family and community ties.

IDS used methodological training and ongoing accompaniment with community researchers in northern England who experience problems related to mental health, addiction recovery, or refugee status. Their research into local inequalities was transformative: they moved from viewing problems as personal failures to understanding wider systemic causes. For some, this built their confidence to get involved in decision-making and collective action, for others the process helped overcome significant isolation.

Children in the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal have undertaken systemic analysis that resulted in a variety of collective actions through the IDS-led programme Child Labour: Action–Research–Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA). For example, working children shared the evidence they gathered about unsafe conditions that led to local officials installing streetlights and boosting police patrols. Schools were influenced to accommodate working children better, and business owners employing children began to organise towards sector-wide change.

Strategic priority one: Collaborating across sciences and disciplines, sectors and communities to do research that brings about progressive change



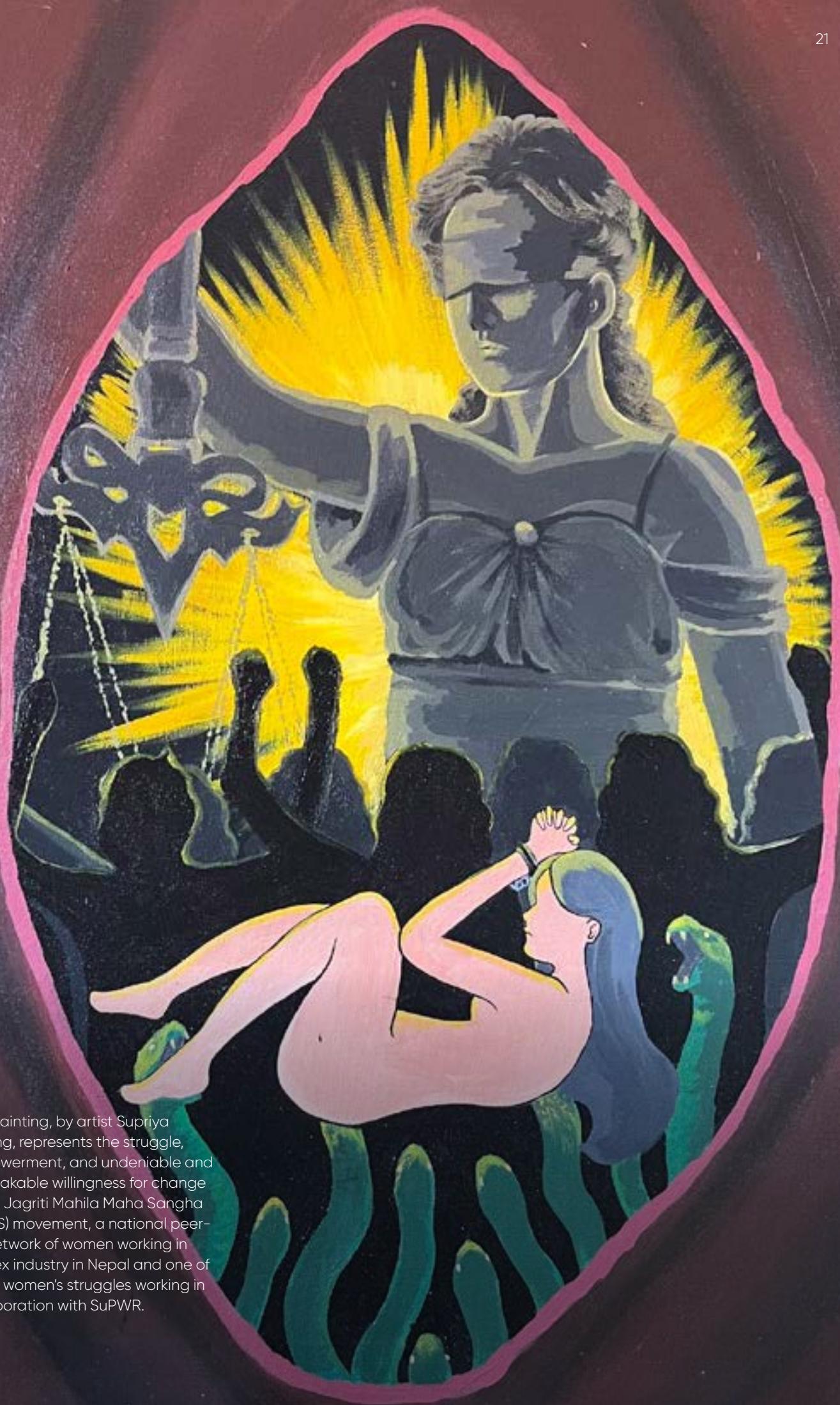
IDS-led research is using innovative ways to build trust and connections among feminist movements, by working collaboratively with women's rights activists to help them counter growing hostility to gender equality, and to sustain gains made.

[Sustaining Power: Women's struggles against contemporary backlash in South Asia \(SuPWR\)](#) is a five-year project focusing on when, how and why women's power struggles retain power and sustain gains against regressive forces. SuPWR and partner CARE Nepal supported four feminist movements in Nepal to attend the 2024 Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) International Forum in Bangkok.

At AWID, members from the four groups performed 'House of Dignity', a co-created forum theatre highlighting challenges faced by sex workers in Nepal. Developed collaboratively through SuPWR reflective workshops using 'Theatre of the Oppressed' methodology, the forum theatre fostered solidarity between the movement members and encouraged global connections across different gender issues. Participatory joint reflective workshops that the forum theatre was based on helped the four movements to overcome the isolation felt in their separate causes. SuPWR also works with feminist movements in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

[Countering Backlash](#), an IDS-led programme with partners in several countries, has created a well-received '[Cards Against Backlash](#)' toolkit for activists to build strategies to address the erosion of gender justice objectives within development. The cards, which have three categories of strategy: Resisting, Surviving and Creating Feminist Futures, draw on real life tactics of programme partners.

The six-year programme conducts engaged research, generates debates, and builds capacity across networks and strategic partnerships with women's, LGBTQI+ and other human rights organisations, activists, academics and policymakers, regionally and globally.



This painting, by artist Supriya Gurung, represents the struggle, empowerment, and undeniable and unbreakable willingness for change of the Jagriti Mahila Maha Sangha (JMMS) movement, a national peer-led network of women working in the sex industry in Nepal and one of the 16 women's struggles working in collaboration with SuPWR.

Strategic priority two: Building future leadership for development

The learning experience at IDS is about far more than acquiring knowledge and skills. Our courses connect cutting-edge research with policy and practice to create a unique study environment.

Both our postgraduate degree programme and our professional development learning equip participants to respond to complex challenges and enable them to see how they can make a contribution to the global development agenda.



Postgraduate learning at IDS

IDS course convenors and lecturers are all active researchers in development, working on a wealth of different aspects or topics in development, and across the globe in low-, middle- and high-income countries. They bring a combination of academic and theoretical sophistication, applied, practice-based knowledge and experience of working in development to the classroom.

Our partner, the University of Sussex, is the awarding body for IDS degrees.

Master's focused on key development themes:

- 閱 MA Food and Development
- 閱 MA Globalisation, Business and Development
- 閱 MSc Climate Change, Development and Policy
- 閱 MA Poverty and Development
- 閱 MA Gender and Development
- 閱 MA Governance, Development and Public Policy

Master's focused on a range of development themes:

- 閱 MA Development Studies

Master's focused on practice and action:

- 閱 MA Power, Participation and Social Change

Research:

- 閱 PhD Development Studies by Research

For more information on our postgraduate degrees visit: www.ids.ac.uk/learn



Alumni achievements



Roy Trivedy

(MPhil Development Studies 1984–86), humanitarian worker and former United Nations Resident Coordinator, has recently been inaugurated as the Honorary Consul in Scotland of Timor-Leste.



Yolani Fernando

(MA Governance, Development and Public Policy, 2022–23), has co-founded Arutha, a think tank in Sri Lanka dedicated to economic research for policymaking, public communication, and economic civic education.



Sonomi Tanaka

(MA Gender and Development 1994–95), has been appointed Country Director of Bhutan for the Asian Development Bank, leading operations and policy dialogue with the government, development partners and other stakeholders.



Amira Saber Qandil

(MA Development Studies 2020–21), Egyptian MP and Secretary General of the Foreign Relations Committee, has received the Social Action Award at the 2025 Study UK Alumni Awards in Egypt.



Riz Adhima

(MA Power, Participation and Social Change 2023–24), has co-founded Empatika, an Indonesia-based, internationally oriented organisation specialising in people-centred research, training and development solutions.



Tim Holmes

(MPhil Development Studies 1997–99), has been appointed the new CEO of Medical Aid for Palestinians, bringing 30 years of experience in the humanitarian and development sectors to the role.

Stories of success



Recent graduates publish IDS Working Paper on food security

IDS graduates Callum Chapman and Norma Jean Park (MA Food and Development 2023–24) are the lead authors of an IDS Working Paper – *Towards Transformative Change: Grass-roots Innovations for Food Security During Crises in Brighton & Hove, UK*.

While at IDS, Callum and Norma were invited to work as research assistants with the [Building Back Better from Below project](#). Their supervisors felt that the pair's research was worth developing into a working paper, which analyses the evolution of three community-led initiatives focused on food insecurity.



Callum (right) and Norma (left) discussing their research on the panel of an IDS seminar 'Community-led innovation for local food system transformation: lessons from Brighton & Hove and nearby' in May 2025. © Lance Bellers / IDS

'The success of these projects in supporting their communities demonstrates a snippet of what would be possible in the wider food system with more funding and support,' Callum said. A passionate advocate for equitable access to healthy food, he now works at the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership's Community Kitchen.

Co-author Norma was a part-time apprentice on an organic farm in Colorado, in the US. She chose the IDS MA Food and Development because it was one of the few programmes to examine the political dimensions of food. Callum has previously contributed to publications, but this is Norma's first published paper – a huge career milestone.

Since graduating, Norma has begun work as a Water Resources Project Manager with the UK Environment Agency. She oversees projects to help the agricultural sector build resilience to water scarcity.

She explained: 'my experience working with diverse stakeholders in Brighton and Hove's agri-food sector gave me the transferable skills that now help me navigate and manage the many stakeholders I engage with.'

MA experience leads to collaboration for policy change



Nooreen interviewing a participant over Zoom.
© Nooreen Musheer

A module during her MA Development Studies (2023–24) prompted Nooreen Musheer to take a 'deeper look' at the disempowering effect of unpaid domestic labour, undertaken chiefly by women and girls.

For her dissertation, Nooreen spent several months in India interviewing women from diverse backgrounds. 'What I witnessed was staggering – women routinely worked 16+ hour days caring for children, the elderly, cooking, and cleaning.'

She collaborated with activist partners in India, developed advocacy tools and held a workshop with researchers, NGOs, and policymakers on changes to reduce unpaid care work.

'This experience deeply shaped my understanding of how essential it is to centre the voices of those most affected and to approach policy through a feminist lens,' said Nooreen, whose work on women's economic empowerment continues.

International arena for PhD research into child wellbeing

In early 2025, Dr Rosalind Willi completed her PhD on Syrian Armenian children's wellbeing in situations of displacement and return. She has presented her research at five international conferences in Austria, Sweden, the US and the UK.



Dr Rosalind Willi speaking on a panel at the American Anthropological Association conference in Seattle.
© Rosalind Willi

Rosalind conducted nine months of fieldwork in Yerevan, Armenia, using a child-centred participatory approach. Her IDS supervisors were Keetie Roelen and Dorte Thorsen, whose 'mentorship has extended well beyond the PhD programme,' she said.

Having worked for a decade in development and child protection before her PhD, Rosalind hopes her research 'contributes to a shift in how we design support for children and families – putting children's perspectives at the centre.'

A striking finding was that children perceived wellbeing in terms of emotional connections, while adults often focused on material aspects.



**MA and
MSc student
satisfaction
levels 97%**

Students studying for a master's at IDS (pictured clockwise from top left) Atheerah Mohd Azmil, Shruti Nikhar, Isabella Perkins, Yougyeong Na and Lucy Fantaye.

Lucy says: 'IDS has opened my eyes to a world far greater than I imagined, showing me my role in shaping the life I aspire to lead. It's been transformative, inspiring, and deeply empowering'.

© Lance Bellers / IDS

Professional development learning



Research on Tax and Development short course celebrates 10 years

In addition to offering postgraduate degrees, IDS has a world-class portfolio of professional development and learning courses for organisations and individuals already working at the forefront of social change. One of the most popular is the ICTD Research on Tax and Development course – which marks ten years of advancing knowledge and skills in taxation.

Based at IDS, the International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD) conducts independent research on improving tax policy and administration in lower-income countries. Its research course attracts a diverse range of participants from revenue authorities, civil society activists, journalists, academic researchers, and policymakers. Demand is high, with 800 applications received for 25 places in the latest intake.

Participants use what they learn to pursue careers in research or to advance into more senior or specialist roles. The course offers a space for networking, with lasting social and professional collaborations after it ends.

According to a recent alumni survey, 70 per cent reported increased involvement in research activities since completing the course. They highlighted increased confidence in conducting research, increased engagement in projects, and opportunities to apply insights from the course to their work.

Many were inspired to pursue further education. One survey respondent said that the course had boosted their confidence to do a master's degree, aided by a deeper understanding of statistics.

Almost three-quarters of surveyed alumni said they stayed in contact with peers, with many collaborating professionally. They have worked on joint projects across countries, organised webinars, and co-authored papers with ICTD researchers.



'The course has very much helped me to be a better researcher, as well as extending my network of different researchers to collaborate with in doing research. The course has also added valuable knowledge in the M&E of different projects at the Authority.' – Massaga J. Fimbo, Manager Research and Innovation, Tanzania Revenue Authority.

Strategic priority three: Champion the use of evidence for social and environmental justice



UK Government aid-for-trade policy shift linked to IDS research

IDS research is showing the transformative potential of trade-related aid interventions by using innovative data and methods to tackle critical trade and development challenges – and in so doing, is influencing the UK Government's approach to trade-related aid.

The UK Government in late 2024 announced the launch of a new Trade Centre of Expertise, to help UK trade partners in low- and middle-income countries to access and compete in global markets. The announcement came after a critical review of UK policy that cited important IDS research on inclusive trade – namely a working paper *Inclusive Trade: Four Crucial Aspects*, by IDS and University of Sussex trade experts.

The paper makes a notable contribution to conceptualising 'inclusive trade' and draws attention to issues that inclusive trade must consider. It was cited in the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's review of UK aid-for-trade policy, which emphasised the importance of applying a more targeted inclusion lens to aid-for-trade programmes, particularly to ensure disadvantaged and marginalised people can benefit from trade.

The paper's lead author, IDS Research Fellow Dr Amrita Saha, also provided written and oral evidence on trade, development and human rights to numerous UK parliamentary committees. Dr Saha convenes the IDS MA Globalisation, Business and Development.

More broadly, this research stream has led to collaborations with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) UK and the UK Trade Policy Observatory (UKTPO), as well as contributions to national trade policy reviews and trade and development strategies in countries including Botswana, Ethiopia, and India.

Providing the UK Government with knowledge, evidence and learning

IDS leads a consortium of development and diplomacy organisations to run a helpdesk service for the UK's FCDO. The [Knowledge for Development and Diplomacy \(K4DD\)](#) programme provides over 200 rapid evidence reviews each year, which recently included advising on financing for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya, approaches to state fragility and climate security, and much more. Our facilitated learning events and services have helped to shape FCDO policies and programmes in areas such as responding to Mpox and supporting recovery and reconstruction in Ukraine.

A photograph of a woman mending a fishing net, taken as part of the Sustainable and Equitable Aquaculture project in Vietnam. The project, funded by the British Academy and delivered in partnership with the Vietnam National University of Agriculture and Vietnam National University, explores the modern-day reality of rural farming-based communities. It will deliver urgently needed evidence to help identify ways to improve the social and ecological sustainability of food value chains. This project is part of the [Food Equity Centre](#), which is a collaboration of researchers across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, bringing together knowledge and understanding from different contexts to make food systems fairer.

© Ayako Ebata



Strategic priority four: Expanding international research and mutual learning networks



By rethinking tech in small-scale agriculture, IDS influences evaluation practices

A different way of analysing the impact of technological change in small-scale agriculture developed by IDS researchers is influencing how innovation in agriculture is evaluated and is increasingly being applied in evaluations of field studies worldwide.

The Proposition, Encounter, Disposition, Response, and Outcomes (PEDRO) framework challenges the dominant way of thinking about and understanding technological change in agriculture. Launched in 2019, PEDRO offers an approach that considers farmers' agency and the complexities of agricultural innovation.

PEDRO has been gaining traction globally, particularly over the past year. The framework has been well received by senior researchers within the CGIAR global research partnership and other institutions, who value the clarity provided by the PEDRO components in describing, understanding and explaining technological change. The framework has been shared at international conferences and among academic institutions.

PhD students in Australia and West Africa have used the framework in their research, while impact evaluation experts at the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), a major international agricultural research group, are using the framework in their studies. In the Philippines, researchers are applying PEDRO to reinterpret past agricultural interventions, expanding its reach.

IDS researchers have used PEDRO in studies analysing chickpea adoption in India and in evaluations of nitrogen-fixing legumes in Africa. Through this work, PEDRO can change the way that agricultural innovations are evaluated, with increased focus on often overlooked diverse responses and outcomes.

As more research using the framework is published, its influence will grow. PEDRO can improve the design, targeting, implementation and evaluation of projects intended to promote technological advancements in small-scale agriculture, as the original launch paper explained.

Strategic priority five: Create a sustainable, resilient and equitable institution



Making accessibility central to our way of working

IDS is embedding accessibility into its values and practices, creating guidelines for inclusive communication across its work. As a result, what were ad hoc solutions to meet accessibility needs will now become long-term institutional changes.

The Raising Learning Outcomes (RLO) event, held in Nairobi in 2024, illustrates this shift. Attended by researchers from around the globe, the event showed how careful planning can create truly inclusive spaces. Deaf researchers and accessibility experts collaborated with the RLO team to provide sign-language interpretation, multi-modal sessions, and interactive activities, ensuring everyone could fully participate.

Insights from the experience are being shared to improve future event planning. RLO participants reported that the inclusive designs enhanced the experience for all, not just those needing specific accommodations.

Advancing our work on more equitable partnering

IDS staff are deeply engaged in decolonising research for development to help build more equitable partnerships. This year IDS signed the [Africa Charter](#), a groundbreaking framework for transformative research collaboration co-created by Africa's major higher education constituencies. Colleagues also contribute to the [European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes \(EADI\)](#), which convenes debate on development research.

IDS is a partner in an initiative led by [Southern Voice](#) to create an action and research plan to address issues in research partnerships in international development. This includes reflecting internally on how our policies, approaches, and structures affect our partnerships.

IDS held four interactive internal sessions in early 2025 to explore key areas for change. These offered valuable insights on what we do well, what to improve, and how to strengthen our partnerships. Lessons learned will help to shape the future direction of IDS, including a second phase of collaboration with Southern Voice.

Learn with us

We work with hundreds of partners around the world to improve people's lives through research, teaching and action. Our training, action-oriented learning and bespoke knowledge solutions help organisations and individuals increase the impact of their work.

Develop your skills



Attendees of the Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation for Learning course in 2024. © Isabel Soloaga

Our professional development learning offer is always evolving, as we respond to real world challenges. For example, as digital technologies are radically transforming international development landscapes, we recently introduced a new training course. Inclusive Digital Transformation in International Development was designed to enable participants to improve their digital development practice, policy or strategy.

Last year we held our sixth Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) training, in Cambodia, in partnership with Voices That Count and Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC). It was attended by Isabel Soloaga, a filmmaker and research fellow who works as a consultant for multiple nonprofit organisations. She joined the course because much of her work involves co-creating with communities, asylum seekers, and individuals navigating trauma and marginalisation. She said:



'I wanted to ensure I was gathering stories responsibly but also developing frameworks to assess and reflect on the impact of these collaborations in a way that centres participant agency and voice. I was surprised by how flexible participatory M&E can be when it's grounded in strong principles. I found a rich toolkit of methods that can be adapted to different cultural, political, and artistic contexts. It was deeply refreshing to learn from practitioners around the world who are doing community-centred work, many of whom face similar challenges.'

The second iteration of our Enabling Empowered Community Involvement and Engagement (CEI) In Global Health Research course took place, which provides methods, tools and critical analysis to involve communities in

knowledge production. It was attended by Maroof Khan, who works as CEI Manager at the NIHR Global Health Research Centre for Non-communicable Diseases and Environmental Change, which recognises CEI as a core component, with an intent to meaningfully engage communities at every stage. He said:



'The key learnings I took away from the course that have had a direct impact on my work are the importance of collaboratively developing a theory of change, and the applying of MEL (monitoring, evaluation and learning) specifically for CEI. While we had already developed a CEI tracker to monitor our activities, we had not yet been able to use it effectively to generate meaningful insights. The course helped me understand how to strengthen our approach, through defining activity and developing a stakeholder glossary. This has made our reporting more structured and analysable, while also allowing each country team the flexibility to adapt terms to their local context.'

Organisational learning

As well as training for individuals, we work with organisations to design and deliver bespoke research, evidence and learning solutions. This could range from custom organisational or individual facilitated learning activities to providing longer-term research, evidence and learning support such as the work we do with the [Swiss Development Cooperation \(SDC\)](#) and the [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office \(FCDO\)](#).

Last year we worked with working with the [African Center for Economic Transformation \(ACET\)](#) to integrate an accompanied learning partnership as part of their GIZ-funded "Country Economic Transformation Outlook" (CETO) pilot in Ghana, Kenya and Zambia. The learning collaboration aimed to strengthen partnership for increased policy uptake. Though a series of online and in-person workshops we worked with ACET and two national think tanks, along with their respective national government partners, to explore and strengthen the existing partnerships and to convene a wider cross-peer learning platform.

Get in touch

To find out about our professional development learning for individuals, visit www.ids.ac.uk/shortcourses or to discuss a bespoke solution for your organisation, contact Miguel Loureiro m.loureiro@ids.ac.uk.

A message from the Head of Fundraising and Development



I am delighted, through the multitude of impact stories in this report, to share the progress we achieved together this year. Your support has been the cornerstone of our mission, helping us to advance influencing policymaking through our research evidence and impact.

This year brought both opportunities and challenges, including the continued diminution of international development funding and the current seismic shifting political context. The growing localisation agenda is leading donors to prefer providing funds directly to governments and other institutions in the global South, reducing the opportunities available for Northern institutions to directly bid for research funds. Simultaneously, the fall in student numbers (particularly international students) in the UK has led to a mounting funding crisis in higher education institutions.

However, in times of mis/disinformation and a lack of trust between individuals and institutions, the importance of working with different communities, sectors, and disciplines to collectively solve global challenges is even more urgent.

Looking ahead, we intend to contribute to the debates about the future of global development and the reshaping of the international order with new initiatives and campaigns. As IDS reaches its 60th anniversary in April, we will continue building on our excellent reputation by holding webinars, seminars, roundtables, annual lectures, conferences, and a scholarships campaign for future visionary development leaders.

Although our income has decreased by £2.9 million, there are grounds for cautious optimism: our funding portfolio has diversified with the addition of new donors and a broader range of grant types and funded areas. I invite you to continue to collaborate and engage with us and be our advocates in promoting our work. With your ongoing support, we can reach greater heights and continue to expand our impact.

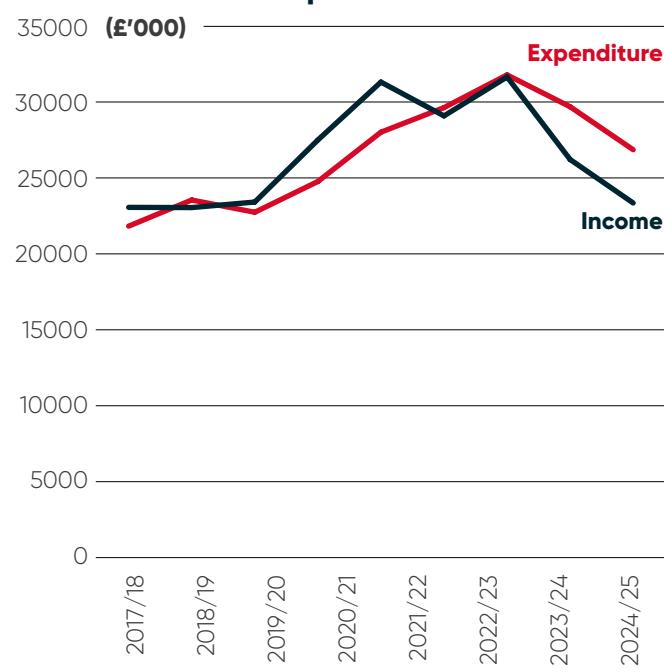
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wezi Mvalo'.

Wezi Mvalo

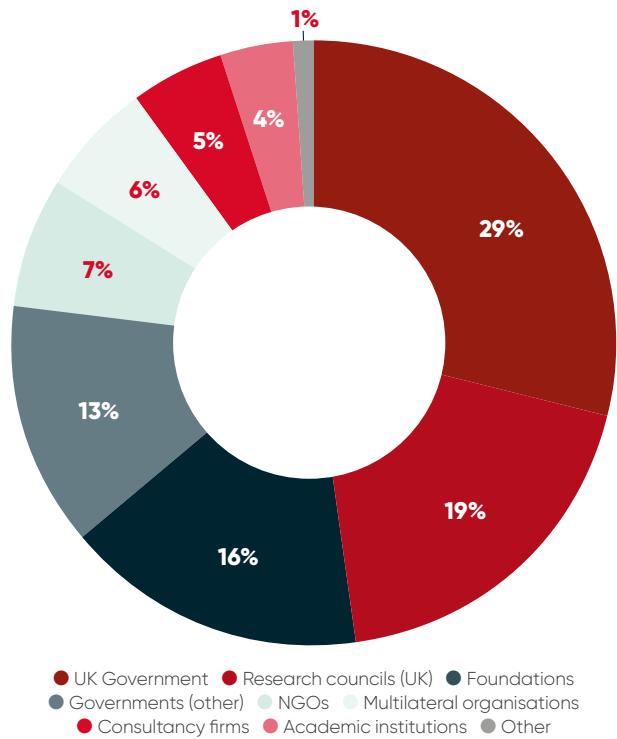
w.mvalo@ids.ac.uk | +44 (0)1273 915695

Finances

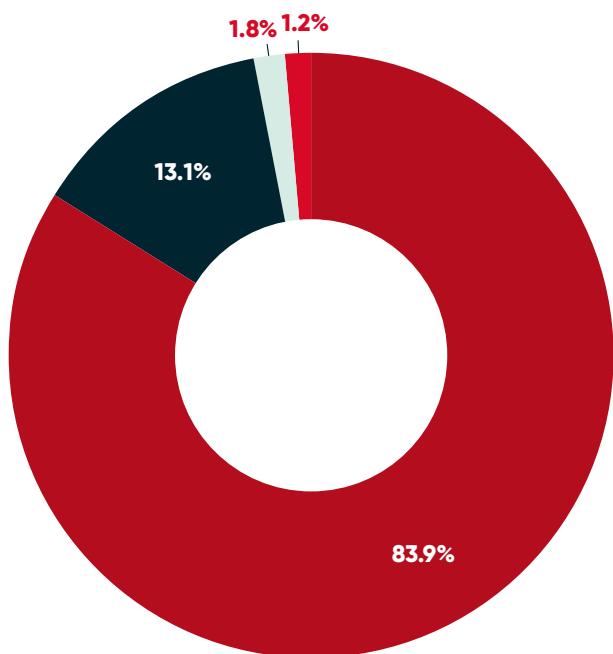
Total income and expenditure (£'000)



Research income by direct contractor category

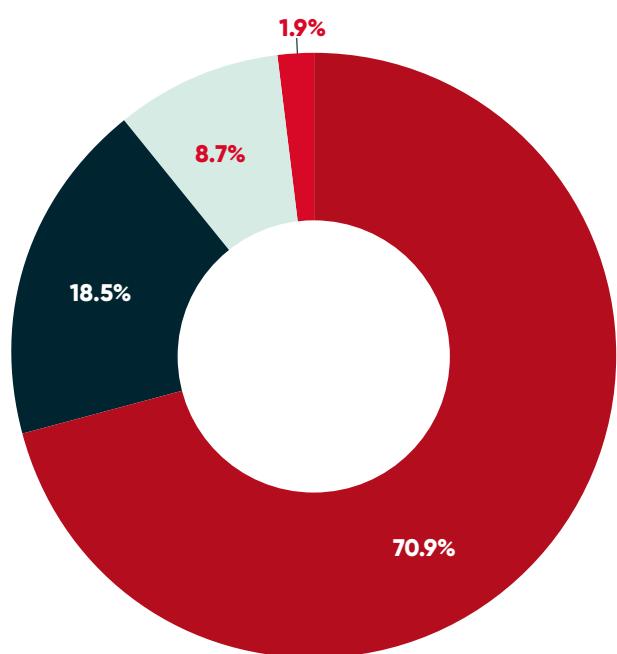


Total income by type



● Research income ● Teaching ● Trading ● Other

Total expenditure by type



● Research ● General support costs
● Teaching costs ● Trading costs

Raising her fist in protest, Bhagavati Adhikari, Executive Director of Nepal Mahila Ekata Samaj (NMES), demonstrates with others against a forced eviction notice, using their platform to demand justice for landless women. Women in South Asia have struggled for many decades to improve their lives within their families, in their communities, for securing their livelihoods and in getting their voices heard as citizens by the state, with women's movements being critical in advancing their rights. However, contemporary social, economic and political changes have created new and multiple forms of backlash.

NMES is one of the 16 women's struggles working in collaboration with the Sustaining Power: Women's struggles against contemporary backlash in South Asia (SuPWR) project featured on page 20. Over the past four years this project has undertaken research with 16 women's struggles in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan to examine when, how, and why women's struggles succeed in retaining power and sustaining the gains they have made against the pushback in gender rights, which is a key focus for IDS.

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