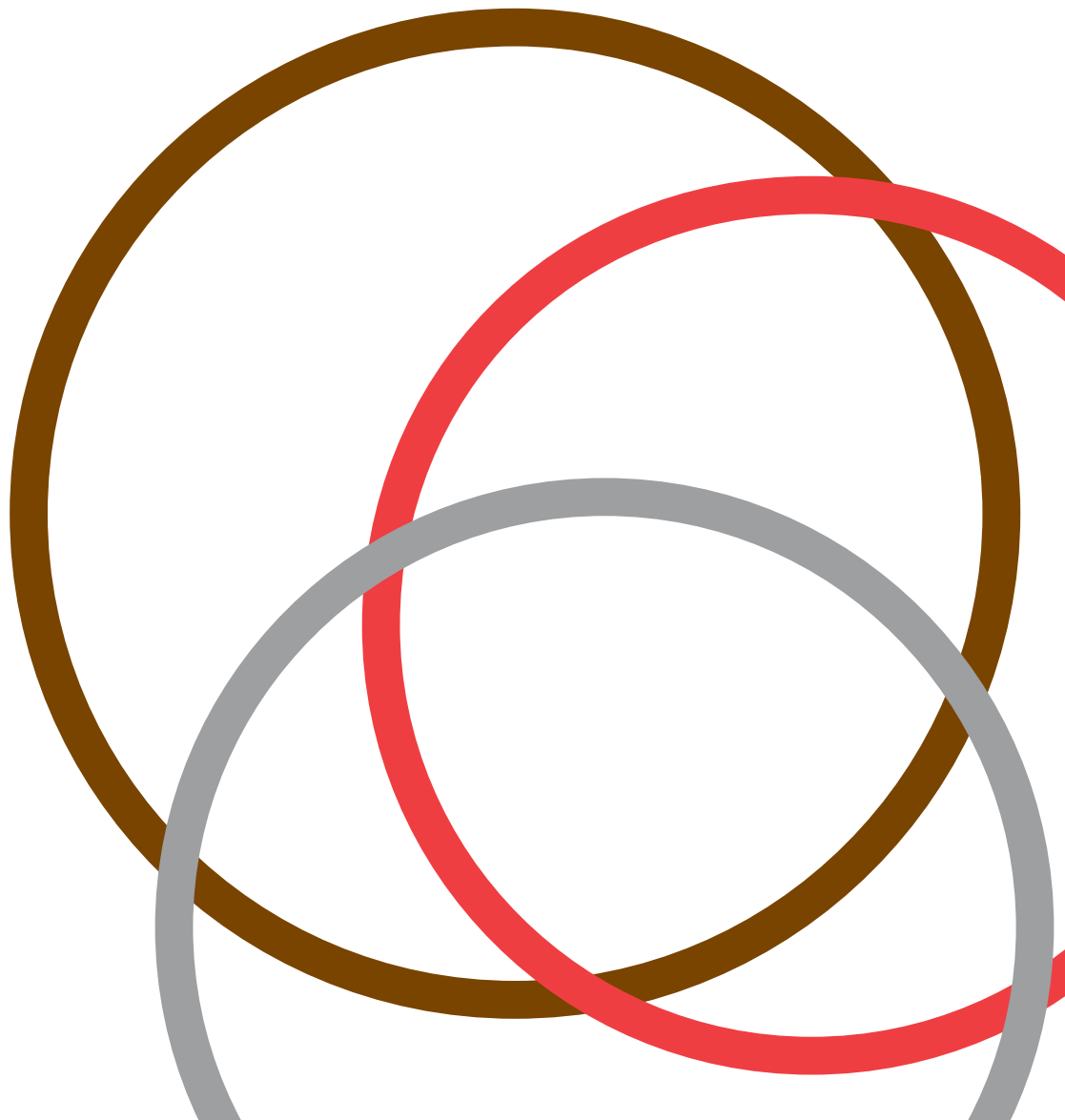


# THINK

The Think Tank Initiative In Review



© International Development Research Centre 2010

This report is printed on FSC-certified recycled paper.  
To reduce environmental impact, few copies have been printed.  
However, the complete report can be found on the  
Think Tank Initiative website at [www.idrc.ca/thinktank](http://www.idrc.ca/thinktank)

Design: H3Creative Inc.

FABRICAM

# RESEARCH

**“To make decisions people need evidence,  
and that is what we are here to provide”**

Antonia Mutoro, Institute of Policy Analysis and  
Research (IPAR), Rwanda



ThinkTank Initiative  
Initiative Thinktank

The Think Tank Initiative is a program dedicated to strengthening independent policy research institutions – or “think tanks” – in developing countries, expanding their ability to provide sound research that both informs and influences policy in order to improve the lives of the poor.

Learn more at [www.idrc.ca/thinktank](http://www.idrc.ca/thinktank)



The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has been making grants since 1967 to help solve social and environmental problems at home and around the world. The Foundation concentrates its resources on activities in education, the environment, global development, performing arts, philanthropy, and population, and makes grants to support disadvantaged communities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Learn more at [www.hewlett.org](http://www.hewlett.org)

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the Foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

Learn more at [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)



Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development. IDRC also encourages sharing this knowledge with policymakers, other researchers, and communities around the world. The result is innovative, lasting local solutions that aim to bring choice and change to those who need it most.

Learn more at [www.idrc.ca](http://www.idrc.ca)

*The three donors have recently been joined by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS).*



The UK Department for International Development (DFID) manages the UK’s aid to poor developing countries and leads its fight against world poverty. DFID works with governments in developing countries to help them lift their citizens – the poorest and most disadvantaged – out of poverty by providing proper health care and education, fostering good governance and promoting equitable economic growth.

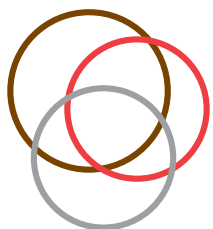
Learn more at [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

The Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) is responsible for development cooperation policy, its coordination, implementation, and funding. The Netherlands works with the governments of other countries and with international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union. DGIS themes include gender, AIDS, education, sustainable economic development, and the environment.

Learn more at [www.minbuza.nl](http://www.minbuza.nl)



## FROM IDRC'S **PRESIDENT**

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is very proud to have been asked to coordinate, on behalf of our partners – the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – a truly ambitious program for promising research institutions in areas touching on economic development in Africa, Latin America and South Asia.

At the core of IDRC's mandate is the belief that the developing world can solve its own problems. As elsewhere, policy works best when it is informed by local evidence and the work of local scholars. This program addresses that objective. By providing core support for their work, the Think Tank Initiative allows research institutions to build their own capacities to serve their countries, regions and the wider world.

Our partners have shown themselves to be exceptionally forward looking, and IDRC was pleased to join with them in launching this ambitious initiative. We hope others will join us in growing the resources that can be devoted to it.

David Malone  
International Development Research Centre

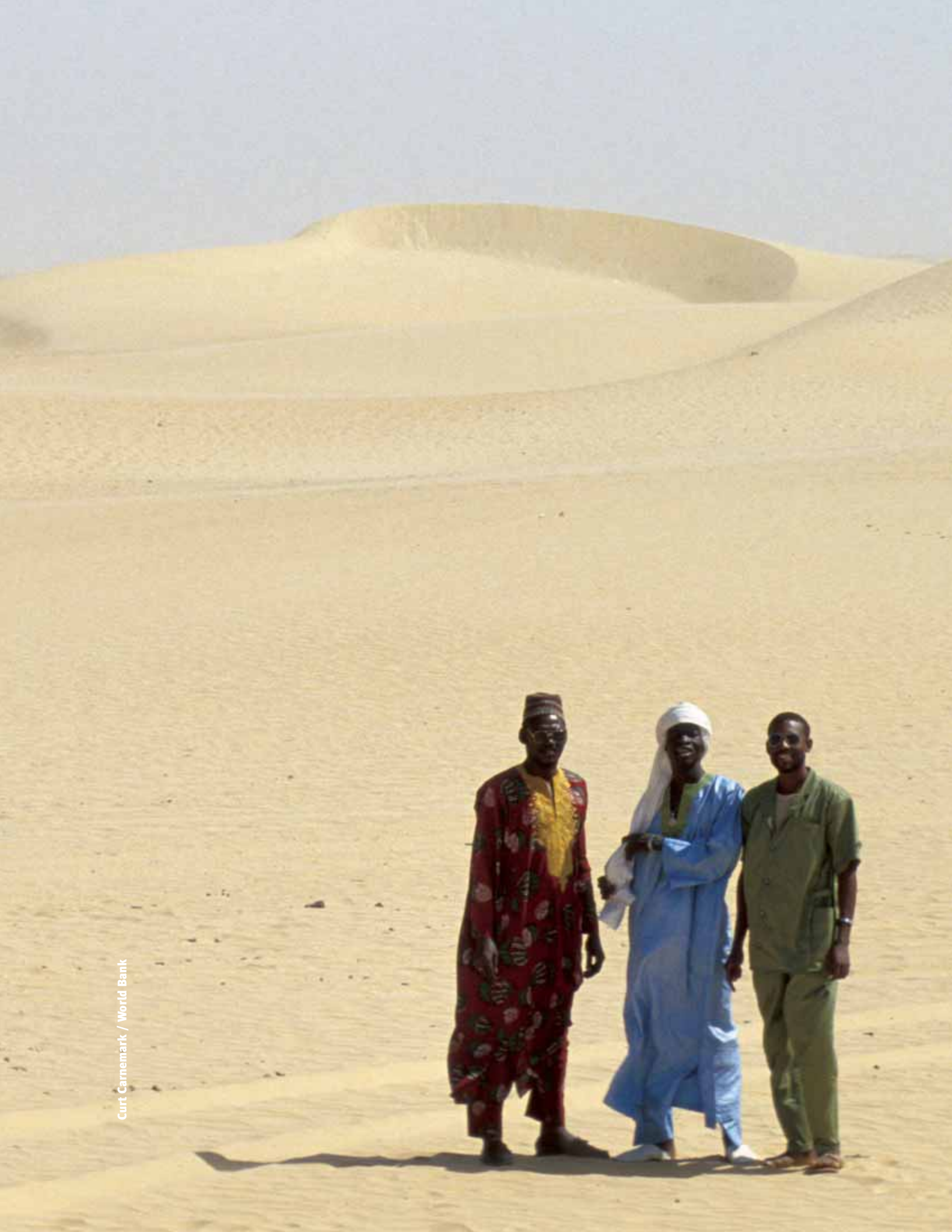
## FROM OUR **PROGRAM MANAGER**

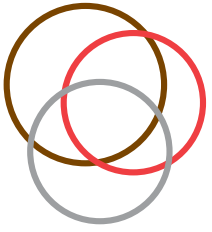
Across the developing world, hundreds of local researchers and institutions are increasingly contributing to create stronger public policy responses to the most challenging social and economic problems in their countries. As such, they play a vital role in building cultures of democracy and contributing to human and economic development. But these institutions operate in a frequently difficult and unpredictable funding environment that jeopardizes the national capacity to develop locally generated development policy proposals. The Think Tank Initiative was created to address this situation.

From over 600 applicants in 23 countries, 52 institutions were selected for sustained support via multi-year core grants. As a result, many deserving institutions are not part of the program's current cohort. This no doubt demonstrates the magnitude of the issue relative to the resources available to the Initiative. But it also underlines our ambition that our work will influence other actors to join in strengthening the larger policy research community in developing countries.

This Report covers the first two years of the program, from its conception to the beginning of its implementation. In the last year, grants have been made to institutions in Africa; grants to institutions in Asia and Latin America will follow in the coming months. Over time, we hope to stimulate the creation of a vibrant group of institutions and thinkers that operates nationally and also regionally and internationally, joining in the key debates of our time.

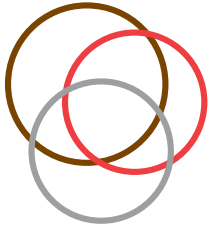
Marie-Claude Martin  
Think Tank Initiative





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>The Think Tank Initiative in Brief</b> .....	2
<b>Our Progress at a Glance</b> .....	4
<b>The Program</b> .....	6
<b>Strong Minds Against the Most Difficult Development Challenges</b> .....	13
<b>Profiles</b> .....	18
Thinking Ahead of the Curve .....	18
A Key Player in the Formulation of Ethiopian Policy .....	19
Great Expectations .....	20
<b>Looking Ahead</b> .....	21
<b>Think Tank Initiative Grantees</b> .....	22
<b>Advisors and Staff</b> .....	24
<b>Financial Summary</b> .....	26



# THE THINK TANK INITIATIVE IN BRIEF

## **What is the Think Tank Initiative?**

The Think Tank Initiative is a multi-donor program dedicated to strengthening independent policy research organizations in the developing world. Managed by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), it is a partnership between IDRC, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS).

## **Why is the Initiative important?**

Think tanks in the developing world are in a unique position to effect change in their societies. They can strengthen public policy debates and promote more objective, evidence-based decision-making. However, most think tanks never receive predictable core funding, instead depending on short-term project grants and consultancy contracts. The Initiative provides think tanks in the developing world with stable funding so that they can attract, retain and build local talent, develop an independent research program, and invest in outreach to ensure that research results are used in policy debates.

## **How does the Think Tank Initiative work?**

The defining feature of the Think Tank Initiative is its provision of core, non-earmarked funding to participating organizations. The Initiative also assists these organizations in three broad areas: research methods and skills; communication and outreach; and general organizational development. Four year core grants and two year renewable grants are combined with dedicated technical support to address key weaknesses. The Initiative supports peer-to-peer review, learning and exchange by bringing together supported organizations, outside experts, and other stakeholders.

## **How much is invested in the Initiative?**

Strengthening organizational capacity is a long-term endeavour. The Initiative is envisioned as an investment over 10 years. The five donor partners have committed a total of about US\$ 110 million to the program for the first phase ending in 2014.

## **Where to find out more?**

[www.idrc.ca/thinktank](http://www.idrc.ca/thinktank)

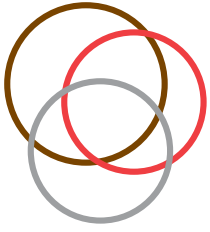




# SUPPORT

**The specific objectives of the Think Tank Initiative are to:**

1. Select a group of promising independent policy research organizations and assist them in identifying areas for improvement;
2. Provide a combination of general support funding and access to training and technical support to strengthen research quality, policy linkages and organizational performance; and,
3. Capture and share learning about strategies for supporting and managing policy research organizations in order to influence the future activities of the funding partners, think tanks, and other development actors.



## OUR **PROGRESS** AT A GLANCE



**2008**

**May 2008**

First meeting of the International Advisory Group in Oxford, England

**June – Aug 2008**

Initiative is staffed at Head Quarters (Ottawa) and Africa

**June – Aug 2008**

Call for Proposals in 11 countries in East and West Africa – 284 applications received

The Hewlett Foundation approaches IDRC and together they design the program.

The Initiative's Implementation Plan is officially approved by the Board of Governors of both institutions in the latter part of the year.

**2007**

**January 2009**

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation joins the Initiative

**January 2009**

Second meeting of the International Advisory Group in Washington, DC

**May 2009**

The African cohort is announced and holds its first meeting in Dakar, Senegal

**2009**

**July – Sept 2009**

Call for Proposals in 7 countries in Latin America and 5 countries in South Asia – 320 applications received

**2010**

**March 2010**

African cohort meets for the second time in Nairobi, Kenya

**May 2010**

Third meeting of the International Advisory Group in Ottawa, Canada

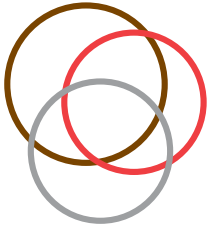
**July 2010**

DFID and DGIS join the Initiative

**July 2010**

The Latin American and South Asian cohorts are announced





# THE PROGRAM

## Local Research for Lasting Solutions

In the developing world, independent policy research organizations, or think tanks, play a vital role in building cultures of democracy and contributing to human and economic development.

Sadly, the transformative power of local research too often goes unnoticed. International donors continue to invest in Western development research, and where local think tanks do receive funding it is usually on a project-by-project basis that decreases the sustainability, flexibility and responsiveness of these institutions.

After consulting a wide range of policy-makers, think tank managers and other experts, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation approached the International Development Research Centre and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to come together with a long-term vision.

The Think Tank Initiative was born as a 10 year program to help these valuable institutions in developing countries consolidate themselves as stable organizations, develop long-term and relevant research programs, and more effectively link research and policy in an effort to better connect the best policy research to the most challenging domestic development problems.

The program has begun its operations by providing long-term general support grants (“core funding”) and access to training and technical assistance to 52 policy research organizations in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America. During its first two years, it has focused on laying the groundwork for success: developing a fully-operational program and beginning to produce and share knowledge on this particular model for strengthening local research.

Recently, two more donors have joined the program, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS). This strengthened partnership provides renewed momentum toward establishing and nurturing a worldwide network of strong local think tanks that ultimately helps generate smart and effective policy-making.

The Initiative is housed at IDRC’s headquarters in Ottawa with Program Officers based in the regional offices of Montevideo, Delhi, Nairobi and Dakar. It is governed by an Executive Committee, composed of one representative of each funding agency, and by an International Advisory Group (IAG) composed of nine experts in the fields of policy research and management.



# CHANGE

## A not so Novel Idea

The concepts behind the Think Tank Initiative are not new; what is new is the way that the program is going about implementing them:

Old	vs.	New
Providing core funding		Providing long-term and flexible funding to help the institution craft its own vision and agenda
Providing training and technical assistance		Providing assistance that is demand-driven
Improving research quality		Giving serious attention to organizational performance issues

---

*“Non-earmarked funding keeps think tanks from following the research agendas of their donors and enables them to conduct research and activities on issues which they, themselves, deem to be priorities”*

*Dr. Cheikh Oumar Ba, Initiative prospective agricole et rurale (IPAR), Senegal*

---

## **A Focused Approach**

Two strategic decisions help frame the work of the program: a focus on one particular type of research organization, and, a concentration on a limited number of countries and regions.

So why think tanks? First, because they provide citizens with the information they need in order to advocate for better public services and demand accountability in the delivery of those services. Second, because only locally sound policy research can help point donors, government policy-makers, and NGOs to the “right” interventions. And third, because an understanding of tradeoffs and outcomes based on rigorous research and evaluation can stimulate policy changes and replication that better address the needs of the poor.

There are few if any countries and regions where the program would not be welcome. Given limited resources however, the program is focusing as a start on a small number of countries that meet specific criteria such as a degree of both political openness and policy research capacity. Scoping exercises have been carried out to gain in-depth knowledge of their socio-economic and political context as well as their policy research environments.

These countries are:

- East Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda
- West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal
- Latin America: Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru
- South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

---

*“With a project-based funding approach, one cannot draw a forward-looking, proactive and continuous research agenda, which is indispensable for constant engagement in the policy debate...”*

*Bitrina Diyamett, African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS), Tanzania*

---



# STRENGTH

## **Smarter Funding, Stronger Institutions**

One dominant theme that emerged from consultations leading to the creation of the Think Tank Initiative is that many of the weaknesses in policy research are the result of shortsighted funding decisions by donor agencies. For example, research institutions in developing countries rarely receive the kind of predictable core support that would allow them to carry out long-term planning, establish their own research priorities, and invest in creating strong research programs. International donors provide financial support, but usually for one-off projects, which the donor agency often designs and leads.

As a result, most policy research institutes are restricted largely to carrying out “commissioned research,” rather than setting a forward-looking research agenda responding to locally-determined needs. These problems are compounded by the limited pool of highly educated experts in many developed countries, and the difficulties of building policy research careers within local institutions. Long-term and stable sources of funding are needed to allow research institutions to provide policy researchers with real opportunities to build careers.

The defining feature of the Think Tank Initiative lies in its provision of core institutional support (core funding) to participating organizations at a level that is enabling, without creating dependency. This is provided through non-earmarked, multi-year grants, to help fund both the organization’s research program and operating costs. Provision of such stable, financial support is seen as critical in giving organizations both the flexibility to adjust and be proactive to changing circumstances, and the stability to engage in sustained research and analysis on particular issues.

Long-term core support is combined with dedicated capacity development to address key weaknesses. Assistance is also provided to institutions in identifying and mobilizing appropriate sources of technical support in three broad areas: research methods and skills; communication and outreach in the policy context; and general organizational development.

The Initiative also aims to support peer-to-peer learning by bringing together funded organizations, outside experts, and other stakeholders.

## Testing the Model – Measuring Change

The Think Tank Initiative makes a bold statement: that ‘better’ funding leads to more sustainable and effective institutions, which in turn lead to better development policies. How can one know at the end of 5 or even 10 years whether this statement holds true?

As can be imagined, it is very complex to assess the impact of a program of this nature. Because of this complexity, the Initiative has invested in developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. This system will help to ensure accountability and improve performance, while generating and tracking learning at several levels.

More specifically, it will capture changes at the institutional, country and program levels through the monitoring of specific indicators and evaluative research to answer important, emerging questions. In addition, an external evaluation of the program will provide an independent, informed view about how the Initiative is performing, the extent to which its objectives are being met, and the results and effectiveness of the programming.

In the first two years of the program, M&E activities focused on developing and applying a results framework to identify indicators of progress at the level of both individual grantees and the overall program. The Initiative also developed a suite of monitoring tools to collect data over time about research quality, policy linkages and organizational performance of all funded think tanks, and about the effectiveness of the program’s approach to organizational capacity building for these institutions.

With the monitoring of grantees underway, the program now wants to carry out research to help gain insight into complex questions such as: What are the factors that enable “leading” think tanks in the world to be perceived as successful? What are the reasons that affect policy-makers’ demand for research results? Or, what influences the level of investment in local research?

---

*“A key question that faces policy research institutions in Africa is the manner and extent to which M&E can capture the impact of research on policy. Policy research as we know produces knowledge whose benefits and impact span over time and space. What mechanisms can be used to effectively track the impact of research on policy? What should be the start and end point?”*

*Professor Eric Eboh, African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), Nigeria*

---





# SHARING

## **The Think Tank Initiative's Data – A Public Good**

The Initiative is collecting a vast amount of data – in four years, monitoring and evaluation tools will have generated numerous observations from a significant number of institutions. How can this data be stored and shared securely within the program and with others? How can a balance be found between sharing knowledge and maintaining the confidentiality of grantee institutions? And how can the information be used to provide practical insights to think tanks and their supporters?

The program is building an online database to help address these challenges. It will contain all of the statistics generated by the Initiative, and be accessible to program staff and grantee institutions, who will be able to upload and view their own data. Some of this information will be made available to other researchers.

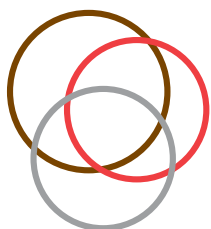
The program hopes that this database, an open source project, can be in itself a contribution to other initiatives and organizations grappling with large quantities of data.

**Coming Soon!** A large-scale Policy Community Survey has been launched in each country where the Think Tank Initiative is active. This survey of senior-level policy and decision-makers will:

- shed light on the nature of the wider policy community in which think tanks in a specific country are operating, and indicate how each think tank is perceived as contributing to national policy processes and other policy demands in that country;
- provide a basis for reflection by each think tank on their own performance, which will help them identify some of their critical organizational capacity needs;
- allow tracking of broad changes in the policy community in a particular country over time and the extent to which each think tank is perceived to have adapted to those changes as they occur.

The results of the East and West Africa baseline community survey will be made available in late 2010. A second round in Latin America and South Asia is scheduled for 2011.





# STRONG MINDS AGAINST THE MOST DIFFICULT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

*“Government agencies and various institutions are beginning to realize how important our work is for the economic development of Ghana, and they are gradually coming back to us for advice, for information, and for indicators”*

*Dr. Clement Ahiadeke, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana*

The think tanks supported by the program are independent policy research organizations committed to using research to inform and influence national-level social and economic policy debates, mainly in the areas of growth, equity, and poverty reduction.

They are all very different institutions: some are small and new, and others have a long track record in their countries; some have a unique strength in outreach to citizen groups and others are traditional research centres; some are housed in universities while others are autonomous; and the differences carry on.

The key commonality is that each institution has demonstrated a track record of rigorous research and analysis on national social and economic policy issues, and a keen desire to stimulate broader public policy debates in their countries with the ultimate goal of promoting sustainable growth and poverty reduction. These commonalities are what make them a promising investment.

## A Competitive Selection Process

The 52 Think Tank Initiative grantees in 23 countries were selected after an extensive assessment process. The program held two competitive Calls for Expression of Interest, the first in 2008 in East and West Africa and the second in 2009 in Latin America and South Asia, receiving a total of over 600 proposals.

### The Numbers

East Africa	West Africa	Latin America	South Asia
5 countries	6 countries	7 countries	5 countries
136 proposals	148 proposals	165 proposals	158 proposals
13 selected institutions	11 selected institutions	12 selected institutions	16 selected institutions

**The Process**

Initial Screening	To eliminate those organizations that did not meet the criteria
Internal Assessment	To evaluate the proposals and supporting documents of remaining organizations
Institutional Visits	Two day visits to short-listed institutions by program staff and consultants to further assess the organization
Peer Reviews	To assess the quality of research products submitted by the remaining candidates
Review by the International Advisory Group	Final review of visited institutions by program advisors to make recommendations to the Initiative's Executive Committee
Final Selection by the Executive Committee	To approve and endorse recommendations of the International Advisory Group and select and identify the final cohort

**Towards a Community of Think Tanks**

The institutions supported by the program are drivers of change: they work for better policies in their countries; they strive to become stronger organizations; and as grantees of the Initiative, they are part of a relatively small group of institutions in developing countries experimenting with new approaches to help solve the most challenging problems in their countries.

As trendsetters, they need a space to share their questions, learnings, results and best practices with each other. They also need to network and get ideas off the ground.

In the program's first two years, two "peer learning" events were held with African grantees. The first took place in May 2009 in Dakar, Senegal, and began a process of knowledge-sharing on issues confronted by think tanks in the region. Three separate sessions focused on Strategic Planning and Resource Mobilization, Communication Strategies and Policy Engagement, and the Recruitment and Retention of Researchers. Panelists were members of the institutions selected, who discussed their approaches and challenges around the above areas.

# DIVERSITY

## Think Tanks at Work

The Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) is assessing service delivery in Uganda, which will in turn help voters put more pressure on their local leaders.

The Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) is tracking government expenditures in Uganda, which will help ensure these resources actually reach their intended beneficiaries.

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) is developing recommendations for a regulatory framework to govern oil and oil revenues in Ghana, which will help keep these important resources in the country and direct them towards needed domestic investments.

The Initiative prospective agricole et rurale (IPAR) is informing the debate on agricultural policies and unemployment in Senegal, addressing two of the most complex challenges in Africa.

The Centre d'études, de documentation et de recherche économiques et sociales (CEDRES) has already helped change taxation law on rice in Burkina Faso, reducing the price of this important commodity.

A second event took place in March 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya. In response to the institutions' request, the workshop focused on Monitoring & Evaluation. The event provided a series of concepts, methods and tools for the development of an evaluation culture within research organizations, and for the elaboration of institutional M&E strategies. It explored ways in which evaluation can enhance key organizational performance areas.

The Think Tank Initiative is committed to continue facilitating opportunities for exchange and learning. Similar events will take place in late 2010 in Latin America and South Asia, and in 2011 the program will host a large Learning Forum, bringing together funded and non-funded think tanks, outside experts, policy-makers and other stakeholders.

### **Challenges Facing African Think Tanks**

The Dakar and Nairobi meetings resulted in keen discussions around some of the most important issues these research organizations grapple with. Some key challenges are highlighted below:

#### **Research**

- Retaining and motivating high-caliber research staff
- Controlling the quality of research
- Keeping up with cutting-edge research methods and models

#### **Policy**

- Measuring policy uptake
- Accessing and developing relationships with decision-makers and opinion leaders
- Translating research results into a language that policy makers, the media, and civil society groups can understand and operationalize

#### **Organizational**

- Developing and implementing solid monitoring and evaluation strategies
- Managing leadership transitions and human resources
- Establishing and maintaining good Board relations
- Mobilizing financial resources

# LOCAL

## **Institutional Visits – Good on their Own**

The 2-day institutional assessment visits were a key element of the selection and assessment process. In this exercise, organizations came alive in the eyes of evaluators, moving beyond written proposals to groups of individuals with stories and ideas to share. But the evaluators and the program were not the only ones benefiting from these visits; the institutions themselves found this process to be useful and informative, and many even used the organizational assessment process for their own purposes.

Here is what some institutions had to say about the visits:

*“Although our Board had just approved a new Ten Year Strategic Plan and Programme of Work, we were less than certain on how to go about rolling out the implementation of the Plan. The visits and the assessment process helped us become more strategic and action oriented in our approach to program design and institutional development activities. The experience from the process particularly helped us become more precise in defining our key policy research and policy outreach outputs. These outputs have helped us to move towards a performance-based staff appraisal and rewards system.”* Godber Tumushabe, the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment, Uganda

*“The process helped us think purposefully about our relation to the policy sphere and how to systematically articulate and develop the influence the Centre has wielded over time, and the directions we would like to take in the future.”* Dr. Rajeev Bhargava, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, India

*“The Institutional Visit by the Think Tank Initiative personnel to CPED and the tools they used for the assessment were informative and valuable to the institution. We can say that even if we were not selected as one of the grantees, the assessment tools would still have been used to improve our research quality, organizational performance and policy linkages, communications and outreach.”* Professor Andrew Onokerhoraye, Centre for Population and Environmental Development, Nigeria

*“CEDRES had never really had an accounting system that followed the existing rules. This was a basic but important recommendation made during the Think Tank Initiative visits. Today, the Centre is in the process of organizing its accounting system.”* Professor Taladidia Thiombiano, Centre d'études, de documentation et de recherche économiques et sociales, Burkina Faso



Professor Léonard Wantchékon,  
IERPE Executive Director

RESEARCH QUALITY

## PROFILE: THINKING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

*The Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE), Benin*

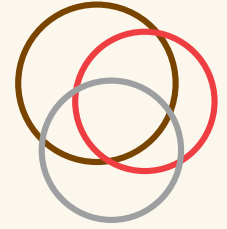
The Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE) is an innovative, not-for-profit institution dedicated to training in public economics and applied statistics, and research in impact evaluation of public policies. Created in 2004, it has quickly become a credible training institution, offering a Masters program with more than 20 graduates, and it is a key partner to international institutions for surveys and impact evaluation studies in Benin. IERPE intervenes in a wide range of topics, including democracy, governance, education, health, participatory management and energy.

IERPE has recently undertaken an action research project in collaboration with the Ministry of pre-primary and primary education. As part of this project, IERPE is creating local education councils in 36 municipalities. These councils made up of community leaders work directly with local government in the planning and organization of educational activities in their district. The councils will collectively decide on budget expenditures and use data collected by IERPE to inform debates on education at the community level. The project will last two years and it is expected that this participatory approach at the municipal level will lead to greater education outcomes, and ultimately to the adoption of reforms in the management of the maternal and primary education sector in Benin.

In addition to training and research, IERPE organizes outreach events in the form of seminars where researchers present the findings of a particular study to relevant stakeholders. In 2006, before the presidential elections, the Institute conducted a survey that revealed voters' preferences and implemented a local program that informed populations and the candidates. The aim of the study was to avert electoral clientelism by political parties and encourage transparent election campaign strategies. The findings were presented in a workshop in 2007, where political parties' capacities were strengthened.

IERPE credits its ability to carry out such innovative research to flexible funding such as the grant it receives from the Think Tank Initiative. According to IERPE's Executive Director, Professor Léonard Wantchékon, the Initiative's funding allows the Institute to carry out research on topics that do not often appeal to major funding groups despite being of vital importance to the municipalities and people they reflect. "If you have core funding," says Professor Wantchékon, "you can have the freedom...to improve the range of research that you do, to be more creative and to be able to follow what you, as a think tank, believe is important, not necessarily what the donors think is important."





Dr. Assefa Admassie,  
EEA's Executive Director

## PROFILE: A KEY PLAYER IN THE FORMULATION OF ETHIOPIAN POLICY

*Ethiopian Economic Association / Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEA / EEPRI)*

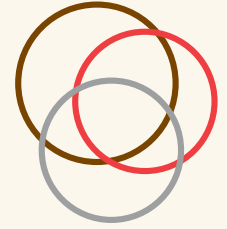
The Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA) was established as a non-profit, non-religious and non-partisan professional association in 1992. Its mission is to represent the professional interests of its members, advance the discipline of economics and contribute to the development of the Ethiopian economy by undertaking rigorous policy research and analysis. To best achieve this goal, the EEA established the Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEPRI) in 2000 to act as the implementing arm of the Association.

Since its inception, the EEA has carried out over 100 research projects and has organized several training sessions and top discussion forums on economic issues. Many of these projects and events have been developed at the behest of bilateral partners, ranging from civil and private sector groups to universities, government agencies and private consulting firms, and multilateral bodies including the World Bank, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations Development Programme.

All research has been conducted with the ultimate aim of reaching and informing policymakers, although the EEA knows from experience the challenges that local think tanks face in their attempt to influence and inform policy. In the words of EEA's Executive Director, Dr. Assefa Admassie, "It is always very difficult for a think tank to boldly argue that it has either informed or influenced public policy with certainty. This is because of a lack of benchmark references. In addition, policymakers often do not acknowledge the contribution of think tanks, particularly the independent ones, even if they have taken up the idea suggested by these think tanks."

And yet, despite these complexities, there are positive signs of the impact of its output. The demand for EEA/EEPRI research from national and international organizations is steadily increasing. EEA researchers and staff members are widely recognized as experts in their fields and are invited to nearly all discussion forums organized by government, private sector and international organizations in Ethiopia where economic issues are on the agenda. And finally, interest and participation in EEA discussion forums such as Vision 2020 and the Annual Conference on the Ethiopian Economy, are ever increasing.

POLICY LINKAGES



Professor Massa Coulibaly (left) and Boubacar Bougoudogo from GREAT

## PROFILE: GREAT EXPECTATIONS

*Groupe de recherche en économie appliquée et théorique (GREAT), Mali*

The Groupe de recherche en économie appliquée et théorique (GREAT) is a socioeconomic research institution which aims to build local capacity for the development and analysis of economic policies in Mali. Founded in 1999, GREAT's priority research areas include poverty analysis, pro-poor growth, and the links between decentralization, poverty and inequality.

The institute's Executive Director and founder Professor Massa Coulibaly, is an established researcher and is well known in Mali. GREAT is also respected in the region and has worked with international organizations such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).

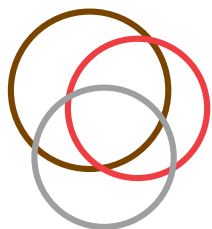
GREAT's research on the poverty profile of Mali is cited by many of the country's financial and development partners, as well as by government agencies. Another important study completed by GREAT is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Common External Tariff (CET), which aims to assist ECOWAS in the development of appropriate safeguard measures for correct implementation of the CET.

Despite GREAT's reputation for excellent research and analysis, the institute remains small, with the key challenge of developing policy recommendations on a larger set of important issues for the country. Therefore GREAT hopes to use the funding provided by the Think Tank Initiative to strengthen itself as an institution and expand its reach and influence in the country.

While engaging in a comprehensive strategic planning exercise to further define its research agenda and institutional needs, GREAT is also taking very specific steps such as hiring high-quality research staff and improving its research facilities.

"Our work," says Professor Coulibaly, "is important to us and, we think, important for the government, for the people of Mali and for the development of our country." GREAT shows immense potential and will certainly be a think tank to watch in the coming years.

ORGANIZATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE



## LOOKING AHEAD

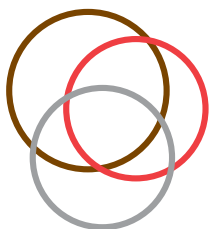
In its first two years, the Think Tank Initiative has successfully rolled out program activities related to the selection of policy research organizations in all four regions, supported and monitored the first cohort of funded think tanks, and begun carrying out research to inform programming.

In its third year, the focus will be primarily on supporting the work of the funded think tanks. The Initiative will continue to work closely with all grantees, further develop its research component, implement its Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, and aim to share learnings around this funding model.

The newest grantees – those from Latin America and South Asia – will have an opportunity to gather for the first time to discuss critical issues surrounding policy research. Together with think tanks, the Initiative will also explore alternative ways of capacity development, such as institutional exchanges, in-country trainings, e-forums, and peer reviews.

More emphasis will be placed within the Initiative on developing a research agenda to determine how best to support local research capacity and help it shape policy decisions. This work is seen as a key contribution to those interested in how best to foster policy research.





# THINK TANK INITIATIVE GRANTEES

## EAST AFRICA

### Ethiopia

Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI)

Ethiopian Economic Association/  
Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEA/EEPRI)

### Kenya

Center for Research and Technology Development (RESTECH Center)

Institute of Economic Affairs – Kenya (IEA Kenya)

Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Kenya (IPAR Kenya)

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)

### Rwanda

Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Rwanda (IPAR Rwanda)

### Tanzania

African Technology Policy Studies Network – Tanzania Chapter (ATPS Tanzania)

Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)

Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA)

### Uganda

Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE)

Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)

Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)

## WEST AFRICA

### Benin

Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE)

### Burkina Faso

Centre d'études, de documentation et de recherche économiques et sociales (CEDRES)

### Ghana

Institute of Economic Affairs – Ghana (IEA Ghana)

Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)

### Mali

Groupe de recherche en économie appliquée et théorique (GREAT)

### Nigeria

African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE)

Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA)

Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED)

Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)

### Senegal

Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (CRES)

Initiative prospective agricole et rurale (IPAR)

## LATIN AMERICA

### **Bolivia**

Fundación ARU  
 Instituto de Estudios Avanzados  
 en Desarrollo (INESAD)

### **Ecuador**

Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho  
 Ambiental (CEDA)  
 Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas  
 y las Oportunidades (Grupo FARO)

### **El Salvador**

Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo  
 (FUNDAUNGO)  
 Fundación Salvadoreña para El Desarrollo  
 Económico y Social / Departamento de  
 Estudios Económicos y Sociales  
 (FUSADES/DEES)

### **Guatemala**

Asociación de Investigación y Estudios  
 Sociales (ASIES)

### **Honduras**

Foro Social de Deuda Externa y Desarrollo  
 de Honduras (FOSDEH)

### **Paraguay**

Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía  
 Paraguaya (CADEP)  
 Instituto Desarrollo (ID)

### **Peru**

Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE)  
 Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)

## SOUTH ASIA

### **Bangladesh**

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)  
 Institute of Governance Studies (IGS)

### **India**

Center for Study of Science, Technology and  
 Policy (CSTEP)  
 Centre for Budget and Governance  
 Accountability (CBGA)  
 Centre for Policy Research (CPR)  
 Centre for the Study of Developing Societies  
 (CSDS)  
 Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS)  
 Institute of Economic Growth (IEG)  
 Institute of Rural Management (IRMA)  
 National Council of Applied Economic  
 Research (NCAER)  
 Public Affairs Centre (PAC)

### **Nepal**

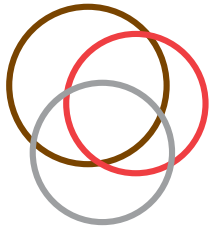
Institute for Social and Environmental  
 Transition – Nepal (ISET-N)

### **Pakistan**

Social Policy and Development Centre  
 (SPDC)  
 Sustainable Development Policy Institute  
 (SDPI)

### **Sri Lanka**

Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)  
 Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)



# ADVISORS AND STAFF

## International Advisory Group (IAG)

### Rukmini Banerji

Rukmini Banerji is currently a program director at Pratham. Overseeing work in several major states in north India, she is also a team lead on the Annual Status of Education Report, the largest annual study ever done by Indian citizens to monitor the status of elementary education in the country. Initially trained as an economist in India, Ms. Banerji was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University and completed her PhD at the University of Chicago.

### Paul Collier

Paul Collier is a Professor of Economics and the Director for the Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford. He is currently advisor to the Strategy and Policy Department of the IMF and advisor to the Africa Region of the World Bank. His latest book is entitled “The Plundered Planet: Why We Must – and How We Can – Manage Nature for Global Prosperity”. He is the author of two other books, “The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It” and “Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places”.

### Nancy Birdsall

Nancy Birdsall is the founding president of the Center for Global Development. Prior to launching the Center, Dr. Birdsall served for three years as Senior Associate and Director of the Economic Reform Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and as Vice-President of the Inter-American Development Bank from 1993-1998. Before joining the Bank, she spent 14 years in research, policy, and management positions at the World Bank. She is the author, co-author or editor of more than a dozen books and over 100 articles for scholarly journals and books.

### Nicolás Ducoté

Nicolás Ducoté is the co-founder of CIPPEC, a leading think tank in Argentina and Latin America. He has held the posts of Director of the National School of Government, Director of the Center for International Cooperation in Public Administration, board member of the National Institute of Public Administration and he has been an international consultant for the United Nations. Mr Ducoté is the author of numerous articles on public policy in the Argentine national media, of five internationally published papers, and he has been featured in over 50 national and international news pieces.

### Rashad Cassim

Rashad Cassim is the Deputy Director General, Economic Statistics, at Statistics South Africa and is responsible for the production of all official economic statistics in the country. Prior to joining Statistics South Africa in July 2006, he was the head of the School of Economics and Business Sciences at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg for three years. He was also Executive Director of Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies, a think tank located in South Africa. He has a PhD in Economics from the University of Cape Town.

### Rebeca Grynszpan

Rebeca Grynszpan is the Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Prior to her appointment, she served as the Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of UNDP’s Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean for four years. In addition to her experience as an adviser, lecturer and author, Ms. Grynszpan has been actively involved in key United Nations initiatives such as the Millennium Project’s Task Force on Poverty and Economic Development and on the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development.

### Rakesh Mohan

Dr. Rakesh Mohan is a Professor in the School of Management and a Senior Fellow at Yale University. He is also a Non Resident Senior Research Fellow of the Stanford Centre for International Development, at Stanford University. He has served as Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and as Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance (Government of India).

### Maureen O'Neil

Maureen O'Neil is President of the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. Before this appointment, Ms. O'Neil was President of the International Development Research Centre (1997-2008) and her previous positions include Interim President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, and President of the North-South Institute. She has also represented Canada on the UN Commission on the Status of Women, on OECD committees, and has been a member of the UN Committee for Development Planning and the Board of the UN Research Institute for Social Development.

### Marie-Angélique Savané

Marie Angélique Savané is an international consultant. She is the former Chair of the Panel of Eminent Persons for the African Peer Review Mechanism in Senegal and has worked with various international organizations and United Nations agencies including the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Population Fund. Madame Savané has also been an active member of the South Commission, the Commission of Global Governance and the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century.

## The Think Tank Initiative Staff

### In East Africa:

**John Okidi** – Senior Program Officer, Think Tank Initiative

**Paul Okwi** – Senior Program Officer, Globalization, Growth and Poverty/Think Tank Initiative

### In West Africa:

**Diakalia Sanogo** – Senior Program Officer, Think Tank Initiative

**Elias Ayuk** – Senior Program Specialist, Globalization, Growth and Poverty/Think Tank Initiative

### In Latin America:

**Antonio Cicioni** – Senior Program Officer, Think Tank Initiative

**Carolina Robino** – Program Officer, Globalization, Growth and Poverty, Think Tank Initiative

### In South Asia:

**Samar Verma** – Senior Program Officer, Think Tank Initiative

### In Ottawa:

**Marie-Claude Martin**, Program Manager

**Peter Taylor**, Senior Program Specialist

**Maria Urbina-Fauser**,  
Communication and Learning Officer

**Véronique McKinnon**, Research Officer

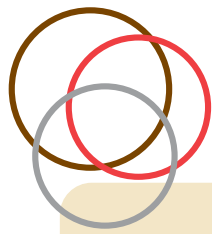
**Caitlin Myles**, Research Officer

**Sara D'Arcy**, Program Assistant

**Jennifer McDonald**, Grant Administrator

**Katy Stockton**, Professional Development Awardee

**Janet Oropeza**, Research Intern

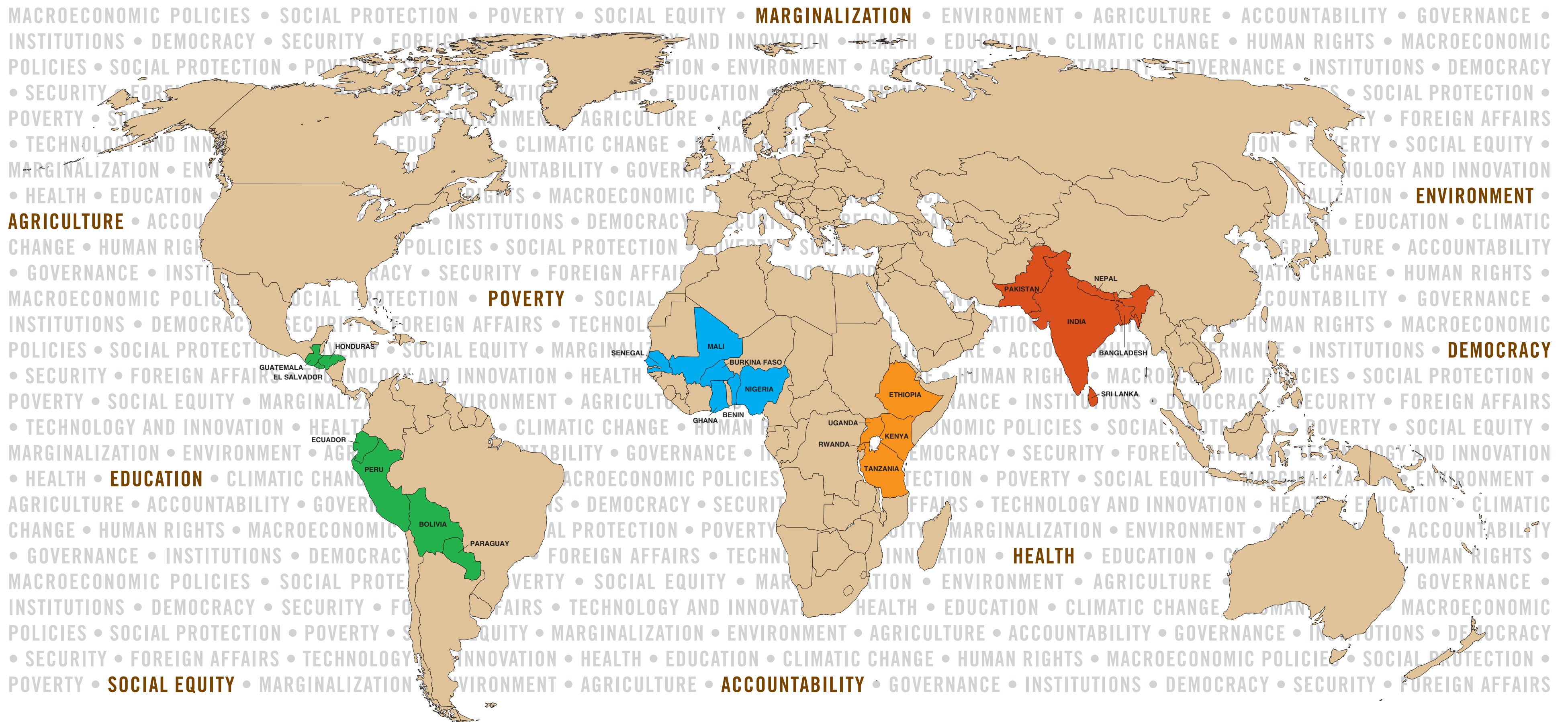


## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	Dec 2007 – Mar 2009	Apr 2009 – Mar 2010	Total
<b>Contributions</b>	<b>1,936,355</b>	<b>9,206,689</b>	<b>11,143,044</b>
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	119,812	1,823,165	1,942,977
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation		6,314,117	6,314,117
International Development Research Centre	1,816,543	1,069,407	2,885,950
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>1,936,355</b>	<b>9,206,689</b>	<b>11,143,044</b>
Operational Costs	1,299,156	1,923,560	3,222,716
Application and Selection Process	368,217	123,074	491,291
Monitoring and Evaluation	43,154	164,703	207,857
Research Expenses	212,991	6,154,330	6,367,321
Administrative Cost Recovery	12,837	841,022	853,859



# MAPPING POLICY RESEARCH



*The Think Tank Initiative is a multi-donor program supporting 52 independent policy research institutions or “think tanks” in developing countries, enabling them to better provide sound research that both informs and influences policy. For more information, please visit [www.idrc.ca/thinktank](http://www.idrc.ca/thinktank)*

LATIN AMERICA	WEST AFRICA	EAST AFRICA	SOUTH ASIA
<p><b>Bolivia</b> Fundación ARU Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Desarrollo (INESAD)</p> <p><b>Ecuador</b> Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA) Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas y las Oportunidades (Grupo FARO)</p> <p><b>El Salvador</b> Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO) Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social / Departamento de Estudios Económicos y Sociales (FUSADES/DEES)</p> <p><b>Guatemala</b> Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASIES)</p> <p><b>Honduras</b> Foro Social de Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras (FOSDEH)</p> <p><b>Paraguay</b> Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya (CADEP) Instituto Desarrollo (ID)</p> <p><b>Peru</b> Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE) Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)</p>	<p><b>Benin</b> Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE)</p> <p><b>Burkina Faso</b> Centre d'études, de documentation et de recherche économiques et sociales (CEDRES)</p> <p><b>Ghana</b> Institute of Economic Affairs – Ghana (IEA Ghana) Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)</p> <p><b>Mali</b> Groupe de recherche en économie appliquée et théorique (GREAT)</p> <p><b>Nigeria</b> African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE) Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED) Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)</p> <p><b>Senegal</b> Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (CRES) Initiative prospective agricole et rurale (IPAR)</p>	<p><b>Ethiopia</b> Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) Ethiopian Economic Association/Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEA/EEPRI)</p> <p><b>Kenya</b> Center for Research and Technology Development (RESTECH Center) Institute of Economic Affairs – Kenya (IEA Kenya) Nigerian Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Kenya (IPAR Kenya) Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)</p> <p><b>Rwanda</b> Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Rwanda (IPAR Rwanda)</p> <p><b>Tanzania</b> African Technology Policy Studies Network – Tanzania Chapter (ATPS Tanzania) Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA)</p> <p><b>Uganda</b> Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)</p>	<p><b>Bangladesh</b> Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Institute of Governance Studies (IGS)</p> <p><b>India</b> Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) Centre for Policy Research (CPR) Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS) Institute of Economic Growth (IEG)</p> <p><b>Nepal</b> Institute for Social and Environmental Transition – Nepal (ISET-N)</p> <p><b>Pakistan</b> Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)</p> <p><b>Sri Lanka</b> Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)</p>