

annual review 2020–21



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


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

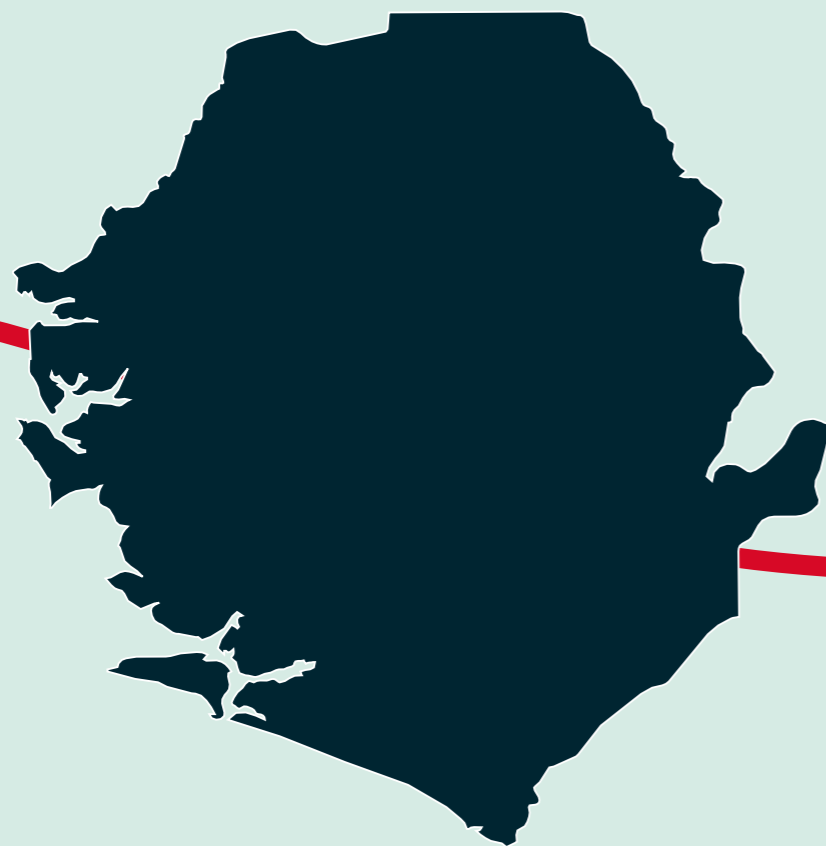
To visualise the truly global nature of our work and impact, the artwork in our Annual Review illustrates a snapshot of countries where we have active research projects or international partnerships.

With these countries and the red line that links them all, we recognise the mobility, fluidity, trans-local connections and transborder movement that our ever-changing world has to offer.

Each country is linked to the next, communicating our commitment to knowledge-sharing and mutual learning in tackling universal development challenges such as climate change or poverty.

Countries are drawn to be of equal size, reflecting our belief in equity and justice above all.





Sierra Leone

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Director's foreword

Melissa Leach



This has been an extraordinary year for the Institute. The Covid-19 pandemic and its health, social, economic and political impacts have created massive disruptions, transforming how people live and organisations function throughout the world. The challenges it has brought to how we at IDS contribute to creating a more equitable and sustainable world, where people everywhere are free from poverty and injustice, have been compounded by the UK Government's recent cuts to overseas aid. These have been imposed hastily and there can be no doubt that they will have drastic effects.

As we navigated this perfect storm of change and adapted our approaches to research, teaching and learning, communications and impact, and our internal operations, we also saw the opening of new opportunities. Our response showcased our commitment to making a difference while forging a lasting legacy in how we work. It made the phrase 'building back better' – or 'building forward differently' – feel apt across many of our areas, including the radical rethinking (and 'decolonisation') of key concepts, practices and power relations in development and development studies; the ways we deliver teaching in inclusive, blended modes; how we can work in smarter and greener ways through technological innovation; and how we nurture equality and diversity among our people.

We are now one year into the implementation of our Strategy 2020–25 [Transforming knowledge, transforming lives](#). Although developed pre-Covid, its emphasis on responding to the disruptions and shocks of our era is proving remarkably salient in the context of today, and as we look ahead to life with and post the pandemic

Our strategy drives the structure of this Annual Review, which highlights our progress towards each of our five strategic priorities. We share impact stories from across the Institute that demonstrate our work towards these priorities. Not surprisingly, many of our key impacts this year relate to the pandemic. These include the wide-reaching influence of the Sanitation Learning Hub's Handwashing Compendium, the Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform on Covid-19 response, and our work to provide rapid analysis and facilitated learning to the UK Government to support pandemic recovery. Other stories highlight exciting impacts such as large-scale successes in pedagogical advancement in Africa through equitable partnerships, and addressing digital exclusion that is affecting the most marginalised communities in our home city, Brighton, in the UK. We also marked 50 years of collaborative research with pastoralists, whose insights are prompting some major, and timely, rethinking of approaches to land management and climate change.

The breadth and quality of our research, teaching and learning was recognised in 2020 by IDS sustaining its position as top International Development Policy Think Tank in the Global Go To Think Tank Index. And together with the University of Sussex, we have retained our ranking as best in the world for Development Studies in the QS University Rankings 2020, now held for five years in a row.

The past year has given us much to learn from and has reinforced our role in the global effort to build ahead through our research, partnerships, mutual learning and knowledge exchange. As we look forward, particularly to international attention being focused on development challenges at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) that follows the G7 Summit, this commitment to progressive change feels even more necessary.

Melissa Leach

Chair's statement

Deepak Nayyar



It is not possible to reflect on the past year without thinking of the incredible disruption wrought by Covid-19 not only in economy, polity and society but also in every aspect of our daily lives. The pandemic has deepened existing inequalities and accentuated exclusion. At this juncture, the work of the Institute of Development Studies in its quest for equitable societies is more important than ever before. For me, as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees, it is both a challenge and an opportunity.

The backdrop of volatility and disruption, particularly in the way the Institute secures and sustains funding, made it imperative that there was renewed focus on operational resilience through 2020–21. This included work to strengthen financial management, governance, policies, and above all, excellence in teaching and learning.

These efforts contributed to the Institute being ranked first for development studies by QS University Rankings for the fifth consecutive year and number one for international development policy in 2020 by the Go To Think Tank Index Report. This recognition of the Institute's position as the world leading centre for development research, learning and partnership is a tribute to the hard work of the entire IDS community in a year when every aspect of teaching, learning and research changed so profoundly.

The commitment to excellence prompted a review of policies relating to people and values, with steps taken to secure the organisation's position as an 'employer of choice' by developing approaches to foster equality, diversity and inclusivity. Among the immediate outcomes was a commitment to remove barriers to attracting a diverse field of applicants for the 2020 Fellow recruitment campaign, while launching a mentoring pilot programme to encourage skills development and career progression.

In line with its strategic vision and commitment to communities in which it operates, the Institute completed an audit of its environmental impact. This led to definition of an action plan to improve the sustainability of the IDS, including maintaining the Carbon Emission savings seen during 2020–21 due to reduced fieldwork travel.

The robust approach taken by IDS to financial management enabled the Institute to mitigate some of the worse effects of changes in the wider environment, including Brexit and the UK Government aid spending cuts. At the end of the financial year, overall financial performance was positive. Unrestricted reserves increased by £1.66 million with a forecast of a balanced budget.

This achievement reflects the success of the organisation in translating funding proposals into contracted projects alongside the operational efficiencies achieved during the past year. A review of how the Institute works with funders and suppliers alongside work to strengthen due diligence and mitigate risk is directly contributing to a more secure financial position.

However, as we look forward, significant risks and worrisome uncertainties remain. The decision by the UK Government to reduce aid spending from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GDP is hugely damaging and heralds a new era of financial uncertainty for IDS and its partners. This uncertainty is compounded by the ongoing effects of the revaluation of the USS Pension Scheme and impact on student numbers due to both Covid-19 and Brexit.

Navigating this uncertainty and remaining vibrant, as the future unfolds, relies on our continued, collective effort. The successes achieved in this extraordinary year, ranging from operational efficiency to research impact, demonstrate the strength of the IDS community, as well as its resilience when confronted with exogenous economic, environmental and social shocks. It is the reason why I am confident about the continued success of IDS even in these difficult times.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Nayyar'.

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 priorities:

- 1** Collaborate across sciences, sectors and communities to do research that brings about progressive change
- 2** Build future leadership for development
- 3** Champion the use of evidence for social and environmental justice
- 4** Work with partners to expand international research and mutual learning networks for development
- 5** Create a sustainable, resilient and equitable institution.

for better lives globally

Highlights

2020 Global
Go To Think Tank
Index Report

Nº1

International
Development Policy
Think Tank

350

students joined us
between Sept 2019 and
Sept 2020, including 52
students on scholarships
from across 31
countries

377

contractual research,
learning and funding
partners

83

published journal
articles authored
by IDS staff

150

participants from
52 countries completed
IDS professional
development short
courses

1,380

items in global print,
online and broadcast
media

354,793

engagements with IDS digital
content, including event
registrations, newsletter and
social media subscribers,
an 8% increase on
last year.

QS World
University
Rankings 2021

Nº1

Development
Studies

Awards, honours and appointments

Atefeh Asfari,
Gertrude Ashilley and
Dolapo Olaniyan were
awarded IDS Graduate
Scholarships to study
master's courses at
IDS commencing
September 2020.

Ian Scoones
was recognised in the
2020 Highly Cited
Researchers List compiled by
Clarivate Analytics/Web of
Science, ranking in the top
one per cent by citations over
the past decade across the
social sciences.

Jing Gu
was appointed
Academic Editor
of Third World
Quarterly journal.

Katie Williams
was awarded the
CIPD Certificate in
Human Resource
Management
Level 5.

Katy Oswald
and **Colin Anderson**
were winners of the 2020
Sussex Education Awards:
Katy for 'Teaching to Disrupt'
& Colin for 'Sussex Spirit'. **Lidia
Cabral** and **Sohela Nazneen**
were also nominated for
awards.

Mick Moore
was appointed as
an (OBE) in the New
Year 2021 Honours
List, for services to
international
development.

Responding to Covid-19

Within days of Covid-19 being declared a pandemic, IDS rose to the challenges of meeting demands for its expert research on response and recovery and of rapidly shifting operations online. We adapted with speed to new ways of sharing information, collaborating and coming together as an IDS community.

Every aspect of IDS moved to remote working from March 2020. All teaching and learning went online and fieldwork was either curtailed or completed remotely. This huge and rapid transformation was made possible through strengthened IT systems and a community-wide commitment to maintain learning and research excellence.

IDS is a social sciences 'partner of choice' for natural and health sciences, renowned for our interdisciplinary work through the STEPS Centre, Global Challenges Research Fund hubs, and on epidemics like Ebola. This made IDS the natural home for specialist social perspectives, knowledge and partnerships to shape the response and help 'build back better' from Covid-19.

Responding swiftly: SSHAP, handwashing and K4D

The crisis brought an increased and accelerating need for research and evidence. IDS researchers joined the World Health Organization's Social Science Expert Group. The [Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform \(SSHAP\)](#) was extended and focused on Covid-19. Building on the earlier, widely praised [Ebola Response Anthropology Platform \(ERAP\)](#), SSHAP mobilised social scientists and produced 23 research briefs on the social dimensions of the pandemic. SSHAP met requests from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) for ten briefs incorporated into Research and Evidence Division updates. It provided evidence on public health and social measures for UNICEF in East and Southern Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Protection invited SSHAP to co-convene webinar roundtables on Covid-19 response in Africa, attended by more than 150 stakeholders.

The Sanitation Learning Hub swiftly developed the [Handwashing Compendium for Low-Resource Settings](#) – downloaded more than 10,000 times since launching in April 2020. The Compendium has been cited 23 times in policy documents, including by the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control.

The [Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development \(K4D\)](#) helpdesk for UK Government, channelled through the FCDO, responded comprehensively to multiple requests for evidence syntheses and learning journeys on various aspects of the pandemic. (See impact story, for more details.)

Responding collaboratively: Covid Collective, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Irish Aid

IDS is collaborating with more than 50 partners worldwide on Covid-related programmes. Among these are the UK Government-funded '[Covid Collective](#)' that is coordinated by IDS, for research, scenario and foresight work for systemic transformations, and the IDS-led [knowledge translation support](#) for IDRC's Covid-19 Responses for Equity programme (CORE). These projects are rapidly mobilising evidence to improve understanding of the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, improve existing responses, and generate better policy options for recovery.

To inform Irish Aid's strategic interventions, we provided research and analysis insights on health response, social protection, governance, food systems, and gender. IDS convened four events for Irish Aid's global community, attended by 56 practitioners from nine countries, with debates to informing a series of Strategic Positioning papers launched in September 2020. This collaboration continued with a special edition of the *IDS Bulletin*, '[Building a better world – the crisis and opportunity of Covid-19](#)' in March 2021, with authors from IDS, Irish Aid and affected countries.

Responding globally: health and social systems

Our work on global pandemic responses included the [Redesigning Health Systems for universal health coverage during Covid-19 and beyond](#) (Health Systems Global); the [Global Symposium on Health Systems Research \(HSR2020\)](#); and the Wellcome Trust-funded [Pandemic Preparedness Project](#), bringing an anthropological lens to disease threats, preparedness and response in Africa.

IDS helped to organise a high-level panel discussion on 'Social Divides and how we address this in times of Covid-19' for the 2020 Virtual Victoria Forum. The session, co-hosted by IDS and the University of Victoria, attracted 150 participants and created a globally accessible research platform on areas such as food systems, social protection and gender equality.



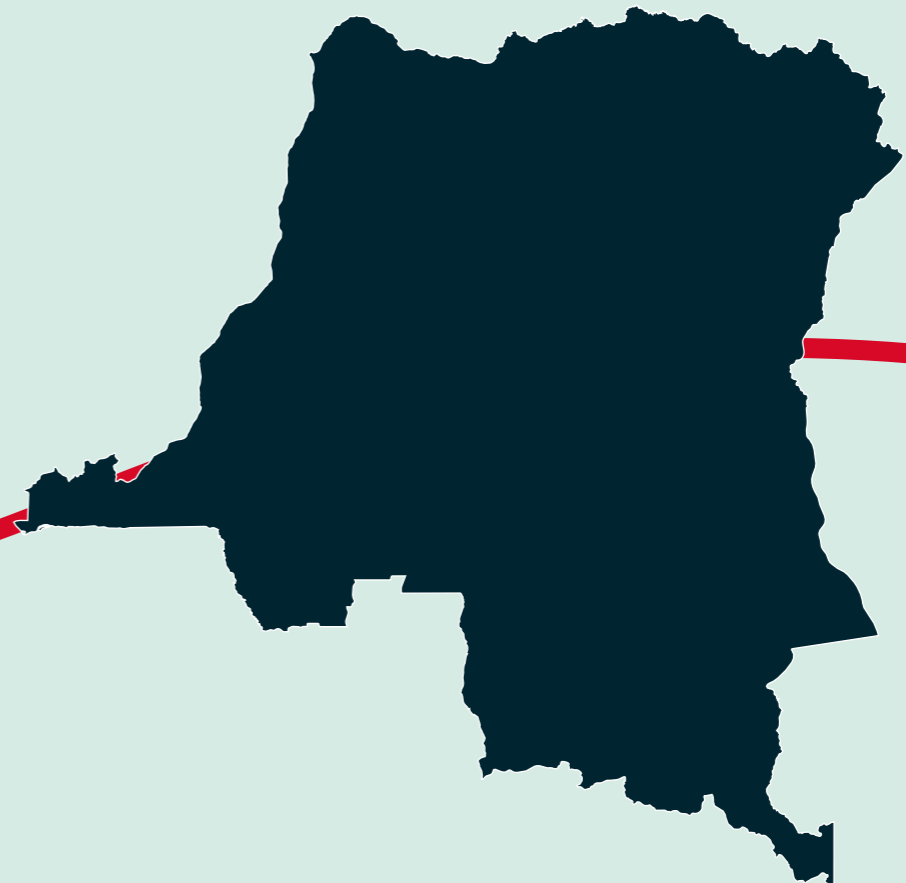
An emergency response medical team in Najaf, Iraq, use an infrared thermometer to take the temperatures of a family. Photograph: Ivor Prickett/Panos Pictures

1 collaborating across sciences, sectors and communities in research for progressive change

We collaborate innovatively in order to make a difference to people's lives. Whether across social, natural, medical or other sciences, with arts and humanities, with governments, organisations, civil society or people in communities – we collaborate widely to generate knowledge, evidence and insights to address current challenges. There has been no shortage of challenges to face in the past year. With Covid-19 forcing so many services online, our Digital and Technology Cluster team has forged new research relationships to highlight the degree to which digital exclusion is affecting the most marginalised communities. We have taken stock of 50 years of collaborative research with pastoralists, whose insights are prompting a rethink on approaches to land management and climate change. Our Tax and Development researchers have connected with residents in Sierra Leone's capital to help create a fairer property tax, which is now raising more revenue for their local services.



Canada



Democratic Republic of Congo

Collaborating to reform Freetown's property tax system

Researchers from the IDS-based [International Centre for Tax and Development \(ICTD\)](#) worked with the city council of Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, and the International Growth Centre to create a more equitable, efficient property tax system. Revenue potential has since increased fivefold, helping to fund critical local services for residents.

The city's colonial-era property tax system was obsolete and regressive – with area-based valuation meaning a tin shack could pay the same amount as a three-storey brick building. When Yvonne Aki-Sawyer was elected mayor of Freetown in 2018, she made revenue mobilisation – particularly property taxation – central to her agenda to '[Transform Freetown](#)'. She reached out to the ICTD, which was working on these issues through its [African Property Tax Initiative](#) (APTI).

ICTD researchers introduced the Council to a fairer and more practically feasible points-based property valuation method. After a successful pilot the Council approved the new system, and the project was scaled up to cover the whole city, with funding from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in Sierra Leone.

By April 2020, 95 per cent of properties in Freetown were mapped and valued – doubling the number in the register. The partners built a new IT system to manage the entire process from data collection to billing, and enabled payments to be made via banks. The new system is much more progressive, with tax payable on the top quintile of properties more than tripling and that on the bottom quintile more than halving.

Overcoming challenges to reform

In May 2020 distribution of tax bills began, but a month later the central government called for the project to be paused in order to review national guidelines for property tax reform. The project partners responded by working with stakeholders across government, and other local councils, to make the case for the Freetown reform model, and avoid new guidelines that would undercut it. Those efforts enabled the mayor, six months later, to press ahead with the reform.

Meanwhile, staff at the Freetown City Council began to call for greater ownership and control over the project. Over the past year, the project team has worked closely with local government officials to design new administrative structures and provide training in order to effectively hand over the project and ensure its sustainability. In documenting these experiences and processes, the researchers are generating substantial new insights into how to implement large-scale reforms.

Local success, international recognition

Since February 2021, demand notices have been delivered to every property in Freetown. In just the first two months of the year, more than \$537,000 was collected, compared to the total annual revenue potential of about \$800,000 under the old system.

The programme included an intensive public outreach campaign and participatory town hall meetings to allow taxpayers to discuss and vote on priority public services to deliver. The mayor committed to allocating 20 per cent of revenue from property taxation to participatory budgeting each year. So far the process has been successfully implemented in 30 city wards.

The Freetown reform attracted significant attention: it was published as a '[top story](#)' by [African Arguments](#), featured in [The Economist](#), and presented at the African Union and African Tax Administration Forum [High-Level Tax Policy Dialogue](#), and the World Bank's [annual tax conference](#).

Local governments in The Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon and elsewhere are now exploring similar reforms with the ICTD, and a new partnership with UN-HABITAT is in the works. The Centre has also secured funding from several new donors to build on the success of the APTI and launch an expanded Local Government Revenue Initiative.

Research on pastoralism highlights new directions for development

[IDS marked 50 years of research on climate, the environment and pastoralism](#) in 2020, offering a chance to explore how insights from this body of work have challenged conventional thinking about environmental change and led to wide-reaching impacts on practice and policy.

IDS research on pastoralism has involved many major collaborations and ongoing initiatives over the years. These include the [PASTRES \(pastoralism, uncertainty, resilience\) programme](#), currently working in China, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Italy and Tunisia; the [pastoralism theme of the Future Agricultures Consortium](#) in the Greater Horn of Africa; and research in [Ethiopia, Mali, and Zimbabwe on crop–livestock integration](#).

Pastoralism provides food and livelihoods for millions of people in more than 100 countries, in some of the harshest conditions on the planet. Pastoralists tend livestock (camels, cattle, yaks, sheep, goats and other animals) on rangelands that cover 25 to 40 per cent of the world's surface.

Long before human-influenced climate change was identified, pastoralists were adapting to climate variability. Drawing from long-term fieldwork across Africa, Asia and Europe, our research has shown that there is much to learn from – not just for those working in development, but also those in health, finance and infrastructure.

Shaping rangeland management in Africa

Cumulatively, our research has helped to reframe thinking about land degradation and desertification, influencing UN agencies and national governments in how rangeland management is approached.

IDS is a close active collaborator with the [Food and Agriculture Organization's knowledge hub on pastoralism](#), helping to foster debates among multiple actors about pastoralism and drylands.

Our inputs build on years of collaborations on pastoralism – such as that with Mohamed Elmi, who moved from working with Oxfam to become the Minister of State for Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands. His [reflective work](#) with Future Agricultures on policy processes around pastoralism showed the importance of sustained research.

IDS has also consulted on field projects – notably on a substantial and influential field programme with Oxfam in dryland pastoral areas of Africa for many years. We have worked in policy reform supported by the UK's aid programme, FAO and the World Bank, where IDS contributed to the framing and implementation of development activities on the ground.

Learning to embrace uncertainty

Much IDS research over the years has highlighted the importance of uncertainty – where we don't know and can't predict the probability of outcomes. Responding to [uncertainty](#) is a central theme of the European Research Council-funded PASTRES programme. Pastoralists live with uncertainty, exploiting variability and, through skilled herding, making use of highly challenging environments – whether dryland plains subject to frequent droughts or mountain systems, where snowfall events are unpredictable.

[Uncertainty needs to be placed at the centre of the development debate](#), and inspiration can be drawn from research on pastoralism. From this, fundamental new directions can emerge for how development is framed and practised – moving from linear management approaches that assume a singular direction and vision of progress towards ones that embrace uncertainty and complexity to build resilience.

The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the need to embrace and not deny uncertainty. The recent STEPS Centre book [The Politics of Uncertainty: Challenges of Transformation](#) shows how living with uncertainty is as relevant for those working in financial systems, migration policy or pandemic disease preparedness, as it is for pastoralists.



Long before human-influenced climate change was identified, pastoralists were adapting to climate variability.

Local pastoralists and monks carry fodder to the Blue Sheep, a protected species in Golok, Amdo, Tibet. Photo: Palden Tsering, IDS postgraduate researcher



Connecting the digitally disconnected

Covid-19 has highlighted more than ever the great importance of digital connectivity. Yet, as research by the IDS Digital and Technology Cluster shows, persistent digital inequalities in the UK and the US threaten to exclude the most marginalised.

Services and activities across many areas of social and economic life were already shifting online before the pandemic began. But the past year has provided a snapshot of the reality of a 'hyper-digital' society. People with digital skills can obtain well-paid remote work and support. Those who are less educated with fewer formally recognised skills are less likely to be online, more likely to work in vulnerable low-paying, unstable gig work and more likely to lack the digital skills needed to obtain key welfare support.

Fundamental questions about our future working lives are raised by this rapid digitisation of services and support – questions that the [Digital Futures at Work Research Centre](#) was set up to answer. The University of Sussex co-leads the centre, known as Digit, which began work in January 2020 with a five-year investment from the Economic and Social Research Council and which includes IDS among its research co-leaders.

IDS explores digitisation impacts

As part of Digit's Research Track 4, 'Reconnecting the disconnected: new channels of voice and representation', researchers from the IDS Digital and Technology Cluster have been conducting research in Brighton, Barking and Dagenham (London), and New York to understand the impact of digitised services on communities with intermittent and poor digital connectivity.

Their findings show that people face significant barriers, both in accessing social protection systems online and in looking for work. Intersecting forms of exclusion – such as disability or migration status – are resulting in deeper exclusion for members of some communities.

The research found that meaningful connectivity is not just about device ownership and getting online – the challenges that people face are often caused by a lack of basic digital skills and the cost of data. This includes people who are forced to apply for jobs online yet who lack the skills to do so because they did not use digital tools in their previous work.

Supporting economic development

The economic impacts of the pandemic mean that more and more people are likely to need to claim welfare benefits and apply for jobs online. To understand better the experience of those who are disconnected, the IDS Digital and Technology Cluster partnered with [Digital Brighton and Hove](#) and Citizens Online in July 2020 to help people with limited or no digital skills. The project provided tablet computers and assistance to use these through tailored, one-to-one technical help from digital champions. It was funded through the UKRI Higher Education Innovation Fund Covid-19 Response at the University of Sussex, and was part of the work for Research Track 4.

The project is enabling people who are digitally disconnected and who are referred through job centres and employment initiatives to access skills training, job sites and state welfare, with help from Digital Brighton and Hove. According to analysis published by Lloyds Bank in 2019, compared to the UK average, unemployed individuals are 64 per cent more likely to lack adequate '[Essential Digital Skills](#)' for life.



Meaningful connectivity is not just about device ownership and getting online.

2 Building future leadership for development

We work to build leadership capabilities among students, professionals, partners and peers to respond to global development challenges and opportunities – with Covid-19 impacts now adding to the mix. This year, our world-renowned postgraduate degrees, PhD research programme, and professional development courses moved entirely online, in a mammoth and innovative undertaking by staff and students alike. In one of the year's highlights, a former IDS student – now His Excellency the President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado Quesada – gave the IDS Annual Lecture in October 2020, asking how young leaders and development practitioners can help build back better from the pandemic. Elsewhere, the inclusive, transformative attributes of female leadership were reflected in the wide-scale success of the Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL) partnership. Participants worldwide accessed the newly launched, highly successful short course for professionals on social protection, which has fast become a core part of our building leadership work.



China



Egypt

Strengthening leadership through pedagogical reform in Africa

A case study on inclusive, transformative attributes of female leadership shone a light on the wide-scale success of the [Pedagogical Leadership in Africa \(PedaL\)](#) partnership for higher education reform. IDS is a partner, alongside universities in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda.

PedaL focuses on transforming social sciences teaching in African universities. Its student-centred pedagogical training for educators encourages the use of participatory, gender-sensitive teaching methods that are orientated towards developing skills of real world problem-solving and that move away from approaches where the lecturer tells the class what they need to know.

Since it began in 2018, PedaL has enhanced the teaching and facilitation skills of 2,000 educators from more than 80 universities across ten African countries. It has as a result influenced the learning experience for literally thousands of students across the continent.

The partnership is led by Dr Beatrice Muganda of the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) in Nairobi. Her insights on female leadership – and those of IDS' Director of Teaching and Learning – became the basis for a revealing recent [case study into the leadership attributes required in contexts where gender inequality is systemic](#), and where complex gender dynamics need to be navigated at multiple levels.

A 'power reversal'

Dr Muganda's insights stem from her own approach to PedaL and its work. She describes her leadership role with PedaL as being the person who 'shares the direction, and who carries others along'. She makes herself available to others, achieves buy-in from others, and prompts 'a subtlety of thought' to grow her team and trainers.

The case study set out to highlight that female leadership attributes – such as those embodied by Dr Muganda – can lead to inclusive, transformative change, precisely because female leadership approaches often have to contend with power from a position of disadvantage. The case study challenges assumptions about what to expect from women in leadership.

The PedaL approach is having an impact both for women and men, and, at an institutional level in terms of how the partnership is led – with IDS taking a more backseat role. 'There is this sense of power reversal. Black women are being heard, they are leading, the room is predominantly black. It's amazing!', Dr Waldman, IDS Director of Teaching and Learning, said in the case study.

Impact at scale

The PedaL model fosters capacity-building at scale, notably through its 'training of trainers' approach. Core resource people lead workshops and support promising participants to become trainers themselves. They then teach others beyond their country of residence. From an original proposal to train staff at five universities, the model has now reached staff in more than 90 universities. Those staff have also redesigned course modules, influencing the learning of an estimated 200,000 students across Africa.

With many African universities moving to distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in June 2020 PedaL also successfully launched a series of month-long online courses for educators on strategies for planning, designing, facilitating and assessing learning online. This aligned with the programme's overall efforts to promote access to and use of open education resources, tools and technologies such as Moodle.

PedaL's wide-ranging impact is attributed to its structure, reputable members, African values and transformational leadership. IDS's role is to support PedaL's pedagogical approach and to help maintain quality and rigour in activities.

According to Dr Muganda, 'the partnership stands out as one with a deep level of shared values, including resilience, patience, appreciation, selflessness and working within constraints'.

PedaL is part of the UK-Aid-funded Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR) programme.

Online learning about social protection, for everyone everywhere

Even before Covid-19 prompted our shift to online teaching, IDS was already exploring the potential for broadening access for a wider range of participants through online learning. Launched in June 2020, '[Social Protection: A Primer](#)' was a timely short course offered to professionals – and has become a core part of our building leadership work in this field.

Aimed at practitioners and policymakers in social protection, the free-to-access course was developed by the IDS [Centre for Social Protection](#) and the [Knowledge Impact and Policy Cluster](#), and is supported by Irish Aid as part of our partnership with them. Such has been its success, the course will run at least until early 2022.

The impetus for 'A Primer' came from our growing awareness that in-person short courses were not reaching those without travel and training budgets – often those who work on the ground or in lower levels of social protection. Market analysis highlighted this gap and a desire for online learning about the basics of social protection.

The impacts of Covid-19 threw into stark relief the vulnerability of many people who live in poverty and the vital role of social protection in helping them to cope. Almost every country has expanded or introduced programmes to meet rising needs. Aside from fast-response interventions, the pandemic has underlined the need for long-term strengthening of social protection systems.

Course builds capacity

Achieving effective short and long-term responses – whether to Covid-19 or to other shocks and crises – rests on capacity-building. Those who devise and implement interventions need a solid understanding of social protection, from basic principles to innovations in the field.

Participant numbers for the course have far exceeded the early ambitions of course developers Keetie Roelen and Alistair Scott of attracting 100 participants. During its first year, more than 2,000 people from around the world took the course.

Feedback has been extremely positive, with several participants sharing how the course has helped to build their individual and their team capacity. Senior staff in World Vision and UNICEF Lebanon recommended it to their staff for capacity-building and development of their approach to social protection. Team managers in Terre des Hommes Bangladesh included it in training for all their social workers and community mobilisers to build stronger links between their work and social protection.

One participant described the course as 'extremely detailed, but also not filled with overly technical and complicated terms', adding: 'I have acquired valuable knowledge on social protection, and better understand the need for the protection of vulnerable communities.' Another spoke of learning 'so much about social protection and the role it could play towards ending poverty'.

A wider online offer

With limited resources, Keetie and colleagues took the approach of building a modest but well-made course, where concepts could be understood and learned without human interaction. A specific module on social protection and Covid-19 was added later.

Care was also taken to ensure course content complemented that of partners' existing offers. So the course works as a primer for subscribers to the e-TRANSFORM course, run by SocialProtection.org, with whom the Centre for Social Protection has long-standing links. It was also a prelude to the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) South Africa Social Protection course in October 2020.

This is just one of the [short courses for professionals](#) that IDS runs online. Others include Shaping Policy with Evidence, Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning, and Pathways to Sustainability. In March 2020, IDS delivered its first Online Distance Learning (ODL) module, as part of the University of Sussex's MSc in Sustainable Development. This online degree, launched in July 2019, has been attracting very high student numbers.

Supporting our learners through the pandemic

We remain as committed as ever to transforming development knowledge, action and leadership through our teaching and learning programmes. During the Covid-19 crisis a huge range of new measures were put in place to continue this work while adapting and responding in the best interests of our students and wider learning community.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, our focus has been to balance safety, quality education and equity. We know that many students have responded positively to our online teaching which, while not the same as face-to-face, has in many cases exceeded expectations.

While the past year has been different, we wanted the IDS experience to be as valuable as it has always been. With this in mind, we focused on providing a full range of activities to complement learning and encourage students to build the connections that are so important to feeling part of our vibrant community, and to their future lives and work. Examples included a student-led TEDxIDS session that explored ‘What does post-COVID development look like?’ and a popular and hard-hitting online debate series.

Alongside, we maintained regular contact with our postgraduate students through weekly email updates, monthly IDS Community Fora and a series of online social activities. These were well received, helping students and staff feel part of the community despite being remote.

During the year, it became clear that mental health support was a particular area of need for our learners. We responded by highlighting the Mental Health First Aider scheme with volunteers on hand to speak to anyone struggling.

[IDS Alumni Network](#) instigated Virtual Connections, a project to connect IDS master’s students with alumni in order to practise networking and informational interview skills. For alumni it was a chance to support IDS without a significant time commitment and increased their awareness of the alumni network online mentoring and advice service. The project was a huge success, with 361 alumni, students and PhD Researchers taking part. Students commented on how helpful it was to find out about alternative career paths and hear alumni stories.

For more information about our alumni and how you can stay connected, get involved and change lives, visit: alumni.ids.ac.uk

Postgraduate degrees



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

3 Championing the use of evidence for social and environmental justice

We strive to generate and use evidence to shape policies and practices that have the best impacts on people's lives. Our research, learning and teaching programmes underline the value of evidence in decision-making, and reveal how politics and power can influence the creation and use of evidence. The Covid-19 pandemic produced an urgent demand for evidence and learning – one that we were well placed to meet. The IDS-led K4D programme responded swiftly to calls for evidence summaries and learning services for the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Evidence-gathering by the Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID) galvanised action from international policymakers over discrimination of religious minorities. Partnerships with local communities in South Asia's Sundarbans delta as part of the TAPESTRY project provided new ideas to help vulnerable communities live with uncertainty.



United Kingdom



Indonesia

Informing UK international development policy

The IDS-led [K4D programme](#) had an active year informing health provision, boosting understanding of water security, reacting rapidly to calls for evidence on Covid-19 – and providing evidence and learning to help optimise the UK's international development policymaking.

K4D – the Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development Programme – has [worked with thousands of policymakers and programme staff across government ministries](#), in the UK and in country offices. K4D provides evidence and learning services on development issues and processes, to enable staff to innovate and respond more effectively to rapidly changing and complex development challenges.

Due to the pandemic, K4D moved entirely online in 2020, providing flexible and responsive services to meet the changing demands of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the primary recipient of K4D expertise.

Swift response with Covid-19 evidence

In early 2020, K4D developed new rapid Covid-19 Evidence Summaries, filtering and condensing the proliferation of resources from around the world. By the end of 2020, K4D had produced 106 Health Evidence Summaries (daily and weekly), 27 Conflict and Governance summaries (weekly and fortnightly), and 13 Demography summaries (fortnightly). These were shared with FCDO staff and uploaded online to the K4D Covid-19 Resource Hub, [K4D Covid-19 Evidence Search](#) interface, and tweeted.

Feedback from FCDO rated the summaries 'very good', with 87 per cent reporting them beneficial to their work, especially on Covid-19 response and programming. The summaries also fed into weekly reports produced by the Covid-19 Chief Scientific Advisor team, were shared across government and with partners like the World Bank.

Publication of the summaries and social media sharing helped to attract much greater public engagement with K4D. Between April and June 2020, K4D's total twitter impressions increased by 228 per cent and engagements by 112 per cent from the previous quarter.

Mental health learning journey

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the turbulence of the year, the most accessed single K4D resource in 2020 was the [Mental Health Topic Guide](#) with more than 6,500 downloads. This output emerged from the Mental Health Learning Journey.

K4D learning journeys are collaboratively designed, with spaces to enable discussion, peer and interdisciplinary learning, and reflection on implications and opportunities for everyday work. By the end of 2020, K4D had 35 learning journeys complete or in progress.

Other impacts of the Mental Health Learning Journey included FCDO Syria and FCDO Yemen exploring approaches and partners for integrating mental health into their work, following a series of closed-door consultations. FCDO and the World Health Organization collaborated on a guidance note for humanitarian advisers. FCDO Ghana was reported to be confident in proceeding with a new £38m programme, of which £11m was for mental health and disability rights.

Galvanising action on water security

In August 2020, K4D facilitated the UK Government's session at World Water Week at Home as part of the [Water Security Learning Journey](#). The webinar event was headed by UK Government Minister Zac Goldsmith, whose speech drew on K4D's rapid assessment evidence, which was described as robust and comprehensive.

The event's reach has spread beyond the participants who joined it live. It has been shared through policy and practitioner newsletters and blogs, gathering more than 400 views by the end of August 2020. It sparked a new hashtag, #WaterAtCOP26, which partners are using to highlight work on water security in the run-up to the Glasgow climate negotiations in 2021.

Feedback has been generally positive on moving the learning journeys online. Participants of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) Scenarios Learning Journey, for instance, felt the scenarios facilitated through the Mural online tool will play a key part in the process of drafting a MENA strategy.

Achieving climate justice in South Asia's Sundarbans delta

An IDS research project in the Sundarbans delta of South Asia is showing how partnerships with local communities can yield new knowledge and ideas for more climate-resilient livelihoods. This year, the [TAPESTRY project](#) offered lessons for policymakers, practitioners, researchers and civil society groups on how marginalised communities are forming alliances to respond to uncertainty.

Straddling the border of India and Bangladesh, the Sundarbans mangrove forest delta is one of three vulnerable coastal areas (along with Mumbai and Kutch) that are the focus of TAPESTRY. Islanders in the Sundarbans are battling sea-level rise, salinity intrusion and cyclones, including the devastating Amphan supercyclone of May 2020.

Previous state-dominated development pathways did not address the dynamic nature of the delta, or the multi-layered needs of its inhabitants. Like other people living in coastal areas, inhabitants of the Sundarbans face a range of 'cascading' uncertainties, including those from climate change, and most recently from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Co-producing ideas for scaling up and out

TAPESTRY's research on [climate uncertainties in marginal environments](#) has demonstrated how initiatives built on partnerships between local communities (farmers, fishers and pastoralists), civil society and researchers can respond to uncertainties, support more reliable livelihoods and living conditions, build collective agency and engage with legal and decision-making processes.

Instead of 'top-down' solutions, the alliances involved in the TAPESTRY project are co-producing knowledge and ideas for socially just and ecologically sound alternatives that are based on local people's understandings of what positive transformation entails. Our focus is on 'patches of transformation' – sites where hybrid alliances, and their innovative initiatives, reimagine sustainable development and inspire transformative societal changes that can be scaled up and out.

Residents of Kultoli block (India) and Shyamnagar sub-district (Bangladesh) of the Sundarbans are working on 'hybrid' innovations, such as the trialling of salinity resistant indigenous rice varieties. The project is working to show how these can help to enhance food security, livelihood security and local wellbeing. The new initiatives offer hope for livelihoods, which could reduce outward migration.

Despite the constraints of the pandemic, the work has been shared in [webinars](#), [policy fora](#) and [academic conferences](#) in order to provide bottom-up perspectives regarding pathways to sustainability in areas that are at the frontline of climate change.

Highlighting challenges for women and young people

As part of previous work in the Sundarbans, 80 women from religious minorities across three areas in the Sundarbans documented the challenges they face using [photo stories](#) and advocated for change.

The current project also uses the Photo Voice method to document people's own visions and stories of the uncertainties, along with artworks produced by young people in schools on the theme of climate change and the pandemic.

To link research with action, the project is holding smaller consultations with local people and agencies on transformative practical action in the Sundarbans. These will feed into a series of round tables in 2021–22 that will focus on the policies and relationships that are needed to sustain local wellbeing, place-based identities and livelihoods and allow bottom-up transformations to flourish. The events will highlight connections between the different sites of Kutch, Mumbai and the Sundarbans, and how grassroots alliances in these different regions can learn from each other.

Working across both India and Bangladesh also offers a much-needed transboundary perspective on the Sundarbans. Given that there are so many cultural and ecological similarities, there is great scope for cross-border action to ensure sustainable and climate-just futures for the delta – yet this has often been hindered by national boundaries.

TAPESTRY is run through a transnational and cross-disciplinary consortium funded by the [NORFACE and Belmont Forum Transformations to Sustainability \(T2S\) research programme](#). The project will run until 2022.

Religious inequalities evidence cited in UN and UK policy spaces

This past year, the IDS-led [Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development \(CREID\)](#) has established strong relationships with policy influencers in the UK and the United Nations. We also provided much-needed evidence on the poorly documented discrimination of religious minority groups – notably on online hate speech, Covid-19 impacts, and the targeting and abuse of women.

Although Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, discrimination on the basis of religion or belief is widespread around the world. It can result in lack of access to basic services, experiences of verbal, emotional or physical violence and abuse, and exclusion from social and political processes. CREID provides research and practical programmes to redress the impact of such discrimination.

Alerting UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB

CREID's work includes monitoring online hate speech against religious minorities. In spring 2020, local partners identified a spike in hate speech on social media linked to [senior public figures in Pakistan](#), targeting the Ahmadiyya community, which is already stigmatised, socially and economically alienated, and experiencing hate-based violence. [CREID rapidly mobilised to alert international stakeholders](#), including the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB, Ahmed Shaheed, who subsequently wrote a letter to the Pakistani government condemning the situation.

Mr Shaheed also referenced CREID evidence [on how Covid-19 has exacerbated religious inequalities](#) in his October 2020 [report](#) to the UN General Assembly – and, as a follower of CREID on Twitter, he has tweeted links to CREID papers.

Shaping UK Government policy

In the UK, CREID also works closely with parliamentarians shaping government policy on FoRB. In autumn 2020, Rehman Chishti MP, the former Prime Minister's Special Envoy on FoRB, consulted CREID Director, IDS Fellow Mariz Tadros, to prepare his speech in a [parliamentary debate](#) on the persecution of Christians and FoRB, in which he referenced CREID evidence.

Current Special Envoy, Fiona Bruce MP, also quoted CREID research in a parliamentary [debate on the impact of Covid-19](#) on FoRB. Earlier, CREID research was cited by Lord Alton, another FoRB advocate, in a [written parliamentary question](#) on [ideologically motivated sexual abuse](#), and was reiterated in the reply from the government minister Baroness Sugg.

Much-needed evidence on minority women's experiences

Mariz Tadros presented evidence on the intersection of religious marginality, economic exclusion, and gender inequality at the [UK FoRB Forum](#) (of which CREID is an active member). This is chaired by the Bishop of Truro, whose [report on religious minority persecution](#) forms a key plank of UK policy on FoRB.

A major [report](#) by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on FoRB, published in February 2021, references CREID outputs, especially on Iraq and Pakistan, where CREID has several projects. Its discussion on the experiences of Pakistan's Hazara Shia women, a minority within a minority, draws almost exclusively on our work – showing how CREID is raising issues not covered elsewhere.

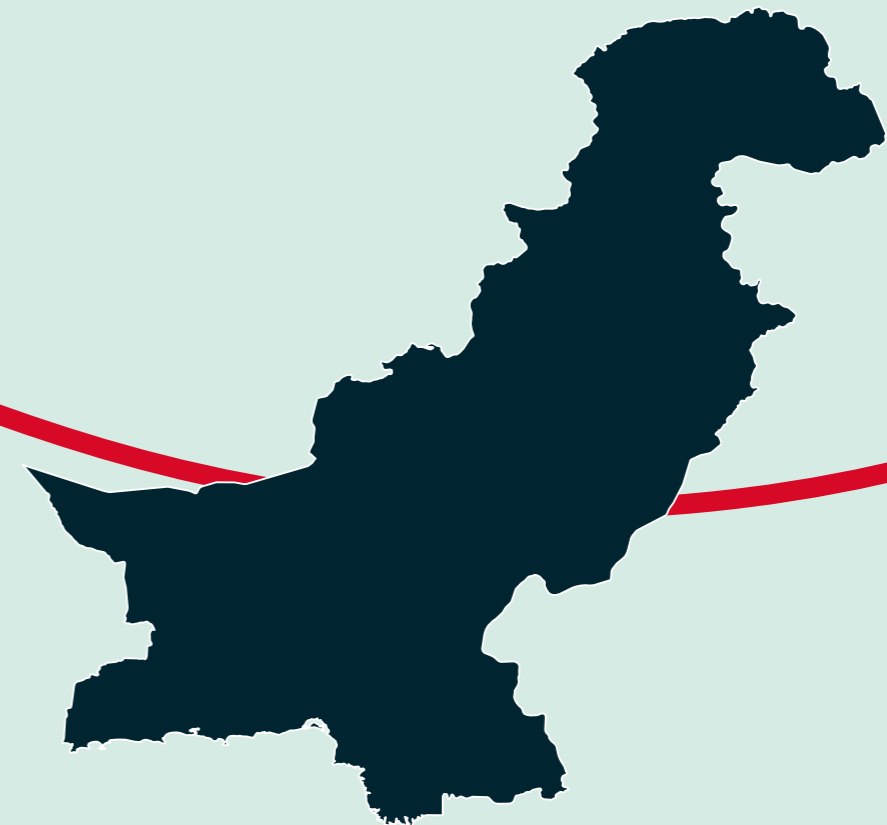
CREID partners also [provided written and oral evidence](#) to the Pakistani Minorities APPG's inquiry into forced conversions and forced marriages of religious minority girls, conducted in closed hearings with activists and families who have been directly affected. This evidence drew on innovative participatory research by CREID partners with women from religious minorities in Pakistan, published in [a special collection of papers](#). These were [launched at an event on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#), opened by the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, Karima Bennoune. CREID continues to raise this matter, most recently in a Briefing Note for UK parliamentarians on the case of Kavita Oad, a 13-year-old Hindu girl abducted in March 2021.

4 Expanding international research and mutual learning networks

We are strengthening ways to ensure that a wider range of perspectives shape development thinking, practice, policy and learning. Through equitable and sustainable partnerships, we work with universities, research bodies, governments, civil society, communities and the private sector to generate new research and learning agendas. Our network has evolved substantially in the past year through our International Initiatives – a programme to facilitate mutual learning in places at the forefront of development thinking and practice. The Initiatives now running in Brazil, China, Ghana, Pakistan and Europe are sharing reflections on development themes, notably ‘building back better’ from Covid-19. We also continued our work as the UK Anchor Institution for the China International Development Research Network as part of forging stronger links between researchers in the UK and China to encourage better understanding, knowledge-sharing and collaboration on China’s international development policies.



Ghana



Pakistan

Building regional networks for development

In 2020 IDS launched the [International Initiatives](#), a network of partnerships that facilitate research and collaboration to strengthen mutual learning for development. The network spans places at the leading edge of development thinking and practice, due to accelerating geopolitical change.

The Initiatives launched as pilots in [Brazil](#), [China](#), [Europe](#), [Ghana](#) and [Pakistan](#). The ambition is that the network expands further according to research and partnership priorities. While the Initiatives promote global cooperation across the network, each is designed for the context in which it exists, with local environments and partnerships defining the research focus and operation. The concept maps directly to our [Strategy](#) and commitment to creating research and mutual learning hubs.

Enriching and creating equitable partnerships

The first year of the programme had an immediate impact on fostering equitable partnerships. IDS has 12 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with partners across the five geographies, enabling collaborative research, teaching, policy engagement and learning activities.

With our Brazilian partner, Articulação Sul, IDS is scoping a trilateral development cooperation collaboration between the UK, Brazil and African countries to help the latter meet the challenges and harness the potential of rapidly growing populations. The collaboration engages with and learns from Brazil's world-leading ecosystem of institutions to generate, analyse and operationalise data in national planning and poverty reduction policy. It involves the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency.

The Initiatives in Europe and Pakistan created platforms to share practical reflections on ways to 'build back differently' from Covid-19. Globally prominent academics, practitioners and policymakers took part in two webinar series – [Youth Employment and Politics](#) coordinated by the European Engagement Initiative, and the [Mahbub ul Haq Distinguished Lecture Series](#) coordinated by the Pakistan Hub.

Mobilising knowledge for impact

Events and co-authored publications linked to the International Initiatives are helping to promote the use of evidence in development practice and policymaking. More than 2,300 people accessed our related news and opinion pieces, and more than 113,000 viewed or attended our public events virtually.

Our event '[State-citizen trust through Covid-19](#)' with partners from China, Pakistan, Brazil and the UK advocated shared learning across contexts to strengthen institutional trust during the pandemic and beyond.

The event '[Building ahead from Brazil's pandemic](#)' on agri-food systems was coordinated with Instituto Ibirapitanga, the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, and the Open University. Participants and panellists gave positive feedback. A dedicated repository of 80-plus [Brazil IDS Initiative outputs](#) was created to promote our collaborative work, such as on agri-food systems, to a global audience.

The Agricultural Policy Research in Africa programme pivoted its activities to assess the [impact of Covid-19 on food systems and livelihoods in southwestern Ghana](#), with recommendations on building resilience among vulnerable groups.

Co-constructing research agendas

The Initiatives convened a series of events with eminent thinkers to co-develop research agendas towards transformative change. These included a gender and cities roundtable between IDS and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) that will contribute to the co-development of the South Asia Human Development Report in 2021.

New funded research projects began this year, including a collaboration with LUMS on the informal economy in Pakistan, and a [project](#) mapping China's experience of promoting sustainable urbanisation and exploring their relevance to Ghanaian and Kenyan cities.

Find out more about our partnerships at www.ids.ac.uk/partnerships

Strengthening UK–China connections for knowledge-sharing and learning

As the [UK Anchor Institution](#) for the [China International Development Research Network](#) (CIDRN), IDS has continued activities this year on China’s development engagement, with co-created research outputs, a virtual forum, professional training and seminars.

China has the potential for transformative impact in global development due to its strategic importance, role in the global South and commitment to [development](#). As such, stronger links are needed between researchers in the UK and China to encourage better understanding, knowledge-sharing and collaboration – hence the formation of the CIDRN.

Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and supported by the Ministry for Commerce, China, the CIDRN is a three-year project to open connections and forge new partnerships among British and Chinese research centres, institutes and university departments. These are generating research to inform China and the UK’s international development policy and progress towards the UN Global Goals.

Engaging policy through research

Significant outputs this year included the development of a series of [knowledge, evidence and policy recommendations](#) in IDS Policy Briefings, published in partnership with UK and other research institutions. IDS Fellow and Programme lead Jing Gu was also invited to join the advisory panel contributing to the Center for Global Development policy [paper](#), which calls for a renewed strategy with China for effective bilateral development cooperation in the aftermath of Covid-19.

IDS and other UK researchers have contributed to high-level UK–China government discussions throughout the project. Most recently, IDS Director Melissa Leach joined global policymakers, development specialists and business leaders at the virtual [UK–China Development Forum](#) held over two days in December 2020.

Earlier in the project, IDS joined a high-level summit in 2019 on the [Belt and Road](#) Initiative in Beijing, and coordinated visits by Chinese officials to IDS and other UK institutes. IDS also hosted a visit in 2019 of the Chinese State Taxation Administration and the China International Development Cooperation Agency to build understanding of the UK foreign aid programme legislation and management of aid programmes.

Enabling mutual learning

Activities facilitated by IDS to stimulate knowledge-sharing and mutual learning included the China Global Development Knowledge Network (CGDN) website launched in January 2021 and a dedicated China and Global Development [Seminar Series](#) on critical global challenges, with opportunities for informal dialogue.

Seminar themes debated so far include [Chinese perspectives](#) and [African perspectives](#) on green energy transition, which generated significant attendance, including from NGOs and government organisations globally but especially those based in the UK, Africa and China.

Further related webinars were planned with partners such as the African Economic Research Consortium, the CIDRN, the Southern Think Tank Network (NeST), and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, focusing on strengthening global solidarity through development cooperation against Covid-19.

In July 2020, IDS ran a ten-day [Global Development Policy and Perspective professional development](#) course for young researchers and development professionals from UK and Chinese organisations. This encouraged development cooperation and contributed to developing the skills of future leaders.

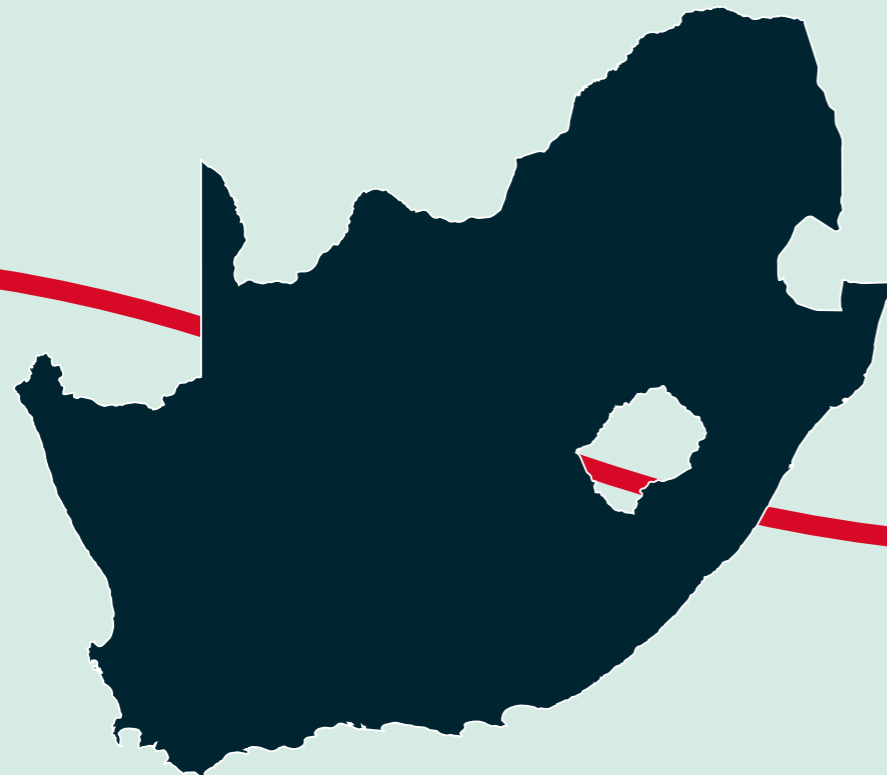
A platform for growth

The programme has been further strengthened and supported by the [IDS China Centre](#), part of the [IDS International Initiatives](#). The programme will encourage further collaboration that will contribute to providing the evidence needed to inform Chinese development policy, strengthening the UK’s role as a global actor.

Already, considerable new research has been generated on critical development topics such as aid for trade and bilateral export upgrading; the role of technological innovation in improving governance effectiveness; the internationalisation of Chinese NGOs under the Belt and Road Initiative; China’s role in global agricultural governance; and China’s role in the new aid architecture for international development.

5 Creating a sustainable, resilient and effective organisation

We aim to run our operations and treat our people in a way that reflects our commitments to equity and sustainability. As for most organisations, the Covid-19 pandemic forced a radical change in how we work. Our travel was hugely reduced, all but a few staff worked from home, and all our interactions went online. Throughout, IDS has sought to be accommodating, supportive and flexible as an employer, while remaining financially sustainable and continuing to deliver excellence in our work. In rising to the challenges, we see opportunities ahead for embedding new practices into how we function long term – not least as this reinforces our determination to live our values on combating climate change. With Black Lives Matter stirring debate for us as well as more broadly, we have also continued to strengthen the equality, diversity and inclusivity agenda for those who work at IDS.



South Africa



Brazil

Fostering equality, diversity and inclusion in IDS

Events in 2020 in many ways underlined the importance of our activities to strengthen the equality, diversity and inclusivity agenda for those who work or study at IDS – and which continued on course despite the challenges during the year.

Activities spanned different strands, and were spearheaded by the IDS Equalities Champions Group, with volunteers from across the organisation. Progress will be consolidated thanks to a ring-fenced budget of £20,000 to allow for investment in the year ahead.

Decolonising agenda

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign produced significant internal debate at IDS – not least because of its acute relevance to this strategic priority. There is a clear opportunity to strengthen our thinking and practice to how we as an organisation operate, engaging with debates and practices around decolonising, and building on our longstanding experience with participatory and inclusive methodologies.

We added our support to the BLM campaign and renewed our commitment to act against racism with an [updated statement](#). We also committed to the Race at Work Charter and to ethnicity (as well as gender) pay gap reporting.

A working group of students and staff developed and published the Decolonise IDS Manifesto. Sessions on IDS teaching, and an exploration of ways to open up discussions of power dynamics and understand more about the lived experiences of staff and students are being developed in light of this agenda. Tailored questions on the staff wellbeing survey offered initial insights into the extent people felt their experience of working at IDS aligned with our ambitions.

Ambitious Action Plan

The Action Plan for taking forward equality, diversity and inclusion is wide ranging and ambitious. At the heart of our approach is the regular collection, analysis and review of staff equality and diversity data. This was shared and discussed at a dedicated equalities session at the October IDS annual staff retreat (held online).

The data gave a benchmark to chart progress but also identified possible systemic issues and barriers. Analysis showed that while the majority of staff in IDS are women, and we promote men and women in similar proportions, we have a gender pay gap that reflects us having more men in senior positions. A key challenge in our recruitment is addressing the need for visa sponsorship for some candidates. Both the benchmark and the Action Plan will be used for ongoing measurement and evaluation of change.

We took action to remove barriers to attracting a diverse field of applicants for the 2020 Fellow recruitment campaign. This included our commitment as a disability-confident employer to guarantee interviews to applicants with a disability who meet a role's essential criteria. Unconscious bias training was offered to all IDS staff including those involved in recruitment. We also revised the wording in recruitment materials using a gender decoder and made information about flexible working and the support and funding available for immigration purposes clear and more prominent.

Inclusive and flexible employer

Being inclusive of difference and supporting career progression at IDS are important parts of our desire to attract and retain talent. We are developing a reverse mentoring pilot programme to encourage mutual learning between the Strategic Leadership Group and new or early career staff.

Our flexible working policy is also being reviewed to better reflect different needs among our staff and to develop the option of hybrid working, with the pandemic demonstrating the need for our own operational flexibility on this. We began scoping a comprehensive Rewards Review to ensure that our reward structures reflect our values and deliver our strategic aims, with a working group launched in February 2021.

Action on climate change

Addressing climate and environmental change forms a major part of both our research work and our strategy, in terms of our values and how we as an organisation operate. We are determined to ‘walk the talk’ on climate action, as activities over the past year demonstrate.

The first greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) audit methodology for IDS was developed in 2020, revealing our current emissions profile and setting a baseline for monitoring future emissions. A sub-group of the IDS Climate Action Task Force pursued this work, building on discussions at the 2019 IDS Annual Retreat.

Reducing air travel was shown to be the single most important contribution that IDS can make to cutting emissions. More than three-quarters of IDS’s emissions came from flights: in 2019–20 62.5 per cent of our total emissions were from flights for work trips, and the remainder was for staff and students commuting by plane and participants travelling to attend short courses.

Vital to the success of this work has been the resourcing support from the Strategic Leadership Group (SLG). Their support has also been essential in communicating with donors and partners to promote a shared agenda on reducing emissions as a sector. Through 2021, more focus group discussions with staff will outline plans for acting on the audit recommendations and setting realisable ambitions.



Addressing climate and environmental change forms a major part of both our research work and our strategy.

UN Global Compact commitment

Early in 2020, IDS submitted its first Communication on Engagement (COE) to the UN Global Compact. This voluntary initiative is based on organisations’ commitments to implement universal sustainability principles and to take steps to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is part of our recognition that our activities may have an adverse impact on the environment and that we will take steps to minimise those impacts.

The Covid-19 lockdown brought rapid changes to how we work – such as reduced travel and a swift upgrade to our use of digital technologies like video conferencing to convene and interact with global partners. We are now actively seeking to embed these changes long term to help reduce our environmental impacts and boost our future sustainability plans.

The Climate Action Taskforce, set up at the 2019 Retreat, continues to develop and implement policies and procedures that minimise waste and conserve energy, and that promote sustainable modes of transport.

This work is all in line with our 2020–25 strategy, which commits us to reducing our carbon footprint and our institutional environmental impacts. We are finding and modelling new and innovative ways to work, and embedding understanding of climate and environmental challenges and opportunities among all our staff and students. We aim to manage our activities, buildings and estates to promote sustainability goals and to bring about a continual improvement in our environmental performance.

Enhancing our financial sustainability

We ended the year in a strong financial position, despite a highly competitive funding environment and the disruptions brought by Covid-19.

At the end of March 2021, we had an operating surplus of £3,293k of which £822k relates to unrestricted funds.

Our contribution to the financial reserves has again exceeded our budgeted figure which puts us in a strong financial position as we enter a challenging financial year.

Brexit and UK Government aid funding

In the past year, we faced considerable financial uncertainty particularly because of the UK Government cuts to UK Aid but also more broadly from the ongoing challenge around the USS Pension Scheme and forecast student numbers, both due to Covid-19 and Brexit.

The announcement by the UK Government at the end of 2020 that UK Aid spending was to be cut from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GDP has created significant challenges. The full extent of the cuts were not clear by the end of this financial year but, to mitigate potential impact, the IDS project risk review group set up to consider Covid issues was expanded to review risks and opportunities for projects linked to the cuts.

Steps were also taken to manage financial risk, including a review of our procurement processes to ensure we provide value for money for funders and maximise impact while remaining open, fair and transparent. This included identifying ways of reducing spend, including managing expenses and monitoring exceptional costs.

Beyond Covid and funding disruption, we also had to plan ahead for the impact of Brexit on staff and students. This included implementing new immigration processes as required by the Home Office and providing additional HR and legal support to those colleagues based in Europe.

At year end, our operational resilience demonstrates our continued ability to adapt our systems and processes to external change. This will continue to be vital into the years ahead.

In the past financial year we had contractual research, learning and funding partnerships in 69 countries around the world. We show the location of each country on a Mollweide Projection of the world, as it shows the entire surface of the earth on an equal-area projection.



Transparency

We are committed to ensuring the highest level of accountability and transparency regarding the funding we seek and receive, as set down in our funding ethics policy. Transparify has recognised this commitment in their global rating of the financial transparency of major think tanks. IDS currently holds the highest five-star transparency rating that Transparify awards.

Accountability

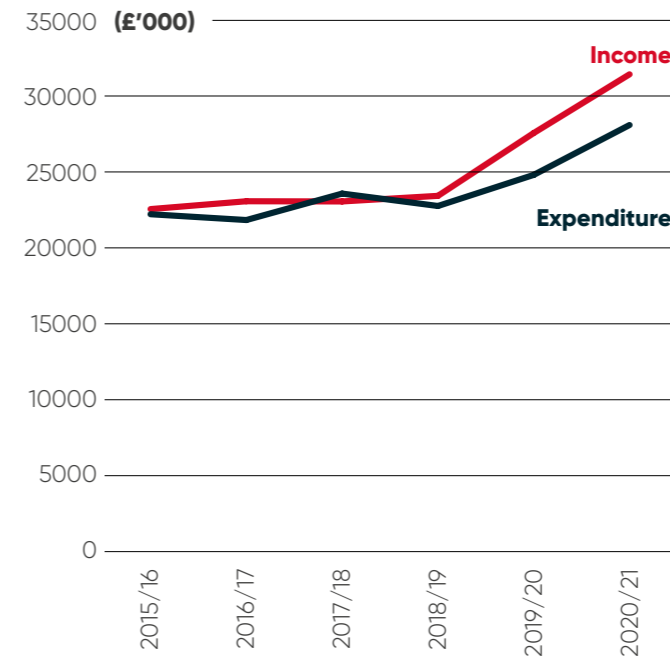
IDS is registered in England and Wales as a charitable company (no. 00877338) limited by guarantee, and with registered charity number 306371. You can see detailed information about our finances and compliance history on the Charity Commission and Companies House websites.



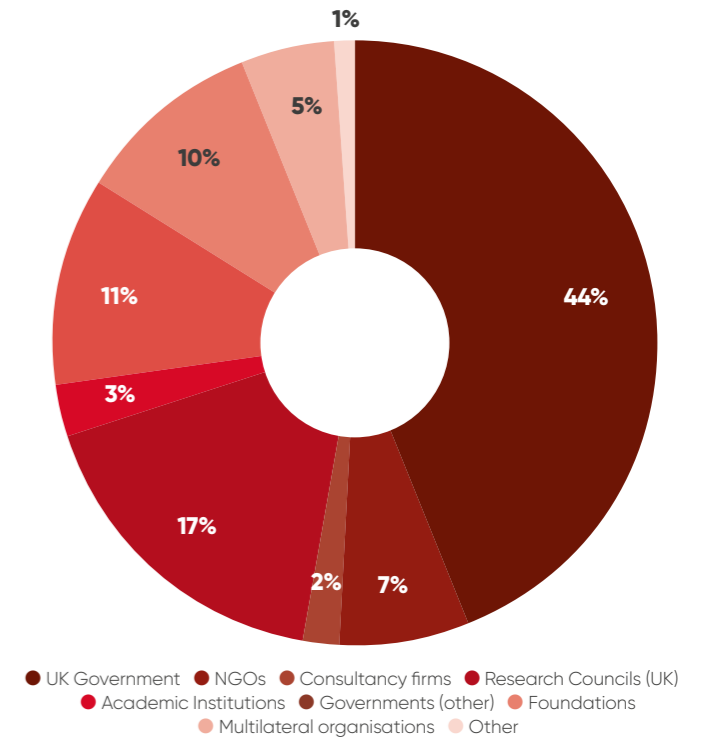
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Finances and governance

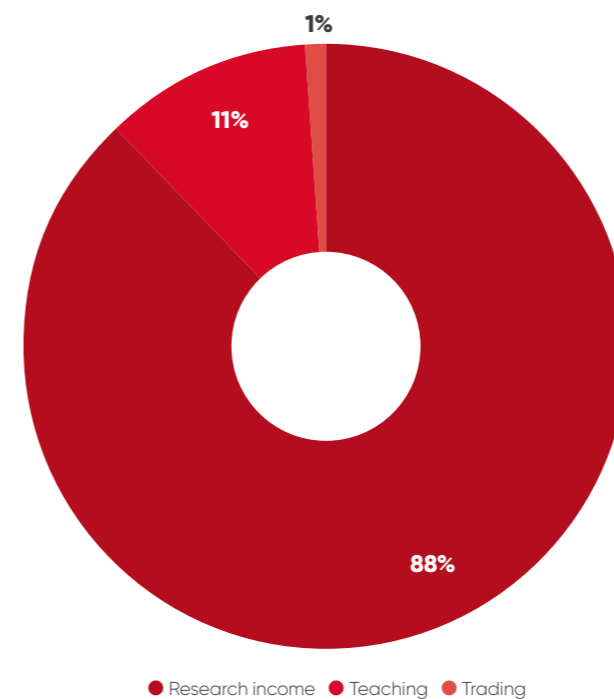
Total income and expenditure



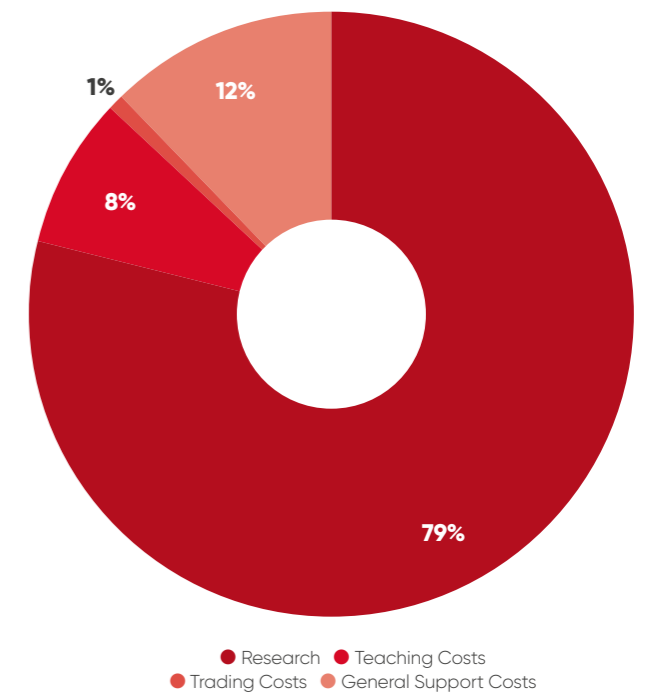
Research income by direct contractor category



Total income by type



Total expenditure by type



Cover photo: Kampala, Uganda. A man fits a lamp made from a plastic soft drinks bottle filled with water and a few drops of bleach and fitted with a metal reflector. It is fitted through a hole cut in a tin roof. The sun's rays diffract in the bottle, illuminating the room. During the most intense hours of sunshine, the bottle gives a power equivalent to 60 watts but, of course, the lighting only works during the day. Photograph: Frederic Noy/Panos Pictures

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