

annual review 2021-22



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.



Ukraine

Workers clear the rubble after two cruise missiles landed in the night, killing a renowned Ukrainian journalist and injuring a number of people.
Photo: Sean Sutton/Panos Pictures

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Director's foreword

Melissa Leach



Responding to the devastating convergence of conflict, climate and Covid

The world is in a desperate state. This has been a year marked by conflict, climate change and Covid – intersecting crises that intensify and entrench longer-term vulnerabilities. Conflict and war in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Syria and Ukraine and elsewhere have resulted in vast displacement and accelerating humanitarian need. Climate and environmental change are devastating lives and livelihoods, exacerbating economic instability. And the ongoing impacts of the pandemic have compounded the challenges facing vulnerable people and places, such as food and fuel cost inflation. Amid all this, inequalities – across class, gender, race and place – are rising and interacting in new ways, while political instabilities and geo-political shifts create further tensions.

These converging crises reveal a world of disrupted development and deep uncertainties. Panning out across the globe, they remind us how interconnected we are. They also underline the importance of research to understand their causes and effects, and to inform transformational change. Yet uncertain times also require development research to be done differently – triangulating between multiple sources of knowledge, adapting to complexities and fast-changing issues, and responding to people's dynamic needs and realities. They require approaches to learning and knowledge exchange that engage both policy actors and communities in all their diversity. As evidenced in this Review, much of our work at IDS in the past year has centred on navigating uncertainties and crises with research and learning that are equal to such demands.

A strategy fit for uncertain times

This has been another turbulent year for IDS, as we have continued to adapt to the ongoing effects of Covid-19 on all aspects of our work and operations. The major cuts to UK Government aid funding created additional challenges, interrupting and affecting many of our research activities. But thanks to the commitment of our dedicated people, we responded with a plan of action to diversify our funding streams, maintain our staff and expertise, and invest in our strategic priorities.

Our 2020–25 strategy, with its emphasis on responding to the shocks and disruptions of our era, has again proved remarkably apt, and despite the challenges we have made exciting progress. The innovations and adaptations we made last year to sustain research, teaching, partnerships, events and communications in online and hybrid forms have stood us in good stead, enabling us now to manage a gradual transition to more in-person interactions into 2022.

Supporting policies and communities through research and learning

This Review highlights our progress during the year together with a quantitative snapshot of achievements. Stand-out emphases include contributions to climate and environmental justice in the context of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), along with work towards our other strategic commitments – reducing inequities, fostering healthy lives, and building more inclusive societies. Our capabilities and profile in innovative research methodologies and action are amply illustrated – be it championing a major handbook of participatory approaches, making community engagement central to global health research, or developing new methods that are informing policy for greater accountability in conflict-affected countries. Other stories focus on strengthening learning, such as providing vital evidence to improve humanitarian responses in Afghanistan, and helping government ministries to shape policy with evidence more effectively.

As all these stories show, it has been a productive year; one in which IDS's resilience, community spirit and ability to operate under stress have all been tested but have come through positively. These experiences position us well to face the challenges ahead and to contribute actively to re-casting development for current and future times.

Melissa Leach

Best wishes

Melissa Leach



Vanessa Nakate and Greta Thunberg at the helm of a Fridays for Future march in Milan, Italy, October 2021. The protests aim to put pressure on policymakers to act on the climate crisis. Photo: Stefano Nicoli/Speed Media/Alamy Live News

Chair's statement

Deepak Nayyar



I joined IDS as Chair of the Board of Trustees in August 2020. The period since then has witnessed a perfect storm of intersecting and persisting crises – the Coronavirus pandemic, conflict situations (particularly Ukraine) and climate change – that have taken lives and lost livelihoods across societies, imposing hardship on the poor everywhere. These crises have created huge uncertainties for millions of people worldwide, reversing earlier gains in poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, while accentuating inequalities further.

Our response to these crises – old and new – and ability to prevent them in future, will depend on our understanding of such crises. Therefore, the need for engaged research and learning on development, in the national and international context, that is done at IDS, is greater than ever before. Evidence-based development research, informed by lived realities with a focus on people, is essential for more effective decision-making.

In light of this, it was devastating that the UK Government pressed on with significant cuts to aid-funded research budgets. Almost overnight, support for research on global challenges such as zoonotic diseases and the prevention of future pandemics were cut by more than half. In the process, valuable research partnerships established over years were severed, thus diminishing the UK's reputation for international research.

This challenging situation, with so many IDS projects affected by budget cuts of around 50 per cent, was compounded by continuing disruptions caused by Covid-19. In response, a five-year plan was developed to diversify funding and restore student numbers to pre-pandemic levels. Thanks to IDS's dedicated community, we were able to maintain our activities, retain our existing staff and expertise, and keep delivering on our strategic priorities.

Our impressive progress despite all the challenges, reflected in an incredibly productive year, is a source of pride. Existing partnerships and new research collaborations have helped us to address some of the world's most pressing global challenges.

My personal highlights include sharing state of the art knowledge on participatory research and enquiry and seeing how IDS researchers have applied such methods to help protect the livelihoods of pastoralists; and, our collaboration with a major funder of global health research to make community engagement central to research on health inequities and complex health problems. Work to learn from Covid-19 gathered pace with two particularly successful partnerships – the Covid Collective and the Pandemic Preparedness Project – demonstrating agile partnering to tackle the most pressing development problems arising from the pandemic. I am also pleased with efforts to foster future leadership through strengthened, expanded and extended opportunities for learning through our world-renowned postgraduate degrees, PhD research programmes, and professional development and learning activities for organisations and individuals.

The quality of our research, teaching, and learning were recognised yet again by the QS University Rankings where, together with the University of Sussex, we were ranked first in the world for Development Studies for the sixth consecutive year.

As I reflect on the extraordinary challenges juxtaposed with our impressive responses over the past year, I am struck by how our people stepped up, adapted, and worked hard to deliver on our strategic priorities for 2020–25 in our quest for transforming knowledge and transforming lives around the world. In supporting our students, in maintaining research excellence, and in building new partnerships, the IDS spirit of community and solidarity has shone through.

Our testing times will continue as the crises persist. Yet, it is comforting that we end the year in a resilient position to confront and manage this difficult conjuncture. And, despite the uncertain future, I have every confidence in the inherent strengths of IDS to accomplish its mission and realise its aspirations.

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.

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

Our commitments:

- Upholding climate and environmental justice
- Reducing extreme inequities
- Fostering healthy and fulfilling lives
- Nurturing inclusive, democratic and accountable societies

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

N°1

2021 Global Go To Think Tank
Index Report International Development
Policy Think Tank

N°1

QS World University Rankings
by Subject 2022
Development Studies

320

Masters and PhD students learnt with
us between Sept 2020 and Sept 2021,
including 60 students on scholarships
from across 33 countries

385

contractual research,
learning and
funding partners

134

published journal
articles authored
by IDS staff

100

participants from
41 countries completed
IDS specialist short courses

1,510

items in global print,
online and
broadcast media

+ 793,449

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

Awards, honours and appointments



Ian Scoones

(Professorial Fellow) was included in the annual Highly Cited Researchers List compiled by Clarivate Analytics that recognises the global influence of academics within their field.



Joy Lin

(IDS student) was awarded the 2022 Development Studies Association Masters Dissertation Prize.



Max Gallien

(Research Fellow) won the APSA MENA Politics Section Award for Best Article in MENA Politics for his paper 'Informal Institutions and the Regulation of Smuggling in North Africa'.



Karabo Mohale

(IDS student) was appointed Executive Deputy Chairperson of the Board of the National Youth Development Agency in South Africa.



Melissa Leach

(Director of IDS) was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, and 'Foundation Fellow' of the International Science Council.



Mick Moore

(Professorial Fellow) was appointed as a Non-Resident Fellow of independent think tank Verite Research, Sri Lanka.



Stephany Griffith-Jones

(Emeritus Fellow) was appointed to the Central Bank of Chile's Board of Directors.



The IDS-led **Wellbeing and Housing Infrastructures in urban Turkey** project was awarded a place in the British Academy Summer Showcase, in recognition of its outstanding social science research.

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

At the heart of all our research is collaboration. The intersecting crises spanning the world – global health, conflict, climate change – require research approaches that encompass complexity and uncertainty. These crises present both challenges and opportunities for progressive change – with optimal responses anchored in collaborative research. Throughout these testing times, we have been collaborating across social, natural, medical and other sciences and disciplines, with communities, civil society, non-governmental organisations, and governments. To this end, we published a landmark new handbook on participatory methods to improve knowledge-gathering from the people most exposed to crisis impacts. We partnered with a major global health funder to make community engagement central to health inequities research. Our innovative 'citizen's-eye' method, part of our multi-year programme on accountability and empowerment, is now influencing public policy and development programming. In these examples and more, our collaborations have been generating and applying evidence in ways that ultimately make a difference to people's lives.



Mozambique

Mozambique women walking home after looking for mussels at Tofo Beach in the south of the country.
Photo: Aostojska, Shutterstock



Myanmar

Women working in a ricefield, Myanmar. Photo: Alejandro Rugama, Unsplash

Gleaning global lessons from the margins through participatory methods



Participatory research and inquiry is all about ‘putting the people who are experiencing the problems at the heart of finding the solutions’. As interest in participatory methods has surged, IDS this year produced a highly acclaimed and comprehensive handbook aimed at social science researchers across many disciplines.

The two-volume *Sage Handbook of Participatory Research and Inquiry* is edited by two IDS research fellows – Danny Burns (whose words define participatory research just above) and Jo Howard – with Sonia M. Ospina of New York University. It has been praised as a resource that ‘researchers with varied expertise in the field can use to support the type of social transformation that we need,’ according to UN Deputy General Secretary Amina Mohammed, who added: ‘I encourage all researchers to make full use of it.’

An international group of 150 authors wrote the 71 chapters that cover the explosion of new participatory research methods over the past two decades, the foundations of participatory research, and critical practice issues, including ethics and inclusion. Several research fellows at IDS also served as section editors and contributors.

The handbook applies to the work of a diverse spectrum of social science researchers – from health and social care, development studies, sociology, criminology, education and business, and civil society groups.

High praise and interest levels

To launch the handbook, IDS hosted a Participation Research Week in September with events facilitated by IDS contributors that attracted more than 700 people. These included a series of webinars where the handbook editors and authors shared cutting-edge approaches, practices and ideas with an audience of policymakers, practitioners, students, NGOs and development experts from around the world.

The handbook has attracted highly positive reviews. A ‘landmark achievement’ and a ‘state-of-the-art contribution’ to participatory research, was the assessment of Yoland Wadsworth, former President of the Action Learning Action Research Association (ALARA).

‘This rich, inspiring collection is testament to the extraordinary creativity of those who have brought about a veritable revolution in research through participatory methodologies and approaches,’ affirmed Professor Andrea Cornwall, Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise), SOAS University of London.

Garnering knowledge in uncertain times



Borana, Ethiopia. Using the Photovoice methodology, IDS PhD researcher Masresha Taye and local pastoralists discuss their responses to uncertainty. Photo: Guyo Gobu

Understanding rural settings and indigenous ways of knowing can be captured through participatory Photovoice approaches – visual research methods that enable participants to document and share their lived realities. These have been used by the European Research Council-funded [PASTRES](#) (Pastoralism, Uncertainty and Resilience) research programme. Working in six countries across three continents, PASTRES is learning how pastoralists – mobile livestock keepers making use of extensive rangelands – respond to uncertain environmental,

market and political conditions. Using Photovoice, PASTRES PhD researchers supported pastoralists to record their own perspectives on living with uncertainty, in photo and video. Participants created an accompanying narrative to present in discussions with other community members to generate reflection and to use as a basis for future action.

An online exhibition [Seeing Pastoralism](#) ensures that the Photovoice project is gaining a global audience. Images and their accompanying stories were displayed during the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, as well as in Brighton, Florence, Isiolo and Sardinia. Further physical exhibitions are planned in Addis Ababa, Beijing, Brussels, Rome and Stockholm.

Together with pastoral leaders from across the world, a major new report – [‘Are livestock always bad for the planet?’](#) – was launched at COP26. The report argues that important decisions about climate mitigation, food systems and land use are being based on partial or misleading evidence.

Mobile, extensive pastoralism can offer a sustainable alternative to industrial systems, addressing climate change and enhancing biodiversity, while providing nutritious diets and livelihoods in marginal areas. Through the eyes of pastoralists, the Seeing Pastoralism exhibition shows the opportunities of sustainable livestock systems.

Making community engagement central to global health research

As health systems around the world grapple with providing care within the ‘new normal’ of Covid-19, IDS has stepped up collaboration with a major funder of global health research to make community engagement central to research on health inequities and complex health problems.

The UK-based National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funds high-quality research that addresses the health needs of people in low- and middle-income countries. Over a three-year period, we have been supporting NIHR to build capacity to creatively embrace complexity in health research.

IDS Researcher Dr Erica Nelson led a learning programme of resources and activities to enable potential NIHR-funded researchers to integrate meaningful community engagement and involvement (known as CEI) into research proposals. NIHR sought Dr Nelson’s expertise for the programme following the success of the [Resource Guide on Community Engagement and Involvement in Global Health](#) that she wrote for NIHR in 2019.

Through this collaboration, IDS has helped to shift the thinking and practice of this key funding body towards more inclusive, decentred and power-aware approaches to knowledge production. NIHR has since made CEI a strategic priority, has set up a learning clinic for NIHR-funded early career researchers (with the [Brighton and Sussex Medical School](#)), and has jointly authored two published journal papers – with another by Dr Nelson in the pipeline.

The work has also affirmed IDS’s position as a thought-leader in supporting research processes that allow for complexity – a goal that is much talked about in global health research but not very often applied.

Sharing the learning

As well as magnifying health inequities, Covid-19 revealed the need to draw on diverse forms of knowledge to solve complex health challenges. It also underlined the intrinsic importance of trust among communities, health practitioners and researchers. Both themes have been core parts of IDS research on health equity over the years.

Through her work with the IDS [Accountability for Health Equity programme](#), Dr Nelson drew on previous relationships to get input from experienced CEI practitioners from Latin America, Africa, Oceania and South Asia for the learning programme. It ran from July 2020 to September 2021, with webinars tailored to coincide with the NIHR global health funding cycle.

Almost two-thirds of the 206 webinar participants came from low- and middle-income research contexts. At the end of the programme, 90 per cent of participants surveyed said that they would apply their learning to future CEI work, proposal development and community collaborations.

The programme comprised three strands – how to empower meaningful CEI; ethical dimensions and considerations; and what it means to take a ‘leave no one behind’ approach to CEI, echoing the 2030 Global Goals. Each strand had a webinar session featuring the CEI experts from the four continents.

Wider NIHR audiences and stakeholders could access recordings of the webinars and the full set of learning resources, plus a video and podcast online: these have achieved more than 110,000 page views on the IDS Institutional Repository since publication in late 2021. To share the learning further afield, these resources were disseminated through IDS’s extensive global multidisciplinary networks.

The NIHR team for CEI praised Dr Nelson and IDS colleagues for delivering such a comprehensive and value-adding programme, particularly during the pandemic. They also noted how worthwhile it was to collaborate with renowned partners such as IDS in this area.



IDS has helped to shift the thinking and practice of this key funding body towards more inclusive, decentred and power-aware approaches to knowledge production.

New insights on accountability and empowerment in conflict settings



The IDS-led international research programme, [Action for Empowerment and Accountability \(A4EA\)](#) concluded in 2021 with a powerful final report, '[Against the Odds](#)', which shares new insights on how accountability, governance and citizen empowerment play out differently in fragile and violence-affected settings.

200

outputs

100

researchers

25

research partners

22

countries

Over its five years in operation, A4EA involved more than 100 researchers and 25 research partners and spanned 22 countries overall, though it was primarily focused on Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, and, initially, Egypt. A4EA aimed to explore how social and political action can contribute to empowerment and accountability in settings affected by fragility, conflict, and violence.

The 'Against the Odds' report is a showcase of A4EA's extensive collaboration and learning exchange, drawing on findings from across [over 220 programme outputs](#). One key finding draws on an innovative method, Governance Diaries, developed and rolled out by A4EA working with poor and marginalised communities, which takes a 'citizen's-eye' view of governance relationships.

Innovative 'citizen's-eye view' method widely adopted in policymaking

The [Governance Diaries methodology](#) built relationships of trust with marginalised households, documenting experiences of how they expressed grievances and sought accountability, in conflict-affected parts of Mozambique, Myanmar and Pakistan. Over time, these diaries provided a 'view from below' of how citizens interact with authority.

Key to the success of this approach was the researchers' routine of checking in with more than 160 marginalised households once a month over 12 months. Researchers asked about the issues the people faced, whether they sought help from governance actors, and how these issues were resolved. Partners

in Myanmar adapted the approach in the pandemic to pursue 'Covid diaries', gauging how restrictions and policies were experienced among communities.

Inspired by the results, at least seven unrelated research projects have adapted the methodology for other issues in six new contexts. For example, the Asian Development Bank has sponsored the use of an approach that draws on the methodology to assess impacts of Covid-19 on young people in Nepal and Indonesia.

Through this innovative approach, researchers discerned significant mistrust in and fear of authorities among people living in conflict-affected areas. Awareness of this in public policy and development programming is likely to mean interventions will respond better to the real-life complexities that people in these areas experience when accessing services, negotiating 'gatekeepers', making decisions and claiming rights.

Charting five years of change

Launched in 2016, the A4EA programme witnessed significant political and economic change and upheaval across its lifespan. Not only the impact of the worldwide pandemic in 2020, but also wholesale change to political leadership following elections (in Pakistan, the UK, the USA) and a military coup (Myanmar) had major implications for both research and programme operations.

IDS Fellow and A4EA Director Professor John Gaventa explained how, when A4EA was launched, 'there was an optimism in many places that a governance agenda of transparency, accountability and participation was both growing and making a difference in many parts of the world.

'Over the five years of our research, the world has changed. Rather than becoming more democratic, with more transparent and accountable institutions, we have seen democratic backsliding, growing authoritarianism and closing civic space. Rather than being fragile exceptions to an otherwise increasingly democratic world, the countries we studied increasingly represent the norm.'

Yet despite the challenging contexts in which it has worked, the A4EA programme has influenced changes in policy and practice in each study country and further afield. Perhaps the less commonly measured results may have the longest legacy – the new skills and insights learned, the relationships and networks built, and the spin-off projects that have emerged.



Police in Myanmar are given roses – one of many creative strategies used by those protesting the February 2021 military coup. Against a backdrop of closing civic space globally, a major IDS-led international research programme, Action for Empowerment and Accountability, provided key insights on how social and political action can contribute to empowerment, including in Myanmar.
Photo: Panos Pictures

2 Building future leadership for development

We work to support new generations of informed and knowledgeable leaders and champions – from presidents and ambassadors to intellectuals, activists, entrepreneurs, NGO and community workers and journalists. The continued impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have meant that both our faculty and learners have experienced previously unimaginable changes in circumstances of considerable uncertainty. Despite this, we have strengthened, expanded and extended the opportunities for learning through our world-renowned postgraduate degrees, PhD research programmes, and professional development and learning activities for organisations and individuals. Our experience with online teaching and learning has deepened and we are combining the best of on- and off-line pedagogies. Student satisfaction rates are high, our PhD cohort has grown, and we are implementing a number of well-received initiatives aimed at decolonising our curriculum, teaching and learning. In a year like no other, we are immensely proud to see how our students, alumni and professional learners have met the challenges brought by Covid-19 and flourished as development leaders.



South Africa

Car light trails on a highway in Cape Town, South Africa.
Photo: Squareplum, Shutterstock



Sierra Leone

Aerial shot of Bo, the second largest city in Sierra Leone.
Photo: Joshua Hanson, Unsplash

Fostering future leaders in a time of uncertainty

The impacts of Covid-19 on teaching and learning at IDS have been both challenging and radical for our postgraduate and professional learners and faculty. Making the formal decision to teach online for the 2020–21 academic year was not easy. Substantial preparation and support went into making this transition. IDS and the [University of Sussex](#) provided additional resources and training for staff. Throughout, we focused on tailoring our pedagogies to ensure a world-class learning experience for our students and to imbue a sense of IDS community and belonging. IDS teaching staff were phenomenal in rising to the challenge of online teaching, upskilling and learning new modalities for the delivery of higher education.

Teaching online has helped us to realise new benefits for our students and for IDS and our experiences have made us aware of new innovative possibilities for using technology and methods which can have pedagogical advantages. As Covid-19 restrictions in the UK began to relax over the year, we made further adaptations and welcomed some face-to-face interactions.

Student satisfaction high

Despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, IDS students reported high levels of satisfaction. In the 2021 Postgraduate Student Experience Survey, our PhD students reported a satisfaction rate of 90%. In the 2021 IDS End of Course Evaluation, Masters students reported a satisfaction rate of 83%.

Expanding our PhD cohort

Building on our thriving PhD programme, we introduced a new [PhD: Development Studies by Published Works](#). This degree is designed for researchers with an existing portfolio of published work who haven't had the chance yet to get a doctorate but have potential for future leadership in international development. During the academic year, starting in September 2021, 60 students were registered for our PhD degrees.

Postgraduate degrees



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

Decolonising teaching and learning at IDS



The Decolonise IDS student group sparked a debate about decolonising development imagery by organising a participatory process to comment on pictures in the IDS building. Photo: Lisa Trebs

Working with staff and students, we continued to explore ways to decolonise our curriculum, learning and teaching at IDS. This is a challenging initiative given that we are a UK-based institute that works on global issues, inextricably linked with the histories of coloniality that inform today's structural inequities and inequalities. Our work has included updating and diversifying reading lists, drawing more on other forms of expression (poetry, art, performance) in our teaching, and highlighting students' experience.

Recent student feedback included: 'I also found IDS' forward-thinking, progressive ethos around decolonising development studies incredibly important and valuable.' Another participant said: 'Being exposed to decolonising content was eye-opening, provocative and an emotionally engaging and necessary experience.'

Empowering our students

In 2021, we asked our students how IDS had helped them to make a development impact. They told us that their time at IDS had empowered them to make bold decisions about committing to development initiatives in their own countries, and to be able to use their voice to oppose inequality and injustice. Some students spoke of IDS having developed their capacity to share a common initiative and to build a space in which to debate and contribute to development aims. Other students spoke of learning how to have the strength to complete challenging assignments with partners and other organisations.

In terms of national influence and impact in students' respective countries, one student was elected a Member of Parliament during their academic year and was able to use experience gained at IDS to better comprehend and contribute to policy processes as an MP. Another student drafted national social protection policy, applying critical takeaways from IDS teaching to organise consultations at national and subnational levels. A third student has been actively involved in the implementation of the transgender rights protection bill.

Professional development and learning achievements

We work with organisations and individuals at the forefront of social change to help maximise the impact of their work by providing vital research and evidence, and facilitating learning.

In the past year, our professional development and learning portfolio continued to evolve, falling into three broad categories:

- specialist short courses for development professionals and practitioners
- facilitated learning opportunities for individuals and organisations
- learning processes embedded within development programmes.

Across our portfolio of learning activities, our virtual platforms have been key in helping us to facilitate a more inclusive approach to learning and extend our global reach.

The IDS specialist short course programme regained momentum after a hiatus caused by Covid-19 travel restrictions. Successful courses in 2021-22 included:

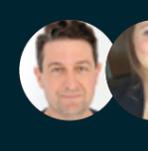
- Contribution Analysis for Impact Evaluation
- Making Trade Policy Inclusive
- Global Development and Policy
- Shaping Policy with Evidence
- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for Learning.

We saw growth in demand for our facilitated learning for individuals and organisations. Examples from the past year include '[Organisational learning for good governance globally](#)' designed and delivered in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and '[Stimulating evidence uptake](#)' commissioned by the Queen Rania Foundation for Education and Development in coordination with Jordan's Ministry of Education.

We also collaborated on a range of learning activities embedded within multi-year development programmes. Our [learning component of the Covid-19 Response for Equity programme](#), with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), met the need for ongoing, real-time reflexive learning about programming to maximise effectiveness in rapidly changing contexts of crises. And together with partners in the [Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform \(SSHAP\)](#), we supported the professional development and learning of [35 new SSHAP Fellows](#) who are applying their social science expertise to humanitarian emergencies in a locally relevant way.

For more on our Professional Development and Learning, including our clients, see www.ids.ac.uk/learningfordevelopment

Alumni achievements

 <p>Anushay Hossain (Class of 2005) authored <i>The Pain Gap – How Sexism and Racism in Healthcare Kill Women</i>, which explores the health crisis in America and what we can do about it. Photo: Greg Powers</p>	 <p>Jennifer Uchendu (Class of 2020) launched The Eco-anxiety Africa Project to create space and support to help safeguard young people. Photo: Anny Robert</p>	 <p>Lusungu Kalanga-Malamba (Class of 2017) was an advisor to Eyala – a platform for and about African feminists.</p>
 <p>Nancy Okail (PhD 2009) became President and CEO of the Center for International Policy. Photo: Melody Yazdani</p>	 <p>Nora Khalaf-Elledge (Class of 2014) authored <i>The Religion-Gender Nexus in Development</i> which makes insightful recommendations for policy and practice.</p>	 <p>Manuj Pandey and Shashi Verma (Class of 2017), contributed to impactful public policy initiatives in India, from mitigating armed conflict to improving social protection for migrants.</p>
 <p>Olusola Owonikoko (Class of 2018) was recognised by the British Council as a Study UK Global Finalist for the Social Impact Award 2021. Photo: Tunde Alabi-Hundeyin II</p>	 <p>Pauline Koelbl (Class of 2008) founded ShEquity, an African-focused gender-lens investment firm with the vision of closing the \$42 billion gender funding gap in Africa.</p>	 <p>Roland Smith and Jessica Chapman (both Class of 2020) were awarded Leverhulme Doctoral Trust Scholarships at the University of East Anglia. Roland Smith photo: Lorna Palmer</p>
 <p>Tanjila Mazumder Drishti (Class of 2018) was featured as an Ambassador-in-Action at the One Young World Summit 2021, for her work on health and Covid-19 response interventions at BRAC. Photo: BRAC</p>	 <p>Yoko Inagaki (Class of 2020) became a delegate for the Australian-Japan Youth Dialogue and established social start-up <i>Manasa Mora</i>, a laundromat for empowering women and improving public sanitation.</p>	<p>For more information about our alumni and how you can stay connected, get involved and change lives, visit: alumni.ids.ac.uk</p>

Nurturing positive leadership through scholarships



In the past year, O'bai Conteh made an important contribution to addressing sexual and reproductive health in his home country Sierra Leone. O'bai's studies at IDS were supported by the [IDS Graduate Scholarship](#). O'bai graduated from the IDS MA Gender and Development in 2018 and is currently working as a Project Analyst at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Sierra Leone.

The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted many dimensions of our lives. In Sierra Leone it created great uncertainty for many social services such as health and education. At UNFPA, their concern was how to address the uncertainty around the continuation of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for women and girls. O'bai's work as a key member of the country coordination team was to better

understand uncertainty on access and utilisation of sexual and reproductive health services and navigate through it. This was done through support to communities with sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education aimed at improving knowledge and reducing risky behaviours in adolescents and young people to prevent sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and unplanned pregnancy.

During this time, O'bai facilitated and coordinated the planning and implementation of an emergency obstetric and general surgical training programme designed to benefit rural communities. As a result, 13 surgical training students graduated with support from UNFPA. By improving the skills of mid-level health care personnel – such as Surgical Assistant Community Health Officers who conduct most caesarean sections in district health facilities – the programme has helped to enhance women's access to skilled health care providers and services that can help them have a fit pregnancy, safe birth and healthy baby.

Reflecting on his time at IDS, O'bai said: 'IDS provided a work-integrated learning opportunity for me to develop an awareness of workplace culture, and enhance critical workplace skills, such as positive leadership and communication. The knowledge and experience gained at IDS helped me foster collaboration to help vulnerable girls and women in Sierra Leone.'

[Find out](#) how you can help a talented scholar gain the necessary skills to make a difference in their home country.

3 Championing the use of evidence for social and environmental justice

Much of our work revolves around evidence: reviewing it, synthesising it, brokering it, and enabling others to use it – all with the goal of changing people's lives for the better. Our researchers produce high-quality evidence that is used by actors across the development spectrum – from local NGOs to global agencies and governments. Our courses and programmes enable practitioners and our research partners to make the links from evidence to policy to implementation to positive change. As new crises unfolded this year, the [K4D programme](#) moved swiftly to provide valuable evidence of lessons learned from past emergencies. The successful Shaping Policy with Evidence course inspired tailor-made activities on using evidence to improve education policy-making in Jordan. Taking the long view, IDS researchers contributed to a major rethink on donor policy for microfinancing with the widest-ever review of evidence – and to improving humanitarian responses to protracted crisis situations, through the new [BASIC research consortium](#).



Iraq

Downtown Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq.
Photo: Saad Salim, Unsplash



Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan. Photo:
Mohammad Husaini, Unsplash

Influencing a rethink of donor policy on microfinance



Tossota, Benin. A villagers' cooperative meeting to discuss their microfinance loan of three million CFA (GBP 3,036). Photo: Philippe Lissac / Panos Pictures

How best to help the world's poorest people escape from poverty is being reappraised thanks to findings from the widest-ever [review of evidence](#) on the impact of financial services conducted by IDS and the [University of East Anglia \(UEA\)](#).

Microfinance and microenterprise interventions have been a cornerstone of financial development programming for 30 years, attracting billions of dollars from large global donors. These

small-scale loans chiefly target women and the poorest people, who are disproportionately affected by socioeconomic inequalities and crises – as the Covid-19 pandemic has starkly illustrated.

Yet, after decades of substantial investment, there is scant evidence that microfinance interventions have had a lasting impact on poverty alleviation and wellbeing for the people concerned, as the IDS-UEA review showed. The findings of the review have fed into a major US Government [reappraisal](#) of policy on microfinance and have informed investigations by journalists into the adverse effects of such interventions.

The IDS-UEA research has contributed to an important shift in donor policy. This moves the emphasis away from supporting women to work their way out of poverty via microenterprise loans and instead reconsiders the role of social services that provide long-lasting support and enable vulnerable people to break the poverty cycle. IDS researchers (including those from the IDS-led [Centre for Social Protection](#)), and long-term partners [BRAC](#), have advocated for alternatives such as the Graduation approach for decades.

Innovations in research synthesis

In a ground-breaking approach, IDS and UEA researchers linked theory to evidence on financial inclusion from around the world, creating the first review of reviews ever to be completed in international development. This meta-study, which took nearly three years to complete, represents a

methodological innovation in research synthesis and is emblematic of the mixed-methods research that IDS has established.

By interrogating both qualitative and quantitative evidence, and examining the theory of change behind various financial inclusion interventions, the IDS and UEA researchers drew together the widest-ever pool of impact evidence on financial services for the poor.

Their work, and the communications activities related to it, has opened up the scope for reviews of this type in other areas – such as livelihoods approaches or poverty graduation models. The methodological lessons from this pioneering study can be applied by other researchers who will adopt or develop the meta-reviewing method further.

Sharing knowledge and building capacity

The IDS-UEA study launched at an event in April 2019 to a packed audience at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), organised by the project funders [3ie](#) (International Initiative for Impact Evaluation). Interest has since come from a wide range of development professionals and media, including members of the [European Research Conference on Microfinance](#), the [German Institute of Economic Research \(DIW\)](#), the [ISEAS/Yusof Shafak Institute in Singapore](#) and several UK business schools.

The global poverty research partnership CGIAR published an [Evidence Explainer](#) about the IDS-UEA research on the [CGIAR GENDER resource hub](#) in September 2021. In spring 2022, a paper in *The Lancet* [on child and adolescent health and development](#) referenced the research.

The researchers also provided evidence to Bloomberg journalists who undertook a multi-country investigation resulting in a series of [exposé articles in May 2022](#) on the darker sides of microfinance, including the potential for poorly protected borrowers to be exploited.

The research is also contributing to building capacity, with its mixed-methods concepts shared with cadres of professional development learners as part of [IDS short courses](#) on impact evaluation. The research was enabled through established links with researchers at the [Centre for Development Impact](#), an initiative in which IDS, UEA and [Itad](#) are core partners.

Evidence on protracted crises shapes more effective humanitarian responses



A new school in the north of Yemen which was built too small, resulting in teachers having to instruct pupils on the roof under plastic tarpaulin. Photo: Philip Proudfoot

Humanitarian crises have come thick and fast in recent times – notably Ukraine, Afghanistan and situations worsened by Covid-19. While each creates urgent humanitarian needs, each also carries the risk of becoming protracted or recurrent like so many other existing global crises.

The reflex currently is to provide short-term, reactive humanitarian aid. But this response pattern is not always the most effective way of helping vulnerable people to cope. A lack of

evidence and knowledge-sharing is preventing the sector from improving its approaches. Various strands of IDS research are helping to bridge this knowledge gap by providing vital insights and cross-disciplinary connections to make humanitarian responses more effective.

The dramatic return of Taliban control in Afghanistan in 2021 posed serious problems for local NGOs seeking to ensure access to humanitarian aid, particularly for women. IDS researchers at the Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development (K4D) programme, which provides quick access to evidence and analysis on key development questions, were able to inform negotiating efforts with the new regime.

K4D published a Helpdesk report '[Lessons Learnt From Humanitarian Negotiations with the Taliban: 1996 – 2001](#)', drawing on a rapid literature review of humanitarian agency reports, evaluations and academic articles, and leading experts' opinions. It highlights lessons on negotiating practices used previously with the Taliban, chiefly to try to secure women's access to aid.

The [Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development \(ACBAR\)](#) said the report was 'a very timely release as NGOs have been struggling to negotiate with the current regime on various issues'.

Increasing impact of K4D analysis

The K4D report was quickly shared on Relief Web and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Research for Development Outputs websites. ACBAR also asked the author to present the report at their monthly consortium meeting, attended by several NGOs.

After consulting with ACBAR, K4D translated the report into Dari – which was greatly appreciated by local NGOs and increased its reach among those negotiating with the Taliban. It was uploaded to the IDS institutional repository and shared directly with ACBAR for dissemination among its members.

The conflict in Ukraine has created another complex context. Within weeks of Russia's invasion, K4D established the [Conflict, Peace and Humanitarian Resource Hub](#). It brings together multiple new Helpdesk Reports about Ukraine, Russia, and post-conflict rebuilding, to support those working in conflict, peace and humanitarian spaces.

Responding well to protracted crises

In January 2021, an IDS-led consortium launched BASIC (Better Assistance in Crises) Research to generate evidence on how to strengthen social assistance in the most difficult protracted crisis settings and for populations that are the hardest to reach. Yemen, Iraq and Mali are among the areas that the programme is studying. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the consortium includes the University of Sussex and the [Centre for International Development and Training \(CIDT\)](#) at the University of Wolverhampton.

IDS is also a leading partner in SSHAP – the Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform – which in 2021 began a new fellowship programme to pair social scientists with humanitarian practitioners in the same region to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange. So far 35 fellows have benefited from the programme, with another cohort beginning in mid-2022.

Similarly, the [Covid Collective](#) programme has been linking academics and practitioners working in humanitarian responses to Covid-19, while developing new partnerships with the humanitarian sector. [The Humanitarian Learning Centre](#) also continues its work on protracted crises and agency-led inclusive responses to multiple shocks. It brings together high-quality analysis, dialogue and debate with accessible, operational learning to improve humanitarian response, practice and policy.



In western India, the Rabari is a pastoralist community which follows a cyclical rhythmic pattern of mobility, returning to the same places year after year, while responding day-to-day to changes in the social and biophysical environment. Through the PASTRES (Pastoralism, Uncertainty and Resilience: Global Lessons from the Margins) programme, IDS is learning how pastoralists respond to uncertainty and resilience, drawing lessons for responding to global challenges. This image is taken from the exhibition 'Seeing Pastoralism', which focuses on pastoralism in six locations around the world. Photo: Nipun Prabhakar

Linking evidence to policy implementation for social change



Jordan. A female teacher helps a young girl with her writing at a school in Zaatari Refugee Camp. Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith / Panos Pictures

Generating evidence is only part of achieving positive change. Using that evidence in policy and implementation is the other critical part. IDS is working to help social policy professionals to link evidence to decision-making in ways that can improve people's lives.

Through sustainable and equitable partnerships with UN agencies, philanthropic organisations, non-governmental and civil society organisations, universities, and independent consultants, IDS is

supporting professional development and learning on the uptake and use of evidence from research.

Our work with Jordan's Ministry of Education is a prime example of championing evidence use for positive change. Over two years, up to late 2021, IDS led a programme of facilitated learning activities to build the capacity of Ministry of Education staff to use high-quality policy research to inform decision-making. The ultimate aim is to improve learning outcomes for children in Jordan.

The IDS-led activities have prompted increased commitment from the Ministry of Education to use evidence-informed approaches to policy development and implementation. Officials also committed to boost research capacity and connections to education researchers and practitioners.

The activities in Jordan were commissioned by the [Queen Rania Foundation](#) for Education and Development in coordination with the Ministry of Education, as part of the [Evidence-Driven Results in Learning \(EDRiL\)](#) project, with funding from the UK and Canada.

Stimulating research uptake

A key problem identified by EDRiL was that pockets of good practice in education research were not well linked to uptake in policy or implementation by the Jordanian Ministry of Education. To address this missing link, IDS

was asked to co-design and deliver a capacity-building workshop and an evidence review for the ministry.

Thirty participants from across the ministry benefited from the week-long workshop, using a highly tailored version of the IDS short course [Shaping Policy with Evidence](#). Workshop goals included deepening understanding of the role of evidence in decision-making and improving participants' ability to apply tools and approaches to evaluate a policy context. Priority areas were agreed in advance with the ministry.

The key recommendation of the IDS work was for Jordanian officials to facilitate an evidence-for-policy event to enable cross-governmental discussions and learning. In December 2021, the Ministry of Education held its first-ever high-level Evidence Forum, including the UK Ambassador to Jordan and Jordan's Secretary General for Educational Affairs. IDS's Director of Communications and Impact, James Georgalakis, was invited to present the findings of the [IDS evidence review](#) to help frame the discussion.

Connecting power of 'unique' course

The basis of the learning programme in Jordan was IDS's Shaping Policy with Evidence course, held both online and in-person. Running since 2019, the course has helped more than 115 individuals to build their capacity to make better use of evidence for producing viable policy options.

Comments from course attendees testify to its impact. 'The course strengthened my understanding of the link between evidence and the politics of influencing social change in a complex world,' Aileen O'Donovan, Deputy Head of Development at Irish Aid Ethiopia said, praising 'the networking and interaction with people from different disciplines across the globe'.

'The course is unique in that it connects topics related to the production of evidence to the use of evidence in policymaking and influencing,' noted Henk Gilhuis, Manager of Science and Impacts at the Rainforest Alliance. UNICEF's Social Policy Specialist in Yemen, Ali Al-Agri, described the course as 'amazing, rich, informative and powerful'.

The course has produced several follow-up requests for technical support from IDS, such as from the [Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat](#) which works with displaced communities in East Africa and the Horn of Africa.

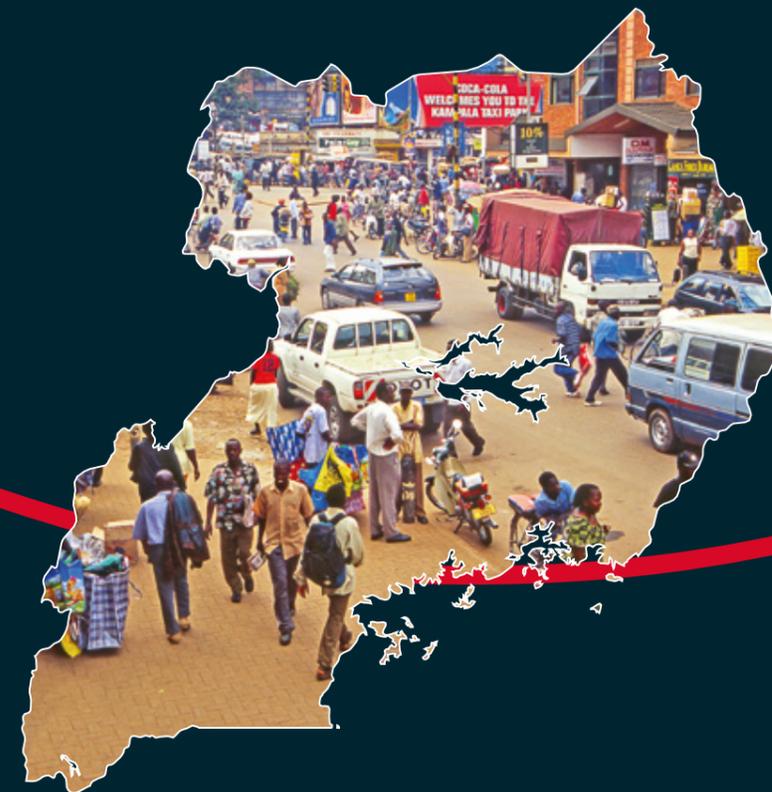
4 Expanding international research and mutual learning networks

Geo-political challenges may appear global, but their impacts are felt first and foremost at local levels. In recognition of this, IDS seeks partners at the forefront of development in all our work to expand international research and mutual learning networks. Our partnerships are central to how we think about transformation, how we challenge attitudes about whose knowledge counts, and how we shape equitable, sustainable development agendas. Despite the constraints of Covid-19 our partnership activities have gathered pace this past year – and the number of contractual knowledge, research and funding partners we worked with around the world increased to 385. Among these are organisations collaborating with us on the Covid Collective and the Pandemic Preparedness Project – both of which demonstrate particularly successful and agile partnering to tackle the most pressing development problems arising from the pandemic. Our five International Initiatives are forging ahead with new collaborations and outputs, including high-profile talks in Pakistan, thought-provoking workshops on Brazil's Cerrado region, and new angles on China's development relations.



Brazil

Aerial view of a log storage yard in the Amazon rainforest, Brazil.
Photo: Tarcisio Schneider, Shutterstock



Uganda

People on the street in Kampala, Uganda.
Photo: Pecold, Shutterstock

Partnerships for Covid-19 response exceed expectations



Providing awareness training on how to prevent Covid-19. Photo: ILO Asia-Pacific via Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Two years into the Covid-19 pandemic, the more complex impacts of the disease are becoming clearer. Rising to these multidimensional challenges, IDS partnerships have gone above and beyond expectations in pursuing social science research to inform policy and practice.

Despite the constraints and restrictions on working during the pandemic, many projects, programmes and centres involving IDS have made substantial progress on collaborative research over the past

year. Two initiatives in particular – the Covid Collective and the [Pandemic Preparedness Project](#) – have showcased successful and agile partnering in action.

With 56 projects and 28 partners in 34 countries, the Covid Collective is a platform that offers rapid social science research to improve decision-making on the most pressing development problems emerging from the pandemic. Coordinated by IDS, the platform draws together the expertise of global partner organisations, and funds and commissions research – both on existing responses and to meet new needs arising from Covid-19.

The Covid Collective website boasts a wealth of online events, blogs, briefings, Helpdesk reports, and themed projects that is testament to the sheer diversity of outputs generated over the past year and to the energy devoted to supporting mutual learning and engagement.

These research outputs are shedding light on how pandemic impacts and responses have affected communities from Brazil to the Philippines – and on the inequities that are preventing many people from meeting basic needs, such as adequate health care and vaccines, social protection, decent work and nutritious food.

Pandemic preparedness from below

Since early 2020, the Pandemic Preparedness Project has pivoted much of its fieldwork and research to focus on Covid-19. Local-level work to examine ‘preparedness from below’ is conducted in Sierra Leone and Uganda,

through gathering oral histories, participatory research and ethnographic fieldwork to track how people currently understand and deal with health events and threats.

The project was set up in 2019 in the aftermath of the devastating outbreak of Ebola in Africa during 2014 and 2015. As well as working locally with communities, IDS and research partners from Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and France are interviewing global, regional and national actors to trace how ideas, frameworks and assumptions about health and diseases travel and flow, upwards and downwards.

Having presciently tapped into concerns about disease preparedness before Covid-19 emerged, the project is now working to find entry points and pathways for connections that can enhance and support the legitimacy and agency of communities’ own preparedness for future outbreaks.

Real-time watch on civic space impacts

A major impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the effects of social and political restrictions on civic activism. In another successful partnership, the A4EA workstream project [Navigating Civic Space in a Time of Covid](#) looked at pandemic effects on the already shrinking civic space in Mozambique, Nigeria, and Pakistan. All three countries have legacies of conflict, military rule and authoritarianism.

Between June and December 2020, the project investigated the parallel trends of crackdowns on democracy and governance under the guise of Covid-19 restrictions and of increased grassroots mobilisation for community solidarity and accountability.

Research partners in the three countries set up panels of civil society leaders to monitor events and to feed into a synthesis report and country case studies. Findings from this are now influencing policymakers and those working towards protecting democratic space and improving accountability in the study countries and beyond.

Many IDS projects during the year owed their success to the dynamism of the partnering collaboration. Deep, contextual knowledge and experience has been brought into proximity with diverse voices and views, enabling methodological adaptation and innovation, and gaining considerably through the complementarity of interdisciplinary approaches.

Progressing our International Initiatives in Brazil, China, Europe, Ghana and Pakistan

Our five [IDS International Initiatives](#) in Brazil, China, Europe, Ghana and Pakistan produced a vast scope of work this year. From new thinking on Brazil's overlooked Cerrado region to a flagship human development report in Pakistan, research goals have made progress through events, networking, and publications.

Now in their second year, the Initiatives create spaces where researchers from participating countries can share, learn and work with IDS researchers, governments, civil society, communities, and the private sector to tackle development challenges.

Situated in geographies at the leading edge of development, each location this year contributed new perspectives that will further the overall aim of strengthening development thinking and practice.

Challenging agribusiness in Brazil's Cerrado

Workshops hosted by IDS and the Centre for Sustainable Development at the [University of Brasilia](#) have re-evaluated agribusiness domination of Brazil's huge Cerrado region for intensive soybean and beef production. In December 2021, the Newton Researcher Links Workshop series drew 37 early career researchers from universities in Brazil and the UK to share work on agrifood systems and territories in the country.

The discussions resulted in a [Policy Brief](#) that challenges the prevailing narrative of agribusiness success in the Cerrado and demands support for traditional peoples dispossessed of territories. A collection of related working papers, journal articles, and an issue of the *IDS Bulletin*, are planned for release later in 2022.

Exploring China's international development relationships

In 2021, the [IDS China Centre](#) convened several events and produced publications that explored China's development relations with South Asian and African countries. The [China and Global Development Seminar](#) Series offered presentations from collaborators on the Belt and Road Initiative, hydropolitics and hydropower. IDS with the [London School of Economics](#)

published a [Policy Briefing](#) on China–Africa economic zones, while a special [IDS Bulletin](#) appeared on China and International Development: Knowledge, Governance and Practice.

The Global Development Perspectives and Policies online training course attracted 27 participants from China and the UK, and positive feedback. Three visiting fellows and two PhDs were confirmed under the Chinese Scholarship Council scheme, to join IDS in 2021–23.

Flagship report and high-profile talks at Pakistan Hub

The [Pakistan Hub](#), a partnership with the [Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre \(MHRC\)](#) at the Lahore University of Management Sciences and IDS, convened a range of successful events. Five high-profile lectures, including by Professor Mariana Mazzucato (University College London) and Professor Leonard Wantchekon (Princeton), marked the inaugural 2021 [Mahbub ul Haq Distinguished](#) Lecture series, held on the LUMS Live platform with more than 200,000 views. A political economy of development webinar series and a global challenges webinar series were also held. The events complemented ongoing work to co-develop the upcoming flagship periodic South Asia Human Development Report.

Ghana Hub sets course for future work

Identifying critical research questions, and mutual strengths and expertise for future collaboration was the focus for webinars held at the Ghana Development Studies Hub, co-convened with IDS and anchor partners, [the University of Ghana](#) and [the University for Development Studies](#). Subjects addressed so far include latest thinking on migration and mobility in Ghana and beyond; and pastoralism and climate change in West Africa.

Europe-based events champion youth political engagement

More than 30 distinguished academics, policymakers and practitioners from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Africa joined the IDS-led [Youth Engagement and Politics Series](#) in June 2021. The series prompted follow-up engagements with Oxfam, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German development agency GIZ, and the International Institute of Social Studies.

5 Creating a sustainable, resilient and effective organisation

It was an exceptionally challenging year. Like many other global development organisations, we felt greatly the impact of the pandemic. This was compounded by significant cuts to the UK Government's overseas development aid spending which heavily impacted our research funding. However, our response strategy to fill gaps, diversify funding and avoid restructuring has been largely successful, reflecting the resilience we have built up in recent years, and we finished the financial year in relatively good shape. A priority for us was to adapt to protect and enhance the wellbeing of all our staff. We took a range of steps to do this, informed by our 2021 staff survey, including a review of our flexible and hybrid working policies, and initiatives to support mental health. Significant progress was made on actions to support equality, diversity and inclusion – including piloting innovative new mentoring and appraisal schemes, advancing our building and digital accessibility, and ongoing commitments to reduce inequalities relating to race, gender and disability – with further ambitious plans for the year ahead.



United Kingdom

University of Sussex campus,
where IDS is based.
Photo: University of Sussex



Kenya

Traffic passes a mosque in
Mombasa, Kenya. Photo:
Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures

Ensuring the wellbeing of our staff in the pandemic and beyond



IDS staff and students enjoy a walk on the Sussex Downs. Photo: Rhiannon McCluskey

Covid-19 has challenged us all to re-evaluate how we work, what we value most from our colleagues and how we can best support each other. During the past year, a priority for us has been to apply what we've learned as an organisation during the pandemic so far and adapt to protect and enhance the wellbeing of all our staff.

Our leadership and Covid response teams steered us through this period with a spirit of openness, listening to concerns raised via IDS community

forums and staff surveys, and regularly reviewing and adjusting IDS policies as needed. This was crucial when we began navigating the transition from homeworking to a gradual return to the IDS building as government-mandated Covid restrictions eased.

The health and safety of everyone at IDS has been paramount during this time. Homeworking environment assessments continued in parallel to changes within the building. Our facilities team re-arranged our working spaces, putting in protective perspex dividers, limiting room capacity numbers and offering separate office spaces as needed. Covid-safe cleaning protocols continued, along with mask-wearing policies, regular testing and our buildings ventilation system was also tested and proven to be effective, giving everyone as much confidence as possible.

Reconnecting with colleagues

Along with some understandable caution, many relished the opportunity to be more sociable again and reap the benefits that brings to nurturing positive mental health and wellbeing. While adhering to the remaining Covid restrictions that were still in place, we found ways to bring staff and students together away from work – through cake and the IDS band at our summer picnic, walks on the South Downs, and the renowned IDS Pantomime!

The high scores from our 2021 staff wellbeing survey for positive 'relationship with team' and 'ability to connect and inspire' reflected our efforts to encourage collegiality. Survey feedback around feeling low in energy prompted the development of our new post-Covid hybrid working approach and review of our flexible working policy to help improve work-life balance. We continue to support people to balance needs such as child-care or caring responsibilities, with their responsibilities at work.

Supporting mental wellbeing

In addition to work challenges caused by Covid-19, staff working on research projects impacted by UK aid budget cuts faced additional uncertainties. We were able to keep our commitment on zero redundancies and established an internal marketplace to match colleagues affected by the cuts with work in new or expanding projects. This marketplace addressed a practical need, but we also recognised the need to make sure that support for mental wellbeing was available.

Ongoing mental health support remains a priority across the organisation but was particularly important for us over the past year. This included our active wellbeing at work staff group, which recently launched menopause awareness guidance in the workplace, including a presentation from a qualified nutritionist specialising in women's health. Our staff mental health first aiders provided the first touch point for students and colleagues feeling concerned for themselves or others. Our Employee Assistance Provider and Occupational Health Office are also on hand to provide assistance from qualified professionals, including face-to-face counselling. And in 2022, support was further bolstered through a new training programme on managing mental health in the workplace, with more sessions running in the coming months.

Individually and collectively, our people are the key to our goal of being a sustainable, resilient and equitable institution. We know the positive impact work can have on health and wellbeing and we are committed to supporting our talented and diverse community to sustain healthy and motivated employees for the years ahead.

Action to reduce inequalities and foster diversity and inclusion

Eliminating discrimination and embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion is central to our values and vital to our success at IDS. In the past year, we worked to strengthen our action on equality, diversity, and inclusivity for all those who work or study with us as we look to be inclusive, resourceful and respectful across all that we do.

Tackling the pay gap

A core part of IDS' work is promoting and advocating gender equalities, and as such we are committed to reducing any overall pay gap. Our pay gap analysis this year shows a mean average increase from 10 per cent in 2020, to 14 per cent in 2021, but continues an overall trend in reducing the gap from an initial starting point of 18 per cent in 2017. This mirrors the national increase in gender pay gap, and internally reflects the increase in women in our lower middle quartile, though we are also increasing women's representation in the upper and upper middle quarter. We will continue collecting and reporting on our gender pay gap data and aim to reduce this to 0 per cent by 2025.

We no longer ask about previous salary history during the recruitment process, as this has been shown to perpetuate the gender pay gap and other inequalities. We've introduced unconscious bias training for recruitment panels and are trialling the use of gender decoders. In 2021 we also introduced hybrid working guidelines and revised our flexible working policy. We are currently reviewing our reward practices and in 2022 will carry out a further equal pay review, focusing on our incentive scheme, salaries and grades, career development, workload equity and transparency.



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

Ethnicity pay gap

We've committed to a full audit of equality, diversity, and inclusion in 2021. As part of this, we'll analyse and report on the ethnicity pay gap, a measure recommended by the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter. As there is no current legislation or obligation to capture this information, we'll use guidance from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development to inform our approach. We're also exploring how to further understand different experiences of working or studying at IDS through qualitative data. This is likely to include working with external specialists to identify our blind spots and how to make positive changes.

Addressing other inequalities

Our recently launched Menopause Awareness Guidance will help us to provide training, support, and workplace adjustments to ensure people experiencing menopause feel comfortable at work. Alongside this, we are reviewing the provision for new and expectant parents, as well as provision for those with other caring responsibilities. In further efforts to build awareness, insights and action that directly contribute to an equitable and inclusive organisation, we are trialling a Reverse Mentoring Scheme. Mentors within this scheme are staff who are either new to IDS, in new roles within IDS, at an earlier stage of their career, or from an under-represented group, whilst mentees are all members of the Strategic Leadership Group.

Maximising accessibility

An accessibility review of our building, facilities and website in 2022 will identify priority actions to ensure everyone is able to access our digital resources and use the building comfortably, whatever their needs. This will supplement existing plans to develop a Building Users Guide, to include information about what to expect when coming to IDS. As a Disability Confident Employer we provide a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process and make reasonable adjustments as required and support employees to manage their disabilities or health conditions.

Enhancing our financial sustainability

It was a year of intense funding challenges. IDS, like many other UK research institutions, was significantly affected by the major reduction in UK Government spending on overseas development assistance, compounded by the ongoing disruptions brought by Covid-19 and a highly competitive funding environment. We also faced broader uncertainties relating to student numbers due to both Covid-19 and Brexit.

Funding challenges and responses

The UK Government's decision to cut aid spending from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GDP affected many of our research projects, which in some cases faced cuts of up to 50%. In the context of these cuts (and other funding impacts related to Covid) we decided not to restructure or reduce our capacity, but to launch a call to action to fill gaps, replenish and diversify funding and invest in our strategic priorities. So far, this approach has been successful.

Although the UK aid budget cuts will be in place at least until 2024, some positive news is beginning to filter through about restoration of cut budgets for 2022–23 and 2023–24, and re-funding of ongoing programmes. There are also many new research proposal calls emerging. Much collective work and support will be needed over the next year to ensure that our research funding continues to build.

The impacts of Brexit continue to be felt, for example via challenges relating to eligibility for UK research institutions accessing EU research funding. To support our increased fundraising activity, we have designed and developed new processes to support our staff, which are now being piloted.

Our operational resilience and financial health demonstrate our continued ability to adapt our systems and processes to external change. This will continue to be vital into the years ahead.

At the end of the financial year end, we had a relatively small operating deficit of £548k. This was achieved through continuous adaptation of our funded projects, minimising the impact of the significant cuts to the aid budget and ensuring we ended the year positively.

Our total income for the year was £29.1m, and we were very pleased that despite the UK Government cuts, this represents a decrease of only £2.2m from 2021.

As a result of the aid budget reductions our pipeline has been reduced; however, it remains higher than 2018/19 levels currently.

In the past financial year we had contractual research, learning and funding partnerships in 56 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

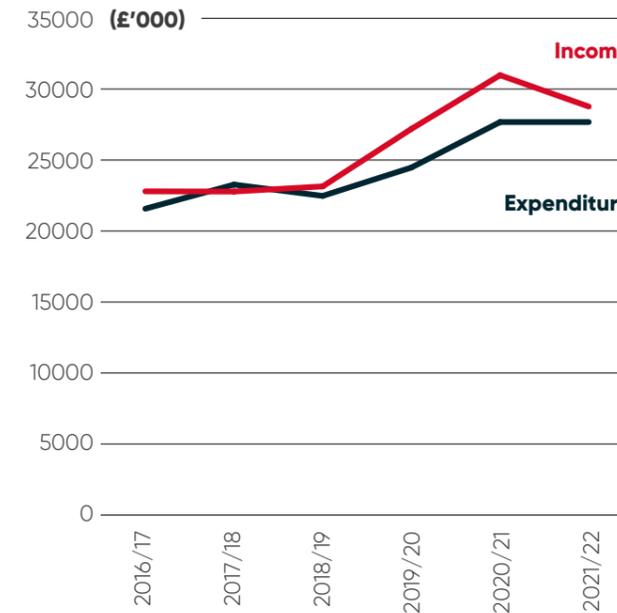
IDS is registered in England and Wales as a charitable company (no. 00877338) limited by guarantee, and with registered charity number 306371. You can see detailed information about our finances and compliance history on the Charity Commission and Companies House websites.



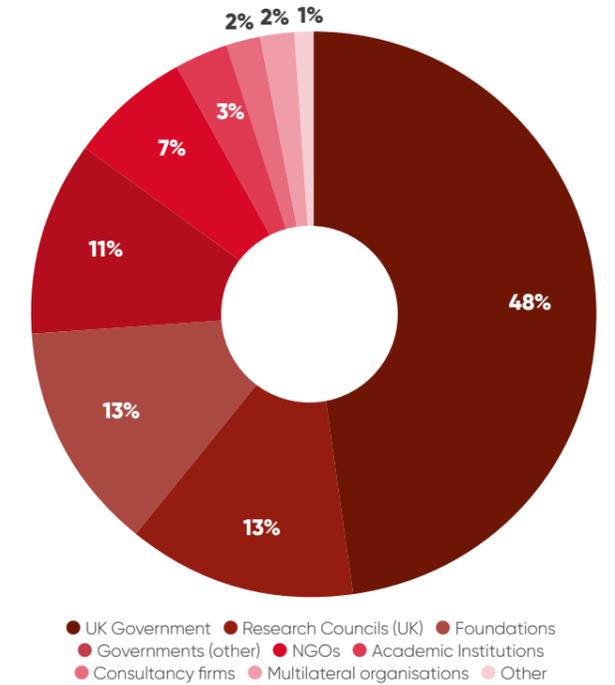
Our operational resilience and financial health demonstrate our continued ability to adapt our systems and processes.

Finances and governance

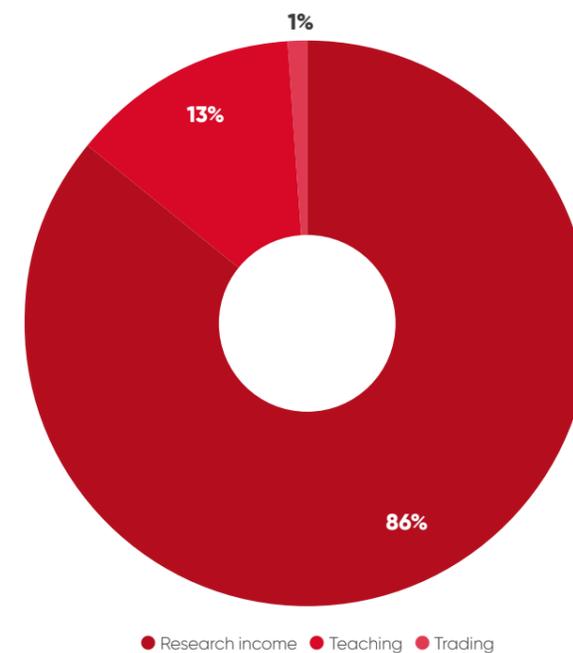
Total income and expenditure



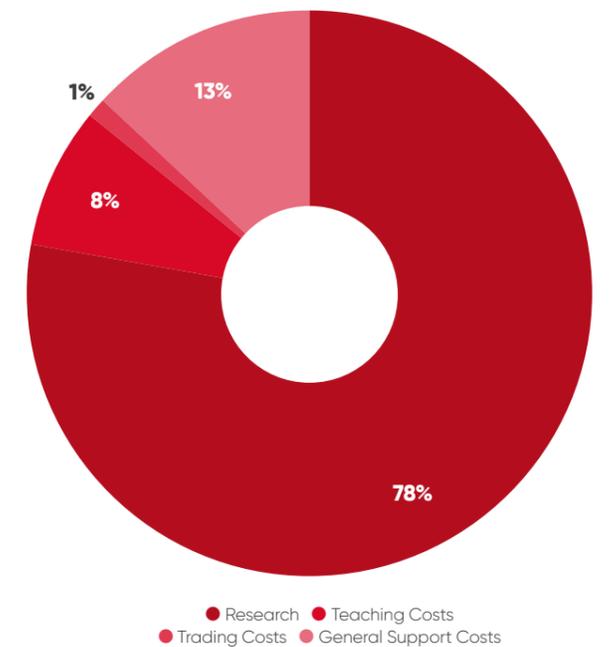
Research income by direct contractor category



Total income by type



Total expenditure by type



Cover image: Kuttanad in Kerala, India. A villager called Santhosh Puthenkulam fills drinking water into water tanks to transport them by boat to different locations in the region. Many of the areas in Kuttanad are facing drinking water scarcity. Kuttanad is a tourist hotspot surrounded by water and wetlands. Yet its water resources, including groundwater, have come under considerable pressure in recent years and have become contaminated and depleted. This photo was taken as a part of the research project Towards Brown Gold which seeks to address the challenges of marginality, sanitation and wastewater management in five growing towns in Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Nepal. The project is led by IDS with a range of partners including the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay. Photo: Demathlal PM

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IDS is registered in England and Wales as a charitable company (no. 00877338) limited by guarantee, and with registered charity number 306371.

ISBN: 978-1-80470-016-7 DOI: [10.19088/IDS.2022.054](https://doi.org/10.19088/IDS.2022.054)