

Mobilising Knowledge for Development

Knowledge matters and how it is shared shapes the decisions, policies and actions that can improve the lives of people living in poverty. However, turning knowledge into action is complex, political and iterative.

Too often development research falls short of its potential to improve the lives of people and remains unused outside of academic communities.

Intermediaries and knowledge brokers who mediate between communities, researchers, practitioners and decision makers are central to addressing this challenge.

Our Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D) programme aims to work with and support these intermediaries to increase access to, and effective use of, research-based knowledge by those working to reduce global poverty and social injustice.



Five key areas of our work

- **Developing open platforms**, approaches and standards for sharing knowledge globally
- **Facilitating communities of practice and networks** to promote exchange and knowledge sharing between development stakeholders
- **Opening up access** and presenting a diverse view of the latest research, debates and practice in development
- **Stimulating demand** for research knowledge by development actors in policy and practice
- **Strengthening the capacity** of the emerging intermediary sector, particularly in developing countries, to share, learn and take action together



What is our approach?

Increasing access to research produced and published in the South is critical to strengthening the quality and relevance of decision-making by practitioners and policymakers working in development globally. We contribute to improved access by, among other things, developing, supporting and linking repositories for southern produced research and improving the diversity and visibility of our own collections. Alongside this our **open development** work stream supports partners seeking to promote open access research and data publishing models as a framework for increasing global access to development knowledge.

But we recognise that just improving access isn't enough. Perceptions of research origins, relevance and agenda affect how research is used. So understanding our target audiences and the context in which decisions are being made is essential to the credibility and uptake of the products we offer. Recognising this means we increasingly engage with partners in the **co-production** of new products. Working with intermediary partners who understand and are directly engaged in a particular country or sectoral context adds value to what we do. It also provides an opportunity to share learning and strengthen capacity among our peers in the intermediary world.

We also need to **stimulate the demand** for research knowledge. Development actors are often not aware of how research knowledge can help address their problem. To this end we have been developing, with partners, an information literacy programme for librarians, researchers, and development NGOs. We offer courses and regional workshops to share best practice approaches to stimulating demand for research knowledge and also host the Chat Literacy online network for intermediaries and information professionals to meet, share resources, discuss good practice and learn about current approaches in the sector.

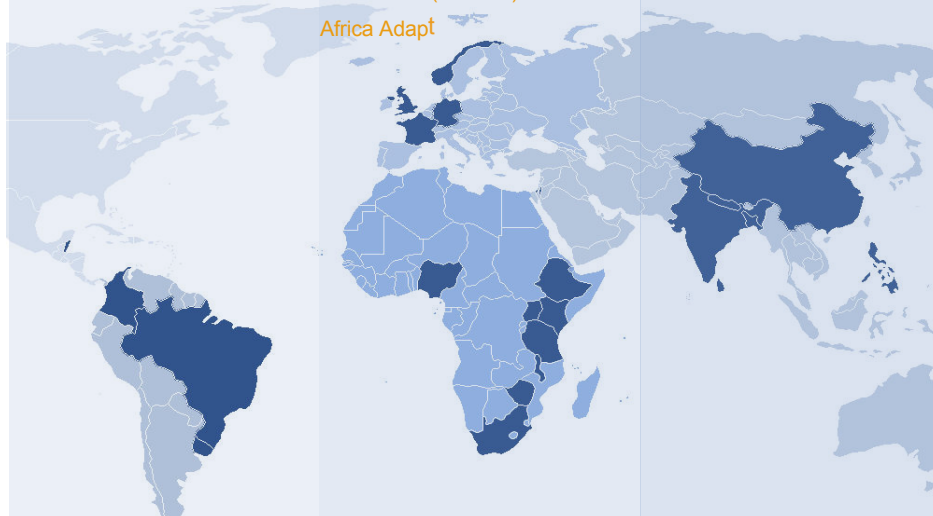
Convening **knowledge sharing networks** is another important aspect of how we work to strengthen the capacity of the intermediary sector. The I-K-Mediary Network is a global network of organisations who engage online and through face-to-face events to increase access to, and use of, research - through services such as web portals and reporting services. We also convene the Knowledge Brokers Forum, an online collaborative space to promote knowledge sharing and dissemination on knowledge brokering (KB) and the role of intermediaries in international development.

Where our partners are

Colour Key

Increasing access Open development Co-production Stimulating demand Knowledge sharing network

| Latin America & Europe | Africa | Middle East & Asia |
|---|---|---|
| Aptivate | Development Studies Forum for Social Studies (FSS) | Madras Institute of Development Studies, India |
| Noragric | Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi | Oneworld South Asia |
| FUNDAEXPRESIÓN | Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe | ICIMOD |
| Cieudur | Makerere Institute of Social Research | Development Research Network (D.Net) |
| Gendercc | Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) | Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS) |
| University of Bahia | D-Tree | Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) |
| INASP - International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications | i-Network | Social Watch Philippines |
| Caribbean Community - Climate Change Centre | Arid Lands Information Network | IT for change |
| UNESCO (IIEP) | Malawi National Library Service | Gender and Development Network, China |
| | Soul City | Bir Zeit University |
| | Future Agricultures Consortium | Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) |
| | UNEP | Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR) |
| | Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA) | |
| | African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) | |
| | Africa Adapt | |





Further reading

BLDS, (2011) *Strengthening information literacy interventions: creative approaches to teaching and learning*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, Centurion (SA): Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa

Fisher, C., Vogel, I. (2008) *Locating the power of in-between: how research brokers and intermediaries support evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

Wolfe R. (2006) *Changing conceptions of intermediaries in development processes: challenging the modernist view of knowledge, communication and social change*, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

About IDS Knowledge Services

IDS Knowledge Services, hosted at the Institute of Development Studies (UK), aims to help people understand and make sense of the complexities and realities of poverty and inequality by drawing on quality research from around the world. We create, deliver and support information services and knowledge brokers, focusing on development research, policy and practice.

We have built our expertise in this area through long established services such as the British Library of Development Studies, Europe's largest research collection on economic and social change in developing countries; BRIDGE, which supports gender advocacy and mainstreaming; Eldis, a web portal sharing development research, policy and practice; and Eldis Communities - a social networking platform hosting learning networks for development professionals. Our Impact and Learning Team is exploring the role of knowledge brokers and intermediaries in the context of research to policy processes and testing approaches to planning, monitoring, evaluation, and sharing the wider lessons around this.



Picture credit: Panos/Ami Vitale

To find out more, contact us at: knowledgeservices@ids.ac.uk or to go: www.ids.ac.uk/info



The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is a leading global charity for research, teaching and communications on fighting poverty and social injustice.

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