

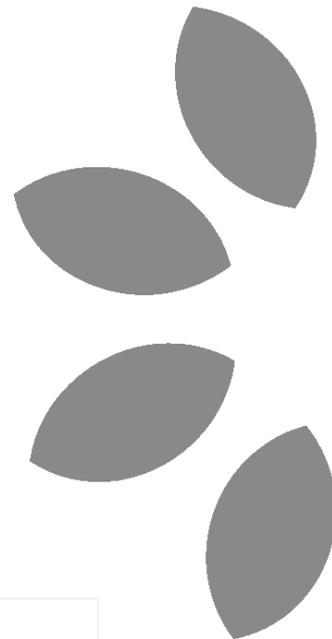


Promoting Quality Research: Experiences from Least Developed Countries

Francesco Obino, Head of Programs

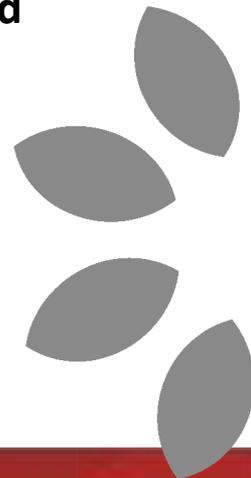
Arianna Flores, Climate Change & Education for Sustainable Development Fellow & Blog Manager

4th Gobeshona Annual Conference
11th January 2018



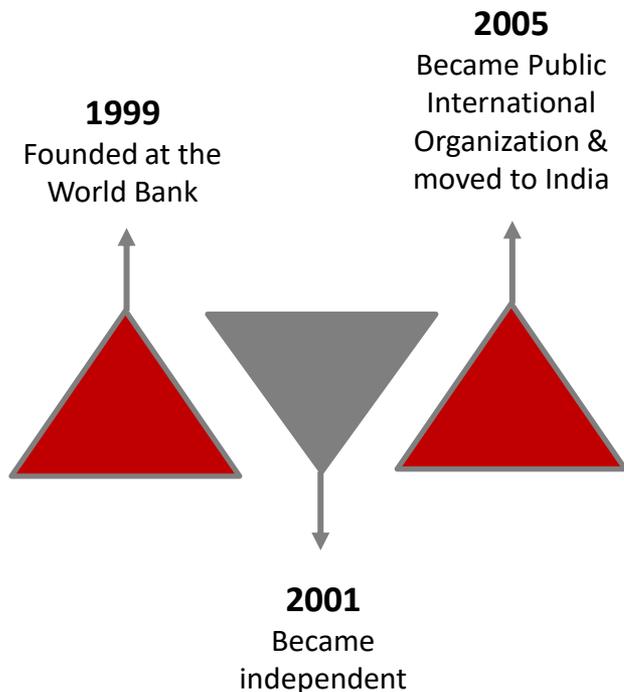
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What is the Global Development Network?

Where GDN comes from?



Strategy for 2017-22

1

Pillar

- Work with institutions to build research capacities

2

Pillar

- Catalyze high quality research from developing countries

3

Pillar

- Link research and policy debates

A unique mandate:

To strengthen policy-relevant social science research in developing countries



Not a donor:

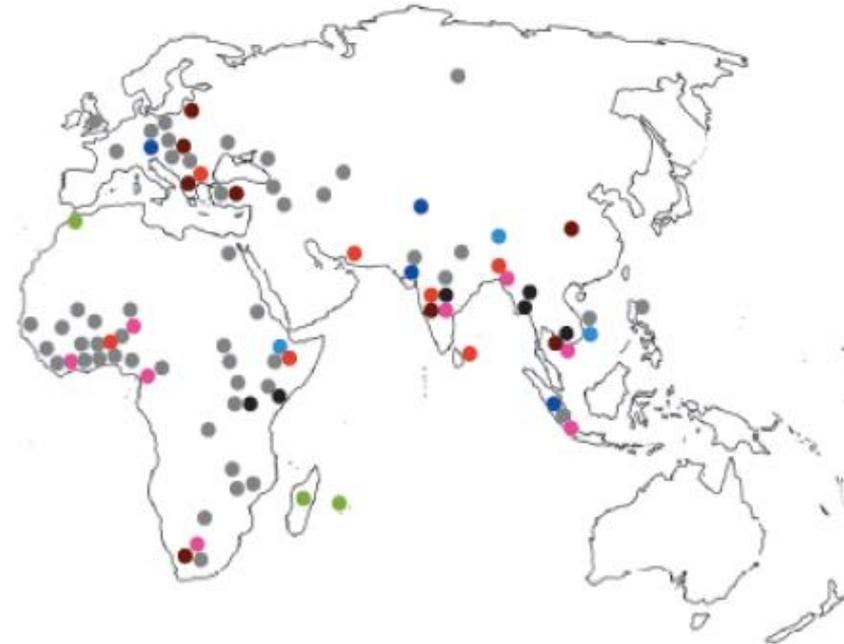
Re-grants development aid funding for research

Works in partnership to build, fundraise for & implement research & research capacity building programs



In 2016, GDN had active programs in over 60 countries

PROGRAMS



Key

- Regional Research Competition
- Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development
- Japan Social Development Fund Award
- Most Innovative Development Project
- Natural Resources Management-Natural Wealth Accounting
- Strengthening Research Capacity of Small Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to Promote Better Informed Policymaking
- Doing Research – Assessing the Environment for Social Science Research in Developing Countries
- Building Research Capacity In Least Developed Countries
- Global Research Competition

Africa: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Asia Pacific: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey, The Philippines and Vietnam.

Eastern Europe & Central Asia: Armenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyz Republic, Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.



Case Study:



Building research capacities in least developed countries

In a nutshell

A GDN  program (2014-17) with funding from IDRC

Between 2014 and 2017, GDN provided



FUNDING

Up to 140,000 USD
over 24 months



MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

On-demand & regular
feedback on strategic
issues relating to the
development &
implementation of the
project



MENTORING

To institutions based
in LDCs, with the goal
to implement *their
own blueprints for
stronger research
trainings at their own
institution.*



Assumption 1: Institutional capacities are key to
boosting both demand & supply of high quality
local research



Assumption 2: There is a gap in funding for
research institutions in LDCs



Assumption 3: Demand-driven funding has
higher chances to work, particularly in low
resource environments where institutions are
overstretched



Case Study:

Building research capacities in least developed countries

400

Applications

140

Eligible

4

Grants assigned



Royal University of Bhutan

The Institute for Gross National Happiness for the Royal University of Bhutan

FOCUS: young lecturers, research centres, research leadership



Royal University of Law and Economics (Cambodia) in collaboration with the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences

FOCUS: regional summer school



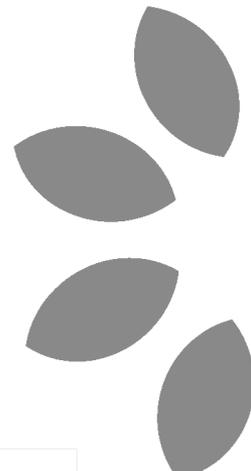
The African Center for Higher Studies in Management (CESAG), Senegal

FOCUS: modelling laboratory



Haramaya University, Ethiopia

FOCUS: Masters and PhD dissertations (fieldwork and supervision)



Case Study:

Building research capacities in least developed countries

What does demand driven change looks like?



The Building Ethiopia's Research Capacity in Economics and Agribusiness (BERCEA) project (2014-17)



International support can make a pilot project/proof of concept possible



Problem identified

Quality of postgraduate research in the areas of economics & agribusiness has been decreasing



Response

3 interrelated actions:

1

Introduced **small fieldwork grants** for Masters and PhD dissertation work

23

2

Introduced **intensive training workshops** on data collection and data analysis

171

3

Supported **staff exchange** & networking to strengthen pedagogical & supervision capacities

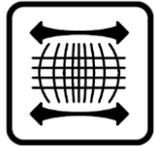
2



Case Study:

Building research capacities in least developed countries

What was  possibly right about?



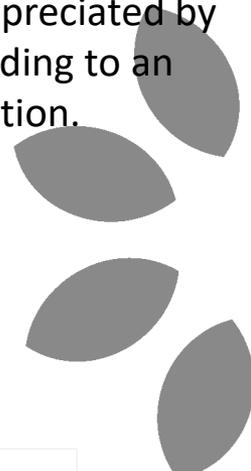
Institutions are overstretched - even demand-driven projects can move to the back burner if the momentum is lost.



Change in research capacity building is about **practices, politics & proof of concept**, & these interact & take shape **within single institutions**. Institutions are laboratories of change.



Institutions care for more than funding: mentoring and project management support were hugely appreciated by grantees, according to an external evaluation.



Case Study:

Building research capacities in least developed countries

What did learn?



Assumption 2 is only partly true:

- ❖ There is a clear funding gap for *institutional development*, even when institutions have financial resources
- ❖ They are risk averse: budgetary re-allocation only happens once the value of a new activity is tested & proven, including politically
- ❖ They do not prioritize research training – high risk/low priority



Teams – not institutions – drive innovation. They have the good ideas. Change levers are insiders. Their imagination is shaped by internationalization.



'**Outreach**' efforts within the institution are key to sustainability of the project



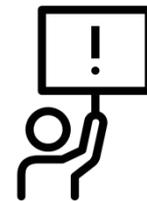
International support's most significant contribution is to **legitimize the innovative work of a team** within an institution – international support makes the debate about change easier, and it helps institutions accept the risks they see in innovation.



Approaching universities to access services directly not unrealistic, but it requires **country presence** and **political intelligence**



Mentoring was a key part of the legitimising mechanism. Funding alone is not enough.



Demand-driven approach works at institutional level, but systemic spill-over remains elusive. Effort must be modular and large-scale.

Case Study:

Building research capacities in least developed countries

What questions remain unanswered?



How to move from institutions to systems?



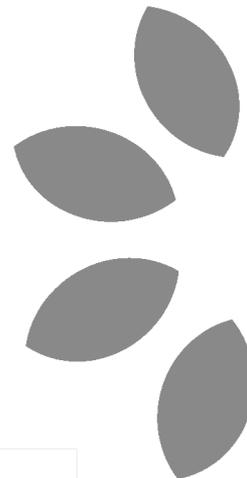
What would make a virtuous example of demand-driven change “contagious” at the national level?



How to professionalise a service like mentoring, including along South-South lines?



Basic assumption 1 (stronger research is appealing to policy actors) remains to be tested – over the long term. **How long is long enough?**





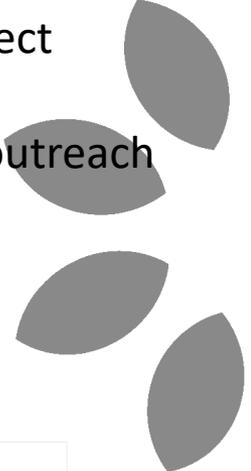
Can international support ever trigger demand-driven change in HE?



Short answer: YES. International funding can support innovation in HE, particularly through a mix of 'outsourcing of risk' & 'legitimation' of teams of insiders with a clear vision of HE development at the scale of their institution.



Longer answer: YES IF international support becomes much more than funding. Networks can have a critical role in structuring & channelling funding flows for HE, complementing it with substantive non-financial support (project management, financial management, mentoring, outreach development, etc.).



GDN's work in Adaptation to Climate Change



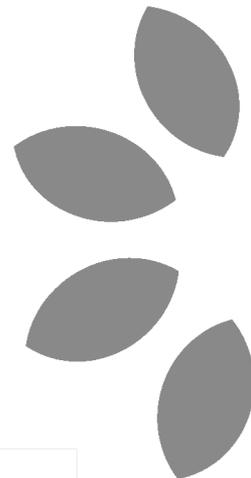
Climate change and its impacts keeps on being a barrier for sustainable & resilient development



GDN recognizes these challenges and joins the global effort to address this important issue



July 2017:
GDN became a partner of the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) and started the process to become an observer



GDN's work in Adaptation to Climate Change



Our mission?



Contribute to the thinking on how and why is it important to include social sciences researchers from developing countries in the formulation, monitoring & evaluation of national & international adaptation plans and strategies.



Contribute to overcoming the division between climate and social sciences is crucial to achieve more sustainable, effective and inclusive action on climate change



Why is this important?



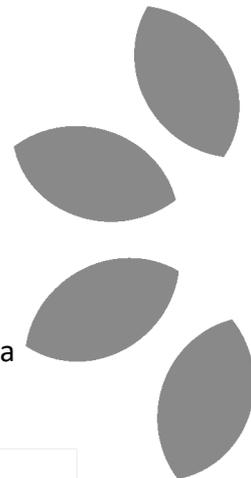
The limited role social science research has played in discussions on climate change so far.



Social scientists are not always involved in IPCC scoping process & the identification of authors from various scientific disciplines doesn't include representatives from all disciplines in social sciences.



The importance of data, evidence, research and information is constantly a topic of discussion in the climate negotiations



Our activities so far...



September 15th and 16th 2017

33 experts from 23 key institutions to discuss how resilience, adaptation and risk management interact and contribute to each other, and to what extent the notion of a 'continuum' between analytical lenses, actors and tools associated with each concept can advance and accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

COP23

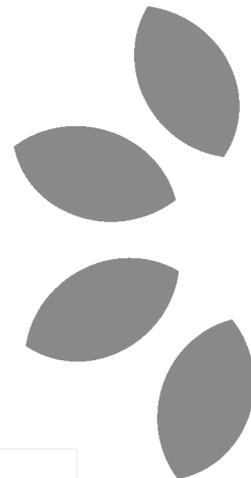
GDN was invited to participate and share experiences in the 11th NWP focal point forum on human settlements and adaptation (8th November, 2017) and in the side event on the Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (9th November, 2017) at the COP23.





Next steps...

- ❖ **Support universities to become reference centers for training and policy relevant knowledge on adaptation, on a demand-driven model (partnership with LUCCC?)**
- ❖ **Design *social sciences* research agenda on climate change adaptation, led by developing country researchers**
- ❖ **Promote role of universities and social scientists in NAP and CGF applications, in developing countries**



QUESTIONS?



Thank you



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